

**Distribution, Status and Prospects for the Conservation
of the Caspian Whipsnake *Hierophis Caspius* (Gmelin, 1789) (Colubridae, Reptilia) in Kazakhstan**

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The Caspian whipsnake was described by I. I. Lepyokhin (1771), possibly from the Western Kazakhstan. The species name *caspicus* was assigned to the snake by J. F. Gmelin (1789). Based on our own and literature data, modern habitats of the Caspian whipsnake are given in the Western Kazakhstani and Atyrau regions of Kazakhstan – from 48°47.305' N and 47°22.559' E (in the north) to 46°56.536' N and 49°18.177' E (in the south). A number of findings noted over the past 250 years in modern Kurmangazinsky, Isatai and Makhambet districts of the Atyrau region, as well as in the vicinity of the Atyrau City, in Tupkaragan district of the Mangystau region, Akzhaik and Zhalgalsky districts of the Western Kazakhstan region require confirmation and clarification. Any indications of the distribution of the species in the Eastern Kazakhstan are erroneous. At present in the specially protected natural areas of Kazakhstan, the species reliably lives only in the natural state wildlife area “Orda” (of local value), where it was discovered in 2018. In order to preserve the species in Kazakhstan, the rationale and creation of a specially protected territory “Maloye Bogdo Mountain” seem promising. Rare plant and animal species, including the Caspian whipsnake with a relatively high abundance, inhabit this mountain and its surroundings, where mining of nonmetallic minerals has begun.

Key words: snakes, Red Data Book of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Maloye Bogdo, natural state wildlife area “Orda” (of local value).

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