

SNAKE AWARENESS DAY



Juvenile boomslang

LAST WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER

WHY ARE SNAKES SO IMPORTANT?

Snakes are **vital predators** within many ecosystems.



Rodents are prolific breeders and can cause damage to crops and property; snakes help to control rodent populations.



Snakes are **prey** to other snakes, mammals and birds.



Snakes are found in a range of ecosystems:



Terrestrial



Arboreal



Fossorial (burrowing)



Marine



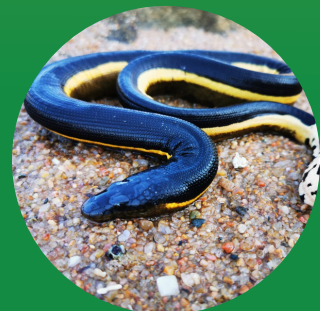
Gaboon adder



Natal green snake



Stiletto snake



Yellow-bellied sea snake

They balance food webs in all these ecosystems.



WHAT ARE THE THREATS TO SNAKES IN SOUTH AFRICA?



HABITAT LOSS



Agricultural expansion



Afforestation



Urban development

Habitat loss affects snakes directly and indirectly through **reduction in prey availability** and **fragmentation of populations**.

ROAD KILL



Snakes are killed while **crossing** or **basking** on warm roads.

OVER HARVESTING

Many are captured for the pet trade, for food, skins or for traditional medicine.



POISON

People use poison to **kill rodents**. When the snake eats the rodent, it dies.



HUMANS & PETS

Snakes are threatened by humans through **fear** and **intolerance**. Domestic pets such as **cats** and **dogs** also kill large numbers of snakes.



SCARY STATISTICS

Some snake populations are **locally extinct** because of the threats listed here.

Almost **10%** of Southern African snake species are threatened with extinction.



We need to do more research to work out the **conservation status** of many snake species.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SNAKES

Less than
10%
of southern African snake
species are **deadly venomous**.



Berg adder



Black mamba

Snakes are **shy animals** that
avoid contact with humans.

A snake's natural response is to flee,
but they will **defend themselves**
if they are **under threat**.

If we leave snakes alone and treat them with respect,
our chances of being bitten are greatly reduced.

SAFETY



Never pick up a snake
if you don't know
what species it is,
even if it looks dead.



Always
wear shoes
when walking
outside at night.



Use a torch
to ensure that
you do not stand
on a snake.



Watch where you
put your hands when
climbing a tree
or gardening.



If you see a snake, do
not move towards it,
remain calm and call
someone for help.



If you are
bitten, keep calm
and go to the
nearest hospital.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP SNAKES?



Don't
kill
snakes



Don't
use poison
to kill
rodents



Share the truth about snakes with your family and friends and encourage them to care for snakes.

SNAKE HANDLERS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Name	Contact	Area
Jason Arnold	082 745 6375	Durban and surrounding
Nick Evans	072 809 5806	Durban and surrounding
Dylan Leonard	074 918 1181	Durban and surrounding
Dangerous Creatures	031 328 8137	Durban and surrounding
Byron Zimmerman	082 894 6783	Hillcrest and Highway
Martin Rodriguez	074 484 1859	Middle South Coast (Crocworld)
James Wittstock	066 292 0880	South Coast
Neville Wolmarans	082 561 4969	North Coast



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If you encounter a snake in your home or garden and would like it removed, please consult your nearest snake handler:
www.africansnakebiteinstitute.com

HEAVIEST SNAKE GREEN ANACONDA



A snake in South America measured 5.2 metres and weighed 227 kilograms.

THE BIG FIVE

LONGEST VENOMOUS SNAKE KING COBRA

A King cobra at the London Zoo measured 5.71 metres.



LONGEST SNAKE RETICULATED PYTHON



A Reticulated python in Southeast Asia measured 10 metres.

FASTEST SNAKE BLACK MAMBA

Reaches speeds of 16-19 km per hour.



LONGEST FANGS GABOON ADDER

Produces the most venom.
The fangs grow to 2.5 cm.



COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SNAKES

Brown house snake



MYTH

FACT

If you kill a snake, its partner will seek revenge on you.



Snakes are **solitary animals** and do not live with partners or families.

If you are bitten by a snake, you need to run to water and drink before the snake does.



This **myth** is thought to originate from when older women spent time at the river collecting water or washing clothes. If a child ran to the water to drink, they would know that the child had been bitten by a snake. Running after being bitten by a snake is not a good idea as it will speed the movement of the venom through the lymphatic system.

Snakes will drink milk offered to them.



Snakes **do not drink milk.**

Strong drain cleaning products can repel snakes.



There is **no substance known** to repel snakes.



You have 5 minutes to live if you are bitten by a snake.



The amount of time it takes to see symptoms of envenomation **varies among individuals.** Using the **correct first aid treatment** for snake bites and getting the victim to **hospital** promptly is important.



Snakes have venom in their tails which can be injected into you.



Some snakes have a **sharp scale covering the tip of the tail** which can poke an attacker, making them think that they have been bitten. **Venom can only be injected by the snake's fangs.**



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