

HAVE YOU SEEN THESE SNAKES?!

Many people want to know: what do you do when you encounter a venomous snake?! Snakes are beneficial animals who are often feared and misunderstood. Many unwanted encounters with venomous snakes result in the animal being killed unnecessarily out of fear; however, in addition to playing a vital and irreplaceable role in the ecosystem, their venom has unique medical applications that you or your loved one(s) may one day come to depend on! It's important to understand that the difference between fear and respect is education! Many people begin to feel

empowered rather than afraid when they take the time to learn about our native species. If you happen to encounter a venomous snake, the best thing to do is to stop, take a step back, and admire it from a safe distance. Most snakes will move on their own when given the opportunity to do so. Never attempt to handle or kill a venomous snake—this increases your risk of being bitten! Be aware of your surroundings, especially areas on your property where snakes may be found. Wear proper footwear, and don't place your hands into areas you can't see: such as under plants or logs.

VENOMOUS Snakes of Florida



The Rattlesnake Conservancy

EASTERN DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE *Crotalus adamanteus*



The eastern diamondback is a large rattlesnake known for its diamond pattern with average adults reaching lengths between 36-72 inches! It is a large, heavy-bodied, tan snake with dark diamonds down its back that are lighter brown in the center and have cream colored borders. The large, thick head has a dark stripe through each eye with cream colored borders and vertical stripes on the snout. The diamond pattern usually fades to a brownish colored tail that ends in a rattle.

RANGE: throughout Florida, even in the keys and barrier islands
HABITAT: pine flatwoods, longleaf pine and turkey oak, sand pine scrub areas, sandhills, coastal dunes, and barrier islands

CANEBRAKE / TIMBER RATTLESNAKE *Crotalus horridus*



The canebrake, or timber rattlesnake, is a large, thick bodied snake with average adults reaching lengths between 36-60 inches! It has a pinkish tan or gray colored body with a rust colored stripe down the center of its back. It has a unique pattern of black, chevron crossbands with a black tail that ends in a rattle.

RANGE: restricted to North Florida in the counties within and surrounding the Suwannee river basin and the northeastern panhandle
HABITAT: low, damp bottomlands including river beds, hardwood hammocks, pine flatwoods, swamps, prairies, and cane thickets.

DUSKY PYGMY RATTLESNAKE *Sistrurus miliarius barbouri*



The dusky pygmy rattlesnake is the smallest species of rattlesnake in Florida, with adults typically reaching lengths between 12-24 inches long. It is light to dark gray with darker, black colored blotches along the length of its body. It often has a brownish, rust colored stripe down the center of its back and dark stripes on the sides and top of the head.

RANGE: throughout Florida except in the Florida Keys
HABITAT: lowlands including flatwoods, prairies, freshwater marshes, cypress domes, and swamps.

COTTONMOUTH / WATER MOCCASIN *Agkistrodon conanti* *Agkistrodon piscivorus*



A large, heavy bodied snake with average adults reaching lengths between 20-48 inches. It is tannish brown to black in color with dark crossbands containing round splotches. Juveniles can be brightly colored and will darken with age. Some adults are lighter in color and retain their pattern while others can appear to be solid black in color. The head is thick with dark stripes on each side of its head and a distinctly thinner neck.

RANGE: throughout Florida
HABITAT: in or near aquatic habitats including ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, canals, ditches, freshwater marshes, cypress swamps, wet prairies, and brackish coastal marshes.

COPPERHEAD *Agkistrodon contortrix*



A thick bodied brown to gray colored snake with adults typically between 22-36 inches in length. It often has a pinkish tint with darker brown to reddish brown colored crossbands with a unique shape that is wider at the outer edges and narrows as they approach the center of its back.

RANGE: limited only to western portions of the panhandle
HABITAT: low wetlands including swamps, stream beds, river beds, and damp ravines. This species can also be found within its range in urban and suburban areas and neighborhoods.

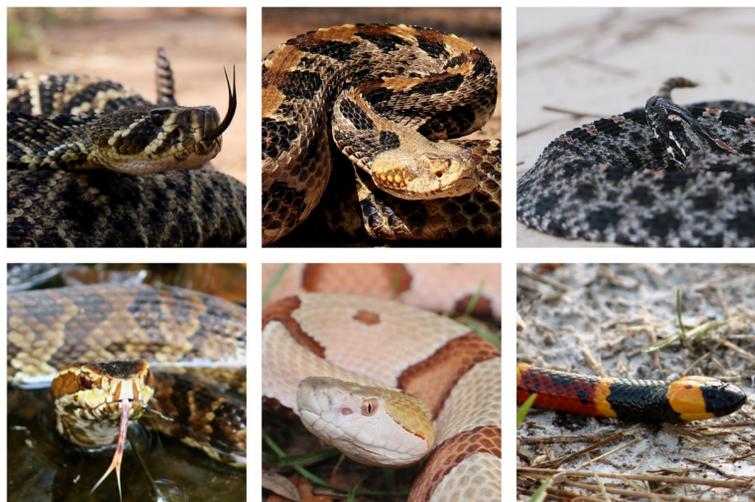
EASTERN CORAL SNAKE *Micrurus fulvius*



A long, banded, tri colored snake with adults typically between 20-30 inches in length. This snake has a black snout and a tail that ends in yellow and black bands. It's body is banded with alternating red, yellow, and black bands that continue around the belly of the snake.

RANGE: throughout Florida
HABITAT: this species can be found in a variety of habitat including xeric flatwoods, sandhill and scrub to low, wet hammocks and along swamps

Did you know...?



Did you know that there are fifty snake species found throughout Florida?! Of those, only six are venomous! This means that you're more likely to encounter a harmless snake than a venomous one. Even potentially dangerous snakes are important to our environment. Taking the time to learn how to identify the venomous snakes in your area can be an important step in protecting yourself and our native wildlife. Remember, if you see a snake—just leave it alone! Snakes are not aggressive and will not chase or attack you.

Mistaken identities and misinformation

If you have ever heard a rhyme, tip, or other trick that claims to teach you how to tell if a snake is harmless or venomous—forget it now! **There is no way to tell if a snake is venomous simply by a rhyme, its color pattern, head shape, or pupils.** Rhymes can be wrong, misremembered, or recited backwards—and all snakes can have aberrant or non typical color patterns. Harmless snakes are able to flatten their heads as a defense mechanism, causing them to look triangular. Some harmless snakes will even shake their tail like a rattlesnake! Venomous snakes like the eastern coral snake have round pupils—but even elliptical, or cat-like pupils can dilate and appear round in certain lighting conditions. Never attempt to handle a snake you cannot identify, or to kill a snake you believe is venomous—doing so will increase your chance of being bitten. Remember, respect wildlife by admiring it from a safe distance and allowing it the opportunity to move on!



HARMLESS



VENOMOUS