



## HABITAT ACQUISITION TRUST

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*Creating  
Conservation Legacies*

# Guidelines to protect Sharp-tailed Snake habitat

Protecting Sharp-tailed Snake habitat is of the outmost importance. Most Sharp-tailed Snakes are located on private lands such as yours, which means that actions you take are important and collectively help ensure that the species will survive in Canada. Here we outline areas most likely to be inhabited by the snake on your property and provide a short list of actions that will help you protect the snakes and their habitat.

Since 1996, increased efforts to find the Sharp-tailed Snake have resulted in the discovery of several new localities. Nevertheless, Sharp-tailed Snakes remain rare. In 2009 the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada reassessed the Sharp-tailed Snake's status and decided that it should remain listed as an ENDANGERED species.

One behalf of the Sharp-tailed Snake Recovery Team and HAT's outreach team, we thank you for participating in this project.

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Sensitive Sharp-tailed habitats on your property are outline in red in the photo below.



**Simple actions to help the Sharp-tailed Snake** - tick them off as accomplished:

- Provide sheltered sites for the snakes to warm themselves, such as flat rocks, slabs of bark, and forest or garden debris placed in the sunniest parts of your property; open areas within the red polygons in the map provide many suitable locations for such shelters
- Provide hiding places such as leaf litter, fallen logs, and rocks throughout the property and leave some areas of your property in an un-groomed, natural state to provide habitat for Sharp-tailed Snakes and other wildlife
- Keep lawn grass short; Sharp-tailed Snakes have been killed during weed-trimming tall and matted grass. Such grass is best cut during cold periods in the winter when snakes are inactive.
- Control invasive species that form a thick vegetation layer, such as periwinkle, St. John's wort, Scotch broom, gorse, laurel-leaved daphne and English ivy, which form monocultures and change the temperature regime and microclimate of snake habitat
- Provide an environment free of pesticides and slug-bait. Especially avoid slug-baits containing metaldehyde, which is harmful to Sharp-tailed Snakes, and is also toxic to other wildlife, pets, and humans. Use environmentally friendly pest control methods as needed. Contact HAT staff for methods that may be effective on your property.

- Be careful when digging through compost heaps, as Sharp-tailed Snakes are attracted to the heat and have been found in compost piles
- Be careful when undertaking construction projects, especially within sensitive habitats (red polygons in map). Search for the snake under cover before starting construction; the snake has been known to hide under bits of tar paper and plastic, and in rubble piles. Move snakes to safety if found and proceed carefully.
- Choose the stack wall (free stack) method for constructing garden rock walls. Stack rock walls provide cracks and crevices for Sharp-tailed Snakes and other helpful reptiles (note: If needed, sparingly use concrete to anchor particularly wobbly rocks)

Enjoy looking for the Sharp-tailed Snake under the artificial cover objects we placed in your garden in (year). The best time to find snakes is in the spring, from **March to May** and in the fall, from late **September to October**.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.  
If you find a Sharp-tailed Snake, let us know.  
Thanks for your participation!