



ASI SNAKE BOOKLET

# COMMON SNAKES OF CLARENS



Copyright: Johan Marais - African Snakebite Institute  
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# 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,  
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for details.



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# INTRODUCTION

**T**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 distributor 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.

**O**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 CLARENS

The Northern Cape has 39 different snake species. Of the 18 snakes that occur around Clarens two are highly venomous, two are venomous, one can inflict a nasty 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 occurred 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](http://www.AFRICANSNAKEBITEINSTITUTE.com).*





# COMMON SNAKES OF CLARENS



Clarens has around 18 species of snakes. Two species are considered highly venomous. One species can give a bad bite and another may require stitches. Three species are mildly venomous and the rest of the species are harmless to humans.

## HIGHLY VENOMOUS

Has caused human fatalities

## VENOMOUS

Painful bite, but does not require antivenom

## MILDLY VENOMOUS

Not thought to be harmful

## HARMLESS

Not dangerous to humans



Rinkhals  
(*Hemachatus haemachatus*)

HIGHLY VENOMOUS



Puff Adder  
(*Bitis arietans*)

HIGHLY VENOMOUS



Berg Adder  
(*Bitis atropos*)

VENOMOUS



Spotted Skaapsteker  
(*Psammophylax rhombatus*) - photo Luke Kemp

MILDLY VENOMOUS



Cross-marked Grass Snake  
(*Psammophis crucifer*) - photo Luke Kemp

MILDLY VENOMOUS



Herald Snake  
(*Crotaphopeltis hotamboica*) - photo Luke Kemp

MILDLY VENOMOUS



Mole Snake - adult  
(*Pseudaspis cana*)

CAN INFLICT A PAINFUL BITE



Mole Snake - juvenile  
(*Pseudaspis cana*)

HARMLESS



Brown House Snake  
(*Boaedon capensis*)

HARMLESS



Spotted Rock Snake  
(*Alopecion guttatum*)

HARMLESS



Aurora House Snake  
(*Lamprophis aurora*) - photo Luke Kemp

HARMLESS



Olive Snake  
(*Lycodonomorphus inornatus*)

HARMLESS



Brown Water Snake  
(*Lycodonomorphus rufulus*)

HARMLESS



Common Egg-eater  
(*Dasypeltis scabra*)

HARMLESS



Common Slug-eater  
(*Duberria lutrix*) - photo Luke Kemp

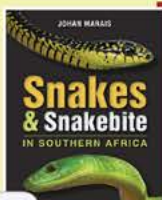
HARMLESS



Bibron's Blind Snake  
(*Afrotyphlops bibroni*)

HARMLESS

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

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## EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

### 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 help-line 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](https://www.asiorg.co.za).

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HIGHLY VENOMOUS



## Rinkhals (*Hemachatus haemachatus*)

Maximum Length:  
1.5 m



Other names:

Ring-necked Spitting Cobra

The Rinkhals is endemic to Southern Africa and is found only in South Africa, eSwatini, Lesotho and eastern Zimbabwe. Though it resembles a cobra (spreads a hood) it is not a true cobra and gives birth to live young. It is essentially a grassland inhabitant but is also found in fynbos in the Western Cape. It is fond of wetlands where it feeds on frogs. When threatened it is quick to disappear down a hole, but if cornered it will stand its ground, form a hood and spit. The Rinkhals is also quick to play dead with the body turned upside down and the mouth hanging open. The venom of this snake is largely cytotoxic causing pain, swelling and potentially tissue damage. Bites are extremely rare and fatalities virtually unheard of. Polyvalent antivenom is effective.



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# ASI EASY ID

## Rinkhals (*Hemachatus haemachatus*)

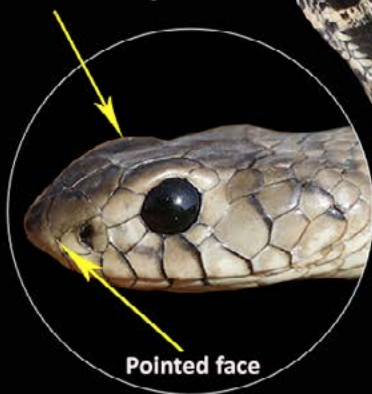
**HIGHLY VENOMOUS**

Average length: 80 cm - 1 m. Maximum length: 1.5 m

Can be confused with: Mozambique Spitting Cobra, Mole Snakes



Adults have black faces.  
Juveniles often have  
grey faces  
with black edged scales



Pointed face

Can spit effectively up to 3 m

Varies in colour from olive to  
dark brown, grey or dull black.  
In KZN, the Eastern and Western  
Cape and Zimbabwe  
they are usually banded

Spreads a hood

White bars  
on neck region

Has keeled scales,  
giving the snake a  
rough texture

Belly usually black,  
sometimes with grey  
or pale edges

Well known for shamming death  
when harassed

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## SNAKEBITE PROFILE

### RINKHALS

*Hemachatus haemachatus*



#### Risk of Bites

This snake is quick to hood in a defensive position when startled and will often spit venom at attackers. It is also well known for playing dead when cornered. Bites to humans are uncommon. However, dogs that attack the snake are often bitten and die quickly unless treated with antivenom by a veterinarian soon after a bite.



#### Most Bites

Bites are not common, except for incidents where snake keepers are bitten by captive snakes. Persons handling the snake may also be bitten.

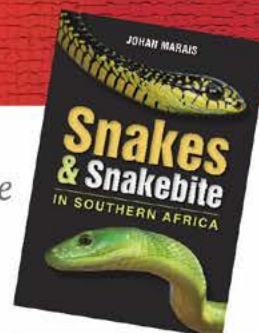


#### Symptoms & Venom

The venom is both cytotoxic and neurotoxic. Symptoms include painful swelling of the affected limb and possibly necrosis at the site of the bite. Other symptoms, though not common, include nausea, dizziness and respiratory distress.

See pages 67-69

– *Snakes and Snakebite  
in Southern Africa*  
(2024).



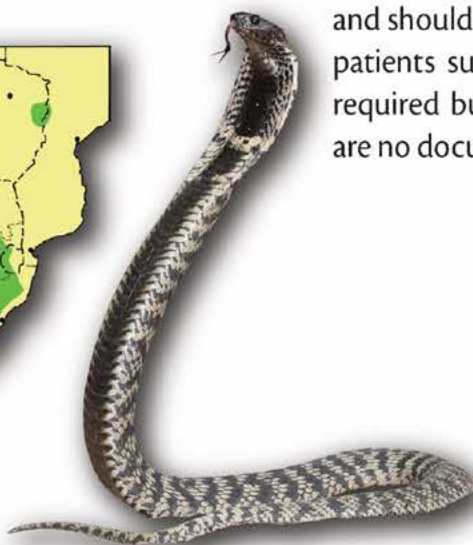
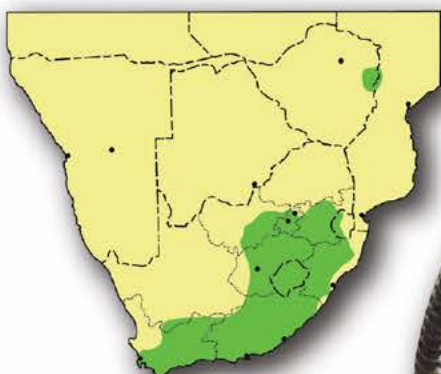
#### First Aid

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. For venom in the eyes, wash the eyes out immediately using water or any other bland liquid and transport the victim to a medical doctor.



#### 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, or respiratory distress, doctors will treat such bites with 12 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. There are no documented fatalities from these bites in more than 45 years.



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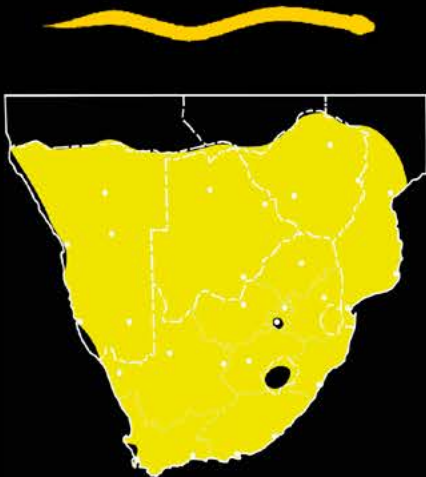
HIGHLY VENOMOUS



## 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.



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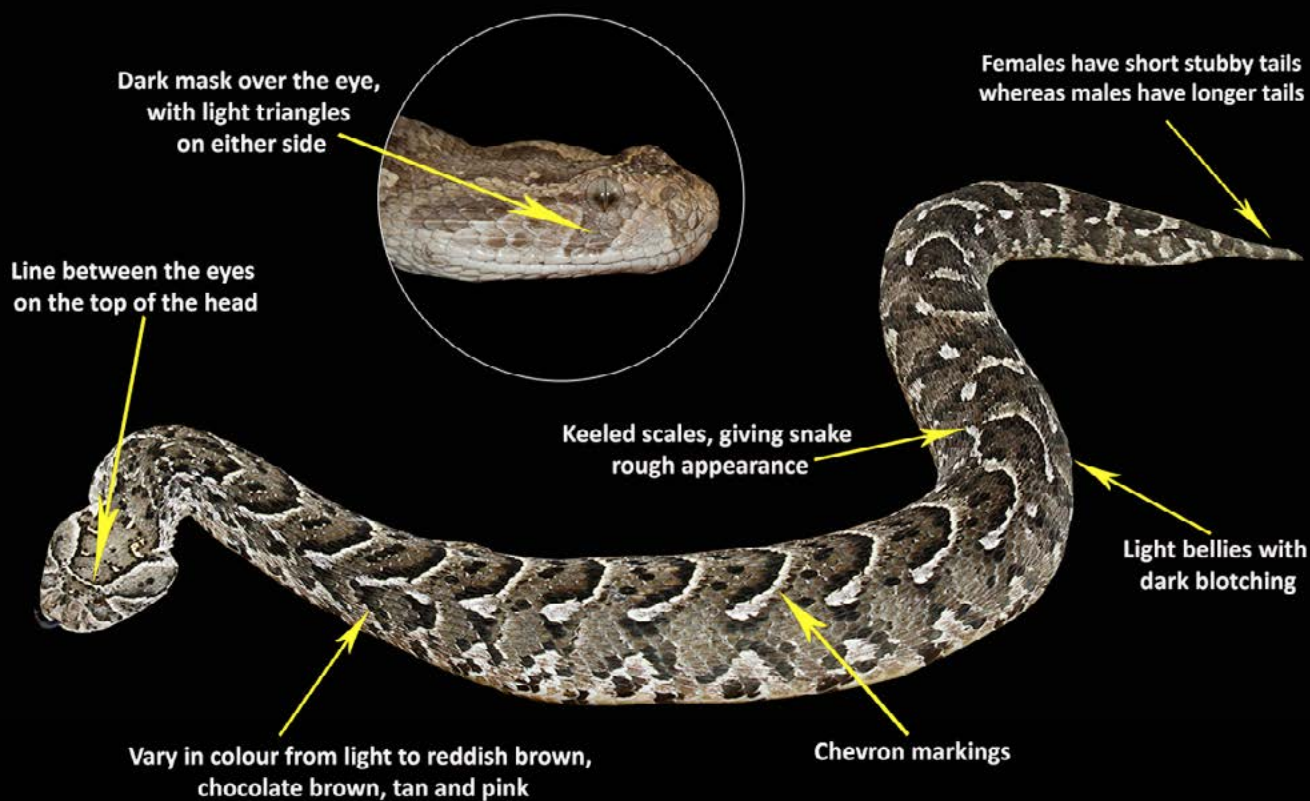
## ASI EASY ID

### Puff Adder (*Bitis arietans*)

**HIGHLY VENOMOUS**

Average length: 90 cm. Maximum length: 1.4 m

Often confused with: night adders and Berg Adders



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# 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.

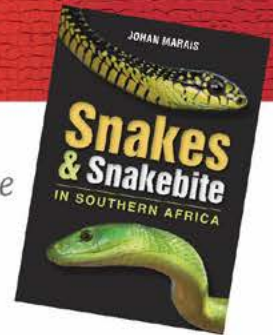


### Symptoms & Venom

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).



### First Aid

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.



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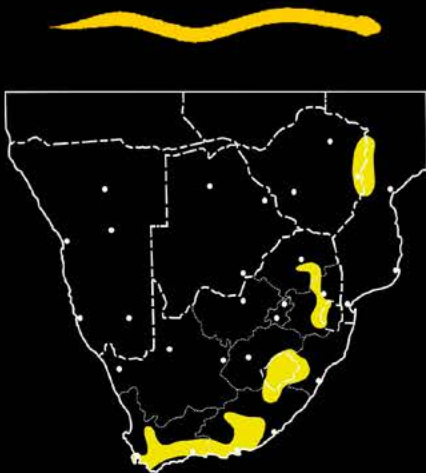
VENOMOUS



## Berg Adder (*Bitis atropos*)

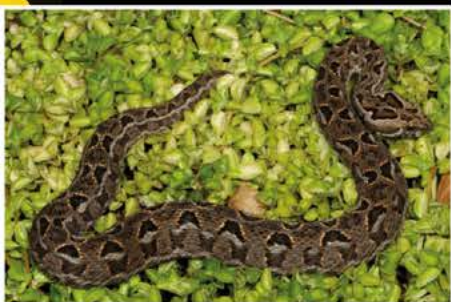
Other names:  
Bergadder

Maximum Length:  
60 cm



There are at least four isolated populations of the Berg Adder, largely at high altitudes except for the Western Cape and Eastern Cape where they may occur at sea level. This snake averages 30 – 40 cm, reaching 60 cm in length.

It is fond of basking, especially on mountain paths and rocky ledges. The Berg Adder is a bad-tempered snake that hisses loudly and strikes easily. Its venom is mainly neurotoxic and attacks the facial and optic nerves. Breathing may be affected by the venom and most patients may need to be ventilated. There is no antivenom for the bite of this snake, but no fatalities have been recorded.



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## ASI EASY ID

### Berg Adder (*Bitis atropos*)

**VENOMOUS**

Average length: 40 cm. Maximum length: 60 cm

Often confused with: Puff Adders and other dwarf adders



No tufts above eye

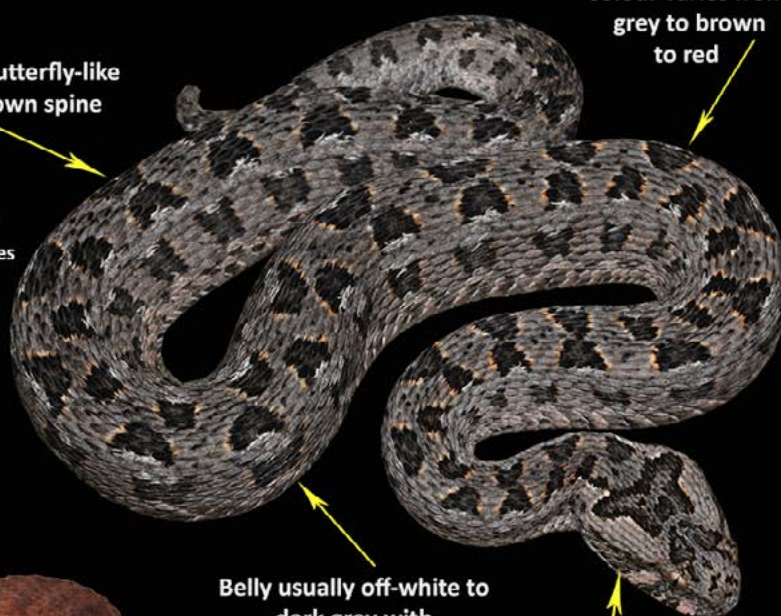


Light line  
under the eye

Dark paired butterfly-like  
markings down spine

In Cape and  
Drakensberg  
specimens  
the "butterflies"  
have white outlines

Colour varies from  
grey to brown to  
red



Belly usually off-white to  
dark grey with  
dusky infusions

Elongated  
head

Mpumalanga specimens  
are grey to brown or red



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## SNAKEBITE PROFILE

### BERG ADDER

*Bitis atropos*



#### Risk of Bites

Bites are not common with around 5 serious bites a year reported in South Africa.



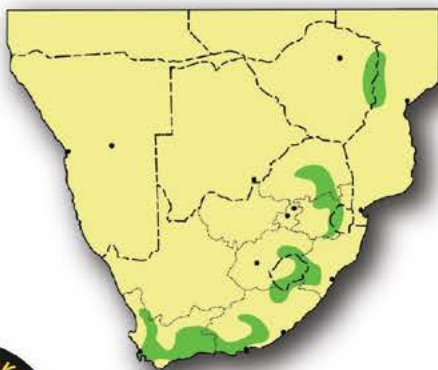
#### Most Bites

Most bites occur to hikers who tread on a snake or place their hands on a ledge close to a snake. Berg Adders are ill-tempered and are quick to bite when threatened.



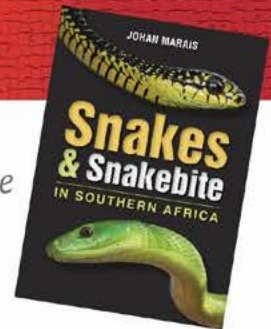
#### Symptoms & Venom

The venom results in both neurotoxic and to a lesser degree cytotoxic symptoms. The optic and facial nerves are affected with symptoms including drooping eyelids (ptosis), dilated pupils, blurred vision, squinting, as well as dizziness and temporary loss of taste and smell. Respiratory failure may occur several hours after the bite, and several victims end up on a ventilator. Pain and swelling can be expected. Necrosis, though not common, has been recorded in some bites.



See pages 32-34

– *Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa* (2024).



#### 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.



#### Medical Treatment

There is no effective antivenom and victims are treated symptomatically. In a recent study of 14 bites, all victims had to be intubated and ventilated 5-7 hours after envenomation. Despite a bite from a Berg Adder being considered life-threatening, no fatalities have been documented.



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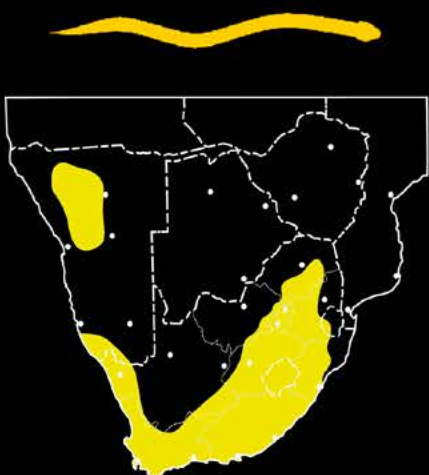


MILDLY VENOMOUS



## 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.



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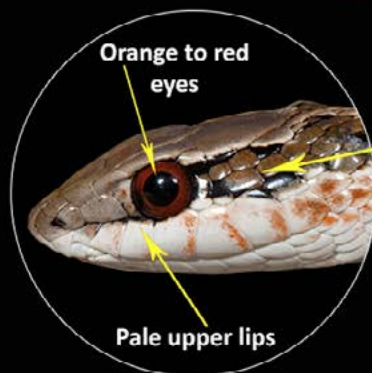
# ASI EASY ID

## Spotted Skaapsteker (*Psammophylax rhombeatus*)

**MILDLY VENOMOUS**

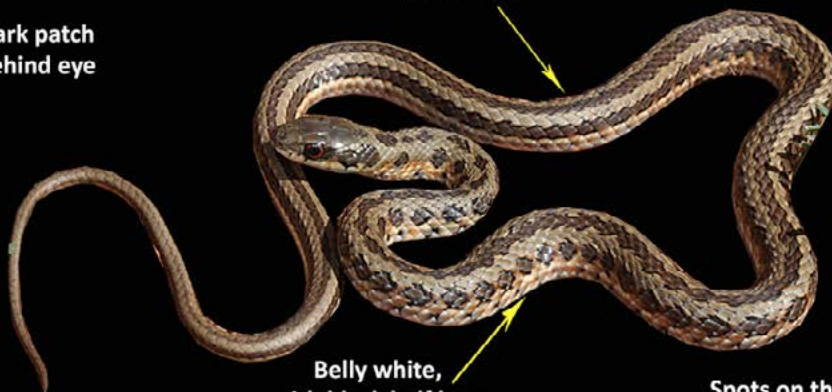
Average length: 40 - 60 cm. Maximum length: 1.4 m

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



Dark patch behind eye

Grassland form



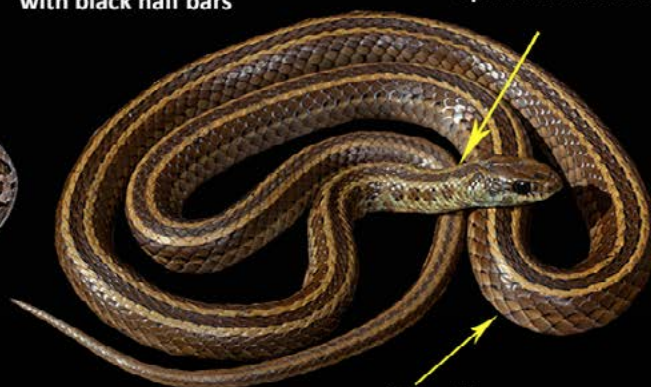
Belly white, with black half bars

Spots on the neck

Cape form



Cape form has red and blue flecks



Striped form

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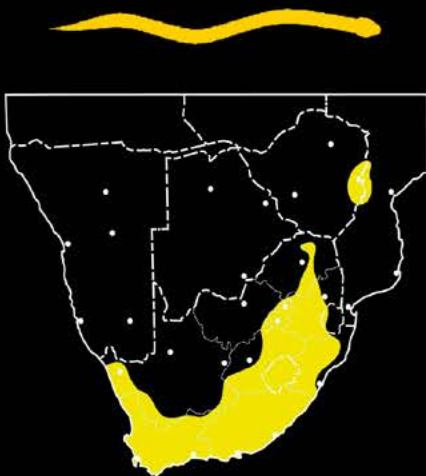


MILDLY VENOMOUS



## 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 Slug-eater. 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.



Graham Alexander



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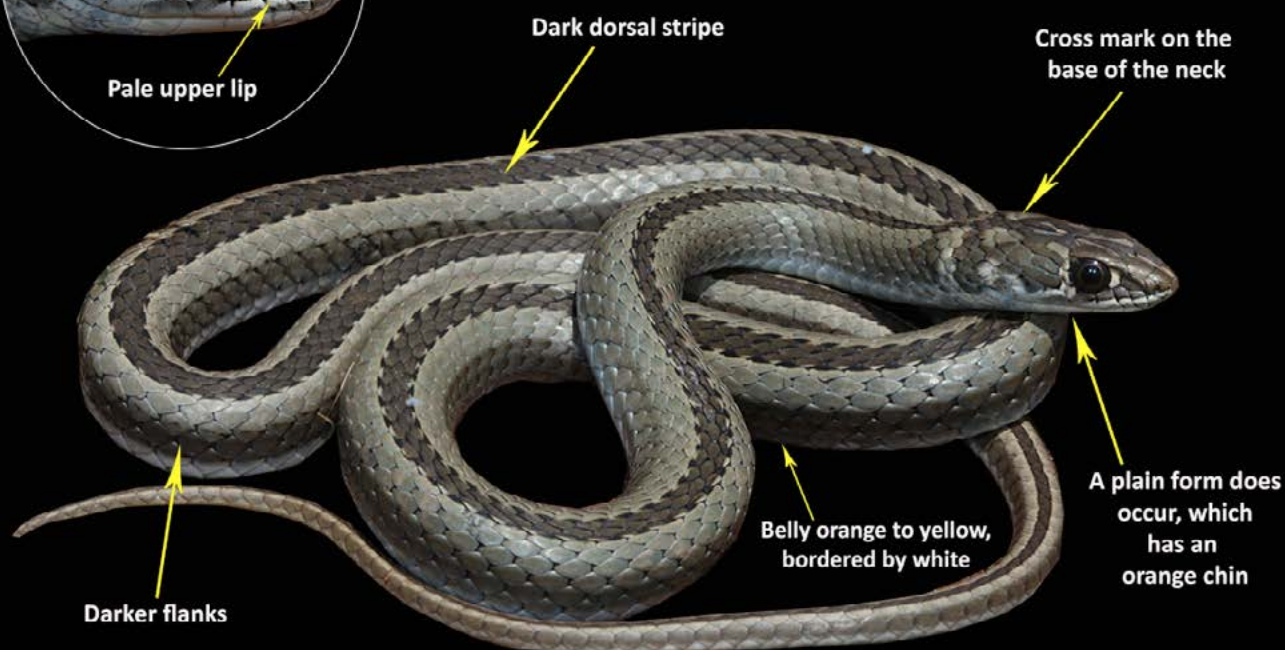
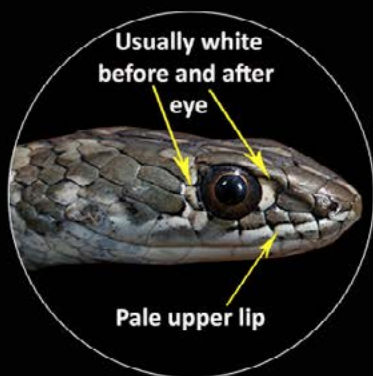
## ASI EASY ID

### 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



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MILDLY VENOMOUS

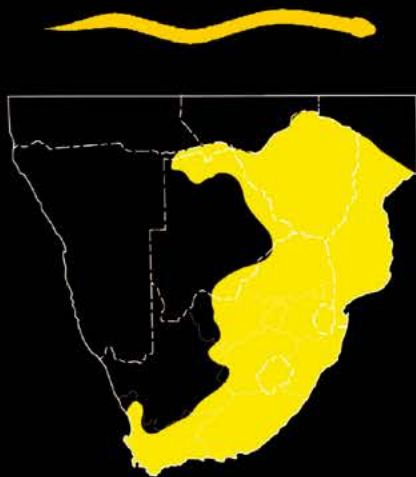


Photo Luke Kemp

## 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.



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# ASI EASY ID

## Herald Snake (*Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia*)

**MILDLY VENOMOUS**

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

Can be confused with: juvenile mambas and cobras



Head is distinctly darker  
in colour than body.

Dark temples with  
iridescent sheen

Dark temples

Upper lips can be red,  
orange or white

Body usually light brown,  
grey to olive grey

White speckles down the body

Belly is usually white,  
to mother of pearl cream

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CAN INFLICT A NASTY BITE



## 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.



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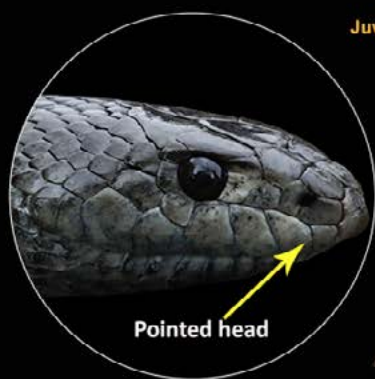
## ASI EASY ID

### Mole Snake (*Pseudaspis cana*)

NON-VENOMOUS, BUT CAN INFLICT A NASTY BITE

Average length: 1.2 m. Maximum length: 2.1 m

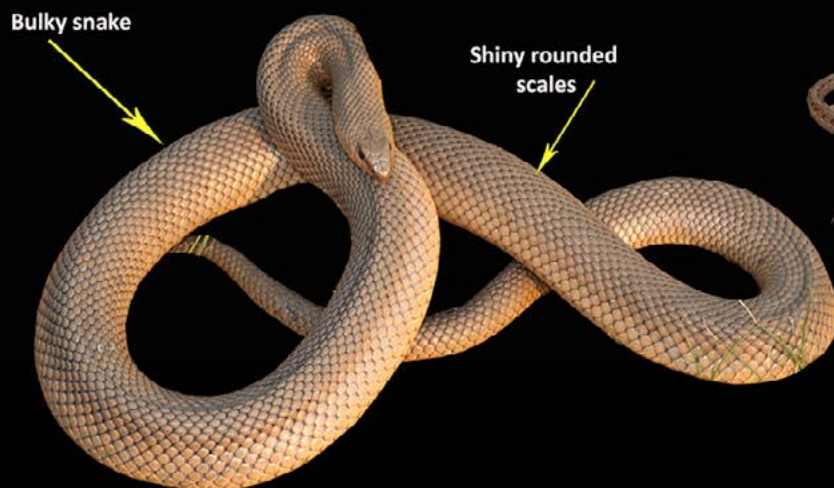
Often confused with: Cape Cobras, and Snouted Cobras.  
Juveniles are often confused with egg-eaters, night adders and skaapstekers



Pointed head



Vary in colour from beige, brown, to reddish brown or black



Bulky snake

Shiny rounded scales



Juvenile Mole Snakes are usually light reddish to greyish brown in colour, with dark, usually zig-zag markings, light spots and mottling down the back

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**HARMLESS**



## Brown House Snake

(*Boaedon capensis*)

**Maximum Length:**  
**1.5 m**



### Other names:

Bruin Huislang

The Brown House Snake, true to its name, frequents human dwellings where it feeds largely on rodents and lizards. It is completely harmless and relies on muscle power to constrict its prey. It is widespread in South Africa and very common in suburban gardens.

This snake is active at night and is relatively slow-moving. Most individuals are medium to dark brown with a mother-of-pearl belly and two light lines on either side of the head – one from the nose through the top of the eye to the back of the head and the other from the back of the eye to the angle of the jaw. The Brown House Snake comes in a variety of shades of brown, often with mottling of white along the neck.



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# ASI EASY ID

## Brown House Snake (*Boaedon capensis*)

**HARMLESS**

Average length: 55 cm. Maximum length: 1.5 m

Can be confused with: Slug-eaters



Varies in colour from light brown to reddish brown, chocolate brown, tan and pink

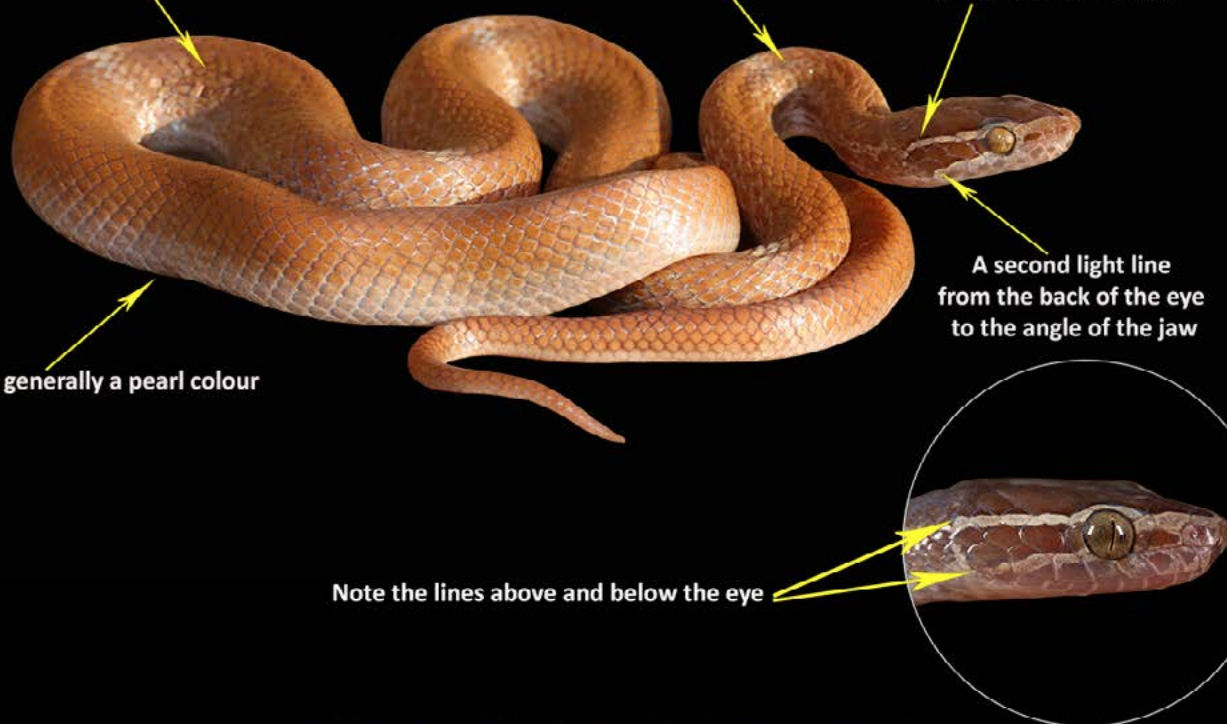
May have mottled markings down the neck

One light line from the nose through the top of the eye to the back of the head

Belly is generally a pearl colour

A second light line from the back of the eye to the angle of the jaw

Note the lines above and below the eye



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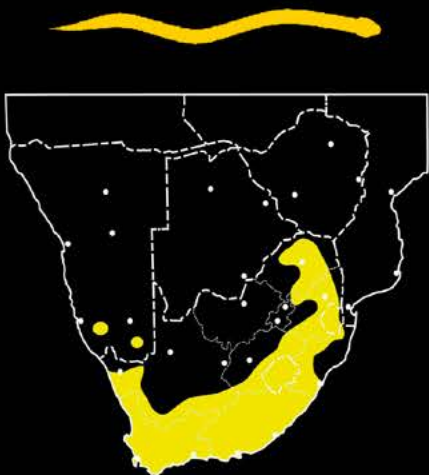


**HARMLESS**



## 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.



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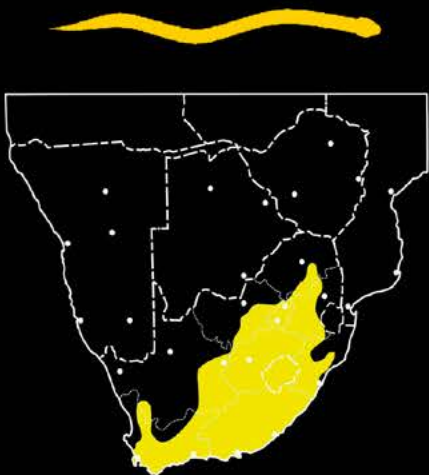


**HARMLESS**



## Aurora House Snake (*Lamprophis aurora*)

**Maximum Length:**  
**90 cm**



### **Other names:**

Auroraslang

A beautifully-marked, slow-moving snake that favours damp localities in grasslands, lowland forest and fynbos where it hunts for nestling rodents, lizards and frogs at night. Adults average 60 cm but may exceed 90 cm. It varies in colour from shiny olive green to dull dark green above with a bright yellow to orange vertebral stripe from the top of the head to the tip of the tail. It is a harmless constrictor that seldom attempts to bite. This snake is endemic to South Africa and Lesotho and occurs from the Cape Peninsula through the Western and Eastern Cape into parts of the Northern Cape, the Free State, much of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng and eastern North West province.



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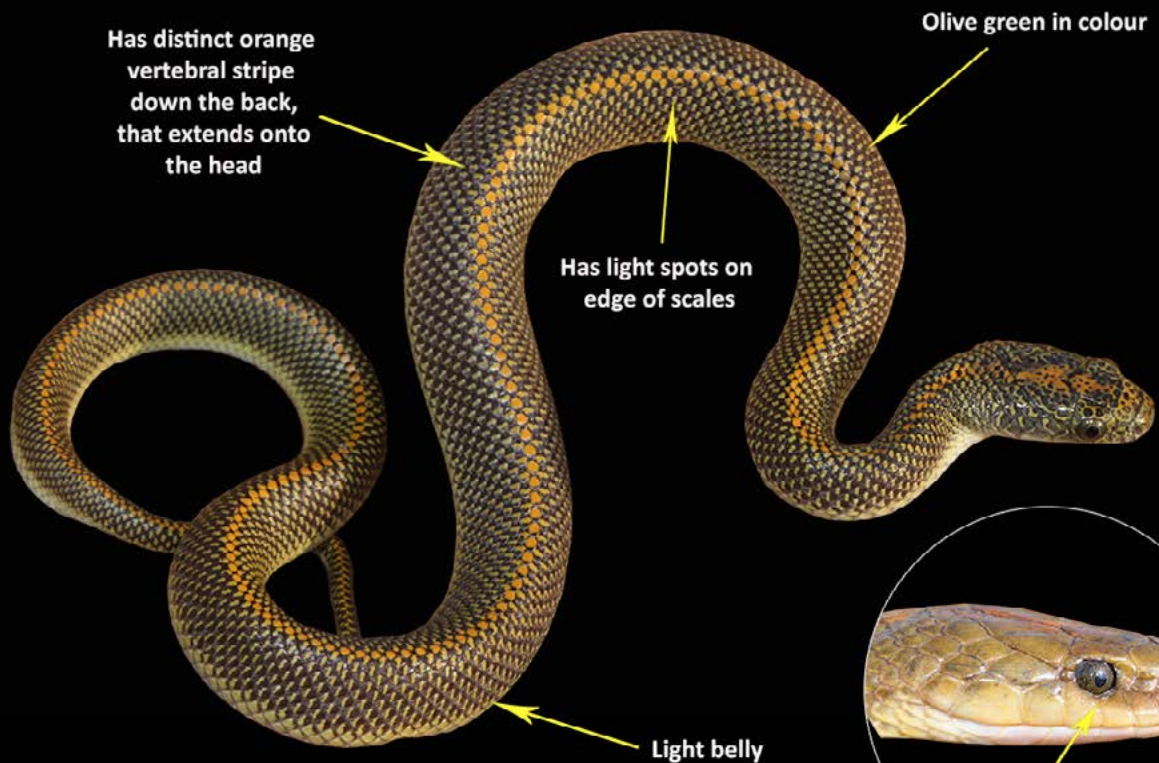
## ASI EASY ID

### Aurora House Snake (*Lamprophis aurora*)

**HARMLESS**

Average length: 30-50 cm. Maximum length: 90 cm

Often confused with: Spotted Harlequin Snakes (Grassland form)



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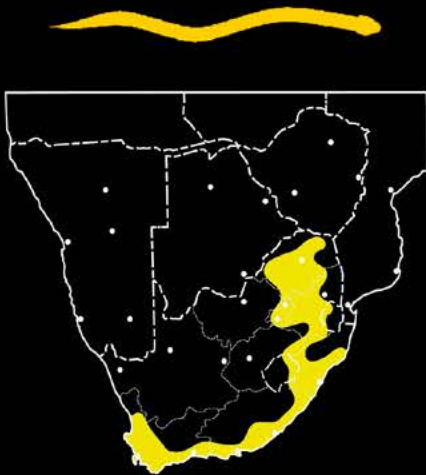
**HARMLESS**



## Olive Snake

*(Lycodonomorphus inornatus)*

**Maximum Length:**  
**1.3 m**



### Other names:

Olive House/Ground Snake, Olyfslang

A slow-moving nocturnal snake that is quite similar to the Brown House Snake in behaviour. It averages 30-60 cm but reaches 1.3 m in length. Commonly found around houses but prefers damp areas where it hunts for lizards, rodents and other snakes. Because of its colour, varying from olive-green to light brown or black, it is mistaken for a variety of other snakes including the Black Mamba and the Brown Water Snake.

The Olive Snake used to be in the same genus as the house snakes, hence the common name Olive House Snake, but has since been moved to the same genus as the water snakes. This snake is not venomous and poses no threat to humans.



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# ASI EASY ID

## Olive Snake (*Lycodonomorphus inornatus*)

**HARMLESS**

Average length: 75 cm. Maximum length: 1.3 m

Often confused with: Brown House Snakes, Brown Water Snakes, Yellow-Bellied House Snakes



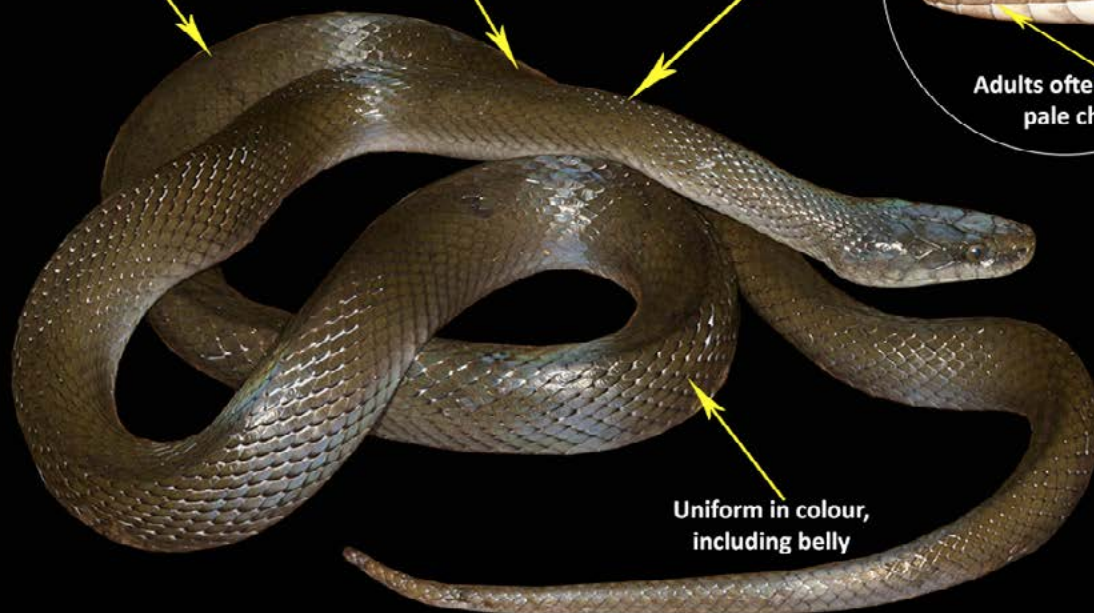
Adults are olive green to brown or black in colour

Juveniles in the Cape are light olive green with distinctly dark head

Juveniles in the East are usually pitch black

Adults often have pale chin

Uniform in colour, including belly



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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.



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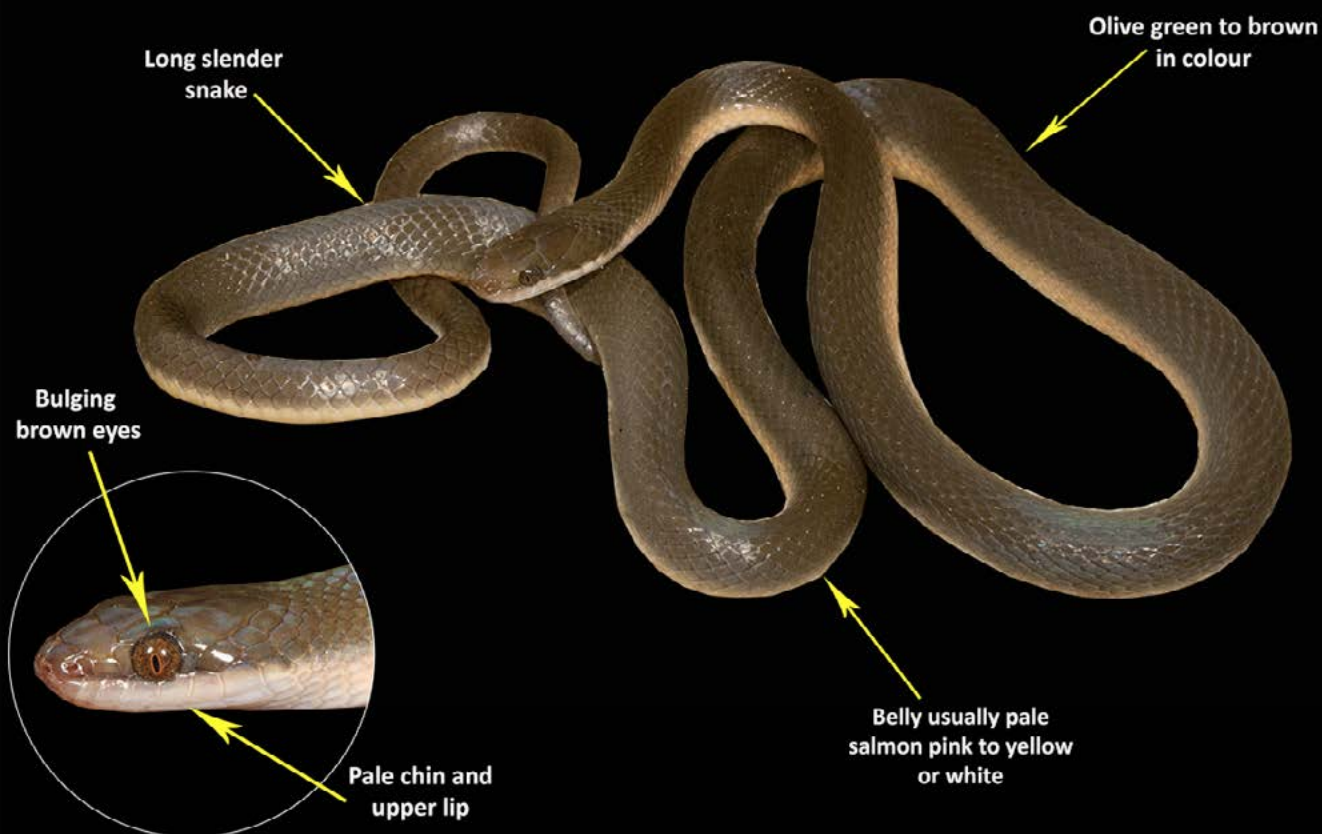
# ASI EASY ID

## Brown Water Snake (*Lycodonomorphus rufulus*)

**HARMLESS**

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

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



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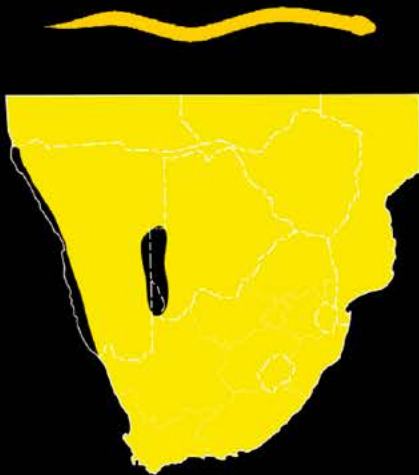


HARMLESS



## Common Egg-eater (*Dasypeltis scabra*)

Maximum Length:  
1.16 m



Other names:

Rhombic Egg-eater, Gewone Eiervreter

A common snake throughout most of southern Africa except for true desert and closed canopy forests. It averages around 50 cm and is well adapted at climbing trees. It is most abundant in thornveld and grasslands where it can be found in any situation. It is nocturnal, spending most of the day hiding beneath rocks or under loose bark. When agitated, it will coil and uncoil while striking out viciously. The rubbing scales create a rasping sound similar to a hiss. It is completely harmless, and the teeth are reduced. It feeds exclusively on birds' eggs. It may be confused with the venomous Common Night Adder.



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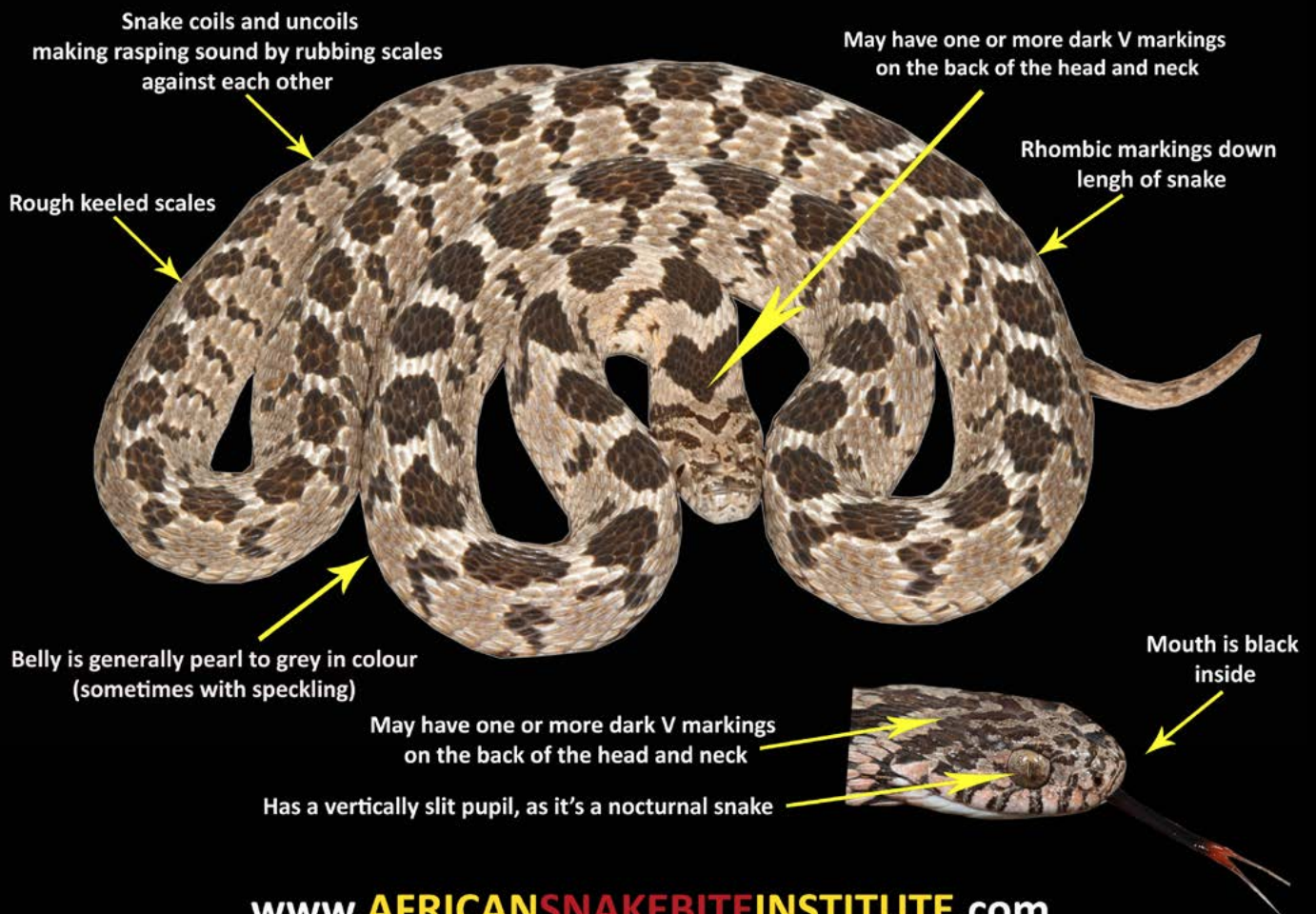
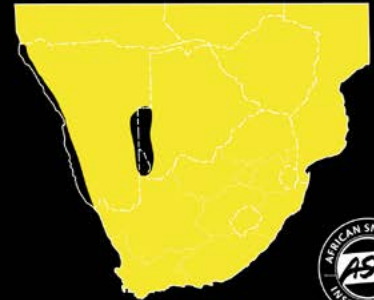
## ASI EASY ID

### Common Egg-eater (*Dasypeltis scabra*)

**HARMLESS**

Average length: 55 cm. Maximum length: 1.16 m

Often confused with: Common Night Adders



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HARMLESS



## Common Slug-eater (*Duberria lutrix*)

Maximum Length:  
43 cm



Other names:

Gewone Slakvreter, Tabakrolletjie

A small snake that averages 30 – 35 cm. It feeds exclusively on snails and slugs and locates them by following the slime trail. The Common Slug-eater favours damp localities in the south-eastern half of southern Africa.

During the day it seeks shelter under rocks, logs and grass tufts and emerges in the evening to hunt. It is reluctant to bite and if threatened will defecate and secrete a foul-smelling substance simultaneously. It also has the peculiar habit of rolling up into a tight spiral with the head concealed, like a roll of tobacco, hence the Afrikaans name. This small slow-moving snake is not venomous and poses no threat to humans.



Luke Kemp



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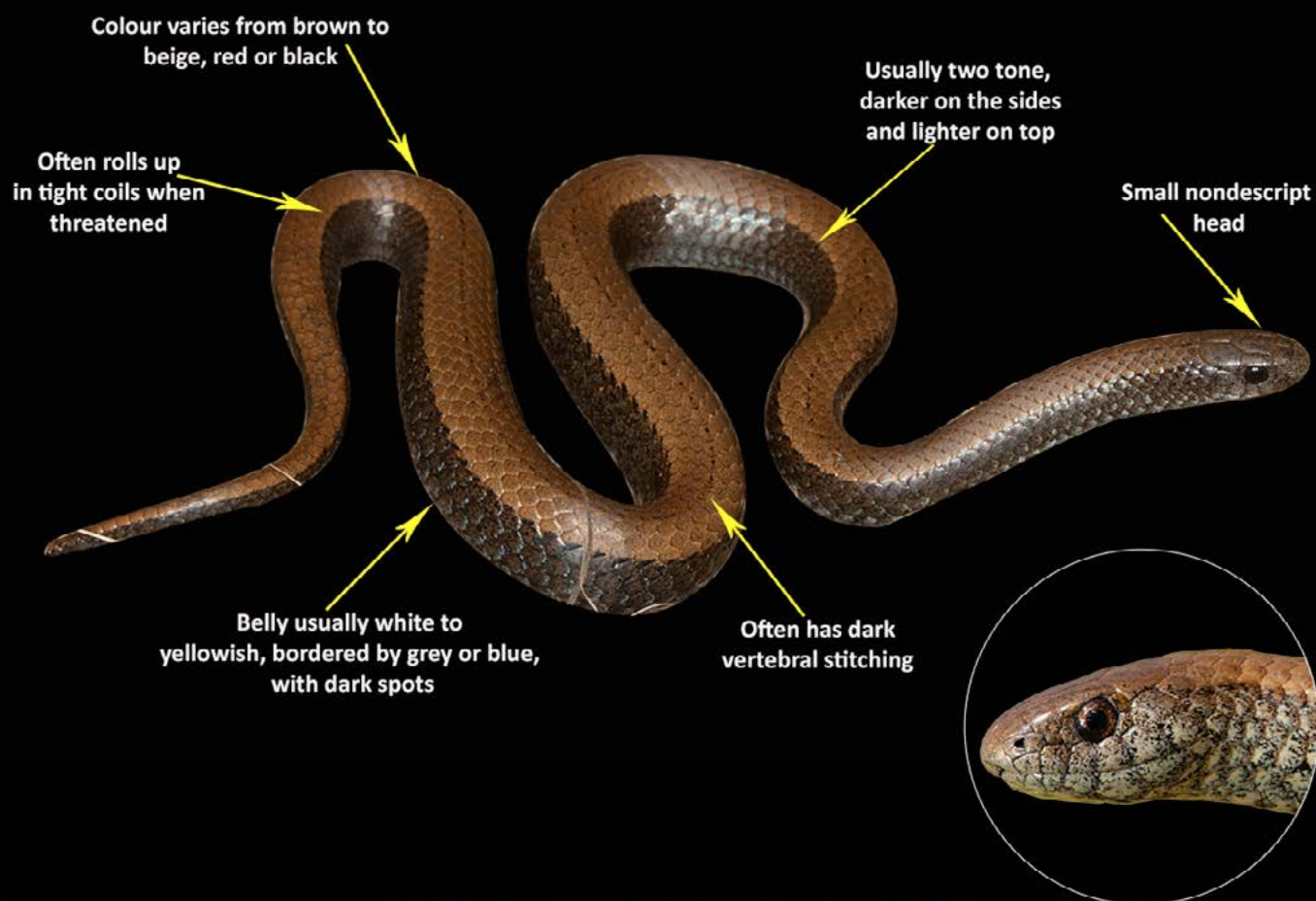
## ASI EASY ID

### Common Slug-eater (*Duberria lutrix*)

**HARMLESS**

Average length: 35 cm. Maximum length: 45 cm

Often confused with: Juvenile Cape Cobras



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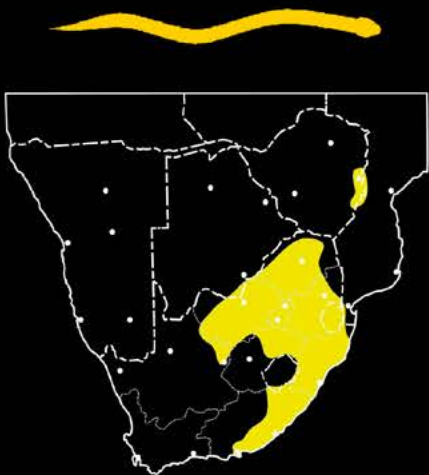
**HARMLESS**



## Bibron's Blind Snake

(*Afrotyphlops bibronii*)

**Maximum Length:**  
**48.4 cm**



### Other names:

Bibron's se Blindeslang

This harmless burrowing snake spends most of its life underground where it feeds on ants, termites and their larvae. It is often flushed to the surface after heavy rains. As the common name indicates it is largely blind, with a scale over the eye – an adaptation for an underground existence. Bibron's Blind Snake averages 30 – 38 cm with a maximum length of 48.4 cm. Both ends are rounded, and one must look carefully to work out which end is the head and which is the tail. A variety of burrowing snakes, like the stiletto and harlequin snake prey on this species. This snake may be confused with Delelande's Beaked Blind Snake and the venomous stiletto snakes.



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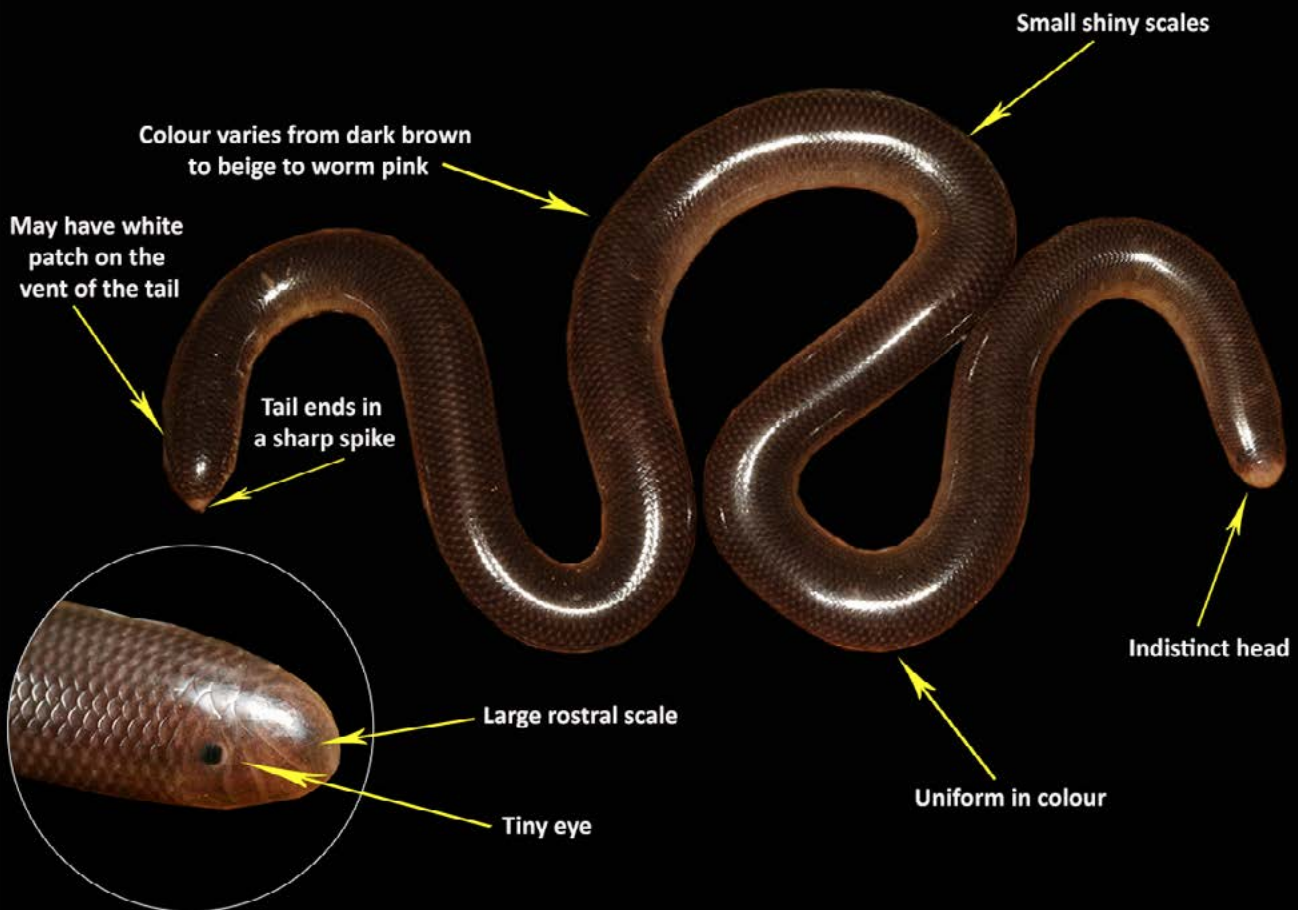
## ASI EASY ID

### Bibron's Blind Snake (*Afrotyphlops bibronii*)

**HARMLESS**

Average length: 30-40 cm. Maximum length: 48.4 cm

Often confused with: stiletto snakes and Deleclando's Beaked Blind Snakes



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# FIRST AID FOR SNAKEBITE



## IN THE EVENT OF A SNAKEBITE, DO...

- ✦ Do 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 (0)82 494 2039**.
- ✦ Do 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.
- ✦ Do remove jewellery as well as 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.
- ✦ Do administer artificial respiration if patient stops breathing. 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 life-saving. 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. In the western parts of the country these are replaced by the Black Spitting Cobra. These 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 may 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 water or a weak (normal) saline solution. The idea is to flush away any excess venom. Transport the victim to a medical doctor, who will examine the eyes for corneal damage and prescribe antibiotic eye drops to prevent secondary infection. There is no reason to use diluted antivenom – it has no proven benefits and may cause an allergic reaction.
- ✦ 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 CLARENS

Dihlabeng Regional Hospital  
(Bethlehem)

Tel: 058 307 1000

(-28.233136, 28.319797)

2 Eeufes St, Bethlehem, 9701

Mediclinic Hoogland (Bethlehem)

Tel: 086 166 1166

(-28.228362, 28.321805)

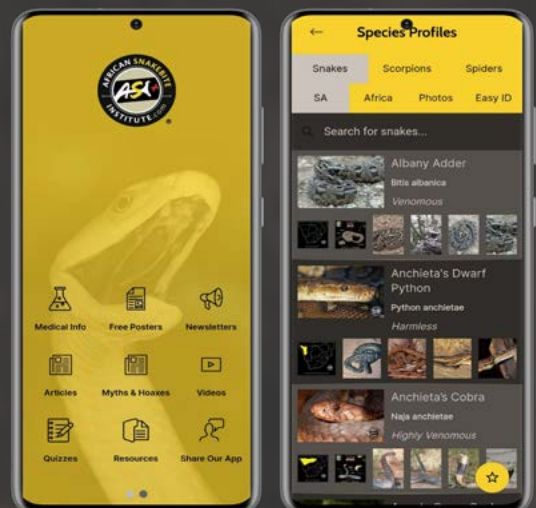
De Leeuw St, Bethlehem, 9701



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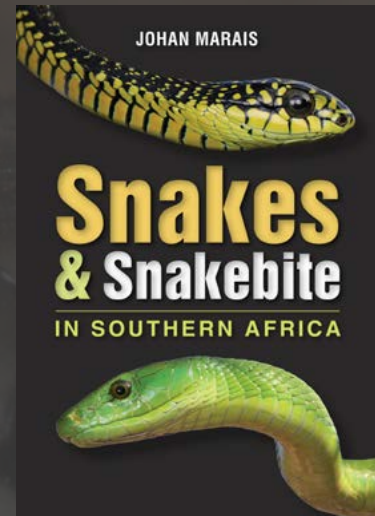
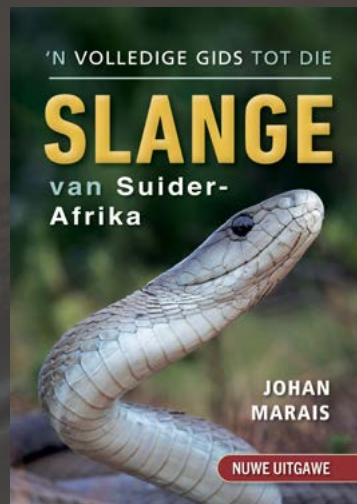
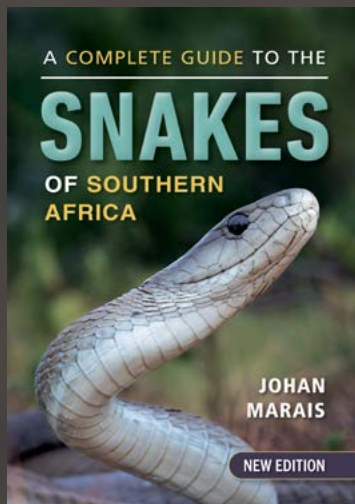
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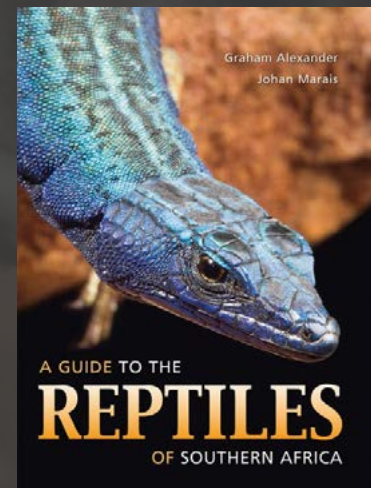
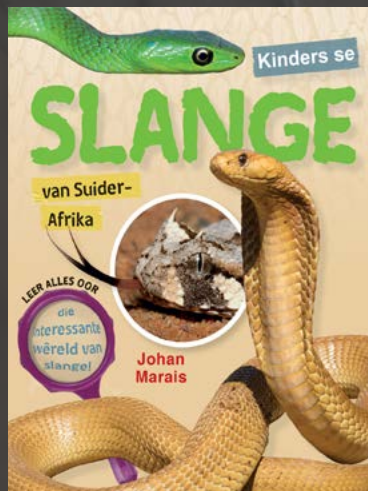
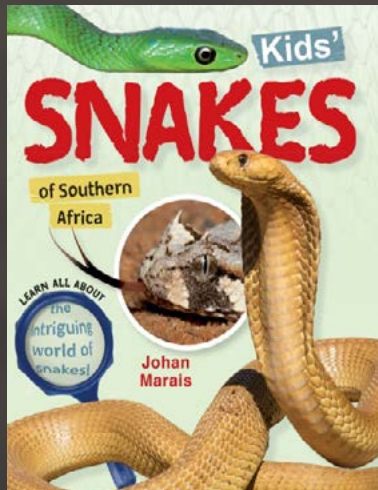




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**Snake Identification:** +27 72 979 1249 or [support@asiorg.co.za](mailto:support@asiorg.co.za)

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