

## **Snake Survey Summary 2008**

Snake surveys are completed for the whole-park ecological inventories through an established citizen science program. This program began in 2004. Munroe Falls Home Property and the Clinton Towpath were surveyed in 2008.

Liberty Park is also surveyed as part of a long-term monitoring project. This park has the potential to harbor the eastern massasauga rattlesnake. Following the protocol set forth by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the rattlesnake is being surveyed for in Liberty Park and adjacent Pond Brook South (Johnson et al. 2000).

Cover boards made of tin (approximately 12 x 48 x 0.6 in.) were placed in wet meadows, fields in and near wetlands or near forest edges. These cover boards are put in place and remain there from May through September. Cover boards were checked once every two weeks. The surveys are completed when there is >50% cloud cover, less than 15 mph breeze, and temperatures between 50 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. They are conducted during the morning or evening hours. The cover boards are lifted with a snake hook to provide safe distance between the surveyor and the animals.

All snake species found under the boards are documented. Other non-reptilian species are also recorded. Species, general body condition, and comments are recorded for each species (sample data sheet in Appendix A).

### **Results**

Table 1 illustrates the species found in each park surveyed in 2008.

Only a small numbers of each of species were documented in each park. This may be due to cover board number and location. It was very difficult to find locations to place cover boards. Habitat was available. However, many of the desirable locations were easily accessible to the public. Even with our best efforts to place cover boards, some were vandalized or removed from their original locations.

No new species were documented for Liberty Park or Pond Brook South. However, productivity under the tins remains high. Eastern milk snakes, eastern garter, northern brown, red bellied, black rat and northern water snakes were documented.

Clinton Towpath yielded a number of garter snakes. One eastern milk snake was also documented, a species known to the more rural areas of our county.

Munroe Falls Home property was also surveyed for snake activity. While a number of tins were placed, only 3 garter snakes were observed during the course of the survey.

Table 1. Snake Species Documented at 2008 Survey Sites.

<b>Snake Species</b>	<b>Black Rat</b>	<b>Eastern Garter</b>	<b>Eastern Milk</b>	<b>Northern Brown</b>	<b>Northern Water</b>	<b>Red-Bellied</b>
Clinton Towpath		X	X			
Munroe Falls Home Property		X				
Liberty Park	X	X	X	X	X	X
Liberty Park South		X		X	X	

## **Conclusions**

Snake surveys will continue to be performed in Liberty Park and Pond Brook South as part of a long-term monitoring effort for the eastern massasauga rattlesnake. This species has not been documented in these parks in recent history. In 2009, surveys in a number of conservation areas will be conducted. These sites will be determined at a later date.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Temp \_\_\_\_\_ Start Rel. Humidity: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Wind(Beauford): \_\_\_\_\_ Start % Cloud Cover \_\_\_\_\_  
 Surveyors Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Survey # \_\_\_\_\_ Park/Conservation Area \_\_\_\_\_  
 End Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Temp: \_\_\_\_\_ End Rel. Humidity: \_\_\_\_\_ End Wind (Beauford): \_\_\_\_\_ End % Cloud Cover: \_\_\_\_\_

Beaufort Wind Scale	Wind Speed (mph)	Description
0	< 1	CALM: smoke rises vertically
1	1-3	LIGHT AIR: rising smoke drifts; weathervane inactive
2	4-7	LIGHT BREEZE: leaves rustle; can feel wind on face
3	8-12	GENTLE BREEZE: leaves and twigs in constant motion; small flags extend
4	13-18	MODERATE BREEZE: moves small branches; raises dust and loose paper ( <b>too windy to monitor</b> )
5	19-24	FRESH BREEZE: small trees begin to sway ( <b>way too windy to monitor</b> )

[illegible]