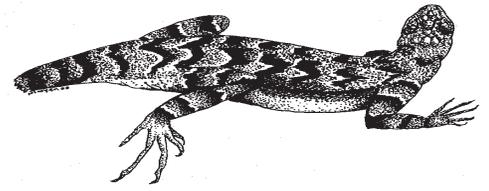
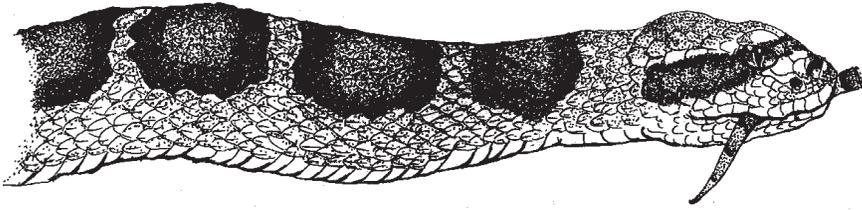


Petrified Forest

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

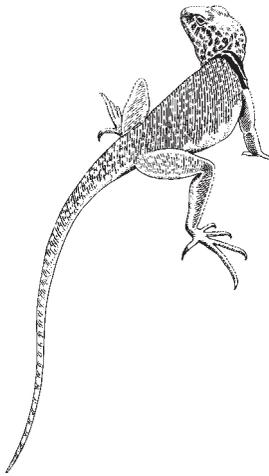
Petrified Forest National Park
Petrified Forest, Arizona



Modern Reptiles

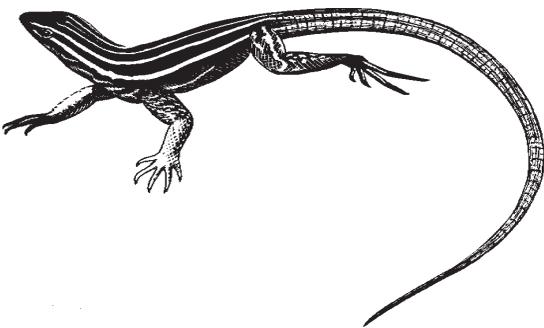
Well adapted to the often dry environment of Petrified Forest National Park, reptiles play an important part in maintaining the health of the ecosystem. Over sixteen varieties of lizards and snakes make Petrified Forest their home. Reptiles occupy a variety of habitats ranging from grassland to rocky slopes. They consume large quantities of insects, spiders, scorpions, other reptiles and small mammals thereby preventing infestations of any single species. Respecting the entire reptile community helps to preserve this vital link.

Collared Lizard



The collared lizard is the largest and most frequently seen lizard in the park because it is found in every habitat. It is easily identifiable by its large head, greenish-blue to greenish yellow highlights on its back, and a double black neck collar. Not shy, collared lizards are often seen sunning themselves on rocks and petrified logs. Don't be fooled by their harmless appearance; they have very sharp teeth and will bite if they feel threatened.

Plateau Striped Whiptail



A lover of grasslands and developed areas, plateau striped whiptails are long, slender lizards. They have six to seven light stripes down their back, separated by dark brown to black bands, and a long olive-blue or greenish-blue tail. Whiptails are exceptionally fast and can be seen darting rapidly

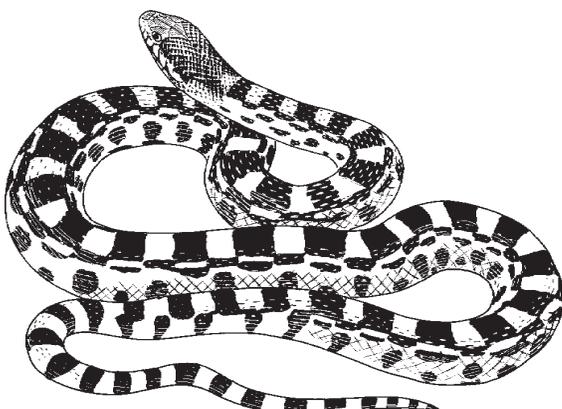
from bush to bush to avoid capture. The success of the whiptail in northern Arizona is partially due to their fascinating reproduction process; there are only females in this species. In early summer, the females lay three to five unfertilized eggs which hatch to become individuals genetically identical to the mother.

Side-blotched Lizard



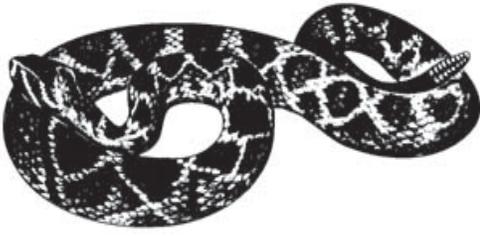
Confining itself to rocky areas of the park, the side-blotched lizard is seldom seen. Three to four inches long, it is distinguished by black to blue blotches on each side of its chest behind the forelegs. Like many lizards, it has the ability to shed its tail when attacked. The tail will grow back, but does so at a significant cost in energy. This can result in missed reproductive cycles, sluggish metabolism and loss of status in the lizard community.

Gopher Snake



Gopher snakes are one of the most commonly seen snakes in the park. They have few habitat preferences and are often seen during the day. They have a cream colored background and belly with black, brown, or red-brown blotches that darken in rings towards the tail. When disturbed, the gopher snake will sometimes imitate a rattlesnake by hissing loudly, vibrating its tail, and striking repeatedly. If you encounter this behavior you are too close. Slowly back away.

Western Rattlesnake



Preferring grasslands and shrub areas, the western rattlesnake is the only venomous snake found in the park. It can be identified by brownish blotches down its back, triangular shaped head, and thick tail usually ending in a rattle. It is often confused with the gopher snake because of similar coloration and behavior. Unlike most other snakes, rattlesnakes bear live young. In some instances the mother will stay with her litter for few days to a few weeks after they are born, defending them from predators. If you are fortunate enough to see one, be sure to give it a wide berth, six feet or more, to respect its personal space.

Common Kingsnake



The kingsnake is a less common snake in the park, but easily identified. It is the only snake to have alternating black and white cream, or yellow bands on the back and sides. The head is small and not very distinctive. It prefers the open grasslands of the park. It is one of the few species that will eat rattlesnakes, apparently being immune to the venom. If disturbed, they will empty their cloacal contents on the unsuspecting victim, so beware!

The following is a list of the reptiles known to occur in the park. Help protect this important park ecosystem by observing our reptile inhabitants from a distance.

Lizards

Collared lizard	<i>Crotaphytus collaris</i>
Side-blotched lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>
Sagebrush lizard	<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>
Eastern fence lizard	<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>
Short-horned lizard	<i>Phrynosoma douglasii</i>
Lesser earless lizard	<i>Holbrookia maculata</i>
Plateau striped whiptail	<i>Cnemidophorus velox</i>
Little striped whiptail	<i>Cnemidophorus inornatus</i>
New Mexico whiptail	<i>Cnemidophorus neomexicanus</i>

Snakes

Glossy snake	<i>Arizona elegans</i>
Gopher snake	<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>
Night snake	<i>Hypsiglena torquata</i>
Striped whipsnake	<i>Masticophis taeniatus</i>
Common kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis getula</i>
Milk snake	<i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>
Western rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus oreganus (Crotalus viridis)</i>

Turtles

Western box turtle	<i>Terrapene ornata</i>
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