

Red Milk Snake



What does the red milk snake look like?

The upper body of the red milk snake has red and orange blotches bordered with black, separated by yellow or white bands. The belly is whitish with irregular black markings. The head and snout are red.

What type of habitat does the red milk snake like?

This species lives under rocks on wooded rocky hillsides and cedar glades. The red milk snake often is misidentified as a coral snake, which is not found in Missouri. Coral snakes have red bands bordered by yellow.

What does the red milk snake eat?

Adults consume mainly rodents. Milk snakes are constrictors and kill their food by suffocation. Milk snakes are so named because it was once believed that these snakes would enter barns and steal milk from cows. This is false; snakes only drink water. They would become sick if they were to drink cows milk. Snakes also have sharp teeth; no cow would stand still for that! The milk snakes were in the barns actually helping the farmers by looking for rodents to eat.



What are their mating habits?

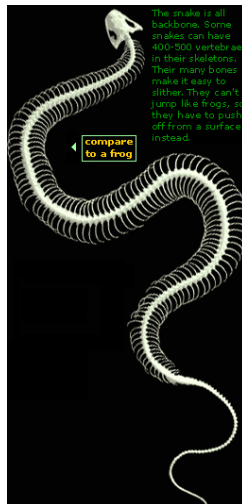
Mating takes place in spring or early summer. The female lays about 10 eggs in an area selected for its high humidity and warmth. Incubation lasts from 28 to 39 days. In the fall, the young milk snakes hatch from their eggs. They are 5 to 10 inches at hatching and have the most spectacular coloration they will ever have. They are bright white or gray with rich pure red blotches. Milk snakes are usually apt to coil, strike and bite when captured, especially during cold weather. They strike with a short, forced hiss and try to quickly slither away and under cover when they get the chance. Even after they are picked up, they may casually turn and chew on fingers or the arm of the person holding it. They also vibrate their tails and release musk.



Can you tell the difference between a coral snake and red milk snake?



Snake skeleton



The snake is all backbone and muscle. Some snakes can have 400-500 vertebrates in their skeletons. Their many bones and muscle make it easy for a snake to push off and slither.

