

# Contents

Preface ix

Acknowledgments xiii

## Introduction

What Is Snake Road? 3

On Using This Book 5

Setting Your Expectations 6

Preparing to Visit Snake Road 14

Travel Information 18

Rules of the Road 21

How You Can Help Conserve Snake Road 22

A Note on Names 23

A Note on the Photography 23

On Visually Identifying Snakes 24

## Part 1. Snakes of Snake Road

1. Northern Cottonmouth (Venomous) 30

2. Plain-bellied Watersnake 36

3. Western Ribbonsnake 40

4. Ring-necked Snake 44

5. Rough Greensnake 48

6. Gray Ratsnake 51

7. Dekay's Brownsnake 55

8. North American Racer 58

9. Mississippi Green Watersnake 62

10. Eastern Copperhead (Venomous) 65

11. Timber Rattlesnake (Venomous) 69

12. Red-bellied Snake 74

13. Smooth Earthsnake 78

14. Common Gartersnake 81

15. Eastern Black Kingsnake 84

16. Common Wormsnake 87

17. Eastern Milksnake 90

- 18. Diamond-backed Watersnake 93
- 19. Red-bellied Mudsake 96
- 20. Eastern Hog-nosed Snake 98
- 21. Flat-headed Snake 102
- 22. Common Watersnake 105
- 23. Scarletsnake 108

Part 2. How to Tell Similar Snakes Apart

- Black Snakes 112
- Northern Cottonmouth (Venomous) and Plain-bellied Watersnake 114
- Northern Cottonmouth (Venomous) and Eastern Copperhead (Venomous) 117
- North American Racer and Gray Ratsnake 121
- Red-bellied Snake and Dekay's Brownsnake 124
- Western Ribbonsnake and Common Gartersnake 126
- Smooth Earthsnake and Flat-headed Snake 128
- Common Wormsnake and Smooth Earthsnake 130
- Mississippi Green Watersnake and Diamond-backed Watersnake 132
- Eastern Copperhead (Venomous) and Common Watersnake 134
- Eastern Milksnake and Scarletsnake 138

- Some Final Thoughts 145
- Species Checklist 147
- Further Reading 151