

HIGHLY VENOMOUS



## Rinkhals

(*Hemachatus haemachatus*)

Maximum Length:  
 1.5 m



### Other names:

Ring-necked Spitting Cobra

The Rinkhals is endemic to southern Africa and occurs in South Africa, eSwatini, and Lesotho. Although it resembles a cobra by spreading a hood, it is not a true cobra and gives birth to live young. It is primarily a grassland species but also inhabits 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. It is also well known for its dramatic defensive display of playing dead, rolling onto its back with its mouth agape. Its venom is largely cytotoxic, causing pain, swelling, and potentially tissue damage. Bites are extremely rare, and fatalities are virtually unheard of. Polyvalent antivenom is effective.

