

Thamnophis marcianus



Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Anamalia
Phylum:	Cordata
Class:	Reptilia
Order:	Squamata
Suborder:	Serpentes
Family:	Colubridae
Genus	Thamnophis
Subgenus:	<i>T. marcianus</i>

Binomial Name

Thamnophis marcianus
([Baird & Girard](#), 1853)

Synonyms

- *Eutainia marciana*
Baird & Girard, 1853
- *Eutaenia marciana*
— [Bocourt](#), 1893
- *Thamnophis marcianus*
— [Ruthven](#), 1907

- *T. m. bovalli* [Dunn](#), 1940

Nota bene: A [trinomial authority](#) in parentheses indicates that the subspecies was originally described in a [genus](#) other than *Thamnophis*.



Albino checkered garter snake

The **checkered garter snake** (*Thamnophis marcianus*) is a [species](#) of [garter snake](#) [endemic](#) to the southwestern [United States](#), [Mexico](#), and [Central America](#).

Etymology

The [specific epithet](#), *marcianus*, is in honor of American Brigadier General [Randolph B. Marcy](#), who led surveying expeditions to the frontier areas in the mid 19th century.^[3]

Description

The checkered garter snake is typically greenish in color, with a distinct, black checkerboard pattern down its back. It is capable of growing to a total length (including tail) of 42 in (107 cm), but 28 in (71 cm) is closer to average.

Habitat

T. marcianus may be found in a variety of habitats that are endemic to the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central America.

Diet

The diet of *T. marcianus* includes small [frogs](#), [toads](#), small [fish](#), and [earthworms](#). If kept as a pet, they can be trained on live or freeze - thawed mice, but even so, they are fussy eaters and can suddenly start to refuse mice at any point.

Defensive behaviour

T. marcianus will strike and bite if provoked. It will also release a foul-smelling liquid from its [cloaca](#) onto attackers.

Venom

T. marcianus has been found to have mild venom.

Subspecies

The three recognized [subspecies](#) of *T. marcianus* are:

- *T. m. marcianus* ([Baird & Girard](#), 1853)
- *T. m. praeocularis* ([Bocourt](#), 1892)

In captivity

The checkered garter snake is the easiest garter snake to tame. Even a wild-caught one can become tame in a few days if handled carefully. The checkered garter snake is frequently available in the exotic [pet](#) trade, and makes a hardy captive animal. It can be trained to accept mice or fish fillets as food. [Captive breeding](#), while not common, is done, and [albino](#) variants are being produced.