

Snake Sense

Overview: Snakes are among the most feared and hated creatures in the world despite the great amount of material that has been written about their beneficial activities. Probably the greatest economic value of these reptiles is the service they perform in pest control through their feeding habits.

"Factsss"



Snakes are rarely aggressive towards humans.



Only two of the twenty-seven kinds of snakes inhabiting Maryland are venomous. The Copperhead and the Timber Rattlesnake.



Snakes are beneficial to man and hold an important place in the ecology of all parts of the world. They effectively control the populations of small mammals, like mice and rats. They are also an important food source for hawks and other predators.



Snakes seek food and cover under boards, flat rocks, trash piles and similar materials. Along water margins, snakes sun on logs on over-hanging brush. They hide under driftwood, rocks and boats and are seldom seen on clear, open beaches where they are exposed to direct sunlight and predators.

Remember: Snakes are a part of our natural world and should be left there unharmed. If you encounter a snake, do not attempt to handle or kill it. Slowly move away and the snake will not strike. All native snakes in Maryland are protected by the **Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act**. This means that native snakes cannot be killed, possessed or bred without first acquiring the proper permit from DNR.

YOU can prevent snake bites!

Avoid getting bitten by:

1. Learn to identify, by sight, the copperhead and timber rattlesnake.
2. When hiking or camping in areas where snakes may be found, watch where you put your hands and feet. Watch where you sit and where you place your sleeping bag.
3. Wear suitable clothing, when hiking through tall grass or heavy brush, wear long pants and heavy boots.
4. Avoid rock piles, stacks of old boards and brush in wooded areas, snakes use these areas frequently.
5. Never handle "dead" venomous snakes, they may not be completely dead!
6. **LEAVE SNAKES ALONE. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE OR KILL THEM.**

What to do if a snake bites:

1. Wash the bite with soap and water.
2. Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart.
3. Get medical help.
4. **DO NOT** ice or any other type of coolant on the bite. Research has shown this to be potentially harmful.
5. **NO** tourniquets. This cuts off blood flow and may result in loss of the affected limb.
6. **NO** incisions in the wound. Such measures have not been proven useful and may cause further injury.

Common Snakes found in Howard County Parks:

Black Rat Snake

Northern Black Racer

Eastern Garter Snake

Northern Ring Snake

Northern Water Snake

* The Northern Copperhead may be present in some park settings.