

### Sharp-tailed Snake

*Contia tenuis*

A member of the family Dipsadidae (“Rear-Fanged Snakes”), also referred to as “Sharptail Snake, Brown Snake, Oregon Worm Snake” and “Pacific Brown Snake.” The species scientific name “tenuis” means slender or thin. This reclusive species spends much of its life under cover or in downed wood.



Adult Steve Velo Flickr



Adult ventral (belly) scales Steve Velo  
Flickr



Typical cavity use in downed wood K.  
Ovaska



Close up of tail spur Ken-ichi Flickr



Adult from Pemberton Pamela Zevit



Adult from Pemberton Pamela Zevit

## Characteristics

Adult *length 20-45 cm*. A small, smooth-scaled snake, the body is the thickness of a pencil. The 15 rows of scales distributed around the dorsal part of the body range from reddish along the back to grey along the sides. Adults have an indistinct, dark lateral stripe that terminates in a dark line across each eye of the blunt nosed head. Belly scales are light grey to a greenish-blue with a sharp black bar lining each ventral scale (“scute”), giving the snake a characteristic black and white pattern on the ventral area. Juveniles are a distinctly solid brick-red with yellowish-brown lateral lines. On adults and juveniles the dorsal scales near the tail are uniformly red, terminating in a small sharp “spur” that divides the anal plate and from which the species derives its name.

## Status

<b>Global Status:</b>	G4G5
<b>Provincial Status:</b>	S1S2
<b>SARA Status:</b>	Endangered
<b>BC List Status:</b>	Red (Candidates for- Extirpated, Endangered, or Threatened status)

## Resources

[Habitat Restoration for the Endangered Sharp-tailed Snake](#)

[Natural History of the Sharp-tailed Snake](#)

## **For further information see**

### **The Reptiles of British Columbia**

#### **BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer: Species and Ecosystems Search**

A source for authoritative conservation information on thousands of plants and animals and hundreds of ecological communities in BC. From here connect to all provincial and federal recovery plans (including the SARA Registry), COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), Identified Wildlife guidance and conservation requirements for specific species and ecological communities of conservation concern impacted by forestry activities) and links to E-Flora and E-Fauna (the Electronic Atlas of the Plants and Wildlife of British Columbia).

#### **British Columbia's Coast Region Species & Ecosystems of Conservation Concern**

A joint venture resource providing comprehensive information on a range of species and ecological communities specific to the Coast Region of BC (including the South, Central and North Coast, Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii).

#### **Develop With Care Guidelines (see BMP's for Herptiles)**

Environmental guidelines for urban and rural land development in BC.

#### **Species at Risk & Local Governments a Primer for BC**

Learn what species are at risk in your area, search by name, habitat type, regional district and forest district.

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**Source URL:** <http://sccp.ca/species-habitat/sharp-tailed-snake>

#### **Links**

[1] <http://www.bcreptiles.ca/snakes/sharptail.htm>

[2] <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>

[3] <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>

[4] [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop\\_with\\_care\\_intro.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop_with_care_intro.html)

[5] <http://www.speciesatrisk.bc.ca/>