

updated March 2017

WESTERN TERRESTRIAL GARTER SNAKE



Range	North America; ranging from Northern Mexico to Canada
Habitat	Most commonly found near lakes and slow flowing streams, but can also live in deserts, plains, mountains, meadows, and forests. They can be found at elevations ranging from sea level to 3,993 meters.
Diet (wild)	Slugs, salamanders, small mammals, and lizards. Individuals that live around water sources will also hunt frog and toad larvae, leeches, and fish.
Diet (captivity)	
Description	Length: 42 inches. Grayish-green back with a yellow belly and a yellow stripe that runs the length of their body on each side. Females are larger than the males.
Lifespan	Wild: 2 years. Captivity: 12 years
Reproduction	Garter snakes are ovoviviparous with a gestation period of 2–3 months. An average of 12 offspring are born and like most snakes, immediately after birth they are left to defend themselves and must start to feed in order to survive the long winter hibernation. Mating typically occurs in the spring as the temperature begins to rise. Western terrestrial garter snakes reach sexual maturity at 2 years of age.
Behavior	Local climate and seasons dictate when western terrestrial garter snakes are most active. They spend the mornings warming up in the sun, and once warmed up they spend the day hunting. They require a lot of energy to invest in reproduction and they must eat enough to survive the long winter hibernation. They return to shelter in the evening before temperatures drop too low. During the warmer months, these are solitary animals but they den communally for winter hibernation.
Our animals	1 female; 1 male. Born: 02/06/2016
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western terrestrial garter snakes will bite when they feel threatened. They are considered mildly venomous, but because they do not have an effective means of delivering the venom and it is only mildly toxic, the only effect is minor irritation. They will also secrete the contents of their cloaca when threatened, a behavior called musking. The secretion has a very foul odor that the snake will rub on itself and on predators when attacked.

Phylum
ChordataClass
ReptiliaOrder
SquamataFamily
ColubridaeGenus
Thamnophisspecies
T. elegans