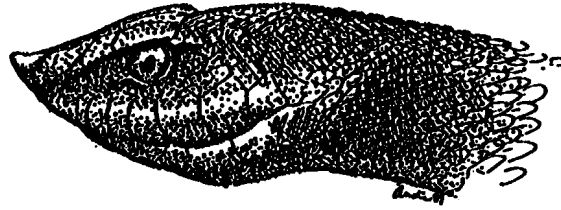


EASTERN HOGNOSE

Heterodon platirhinos

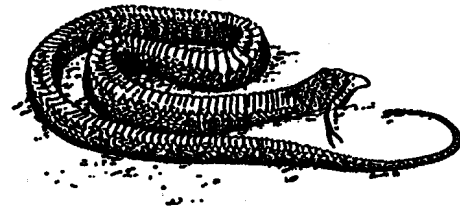


The eastern hognose is a snake with many nicknames. Names like sand cobra, puff adder and blowsnake, to name a few, accurately depict this snake's defensive behavior. Although the hognose acts as though it is a fierce, dangerous reptile, dangerous it is not. This harmless, thick-bodied eater of toads will puff up with air, flatten its head and body, coil up and hiss loudly when disturbed. This means of defense fools natural enemies such as skunks, raccoons and fox ... but humans often look upon this act as a warning that this snake is dangerous. Those that do not readily flee the scene out of fear sometimes resort to killing the hognose.

Named for its upwardly curved nose, the hognose prefers open, dry, sandy woodlands. Its curved nose is a useful adaptation for digging up toads, its food of choice. Adults range in length from 20-40 inches.

Female hognose snakes lay from four to 50 eggs in early summer, usually in an underground burrow. The six to ten-inch baby snakes hatch about 60-70 days later. The young snakes are capable of spreading and hissing before they are even free of their eggshells.

The hognose occurs over much of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. It has only been recorded in Menominee County in the Upper Peninsula.



If its huffing and puffing do not deter an intruder, then the hognose will simply roll over on its back and "play dead."

SOURCE: Gillette Sand Dune Visitor Center, P. J. Hoffmaster State Park