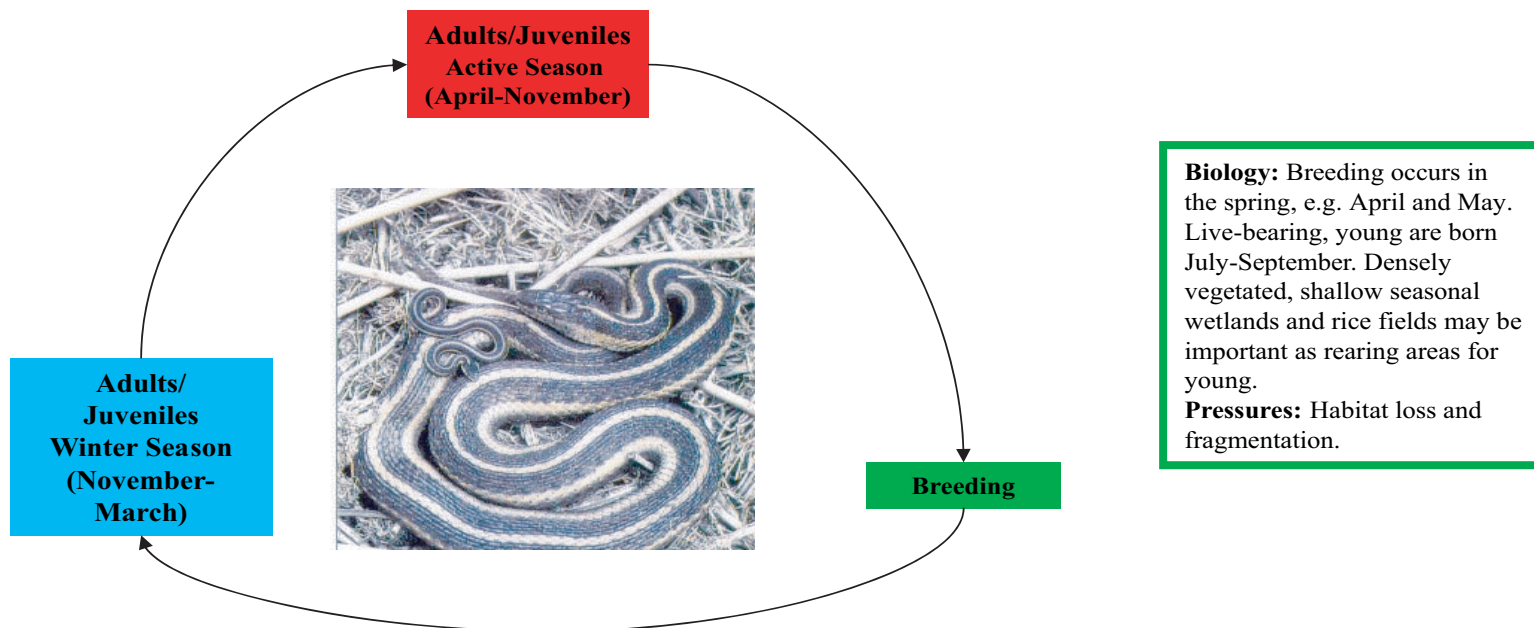


Giant Garter Snake Life Cycle and Pressures Model

Biology: Adult and juvenile active season (April-November) habitat consists of dense, emergent aquatic vegetation in still, or slow-moving water, in sloughs, oxbows, canals, and marshes. Mats of dead emergent aquatic vegetation used for basking. An important habitat component is an abundant prey base of native or non-native amphibians and fish. Upland areas with ground squirrel burrows or other underground retreats for escaping extreme high temperatures.

Pressure: Habitat loss and fragmentation are the biggest threat, secondary pressures include, canal and levee maintenance, and possibly, chemical contaminants.



Biology: Breeding occurs in the spring, e.g. April and May. Live-bearing, young are born July-September. Densely vegetated, shallow seasonal wetlands and rice fields may be important as rearing areas for young.

Pressures: Habitat loss and fragmentation.

Biology: Adult and juvenile winter season habitat consists of uplands adjacent to aquatic habitat. Giant garter snakes use ground squirrel burrows, rip-rap, or other underground retreats as shelter from cold temperatures. These snakes do not hibernate during the winter as much as retreat from cold or inclement surface conditions. They will become active on the surface during warm winter days. Individual giant garter snakes have been documented using winter season retreats up to 250 meters from active season (i.e., wetland) habitat.

Pressures: Habitat loss and fragmentation. Potential crushing while inactive in burrows and other underground retreats, or basking at the surface on warm days during levee maintenance activities such as grading or driving heavy equipment on levees.