

# Reptiles of Cass and Clay Counties

## Snakes



### **Plains Garter Snake** (*Thamnophis radix*)

**Description:** Typically 1 to 2 feet long; brown, greenish, or black; three long, light-colored stripes that are yellow, orange, or off-white

**Habitat:** Open spaces such as farm fields, yards, and parks; mainly active during the day

**Food:** Frogs, insects, worms, fish, rodents, and eggs; doesn't kill things before eating them, but will sometimes eat things that are already dead



### **Common Garter Snake** (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

**Description:** Up to 3 feet in length; black with yellow lengthwise stripes on their back and sides

**Habitat:** Forests, fields, and prairies; often found near water

**Food:** Frogs, small mammals, earthworms, and insects



### **Plains Hog-nosed Snake** (*Heterodon nasicus*)

**Description:** Dark blotches on the back extending from the back of the head on to the tail; large amount of black coloration on the underside, with contrasting patches of white, yellow and orange; snout is upturned

**Habitat:** Arid areas; farmlands, and floodplains

**Food:** Mainly toads, but also lizards and reptile eggs, and to a lesser extent frogs, salamanders, snakes, birds, and mammals



### **Redbelly Snake** (*Storeria occipitomaculata*)

**Description:** About the size of a large nightcrawler; brown or reddish-brown with a single lighter stripe, or can be gray with four dark stripes; red belly

**Habitat:** Woodlands and forest edges often near water

**Food:** Insects, earthworms, and slugs



### **Smooth Green Snake** (*Opheodrys vernalis*)

**Description:** Bright green coloration with a yellow or off-white underside, but some are light brown instead of green; smooth scales

**Habitat:** Open areas with grass and shrubs

**Food:** Mostly insects and spiders

## Turtles

### **Common Snapping Turtle** (*Chelydra serpentina*)



**Description:** Shell is colored from green to brown to black; young turtles have crests on the top of their shell, which gradually disappear with age; underside of the shell is greatly reduced; long tails with a series of raised scales along the top; large head with long neck; more aggressive when on land than in water

**Habitat:** Aquatic habitats; prefer slower moving bodies of water

**Food:** Insects, fish, clams, crayfish, snails, worms, frogs, tadpoles, salamanders, snakes, turtles, birds, various small mammals, and aquatic plants; will also eat dead animals; have to feed under water because they need the water pressure to swallow

### **Painted Turtle** (*Chrysems picta*)



**Description:** Low, smooth shell that is black or olive with red markings along or under the margins; underside of shell is yellow or orange with central dark blotch; head is yellow striped; neck and limbs are red or yellow striped

**Habitat:** Prefer shallow, weedy waters with a mud bottom

**Food:** Aquatic plants and seeds, insects, snails, tadpoles, carrion, and more

## Lizards

### **Northern Prairie Skink** (*Plestiodon septentrionalis*)



**Description:** Long tail; shiny; tan or brown on the back, dark brown almost black on the sides, with alternating dark and light stripes; three wide pale stripes that don't reach the head; chin and throat are yellowish or pale yellow; belly is gray to tan and unmarked; short legs

**Habitat:** Stream banks, mixed grass prairies, openings in pine barrens

**Food:** Grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, caterpillars, and other insects; spiders, snails, and other small arthropods

#### **Sources:**

<http://herpnet.net/northdakota-herpetology/>  
[http://dnr.state.mn.us/reptiles\\_amphibians/index.html](http://dnr.state.mn.us/reptiles_amphibians/index.html)

#### **For more information:**

River Keepers  
1120 28th Ave. N., Ste. B  
Fargo, ND 58102  
701-235-2895  
[info@riverkeepers.org](mailto:info@riverkeepers.org)  
[www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org)  
[www.facebook.com/RiverKeepersFM](https://www.facebook.com/RiverKeepersFM)

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