

Copyright: Johan Marais - African Snakebite Institute First Edition published 2025

814 Wapadrand Rd, Wapadrand Security Village, Pretoria, 0081

Cell: +27 (0)82 494 2039 E-mail johan@asiorg.co.za www.africansnakebiteinstitute.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used commercially without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

SNAKE COURSES

The ASI offers both public and corporate snake courses.

Public courses take place at various venues throughout South Africa.

The corporate training is done on-site, both in South Africa, as well as in 19 African countries.

We pride ourselves on teaching only the safest snake handling methods, to ensure the safety of both the handler and the snake.

We offer a range of different course options, including snake awareness, first aid for snakebite, venomous snake handling, venomous snake handling bootcamps, as well as advanced first aid for snakebite, advanced venomous snake handling and a reptile photography course.

For course info, click here or email us on courses@asiorg.co.za for details.





INTRODUCTION

he African Snakebite Institute is the leading training provider of Snake Awareness, First Aid for Snakebite and Venomous Snake Handling courses in Africa as well as the largest distributer of quality snake handling equipment, snake PPE and snakebite first aid kits. Our aim is to spread snake awareness as far and wide as possible, which is why we've launched our new free E-Book series.

ur CEO, Johan Marais is a well-known herpetologist with over 40 years of experience with snakes. He has worked at various reptile facilities and has collaborated on a variety of scientific studies with some of the world's leading herpetologists. He is also one of Africa's most prominent authors of snake books and has written the best-sellers A Complete Guide to Snakes of Southern Africa, Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa and First Aid for Snakebite, to mention just a few.



COMMON SNAKES OF CERES

The Western Cape has 40 different snake species. Of the 24 snakes that occur around Ceres four are highly venomous, three are venomous, one can inflict a painful bite and the rest are mildly venomous or harmless. We've listed the common species in this booklet, showing venomosity, key ID features, full distribution, and snakebite info for venomous species.

Snakebite is problematic with most bites reported from the hot, wet regions in the eastern part of the country. More than 4,000 snakebites are reported annually with over 1,000 victims being hospitalised. Of those around 60% show signs of envenomation and the remaining 40% show no symptoms – these are referred to as dry bites or may be bites from mildly venomous or harmless snakes. In a recent 5 year survey of 879 snakebite cases in Zululand, nearly 98% of victims showed typical signs of cytotoxic envenomation – largely Mozambique Spitting Cobra, Puff Adder, Common Night Adder and Stiletto Snake bites. Despite their relative frequency, if treated correctly in hospital, these bites are rarely fatal. Most bites occured in the early evening in the warm wet summer months from November to April/May. Around 84% of the bites were inflicted well below the knee. Less than 11% of these victims received antivenom and none of the bites in this survey were fatal.

Generally speaking we have 10 - 12 fatal snakebites a year in South Africa and these are invariably caused by the Black Mamba and Cape Cobra. Both of these snakes have a potent neurotoxic venom that may quickly affect breathing.

SNAKE HANDLING EQUIPMENT

The African Snakebite Institute is the leading provider of quality snake handling equipment in Africa. View our range online here.



COMMON SNAKES OF CERES



Ceres has around 24 species of snakes.
Four species are considered highly
venomous. Another three species can give a bad bite.
Seven species are mildly venomous and twelve
other species are harmless to humans.

HIGHLY

Has caused human fatalities VENOMOUS

Painful bite, but does not require antivenom VENOMOUS

Not thought to be harmful to humans

HARMLESS

Not dangerous to humans



Cape Cobra



Black Spitting Cobra



Cape Coral Snake



Boomslang - male (Dispholidus typus



Puff Adder (Bitis grietans)



Red Adder



Spotted Harlequin Snake



Herald Snake



Spotted Skaapsteker (Psammophylax rhombeatu



Karoo Sand Snake



Pross-marked Grass Snake
Psammophis crucifer)



Mole Snake (Pseudospis cana

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL



(Lycodonomorphus rufulus)



Spotted Rock Snake (Alopecion sutra



Sundevall's Shovel-snout



JOHAN MARAIS is the author of various books on reptiles including the best-seller A Complete Guide to Snakes of Southern Africa. He is a popular public speaker and CEO of the African Snakebite Institute. The African Snakebite Institute (ASI) offers a variety of courses including Snake Awareness, Scorpion Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling. ASI is accredited by the International Society of Zoological Sciences (ISZS) and Travel Doctor-approved service provider. The courses are also accredited by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). ASI is the largest provider of quality snake handling and safety equipment in Africa.

FREE ASI SNAKES APP

Johan Marais | African Snakebite Institute

+27 82 494 2039 | johan@asiorg.co.za

www.AFRICANSNAKEBITEINSTITUTE.com

Snakes & Snakebite



IN THE EVENT OF A SNAKE BITE

1 Keep the victim calm, immobilized and transport the victim to the closest hospital without delay.

2 If the victim stops breathing, resort to artificial respiration or make use of a Bag Valve Mask.

3 Call the Poison Information Centre helpline for further advice: 0861 555 777.

DO NOT

- ... apply a tourniquet.
- ... cut and suck the wound.
- ... use ice or very hot water. ... give the victim alcohol.
- ... apply electric shock.
- ... inject antivenom randomly. Antivenom (if required) must be administered by a doctor in a hospital environment.

Download the high resolution poster here.



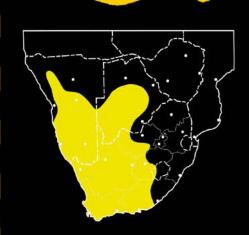
HIGHLY VENOMOUS



Cape Cobra

(Naja nivea)

Maximum Length: 2.3 m



Other names:

Geelslang, Kaapse Kobra, Koper kapel

This snake varies in colour from near black to dark or light brown, beige, yellow or speckled while juveniles have a dark band on the throat. The Cape Cobra is easily confused with the Mole Snake and the Black Spitting Cobra. It is by far our most dangerous cobra and with the Black Mamba it accounts for the majority of fatal snake bites in South Africa. The Cape Cobra may stand its ground if threatened and is quick to form a hood and bite. It occurs largely in the Cape provinces but extends into the Free State, Northwest, southern Botswana and Namibia. The venom is potently neurotoxic causing progressive weakness and may affect breathing rapidly. Victims need urgent hospitalisation and in a severe bite antivenom is essential







Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022



ASI EASY ID

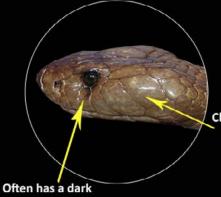
Cape Cobra (Naja nivea)

HIGHLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 1.2 - 1.6 m. Maximum length: 2.3 m

Can be confused with: Mole Snakes, Black Spitting Cobras, Snouted Cobras





Chunky cheeks for venom storage Spreads an impressive hood

Juveniles have a dark band on throat

mark under the eye

Varies in colour from light yellow to brown, gold and black.
Often a speckled mix of colours



Ventral scales often visable on sides

Belly usually same colour as the rest of snake

Usually have dark tipped tails

SNAKEBITE PROFILE **CAPE COBRA**

Naja nivea



Risk of Bites

The Cape Cobra is commonly encountered in suburbia, especially in areas where rodents are abundant. If cornered, it is quick to rear up and form a hood and if approached closely will bite readily.



Most Bites

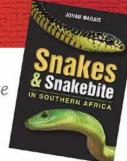
Most victims are bitten on the lower leg or on a hand, often when attempting to capture or kill the snake.



Symptoms & Venom

A potent and fast-acting neurotoxic venom that is quite similar to Black Mamba venom in its effects. It results in pins and needles in the lips, nausea, excessive sweating, drooping eyelids, difficulty in swallowing and eventually drowsiness and muscle pain followed by paralysis and respiratory failure. Some victims also experience some swelling. In severe cases victims become unresponsive within less than one hour.

See pages 49-51 - Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa (2024).



First Aid

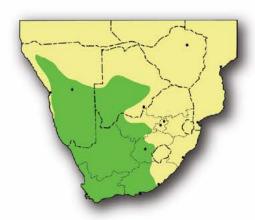
Immobilise and reassure the patient, who must lie down in a rescue position. Immediately arrange transport to a hospital with emergency facilities. If far from a hospital, apply a pressure bandage (Page 19 of Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa). Resort to artificial respiration if the victim stops breathing.



Medical Treatment

severe envenomation cases patients are intubated and ventilated if they are not breathing. They are treated with 12-15 vials of SAVP Polyvalent antivenom. Additional vials of antivenom may be required at a later stage. Even after receiving antivenom, patients may remain unresponsive for a day or two.





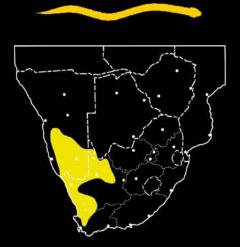




HIGHLY VENOMOUS

Black Spitting Cobra (Naja nigricincta woodi)

Maximum Length: 1.8 m



Other names:

Swart Spoegslang; Swart Spoegkobra

The Black Spitting Cobra occurs north-east from Cape Town through the Cederberg and northwards into much of Namaqualand extending east to Upington, Tswalu and Witsand Nature Reserves and north into southern Namibia.

It is active during the day and favours dry riverbeds and rocky hills. It is a shy and elusive snake that is quick to escape if encountered. Bites are extremely rare.

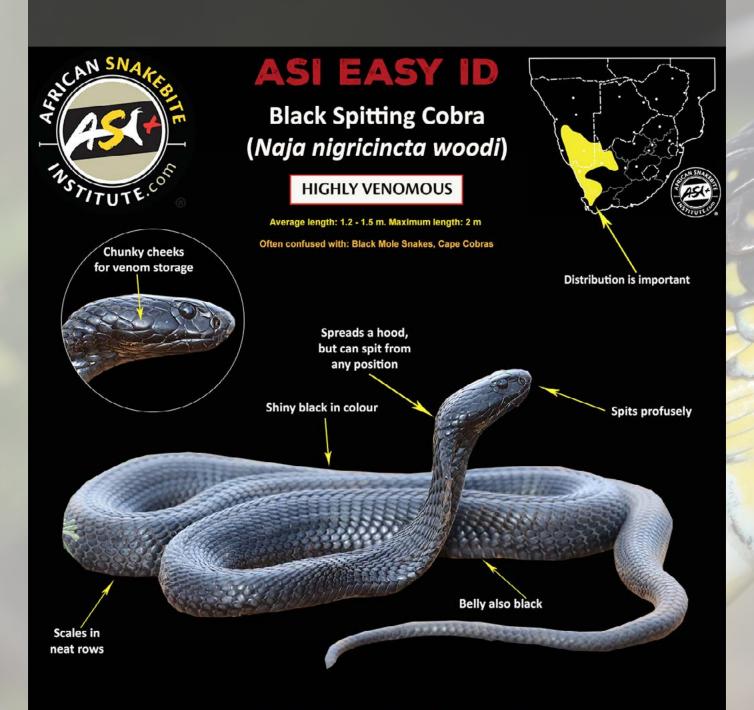
Its venom, like that of all spitting cobras, is potently cytotoxic, causing severe pain, swelling and tissue damage. It also has the ability to spit its venom and does so effectively. It feeds on snakes, lizards and frogs.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023





SNAKEBITE PROFILE **BLACK SPITTING COBRA**

Naja nigricincta woodi



Risk Of Bites

Bites from the Black Spitting Cobra are extremely rare as this snake inhabits dry riverbeds and rocky terrain in arid areas. It is a nervous snake and is very quick to escape. If cornered, it will spit and attempt to escape.



Most Bites

There are few recorded bites, one to a prisoner in a jail cell in Piketberg, Western Cape. However, no fatalities have been recorded.



First Aid

Immobilise and reassure the patient. Elevate the affected limb. Remove tight clothing and jewelry. Promptly transport the victim to the nearest hospital that has emergency facilities. Avoid all other first aid remedies including bandages. For venom in the eyes, wash the eyes out immediately using water or any other bland liquid and transport the patient to a medical doctor for further examination.

See pages 58-59 - Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa (2024).



Symptoms & Venom

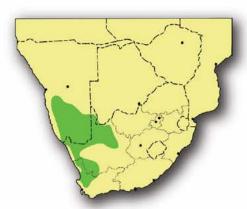
The venom of the Black Spitting Cobra is predominantly and potently cytotoxic. Symptoms include severe pain, progressive swelling and tissue damage.



Medical Treatment

In cases of severe envenomation with progressive swelling extending over 10-15 cm per hour from the bite, doctors administer 12 or more ampoules of polyvalent antivenom. Short-term use of antibiotics **NSAIDs** and not recommended. Fasciotomies are rarely justified and should generally be avoided. Surgery for tissue damage may be necessary, however, it is seldom required within the first few days.













Boomslang

(Dispholidus typus)

Maximum Length: 2.1 m



Other names:

Boomslang

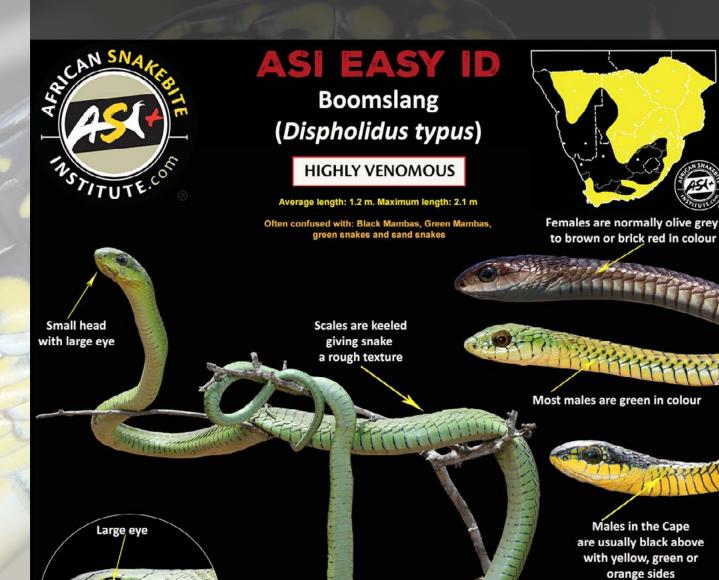
The Boomslang is largely tree-living but may descend to the ground to bask. In trees it poses no threat to humans as it is extremely reluctant to bite, and bites are rare. Juveniles are grey with a massive emerald, green eye but change to the adult colours around a length of 1 m. Most males are bright green, sometimes with black between the scales, but in the Cape Provinces they are usually black above with green, yellow or orange sides. Females are usully brown to grey in colour. Boomslang venom is haemotoxic and compromises the blood clotting mechanism, causing uncontrolled bleeding if not treated. The South African Vaccine Producers manufacture a monovalent antivenom for bites from Boomslang that is very effective.







O Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023



www.AFRICANSNAKEBITEINSTITUTE.com

Juveniles have big emerald green eyes

Short head



SNAKEBITE PROFILE **BOOMSLANG**

Dispholidus typus



Risk of Bites

Bites are not common in South Africa. This snake lives in trees and shrubs and interactions with humans are infrequent. It is a placid snake that only bites when provoked or handled. If spotted, it is quick to flee higher up into trees.



Most Bites

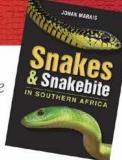
Bites occur when a basking snake is accidentally stepped on or grabbed, or when it is handled.



Symptoms & Venom

Drop for drop the Boomslang has the most potent venom of any snake in Africa. It is slow-acting, but potently haemotoxic and symptoms include bleeding from the bite site, the nose, mucous membranes and internal bleeding.

See pages 79-81 Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa (2024).



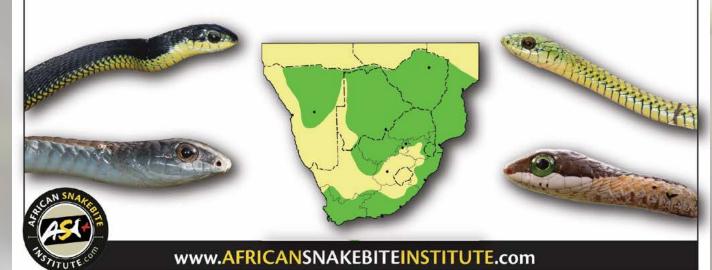
First Aid

Immobilise and reassure the patient. Elevate the affected limb. Promptly transport the victim to the nearest hospital that has emergency facilities. Avoid all other first aid remedies including bandages.



Medical Treatment

In cases of severe envenomation patients are monovalent Boomslang treated with antivenom. The initial dosage is two vials but, in some cases, a third vial may be required. This antivenom is produced by the South African Vaccine Producers. It is a Schedule 4 drug, therefore a script is required should one wish to purchase it. It comes in a 10 ml vial and must be refrigerated. It has a three year shelf life.





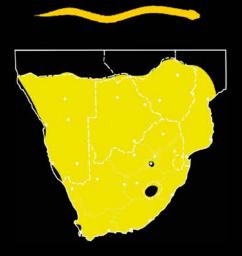
HIGHLY VENOMOUS



Puff Adder

(Bitis arietans)

Maximum Length: 1.4 m



Other names:

Pofadder, Imbululu

The Puff Adder is widespread over much of southern Africa and further north into Africa. It is a heavy-bodied snake that relies on its excellent camouflage and is reluctant to move. Much of its life is spent in camouflage mode and recent research has shown that when hiding, the Puff Adder will not hiss or strike when approached, as this would give away its presence. It is an ambush hunter that will coil up into a striking position and await its prey. This can last several days or even weeks. Toads are lured closer with flicking of the tongue. Puff Adder venom is potently cytotoxic, causing severe pain, swelling, blistering and in many cases severe tissue damage. Polyvalent antivenom is effective.







O Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022



asi easy id

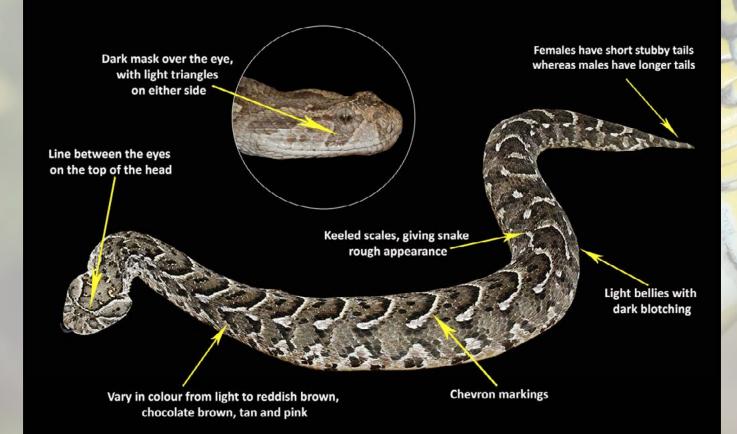
Puff Adder (Bitis arietans)

HIGHLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 90 cm. Maximum length: 1.4 m

Often confused with: night adders and Berg Adders







SNAKEBITE PROFILE **PUFF ADDER**

Bitis arietans



Risk Of Bites

Bites are common as this snake is widespread throughout most of southern Africa. Along with the Mozambique Spitting Cobra, these two snakes account for the majority of serious snakebites in southern Africa. Dogs are at risk and often get bitten when attempting to kill the snake.



Most Bites

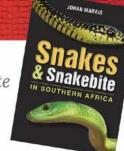
Most victims are bitten at night when accidentally stepping on the snake, but bites are also inflicted during the day when the snake is basking. Most bites are on the feet or lower legs.



Symptoms & Venom

The venom is potently cytotoxic as well as haemotoxic. Symptoms include severe pain, progressive swelling, bleeding from the fang punctures, blistering and tissue damage. The lymph nodes may also be affected. Dogs may perish after a bite from this snake, unless treated with polyvalent antivenom, if required.

See pages 26-28 - Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa (2024).





Immobilise and reassure the patient. Elevate the affected limb and remove tight clothing and jewelry. Promptly transport the victim to the nearest hospital that has emergency facilities. Avoid all other first aid remedies including bandages.



Medical Treatment

In cases of severe envenomation where there are clear signs of progressive swelling, which extends more than 10-15cm per hour above the bite site, doctors will treat such bites with 6 ampoules (or more) of polyvalent antivenom. Anti-inflammatories (NSAID's) and antibiotics are not indicated in the short term. Fasciotomies are rarely justified and should generally be avoided. In cases where patients suffer tissue damage, surgery may be required but rarely in the first few days.

Fatalities are rare.







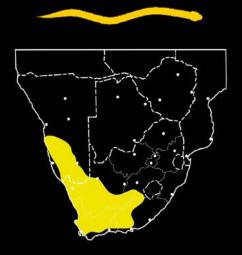


VENOMOUS

Cape Coral Snake

(Aspidelaps I. lubricus)

Maximum Length: 60 cm



Other names:

Koraalslang, Koraalkobra

A colourful nocturnal snake that is widespread in the drier western part of southern Africa. It shelters under rocks during the day and moves around at night, often seen crossing roads. The Cape Coral Snake inhabits outcrops and stony, dry, sandy regions in arid savanna, Karoo scrub, Fynbos and desert. If confronted it will lift its head off the ground, flatten the neck region and hiss while striking out repeatedly. This snake may be confused with the harmless Tiger snakes of the genus *Telescopus*. A popular snake in the illegal pet trade. Its venom is predominantly neurotoxic and may affect breathing. There is no antivenom for the bite of this snake and bites must be treated symptomatically.







Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022



ASI EASY ID

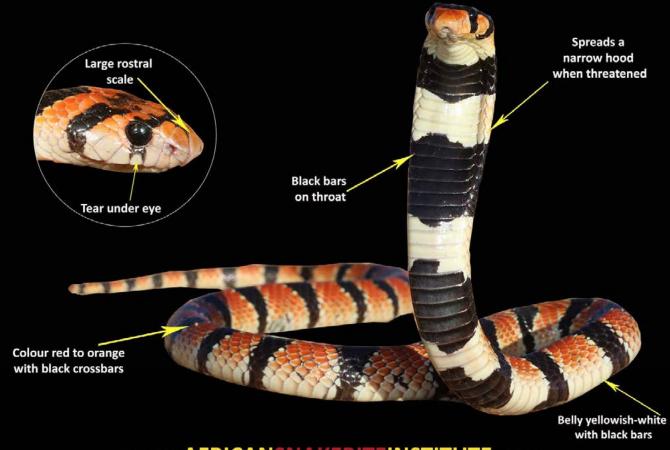
Cape Coral Snake
(Aspidelaps lubricus lubricus)

VENOMOUS

Average length: 35 cm. Maximum length: 60 cm

Often confused with: Spotted Harlequin Snakes and tiger snakes







SNAKEBITE PROFILE **CAPE CORAL SNAKE**

Aspidelaps lubricus lubricus



Risk of Bites

Bites to humans are not common. This snake inhabits rocky outcrops and dry sandy areas. It is quick to form a hood, hiss and strike repeatedly when startled or cornered.



Most Bites

Bites are not common, except for incidents where snake keepers are bitten by captive snakes.



Symptoms & Venom

predominantly venom is neurotoxic. Symptoms may include pain and swelling. There is no antivenom for the bite of this snake. No human fatalities have been

See pages 70-71 Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa (2024).



First Aid

Immobilise and reassure the patient and elevate the affected limb. Promptly transport the victim to the nearest hospital that has emergency facilities. Avoid all other first aid remedies including bandages.



Medical Treatment

There is no antivenom for bites from this snake, and doctors will treat symptomatically.





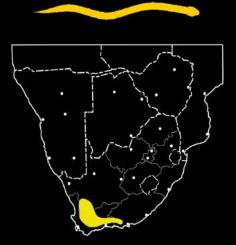
VENOMOUS



Red Adder

(Bitis rubida)

Maximum Length: 44 cm



Other names:

Rooiadder

A small adder averaging around 30 cm with a maximum length of 44 cm. The Red Adder is endemic to the Western Cape and adjacent Northern Cape as well as the western Eastern Cape, where it inhabits rocky mountain slopes and gravel flats in the Klein Karoo and Fynbos. Like many other small adders, it is largely active in the early mornings and late afternoons and is fond of hiding under shrubs or rocks. The horns, if present, are highly reduced. It feeds on lizards, mainly geckos, skinks, agamas and lacertids but also takes small rodents.

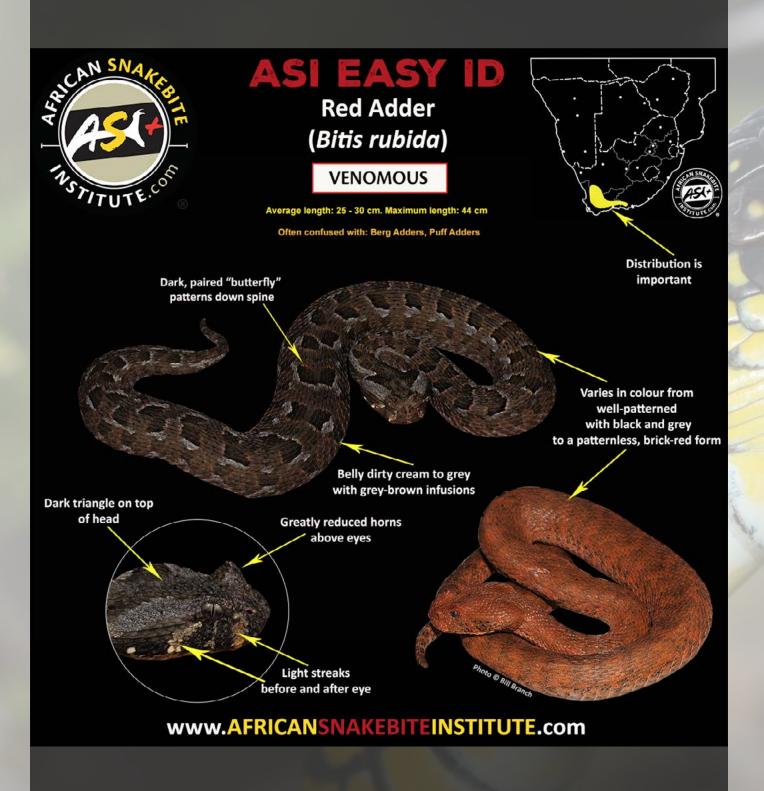
The venom of this snake is thought to be like that of other small adders, causing pain and swelling.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022





SNAKEBITE PROFILE RED ADDER

Bitis rubida



Risk of Bites

This snake has a limited distribution in South Africa and bites are extremely rare.



Most Bites

Due to its limited distribution, bites would most likely be to people trying to catch or photograph a snake.



R Symptoms & Venom

Little is known about the venom of this snake. It is largely cytotoxic, causing pain and swelling.

See pages 18-22 - Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa (2024).



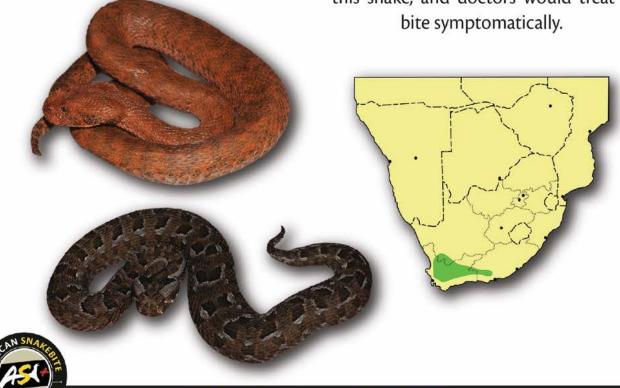
First Aid

Immobilise and reassure the patient and elevate the affected limb. Remove tight clothing and jewelry. Transport the victim to the nearest hospital or doctor for pain management. Avoid all other first aid remedies including bandages.



Medical Treatment

There is no antivenom for bites from this snake, and doctors would treat a





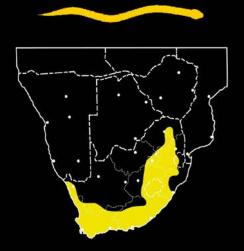


MILDLY VENOMOUS

Spotted Harlequin Snake

(Homoroselaps lacteus)

Maximum Length: 65 cm



Other names:

Gevlekte Kousbandjie

This colourful little snake averages 30 – 40 cm with a maximum length of 65 cm. It varies greatly in colour, depending on locality, and is found in fynbos, lowland forest, moist savanna and grassland. The Spotted Harlequin Snake is quite common in some areas and is found in deserted termite mounds, under rocks and logs or building debris. When exposed it will wriggle violently to escape. It feeds on legless skinks, blind snakes, other snakes and small lizards. Little is known of the venom of this snake, but bites where the snake has been allowed to chew have resulted in pain, swelling and discoloration as well as painful glands. Swelling subsides within 2-3 days.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023



ASI EASY ID

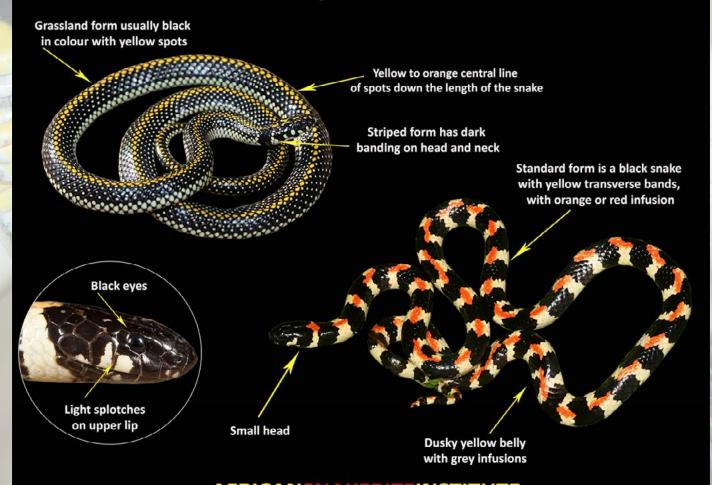
Spotted Harlequin Snake (Homoroselaps lacteus)

MILDLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 40 cm. Maximum length: 65 cm

Often confused with: Cape Coral Snakes and Aurora House Snakes







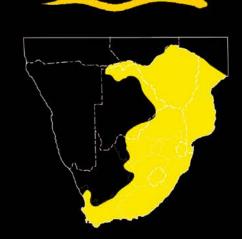




Herald Snake

(Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia)

Maximum Length: 1 m



Other names:

Rooilipslang, Red-lipped Snake

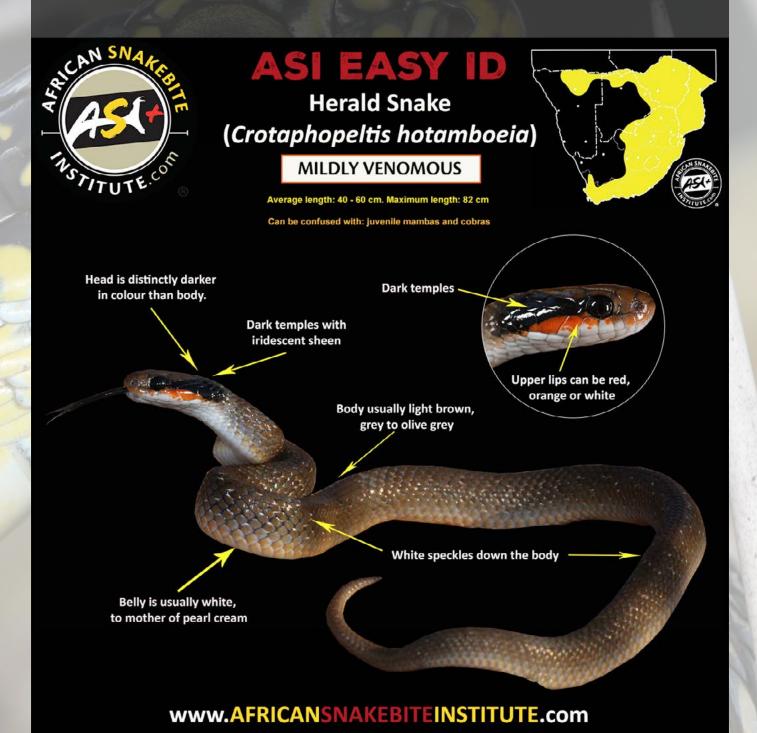
A nocturnal snake that frequents suburban gardens, especially those with water features. It is a toad specialist and often eats toads that look far too large to swallow. The Herald Snake is usually greyish to olive-grey in colour, but some individuals are quite dark. The head is always darker than the body and there may be white speckles on the body. In parts of the range the upper lip is bright red, orange or yellowish to white. When threatened, this snake puts up quite a show, drawing the head back into a striking position with the mouth agape and the head flattened. It is mildly venomous and poses no threat to humans or domestic animals.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023





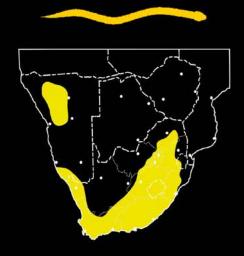


MILDLY VENOMOUS

Spotted Skaapsteker

(Psammophylax rhombeatus)

Maximum Length: 1.4 m



Other names:

Rhombic Skaapsteker; Gespikkelde Skaapsteker

A fast-moving diurnal snake that inhabits grasslands, fynbos, moist savanna and semi-desert areas. It is a nervous snake and is quick to escape, either into a bush or grass tuft or under a rock. The name 'Skaapsteker' came from the mistaken belief that these abundant snakes accounted for sheep deaths, when the actual culprit was probably the Cape Cobra. This is also one of few African snakes that coil around and protect their eggs – the Southern African Python being the other. The Spotted Skaapsteker feeds on rodents, lizards, birds, frogs and other snakes. The venom of this snake is mild and poses no threat to humans.







Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022



ASI EASY ID

Spotted Skaapsteker (Psammophylax rhombeatus)

MILDLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 40 - 60 cm. Maximum length: 1.4 m

Often confused with: other sand and grass snakes and Striped Skaapsteker









MILDLY VENOMOUS

Karoo Sand Snake (*Psammophis notostictus*)

Maximum Length: 1 m



Other names: Karoo Sandslang

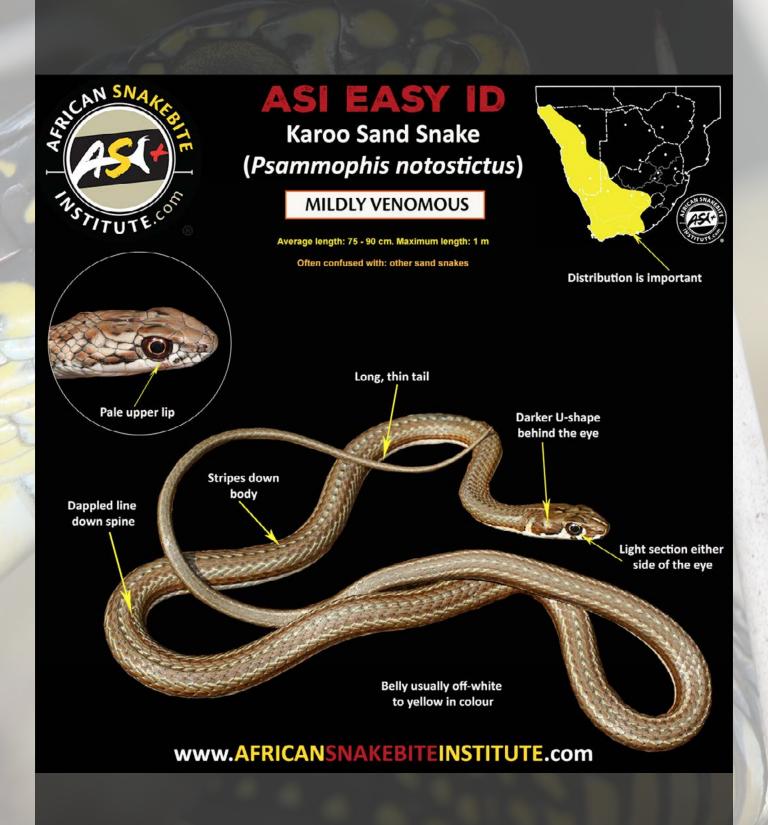
A slender snake that averages 40-60 cm with a maximum length of just over 1 m. It is very fast moving and active in the day when it hunts for lizards, including lacertids, skinks and agamas, but will also take small rodents. In some areas it is by far the most common snake and prefers hard, stony ground. Many individuals are killed by vehicles while crossing roads. It is widespread, occurring in the western Free State, western half of the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and much of the Northern Cape and Namibia, extending into Angola. The Karoo Sand Snake is easily confused with some of the other Sand and Grass snakes. It is mildly venomous and poses no threat to humans.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023



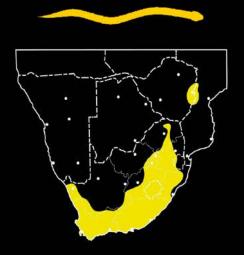




MILDLY VENOMOUS

Cross-marked Grass Snake (*Psammophis crucifer*)

Maximum Length: 82 cm



Other names: Kruismerk Grasslang

One of the smaller grass snakes averaging 30-50 cm but exceeding 82 cm in length. It is active in the day and feeds on small lizards, especially skinks, as well as frogs. It inhabits lowland forest, moist savanna, montane forest, grassland and fynbos. It is common in the sandy scrub-covered areas of the Cape coast and mountain plateau of Mpumalanga. When disturbed it may roll into a tight coil with the head inside, like the Slugeater. Most individuals are striped with distinct patterns on the side of the head, but some are plain brown to reddish brown with virtually no markings. A mildly venomous snake that poses no threat to humans.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022



ASI EASY ID

Cross-marked Grass Snake (Psammophis crucifer)

MILDLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 40 - 60 cm. Maximum length: 82 cm

Often confused with: other sand and grass snakes



Usually white before and after eye

Pale upper lip

Dark dorsal stripe

Cross mark on the base of the neck



A plain form does occur, which has an orange chin

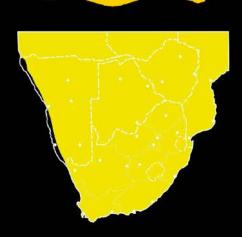






Mole Snake (*Pseudaspis cana*)

Maximum Length: 2.1 m



Other names: Molslang

The Mole snake is a muscular day-active snake that spends much of its time down rodent burrows in search of food. It is widespread and occurs throughout most of Southern Africa. It is often encountered in the Cape, but not seen commonly elsewhere in the country. Individuals vary from black to dark brown, medium brown, light brown or even brick red, while the juveniles have bright markings. This snake is not venomous but does have pin-sharp teeth and is capable of quite serious bites that may even require stitches. Mole Snakes are often confused with the Cape Cobra and the venomous stiletto snake even though it does not resemble them.







O Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023



ASI EASY ID

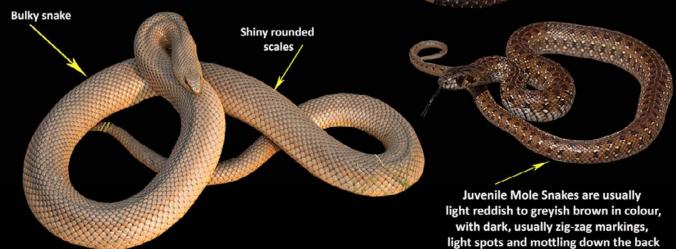
Mole Snake (Pseudaspis cana)

NON-VENOMOUS, BUT CAN INFLICT A NASTY BITE

Average length: 1.2 m. Maximum length: 2.1 m

Often confused with: Cape Cobras, and Snouted Cobras.
Juveniles are often confused with egg-eaters, night adders and skaapstekers





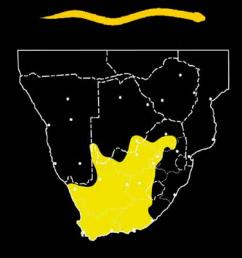




HARMLESS

Sundevall's Shovel-snout (*Prosymna sundevallii*)

Maximum Length: 36 cm



Other names: Sundevall se Graafneusslang

This is a small snake that averages 18-25 cm but reaches 36 cm in length. The snout is characteristically pointed. It is found in a variety of habitats from fynbos to moist savanna, Karoo and grasslands extending into dry savanna where it can be found under rocks and logs as well as in deserted termite mounds. When threatened it coils and uncoils like the old clock springs.

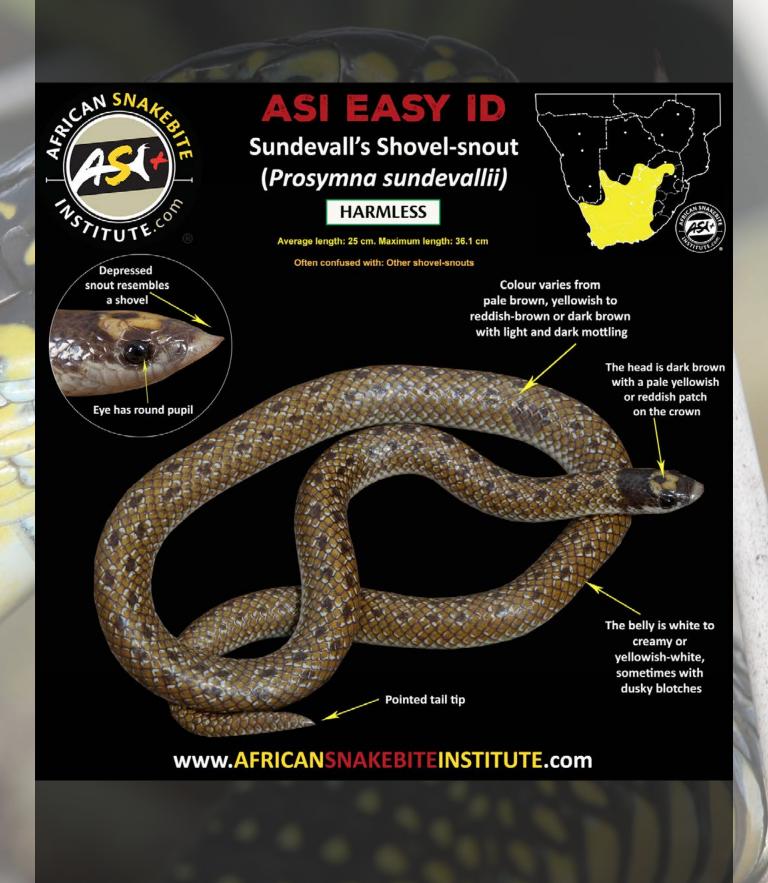
Sundevall's Shovel-snout feeds largely on reptile eggs but will also take small lizards and invertebrates. It is harmless and poses no threat to humans. If handled, it may press the sharp spike on the tail tip into the hand.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023



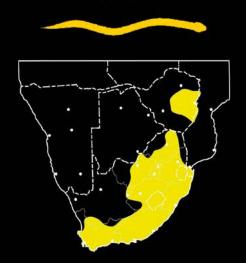




HARMLESS

Brown Water Snake (*Lycodonomorphus rufulus*)

Maximum Length: 97 cm



Other names: Bruin Waterslang

A smallish snake averaging 30-50 cm with a maximum length of 97 cm. It is light to dark brown with a salmon-pink to yellow coloured belly. Snakes from the Western Cape are often much darker. This snake is not as aquatic as the Dusky-bellied Water Snake but does frequent rivers, streams, vleis and other damp areas. It is active at night and swims well but is often seen hunting along shaded streams during the day. It is a powerful constrictor and feeds on frogs, tadpoles, fish and occasionally nestling rodents and geckos. Females produce 6 – 23 eggs in summer. Though harmless this snake is much feared in Zulu culture and is called Ivuzamanzi elimdubu.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 202



ASI EASY ID

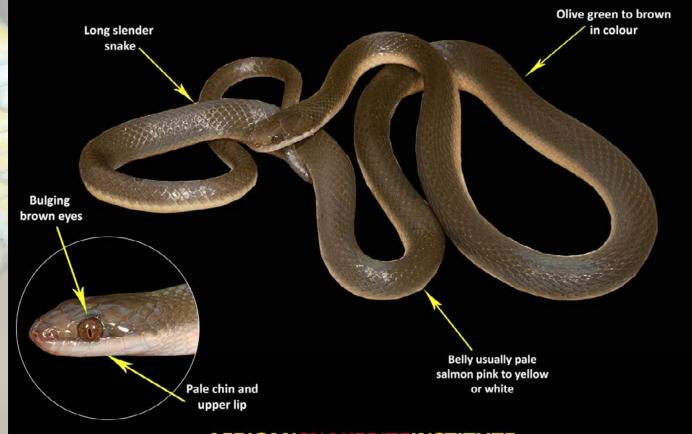
Brown Water Snake (Lycodonomorphus rufulus)



Average length: 45-60 cm. Maximum length: 97 cm

Often confused with: Olive Snakes, Yellow-bellied House Snakes







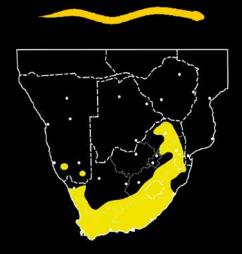


HARMLESS

Spotted Rock Snake

(Lamprophis guttatus)

Maximum Length: 72 cm



Other names:

Gevlekte Rotsslang

A smallish snake that averages under 50 cm in length but may reach 72 cm. The Spotted Rock Snake is a secretive snake that inhabits narrow rock crevices where it feeds on lizards, mainly geckos but may also take rodents and nestling birds. It hunts at night and may be found crossing roads. Over much of its range it is quite rare, but in some areas it is abundant. There is a great deal of colour variation throughout the range of this snake, with most individuals being a yellowish-brown to pinkish-grey above, with reddish-brown to dark brown blotches or spots arranged in adjacent alternate pairs, that may form a zig-zag pattern down the back. This snake is harmless.







© Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2023

www.AFRICANSNAKEBITEINSTITUTE.com

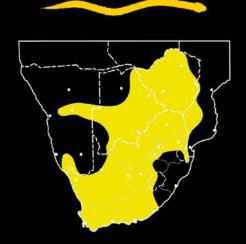




HARMLESS

Delalande's Beaked Blind Snake (Rhinotyphlops lalandei)

Maximum Length: 35 cm



Other names: Delalande se Blindeslang

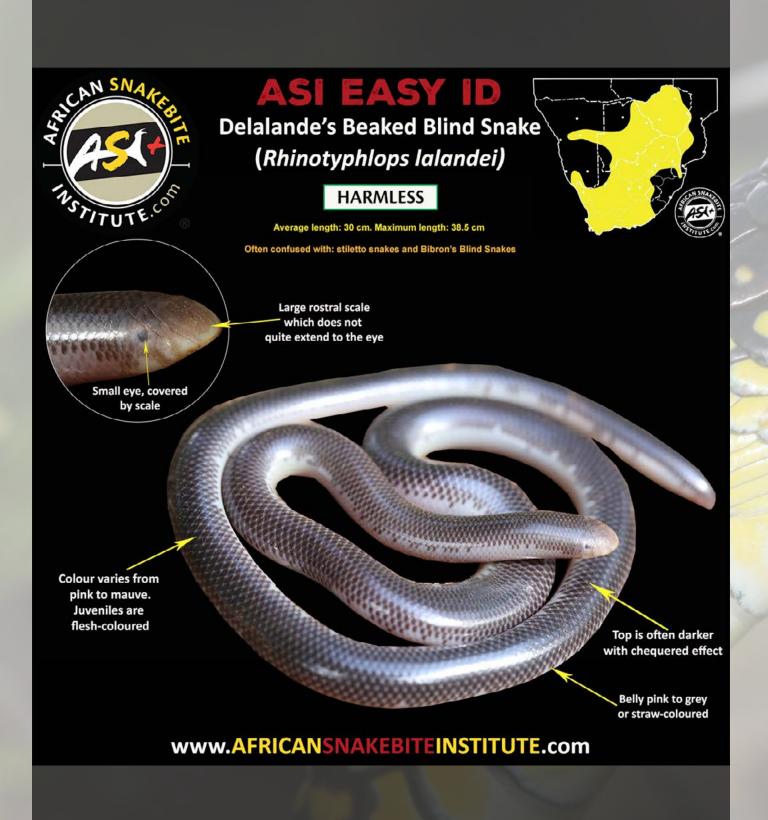
A widespread burrowing snake that spends most of its life underground in search of ants and their eggs. Individuals may be found in soil under rocks or logs, in deserted termite mounds or on the surface at night, especially after rains. They are pale pink to dark-slate or grey-brown in colour. Each scale is pale-edged giving it a checkered effect. The young are pink or flesh-coloured. It is a small snake with adults averaging around 25 - 30 cm, with a maximum size of about 35 cm. They are easily confused with other blind snakes or worm snakes. Blind snakes are preyed upon by birds and a variety of snakes including the Spotted Harlequin Snake.







O Johan Marais African Snakebite Institute 2022



FIRST AID FOR SNAKEBITE



IN THE EVENT OF A SNAKEBITE, DO NOT...

- Do not try to cut or suck out the venom. Never cut the bite site as cutting may do far more harm than good. Sucking does not remove significant amounts of venom.
- ◆ Do not apply any electric shock therapy. Shock treatments have been tested extensively and have been shown to have no effect on the outcome of the bite. Electric shocks do not neutralise snake venom.
- ♣ Do not apply a tourniquet. Many people are bitten by harmless snakes or venomous snakes that do not inject sufficient venom to cause serious damage. Arterial or venous tourniquets are not advised in most bites as venom is transported largely through the lymphatic system and not through veins. There is little evidence that a tourniquet could be lifesaving following a snakebite.
- Do not apply heat, ice, lotions or potions. Apart from cleaning the bite site with water and applying a sterile gauze dressing nothing should be applied to the bite. Very hot water does not neutralise snake venom.
- ◆ Do not inject antivenom as a first aid measure. Most snakebite victims do not require antivenom and the polyvalent antivenom is only effective for the bites of certain potentially deadly snakes. If required, antivenom must be injected intravenously by a medical doctor and usually in large quantities. As victims may go into anaphylactic shock when injected with antivenom, adrenaline and other drugs may also be required. Anaphylactic shock is a serious medical condition which may be fatal if not treated promptly.

HRST AD COUNTY

FIRST AID KITS

We stock a wide range of First Aid for Snakebite Kits, as well as Smart Pressure Bandages, Resuscitators, and first aid books. View the range online here.





FIRST AID FOR SNAKEBITE



FIRST AID MEASURES FOR SNAKEBITE...

- ★ Get the victim to a hospital as soon as possible and in a safe manner. This is
 by far the most important first aid measure. For medical advice in a snakebite
 emergency, call the African Snakebite Institute +27 82 494 2039.
- ★ Keep the victim calm. Often easier said than done as people tend to panic in a snakebite emergency. Many snakebite victims go into shock, experience a drop in blood pressure and may even become nauseous and faint. If possible, do not allow the victim to walk, run, jump etc. Bear in mind that more than 99% of snakebite victims that are hospitalised within a few hours survive their snakebites.
- Remove rings and tight clothing. If bitten on the hand/arm/foot/lower leg, remove rings, bangles, bracelets, watches, anklets and any other tight jewellery including tight clothing.
- ★ Artificial respiration. In serious snakebite cases involving snakes with
 predominantly neurotoxic venom, like the Black Mamba or Cape Cobra, the
 victim may soon experience difficulty with breathing, even within 20 minutes.
 This is a very serious medical condition and assisted breathing could be lifesaving. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation may be beneficial in the short term, but
 the proper use of a Bag Valve Mask is far better in such an instance.

Spitting Snakes

- ★ The common spitting snakes in South Africa are the Mozambique Spitting
 Cobra or M'Fezi and the Rinkhals. Both snakes spray their venom up to a
 distance of three metres and do so in self-defence to temporarily blind their
 attacker so that they can make a quick escape.
- ✦ Although spitting snakes accurately aim for the eyes, the venom diffuses into a spray over a wide area and will get onto your hair, face, arms and chest. Venom in the eyes is very painful and must be flushed or diluted as quickly as possible. The production of tears starts this process, but as a first aid measure, flush the eyes with a weak (normal) saline solution, or place the victim's head under a slowly running tap with the eyes forced open. Keep flushing for at least 15-20 minutes and then transport the victim to a medical doctor, who will prescribe antibiotic eye drops. There is no reason to use diluted antivenom it has no proven benefits and may cause an allergic reaction. If no saline or water is available, other bland liquids like milk, beer, cold drink or even urine can be used.
- If treated quickly, the chance of permanent damage to the eyes is extremely remote.

SNAKEBITE EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Netcare Ambulance: 082 911

ER24 Ambulance: 084 124

Provincial Ambulance: 10177/112

African Snakebite Institute: +27 (0)82 494 2039

HOSPITALS AROUND CERES

Ceres Hospital

Tel: 023 316 9600 (-33.362864, 19.300485) Riverkant Street, Ceres, 6835



SNAKE REMOVERS CONTACTS

Find SNAKE REMOVERS in Ceres

HERE

FREE
ASI SNAKES APP
HERE







The ASI team travels thousands of kilometres a month, often to remote parts of southern Africa, for both snake awareness and venomous snake handling training and for reptile surveys.

We're honoured to have great sponsors, who've made significant changes to our fleet of hardworking vehicles, ensuring they meet our every need.

We'd like to thank our sponsors for making the smooth travel possible.

ASI VEHICLE SPONSORS









OVERLAND



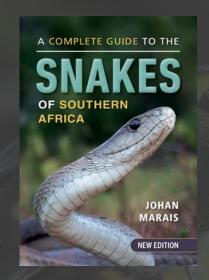


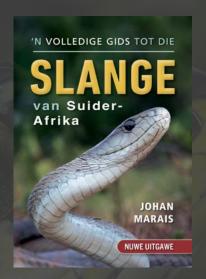


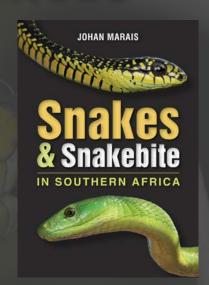




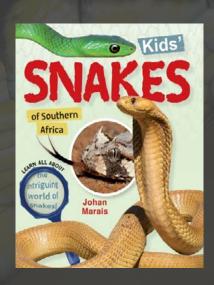
MORE RESOURCES



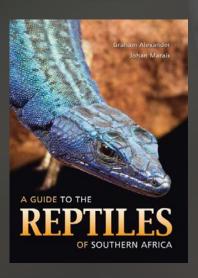




SHOP OUR RANGE OF BOOKS ONLINE HERE.







CONTACT US

Snake Courses: +27 64 704 7229 or courses@asiorg.co.za

Snake Handling Equipment: +27 60 957 2713 or info@asiorg.co.za

Snake Identification: +27 72 979 1249 or support@asiorg.co.za

Snakebite Emergencies: +27 82 494 2039