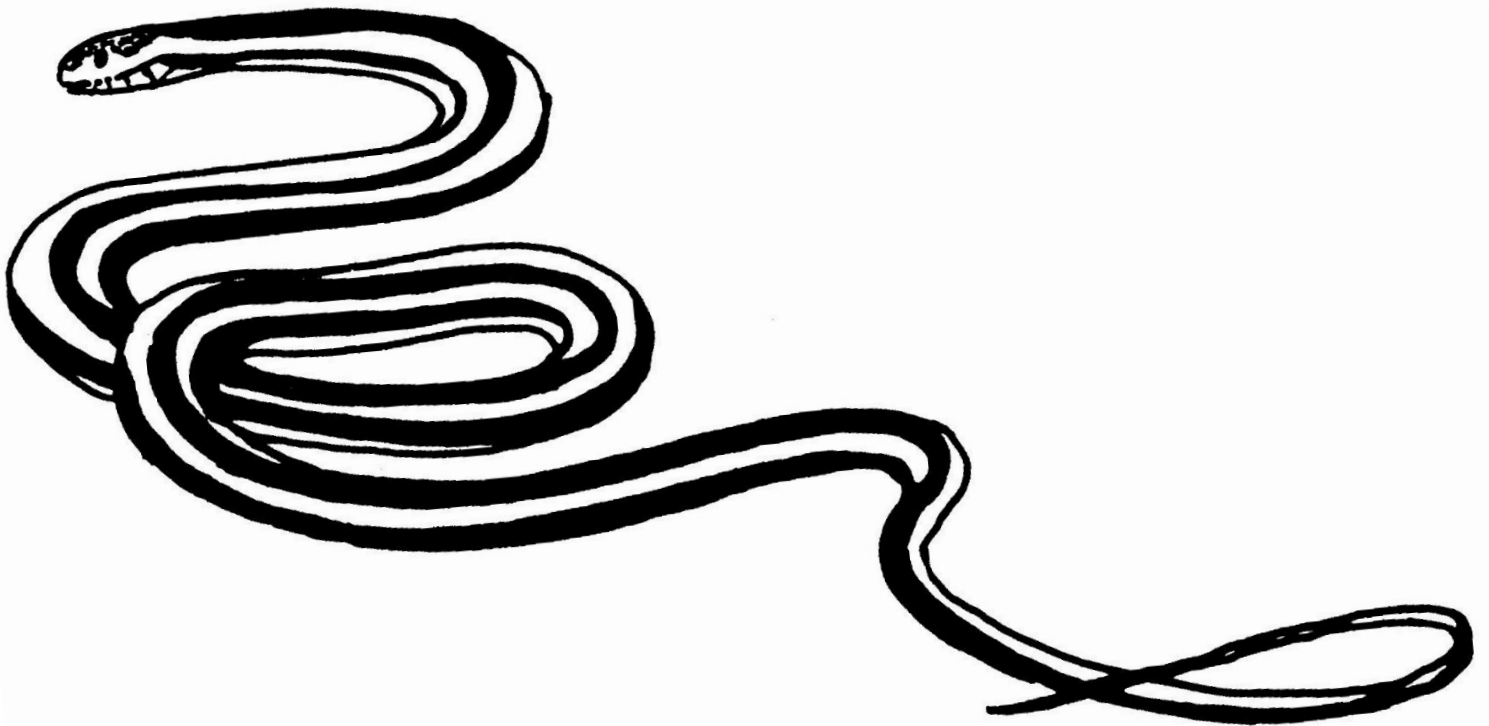




## PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

# Ribbon Snake



All About Me: Hi! I am a Ribbon Snake. We are a close relative of the eastern garter snake and shorthead garter snake, but we are considered more aquatic. We attain a size equal to our cousin, the eastern garter snake, roughly 18 to 26 inches long. We are very agile; we move quickly and with little effort through thick vegetation. In the water, we glide swiftly across the surface. We rarely dive in the manner of true water snakes. Two subspecies are found in PA. The eastern ribbon snake and the northern ribbon snake. We are slender, with fluid lines and a tail that is quite long. We have three bright yellow stripes, one on our backs and one on each side, contrast sharply with a dark body that is red or brown on the northern ribbon snake and black on the eastern ribbon snake. A dark-brown stripe marks the margin of our bellies. Our bellies are yellow or green and have no markings. We have just a touch of yellow under each eye. We can be found within a split range in Pennsylvania. The northern ribbon snake resides in the northwestern part of the state. The eastern ribbon snake is found in the balance of the range. Appearing west and east of the Allegheny Mountains, we have not populated the mountains or plateaus. We are at least semi-aquatic, so we can be found in wet meadows, bogs and marshes. We like weedy shorelines of lakes and shallow, meandering streams. We avoid deep water. We often sun ourselves draped on the branches of overhanging shrubs or trees. From here, we can drop quickly to the water if startled. We seldom wander far from our watery habitats. We eat frogs, salamanders, and small fish that also live in our habitat. Interestingly, we normally do not consume earthworms, a favorite of others in the garter snake group.