



VERY DANGEROUS



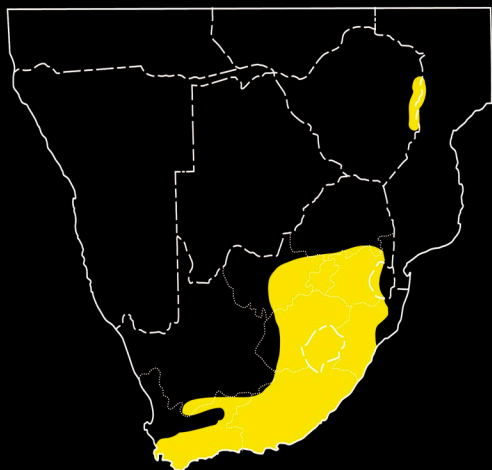
Rinkhals

(Hemachatus haemachatus)

Other names:

Ringhals

Maximum Length:
1.5 m



The Rinkhals is endemic to Southern Africa and found only in South Africa 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 very quick to disappear down a hole but if cornered it will stand its ground, form a hood and is quick to spit. The Rinkhals is also quick to sham 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 against the venom of this snake.

