

## ARBOREAL ECDYSIS IN THE EASTERN GARTER SNAKE (*THAMNOPHIS SIRTALIS SIRTALIS*)

Shed skins of *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis* are most often found beneath debris or on the ground in open situations (Gray, 2005. The serpent's cast: A guide to the Identification of shed skins from snakes of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States. The Center for North American Herpetology Monograph Series Number 1). Herein I report evidence of ecdysis by a *T. s. sirtalis* in an arboreal situation.

On 24 June 2008, at a site in Erie County, Pennsylvania (42.09252°N 80.14201°W [WGS 84]), I found a *T. s. sirtalis* shed skin ca. 31 cm above the ground in a grape vine (*Vitis* sp.). The tail portion of the shed skin was "pointing" upward, indicating that the snake crawled up into the vines during ecdysis. Because the shed skin was not torn, and in a

near complete condition, it is unlikely to have been pulled into the vines by a bird or mammal. *Thamnophis s. sirtalis* is known to be a good climber (Ernst and Ernst, 2003. Snakes of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Books, Washington, D.C.). However, to my knowledge, this is the first report of this species shedding in an arboreal situation. Mounted sections of the shed skin (BG 532) are in my personal collection; unmounted material has been sent to the Sternberg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas 67601.

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