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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, 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 LESOTHO

esotho has 25 different snake species. Of these, three are highly venomous, three others can give a bad bite and the rest are mildly venomous or harmless. We've listed the common species in this booklet, showing venomiosity, key ID features, full distribution, and snakebite info for venomous species.

Snakebite is problematic in Southern Africa with most bites reported from the hot wet regions. Most bites are caused by snakes with cytotoxic venom. These bites can result in extesnive tissue damage. Snakes responsible for these type of bites inlcude the Puff Adder, Night Adders and the Spitting Cobras. Although not as frequent, neurotoxic bites, inflicted by non-spitting cobras and Mambas can pose serious medical emergencies as patients often stop breathing.

ost bites occur in the early evening in the warm, wet summer months from November to April/May. People most at risk are those that spend alot of time outdoors. Agricultural workers in rural areas are especially at risk. Most snakebites are inflicted on the leg below the knee. This is as a result of people accidentally stepping onto or close to snakes. Given that a patient receives prompt and proper treatment in a hospital the chances of surviving a snakebite are very high. In a study performed at a clinic in Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa not one patient died during the five year study thanks to the treatment they received. The clinic treated 879 patients for snakebites in those five years!

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 LESOTHO



Lesotho has around twenty five different types of snakes. Three species are highly venomous, while three others can inflict a rather painful bite. Six species are considered mildly venomous. Thirteen species are harmless. HIGHLY

human fatalities

Painful bite, but does not require antivenom

Not thought to be harmful HARMLESS

Not dangerous to humans







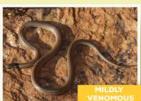




























Olive Snake











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.

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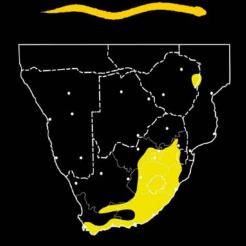




Rinkhals

(Hemachatus haemachatus)

Maximum Length: 1.5 m



Other names:

Ring-necked Spitting Cobra

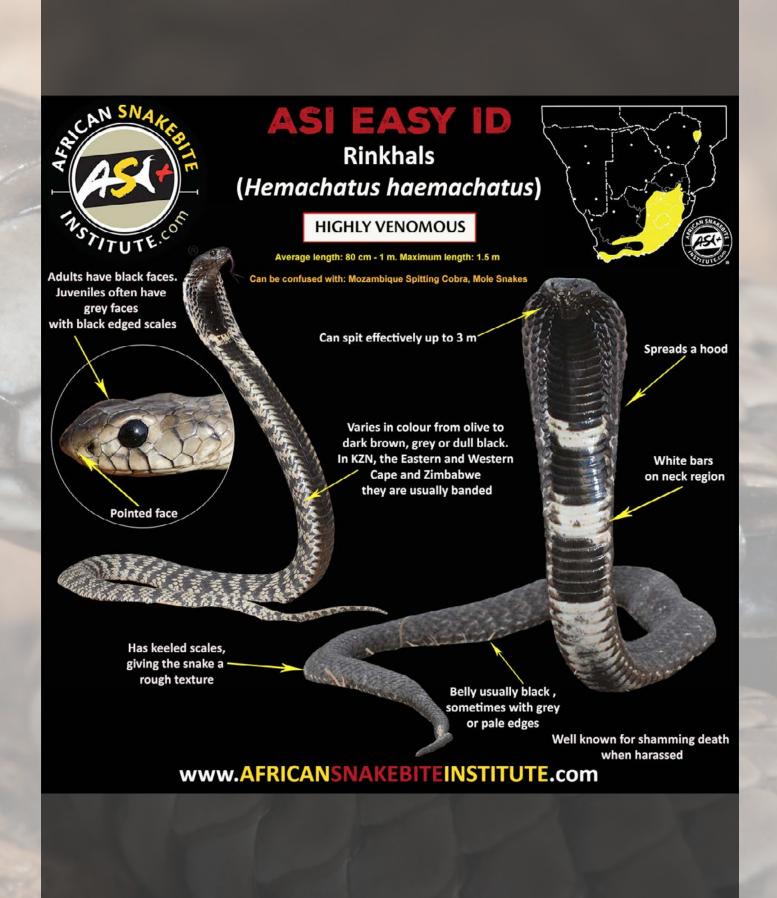
The Rinkhals is endemic to Southern Africa and is found only in South Africa, eSwatini, Lesotho and eastern Zimbabwe. Though it resembles a cobra (spreads a hood) it is not a true cobra and gives birth to live young. It is essentially a grassland inhabitant but is also found in fynbos in the Western 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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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.





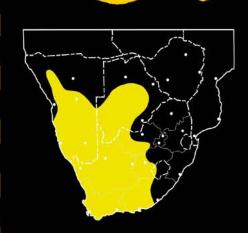
HIGHLY VENOMOUS



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







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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

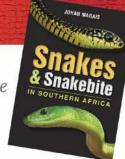
Most victims are bitten on the lower leg or on a hand, often when attempting to capture or kill the snake.



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

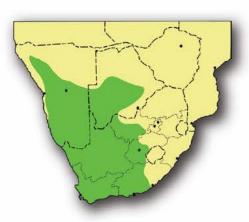
Immobilise and reassure the patient, who must lie down in a rescue position. Immediately arrange transport to a hospital with emergency facilities. If far from a hospital, apply a pressure bandage (Page 19 of Snakes and Snakebite in Southern Africa). Resort to artificial respiration if the victim stops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



Medical Treatment

severe envenomation ln 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.







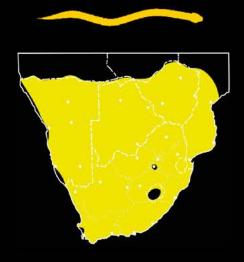
HIGHLY VENOMOUS



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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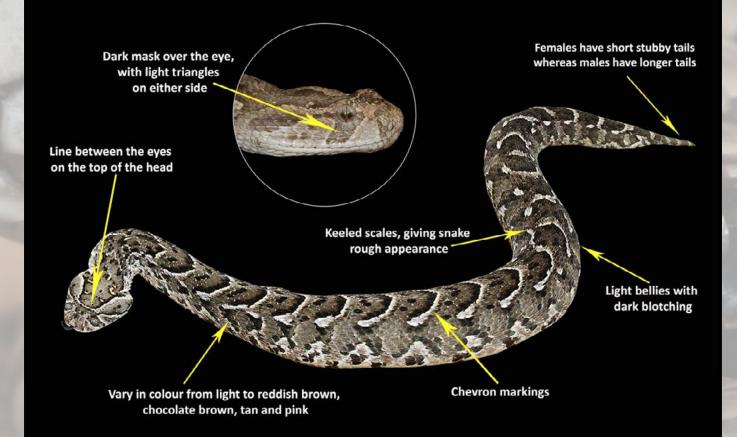
Puff Adder (Bitis arietans)

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).



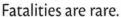
First Aid

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.







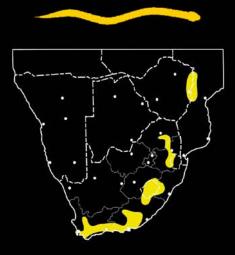






Berg Adder (*Bitis atropos*)

Maximum Length: 60 cm



Other names: Bergadder

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 badtempered 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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Berg Adder (Bitis atropos)

VENOMOUS

Average length: 40 cm. Maximum length: 60 cm

Often confused with: Puff Adders and other dwarf adders

Colour varies from grey to brown to red /

No turts above eye

Dark paired butterfly-like markings down spine

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

Light line

Light line under the eye

Belly usually off-white to dark grey with dusky infusions

> Elongated head

Mpumalanga specimens are grey to brown or red



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.





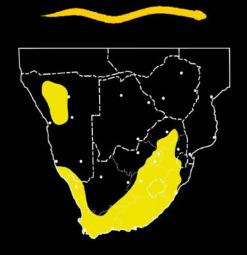


MILDLY VENOMOUS

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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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



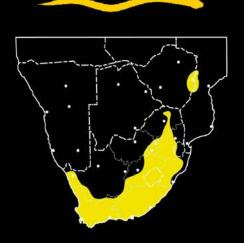




MILDLY VENOMOUS

Cross-marked Grass Snake (*Psammophis crucifer*)

Maximum Length: 82 cm



Other names: Kruismerk Grasslang

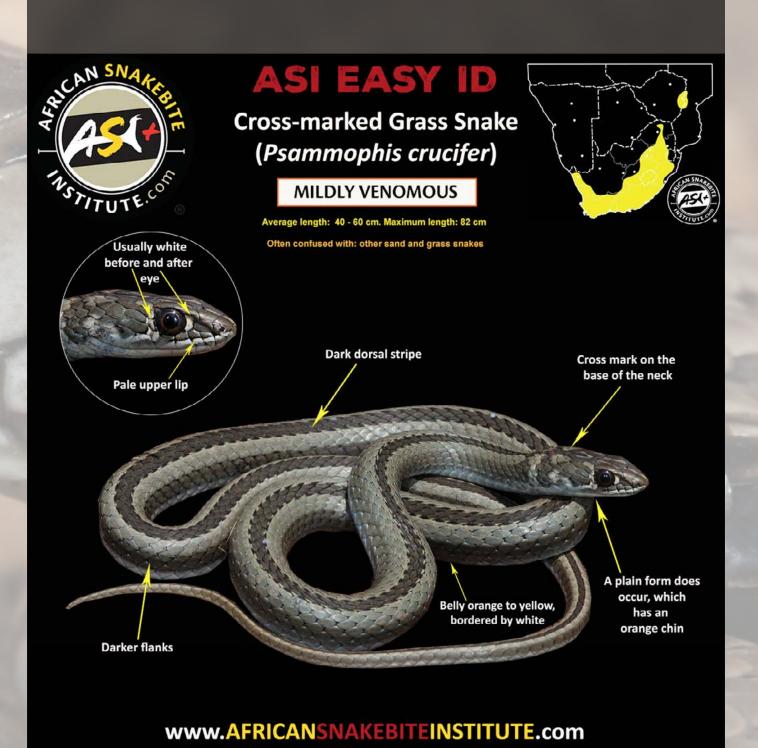
One of the smaller grass snakes averaging 30-50 cm but exceeding 82 cm in length. It is active in the day and feeds on small lizards, especially skinks, as well as frogs. It inhabits lowland forest, moist savanna, montane forest, grassland and fynbos. It is common in the sandy scrub-covered areas of 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.







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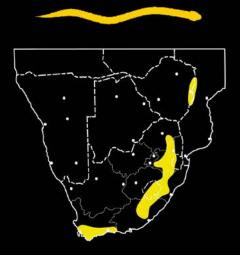




MILDLY VENOMOUS

Many-spotted Reed Snake (Amplorhinus multimaculatus)

Maximum Length: 63 cm



Other names: Rietslang

A slow-moving somewhat secretive snake but locally common and may be mistaken for a Spotted Skaapsteker. Adults average around 40 cm, but may reach a length of 63 cm. This snake is often found in reed beds and riverine vegetation but also found in fynbos and montane grassland. Like the Spotted Skaapsteker it is active during the day and will forage for food, preferring frogs, lizards and small rodents. If disturbed it may coil into a tight spring, like the slug-eater. Most individuals are brown to olive brown with light stripes down the body, but bright green individuals are also found. The venom of this snake is not considered dangerous to humans but may cause local swelling.







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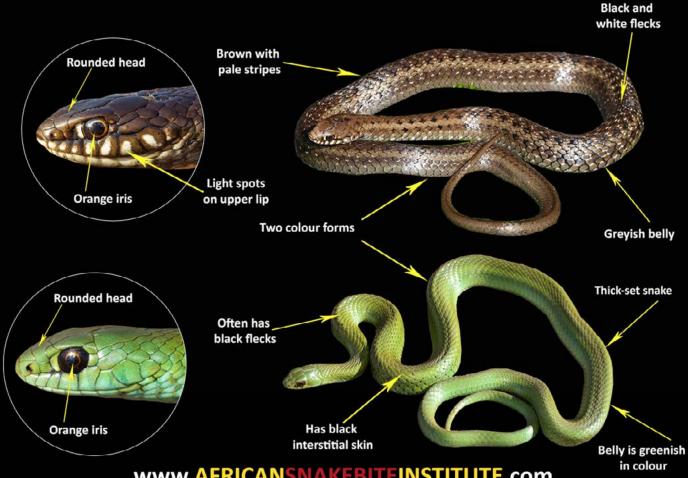
Many-spotted Reed Snake (Amplorhinus multimaculatus)

MILDLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 40 - 55 cm. Maximum length: 63 cm

Often confused with: Juvenile Mole Snakes, Green Water Snakes







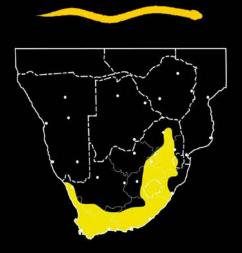


MILDLY VENOMOUS

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.







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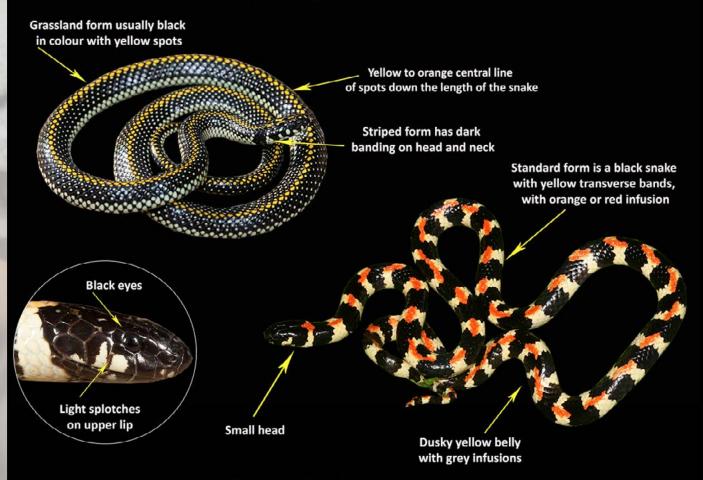
Spotted Harlequin Snake (Homoroselaps lacteus)

MILDLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 40 cm. Maximum length: 65 cm

Often confused with: Cape Coral Snakes and Aurora House Snakes









MILDLY VENOMOUS

Black-headed Centipede-eater (Aparallactus capensis)

Maximum Length: 40 cm



Other names:

Swartkop Honderdpootvreter,

A small slender nocturnal snake that averages 30 cm with a maximum length of 40 cm. This common snake is usually found in deserted termite mounds or under logs and rocks as well as in leaf litter. It occurs in the eastern half of the country from the Eastern Cape northwards.

The Black-headed Centipede-eater is a specialist feeder and preys on centipedes – it will seize its prey and then chew along the body until the venom takes effect. The centipede is eaten headfirst. It has a blackish head and light brown to orange-brown body, making it easy to identify. This snake is back-fanged and mildly venomous and poses no threat to humans.







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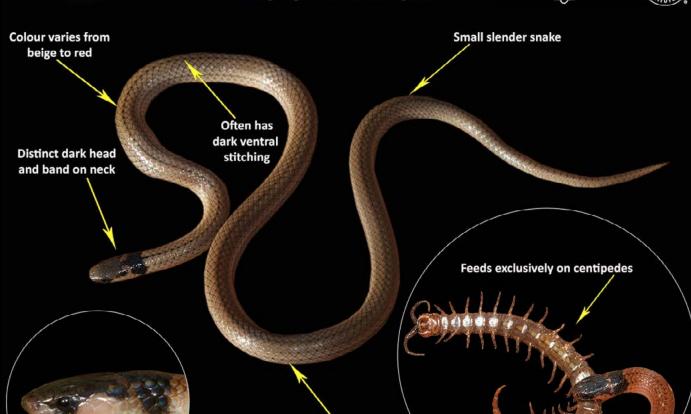
Dark tear under the eye

ASI EASY ID

Black-headed Centipede-eater (Aparallactus capensis)

MILDLY VENOMOUS

Average length: 30 cm. Maximum length: 40 cm



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Belly is pearl in colour



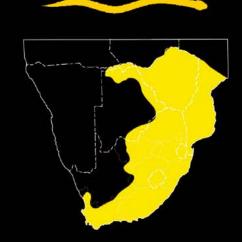
MILDLY VENOMOUS



Herald Snake

(Crotaphopeltis hotamboeia)

Maximum Length: 1 m



Other names:

Rooilipslang, Red-lipped Snake

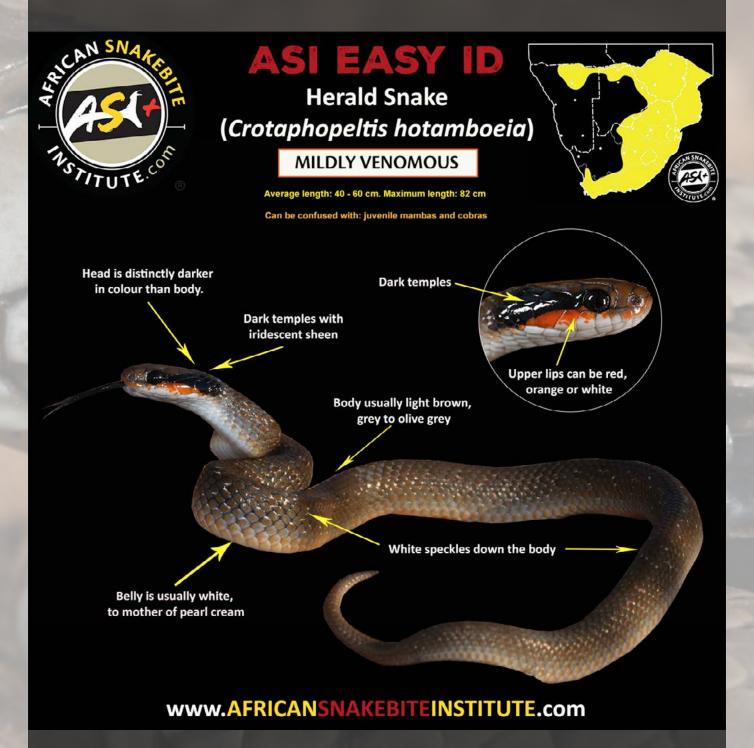
A nocturnal snake that frequents suburban gardens, especially those with water features. It is a toad specialist and often eats toads that look far too large to swallow. The Herald Snake is usually greyish to olive-grey in colour, but some individuals are quite dark. The head is always darker than the 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.



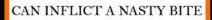




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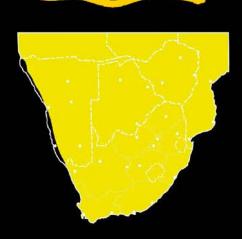






Mole Snake (*Pseudaspis cana*)

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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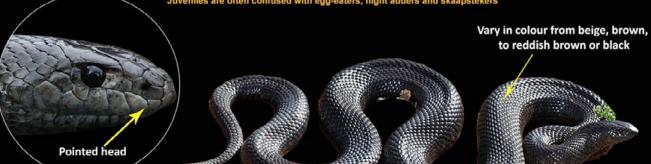
Mole Snake (Pseudaspis cana)

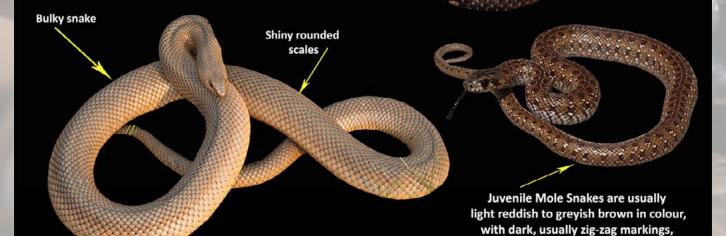
NON-VENOMOUS, BUT CAN INFLICT A NASTY BITE

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





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light spots and mottling down the back



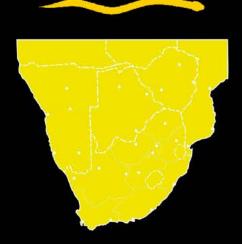


HARMLESS

Brown House Snake

(Boaedon capensis)

Maximum Length: 1.5 m



Other names: Bruin Huisslang

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 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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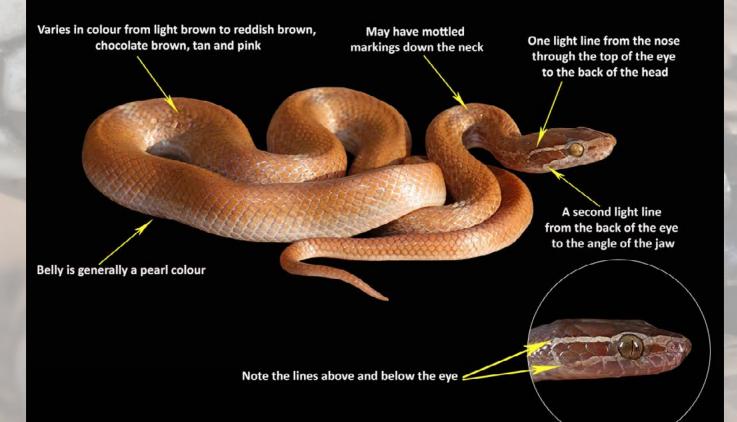
Brown House Snake (Boaedon capensis)

HARMLESS

Average length: 55 cm. Maximum length: 1.5 m

Can be confused with: Slug-eaters





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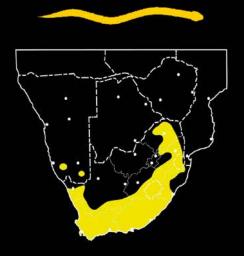




Spotted Rock Snake

(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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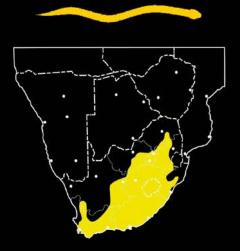


HARMLESS

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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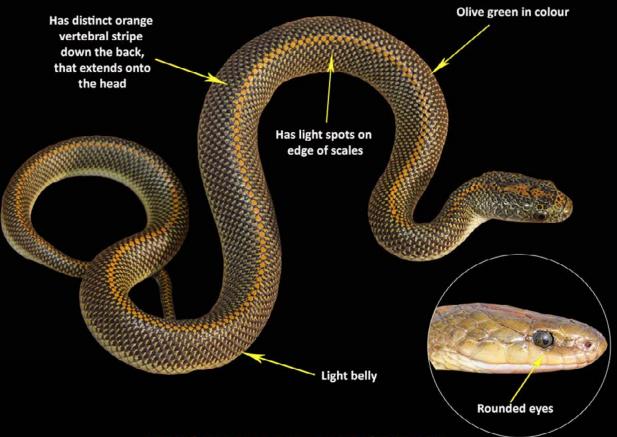
Aurora House Snake (Lamprophis aurora)

HARMLESS

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

Often confused with: Spotted Harlequin Snakes (Grassland form)







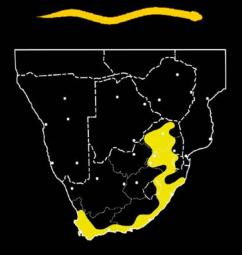




Olive Snake

(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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Olive Snake (Lycodonomorphus inornatus)



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

Adults often have pale chin

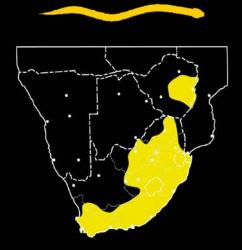
Uniform in colour, including belly





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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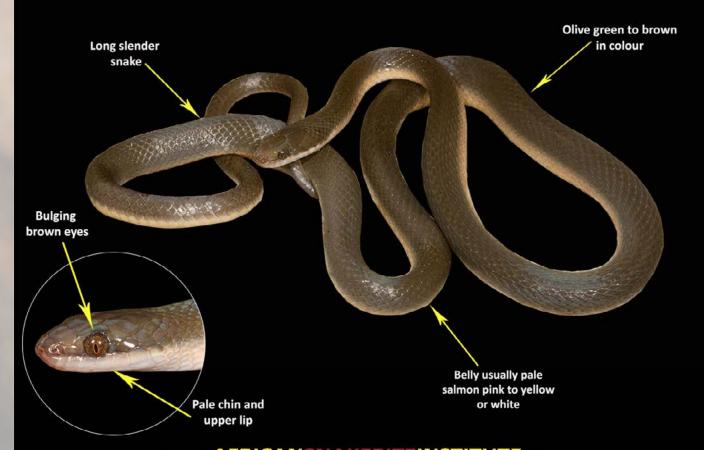
Brown Water Snake (Lycodonomorphus rufulus)

HARMLESS

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

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









Common Wolf Snake (Lycophidion capense)

Maximum Length: 65 cm



Other names:

Cape Wolf Snake, Gewone Wolfslang

This common little snake averages 25-40 cm in length and is frequently found in suburban gardens. It is active at night when it hunts for lizards, especially skinks and geckos. The Common Wolf Snake is fond of damp localities where it seeks refuge under rocks, logs and in rubbish heaps. Though harmless it has long, recurved teeth in both the upper and lower jaw, hence the common name. Females produce 3–9 eggs in early summer. The Common Wolf Snake is difficult to distinguish from the venomous stiletto snake. It differs by having a long thin tail, the head is distinct from the body, and it usually has light spots on the back of each body scale.







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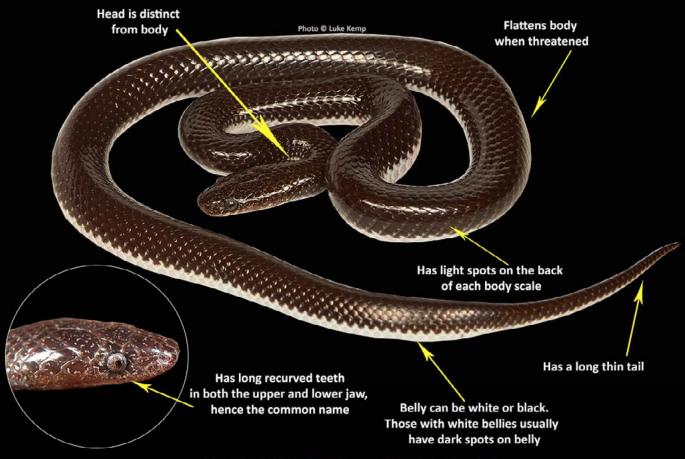
Common Wolf Snake (Lycophidion capense)

HARMLESS

Average length: 40 cm. Maximum length: 64 cm

Often confused with: stiletto snakes



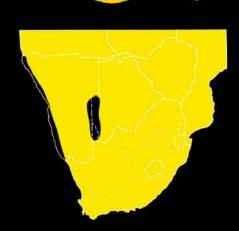






Common Egg-eater (Dasypeltis scabra)

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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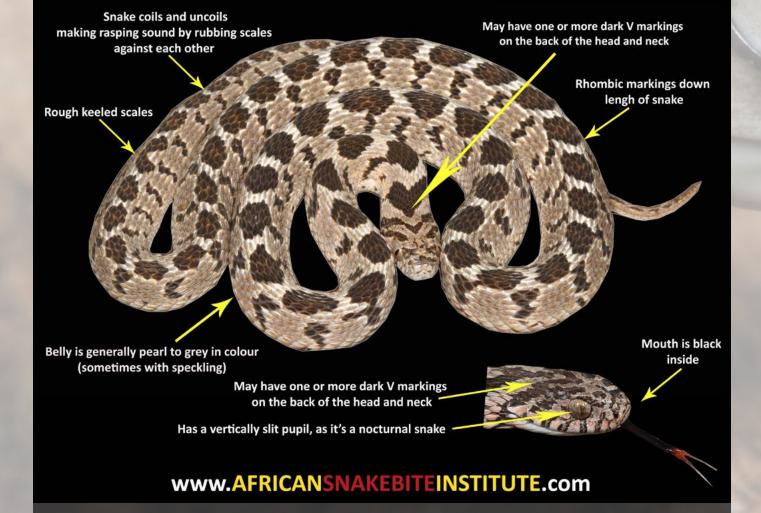
Common Egg-eater (Dasypeltis scabra)

HARMLESS

Average length: 55 cm. Maximum length: 1.16 m

Often confused with: Common Night Adders



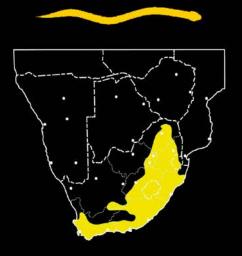






Common Slug-eater (*Duberria lutrix*)

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 southeastern 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.







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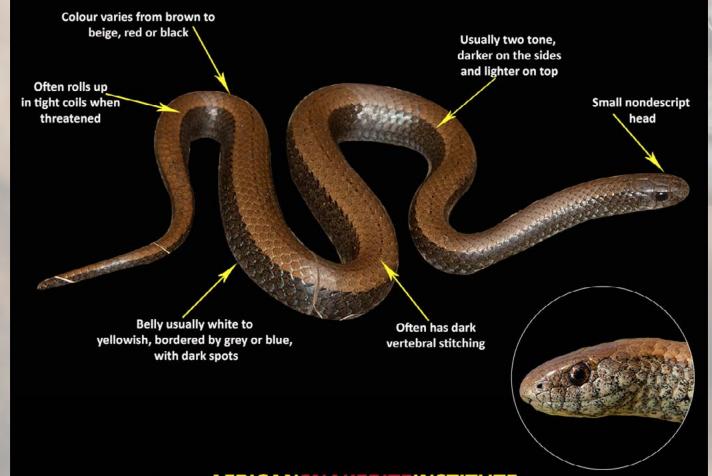
Common Slug-eater (Duberria lutrix)

HARMLESS

Average length: 35 cm. Maximum length: 45 cm

Often confused with: Juvenile Cape Cobras





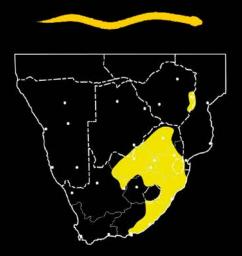




Bibron's Blind Snake

(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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Bibron's Blind Snake (Afrotyphlops bibronii)

HARMLESS

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

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





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.

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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



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 most common spitting snake in Southern Africa is the Mozambique Spitting. In the western parts of the region this is replaced by the Black Spitting Cobra and the Zebra 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

Ambulance: 10177

ER24:084124

Private - EMS: +266 2831 9539

Vitality Health - E M S: +266 2232 6690

African Snakebite Institute: +27 82 494 2039

HOSPITALS AROUND LESOTHO

Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital Tel: +266 2222 0000 / +266 2222 0319 -29.34294, 27.52866

Maseru Private Hospital Tel: +266 2231 3260 -29.28603, 27.52064

St Joseph's Hospital (Roma) Tel: +266 27001953 -29.46158, 27.73386

Scott Hospital (Morija) Tel: +266 22360000 Motebang Hospital (Hlotse)
Tel: +266 22400305 / +266 22400264
-28.87221, 28.05054

Butha-Buthe Hospital Tel: +266 22460210 -28.76546, 28.24613



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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.

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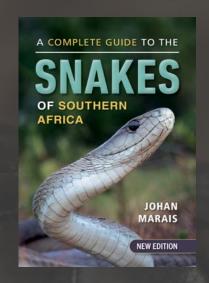


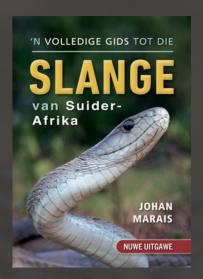


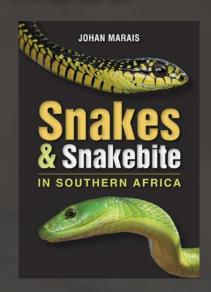




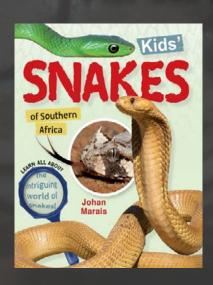
MORE RESOURCES



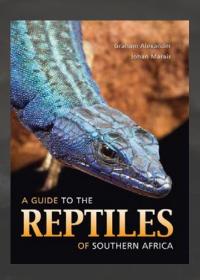




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