

Living Hazards Database (LHD) – Search by Scientific Name



The Living Hazards Database (LHD) is a compilation of more than 500 species worldwide, which are reported to cause serious injury or death of humans. The LHD is intended to provide a concise, practical information source for use by medical, paramedical, first-responder personnel and medical planners supporting U.S. military personnel. Information on each species listed includes: description, habitat, behavior, known harmful effects, geographic distribution, taxonomy, and a representative image for most species.

For information about **antivenom products, producers or sources**, you can go to: <http://www.toxinology.com>, then search by the scientific name (genus and species) of the snake, spider, or scorpion.

DoD Users: If you need need additional information on venomous animals and plants contact the Information Services Division (ISD).

NIPRNET: AFPMB ISD Staff	COM:(301) 295-7476 DSN: 295-7476
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Acalytophis peronii

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New Name: [Hydrophis peronii](#) , changed Jan. 2013; see NOTE: under Hydrophis spp. (general)

Acanthophis antarcticus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Acanthophis antarcticus antarcticus*, *A. a. cliffcrosswelingtoni*, *A. a. schistos*, *A. brownii*, *A. cerastinus*

Common Names: Death adder, deaf adder, todesotter, southern death adder

Description

Adults usually less than 24 inches long, but may reach 30 inches, & are relatively heavy-bodied. Colors quite variable including shades of brown, grey, black, or reddish. Body patterned w/ crossbands which always contrast w/ its background color. Pale belly speckled w/ dark spots. Distinctive slender tail is yellow or cream colored & tipped w/ a soft, spine-like scale.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry, sandy areas in or near open woodlands, grassy plains, or rock outcroppings. Widely distributed in Australia & New Guinea.

Activity and Behavior

Most active at dusk, dawn, or night time, but usually lies in wait for prey animals to come close enough to strike. Often remain partly buried in sand, loose soil or leaf litter. Typical prey includes small mammals, birds or lizards. Sometimes will move its brightly colored tail to lure potential prey closer. Ovoviviparous, bearing up to 20 six-inch long young per litter. These are Elapids, but their overall behavior is very similar to many of the vipers.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (may also have myotoxic factors). This species has very potent venom, relatively long fangs, & may inject up to 60-70 mg of venom per bite (20 mg can kill some humans).

Acanthophis barnetti

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: (Possible synonym of either *A. laevis* or *A. praelongus*)

Common Names: Barnett's death adder

Description

Similar to several related species of "death adders". For some general characters, [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Habitat

Found in northern Papua New Guinea. For more details, [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Activity and Behavior

[See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Venom Characteristics

Venom is probably neurotoxic but not yet well studied. For generalized information, [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#)

Acanthophis hawkei

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Acanthophis cummingi*, *Acanthophis lancasteri*

Common Names: Hawke's death adder, Cumming's death adder, Lancaster's death adder

Description

[See Acanthophis antarcticus](#)

Habitat

Found in Queensland and Northern Territory in Australia. [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Activity and Behavior

[See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Venom Characteristics

[See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Acanthophis laevis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Acanthophis antarcticus laevis*, *Acanthophis groenveldi*, *Acanthophis macgregori*

Common Names: Eastern death adder, New Guinea death adder

Description

Medium-sized, stout-bodied viper w/ fairly short slender tail. For description of a closely related species, [See *Acanthophis antarcticus*](#).



Habitat

Found mainly in dry, sandy, areas in or near open woodlands or grasslands which include rock outcroppings. [See *Acanthophis antarcticus*](#). Found in Papua New Guinea & Indonesia (Irian Jaya, Seram, & Tanimbar).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Not much reported, but probably prey on available vertebrates (e.g., lizards, small mammals & birds) & are probably ovoviviparous w/ small litter numbers. [See *Acanthophis antarcticus*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, but may include other factors, too. [See *Acanthophis antarcticus*](#).

Acanthophis praelongus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Northern death adder

Description

Medium-sized, adults seldom 24 in. (60 cm) long), stout-bodied viper, w/ short narrower tail. Body dark brown w/ narrow lighter dorsal crossbands, much narrower & less obvious than those of the closely-related species, *A. antarcticus*.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry, sandy open areas near open woodlands, grassy plains or rock outcroppings. Found in Australia (Northern Territory, Queensland & Western Australia), Indonesia (Seram, Irian Jaya, & Tanimbar), & Papua New Guinea. [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, often active at dusk or dawn, sluggish during day. Usually await prey in an "ambush" hunting strategy. Will bite quickly if stepped on or disturbed. Slow to retreat when threatened. May hang onto bitten prey or person. [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#). Eat available lizards, small mammals, & birds. Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported but probably few.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly mainly strongly neurotoxic, may also have anticoagulant or cytotoxic factors. [See Acanthophis antarcticus](#).

Acanthophis pyrrhus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Acanthophis antarcticus pyrrhus*, *Acanthophis pyrrhus armstrongi*, *Aggressiserpens armstrongi*, *Aggressiserpens pyrrhus*

Common Names: Desert death adder

Description

This is a bright orange-brown or reddish-brown desert species, crossbanded w/ paler shades of body color. Tip of tail usually black. Scales are heavily keeled & give it a bristly appearance. Size & relative body shape similar to *A. antarcticus*, but a bit smaller (adults seldom more than 75 cm long) & more slender.



Habitat

This species is confined to the western & central desert regions of Australia. Local habitats are generally similar to those for "*A. antarcticus*".

Activity and Behavior

Most active at night. Seldom move about in daytime. Otherwise, behavior & habits are generally very similar to those described for "*A. antarcticus*". This species preys mainly on small lizards. Ovoviviparous w/ usually 10-13 young per litter.

Venom Characteristics

Venom is mainly neurotoxic but may contain myotoxic factors.

Acanthophis rugosus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Acanthophis antarcticus rugosus*, *A. bottomi*, *A. lancasteri*, *A. woolfi*

Common Names: Rauhneckige, Todesotter

Description

[See *Acanthophis antarcticus*.](#)

Habitat

Found in eastern, northern and western Australia and Indonesia (Irian Jaya). [See *Acanthophis antarcticus*.](#)

Activity and Behavior

[See *Acanthophis antarcticus*.](#)

Venom Characteristics

[See *Acanthophis antarcticus*.](#)

Acanthophis spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Taxonomic experts have differing opinions, but from 5 to 11 named species are currently recognized as belonging in this genus (8 are addressed individually here). See each separately-listed species.

Common Names: Death adders, "deaf" adders (reportedly, based on their reluctance to move when approached, early settlers presumed they could not "hear" anything approaching them).

Description

Members of this genus are usually short, squat, terrestrial snakes; w/ adults usually 30-50 cm long, (max. about 100 cm). Body color highly variable dorsally: red, brown, or grayish, either uniform or w/ alternating pale & dark crossbands. Head triangulate, stubby body & thin tail often having a soft spine-like scale at its tip. Belly light-colored, speckled w/ dark spots.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry, sandy areas in or near open woodlands, grassy plains, or rock outcroppings. Some species are widespread in monsoon & rain forests, both lowland & highland, & coastal sand dunes.

Activity and Behavior

Most species are typically nocturnal, sit-&-wait ambushers, sluggish during day. Often hide in leaf litter or loose sand. Commonly found asleep on paths & trails during day; usually bite if stepped on. Strike quickly. Following initial bite, often hang on, not attempting to flee like most other elapids. Some use tail to lure prey. Essentially fill the "niche" occupied by true vipers in other regions.

Venom Characteristics

Venom of most species is strongly to moderately neurotoxic; weakly hemolytic, possibly anticoagulant and cytotoxic. Bite site may be painless or mildly painful. Symptoms usually mild, until severe neurotoxic paralysis occurs. Early mild headache & occasional vomiting in some cases.

Acanthophis wellsi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Acanthophis wellsei, A. wellsi donnellani, A. w. wellsei, Aggressiserpens wellsi

Common Names: Wells' death adder

Description

[See Acanthophis antarcticus.](#)

Habitat

Found only in Australia (Hamersleys & Chichesters Range of the Pilbara). [See Acanthophis antarcticus.](#)

Activity and Behavior

[See Acanthophis antarcticus.](#)

Venom Characteristics

Not much known but probably mainly neurotoxic. [See Acanthophis antarcticus.](#)

Adenorhinos barbouri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Atheris barbouri

Common Names: Uzungwe Mountain bush viper, Barbour's (bush) viper, Uzungwe viper

Description

Small terrestrial adder, adults seldom exceed 40 cm long. Body dull olive, dorsal scales keeled & in 20-23 midbody rows, head triangular & distinct from neck, w/ a short, rounded snout; w/ a pair of straw-colored, dorso-lateral, zig-zag stripes from back of head to tip of rather short tail. Belly greenish-white to olive, & usually paler than dorsum. Sometimes has faint black checkering on top of tail.

Habitat

Found mainly in bush & bamboo undergrowth on mountain slopes at about 1800 m elevation. Limited to the Uzungwe & Ukinga Mountains of southwestern Tanzania.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. May feed on slugs or other available soft-bodied invertebrates. Reproduction habits not known.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. No known human bites or envenomations. No specific antivenom currently being produced.

Agkistrodon bilineatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Ancistrodon bilineatum*, *A. bilineatus*, *Agkistrodon bilineatum*, *A. bilineatus bilineatus*, *A. b. howardgloydi*, *A. b. lemosespinali*, *A. b. russeolus*, *Trigonocephalus bilineatus*, *T. specialis*

Common Names: Cantil, Mexican Moccasin, Mokassinlange, common cantil, vibora castelana, k'an ti, q'an ti, cazadora, cumcoatl, cantil de agua, cuatro narices, gammarrilla, volpochh, bil palka, kantiil [plus >10 additional local dialect names]

Description

Large, heavy-bodied pitviper, adults usually 80-120 cm (max. 138 cm) long w/ fairly long slender tail, fangs may be 12 mm long. Color variable, usually dark gray to almost black w/ 10-19 (usually 12-15) brown to black crossbands, often outlined by thin whitish lines; body may also have yellow, red, or lavender scales; w/ 2 distinct pale lines along sides of head. Belly dark grayish to reddish-brown, lightest along middle, w/ scattered whitish spots (& often w/ dark chestnut-brown lateral spots).



Habitat

Most commonly found in seasonally dry, tropical deciduous scrub forest & large grassy plains w/ scattered trees, mainly in coastal foothills in parts of southern & western Mexico & Central America. Often shelters in crevices or under rocks. Mainly found in lower to moderate elevations, usually <600 m (max. about 1,500 m). Also found in the Rio Chixoy (Negro) Valley in central Guatemala.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Aggressive when provoked; will strike repeatedly. Ovoviviparous w/ each female bearing about a dozen 10-inch long neonates/ litter. Preys on available small mammals, lizards, birds, amphibians & reptiles. Juveniles often eat invertebrates, too.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic, necrotic effects reportedly often extensive; serious human envenomations & fatalities have occurred. This species is the third most frequent cause of snake envenomations of humans in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.

Agkistrodon contortrix

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Agkistrodon contortrix contortrix*, *A. c. laticinctus*, *A. c. mokeson*, *A. c. mokasen*, *A. c. phaenogaster*, *A. c. pictigaster*, *A. mokesen austrinus*, *A. mokason cupreus*, *A. m. pictigaster*, *Boa contortrix*, *Cenchrus atrofuscus*, *C. contortrix*, *C. marmorata*, *C. mokasen*, *C. mokeson*, *Scytalus cupreus*, *S. mokeson*, *Tisiphona cuprea*, *Trionocephalus atrofuscus*, *T. cenchrus*, *T. contortrix*, *T. histrionicus*

Common Names: Copperhead, Southern Copperhead, Northern Copperhead, Broad-banded Copperhead, Osage Copperhead, Trans-Pecos Copperhead, Upland Moccasin, Kupferkopf, beech leaf snake, congo, rusty moccasin, copper snake, dumb rattlesnake, copper adder

Description

Medium-sized, stout-bodied pitviper, adults usually 40-80 cm long. Body usually pale brown, tan or reddish-brown, w/ alternating broad bands of light (pale grayish-yellow to tan) & dark (sandy, chestnut or chocolate brown), a very thin pale line postocular stripe. Tail of young copperheads is usually rather bright yellow (sometimes w/ a greenish tint).



Habitat

Most common in wooded regions containing rocky canyons, springs, or streams; may be found far from permanent water in desert scrub areas, & sometimes in low coastal areas. Found from southeastern Nebraska & Iowa east to Massachusetts & south into northeastern corner of Mexico (at least in the Rio Grande valley) & all U.S. states south & east of those listed.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal; often basks in sunny spots, has a tendency to follow prey close to civilized areas. Preys on small mammals, birds, frogs, & cicadas (sometimes climbing in bushes to catch them). Females bear 8-inch long, live young, usually in or near former hibernation sites.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic & relatively mild; seldom injects large amounts of venom. Bites can produce severe local pain but fatalities are very rare.

Agkistrodon piscivorus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Acontias leucostoma*, *Agkistrodon piscivorus conanti*, *A. p. leucostoma*, *A. p. piscivorus*, *Ancistrodon piscivorax*, *A. p. piscivorax*, *A. p. pugnax*, *Crotalus piscivorus*, *Toxicophis piscivorus*, *Trionocephalus piscivorus*

Common Names: Engl.: Cottonmouth (several subspecies are respectively called eastern, Western and Florida Cottonmouths), water moccasin, gapper, snap jaw, black moccasin, congo, Native Amer.: hiwa, hiwachoba, okifa chinto, we'-ts'a u-bi-xo

Description

Heavy-bodied pitviper, adults about 80-150 cm long (max. 180 cm); olive to light or dark brown, w/ dark brown or black irregular-edged crossbands, belly & chin usually white to tan (darker toward tail), adults' tail dark, inside of mouth & throat strikingly white, tongue bright red, 23-27 midbody dorsal scale rows. Juveniles usually paler, more brightly patterned, w/ yellow tail tip. Eastern & southeastern populations usually paler & stouter. Completely dark & very pale individuals occur.





Habitat

Found mainly in or near water, like swamps, streams, or lakes; but often considerable distances away in fields or open forest. Reported from the Rio Grande valley in southern Texas to Kansas, then east through Iowa & southern Indiana to southeastern Virginia, and all areas south and east from there. Can bite under water, despite a common belief that they can't. May have formerly been present on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, but no confirmed records.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but often basks in sunlight on rocks or logs in or by water. If disturbed while in or near water, they usually slip into the water and swim away. If cornered away from water, often form a coil, arch the head back and gape the mouth wide, showing strikingly white interior. Eat small mammals, fish, amphibians, birds, etc. May become aggressive if disturbed. Can bite very effectively under water.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, often includes a thrombin-like anticoagulation effect, envenomation has been reported historically to cause a number of human fatalities, but in one set of careful observations, less than 20% of known envenomations were fatal (without any antivenom given).

Agkistrodon taylori

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Ancistrodon bilineatus*, *Agkistrodon bilineatus*, *A. b. lemosespinali*, *A. b. taylori*

Common Names: Taylor's cantil, Cola huesco, hueson, metapil, navaja, Mexican Moccasin

Description

Fairly large, heavy-bodied pitviper, adults usually 64-90 cm long (max. 96+ cm), tail relatively shorter than for *A. bilineatus*. Color variable, body usually grayish to brownish-gray w/ 11-16 (avg. 13) dark dorsal crossbands, irregularly outlined w/ rows of white to yellow-orange flecks (may also have some reddish & orange scales). Has 2 distinct, pale (yellowish-white) stripes along each side of head. Juveniles w/ gray & creamy-yellow dorsal crossbands & yellow tail tip.



Habitat

Mainly found in mesquite-grassland, thornforest, & tropical deciduous forest in northeastern Mexico. Most often found away from water, on or near rocky hillsides, w/ abundant limestone outcroppings. Limited to Mexican states of Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosi, & Hidalgo (& maybe eastern Coahuila) & usually at moderate or lower elevations of <600 m.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, & mainly nocturnal. Preys mainly on available lizards, small mammals, & birds, but often also eats grasshoppers & other arthropods. Sometimes basks in morning sunlight. Ovoviviparous w/ 3-10 young/ litter observed for captured specimens.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Can cause extensive tissue necrosis. Serious human envenomations and deaths have been reported to have been caused by this species.

Aipysurus laevis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae, **Subfamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: *Aipysurus fuliginosus*, *Hypotropis jukesii*

Common Names: Olive-brown sea snake, large olive sea snake, olive pipe sea snake

Description

Large, sea snake (up to 2.0 m long); body generally cylindrical w/ dark olive-colored to brownish-green dorsal surface & cream to light yellow-gray venter (usually including more than half the body surface). Tail somewhat laterally flattened. One pair of upper fixed front fangs.



Habitat

Found in marine waters around Indonesia, Timor, New Guinea, east to New Caledonia, & Australia (Western Australia, North Territory, & Queensland). Usually found in small individual home ranges around a single coral outcropping (bommie).

Activity and Behavior

Prey on various fish, & sometimes prawns, along relatively shallow to moderately-deep coral reefs.

Generally docile, but inquisitive, & will investigate new things or people in their location; may be attracted to a divers' face plate; when rebuffed, they will sometimes become aggressive & pursue (& may try to bite) a diver. Ovoviviparous, usually bearing 1-5 young / litter.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly post-synaptic neurotoxins & myotoxins, but contains factors which may also be cytotoxic. Serious, non-fatal snake bites & envenomations of humans by this species have been recorded. Fangs of adults can be 4.7 mm long, & can penetrate some divers' neoprene wetsuits.

Androctonus aeneas

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Androctonus aeneas liouvillei*

Common Names: Black scorpion, fat-tailed scorpion

Description

Medium to large sized dark, fat-tailed scorpion, adults usually about 50 mm long, very similar in appearance to *A. australis* & *A. crassicauda*.

Habitat

Mainly found in arid or semi-arid sites, usually w/ sandy soil, in northwestern Africa. For more detailed description of typical local habitat for a closely-related species, [See *Androctonus crassicauda*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hides in crevices or under various objects during the day. Preys on a variety of available insects & invertebrates, & sometimes small lizards. Mating involves a courtship "dance." Young (usually 5-20+) hatch from eggs within female, then crawl out her genital opening. Often use both pincers & sting in defense & to capture & subdue prey.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly neurotoxic, w/ several body systems & organs of humans being affected. Usually causes immediate local pain, reddening & swelling at sting site; has caused death of human children.

Androctonus amoreuxi

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Fat-tailed scorpion, black scorpion (some color forms)

Description

Very similar in size, appearance, & physical characters to both *A. australis* & *A. crassicauda*.



Habitat

Fairly wide-spread in northern Africa & Middle East; Probably also occurs in Iraq, Syria, & Libya, but no verified specimens from there. For general description of typical habitat for a closely-related species, [See Androctonus crassicauda](#).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hides in crevices & under various objects during day. Preys on a variety of insects & other arthropods (may be cannibalistic), & sometimes small lizards. Uses both pedipalps & sting in defense & to capture prey. Mate via elaborate courtship "dance," typically 5-30+ young hatch within female & crawl out of her genital opening.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cardiotoxic & myotoxic factors. Venom reportedly less potent than that of *A. australis* &/or *A. crassicauda*.

Androctonus australis

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Androctonus australis australis*, *A. a. hector*

Common Names: Dark desert scorpion, fat-tailed scorpion

Description

Largest species of the dark, fat-tailed scorpions in this genus. Adults usually 50-80 mm long (max. 110+ mm). Body heavy, usually medium to dark brown, w/ legs yellow-brown & tips of pincers & telson almost black; 4 dorsal ridges w/ serrate crests along each post-abdomen segment. Numerous short, stiff dark hairs &/or spines scattered over body & post-abdomen. Pincers (pedipalps) large, robust at base; generally fearsome-looking, re-curved spine at tip of tail.



Habitat

Found mainly in margins of deserts or very arid places across most of North Africa, Pakistan & India, & very likely most Middle-Eastern countries between (but not many specimens collected there, so far). Occurs mainly in very dry areas, seldom very near a coast or permanent body of water. Most wide-spread geographically, of any species in this genus.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hides in crevices or under various objects during day. Can climb most vertical surfaces very well (to >20 ft. above ground). Preys on a wide range of insects, invertebrates, other scorpions (sometimes cannibalistic), small lizards & sometimes even small mammals. Mating involves elaborate courtship "dance." Young (usually 5-35+) hatch within female & then crawl out her genital opening. Use both sting & pincers in defense & for prey capture.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic w/ additional cardiotoxic, myotoxic & hemotoxic factors. Often affects several body organs & systems of humans; mainly respiratory or cardiac. Human deaths reportedly most often due to respiratory or heart failure; sometimes cerebral hemorrhage, critical organ dysfunction, or shock may be involved. Has the most potent venom of any species in this genus.

Androctonus bicolor

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Fat-tailed scorpion, black scorpion, bi-colored scorpion

Description

Medium-sized, dark fat-tailed scorpion, adults usually 40-60 mm long (max. about 80 mm). Body usually very dark, like *A. crassicauda*, but terminal segments of legs & pedipalpi lighter yellowish-brown. Pincers not as robust at base as those of *A. crassicauda*.



Habitat

Mainly found in arid, semi-arid or margins of desert sites, usually w/ sandy soil. Found in very similar conditions to those suitable for *A. crassicauda*, & geographic distribution greatly overlaps that of *A. crassicauda*. Reported from several countries in the Middle East & Turkey; may also be present in Lebanon, Syria & Iraq, but no specimens reported from there, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hiding in crevices or under objects in the day. Preys mainly on various available insects & arthropods. Elaborate mating "dance." Young hatch from eggs retained within female then crawl out her genital opening.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cardiotoxic & myotoxic factors, comparable in potency to the venom of *A. crassicauda*. Causes locally painful, reddened & slightly swollen area at sting site, but not reported to have caused human deaths.

Androctonus crassicauda

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Androctonus crassicauda gonneti* [NOTE: This is the second most wide-spread species in this typically Middle-Eastern, North African, & South Asian genus.]

Common Names: Black Turkish fat-tailed scorpion, fat-tailed scorpion

Description

Moderately large dark fat-tailed scorpion, adults usually about 50 mm long (max. 73+ mm). Body heavy, dark brown (often nearly black), w/ 4 or more dorsal, longitudinal ridges w/ serrate crests on most segments of the post-abdomen, & numerous short, stiff, dark hairs & spines scattered over body & post-abdomen. Pedipalps (pincers) large, robust at base; generally fearsome-looking. Re-curved sting at tip of post-abdomen (telson).



Habitat

Mainly found in margins of desert, arid, semi-arid sites w/ sandy surface soil, sometimes found in accumulated vegetation debris, or in rock crevices. This species is widespread in Turkey, & in several other Middle Eastern & North African countries. One subspecies, *A. c. gonnети*, apparently limited to Morocco.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hide in crevices & under various objects during day, can climb most surfaces (all but very smooth glass) to surprising vertical heights (>20 ft.). Prey mainly on smaller insects & invertebrates, but occasionally kill & suck body juices out of small lizards (& rarely, very small mammals). Use sting at tip of post-abdomen to defend themselves & sometimes to kill large prey. Eggs hatch inside female & young (usually 7-30+) crawl out her genital opening.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, but usually includes cardiotoxic, & often also myotoxic factors. Effects of envenomation (sting) usually include immediate severe local pain, redness & swelling; plus delayed (from one to 24+ hours later) systemic effects which may involve heart malfunctions, remote internal bleeding & problems w/ vision & breathing. Human deaths reportedly most often due to respiratory arrest, heart failure, or shock.

Androctonus hoggardensis

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Fat-tailed desert scorpion

Description

Medium-sized, moderately-dark, fat-tailed scorpion, adults about 40-50 mm long. Body colors, pattern & physical appearance very similar to *A. australis*, but generally much lighter in color & markedly smaller. Body yellowish-brown to medium-brown, w/ yellowish-brown legs & post-abdomen. Tips of pincers & telson not very dark brown.

Habitat

Very similar to habitat of *A. australis*. Only reported from Algeria & Nigeria; but probably also occurs in adjacent areas of Chad, Mali, & Libya. For more detailed description of typical local habitat for a closely-related species, [See *Androctonus australis*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hides in cracks & under various objects in daytime. Preys mainly on available insects & other arthropods. Has an elaborate mating "dance," & young hatch inside female & crawl out her genital opening. May use both pincers & sting in own defense & to catch prey.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly neurotoxic, w/ cardiotoxic & myotoxic factors. Few stings of humans & no human fatalities confirmed to have been caused by this species.

Androctonus mauretanicus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Moroccan fat-tailed scorpion, black scorpion

Description

Medium-sized to large, moderately dark, fat-tailed scorpion, adults about 50 mm long. Body yellowish-brown to very dark brown (almost black), w/ yellow-brownish legs, pincers & post-abdomen darker near tips. Re-curved sting at end of telson.



Habitat

Mainly found in semi-arid areas w/ sandy soils. Apparently limited to Morocco. For more detailed description of typical local habitats for a closely-related species, [See *Androctonus crassicauda*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Nocurnal, hides in cracks or under various objects during day. Preys mainly on insects & other smaller arthropods. Has a complex mating "dance." Young hatch from eggs within female then crawl out her genital opening. May use both pincers & sting in defense & to catch prey.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ additional factors that are cardiotoxic, myotoxic, & maybe also hemotoxic. Second most potent of any species in this genus. Causes a number of human deaths every year within its range. [See *Androctonus australis*](#).

Androctonus sergenti

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Fat-tailed scorpion

Description

Medium-sized fat-tailed scorpion, adults about 40-50 mm long. Body colors, pattern & size very similar to *A. aeneas*; but slightly smaller & w/ slightly lighter-colored pincer tips & telson (i.e., medium-brown, not dark brown).

Habitat

Mainly found in dry, semi-desert areas at medium elevations on slopes of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. For more detailed description of typical local habitat of a very similar species, [See *Androctonus mauritanicus*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hides during the day in available crevices or under objects. Preys mainly on available insects & other arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly neurotoxic, w/ additional factors that are cardiotoxic & myotoxic. Not known to have caused serious human envenomations or deaths. For more details of potential venom effects, [See *Androctonus crassicauda*](#).

Androctonus spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: This genus includes at least 13 currently recognized species, but only 8 of those pose significant health threats by stinging humans. The other 5 species are relatively rare, have rather limited distributions, have seldom been reported to sting people, &/or have not been reported to cause human fatalities, nor serious envenomations. See individual species (listed separately) for more details.

Common Names: Fat-tailed scorpions, dark desert scorpions

Description

Most are medium to large sized, fat-tailed, scorpions, adults of most species are usually 50-80 mm long (some >110 mm). Body is usually medium to dark brown, w/ legs lighter (often yellowish), & tips of

pincers & telson very dark. Typically have serrate dorsal crests along post-abdomen segments, & many short, stiff, dark spines (or "hairs") scattered over body. Pincers medium to large, moderately stout, often fearsome looking, w/ recurved spine (stinger) at tip of telson.

Habitat

Mainly found in margins of deserts or very arid sites (like around an oasis or human home), across most of North Africa, southern Asia & the Middle East. Some species live at >500 m elevations. See individual species, listed separately, for more precise reported distributions.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, hide in crevices or under various objects during the day. Most can climb vertical surfaces well (to >20 ft. above ground). Prey on a wide variety of insects, invertebrates, other scorpions (sometimes cannibalistic), sometimes also small lizards (occasionally even very small mammals). Young (usually 5-35+) hatch within the female then crawl out her genital opening. Often remain w/ female (climb & ride on her back) until 2nd instar.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, often w/ additional cardiotoxic, myotoxic, or hemotoxic factors. Often affects several body organs or systems at the same time. Human deaths reported to usually be due to heart or respiratory failure, sometimes cerebral hemorrhage may also be involved.

Apis mellifera scutellata

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Identification

Family: Apidae

Scientific Names: Apis scutellata

Common Names: Africanized honey bee (or AHB)

Description

Look identical to typical "domesticated" European honey bees (microscopic measurement differences). Body about 1.5-2.5 cm long, dark-brown w/ yellow-brown hairs covering thorax, most of head & in bands across abdomen; wings clear & membranous. Social insects, work co-operatively in large colonies (often thousands of individuals) w/ a caste system. Large, dark compound eyes, elongated tongue-like mouthparts, carry pollen stuck among hairs of hind legs.



Habitat

When found "wild", these & other honey bees typically live in warmer to temperate climates, in large colonies (usually called hives; often built in various available somewhat "protected" cavities), w/ honey storage combs & brood chambers built of beeswax, w/ social castes. Wild populations of "Africanized" honey bees have become widely established throughout South and Central America, and as far north as the southern tier of states in the U.S. "Africanized" bees have resulted from crossing of the subspecies of domesticated honey bees most widely commercially cultured in the Americas, *A. m. ligustica*, and the African subspecies, *A. m. scutellata*.

Activity and Behavior

Diurnal, usually foraging & collecting nectar & pollen from available flowers, & various nest (hive) & brood maintenance. This subspecies is much more aggressive than typical "domesticated" (European/ Italian) subspecies, w/ >50% of workers in a colony attacking an intruder w/ slightest provocation; & will maintain attack for 1/4 mile or farther. This subspecies will forage during overcast & in light rain. Tend to "swarm" or abscond more than European subspecies does.

Venom Characteristics

Contains enzymes, peptides, histamine (causes local pain & vasodilation), & hyaluronidase (spreading factor). About 50-60% of venom's dry-weight is peptides (mainly melittin & mast-cell degranulating peptide). Peptides cause cell lysis, pain & inflammation; phospholipases (esp. A2) cause allergic

reactions. This subspecies' venom is NOT more potent than European bees', but significantly more stings usually inflicted. Deaths usually due to anaphylactic shock.

Aspidelaps lubricus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidelaps lubricus cowlesi*, *A. l. infuscatus*, *A. l. lubricus*, *Elaps lubricus*, *Natrix lubricus*

Common Names: Angolan coral snake, Western coral snake, Cape coral snake, South African Coral Snake

Description

Small, relatively thick-bodied terrestrial Elapid snake, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. 80 cm). Body color usually orange to coral-red, patterned dorsally w/ 20-47 black crossbands. First black band usually extends (like a chevron) onto the top of the head. Belly usually yellowish-white w/ the first 2-3 dorsal black bands extending as complete ventral crossbars, too. Juveniles may have additional faint dark crossbands on belly farther toward tail.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry, sandy, or rocky regions of semi-arid scrublands & desert fringes. Found in the Republic of South Africa (Cape Province), southern Angola, & Namibia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Relatively easily excited, never becomes tame in captivity. When disturbed or exposed, it rears up, spreads a narrow hood, & hisses in defense (may strike at intruder if further bothered). Oviparous w/ usually 3-11 eggs/ clutch observed. Preys mainly on available lizards, but also eats reptile eggs & small rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Not very well known. Venom mainly neurotoxic w/ possible mild cytotoxic factors. Few bites & envenomations of humans reported w/ limited, mainly localized minor swelling & pain. No human fatalities reported.

Aspidelaps scutatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidelaps scutatus bachrani*, *A. s. fulafulus*, *A. s. intermedius*, *A. s. scutatus*, *Cyrtophis scutatus*

Common Names: Shield-nosed Snake, Eastern shield-nosed snake, Intermediate shield-nosed snake, Schildnasenkobra, Schildkobra

Description

Small, heavy-bodied terrestrial Elapid, adults usually 40-60 cm long (max. about 75 cm). Has a much enlarged "shield-like" rostral scale (on top of its snout) & 21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body color usually pale gray-brown, salmon-pink, or orange-brown w/ a series of brown blotches over the back & tail. Head & forepart of body glossy black.



Habitat

Found mainly in savanna & sandveld areas; & in arid sandy & stony regions. Found in Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, northeastern Republic of South Africa, & Zimbabwe.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Usually sluggish, but may be very active after rains. Very active burrower, often using man-made items, like partly buried plastic pipes as "burrows." May "play dead" if cornered, but usually hisses explosively & strikes repeatedly if molested. It will rear the front part of its body & flatten its neck when disturbed, but does not have a true hood like typical cobras. Oviparous w/ 4-11 eggs/ clutch observed. Eats lizards, small mammals & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Venom reportedly primarily neurotoxic. Humans are occasionally bitten & envenomated. Reported symptoms have ranged from mild local swelling & pain to death (of small children) due to cardiac arrest. No known antivenom currently produced.

Astrotia stokesii

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New Name: [Hydrophis stokesii](#) , changed Jan. 2013 ; see NOTE: under Hydrophis spp. (general)

Atheris acuminata

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris acuminatus*, *Atheris hispidus* (in part)

Common Names: Bush viper

Description

For generalized description of a very closely-related species, [See *Atheris hispidus*](#) (some authors claim this may be a sub-species of *A. hispidus*).



Habitat

Typically found in forests or forest margins. Reported only from western Uganda.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly arboreal, mainly nocturnal, probably ovoviviparous (w/ a usual litter of <15 young), & probably mainly preys on available small mammals, lizards & frogs. For details about a closely-related species, [See *Atheris hispidus*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Bites of humans extremely rare, & no documented serious human envenomations or fatalities, so far. No specific antivenom currently produced.

Atheris broadleyi

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Identification

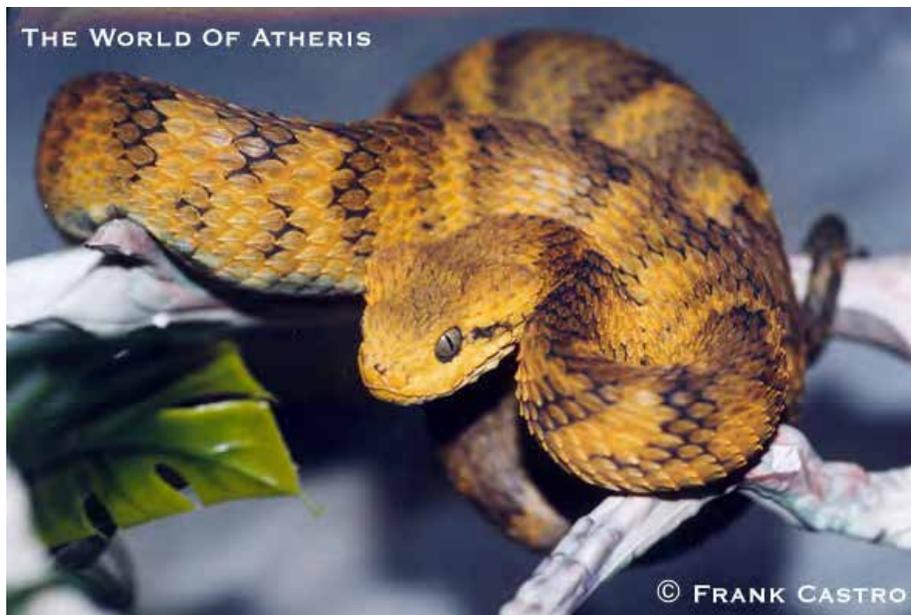
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris squamigera*

Common Names: Cameroon bush viper

Description

A medium-sized, "rough-scaled" true viper (adder) of varied colors & patterns. Very similar to "*A. squamigera*".



Habitat

Found mainly in forest margins. Reported only from Cameroon (East Province).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal & usually nocturnal, but may bask in the sun occasionally, & sometimes hunts for small animal prey near or on the ground. [See *Atheris squamigera*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but mainly hemotoxic.

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Atheris ceratophora

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris ceratophorus*

Common Names: Usambara bush viper

Description

Medium-sized fairly slender, arboreal adder, adults usually 0.6 m long (max. <1.0 m), w/ 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually yellow-green or dark olive-green, mottled w/ dark-brown (all-black forms have been reported). Head very broad, triangular, w/ 3 horn-like scales above each eye. Most scales are strongly-keeled & their tips project away from the body, giving a "rough" appearance. Belly dirty-orange to nearly black, & may have black speckles.



Habitat

Found mainly in bushes at forest edge & in forest glades. Limited to Tanzania (Usambara, Uluguru, Uzungwe Mountains).

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal (may climb to 20 ft. above ground), mainly nocturnal (maybe crepuscular) but often basks in the sun. Often forage for small mammal (rodent) prey on the ground. Ovoviviparous, typically bears 5-8 young/ litter, each about 6 inches long.

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely hemotoxic, but not well studied. Considered nonlethal to man. No known specific antivenom currently produced.

Atheris chlorechis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris chloroechis*, *A. squamiger chloroechis*, *A. polylepis*, *Echis chloroechis*, *Toxicoa chloroechis*, *Vipera chloroechis*, *V. chloroechis*

Common Names: Western bush viper

Description

Medium-sized arboreal adder, adults usually 45-55 cm long (max. 70+ cm), w/ 25-36 midbody dorsal rows of keeled scales. Body usually uniform pale-green above, darkening a little on sides & toward tail. Belly paler green. Tail long, strongly prehensile. Young usually w/ tail tipped w/ sulphur-yellow.



Habitat

Mainly found in green shrubs & foliage fairly near ground in west African rainforests. Limited to tropical & subtropical western African countries (mainly from Guinea eastward to Ghana).

Activity and Behavior

Strongly arboreal (within 1-2 m of ground), but rarely hunts small rodent prey at ground level. Mainly nocturnal or crepuscular (active at dusk & dawn), but may bask in sun. Ovoviviparous w/ usually 6-9 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but venom likely hemotoxic, although no record of human bites. No known specific antivenom currently produced.

Atheris desaixi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Ashe's bush viper, Mount Kenya bush viper

Description

Medium-sized fairly slender arboreal adder, adults usually 40-60 cm long, w/ 24-31 midbody rows of keeled dorsal scales. Body usually dark-brown or black w/ yellow posterior border. Some body scales have light or cream-colored edges or tips, producing a thin, irregular, light yellow zig-zag pattern along the snake's back. Belly usually light-yellow.



Habitat

Generally found in evergreen forests & forest edges at about 1,600 m elevation. Reported only from Kenya.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Mainly arboreal, but often hunts small rodent prey at ground level. Mainly nocturnal, but often basks in sun. Ovoviviparous, w/ 13 young in observed litter of a captured female. For similar details about a closely related species, [See *Atheris squamigera*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely hemotoxic. Not considered lethal to humans. No known antivenom produced.

Atheris hirsuta

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris hirsutus*

Common Names: Green bush viper

Description

Medium-sized, "rough-scaled" viper which is generally brown to olive-green occasionally w/ small amounts darker (& sometimes lighter) cross bands or speckled patterning. Similar & apparently closely related to *A. squamigera* (possibly a sub-species of that species).

Habitat

Usually found in forests & edges of forest clearings. Reported only from the Ivory Coast.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but sometimes basks in sunshine. Mainly arboreal, but sometimes hunts small animals on the ground. Ovoviviparous (litter size not reported but probably <15 young). Mainly prey on available small mammals & lizards (maybe also frogs).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but mainly hemotoxic.

Atheris hispida

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris hispidus*, *A. squamigera*

Common Names: African hairy bush viper, Rough-scaled bush viper, Spiny bush viper

Description

Adults usually 0.5-0.7 m long. Background color may vary from uniform yellow through differing combinations of green, brown, or black; belly usually pale green. Scales heavily keeled & upturned, giving a very bristly appearance.



Habitat

Generally found in forests, inland swamps, & reed & papyrus swamps adjacent to lakes & rivers. Found in the northeastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire - Lutunguru & Kivu Provinces), southwestern Uganda, western Kenya, & northwestern Tanzania.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but sometimes basks in the sun. Capable of climbing reeds & stalks, often basking atop terminal leaves or flowers. Sometimes hunts small animal prey at ground level.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom most likely hemotoxic. Venom not likely fatal to humans except in very unusual circumstances.

Atheris katangensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Katanga mountain bush viper

Description

Similar to other species of 'rough scaled" bush (or leaf) vipers. [See Atheris squamiger](#).



Habitat

Found in the southern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire - Katanga). Typically lives in rain forests, open woodlands bordering forests, & swamps.

Activity and Behavior

[See Atheris squamiger](#).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, but not well known.

Atheris nitschei

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris nitschei nitschei*, *A. n. rungweensis*, *A. woosnami*

Common Names: Great Lakes bush viper, Black-and-green bush viper, Nitsche's bush viper

Description

Medium-sized arboreal adder, adults usually 40-70 cm long (max. 73+ cm). Body usually bright or olive green above w/ black markings; rarely nearly all black w/ lighter tail. Dorsal scales keeled & in 23-33 midbody rows. Belly usually yellowish or very pale green; distinctly lighter than dorsal surface. Irregular black markings on body & head produced by darker tips of some scales (may form a zig-zag pattern). Young usually rich, uniform chocolate-brown or gray-brown w/ bright yellow tail tip.



Habitat

Found mainly above ground, in reeds & papyrus of lake margins or upland swamps, or up to 3 m above ground in elephant grass of humid valleys (usually at 1650-2800 m elevation). Sometimes found at ground level. May also be found in Malawi & Zambia, but specimens from there probably belong to the recently elevated species *A. rungweensis* (formerly a subspecies of *A. nitschei*).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal & usually nocturnal, sometimes basks in the sun & hunts on the ground at night. Less excitable than most other Bush Vipers, but often aggressive if disturbed even slightly. Prey mainly on small mammals, lizards (also frogs). Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 5-13 young/ litter. Young may use caudal-luring to catch prey. For behavior of a closely-related sp., [See *Atheris squamiger*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but venom is likely hemotoxic. Not considered lethal to humans. Bites of humans rare, & no serious human envenomations or deaths reported. No known antivenom currently produced.

Atheris rungweensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris nitschei rungweensis*

Common Names: Rungwe tree viper, Rungwe bush viper, green-&-yellow bush viper

Description

Medium-sized arboreal adder, adults usually 40-70 cm long (max. 73+ cm). Body usually light to bright green above, w/ irregular black patterns (maybe zig-zags) due to black-tipped, keeled dorsal scales (w/ 23-33 midbody rows). Belly lighter, usually greenish-yellow, young usually solid brownish w/ bright yellow tail tip.



Habitat

Found mainly 2-4 m above ground in reeds, grass & bamboo of upland papyrus & phragmites swamps, riverine elephant grass, bamboo, & montane forest up to 2,800 m elevation. May also occur in suitable habitats in northwestern Mozambique, but no specimens confirmed from there, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal (but often basks in sun) & mainly arboreal (but often hunts on the ground at night). Less excitable than many other bush vipers, but can be aggressive when disturbed. Prey mainly on available frogs, less often on small mammals, &/or lizards. Ovoviviparous, w/ probably 5-13 young/ litter. Young may practice "caudal luring" of prey.

Venom Characteristics

Not much studied, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Bites of humans rare, no serious human envenomations or fatalities reported, so far. Not considered lethal to humans, but no specific antivenom currently produced.

Atheris squamigera

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris anisolepis*, *A. burtoni*, *A. laeviceps*, *A. lucani*, *A. polylepis*, *A. proximus*, *A. squamiger*, *A. s. anisolepis*, *A. s. squamigera*, *A. s. robustus*, *Echis squamigera*, *Poecilostolus burtonii*, *Toxicoa squamigera*

Common Names: African bush viper, Rough-scaled bush viper, Leaf Viper, Rankschuppige Buschviper

Description

Adults usually 40-60 cm long (max. 80 cm). Body color varies from dusky pale green to olive, to olive brown, or reddish brown. Belly pale yellow; sometimes pale green, & often thickly spotted w/ black. Some specimens w/ pale yellow crossbands. Scales keeled & their tips usually projecting away from the body, giving the snake a "rough," rasp-like appearance.



Habitat

Mainly found in rain forests, open woodland bordering forests, & swamps. Often persist in hedge rows & other bushes long after deforestation. Found in several central African countries, typically in habitats like those along the river Gabon.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal, often climb to heights of 6 m (20 ft.) or more. Usually nocturnal; may bask in sun during the day. Commonly forage for small rodent prey at ground level. Females usually bear litters of 5-8 live young, each about 6 inches long.

Venom Characteristics

Venom not well studied, but likely hemotoxic. Bites rare, but at least one human fatality reported. No specific antivenom currently produced, but good paraspecific neutralization has been reported.

Atheris subocularis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris squamigera* (in part), *Atheris squamigera laeviceps*

Common Names: Bush viper, leaf viper

Description

A medium-sized "rough-scaled" bush viper w/ varied colors & patterns. Similar to *A. squamiger*, but usually more yellowish w/ pale reddish markings & pale yellow belly.

Habitat

Typically found in forest margins or open woods edges in sub-tropical & tropical areas in equatorial Africa. Only reported from Republic of Congo, but very likely also occurs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo & in Gabon.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal and mainly nocturnal, but basks in sun. [See *Atheris squamiger*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic.

Atractaspis aterrima

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis bibroni*, *A. rostrata*

Common Names: Mole viper, Erdviper

Description

Medium-sized, slender, fast-moving, burrowing asp, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. about 70 cm). Body black, blackish-gray or blackish-brown, cylindrical, w/ small dark eyes, set well forward on head. Tail short, ends abruptly in a little spine, 19-21 (rarely 23) midbody dorsal scale rows, scales smooth.

Habitat

Found in very wide variety of habitats; dry savannah, moist savannah, & forests; from Senegal & the Gambia east to Zaire & Uganda (a disjunct population reported from Tanzania).

Activity and Behavior

Fossorial (burrowing, live mainly underground), mainly nocturnal, may be active above ground after a rain. If disturbed, it will usually try to get away, but if cornered, may form a curious croquet hoop-shaped loop w/ head against the ground. May wind its body into coils & lash & jerk back-&-forth, may release a distinctive-smelling chemical from its cloaca which is highly repellent to other snakes. Eat other available lizards, other snakes, & rodents. Oviparous but a typical clutch size is not known.

Venom Characteristics

In 1995, in Northeastern Zaire (Democratic Rep. of the Congo), a healthy 200 lb., 40 year old man was bitten on one thumb by a large specimen of this species when he picked it up. He had severe and wide-spread pain for a week, local necrosis (within hours) and extensive swelling at the bite site, and eventually had to have the distal thumb segment amputated. He had persistent difficulty breathing, nerve impairment affecting his heart, nearly whole-body capillary damage (w/ extensive black-and-blue discoloration), and was hospitalized for a month. The attending physician recommended immediate and aggressive debridement of the bite wound because the serious local toxic effects began very soon after the bite occurred. The venoms of this species and related species are potentially lethal. There is currently no known antivenom available that will neutralize the venom of this species.

Atractaspis bibronii

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis bibroni*, *A. bibronii bibronii*, *A. b. katangae*, *A. b. rostrata*, *A. coarti*, *A. irregularis* var. *bibronii*, *A. katangae*, *A. rostrata*,

Common Names: Bibron's burrowing asp, Southern burrowing asp, Mole viper

Description

Medium-sized, slow-moving, rather thick snake (big adults often quite stout), w/ 21-23 midbody scale rows, average 30-50 cm. long (max. 70 cm). Body cylindrical w/ smooth, shiny scales, neck not obviously narrowed, tail very short & ends abruptly in a small spine. Body may be brown, purplish-brown, grey or blackish, scales usually have a purplish sheen. Belly brownish, white or pale w/ dark blotches. Pale color may go up 2-3 scale rows on sides & onto upper labials.



Habitat

Usually found burrowing in loose soil or organic debris in semi-desert, savannah & woodlands. Widely distributed in subtropical southeastern Africa, from Namibia east to northern half of South Africa, north to southeastern Zaire, eastern Tanzania & coastal Kenya, just reaching the southern end of the Somali coastline. There are isolated records of collections from adjacent countries to the north & south of its main range.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, burrowing, & may move about above ground at night. Bites are most often due to rural persons stepping on, or a sleeping person rolling onto, one of these snakes at night. Snake handlers are bitten fairly often by these because they have a very thick, strong neck, very smooth scales & are hard to hold firmly. This species is responsible for a large number of bites to humans, mainly in rural areas at night.

Venom Characteristics

Pure venom is straw-yellow & very viscous. Highly toxic, but usually injected in very small amounts. Apparently related to mammalian endothelins & functions as a dramatic cardiotoxin. No known currently available antivenom is effective against the venom of any of the mole vipers which belong to this genus.

Atractaspis boulengeri

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis boulengeri* boulengeri, *A. b. matschiensis*, *A. b. mixta*, *A. b. schmidtii*, *A. b. schultzei*, *A. b. vanderborghti*, *A. matschiensis*

Common Names: Central African burrowing asp, Mole viper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly thick-bodied (large adults often very stout), adults avg. 30-50 cm long (max. 60 cm), scales smooth, in 19-25 midbody dorsal rows. Body may be brown, gray or black above; belly lighter (often white). For description of a closely-related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Habitat

Mainly found in forests of the western Zaire River basin & parts of northern Zaire. Records from savannah clearings of the lower Zaire River are poorly documented. For more detail about typical local habitats of a closely related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mostly fossorial & nocturnal & active above ground after rains. Probably oviparous and probably eat available lizards, other snakes, and small mammals. For information about a related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably mainly cardiotoxic. [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#). No effective antivenom currently available. Bites & envenomations of humans not well documented, may be misidentified for similar species in same region. No documented human fatalities, so far.

Atractaspis congica

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis congica* congica, *A. c. leleupi*, *A. c. orientalis*

Common Names: Eastern Congo burrowing asp

Description

Medium-sized, stocky, adults avg. 30-45 cm (max. about 55 cm), dorsal scales smooth, in 19-23 dorsal midbody rows. Body usually uniform purple-brown to black. Belly lighter, may be whitish. For generalized description of a closely related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in forests & moist savannahs from the mouth of the Zaire River & northeastern Namibia south & east to Angola & northern Zambia. Also, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly fossorial, nocturnal (active after rains), & generally slow moving. Probably oviparous (w/ <10 eggs/ clutch), & probably eat available lizards, other snakes, & small mammals. For information about a closely-related species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably contains mainly cardiotoxic factor(s). Bites & envenomation of humans not well documented, no confirmed human fatalities due to bites from this species. For information about a related species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Atractaspis corpulenta

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis corpulenta corpulenta*, *A. c. kivuensis*, *A. c. leucura*, *A. leucura*, *A. corpulentus*, *Brachycranion corpulentum*

Common Names: The Fat burrowing asp, Mole viper

Description

Medium-sized, stocky snake, w/ smooth dorsal scales, in 23-29 midbody rows. Body dark brown, slatey-gray or black. Belly lighter, nearly white. Occasional specimens from its western African range (Ivory Coast, Ghana) may have a white tail tip. Gray individuals may have a bluish sheen to their scales. For information on a closely-related species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in forested areas from Liberia east to Ghana, reappears along the Dahomey gap in Nigeria, east to northeastern Zaire. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly fossorial (burrowing), active above ground after rains, generally slow-moving but can strike quickly (sideways & backward) if disturbed or stepped on. Probably oviparous w/ few eggs/ clutch; & probably eats available lizards, other snakes, & small mammals. For behavior of a closely-related species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Venom Characteristics

The few reported envenomations by this species have involved only pain, local swelling, fever, & lymphadenopathy. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Atractaspis dahomeyensis

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Dahomey burrowing viper, mole viper

Description

Juveniles are very thin, but big adults can be very stout. Average 29-35 middorsal scale rows. Dark brown, grey, pinkish-grey, or black in color, paler below. One albino specimen recorded from Ghana. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Habitat

Found in savannahs from southwestern Camaroon west and north through Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, northwestern Ivory Coast, southwestern Burkina Faso, & south-central Mali. Also recorded from western Mali & northern Guinea, & one record from a forest in Ivory Coast. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly fossorial, active above ground after rains, & mainly nocturnal. Probably oviparous (w/ small No. of eggs) & eats available lizards, other snakes, & small mammals. [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Venom Characteristics

In a series of envenomations in Nigeria, victims had pain at the bite site, developed local swelling which reached its maximum within 24 hrs., & usually resolved within 5 days. Some victims had swollen, tender lymph nodes & mild fever, but no necrosis was noted. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Atractaspis duerdeni

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Duerden's burrowing asp, Beaked burrowing asp

Description

Similar to *A. bibronii*, but smaller, w/ a short, deep, rounded head w/ a distinct snout. Adults avg. 30-45 cm. long (max. about 55 cm). Dorsal scales smooth, in 21-25 (usually 23) midbody rows. Body usually

black, greyish-black, or grey above; w/ white, cream or pinkish below, & the paler color extending up onto the lower scale rows on the flanks & lips. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in dry savannah & grassland, in two distinct populations on opposite sides of the Kalahari desert, one in north-central Namibia, the other in southeastern Botswana & the western transvaal. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly fossorial (burrowing) & nocturnal. Usually slow moving but may strike quickly (sideways & downward) if disturbed or stepped on. Probably oviparous w/ few eggs/ clutch; probably eats available lizards, other snakes & small mammals. Active mostly during the southern summer (October to April). Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. No human fatalities reported to have been caused by this species, so far. For information about a similar species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Atractaspis engdahli

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Engdahl's burrowing viper, mole viper

Description

Small burrowing asp w/ smooth dorsal scales in 19 midbody rows, Adults avg. 25-40 cm. long (max. 45 cm.). Body brownish, paler below; juveniles may be very light brown w/ nearly white belly. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Habitat

Found from the coastal woodland & grassland of southern Somalia & the lower Juba valley north & west into the dry savannah & semi-desert of northeastern Kenya. Reported from termite nests, in holes, in a dry well, & prowling along the ground in semi-desert at night. Also [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably nocturnal & fossorial, burrowing in loose soil & litter, & active on top of ground after rains. All species in this genus are slow moving but quickly strike to one side & backward if disturbed or physically restrained. Probably oviparous w/ <10 eggs/ clutch, & eat available lizards, other snakes & small animals. For a closely related species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Venom Characteristics

Note much known. Bites & envenomations of humans not well documented, but may pose serious health risk in some cases. For information about a closely-related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Atractaspis irregularis

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis irregularis angeli*, *A. i. bipostocularis*, *A. i. conradsi*, *A. i. irregularis*, *A. i. parkeri*, *A. i. uelensis*, *A. bipostocularis*, *A. caudalis*, *A. conradsi*, *Elaps irregularis*

Common Names: Variable burrowing asp, mole viper

Description

Medium-sized, stout-bodied, burrowing asp, adults avg. 30-50 cm long (max. about 65 cm), w/ smooth dorsal scales in 23-27 (rarely 21) midbody rows. Body usually black or blackish-gray, belly often lighter. For more generalized characters of this group, based on a closely-related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Habitat

Mainly found in forests, forest edges, high grasslands, & savannaahs (but not arid areas) across most equatorial zone of western & central Africa. For typical local habitats occupied by a closely related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly nocturnal & fossorial. Routinely burrows in loose, sandy soil or under surface debris. Active on top of ground after rains. Probably oviparous w/ <10 eggs/ clutch; & eats available lizards, other snakes & other small animals. Known to eat rodents. Also [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably has cardiotoxic factor(s). Envenomation symptoms similar to those for other burrowing asps. At least 2 human fatalities documented due to a bites by this species, but each of those was under unusual circumstances. Also [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Atractaspis leucomelas

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Ogaden burrowing asp, Mole viper

Description

Small burrowing asp, adults avg. 20-30 cm. long (max. 50 cm.) w/ smooth dorsal scales in 23 midbody rows. Distinctly marked w/ a white or grey head w/ irregular dark grey patches on top. A fine yellow-white vertebral stripe runs most of the length of the body, & is bordered on each flank by a broad black lengthwise band. The belly & the 4 rows of scales at the lower edge of the flanks are white. Some specimens w/ a black band under their throat.

Habitat

Found mainly in dry grassland & semi-desert of eastern Ethiopia, northwestern Somalia & Djibouti. Little else is known about this species' habitat. For some general local types of habitats probably typical of this genus, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly nocturnal & burrowing (fossorial), like related species. Probably slow moving but could strike quickly to one side & backwards if disturbed or restrained (or stepped on). Probably oviparous w/ small clutch of eggs, & probably eats available lizards & other small animals (including other snakes). [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Venom Characteristics

Nothing specific is known for this species. Probably has cardiotoxic factors & envenomation would probably cause symptoms similar to those caused by venoms of other related species. For general information on a closely related species, [See Atractaspis bibronii](#).

Atractaspis microlepidota

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: Atractaspis microlepidota andersonii, A. m. magrettii, A. m. microlepidota, A. andersonii, A. magrettii, A. micropholis, A. phillipsi

Common Names: Small-scaled burrowing asp, mole viper, jilbris, "the snake of 7 steps", "father of 10 minutes"

Description

One of biggest burrowing asps, adults avg. 30-80 cm long (max. 1.1 m), big individuals remarkably stout. Dorsal scales smooth & in 25-37 midbody rows. Body shiny black, purplish-black, deep grey, or very dark brown body (rarely w/ white tail tip), may be iridescent gray below w/ very short, broad head.



Habitat

Found mainly in semi-desert & dry savannahs of the sahel; from Senegal & Mauritania to Chad, southern & northeastern Sudan, & low elevation regions of Ethiopia, Somalia, & Kenya. Not yet reported from Tanzania but very near. Also known from southwestern Arabian peninsula & Sinai. Reportedly fairly common in parts of its range (esp. in eastern Africa).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal & fossorial (burrowing), but not well known. Relatively fast moving at night & active on top of ground after rains. Strikes quickly, to one side & backwards, if disturbed, restrained or stepped on. Oviparous w/ 8 eggs laid by a captured female. Eats available lizards, other snakes, & other small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Not very well known, has cardiotoxic factor(s) & causes symptoms similar to those caused by venom of related species; local pain, swelling, nausea, vomiting, & diarrhoea. Venom glands very long, extend 8-12 cm into the snake's neck, bite reported to usually yield rather low volume of venom. Many serious envenomations of humans; at least 3 human fatalities documented. For a similar species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Atractaspis reticulata

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis heterochilus*, *A. reticulata brieni*, *A. r. heterochilus*, *A. r. reticulata*

Common Names: Reticulate burrowing asp, mole viper

Description

Large burrowing asp, moderately-thick body, w/ smooth dorsal scales in 21-23 (rarely 19) midbody rows; adults avg. 60-90 cm long (max. 114 cm). Body usually brown or grey w/ most dorsal scales pale-edged, giving it a reticulated (net-like) appearance. For other general characters of a closely related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in forests of central Africa, from southern Cameroon to eastern Zaire, south to northern Angola, w/ isolated records from Ghana & Nigeria. For additional details of typical local habitats of a related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Probably mainly nocturnal & fossorial (burrowing), but very little known for this species. Probably oviparous w/ small clutch size (fewer than 10 eggs) & probably eats available lizards, other snakes & other small animals. For some general behavioral information on a related species, which is likely to be applicable to this species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Venom Characteristics

No data available, but probably similar to other species in this genus. For generalized information, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Atractaspis scorteccii

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Somali burrowing asp, Mole viper

Description

Large, stout burrowing asp w/ smooth dorsal scales in 23-25 midbody rows, adults avg. 50-75 cm. long (max. 85). Body usually black or dark brown, w/ a broad white ring around its neck, & the top of its head black; lips, chin & throat black, often w/ a dark patch behind & slightly below each eye. Belly white, mottled w/ dark brown, & outer edges of belly scales dark.

Habitat

Known from only a handful of specimens from sandy & stony country in dry grasslands & semi-desert of eastern Ethiopia & northern Somalia.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & burrowing. Probably oviparous w/ clutch of <10 eggs; probably eats available lizards, other snakes, & other small animals. For behavior typical of most of the known closely-related species, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Very little known, but probably has cardiotoxic factors, like related species. Because of its large size, it might pose a health risk for persons who encounter it. For probably applicable generalized information, [See *Atractaspis bibronii*](#).

Atractaspis spp.

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Identification

Family: Atractaspididae

Scientific Names: Currently 15 named species. See individual species data (12 spp. listed separately).

Common Names: Burrowing asps, mole vipers, burrowing vipers, stiletto snakes, side-stabbing snakes

Description

Adults usually less than 90 cm long; fairly slender snakes. Body color varies; usually uniform dark purplish brown to black above, lighter below. Short, conical head, w/ large dorsal scales, & not distinct from the neck; snout broad, flattened, often pointed. Fangs well developed, movable, & attached at front of upper jaw. Cylindrical bodies w/ a short abrupt tail ending in a small spine.

Habitat

Mostly live underground, in holes, burrows, under stones, or in soft or sandy soil. Found in forests, woodlands, semi-deserts, & savannahs. Mainly limited to subtropical & tropical Africa, plus a few Middle Eastern countries.

Activity and Behavior

Most species emerge from burrows or soil only at night, particularly after a rain. Likely to bite as soon as they are touched. Typically not aggressive unless disturbed. Cannot strike forward, but tend to strike backward & sideward toward a threatening animal or prey.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily cardiotoxic. Victims may experience intense local pain, swelling, and, in some instances, necrosis.

Atrax robustus

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Identification

Family: Hexathelidae

Scientific Names: Atrax spp. [Note: There are 3 currently named species in this genus, but only this one is of significant human health concern.]

Common Names: Sydney Funnel-Web Spider, Australian Funnel-Web Spider, Australian black trapdoor spider

Description

A large Mygalomorph spider w/ mature females reaching 4 cm body length. Makes a funnel-shaped web. Usually black all over, w/ obvious "hairy" appearance except for the smooth, shiny black top surface of the adult's cephalothorax.



Habitat

These spiders typically build a tubular or funnel-shaped web in which they hide until some prey organism (e.g., insect, lizard or frog) happens by. These webs are usually constructed along the edges of paths, debris, or logs or structures' foundations. This species is found mainly in the eastern, & northeastern parts of Australia (Queensland, New South Wales, & possibly into northeastern Victoria).

Activity and Behavior

These spiders typically build a tubular or funnel-shaped web in which they hide in waiting to ambush their typical prey of insects, other arthropods, small lizards or frogs. This species is very aggressive & will readily run toward & bite humans or other large animals if encountered or disturbed. They sometimes hunt actively at night & occasionally enter homes.

Venom Characteristics

Very strong, usually rapid-acting neurotoxin, which has killed adult humans within relatively short times after the usually very painful bite. Antivenoms developed against *A. robustus* have been shown to be effective against envenomation by other closely-related species.

Atrax spp.

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Identification

Family: Hexathelidae

Scientific Names: Note: There are currently 3 recognized named species in this genus, but only one species (*A. robustus*) poses a significant health threat to humans.

Common Names: Australian funnel web spiders, Sydney funnel web spiders, Australian (black) trapdoor spiders

Description

"See *A. robustus*".

Habitat

"See *A. robustus*".

Activity and Behavior

"See *A. robustus*".

Venom Characteristics

"See *A. robustus*".

Atropoides mexicanus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atropos mexicanus*, *Atropoides nummifer* (in part), *A. n. mexicana*, *Bothriechis nummifera* (in part), *B. n. var. notata*, *Bothriopsis affinis*, *B. mammifera*, *B. mexicanus*, *Bothrops mexicanus*, *B. nummifera*, *B. nummifer nummifer*, *Lachesis nummifer*, *Porthidium nummifer mexicanum*, *Teleuraspis nummifer*, *Thanatopsis nummifer*, *Thanatos nummifer*, *Trigonocephalus nummifer*, *Trimeresurus nummifer*, *T. n. nummifer*

Common Names: Central American jumping pitviper, mano de piedro, timbo, chehpat, jumping tommygoff, patoca, toboba, toboba chinga, brazo de piedra, chinchintor, dormilon, dormilona, mococho, otooy, tamaga, tamagas, timbo, xalpate, tunco, bajequilla, bolpach, mano de metate, cabeza de sapo, saltadora, sok nok, najak tzajin, nauyaca, pawangu tsany, ochcan

Description

Exceedingly stout, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 90+ cm). Body gray-brown to dark brown (rarely - background color yellow, cream, pale gray, or even reddish), w/ darker brown rhomboidal blotches along dorsal midline, sometimes form a zigzag pattern. Dark postocular stripe, 23-27 midbody dorsal scale rows; high, tubercular-keeled dorsal scales. Belly may be immaculate to heavily blotched w/ brown. Moveable front fangs relatively short.



Habitat

Found mainly in mesic forest, including tropical rainforest, moist, & wet forest; & lower cloud forest; sometimes in pine savannas & rocky outcroppings (includes corozo, coffee, pine & cloud forest life areas). Found at 40-1,600 m elevation from southeastern Mexico to central Panama.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, but sometimes basks in sun. Typically slow-moving & not aggressive by day. Can only strike for about 1/2 of its body length (despite its common names). This species often holds onto prey after striking (often very tenaciously). When threatened, often holds mouth very wide open as a defensive display.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, w/ possible cytotoxic factors. Venom reportedly not as potent as that of other pitvipers in the same areas (e.g., *Bothrops asper*). Main envenomation symptoms usually local pain & swelling. Although a number of human envenomations by this species occur each year, human fatalities reported to have been due to this species, or closely-related species, have not been well documented.

Atropoides nummifer

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atropos nummifer*, *Atropoides numifer mexicanus*, *A. n. nummifer*, *A. n. occiduus*, *Bothriechis nummifer notata*, *Bothrops nummifer*, *B. n. affinis*, *B. n. occiduus*, *Porthidium nummifer*, *P. n. mexicanum*, *P. n. occiduum*

Common Names: Jumping pit viper

Description

A stocky, terrestrial pit viper varying from grey to brown or beige, patterned with angulated blotches which meet along the middle of its back. The head is not patterned except for a dark line angled back and downward from each eye. Adults average 18-24 inches, but may reach 30 inches in length.



Habitat

Found in rain forests, forested hills, and adjacent cleared areas or plantations in Mexico and Central America.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, but sometimes bask in the sun. Usually hide in or under old logs, plies of leaves or debris and hunt in those places for their typical prey of small mammals, lizards or frogs. They may strike at intruders with such force that they throw their whole body off the ground. When very frightened, they sometimes will flail about trying to strike wildly and quickly, turning to keep the threat in sight. Usually a female will bear 5-6 live young per litter.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic.

Atropoides occiduus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atropoides nummifer* (in part), *Bothriechis nummifera* (in part), *Bothriopsis affinis* (in part), *Bothrops affinis*, *Bothrops nummifer nummifer*, *B. n. occiduus*, *Porthidium nummifer occiduus*, *Trimeresurus nummifer* (in part), *T. n. nummifer* (in part)

Common Names: Guatemalan jumping pitviper, mano de piedra, cantil sapo, chinchintor, sulcuat

Description

Small to medium-sized, very stout-bodied, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 35-60 cm long (max. 79.5 cm). Body usually pale brown to burgandy-brown (rarely pinkish or purplish) w/ dark brown rhomboidal dorsal blotches, usually joined at vertebral line forming a zigzag pattern (at least on posterior half). Wide, dark brown postocular stripe. Middorsal scales strongly keeled, 21-27 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly usually lighter, often w/ dark spots or blotches, especially along sides.

Habitat

Mainly found in subtropical wet forest along the Pacific versant from southeastern Chiapas, Mexico to western El Salvador; but also in seasonally dry pine-oak forest near Guatemala City. Found mainly at medium to higher elevations (1,000-1,600 m).

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, but sometimes basks in sun. Sluggish, non-aggressive during the day. Can only strike for about 1/2 its body length (does not actually "jump" or launch itself). May open mouth very wide in a defensive display (usually while coiled) if molested. Sometimes holds onto prey after striking it. Ovoviviparous, preys mainly on small mammals, birds (sometimes also lizards & frogs).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly hemotoxic (w/ possible cytotoxic factors). Reportedly similar to *A. mexicanus* in having relatively less potent venom than other pitvipers found in the same areas (e.g., *B. asper*). Has envenomated humans, but only recently named, and may have been confused w/ similar species previously. No definitely documented human fatalities have been caused by this species so far.

Atropoides olmec

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops olmec, Porthidium olmec

Common Names: Olmecan pit viper

Description

Adult length usually 0.5 to 0.8 meters; an extremely stout-bodied snake. Background color usually reddish, reddish-gray, or orangish-tan dorsally, shading to pink or pinkish-gray laterally; the back usually has a series of rhomboid to diamond-shaped dark blotches which meet along its back.



Habitat

Most common in wetter forested areas at elevations of 500 to 1,500 meters. Found in Mexico (southern Veracruz, Sierra de los Tuxtlas).

Activity and Behavior

Reportedly shy, tending to lower and hide the head upon initial contact. Can strike with such force that its whole body is launched off the ground. Additional biologic and behavioral details are similar to those of "A. nummifer".

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic. No known antivenom produced.

Atropoides picadoi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops picadoi, Porthidium picadoi, Trimeresurus nummifer picadoi

Common Names: Picado's pit viper

Description

Size and coloration very similar to "A. nummifer".



Habitat

[See Atropoides nummifer](#)

Activity and Behavior

[See Atropoides nummifer](#)

Venom Characteristics

Hemotoxic.

Austrelaps labialis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Alecto labialis*, *Austrelaps superbus* (in part), *Denisonia superba* [Some authorities consider this to be a junior synonym of *A. superbus*.]

Common Names: Pygmy Copperhead

Description

Small, cylindrical, smooth-scaled Elapid, adults seldom more than about 80 cm long. Body medium to dark brown above, lighter brown to grayish-brown belly, usually 17 midbody dorsal scale rows, head somewhat pointed. Looks very similar to *A. superbus*, but quite a bit smaller.



Habitat

Found in marshes, grasslands, & fairly open woodlands; most often found near water; limited to South Australia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, mainly diurnal but also active after dark in warmer months. Behavior & activity very similar to *A. superbus*. Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported. Preys mainly on frogs, lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mainly neurotoxic. Reports of human envenomations (and even some deaths) are not well documented, but the toxicity of venom of related species implies these could be a serious health risk to humans.

Austrelaps ramsayi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Austrelaps superbus*, *Denisonia superba*, *Hoplocephalus brankysi*, *H. bransbyi*, *H. ramsayi* [This species is considered by some authorities to be a subspecies or a junior synonym of *A. superbus*.]

Common Names: Highlands copperhead, Ramsay's copperhead

Description

Medium-sized cylindrical, smooth-scaled Elapid, adults usually about 100 cm long. Body usually dark grayish-brown above, lighter below. Head somewhat pointed. Similar in general physical appearance to *A. superbus*.



Habitat

Found in marshes, woodlands, & grasslands; usually at higher elevations in southern & southeastern Australia (limited to New South Wales & Victoria).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal, but sometimes active after dusk. Bask in the sun, usually found near water & seem to be semi-aquatic in marshy habitats. Ovoviviparous, 3-32 young per litter. Usually not aggressive unless disturbed, but will defend themselves after only limited provocation, & may pose a health threat due to their highly toxic venom. Very similar in overall behavior to *A. superbus*.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly neurotoxic, w/ possibly some cytotoxic or myotoxic factors, too. Bites & serious envenomations have been reported, but reports of human fatalities not well documented.

Austrelaps spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names:

Description

Habitat

Activity and Behavior

Venom Characteristics

Austrelaps superbus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Alecto schmidtii*, *Hoplocephalus superbus*, *Notechis superbus*

Common Names: Lowlands Copperhead, Copperhead snake

Description

Medium to large-sized Elapid snake, adults usually 1.0-1.4 m long (max. about 1.7 m). Body cylindrical, dorsal scales smooth; body usually dark brownish above w/ lighter copper-colored sides & lowest lateral scale row yellowish; belly much paler yellowish-brown to grayish-brown. Head slightly pointed, chin usually very pale (often whitish). Can flatten its neck & front part of body (hood-like) as a threat if disturbed.



Habitat

Found only in marshes, woodlands & grasslands in cool, temperate areas. Limited to southeastern Australia (New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria) & Tasmania.

Activity and Behavior

Diurnal & nocturnal, basks in the sun, often found near water; mainly terrestrial, but apparently semi-aquatic in marshy habitats. Usually not aggressive unless cornered or molested, then defends itself aggressively. Ovoviviparous, 9-45 young per litter. Preys mainly on frogs & toads, lizards, small mammals & sometimes birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mostly neurotoxic (like other Elapids), & may also have cytotoxic or myotoxic factors, too.

Azemiops feae

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Fea's Viper, Fea-Viper

Description

Maximum length about 1.0 m; moderately slender snake. Very primitive true viper that looks more like a Colubrid snake. Background color bluish black or black, patterned w/ a few widely-spaced, thin red-orange lateral bands that sometimes meet middorsally; 17 midbody dorsal scale rows, dorsal scales smooth. Belly gray. Head pale red-orange, patterned w/ two darker stripes, & somewhat flattened.





Habitat

Found in mountainous areas from 600-2,000 m elevation. Reported distribution includes northern Burma, southeastern Tibet, China (Jiangxi & Sichuan provinces), & northern Tonkin.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, very rare, oviparous, probably usually prey on small mammals. Occur only at rather high elevations. Little is known about their biology.

Venom Characteristics

Little information available. Probably hemotoxic. Few bites reported. Reported symptoms include local pain and swelling only. No known antivenom produced.

Bitis arietans

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bitis arietans arietans, B. a. somalica, B. lachesis, Echidna arietans, Vipera arietans

Common Names: Puff adder, Gemeine Puffotter

Description

Adults usually 60-100 cm long (max. 190 cm); thick, heavy body, color varies from bright yellow to light yellow, yellow-brown, orange-brown, light brown, or gray, usually patterned w/ darker chevrons. Belly yellowish-white to gray w/ black blotches. Head flat, much wider than neck; scales small, keeled, overlapping. Some males from highlands of eastern Africa brightly colored & patterned.



Habitat

Most widely distributed venomous snake in Africa; encountered almost anywhere, at both low & high elevations, except for rain forests & extreme desert conditions. Found mainly in savannah or open grassland including areas w/ scattered scrubby bushes, from sea level to 3,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal, often basks in early morning or late afternoon; terrestrial but may climb sturdy bushes to bask. Usually sluggish; relies on camouflage to escape detection. Bad-tempered & excitable; when disturbed, makes long deep hissing noise. May move rapidly, coil into "S-shape" & strike suddenly & swiftly, but does not hold on. Eats small rodents, birds, amphibians & sometimes other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Many serious bites reported annually; only a small portion are fatal. Venom has potent cytotoxin, attacking tissue & blood cells. Symptoms often include extreme pain w/ swelling & large blisters in region of the bite.

Bitis atropos

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bitis atropos atropos*, *B. a. unicolor*, *Coluber atropos*, *Echidna atropos*

Common Names: Mountain adder, Berg adder, Bergotter

Description

Small stout adder, adults average 30-40 cm. long (max. 60 cm); usually grayish-olive to dark-brown, w/ 2 rows of triangular black dorsal markings & lateral rows of square markings, rarely whole body drab brown. Head w/ dark arrow-shaped mark on top & 2 pale streaks along each side. Chin & throat pinkish or yellow, belly off-white, sometimes grey or black.



Habitat

Different populations adapted to two diverse habitats: montane grasslands, even above the snowline, & in valleys near sea level. Usually found where it is cool & fairly wet for at least a large part of the year.

Activity and Behavior

Diurnal; seeks shelter in shallow rock crevices & beneath grass clumps. Hiss loudly & strike violently if approached; quick to strike. Mainly prey on rodents, birds, lizards, amphibians, & occasionally other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily neurotoxic, affecting eyes & other sensory functions. Eyes cannot focus, eyelids droop, & sense of taste & smell lost. Not known to cause respiratory distress. Pain & swelling at bite site common.

Bitis caudalis

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Identification

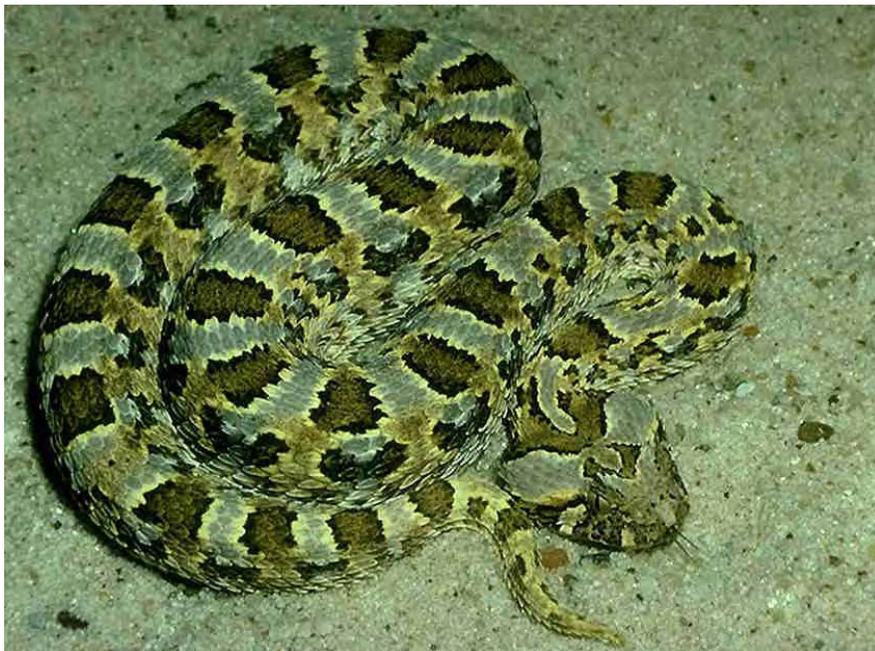
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera caudalis*

Common Names: Horned adder, Gehornte Puffotter

Description

A short, stubby snake, adults average 30-40 cm long (max. 51.5 cm). Color extremely variable, in geographical areas, may be dark-reddish to grayish-brown to very light gray, buff, or pinkish. Usually a single, prominent horn above each eye, 21-31 midbody dorsal scale rows, & dorsal scales strongly keeled. Belly plain white or cream, may be tinged orange along its margins.





Habitat

Usually found in rocky sparsely-vegetated brushland in semi-arid, or sandy desert areas. Common in arid regions of southwestern Africa, eastward through the Kalahari desert of Botswana to southwestern Zimbabwe, & north to southern Angola.

Activity and Behavior

May lay coiled up, half buried in sand; when disturbed, may hiss fiercely & strike violently. Nocturnal, usually buries all but its head & eyes in the sand. Females bear 4-19 live young, each about 13.5 cm long, in late summer (Feb.-Mar.). Eat mainly lizards, & occasionally amphibians or rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Very few bites & no human fatalities recorded. Venom primarily cytotoxic, w/ local swelling & intense pain & vomiting, little or no necrosis. Venom of this species is mildly anticoagulant & possibly the least potent of any species in this genus.

Bitis cornuta

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bitis cornuta albanica*, *B. c. cornuta*, *Cerastes cornuta*, *Cerastes lophophrys*, *Crotophaga cornuta*, *Cobra cornuta*, *Vipera cornuta*, *V. lophophrys*, *V. lophophrys*

Common Names: Many-horned adder, Hornsman, Buschelbrauenotter

Description

Small, stocky, terrestrial, grey & black adder, adults average 30-37.5 cm long (max. 50 cm); generally gray or reddish-brown; belly white to dirty-brownish w/ dark speckles. Head w/ symmetrical dark markings which may fuse to form arrowhead shape & a dark oblique streak from the eye to the angle of the mouth. Typically a series of doubled, pale-edged angular spots down its back. Usually have a tuft of horns above each eye.



Habitat

Found mainly in mountains or sandy plains, particularly in rocky, arid areas.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, shelters in rock cracks or rodent burrows in rocky areas; may bury itself in loose sand. Active at dusk & early morning. When frightened or disturbed, will hiss loudly & strike w/ so much force that most

of body leaves ground. Strikes at the least provocation. Ambushes small rodents, lizards & birds for food. About 5-12 live young (13-16 cm long)/ litter, usually born in Jan.-Apr.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily cytotoxic. Bites may cause pain, local swelling, & local necrosis. Few known bites of humans; no human fatalities recorded.

Bitis gabonica

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bitis gabonica gabonica*, *B. g. rhinoceros*, *B. rhinoceros*, *Cerastes nasicornis*, *Chlotha rhinoceros*, *Echidna gabonicus*, *E. rhinoceros*, *Urobelus gabonicus*, *Vipera rhinoceros*

Common Names: Gaboon viper, Gaboon adder, Gabunviper

Description

Heavy, thick body, adults average 1.2-1.5 m long (max. 2.0 m), & weigh 8.5 kg. Head up to 12.5 cm wide, fangs up to 55 mm long, w/ 2 horn-like knobs on top of snout. Beautifully marked; w/ complex pattern of cream, purple, brown, & pink. Head white or cream above, w/ thin dark line down middle, an obvious dark-brown triangle from each eye down & backward to upper labials. Belly buff-colored w/ dark grey blotches. Has 28-41 midbody scale rows, most dorsal scales keeled.



Habitat

Generally found in tropical rain forests & immediate environs. Sometimes persist in deforested areas. Well camouflaged; blends in w/ leaf litter of forest floor. Widely distributed in central, eastern & southern Africa; w/ a subspecies noted for its long nasal horn restricted to western Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal. May be found basking in patch of sunlight on forest floor, but more likely to be half-buried in leaf litter. Usually slow-moving & does not flee when approached. Makes very loud hissing noise when disturbed. Strikes only as last resort or if stepped on.

Venom Characteristics

Longest fangs of any snake species in the world, often 40 mm long (max. 55 mm), which enable it to inject massive amounts of potent cytotoxic venom deep into a victim. Venom also contains cardiotoxins that possess neurotoxic properties which may be more dangerous than the cytotoxins.

Bitis heraldica

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera heraldica*

Common Names: Bocage's horned adder, Angolan adder

Description

Small, rather stout, max. 40.5 cm. long, eyes & nostrils placed laterally w/ no horn-like scales above eyes, 27-31 midbody dorsal scale rows, dorsal scales keeled. Top of head has symmetrical irregular dark blotches which look like an heraldic design. Body light-brown w/ a dorsal row of 26-38 striking, roundish dark spots, bordered on flanks by a row of fainter dark spots. Belly creamy-white heavily marked w/ dark spots, tail w/ dark spots above, yellow-white (maybe grey spotted) below.

Habitat

Found only on rocky mountane slopes in western & northwestern Angola. For some generalized typical local habitats, [See *Bitis arietans*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Very little is known about the biology of this species, but it is probably most closely related to the Desert Mountain Adder, *Bitis xeropaga*.

Venom Characteristics

Nothing known about venom or bite effects of this true viper. For generalized venom information & bite effects for this whole genus, [See *Bitis arietans*](#).

Bitis inornata

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bitis inornata inornata*, *Chlotho atropos*, *Echidna inornata*, *Vipera inornata*

Common Names: Plain mountain adder, Hornless adder

Description

Small, dull-brown, fat-bodied, adults average 20-30 cm. long (max. 35), w/ 27-30 midbody scale rows. Head rounded, w/ a low ridge above each eye w/o any horns. Background color dull brown to reddish brown; belly light brown & heavily speckled w/ darker brown on sides only.

Habitat

Known mainly from two isolated populations in the Cape Province of South Africa. Typically found in montane grassland where winter temperatures can be very cold.

Activity and Behavior

Hibernates in rodent burrows during cold months; most active in early morning & evening during warmer months. Prey is mainly lizards, occasionally small mammals. Seeks refuge under rock slabs or among grass tussocks. Usually bears 6-8 live young/ litter, 12.5-15.2 cm long (usually Feb.-Mar.). Seldom encountered by people.

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely cytotoxic; no bites of humans recorded. If its venom is like that of other small adders, it likely would cause pain, local swelling, & possibly necrosis.

Bitis nasicornis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Cerastes nasicornis*, *Clotho nasicornis*, *Coluber nasicornis*, *Echidna nasicornis*, *Vipera hexacera*, *V. nasicornis*

Common Names: Rhinoceros viper, River Jack, Nashomviper

Description

Large, stout, w/ a narrow flat triangular head w/ small keeled scales. Adults average 60-90 cm long (max. 150 cm), 31-43 midbody scale rows. Background color varies; patterned w/ various geometric shapes in pale blue, red, lemon yellow, green, purple, white, & jet black. Head blue or green w/ distinctive black arrow mark, belly dirty-white to dull green w/ lots of black & grey blotches.



Habitat

Found mainly in rain forests, swamps, marshes, & floodplains; river, stream, & lake shores. Seldom goes into woodlands. Well camouflaged among fallen leaves of forest floor. Sometimes tolerated by Kenyan villagers as it resides in roofs of their huts.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, partially aquatic, climbs well; often basks in shrubs & trees. Usually lethargic & slow to strike even in self-defense. Makes loud hissing noise if provoked, but usually is reluctant to strike.

Venom Characteristics

Few bites of humans recorded; however, venom highly cytotoxic. May cause massive swelling & tissue necrosis. Tissue necrosis resulting in amputation has been reported.

Bitis parviocula

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Ethiopian viper, Ethiopian mountain adder

Description

Fairly big (up to 75.2 cm long), stout viper w/ long, flat, triangular head covered in small strongly keeled scales. Big dark eyes w/ vertical pupils set well forward. Has 37-39 midbody scale rows, thin neck, keeled scales. Body dark brown w/ a row of black hexagons or diamonds along spine, sometimes w/ paler crossbands, black triangular spots w/ white centers along flanks, belly greeny-grey, clear or dark speckled; chin & throat white. Head brown w/ dark triangle between eyes.

Habitat

Known only from open forest settings or grasslands at 2,000-3,000 m elevation in Ethiopia. Found near human habitations.

Activity and Behavior

Not very well know. Probably nocturnal, mainly terrestrial but may climb. Probably ambushes its prey, which are most likely to be small mammals. For more generalized habit details for a closely-related species, [See Bitis arietans](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably similar to its most closely related species the puff adder, & the rhinoceros viper. For those details, [See Bitis arietans](#).

Bitis peringueyi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera peringueyi*

Common Names: Peringuey's adder, Dwarf puff adder, Zwergpuffotter, Namibviper

Description

Very small orange snake w/ no horns & eyes located on top of its head. Adult average 22.5-25 cm long (max. 32.5 cm), 23-31 middorsal scale rows, back sandy-grey to pale buff w/ 3 longitudinal ill-defined rows of dark spots. Background color generally gray, beige, or yellowish; patterned w/ reddish brown, brown, and/or black spots. Scales strongly keeled, tip of tail black.



Habitat

Confined to dry, sandy coastal areas, particularly sparsely-vegetated wind-blown dunes. The only adder that inhabits the wind-blown sands of the true Namib Desert. Found from Rotkuppe in southern Namibia north to Porto Alexandre in Angola.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal; spends day mostly buried in sand w/ top of head, eyes, & tip of tail exposed. Eats mainly sand lizards, sometimes barking geckoes, & gets all its water either from its prey or from droplets of occasional coastal fogs that condense on its flattened body. Females bear 4-10 live young (each 11.5-13.5 cm long)/litter, in Autumn (Dec.-Apr.). Crawls across sand w/ typical serpentine movements.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom probably mainly a weak cytotoxin, causing pain & local swelling; not likely to be lethal to humans. No known antivenom currently produced.

Bitis rubida

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bitis caudalis*, *B. cornuta albanica*, *B. c. cornuta*, *B. c. inornata*, *B. cornuta-inornata* complex, *B. inornata*, *B. inornata* complex

Common Names: Red adder

Description

Almost identical in size, color & patterning to the Plain Mountain Adder; except that the body color & especially the pattern markings are usually distinctly more reddish. [See *Bitis inornata*](#).

Habitat

Restricted to the upper slopes & summit of the Cedarberg, western Cape Province, Republic of South Africa. [See *Bitis inornata*](#).

Activity and Behavior

Probably nearly identical in activity & habits to the Plain Mountain Adder. [See *Bitis inornata*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Nothing reported for this species. Most likely cytotoxic, w/ local swelling & pain at the bite site. For generalized venom information for closely related species, [See *Bitis arietans*](#).

Bitis schneideri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bitis caudalis paucisquamata*, *B. paucisquamata*

Common Names: Namaqua dwarf adder, Schneider's adder, Namaqua puff adder

Description

Smallest adder known w/ adults averaging 20-25 cm long (max. 27.6 cm). Strongly-keeled dorsal scales in 21-27 midbody rows, eyes on top of head, w/ small raised ridge above (sometimes bear minute "horns"). Background color grey to brownish-grey; patterned w/ 3 rows of black or brown blotches w/ light centers. Belly dirty-yellow, speckled w/ black. Tip of tail often dark.



Habitat

Found only in semi-stable, vegetated coastal sand dunes in Namibia (the southern regions of the Namib Desert, from Luderitz Bay to Little Namaqualand), & in adjacent areas of the Republic of South Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, most active in early evening & night, but early morning, too. Often basks in the sun. Eats mainly lizards (skinks, lacertids & geckoes), but occasionally also small mammals & amphibians. Sidewinds very well, usually buries itself in sand & sometimes uses the black tip of its tail to attract potential prey.

Venom Characteristics

Venom contains primarily weak cytotoxin, causing pain & local swelling; unlikely to be lethal to humans. Very few bites of humans recorded, causing slight swelling & discoloration at the bite site. No known specific antivenom currently produced.

Bitis worthingtoni

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Kenya horned viper

Description

Small, stout, greyish, average 20-35 cm long (max. 50 cm). Broad, flat, triangular head w/ small, overlapping strongly-keeled scales, & arrow pattern on top; small eyes w/ vertical pupils, set far forward, brow above each eye w/ a single horn. Body dark-brown or olive w/ 2 lighter undulating lines along each flank; scales rough, heavily-keeled, w/ 27-29 (rarely 31) midbody rows. Belly off-white mottled & stippled w/ black, tail yellow below.



Habitat

Restricted to scrub bush in broken rocky areas, generally at elevations above 1,500 m, along the high central rift valley, in southwestern Kenya.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, slow-moving, but can strike quickly. Probably mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, sometimes active in daytime. Main natural prey uncertain, but captive specimens feed readily on rodents or lizards

which it captures by ambush from a covered position. Bears live young (7-12)/ litter, usually born in Mar.-Apr.

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely mildly cytotoxic. No known antivenom produced currently. One case report of moderate pain & mild swelling at the bite site of a human victim.

Bitis xeropaga

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Desert mountain adder

Description

Small, slender, adults average 30-40 cm long (max. 61 cm); dorsal scales moderately-keeled, 25-27 midbody rows. Head relatively unmarked on top, darker w/ lighter marks on sides, chin & throat white. Body ash to dark-grey or tan; patterned w/ crossbars, consisting of dark rectangle flanked by whitish spot on either side, in turn flanked by a light brown region. Belly light grey to dusky, speckled w/ darker spots.



Habitat

Found mainly in driest parts of sparsely vegetated rocky hillsides & mountain slopes, in southern Namibia & adjacent areas in northwestern South Africa.

Activity and Behavior

More 'gentle' than other species of "dwarf adders," but will hiss & strike if disturbed. Does not sidewind, nor bury itself in sand. Captive specimens readily feed on lizards or small rodents. Water is readily taken from foliage or pools. Small litters of 4-5 young have been born in summer by captive specimens.

Venom Characteristics

Nothing is known about their venom, but it is likely cytotoxic. No human bites recorded. No known antivenom produced currently.

Boiga blandingii

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Dipsas blandingii*, *D. fasciatus*, *D. globiceps*, *Disas valida*, *Toxicodryas blandingii*

Common Names: Blanding's tree snake, Blanding's cat snake, Blanding's broad-headed snake

Description

Large, stocky, rear-fanged tree snake w/ thin neck, short, broad, flattened head & prominent yellowish to brown eyes set well forward, w/ vertical pupils. Adults usually 1.4-2.0 m long (max. 2.8 m). Two basic color patterns: Glossy black above - yellow below; or brown, grey or yellow-brown above - yellow-brown below. Large, velvety dorsal scales in 21-25 rows at midbody. Usually males are black, females & juveniles brownish, some w/ irregular blackish bars.

Habitat

Primarily found in forested areas, also found in thick woodland/forest-savanna, wooded valleys in grassland, & along gallery forest in savanna areas. Has been reported from a broad band of central Africa, from Guinea in the west to western Kenya & northern Angola. Sometimes enters houses to catch roosting bats.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal; rests in leaf clumps, tree hollows, etc., during the day. Mainly arboreal, can climb to 30 m in large trees, but will descend to the ground to cross open spaces & roads. When threatened, it may inflate its body, flatten its head, raise its body in "C-shaped" coils & make bluffing strikes which are seldom on target. Lays 7-14 eggs (20 x 40 mm)/ clutch, eats birds, arboreal lizards, bats & rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Apparently neurotoxic (causing myoneural dysfunction), but not well characterized; No specific antivenom is currently produced & no commercial antivenom is known to be effective. This species will often bite repeatedly, in rapid succession, when threatened. Has caused locally painful bites, but no documented fatalities of humans.

Boiga dendrophila

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Boiga dendrophila annectens*, *B. d. dendrophila*, *B. d. divergens*, *B. d. gemmicincta*, *B. d. latifasciata*, *B. d. levitoni*, *B. d. melanota*, *B. d. multicincta*, *B. d. occidentalis*, *Dipsas dendrophila*, *Dipsadomorphus dendrophilus*, *Triglyphodon dendrophilum*, *T. gemmi-cinctum*

Common Names: Mangrove snake, gold-ringed cat snake, Mangroven-Nachtbaumnatter

Description

Large snake (2-2.5 m long) w/ large head & mouth (can swallow a squirrel) & has relatively large, fixed rear fangs. Glossy-black w/ bright yellow bands, yellow lips & throat, & black-&-yellow belly. Eyes are grey w/ vertical pupils.

Habitat

Mainly found in mangrove swamps & edges of rain forests along coasts & mouths of large rivers throughout most of Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly active in late afternoon & evening, often basks in trees at 15 ft. or higher off ground. Eats mainly birds (& their eggs) or small mammals, but also lizards, frogs, & other snakes. Often "hangs on" when it bites, & may inject significant amounts of venom from its rear fangs. Female may lay 4-15 eggs/ clutch in a tree hollow or suitable site on the ground. Matures at about 6-7 ft. body length.

Venom Characteristics

Venom characteristics & action have not been well studied. Bite effects in small mammal pets & human children have included: drooping eyelids, reduced muscle tone near the bite, poor coordination, depressed heart rate, respiratory distress, swelling & discoloration of skin significant distance from the bite. Reported fatalities may have actually been due to bites by misidentified kraits (*Bungarus* spp).

Boiga irregularis

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Boiga flavescens*, *Coluber irregularis*, *Dendrophis fusca*, *Dipsadomorphus irregularis*, *Dipsas boydii*, *D. irregularis*, *D. ornata*, *Hurria pseudoboiga*, *Pappophis flavigastra*, *P. laticeps*, *Triglyphodon flavescens*, *T. laticeps*

Common Names: Brown tree snake, Brown cat snake, Braune Nachtbaumnatter

Description

Large snake (up to 3 m on Guam), w/ very long tail, slender, laterally compressed body, & enlarged vertebral scales. Head large w/ big, bulbous eyes & relatively large, fixed rear fangs. May be brown, yellow, pink or barred.



Habitat

Typically found in lowland woods & coastal forests. Native to Australia (New South Wales, North Territory, Queensland, West Australia), Indonesia, New Guinea, & the Solomon Islands. Has been recently introduced into Guam & the Caroline Islands.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, arboreal, rests in leaf clumps, tree hollows etc., during the day. Feeds on birds, rodents or lizards. Tends to flatten its neck laterally when threatened. Has driven many bird species extinct in

places where it has been introduced but has no natural predators. Enters homes, sometimes bites people. Has caused significant power outages on Guam.

Venom Characteristics

Nature & action of venom not well studied. Effects in bitten small mammal pets & human children have included: drooping eyelids, lowered muscle tone near bite, poor coordination, depressed heart rate, respiratory distress, tissue swelling & discoloration significant distances from bite. Rapidly repeated bites by threatened snakes are common. Reported fatalities not well documented & may have been by misidentified kraits (*Bungarus* spp).

Bothriechis aurifer

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops aurifer*, *B. aurifer*, *B. nigroviridis aurifer*, *Lachesis aurifer*, *Thamnocenchris aurifer*

Common Names: Engl.: Yellow-blotched palm pit viper, Guat.: cantil loro, cantil verde, cotorra, gushnayera, ic bolay, raxcaj, tamagas verde, vibora del arbol, vibora verde, yaaxcan, Mex.: nauyaca, manchada, nauyaca verdinegra; Ger.: Guatemala-Lanzenotter, Gelbeflecte Lanzenotter

Description

Relatively slender, green, prehensile-tailed pit viper, adults usually up to 70 cm long (max. about 1 m); 18-21 midbody dorsal scale rows; usually yellowish-green w/ dorsal black-bordered yellow blotches, often w/ a broken black mid-dorsal stripe; belly paler. Top of the head usually has dark blotches & a dark post-ocular stripe from each eye to back of the head.



Habitat

Found most commonly in lower montane rainforest (cloud forest) at 1,200-2,300 m elevation (very rarely, at much lower elevations). It may enter subtropical wet forest (pine-oak forest) along mesic ravines. Found in Mexico (Chiapas) & Guatemala. In Guatemala, it is found in regions of Sierra de las Minas & Sierra de Chuacus.

Activity and Behavior

Diurnal. Usually arboreal, but may be encountered at ground level or on low vegetation. Usually not aggressive & remain quietly coiled in vegetation, but will strike if brushed against or touched.

Ovoviviparous w/ usually 5-8 young/ litter. Prey mainly on tree frogs, lizards & sometimes on available small rodents or birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hematoxic, has caused human deaths.

Bothriechis bicolor

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothriechis ornatus*, *Bothrops bicolor*, *B. bernoulli*, *B. ornatus*

Common Names: Engl.: Guatemalan palm pit viper, Guat.: cantil lora, cotorra, gushnayera, huisnayera, tamagas verde, vibora romana, vibora verde, Mex.: nauyaca bicolor, nauyaca verde, Ger.: Zweifarbige Lanzenotter

Description

Small to medium-sized, relatively slender, green, prehensile-tailed pitviper, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 100 cm). Usually green to bluish-green w/ no distinctive pattern, head lacks a postocular dark stripe, belly usually paler, yellowish-green, 21 midbody dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Most common in lower montane wet forest/moist forest at 500-2,000 m elevation. Occupies moderate & intermediate elevations, mainly along the Pacific versant of the southern Volcanic Cordillera of Guatemala from the Vulcan de Agua to southeastern Chiapas, Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal, mainly nocturnal. Usually not aggressive & remains quietly coiled in vegetation, but will strike if brushed against or touched. Ovoviviparous w/ small number of young (usually <8) per litter. Preys mainly on small mammals, amphibians, & sometimes available birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Humans have reportedly occasionally been bitten by this species. It has not been reported to cause human fatalities, but may have that potential (it is rarely encountered by people).

Bothriechis lateralis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops lateralis, Lachesis lateralis

Common Names: Engl. - Side-striped palm-pitviper, Coffee palm viper; Costa Rica & Panama - lora, toboba; Nicaragua - Chocoya, lora

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender arboreal palm pitviper, adults usually 0.5-1.0 m long; w/ a prehensile tail & 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Background color usually yellowish-green to bluish-green, usually w/ dorsolateral bicolored (yellow & black) vertical bars. Adults usually lack a dark postocular stripe. Belly usually very light green to whitish.



Habitat

Most commonly found coiled in vegetation over or near watercourses; reported from 850 to 2,000 m elevation. Limited to Costa Rica, Nicaragua & Panama.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, mainly arboreal; usually not aggressive & remain quietly coiled in vegetation, but will strike if brushed against or touched. Ovoviviparous w/ 6-17 young in litters reported for captured specimens. Preys mainly on small rodents, frogs, birds, & even (rarely) bats.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ strong proteolytic factors. Sometimes bites & envenomates humans, but typical symptoms usually limited to localized pain, swelling, redness, & occasionally dizziness, headache, photosensitivity, & difficulty breathing. Rare reports of human fatalities due to bites by this species have not yet been confirmed.

Bothriechis marchi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops marchi*, *B. nigroviridis marchi*

Common Names: Engl. - March's palm pit viper, Honduran palm viper; Honduras - tamaga verde; Nicaragua - chocoya, lora, vibora de las palmas

Description

Medium-sized, moderately slender, w/ prehensile tail, adults usually 0.5-1.0 m long. Body color usually yellowish-green to bluish-green, usually without any distinct patterning; some specimens may have indistinct bluish or yellowish-green mottling dorsally, belly paler green or yellow-green. Has 19-21 midbody dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in rainforests & wet forests at low, moderate, & intermediate elevations of the Atlantic-drained slopes of Honduras (mainly at 500-1,500 m), including the Sierra de Espiritu Santo (probably also occur in southeastern Guatemala & northeastern Nicaragua).

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal; usually encountered coiled in trees or bushes. Mainly nocturnal. Usually nonaggressive, but may strike if brushed against or touched. Ovoviviparous w/ 6-13 young/ litter observed for captured females. Eats mainly available small mammals, lizards & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, probably mainly hemotoxic. Rarely reported to bite humans & no human fatalities documented from bites by this species, so far.

Bothriechis nigroviridis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops marchi*, *B. nigroviridis*, *B. n. nigroviridis*, *B. rowleyi*, *Trimeresurus nigroviridis*

Common Names: Engl. - Black-speckled palm-pitviper; Costa Rica - lora, sese, toboba de arbol, vibora de arbol

Description

Medium-sized, arboreal prehensile-tailed pitviper, adults usually <60 cm long (max. 93 cm); 17-21 midbody dorsal scale rows; body usually emerald-green to yellowish-green, strongly mottled w/ black; a distinct black postocular line from the eye to the corner of the mouth. Belly yellowish-green lightly mottled w/ black. Juveniles have black tail tip.



Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest, cloud forest, & high montane forest; most common in undisturbed habitats. Found at 1,100-2,400 m elevation or higher. Limited to both slopes of the central cordillera of Costa Rica & western Panama.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, mainly arboreal; usually not aggressive & remains quietly coiled in vegetation, but will strike if disturbed. Ovoviviparous w/ usually 4-8 young/ litter. Preys mainly on small mammals, & sometimes frogs or birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, w/ possible cytotoxic & neurotoxic factors. Has been implicated in human fatalities; envenomation reportedly results in intense pain, nausea, & asphyxia. Currently no specific antivenoms to this species.

Bothriechis rowleyi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops rowleyi*, *B. nigroviridis macdougalli*

Common Names: Engl. - Mexican palm-pitviper, Rowley's palm-pitviper; Local names - Nauyaca de cola azul, vibora de arbol, vibora verde

Description

Small to medium-sized, moderately slender, arboreal pitviper, w/ a prehensile tail, adults usually 50-100 cm long, & w/ 19-21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body background color usually emerald green scales w/ bluish skin; frequently w/ bluish or yellow & black blotches. The head has no dark postocular stripe.



Habitat

Found mainly in cloud forest & mesic revines in pine-oak forest at 1,060-1,830 m elevation. Limited to Mexico (southeastern Oaxaca, northwestern Chiapas).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal & diurnal. Usually not aggressive & remains quietly coiled in vegetation, but will strike if disturbed. Oviviparous w/ reportedly 6-8 young/ litter. Prey mainly on arboreal frogs & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but reportedly considered a dangerous snake by local inhabitants. Venoms is mainly hemotoxic, but may also contain neurotoxic components. No specific antivenom to this species currently produced.

Bothriechis schlegelii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis supraciliaris, Bothrops nigroadspersus, B. schlegelii, B. supraciliaris, Lachesis nitidus, L. schlegelii, Thanatophis torvus, Trionocephalus schlegelii, Trimeresurus schlegelii

Common Names: Eyelash palm-pitviper, Green Tommygoff, chaj bolay, vibora del arbol

Description

Small, moderately slender, arboreal pitviper, w/ a prehensile tail, adults usually <60 cm long. Background color & markings extremely variable. Most specimens w/ body green, olive green, or gray-green, finely suffused w/ brownish to reddish-brown speckling. One color phase is yellowish w/ many irregular reddish blotches dorsally, often w/ a lot of speckling of smaller orangish spots, & belly usually almost solid paler yellow.



Habitat

Found most commonly in tropical moist forest, wet subtropical forest (cloud forest), & montane wet forest. Usually found in shrubs, trees, & vine tangles close to rivers & streams. Found at up to 1,000 m elevation in Mexico & Guatemala, & up to 1,500 m in other parts of its range.

Activity and Behavior

Primarily arboreal & diurnal. Characteristically coils w/ mouth wide open when disturbed. Usually nonaggressive, but reportedly can be quick to bite when disturbed or just brushed against. Ovoviviparous w/ reports of 6-20 young/ litter; usually breed readily in captivity. Prey mainly on available arboreal lizards, frogs, & small mammals (may also hunt these same prey on the ground).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, but w/ strongly myotoxic factors. A few humans bitten & envenomated by this species each year within its range, but fatalities (mainly of smaller children) reportedly rare. Typical serious envenomation symptoms include: local intense pain & swelling, w/ mild but slowly spreading tissue necrosis, dizziness, nausea, & difficulty breathing. No specific antivenom currently produced against this species.

Bothriechis supraciliaris

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops schlegeli supraciliaris, B. schlegelii supraciliaris, B. supraciliaris

Common Names: Blotched palm-pitviper; Bocaraca, terciopelo de pestana, toboba de pestana, toboba

Description

Medium-sized, rather slender, semi-arboreal, prehensile-tailed pitviper, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. about 80 cm). Body color & pattern extremely variable, usually moss-green, bright-green, blue-green to reddish-brown or reddish-maroon; w/ circular, ovoid, rhomboid, or irregular dorsal blotches (may form crossbands), belly lighter, 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head w/ darker markings & prominent spinelike scales above each eye.

Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest & cloud forest. Limited to a mountainous area in southwestern Costa Rica, at 800-1,700 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, & semi-arboreal (often hunts on the ground). Not reported to be aggressive, but will strike readily if disturbed even slightly. Ovoviviparous, usual litter size not reported (but probably <10 young). Preys mainly on available small mammals, lizards & frogs (mainly those which live primarily on, or near, ground level).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic, but w/ possibly myotoxic factors. No human fatalities due to its bite documented so far.

Bothriechis thalassinus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis bicolor, Bothrops bicolor

Common Names: Morendon palm-pitviper, Yax chan, culebra verde

Description

Medium-sized, slender-bodied, prehensile-tailed pitviper, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 96.7 cm), w/ 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head & body usually greenish dorsally, shading to yellow-greenish along sides; belly usually lighter, cream to yellow-green to pale green. Dorsal pattern may have irregular turquoise blotches, to black blotches or speckling (not reaching very far down sides). Head w/ 2 black stripes & black speckling on top, these become reduced & less visible toward tail.

Habitat

Found mainly in the lower montane wet forest & lower montane moist forest in eastern Guatemala & western Honduras, at 885-1,730 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly nocturnal & arboreal. Not reported to be very aggressive, but will strike quickly if surprised or physically disturbed even slightly. Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported, but likely <10 young/ litter. Prey mainly on available frogs, lizards, & sometimes small mammals or birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic, w/ possibly mildly neurotoxic or mildly myotoxic factors. Seldom encountered by humans, very few reported bites of humans. Typical envenomation effects reportedly limited to local pain, swelling, mild local tissue necrosis, "tingling" of a digit or limb, & nausea. No well documented serious envenomations or deaths of humans from bites by this species.

Bothriopsis albocarinata

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothriopsis pulchra* (in part), *Bothrops albocarinata*

Common Names: Andean forest pitviper, Ecuadorian Forest pitviper, Loro Mashaco, Ysipi

Description

Small, moderately slender, arboreal pitviper that reaches at least 65 cm in length. Dorsal ground color is dark to medium green, often w/ a series of faint pale bands across its back that usually fade & become obscure anteriorly. Belly lighter greenish to greenish-gray. Has 19-23 midbody dorsal scale rows.

Habitat

Very limited data on this species, found mostly in cloud forest or upper rain forest, primarily an inhabitant of the high Andes & has a vertical distribution of 500 to over 3,000 m. May also be found in suitable habitats in Columbia & Peru, but no confirmed specimens from there, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Little is known about this species. It would likely behave like other closely-related arboreal pit vipers.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic w/ possible cytotoxic or myotoxic factors.

Bothriopsis alticola

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothriopsis pulchra*(in part), *Bothrops alticola*

Common Names: Andean forest pit viper, Loro Mashaco, Ysipi

Description

Small, moderately slender, arboreal pitviper, adults about 65-75 cm long. Body is usually greenish-yellow dorsally, w/ a series of transverse black spots that coalesce both anteriorly & posteriorly, but are distinct at midbody, belly usually lighter. Has 19-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Looks very similar to the closely-related species, *B. pulchra*.

Habitat

Found mainly in upper montane temperate forest, at 300-3,000+ m elevation, in the Andes regions of Colombia, Ecuador & possibly also Peru (no confirmed specimens from there, yet).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known about this species. Probably similar to other arboreal pit vipers.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic w/ possible myotoxic or cytotoxic factors.

Bothriopsis bilineata

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothriopsis bilineata bilineata*, *B. b. smaragdina*, *B. taeniata*, *Bothrops bilineatus*, *Cophias bilineatus*, *Lachesis bilineatus*, *Trionocephalus arboreus*

Common Names: Two-striped forest pitviper, green Tommy goffi, Cobra papagaio, lora, orito, loro machaco,

Description

Slender, prehensile tailed pitviper, adults usually <70 cm long (max. 123 cm); body pale green to bluish-green, head green & speckled with black, tan or brown; 23-35 midbody scale rows; body sometimes w/ variable (usually paired) blotches, always with a longitudinal thin yellowish line along each side where the ventral & dorsal scales meet; belly yellow w/ green tinge, tail pinkish (bordered by yellow) near tip.



Habitat

Found mainly in lowland rainforest, especially near waterways, at elevations up to 1,000 m. in Amazon or Atlantic coastal drainage of nine different South American countries; mainly Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, French Guiana, & Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal, slow-moving, mainly nocturnal. Usually found in shrubs, trees & vines more than 1 m above the ground. Not usually aggressive, but will strike if disturbed. Mainly prey on frogs, birds, lizards or small mammals. Bear 4-16 live young.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Primarily hemotoxic; envenomation has resulted in human deaths.

Bothriopsis chloromelas

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis oligolepis, B. o. oligolepis, Bothriopsis oligolepis, B. peruvianus, Bothrops chloromelas, B. chrysomelas, B. oligolepis, B. peruvianus, Lachesis bilineatus var. oligolepis, L. chloromelas, L. peruvianus

Common Names: Engl.: Inca forest pitviper, Bolivia: yoperojobobo venenosa, Peru: achu jergon, lamon, jergon negro, loro machaco, yawayuochaco

Description

Medium-sized, moderately stocky, prehensile-tailed arboreal pitviper, adults may exceed 100 cm long, 23-25 midbody scale rows. Head mainly black on top, w/ pale green highlights, especially around edges. Chin creamy-yellow w/ black & green speckles. Body usually bright green, heavily blotched & speckled w/ black. Ventrals lighter, speckled w/ black & green, tongue black or red w/ black pigment.

Habitat

Not well studied, but found mainly in cloud forest in central Peruvian Andes, from 1,000-2,000+ m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

A rare species w/ not much known about its activities or behavior. Probably mainly nocturnal & arboreal, preying on available small mammals, birds & sometimes lizards or frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably hemotoxic (like the venoms of most known related species). No well documented envenomations of humans, or related symptoms, nor deaths due to bites by this species, have been reported.

Bothriopsis medusa

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops eneydae, Lachesis medusa

Common Names: Venezuelan forest pitviper, mapanare-tigrito, tигра-mariposa, tигра-veinticuatro, viejita

Description

Small to medium-sized, moderately slender, arboreal pitviper, adults usually 50-80 cm long. Body colors include tan, yellowish-brown, gray, & olive green; body usually has a series of irregular dark dorsal bands w/ paler centers (bands indistinct in darker specimens).



Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest & cloud forest in the central range of the Cordillera de la Costa, Venezuela (including relatively colder areas), at 475-2000 m elevation. Considered to be very rare, w/ low numbers due to loss of habitat.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known about the biology of this species. It is probably mainly arboreal (w/ a prehensile tail), but has only been collected while on the ground. Nocturnal, usually slow moving & not aggressive, but will strike rapidly when disturbed. Probably mainly preys on small mammals, maybe also eats frogs & lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic; usually said to have a "mild effect" on humans; but there are some reports of serious envenomations.

Bothriopsis oligolepis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops chrysomelas, B. oligolepis, Bothrops peruvianus, Lachesis bilineatus var. oligolepis, L. chloromelas

Common Names: Inca forest pitviper, jergon, jergon negro, loro machaco, sachavaca machaco

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender, prehensile-tailed arboreal pitviper, adults usually about 80 cm long (max. 99 cm). Body greenish, very heavily blotched & speckled w/ black; many ill-defined black blotches (often w/ pale borders) often forming crossbands, & often bordered by yellow-white; 23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly yellow w/ pale green mottling. Outer part of tail pinkish w/ mottling (may be all dark).



Habitat

Mainly reported from wet montane forests on the eastern slopes of the Andes in southeastern Peru & northern Bolivia at 1,500-2,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

This is a very rare species & not much is known about its habitat or activity. Probably mainly arboreal, & nocturnal, but collection sites are often cold, & thus, this may be a diurnal (or seasonally diurnal) species; probably preying mainly on small mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably hemotoxic, but no documented reports of human envenomations, or their effects.

Bothriopsis pulchra

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriecus albocarinata, B. alticola, B. oligolepis albocarinatus, Bothrops albocarinatus, B. alticola, B. alticolus, B. leptura, B. monticelli, B. mahnerti, B. pulcher, B. pulchra, Bothriopsis albocarinata, B. alticola, B. punctata, B. punctatus, Lachesis pulcher, Trionocephalus pulcher

Common Names: Andean forest pitviper, Chocoran forest pitviper, loro mashaco, mscanchillo, cuatronarices, dormilona, lecha, pelo de gato, ysipi

Description

Small, moderately slender, arboreal pitviper, adults usually about 70 cm long; tail relatively long & prehensile. Body pale brown to greenish-tan, darker pale-bordered dorsal blotches may coalesce w/ lateral blotches forming irregular bands; 19-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head tan on top w/ symmetrical paired dark stripes or marks. Belly yellow w/ black mottling.



Habitat

Found mainly in cloud forest or upper montane temperate forest, at 300-3,000 m elevation, on the Pacific foothills of the Andes & coastal plain from western Colombia, through Ecuador into northwestern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but probably mainly nocturnal, arboreal & not very aggressive. As w/ all "forest pitvipers," caution should be exercised when moving through dense secondary growth in forested foothills within their range. Probably prey mainly on small rodents & birds, & sometimes on lizards or frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Probably hemotoxic, but not much known, & no well documented cases of envenomation of humans, or reports of resultant symptoms.

Bothriopsis taeniata

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis teaniatus, Bothrops castelnaudi, B. c. lichenosus, B. lichenosa, B. taeniatus, B. t. lichenosis, B. t. taeniatus, Bothriopsis taeniata lichenosa, B. t. taeniata, Lachesis castelnaudi Bothriopsis taeniata, Bothrops castelnaudi

Common Names: Engl.: Speckled forest pitviper, Brazil: jararaca-amarela, jararaca-cinca, jararaca cinzenta, jararaca-tigrina, Columbia: cuatronarices, estralita, macabrel, macaurel, rabo de raton, Peru: huicvont, huicvonto, jergon, jergon de arbol, jergon arbicola, marashar, nashipkit, Suriname: boomoroekoekoe, Venezuela: mapanare, mapanare liquenosa

Description

Medium-sized, slender, arboreal pitviper w/ prehensile tail; adults usually <100 cm long (max. about 150 cm); body lavender-grey to yellow-green, pattern extremely variable, but nearly all specimens have a row of bold white spots along the junction of ventral & dorsal scales.



Habitat

Widely distributed in wet & temperate lowland & foothill forests of South America east of the Andes through the southern amazon basin & along the northeastern countries of Brazil, the Guianas, & Suriname, from sea level up to 2,100 m. elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & arboreal; usually encountered in primary forest or forest edge situations, in vines & low vegetation. Difficult to see because of cryptic coloration. Not aggressive but will strike quickly if disturbed. Not well known, but probably ovoviviparous (clutch size not reported), & probably mainly preys on available frogs, birds, lizards, & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

No specific data; however, the rather large size & long fangs of this snake make it potentially dangerous. Bothriopsis venom is primarily hemotoxic.

Bothrocophias campbelli

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops campbelli, B. pulchra, Lachesis pulcher, Porthidium almawebi, Trionocephalus pulcher

Common Names: Ecaudorian toadheaded viper, Campbell's toadheaded viper, serpiente boca de sapo

Description

Medium-sized, stout-bodied, large-headed, toadheaded pitviper, adults usually 75-85 cm long (max. 123 cm); body dorsum pale reddish-grey w/ dark grey-brown cross bands often broken at the mid-dorsal line, belly dark brown to black w/ yellow area on posterior outer edge. Head grey-brown above, w/ dark speckling, small whitish post-ocular stripe, blunt snout. Tail slender, not prehensile, grey-black above, makes up 12-18% of total length.

Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forests & cloud forests of the highlands of western Ecuador, at 1,300-2,000 m elevation; among herbaceous plants, shrubs & trees (typically in margins of forest edges or clearings).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, usually found on forest floor & near a stream or body of water. Prey mainly on rodents, lizards, or various other available prey. Captured specimens have been observed to bear 6-36 live young, each about 18 cm long.

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxic venom, envenomation by 3 closely-related species in this genus have caused human deaths, frequently cause severe necrosis, & may lead to amputation of human limbs.

Bothrocophias columbianus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops columbianus, B. microphthalmus columbianus, B. rhombeatus, Porthidium columbianum

Common Names: Columbian toadheaded pitviper, equis colorado, mapana

Description

Large, heavy-bodied toadheaded pitviper, adults usually 80-100 cm long (max. 136 cm). Very similar to *B. campbelli*, but w/ a more reddish tinge to body (especially notable in juveniles & young specimens); & this species' dorsal scales are mostly very strongly tuberculate & "Lachesis-like" in appearance; usually in 23-25 midbody dorsal rows.

Habitat

Found almost exclusively in lower montane wet forests & cloud forests of the Pacific slopes of the Andes in western Columbia, at 800-2,000+ m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Prey mainly on available small mammals, lizards, & sometimes birds. Closely-related species are all ovoviviparous, but there is one report that this species lays eggs (& "broods" them). For details about biology of a closely-related species, [See Bothrocophias campbelli](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. One reported bite by a juvenile of this species caused grade IV envenomation (the most severe stage), w/ renal complications, thrombosis, & necrosis. Also, [See Bothrocophias campbelli](#).

Bothrocophias hyoprora

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops hyoprora*, *B. hyoprurus*, *B. pessoai*, *Porthidium hyoprora*, *P. hyoprorum*, *Trimeresurus hyoprora*, *T. pessoai*

Common Names: Amazonian toadheaded pitviper, Bolivia: yoperojobobo, Brazil: cuaima, narizona, jararaca nariguda, Columbia: equis sapa, jergon, sapa, Ecuador: hocico de puerco, namacunchi, ushuculi, Peru: jergon, jergon-shuchupe, jergon-shushupe, yatutu

Description

Small, stout-bodied, terrestrial toadheaded pitviper, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 83 cm); 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows, w/ distinctive up-turned snout. Apparently sexually dimorphic w/ males smaller & darker. Similar to other species in this genus in regard to coloration & variations of patterning. For some example variations, [See *Bothrocophias campbelli*](#).



Habitat

Found mainly in rainforest or very humid tropical forest, often near water or in leaf litter on elevated ground; mainly at low elevations in equatorial forests of the Amazon basin in Columbia, eastern Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, & western Brazil in Amazonas & Rondonia. Found from sea level to 1,000+ m elevation. Preys on small rodents, lizards, etc., as available.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Preys mainly on small rodents, lizards, birds, etc. For details about a closely-related species, [See *Bothrocophias campbelli*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxic effects, including several reported human deaths. Also [See Bothrocophias campbelli](#).

Bothrocophias microphthalmus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops microphthalma, B. m. microphthalma, B. microphthalmus, B. m. microphthalmus, Lachesis microphthalmus, L. pleuroxanthus, Porthidium microphthalmum, Trimeresurus microphthalmus

Common Names: Engl.: Small-eyed toadheaded pitviper, Bolivia: yoperojobobo, Brazil: jararaca, Columbia: mapana, taya, talla, Ecuador: hoja podrida, Peru: dukamp, equis, equis jergon, jergon, jergon podridora, jergon shushupe, makanch

Description

Small to medium-sized, heavy-bodied, terrestrial toadheaded pitviper, adults usually 40-70 cm long (max. 116 cm); Brown to straw-colored to gray, w/ irregular transverse marks or crossbands, typically 23 midbody scale rows; head has no distinct markings on top, dark brown post-orbital stripe, iris goldish w/ vertical pupil, tongue uniformly black. Belly heavily mottled w/ dark brown, darker toward tail.

Habitat

Found mainly on the Amazonian slopes of the Andes in Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, & Brazil; from 1,000 to 2,350 m elevation. Mainly lives in lower montane wet forests & cloud forests.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Probably ovoviviparous (litter size not reported) & mainly preys on small mammals, birds & possibly lizards (as available). Also [See Bothrocophias campbelli](#).

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxin, but not well characterized. Venom of this species may be the most toxic of any in this genus. Preliminary studies have indicated that this snake's venom is poorly neutralized by some commercially available antivenoms.

Bothrocophias myersi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops campbelli (in part), B. lanceolatus, B. pulcher, Porthidium almawebi (in part)

Common Names: Chocoan toadheaded pitviper, taya del cauca, cabeze de lanza

Description

Medium to large, moderately slender, toadheaded pitviper, adults usually about 75 cm long (max. 120 cm). Body dorsal color uniformly orange to dark red-brown, sometimes w/ slightly darker crossbars edged in white, usually 23 midbody dorsal scale rows; head w/ top & sides dark brown, grayish-blue post-ocular stripe, belly lighter (may be pinkish), blotched & speckled w/ orange & brown to gray.

Habitat

Found mainly in rainforest (areas receiving >500 cm of rain/yr.) in the Pacific lowlands of western Columbia, at 75-200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Preys mainly on small mammals, lizards, birds, or other available prey. Ovoviviparous (litter size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not well characterized, but probably rather potent and hemotoxic. For details about venom of a closely-related species, [See Bothrocophias campbelli](#).

Bothrops alcatraz

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis lanceolatus*

Common Names: Alcatrazes lancehead, Jararaca-de-Alcatrazes

Description

A rather "dwarfed" terrestrial lancehead pitviper, adults only up to 50 cm long. Body usually pale brownish-gray w/ 14 large dark olive-brown trapezoidal blotches along its back. Dark brown postorbital stripe, dorsal scales strongly keeled, 22-26 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly pale yellowish-gray, sometimes w/ dark gray blotches.

Habitat

Found in low Atlantic Forest vegetation only on the island of Ilha Alcatrazes about 35 km off the coast of Sao Paulo, southeastern Brazil. Found up to 226 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & mainly terrestrial but climbs into low bushes & may be considered semi-arboreal.

Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported, but probably <15 young. Apparently preys mainly on the colonies of Frigate Birds on the island to which it is endemic.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ possible tissue-necrotic factors; reportedly has a very intensely coagulant activity. numerous human envenomations have been reported, but only a very few human fatalities.

Bothrops alternatus

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Identification

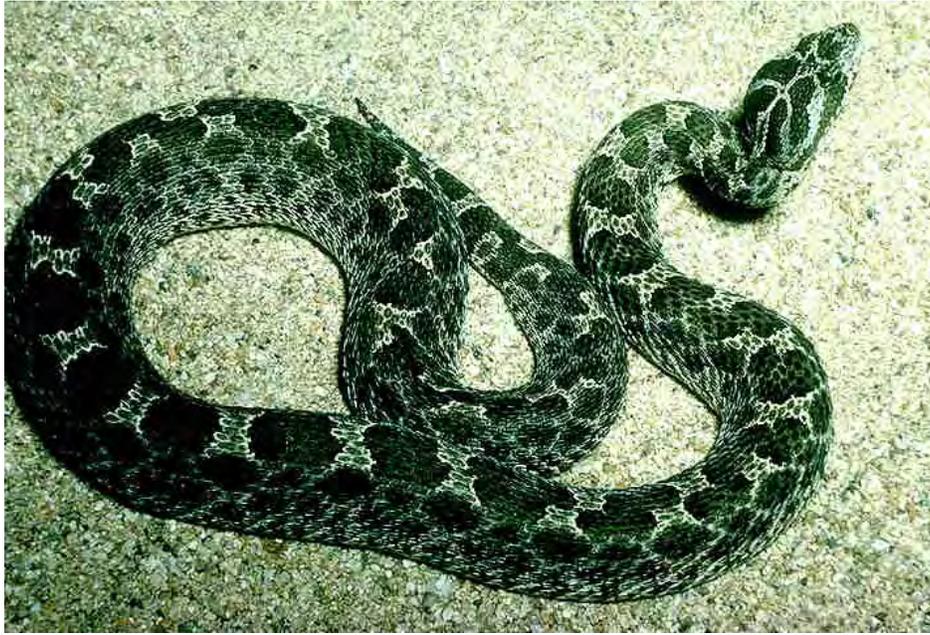
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Craspedocephalus brasiliensis*, *Lachesis alternata*, *L. alternatus*, *L. inaequalis*, *Trimeresurus alternatus*

Common Names: Engl.: Urutu, Argentina: kiririog-aka-kurussu, mboi cuaia, vibora de la cruz, yarara, yarara grande, Brazil: biocoatiara, biocoatiara coatiara, cotiara, cruzeira, cruzeiro, jararaca de agosto, jarara rabo-de-porco, urutu, Paraguay: Mboi-cuatia, Mboi-kwatiara, yarara acacusu, Uruguay: crucera, vibora de la cruz, yarara

Description

Large, heavy-bodied, pitviper, adults usually 1.0-1.7 m long (max. 2.0+ m). Body color variable; may be brown, tan, or gray, sometimes w/ an olive cast. Body usually has a series of C-shaped darker markings boldly outlined w/ paler scales. Belly pale whitish-gray, w/ a dark brown stripe (wider toward tail) from neck to tail tip.



Habitat

Found mainly in low-lying swampy areas, river banks, marshes, & other humid habitats at elevations up to 700 m. Also in open fields & rocky areas in Argentina. Found in tropical, semitropical & temperate forest & is said to be common in cultivated areas & near human habitations. Seldom ever found in very dry situations.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Easily aroused when threatened, it can be aggressive & will defend itself vigorously. Ovoviviparous w/ 1-24 young/ litter. Prey mainly on frogs, toads, etc. as juveniles; then as adults mainly on small mammals, birds, & sometimes lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic & cytotoxic; envenomation by this, & related *Bothrops* spp., can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue necrosis. This species is an important cause of snakebite throughout its range, most bites are to lower limbs. Although seldom fatal to humans, bites are fairly common.

Bothrops ammodytoides

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops burmeisteri*, *B. nasus*, *B. patagonicus*, *Lachesis ammodytoides*, *Rhinocerothis nasus*

Common Names: Engl.: Patagonian lancehead, yararanata, Local Names: Cenicienta, yara nata

Description

Small to medium-sized, stocky terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 50-80 cm long (max. about 100 cm) w/ 23-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually tan or gray dorsally, w/ a series of 30-32 prominent, large, rounded, dark-brown blotches separated by paler areas; smaller, less well-defined dark blotches occur later in life. Head w/ upturned snout & dark-brown postorbital stripe. Belly white w/ scattered black speckling, especially along sides.

Habitat

Most common in temperate to subtropical savannas & steppes, primarily in sandy, rocky areas, including coastal dunes, steep river banks, & salt flats. May frequent small mammal burrows in rocky plains areas. Occurs from near sea level to 2,000+ m elevation. Found only in central & southern Argentina. May be the southernmost snake species in the world.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & nocturnal, & reportedly has an irritable temperament. Ovoviviparous w/ litter number reportedly depending on size of female, probably seldom >20 young/litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. In general, *Bothrops* venoms are mainly hemotoxic & cytotoxic; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. This species is capable of causing human fatalities.

Bothrops andianus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops andiana*, *B. pictus*, *Lachesis lanceolatus* (in part)

Common Names: Andean lancehead, jergon, jergona, terciopelo, la chuta, dormilona, hupachilla

Description

Medium to large-sized, terrestrial lancehead pitviper, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 125.8 cm). Body usually olive-gray to brown, w/ a series of dark, pale-edged rounded triangles along the sides, 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head usually w/ a very wide dark postorbital stripe. Belly cream to yellow, mottled heavily w/ dark gray, brown or black w/ yellowish median streak on front half.



Habitat

Found mainly in wetter forested areas at 1,800-3,300 m elevation. Limited to areas in the high Andes in central & western Bolivia & southeastern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known; probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Ovoviviparous w/ litter size dependent on body size of the female (no specific numbers reported), & probably seldom >20 neonates/ litter. Probably prey mainly on available small mammals, birds, & maybe lizards & frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom of most *Bothrops* species is mainly hemotoxic w/ some cytotoxic factors. Envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Potentially capable of causing human deaths.

Bothrops asper

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops atrox asper*, *B. a. septentrionalis*, *B. a. xanthogrammus*, *Bothrops xanthogrammus*, *Lachesis xanthogrammus*, *Trigonocephalus asper*, *T. xanthogrammus*

Common Names: Terciopelo, barba amarilla, cantil, cantil Boca dorado, cantil devanador, yellow-jaw tommygoff, equis, equis negra, cascabelle, toboba rabo amarilla, cuatronarices, pelo de gato, nauyaca, taya equis, fer-de-lance (plus many more slight local variations of these; >100 variant common names)

Description

Large, moderately slender, lance-headed, adults usually 1.2-1.8 m long (max. 3.05 m); body colors & patterns highly variable, but many specimens are light brown to olive-grey & appear to have a series of dark X's down their back, 23-33 (usually 25-29) midbody dorsal scale rows. Head almost no dorsal markings, postorbital stripe present, snout markedly pointed, underside of head plain pale yellow. Venter pale yellow, cream or whitish-gray.



Habitat

Found mainly in lowlands & coastal plains, from sea level to 1,300 m elevation, but may reach 2,700 m in Andes areas. Most common in tropical rainforest & tropical evergreen forest, from southeastern Mexico through Central America to Ecuador & Venezuela (to Trinidad). Seldom found in very dry habitats.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, but may climb bushes & low trees. Often seeks prey near human habitations & in or near cultivated areas. Excitable & unpredictable if disturbed; easily provoked to strike. Moves very rapidly & defends itself aggressively. Ovoviviparous w/ 25-70 (avg. 40) young/ litter. Young eat arthropods & other exothermic prey until large enough to swallow small rodents; then they shift to warm-blooded (endothermic) prey, & often use their tail to lure prey.

Venom Characteristics

Has a large supply of potent mainly hemotoxic venom w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can cause systemic internal bleeding & serious local tissue destruction. Causes immediate burning pain, edema, local hemorrhage, discoloration, necrosis, can cause wide-spread hemorrhage (at multiple sites & intracranial), coagulopathy, severe hypotension, renal failure & shock. Causes more human deaths than any other pitviper species in the Western Hemisphere.'

Bothrops atrox

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops affinis*, *B. furia*, *B. isabellae*, *B. neuvoiedii venezuelenzi*, *B. sabinii*, *B. subscutatus*, *Coluber atrox*, *C. lanceolatus*, *Lachesis atrox*, *L. lanceolatus*, *Trigonocephalus asper*, *Trimeresurus atrox*

Common Names: Common lancehead, Fer-de-Lance, caicaca, acuamboia, caissaca, bulla barbara amarilla, machacu, taya, taya equis, jararaca, cascabel (juveniles only, in Peru) mapanare, Gewöhnliche Lanzenotter (plus >40 additional variant local names).

Description

Large, moderately heavy-bodied lancehead, adults usually 75-125 cm long (max. 162 cm); body color & patterns extremely variable, but most specimens have a dorsal body pattern w/ a series of distinct light-edged, dark cross bands (sometimes pattern nearly indistinguishable), head brownish to grey w/ dark postocular stripe, lower surface of head & body yellow to whitish w/ variable dark markings (fade toward the tail). Juvenile tail tip often yellowish or pink.



Habitat

Found in low montane forest throughout most tropical lowlands of South America east of the Andes, exclusive of Argentina, Paraguay & Uruguay; up to 1,300 m elevation in eastern slopes of the Andes. Prefer damp locales in association w/ creeks, lakes, or rivers; also found in cultivated areas & around human habitations, including weedy urban lots.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, but will climb shrubs or trees up to 4 m above the ground. Often lives near human habitation. Young eat ectothermic prey (including arthropods) until they are large enough to swallow small rodents; then they switch to mainly endothermic prey (mammals, birds). Sometimes aggressive if cornered and may strike quickly if disturbed. Ovoviviparous w/ 8-24 young/ litter reported.

Venom Characteristics

Has a large amount of potent venom that is mainly hemotoxic w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in intense immediate pain, edema, severe local tissue necrosis, systemic internal bleeding, renal failure, hypotension & shock. Reported to cause human fatalities often.

Bothrops barnetti

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Identification

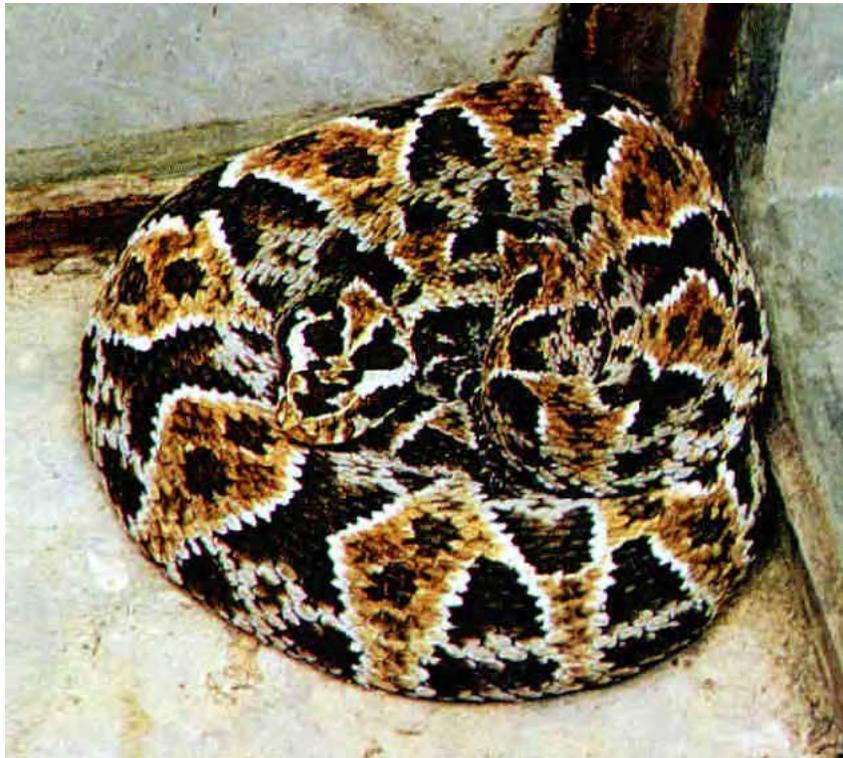
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trimeresurus barnetti*

Common Names: Barnett's lancehead, cascabel, false cascabel, macanch, san carranca, zancarranca

Description

Small to medium-sized, stout, terrestrial lancehead, adults usually 50-80 cm long (max. 140 cm). Body color usually varies from medium brown to pale gray to straw; body usually w/ paired dorsolateral dark brown pale-bordered triangular or trapezoidal blotches that alternate or meet at dorsal midline, 23-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly white w/ dark brown speckling along sides. Most dorsal scales have apical pits.



Habitat

Only reported from near streams, in arid desert scrub areas at elevations near sea level; & only in coastal northwestern Peru, so far (maybe occurs into coastal southwestern Ecuador, but no known specimens from there).

Activity and Behavior

Very little known, but probably mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Probably ovoviviparous (litter size not reported), & probably prey mainly on available small mammals & birds, maybe also lizards or frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Venom of most species of Bothrops is mainly hemotoxic w/ some cytotoxic factors. Envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Potentially capable of causing human fatalities.

Bothrops brazili

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops neglectus* (in part)

Common Names: Engl.: Brazil's lancehead, Brazil: jararaca vermelha, jararacussu, surucucu vermelha, Columbia: rabo de raton, Guyana: kalakunaro, Peru: cascabel, jergon, jergon shushupe, Suriname: bergi-owroekoekoe, boesi-owroekoekoe, labaria, morabana, oroekoekoe, Venezuela: mapanare, mapanare de Amazonus

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied, lancehead pitvipers, adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 140+ cm). Body usually varies from coppery-brown to pale-gray; usually w/ paired dorsolateral pale-bordered darker blotches that may meet dorsally, forming irregular bands or "C's". Has 23-29 (usually 25-27) midbody dorsal scale rows, often w/ rusty tinge along vertebral line. Belly yellow to pinkish-cream w/ slightly darker mottling. Tail sometimes mostly black.



Habitat

Found mainly in elevated primary forests in northern & central South America, from near sea level to 500 m elevation. Appears to be restricted to humid leaf litter habitats.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial; can be aggressive & will strike if molested or accidentally touched. Ovoviviparous w/ litter size not reported, but likely <20 young (depends a lot on the body size of the female). Prey mainly on available small rodents, birds, & often also lizards & frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking; reportedly "greatly feared" by Amerindians in southern Colombia. Venom of most species of Bothrops is mainly hemotoxic, w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Has the potential to cause human deaths, but bites & serious envenomations by this species are relatively seldom reported, & reported fatalities are rare.

Bothrops caribbaeus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops caribbaea*, *B. lanceolatus caribbaeus*, *B. sabinii*, *B. scutatus*, *B. subscutatus*, *Coluber lanceolatus* (in part), *Trigonocephalus caribbaeus*

Common Names: St. Lucia lancehead, fer-de-lance, rat-tail, serpent, Saint Lucia serpent, Saint Lucia viper

Description

A large semi-arboreal, lancehead pitviper, adults usually about 1.0 m long (max. 2.13 m). Body dorsal ground color varies & is usually gray, but may be gray, gray-brown, yellow, or even red; w/ 25-29 midbody dorsal scale rows. Has a dull dark brown to black postorbital stripe behind each eye. Belly usually all yellow; tail usually gray to pink w/ irregular pale marks (usually either pink or yellow in juveniles).



Habitat

Mainly found in lowland tropical forest, some coastal plain regions of low humidity, only on Saint Lucia island. It is said to be abundant in cocoa plantations and beneath piles of coconut husks. Mainly found from near sea level to 200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Limited data available. Reportedly mainly nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, yet often semi-arboreal. Usually avoids humans, but will quickly strike if disturbed even a little bit. Ovoviviparous, w/ litter size not reported,

but probably about 20-30 young per litter. Prey mainly on rodents & other small mammals commonly found in their habitat. Sometimes will also eat available birds, lizards or frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic w/ cytotoxic factor(s). Has been reported to cause human fatalities. For generalized envenomation effects of a closely related species, [See Bothrops asper](#).

Bothrops cotiara

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Lachesis cotiara

Common Names: Engl.: cotiara, Argentina: cotiara, yarara de vientre negro, Brazil: boicoatiara, boicotiara, coatiara, cotiara, jararaca-de-barriga-preta, jararaca preta, kwatiara, Mboi-kwatiara

Description

Adult length usually 0.7-1.0 m; a moderately heavy-bodied snake. Background color usually tan to pale olive-brown; body usually has a series of large pale-edged darker brown rounded trapezoidal to triangular blotches on either side of the midline, 25-29 (usually 27) midbody dorsal scale rows, belly usually cream "powdered" w/ black & darker along sides.



Habitat

Most common in humid, temperate Araucaria (monkey-puzzle) forest & associated savanna at elevations up to 1,800 m. in southeastern Brazil & northern Argentina.

Activity and Behavior

Limited data, but probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Probably similar to other closely related species (e.g., [See Bothrops atrox](#)).

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & has cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Human fatalities have been reported.

Bothrops diporus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops neuwiedi diporus*, *B. neuwiedii diporus*, *B. n. meridionalis*

Common Names: Engl.: Chaco lancehead, Argentina: crucera, kiririog, pina machajuay, vibora de la cruz, vibora de rabo blanco, yara, yarara, yarara chica, yarara de cola blanca, yarara-i, yararaquina, Brazil: boca de sapo, bocuda, cabeza-de-capanga, jarara-cussu, jararaca, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jararaca-pintada, jararaquina, urutu, Paraguay: kyryry'o

Description

Terrestrial, medium build lancehead, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 110 cm); Body color medium to dark brown; patterned w/ a row of white-edged dark-brown to black dorsolateral blotches, 23-27 midbody dorsal scale rows, venter pale w/ not much marking.

Habitat

Found mainly in seasonally dry lower montane forest at elevations of about 1,500 m in northern Argentina, Paraguay & southern Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but terrestrial & probably mainly nocturnal. Probably similar to closely related species (e.g., [See Bothrops neuwiedii](#)).

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Bothrops venoms are mainly hemotoxic & often have cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Potentially lethal to humans, but human fatalities not well documented, so far.

Bothrops erythromelas

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops erythromelas*, *Lachesis neuwiedi itapetiningae* (in part)

Common Names: Caatinga lancehead, cabeça-de-capanga, jararaca, jararaca dasecca, jararaca-malha-de-cascavel, jararacussu

Description

Small, moderately slender pitviper, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 85 cm). Body color usually brown to reddish-brown w/ a series of pale-edged dark-brown to black blotches that may coalesce to form irregular bands, 19-21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head brown to reddish-brown, variably marked, belly yellowish-tan w/ ill-defined dark blotches along sides.



Habitat

Most common in dry & semiarid thorn forest & open rocky areas, but also reported from along river margins, only in northeastern Brazil. May be found under mats of terrestrial bromeliads. Found up to 2,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known; reportedly responsible for many snakebites within its range, but reported human fatalities not well documented.

Venom Characteristics

Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & often have cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. *B. erythromelas* venom lacks thrombin-like activity because of its fibrinolytic effect.

Bothrops fonsecai

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops alternatus* (in part)

Common Names: Fonseca's lancehead, cotiara, jararaca, urutu

Description

Medium to large-sized, heavy-bodied, pitviper, adults usually 1.0-1.5 m long. Body color usually tan to medium-brown w/ a dorsal series of pale-edged black blotches that may alternate or coalesce to form irregular crossbands. Sides each have a series of 17-19 paired smaller dark blotches, & 26-28 midbody dorsal scale rows. A pair of moveable front fangs.



Habitat

Most common in well-drained areas of the Atlantic forest zone at elevations dominated by Araucaria, Podocarpus, & other trees.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & probably mainly nocturnal. Prey mainly on small mammals, possibly also on available birds or lizards.

Venom Characteristics

No specific data. Bothrops venoms are primarily hemotoxic & often have cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. No data reported on case studies of treatment for this species.

Bothrops insularis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis insularis*, *Trimeresurus insularis*

Common Names: Golden lancehead, jararaca ilhoa, Insel-Lanzenotter

Description

Moderately slender, medium-sized pitviper, adults usually 70-100 cm long. Body color usually pale yellowish-brown, sometimes w/ a series of darker irregular bands or large blotches; 23-29 (usually 25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Head pale yellowish-brown dorsally. Belly lighter yellowish brown, sometimes speckled w/ small darker blotches (if present, usually increase toward tail).



Habitat

This species is endemic to Ilha Queimada Grande (state of Sao Paulo), an island 64 km southwest of Bahia de Santos off the southeast coast of Brazil. Found in dry, rocky, open scrubby forests, max. elevation of the island is about 200 m.

Activity and Behavior

There is a high density of this species on the island. Indications are that the species is one of the few species in which the presence of intersexes has been found. Preys almost exclusively on birds.

Venom Characteristics

Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & often has cytotoxic factors; envenomation can cause systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. *B. insularis* venom reportedly is exceptionally toxic.

Bothrops itapetiningae

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis itapetiningae*, *L. neuwiedi itapetiningae*

Common Names: Sao Paulo lancehead, boipeva, cotiarinha, furta-cor, jararaca do campo, pequena cotiara

Description

Small, stocky pitviper, smallest in Brazil. Adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 50 cm). Background color usually pale or dark brown w/ red, pink, or orange overtones; usually w/ a series of white-edged, dark, narrow, transversely oval blotches, narrowly separated both dorsally & laterally. Has 25-27 midbody dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in open fields & bushy areas up to 1,500 m elevation. Occurs along the northern Paraguay border w/ Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & probably mainly nocturnal. Apparently preys on available small mammals, birds & sometimes maybe lizards or frogs, too.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Bothrops venom is primarily hemotoxic & often has cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Dried venom is whitish, much like that of *Bothrops erythromelas*.

Bothrops jararaca

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops leucostigma*, *B. taeniatus*, *B. tessellatus* (in part), *Cophias jajaraca*, *C. jararaca*, *C. jararakka*, *Craspedocephalus brasiliensis*, *Crotalus craspedocephalus brasiliensis*, *Lachesis lanceolatus* (in part), *Trigonocephalus jararaca*

Common Names: Engl.: jararaca, Argentina: yararaca, yararaca Perezosa, Brazil: caissaca, jaraca, jararaca, jararaca-da-matta-virgem, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jararaca-do-campo, jararaca-do-cerrado, jararaca-dormideira, jararaca-dominhoca, jararaca-preguicosa, malha-de-sapo, Paraguay: yarara

Description

Medium-sized, relatively slender, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 80-160 cm long. Background color can vary from yellow or tan to nearly maroon (overall, usually darker at both ends of the body); body pattern is extremely variable w/ irregular sizes & shapes of dark blotches (usually edged w/ a thin line of lighter or white scales), 20-27 (usually 23-25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly nearly always lighter than dorsum.



Habitat

Most common in open regions near vegetation cover at low to intermediate elevations. Occupies a diversity of habitats: tropical deciduous (broadleaf) forests & semitropical upland forests in southern

Brazil, northeastern Argentina & northeastern Paraguay. Found from near sea level to >1,000 m elevation & on some islands up to 35 km off the Atlantic coast of Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & mainly nocturnal; locally abundant in many parts of its range.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking; reportedly an important cause of snakebite in many parts of its range. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & often w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops jararacussu

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis atrox jararacussu*, *L. jararacussu*, *L. lanceolatus* (in part)

Common Names: Engl.: jararacussu, Argentina: kiririog-saiyu, surucucu apete, yarara-cussu, yarara dorada, yarara-guasú, Bolivia: yope pintada, yoperojobobo venenosa, Brazil: cabeça de sapo, patrona, jararacucu, jararacucu malha de sapo, jararacucu tapete, jararacucu verdadeiro, surucucu dourado, surucucu tapete, urutu amarelo, urutu dourado, urutu estrela, urutu preto, Paraguay: yarara-guasú, yarara-guazu

Description

Medium-sized to large, heavy-bodied, pitviper, adults usually 1.0-2.2 m long. Body color & patterns of head & body are extremely variable- background color can vary from tan or yellow to nearly black. However, the pattern of dark & pale scales on many specimens look like a series of dark arches along each side (edged w/ white), sometimes blotches are joined at the dorsal mid-line forming narrow "saddles" (may look like dark "X"-es, viewed from directly above).



Habitat

Found up to 700 m elevation in a wide variety of habitats, including tropical rainforest, tropical semi-deciduous forest, broadleaf evergreen forest, & parana pine forest in swampy, low-lying areas & along river margins.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, nocturnal, apparently preys mainly on small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but has an exceptionally large venom capacity & is an important cause of snakebite in its range. Venom primarily is hemotoxic & cytotoxic; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops jonathani

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Jonathan's lancehead, Chocobamba lancehead, yoperojobobo

Description

Medium-sized, moderately robust pitviper, adults usually 50-80 cm long (max. 88 cm). Body background color usually dark tan; dorsal pattern consists of 34 pairs of dorsolateral triangular to V-shaped dark-brown blotches edged in cream. Apices of the blotches point upwards, & can be staggered or those on opposite sides may touch at vertebral line; 30-33 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly whitish w/ staggered gray bands.

Habitat

Found mainly in dry rocky grasslands & desert scrub along the high eastern slopes of the Altiplano of central & southern Bolivia, mainly found at 2,800-3,220 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much reported & seldom seen, but mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Probably preys mainly on small mammals (& sometimes birds).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & often has cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops lanceolatus

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Identification

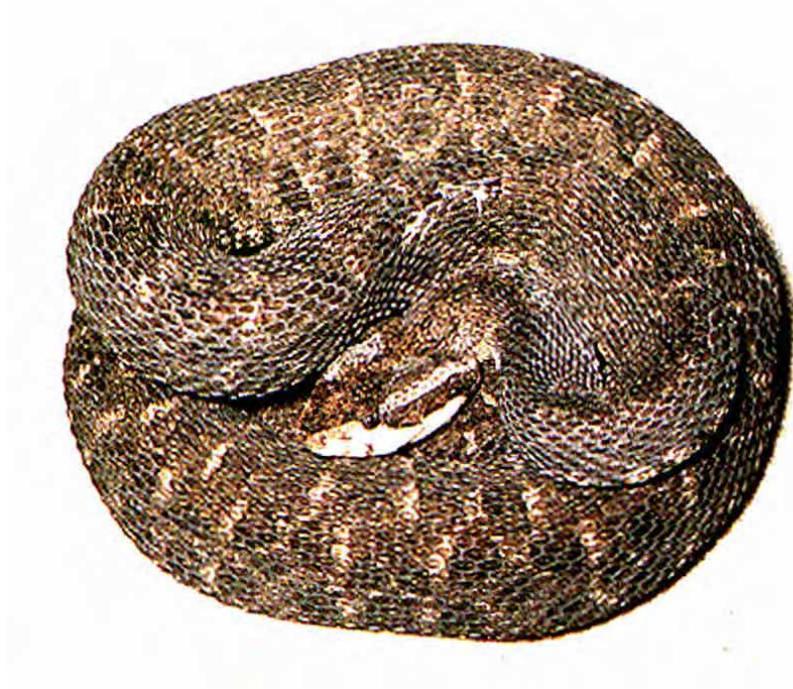
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops braziliensis, B. cinereus, B. glaucus, B. lanceolata, B. lanceolatus lanceolatus, Coluber brasiliensis, C. glaucus, C. hastatus, C. lanceolatus, C. megaera, C. tigrinis, Craspedocephalus brasiliensis, Lachesis lanceolata, L. lanceolatus, Trionocephalus lanceolatus, T. tigrinis, Vipera brasiliiana, V. brasiliniana, V. caerulescens, V. coerulescens, V. lanceolatus, V. tigrina

Common Names: Martinique lancehead, fer-de-lance (the first Bothrops given this common name), le serpent, le trigoncephale, serpent, serpent croissant (females), serpent jaune (males), serpent rouge (males & juveniles), vipere jaune

Description

Large, semi-arboreal, heavy-bodied lancehead, adults usually 150-200 cm long (max. 298 cm); Body color varies from gray to brown to yellowish-tan, usually w/ indistinct darker markings dorsally & laterally; top of head usually darker than the body. Belly usually lighter yellowish-gray to grayish-brown, sometimes speckled w/ small darker grayish blotches.



Habitat

Primarily in tropical moist forest & tropical wet forest in upland areas; also occurs in rocky hillsides. Previously reported from other Caribbean islands, but recently found only on Martinique, from sea level to 1,300 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & mainly terrestrial, but may be semi-arboreal; has been found up to 20 m above ground. Aggressive; can strike quickly when surprised or threatened. Ovoviviparous, w/ litter size not reported. Preys mainly on available small mammals, birds, lizards, & possibly also frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic, often w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Human deaths from the bite of *B. lanceolatus* have been recorded.

Bothrops leucurus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops magaera*, *B. pradoi*, *Trimeresurus pradoi*

Common Names: Bahia lancehead, white-tailed lancehead, jararaca, boca-podre, cabeça-de-capanga, cabece-de-patrona, caicaca, capangueiro, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jaracucu, jararacussu, malha-de-sapo

Description

Slender, terrestrial lancehead, adults usually 60-100 cm long (max. 195 cm); Background colors vary from tan to reddish-brown, usually w/ a variable pattern of darker & paler markings, giving an appearance of diagonal dorsolateral pale lines. Has 23-31 midbody dorsal scale rows; belly yellow or whitish w/ dark brown or gray spots & irregular blotches heaviest along sides.



Habitat

Associated w/ remnants of Atlantic forest in humid, rocky valleys; also found in deforested agricultural areas, in eastern Brazil, from sea level to 400 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Probably preys on available small animals. Probably ovoviviparous (clutch size not given).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic, often w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. There is no data on case studies of treatments. Bites of humans rather rare, & no well documented human fatalities from those bites.

Bothrops lojanus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops alticola*, *B. lojana*, *Bothriopsis alticola*

Common Names: Lojan lancehead, macanchi, macaicho

Description

Small, moderately stocky, terrestrial lancehead, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 61 cm); Background color usually tan to medium-brown, usually w/ a darker zig-zag stripe down the back & indistinct dark blotches along the sides; 21-23 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows. Overall, colors appear rather dull. Belly yellow w/ pale-brown to dark brown mottling, becoming darker toward tail. Tail often reddish on underside near tip.



Habitat

Mainly reported from arid, temperate, montane dry forest in southern Ecuador at 2,100-2,300 m elevation. Has a relatively small geographic range.

Activity and Behavior

Not much reported. Mainly terrestrial, probably mainly nocturnal, ovoviparous (clutch size not recorded), & mainly preys on available lizards, small mammals, etc.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Bothrops venoms are primarily hemotoxic & often have cytotoxic factors, too; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Poses a potential risk of serious envenomation within its range, but no human fatalities documented from bites by this species, so far.

Bothrops lutzi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops iglesiasi*, *B. neuwiedi lutzi*, *B. n. neuwiedi*, *B. n. piauhyensis*, *Lachesis lutzi*

Common Names: Sertao lancehead, Boca de sapo, jararaca, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jararaquinha, rabo-de-osso, tira peia

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly slender, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 40-70 cm long. Body usually pale brown to gray, w/ a series of pale-edged darker irregular blotches; 21-25 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows. Head brown, usually w/ white markings above the eyes & near base of the neck. Belly usually grayish-brown to pale gray, often w/ a limited amount of variable pattern of mixed sizes of darker grayish brown blotches or speckles (heavier along sides & toward tail).

Habitat

Primarily in dry to semiarid rocky regions, from sea level to 800 m elevation; found only in Brazil. Reported from inland region of the state of Piaui, "along the right bank" of the Rio Gurgueia.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but apparently mainly terrestrial & nocturnal (possibly crepuscular; sometimes active around dusk). Probably preys mainly on small mammals & amphibians, as well as on available birds or lizards. Probably ovoviparous.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & often cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. No reported data on case studies of treatment of envenomations by this species. No well documented human deaths due to bites by this species, so far.

Bothrops marajoensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops lanceolatus* (in part)

Common Names: Marajo lancehead, jararaca

Description

Terrestrial, moderately heavy-bodied lancehead, adults usually 100-150 cm long; Body color usually olive brown above, w/ a series of prominent trapezoidal markings laterally, formed by pairs of vertically aligned pale marks & rounded black blotches; 25 midbody dorsal scale rows, dorsal scales have long, low keels (vs. short, higher keels for *B. atrox*). Belly is cream to yellow heavily checkered w/ black. Tail often black.



Habitat

Most common in mainland coastal lowland savanna, mainly on the Iha Marajo in the Amazon River.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & probably mainly nocturnal. Very closely related to *B. atrox*, & may have very similar habits & behaviors.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Bothrops venoms are primarily hemotoxic & may have cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding and local tissue destruction. Note 100% sure if this antivenin will work. There is no data on case studies of treatme

Bothrops mattogrossensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops neuwiedi bolivianus*, *B. n. mattogrossensis*, *B. neuwiedii boliviana*, *B. n. mattogrossensis*

Common Names: Engl.: Mato Grosso lancehead, Bolivia: yoperoyobobo, Brazil: boca de sapo, bocuda, cabeça-de-capanga, jaracussu, jararaca, jararaca cruseira, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jararaquina, rabo-de-osso, Paraguay: kyryry'o

Description

Medium-sized, moderately heavy terrestrial lancehead pitviper, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 130 cm). Body pale brown to dark olive-brown above, w/ 16-33 dark brown to black dorsolateral blotches (usually white-edged), & 22-27 (usually 23-25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly white or yellow w/ scattered darker gray specks. Juveniles w/ white tail tip. For a closely-related species, [See Bothrops neuwiedi](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in savanna (cerrado), panatal, chaco, & wet palm-grasses, usually in association w/ flood-prone plains, in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, & Peru. Mainly found in flood-prone lowlands, & from near sea level to 500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly terrestrial, but may be seasonally semi-arboreal (due to habitat flooding) & probably also is mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly hemotoxic w/ some cytotoxic factors, like the venoms of many other *Bothrops* species.

Bothrops moojeni

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops atrox moojeni*

Common Names: Brazilian lancehead, cabeça-de-capanga, caicaca, caissaca, jaracucu

Description

Large, terrestrial lancehead pitviper, adults usually <160 cm long (max. 230 cm). Usually tan, grayish-brown or olive-gray above, w/ 14-21 dark gray to black trapezoidal lateral markings, often opposite & touching at middorsal line. 23-29 midbody dorsal scale rows, Belly usually immaculate white or cream (may have scattered darker grayish dots). Juveniles usually w/ pale tail tip. For closely-related species, [See *Bothrops neuwiedi*](#)



Habitat

Most common in semi-arid (or seasonally dry) tropical lowland savanna in Brazil, northeastern Argentina and northeastern Paraguay, at up to 1,500 m elevation. This species may possibly also be found in the Pantanal of Southeastern Departamento de Santa Cruz, Bolivia, as it is abundant a short distance away.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Terrestrial & probably mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Little is known, but *B. moojeni* is an important cause of human snakebite in Minas Gerais, Goiás, & São Paulo States. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic & often has cytotoxic factors, too; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops muriciensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Murici lancehead, Jararacucu

Description

Short, stout, terrestrial lancehead, adults usually less than 88 cm long; Background color usually reddish-brown to straw to gray, w/ 12-14 pairs of large dark gray, dorsolateral, trapezoidal blotches, usually on opposite sides & often meet dorsally forming crossbars. Dorsal scales keeled, w/ 25 midbody dorsal rows. Belly pale gray or yellowish w/ a suffusion of dark gray spots, heaviest & darkest along sides.



Habitat

Found only in the Murici Forest, a closed-canopy remnant of the Atlantic wet forest of lowland coastal Brazil, & from sea level only up to about 40 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

This species is relatively rare & has not been well studied. It probably has activity & behavior patterns very similar to the most closely-related species "B. pirajai".

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Bothrops venoms are primarily hemotoxic, often w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops neuwiedi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops neuwiedi bolivianus*, *B. n. diporus*, *B. n. fluminensis*, *B. n. goyazensis*, *B. n. lutzi*, *B. n. matogrossensis*, *B. n. neuwiedi*, *B. n. paranaensis*, *B. n. pauloensis*, *B. n. iauhyensis*, *B. n. pubescens*, *B. n. urutu*, *Bothrops atrox meridionalis*, *B. leucurus* (in part), *B. urutu*, *Lachesis lutzi*, *L. neuwiedi*, *Trigonocephalus pubescens*

Common Names: Neuwied's lancehead, cabeça-de-capanga, jararacussu, jararaca, jararaca-pintada, jararaca-cruceira, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jararaquinha, rabo-de-osso, tira peia, crucera, urutu, pina machajuary, vibora de rabo blanco

Description

Small to medium-sized, moderately slender pitviper, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 120 cm). Dorsal body color & pattern are extremely variable, not only among the 12 recognized subspecies, but also within individual populations. Usually w/ 16-27 pairs of dorsolateral blotches & 22-29 (usually 25-27) midbody dorsal scale rows. No single description can characterize all subspecies, except for precise scalation & other minutely-detailed taxonomic differences.



Habitat

Found mainly in savanna, thorn scrub, tropical & semi-tropical deciduous forest, & temperate forest, usually in dry or semi-arid rocky sites. Restricted to such habitats in Brazil, from near sea level to above 1,000 m elevation. At least 12 named subspecies, some of which do inhabit humid or marshy sites.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Can be aggressive & will defend itself. Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported. Preys mainly on small mammals, & also on locally available lizards & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Hemotoxic & cytotoxic; venom produces extensive tissue destruction. Necrosis can be expected in 10-15% & abscesses in 15-20% of all cases. Incoagulable blood & bleeding occur in the majority of envenomations. Causes a large number of human envenomations in Brazil annually. Has been reported to cause human fatalities.

Bothrops osbornei

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops mahnerti*, *B. punctata*, *B. punctatus mahnerti*

Common Names: Osborne's lancehead, Llutcti negra

Description

Large semi-arboreal lancehead, adults often >100 cm long (max. 140 cm), w/ unusually elongated head & dark postorbital stripe; Juveniles' bodies usually bright yellow to tan w/ 16-18 paired, black-edged, dorsolateral quadrangular dark blotches; belly cream to pale tan w/ small brown spots. Adults usually dark brown (markings often masked) above, & belly nearly all black w/ 23 midbody dorsal scale rows.

Habitat

Found mainly in subtropical moist & wet forest & montane wet forest on the Pacific versant of the Andes in Ecuador & northern Peru, at 500-2,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Semi-arboreal & probably mainly nocturnal & ovoviparous. Probably preys mainly on available amphibians, lizards & other small animals as a juvenile; then switches to mainly available small mammals, birds & other small animals as an adult.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably hemotoxic w/ cytotoxic factors, like most related *Bothrops* species. Closely related to *B. atrox*, and venom effects probably similar to effects caused by venom of that species.

Bothrops pauloensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops neuwiedi pauloensis*, *B. neuwiedii pauloensis*

Common Names: Black-faced lancehead, boca de sapo, bocuda, cabeza-de-capanga, jararacussu, jararaca, jararaca cruzeira, jararaca-do-rabo-blanco, urutu

Description

Medium-built terrestrial lancehead, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 85 cm); Colors & patterns can vary greatly between individuals, background usually grayish-brown, w/ a series of darker dorsolateral trapezoidal marks w/ often distinct paler (whitish) margins, a black post-orbital stripe behind/below each eye & 21-27 (usually 23-25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly white or yellow w/ a profusion of gray specks, heavier along the sides.

Habitat

Found only in central & southern Brazil, in seasonally dry savannah (cerrado) & the Atlantic forest, always associated w/ open areas, from near sea level to 800 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but terrestrial & apparently mainly nocturnal. Probably ovoviviparous & probably preys mainly on available small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most Bothrops venoms are mainly hemotoxic & w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. Occasional bites of humans have been reported, but no well documented human fatalities, so far.

Bothrops pictus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops picta*, *B. roedingeri* (in part), *Lachesis lutzi* (in part), *L. picta*, *L. pictus*, *Trimeresurus pictus*

Common Names: Desert lancehead, jergon de la Costa, macanche, sancarranca, vibora, jergon

Description

Medium-sized stocky, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually <60 cm long. Body color varies from pale silvery-gray to pinkish-tan, w/ variable patterns of ovoid to squarish darker blotches, usually joining dorsally into a zig-zag stripe; a series of dark-brown to black latero-ventral spots; tail usually brownish w/ a series of dark-brown blotches. Postorbital stripe dark brown & 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly ivory to rusty-cream w/ diffuse darker spots heaviest along sides.



Habitat

Most commonly found in arid to semiarid foothills, river valleys & dry lower Andean slopes, & dry rocky regions w/ scattered scrubby leguminous trees. Found at 500 to at least 2,300 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but very probably mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Likely to be ovoviviparous & to prey mainly on small mammals, ground-nesting birds, & other available small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known; however, it is a dangerous species that has caused human deaths. Bothrops venom primarily is hemotoxic, often having cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops pirajai

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops neglecta

Common Names: Piraja's lancehead, jararacussu, jararacucu, jararacucu-tapete

Description

Large, stocky, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 50-110 cm long (max. 137 cm). Body usually brownish-yellow to yellowish-gray w/ 15-19 blackish dorsolateral markings shaped like inverted Y's or irregular squares which alternate or oppose one another, & sometimes join, forming a wavy middorsal line; 25-27 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly yellowish w/ various amounts of brown to brownish-black speckling.

Habitat

Reported only from "cocoa groves," likely found in Atlantic lowland wet forest & lower montane wet forest of coastal eastern Brazil, from sea level to about 500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known; apparently uncommon. Probably terrestrial & mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known about the venom of this species. Bothrops venoms generally are primarily hemotoxic & often have cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction. This snake's size & typical habitat combine to pose at least some potential risks of occasional serious human envenomation.

Bothrops pubescens

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops neuwiedi pubescens*, *B. neuwiedii pubescens*, *B. n. riograndensis*, *Trionocephalus pubescens*

Common Names: Engl.: Pampas lancehead, Brazil: cabeça-de-capanga, jararacussu, jararaca, jararaca cruzeira, jararaca-do-rabo-branco, jararaca-pintada, urutu, Uruguay: vibora de la cruz, yarara

Description

Medium-sized to large, fairly stout, terrestrial lancehead, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 120 cm); body gray-brown to dark-brown, patterned w/ 19-30 white-edged, dark brown, or black dorso-lateral blotches, & 23-28 (usually 25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Sometimes have a series of brown to reddish paraventral spots along sides. Belly white to yellow w/ gray specks scattered throughout. Has a dark postorbital stripe behind each eye.

Habitat

Found mainly in pampas & grasslands, & in regions of natural fields often used as cattle pastures, in northeastern Uruguay & southern Brazil, from near sea level to 500 m elevation. Often found on rocky ridges, or on, or near rock piles.

Activity and Behavior

Not well studied. Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic w/ cytolytic factors. There are no well documented reports of fatal human envenomation by this species, so far.

Bothrops punctatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops leptura*, *B. monticelli*, *B. monticelii*, *B. punctata*, *B. punctatus punctatus*, *Lachesis monticellii*, *L. punctata*, *Thanatophis montanus*, *Thanatos montanus*

Common Names: Chocoan lancehead, cuatronarices, dormilona, equis orito, flecha, mapanare rabiseca, pelo de gato, rabiseca, rabo de chucha

Description

Large, semi-arboreal, lancehead, adults often >100 cm long (max. about 150 cm); body pale brown to greenish-tan, w/ pale-edged dark brown blotches along the sides, 25-29 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly usually cream to pale tan w/ brown spots. Has a long, rounded tail spine sometimes turned up at tip.

Habitat

Found mainly in subtropical moist & wet forest, tropical moist & wet forest, & montane wet forest, in the Chaco region of Columbia, eastern Panama & Ecuador. Reported from near sea level to 2,300 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but semi-arboreal & probably mainly nocturnal, w/ activity patterns & behavior similar to the closely-related species, "*B. atrox*".

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably hemotoxic w/ cytotoxic factors, like most other *Bothrops* species. For generalized symptoms of envenomation, see the closely-related species, "*B. asper*".

Bothrops roedingeri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops pictus*

Common Names: Roedinger's lancehead, jergon de la costa, macanche, sancarranca, vibora

Description

Medium-sized to large, fairly slender, terrestrial lancehead, adults often up to 75 cm long (max. about 100 cm); body pale gray, tan or pale reddish-brown, w/ postorbital stripes; & w/ a dorsal row of brown oval or squarish blotches; 21-25 (usually 21) midbody dorsal scale rows. Often have one or more rows of smaller dark-brown spots along sides. Belly usually creamy white w/ scant dark mottling. Tail mostly covered w/ brown spots.

Habitat

Mainly found in desert, low deciduous thickets, & lower montane dry forest, on the Pacific coastal plains of Peru, from sea level to at least 500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Terrestrial & probably mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Probably typically hemotoxic, w/ some cytologic factor(s), like that of other *Bothrops* species. For generalized effects, [See *Bothrops asper*](#).

Bothrops sanctaecrucis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Bolivian lancehead, yoperojobobo pintada, yoperojobobo venenosa, Jobobo venenosa

Description

Medium-sized, moderately slender, terrestrial lancehead, w/ adults about 66 cm long (probably up to 1 m). Usually no postorbital stripe. Body usually tan to pale gray, w/ a dorsolateral series of triangular to trapezoidal brown spots prominently bordered w/ white; spots become more condensed toward the tail; 25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly immaculate white or yellow w/ some dark outer edges of ventral scales. Tail mainly brown, black at tip.

Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest, & possibly rain forest, in the Amazonian lowlands of central Bolivia, up to 450+ m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but terrestrial & reportedly mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Bothrops venoms are primarily hemotoxic, often w/ cytotoxic factors; envenomation can result in systemic internal bleeding & local tissue destruction.

Bothrops venezuelensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops pifanoi*, *B. venezuelae*

Common Names: Venezuelan lancehead, barriga morada, cuatro narices, rabo candela, terciopelo, tигра mariposa

Description

Large, fairly stout terrestrial lancehead, adults usually about 1 m long (max. about 1.67 m). Body colors & patterns extremely variable & often complex w/ white, brown & black rhomboidal blotches, triangles & lines, sometimes includes a dark middorsal zigzag pattern toward tail. In most specimens, the tail is nearly uniformly black w/ a few transverse pale bars, 19-27 (usually 23-25) midbody dorsal scale rows, & w/ a very prominent dark postorbital stripe edged w/ white.



Habitat

Most common in lower montane wet forest & cloud forest, including temperate areas where cold weather conditions occur, & also found in tropophilous semideciduous seasonal forest. Limited to northern & central Venezuela. Found mainly at 1,000-2,200 m; but has been reported from 600-2,800 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Unpredictable temperament & can be easily aroused if threatened. It can strike fast over a short range. Reportedly appears to have no fear of humans & will not move away when approached.

Venom Characteristics

Venom can produce rapid tissue destruction. In severe envenomation, muscle liquefaction can be so extensive that the bones of a bitten limb can be visible after about 8 to 10 hours. Death can occur within 6 to 16 hours after envenomation. Very dangerous & causes significant number of human envenomations annually within its range.

Boulengerina annulata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Boulengerina annulata annulata*, *B. a. stormsi*, *B. stormsi*, *Naja annulata*

Common Names: Ringed water cobra, banded water cobra, Wasserkobra

Description

Large, relatively slender cylindrical Elapid snake, adults usually 1.4-2.2 m long (max. 2.7 m), w/ 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body glossy brown, grayish brown, or reddish brown, w/ pale belly (may be yellowish or orange in some specimens); often w/ black bands either all along body or just on front half. Tail usually glossy black. Relatively small eyes w/ round pupils, head short & broad. Head scales black-edged in subspecies "stormsi".



Habitat

Usually found in or very near water; most common along lowland forested, bushy or wooded banks of lakes, rivers, & streams. Range includes most of Congo River basin & some forested areas north & west of that. Occasionally goes out onto open beaches or sandbars.

Activity and Behavior

Reportedly active in day & night. Aquatic (at least semi-aquatic), a good swimmer but often basks in low trees & shrubs. Recorded to dive to 25+ ft. deep & to remain submerged 10+ min. Nonaggressive, but when confronted, rears head & spreads narrow "hood." Oviparous (clutch size not reported), & preys mainly on available fish (& sometimes amphibians).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, probably mainly neurotoxic. No specific antivenom currently produced against this species.

Boulengerina christyi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Limnonaja christyi*

Common Names: Congo water cobra, Christy's water cobra

Description

Fairly large, relatively slender cylindrical Elapid snake, adults usually 0.7-1.3 m long (max. 1.4+ m), w/ smooth, glossy scales in 17 midbody dorsal rows. Body usually medium to dark-brown (often blackish in older adults); w/ usually 6 distinctive fine yellowish crossbands on anterior 1/4 of body (not extending farther posteriorly). Medium-sized eyes w/ round pupils & broad head. Belly pale, usually yellow-white to light-brown, head (especially lip) scales edged w/ black.





Habitat

Found most commonly in or near water, in lowland bushy or wooded areas along banks of lakes, rivers, & streams. Limited to the lower Zaire River & nearby wet forested areas.

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known, but reportedly active both during day & night. Semi-aquatic (spends much time in water), & a good swimmer, but also often basks in low trees & shrubs. Moves very quickly.

Nonaggressive, but when confronted, rears head & spreads narrow "hood." Oviparous but clutch size not reported. Preys on available fish & amphibians.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly neurotoxic. At least one human bitten had only mild symptoms (headache, local pain) but may be capable of causing serious envenomation of humans. No specific antivenom currently produced against this species' venom.

Bungarus andamanensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Andaman's krait, South Andaman krait

Description

Medium-sized, adults up to 1 m long. w/ large shiny scales, somewhat cylindrical body but has a distinct mid-dorsal ridge. A pair of fixed front fangs. Body dark w/ thin pale whitish-to-yellowish crossbands along most of its length.

Habitat

Found only on the Andaman Islands, which are part of India (but are about 750 mi. southeast of the mainland, across the Bay of Bengal). This species is sometimes found near humans' homes.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, eat mainly other snakes, but also eat available amphibians & other small animals & birds. Oviparous, clutch size not stated. Most similar spp. (in observed cases) lay 3-12 eggs/clutch. Usually sluggish during daytime, but can be agile at night, & may be aggressive when cornered or molested.

Venom Characteristics

Not well documented. Mainly neurotoxic, potentially lethal to humans. A number of bites of humans have been reported, but relatively few human fatalities (and not usually well documented) have been reported to have been caused by this species.

Bungarus bungaroides

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps bungaroides*, *Xenurelaps bungaroides*

Common Names: Northeastern hill krait, Himalayan krait

Description

Large krait, adults usually 1.3-1.5 m long (max. 1.6 m); body black or very dark brown, w/ white or pale yellowish transverse lines formed by series of spots across back. White line across snout & curved line on each side from behind eyes to lips. Scales smooth, 15 longitudinal rows at midbody, belly dark w/ distinct light crossbars, all subcaudal scales divided.

Habitat

Various habitats at low & moderate elevations; prefers rather dry, open country. Rarely seen. Found in Myanmar (Burma), India (Assam, Cachar, Sikkim), Nepal & Vietnam up to 2040 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal & mainly terrestrial. Agile in movements at night, sluggish in daytime. When alarmed, coils loosely w/ body slightly flattened & head concealed. May make jerky movements & elevate tail. Eats other snakes almost exclusively.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin. Local symptoms generally minimal. Symptoms may include abdominal discomfort, headache, & giddiness. Can be fatal to humans. Neurotoxic symptoms include ptosis, facial paralysis, & inability to open mouth, swallow, or protrude tongue.

Bungarus caeruleus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Boa lineata*, *Bungarus arcuatus*, *B. candidus* var. *caeruleus*, *B. sindanus*, *Pseudoboa caerulea*

Common Names: Common krait, Indian krait, blue krait

Description

Medium to large, adults usually 100-150 cm long (max. 180 cm); scales smooth, shiny, mid-dorsal row large, hexagonal, & obvious mid-dorsal ridge (true for all kraits). Body usually black, brownish black, or bluish black, w/ about 40 thin white crossbars, which may be indistinct or absent anteriorly. Belly usually white. Head flat, neck not very obvious. Has a pair of fixed, upper front fangs.





Habitat

Found mainly in open country, cultivated areas, & scrub jungles in southern Asia, up to 1,700 m elevation. Avoids very rocky & sandy terrain. Often found in termite mounds, rat holes, rubbish heaps, & roofs of buildings.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial. Strictly nocturnal; seldom seen during day. Moves quickly at night. Specimens disturbed during day rarely bite, but instead, press their head against the ground. At night, extremely dangerous & aggressive. Often enters human dwellings, may try to crawl under sleeping persons; eats mainly other snakes (& their eggs).

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin. Most victims bitten while asleep in huts at night. Bites may produce invisible or barely perceptible puncture marks. Few local symptoms; may produce mild pain or numbness w/ little or no local swelling. Human mortality rate is high without use of antivenom.

Bungarus candidus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidoclonion semifasciatum*, *Bungarus candidus* var. *semifasciata*, *B. javanicus*, *B. semifasciatus*, *Coluber candidus*

Common Names: Malayan krait, blue krait, Baluer Krait

Description

Medium to large, adults usually 120-140 cm long (max. about 150 cm); 15 longitudinal dorsal rows of smooth scales at midbody, a distinct mid-dorsal ridge, 19-30 black alternating w/ white or yellowish dorsal crossbands speckled w/ black on body & tail; belly pure white. Head not distinct from neck. Tail ends in a sharp tip.



Habitat

Most common in lowland forests & moist areas, in Cambodia, Indonesia (Java, Sumatra, Bali, Sulawesi), Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, & Vietnam.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal & usually very timid (especially in daytime). Active at dusk & after dark. Usually inoffensive; will not usually bite unless stepped on. Often found near inhabited places & on trails at night. Mainly prey on other snakes, their eggs, & available other small animals. Oviparous, no clutch size reported (other observed related spp. usually lay 3-12 eggs/ clutch).

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin. Most victims bitten while asleep in huts at night. Local symptoms generally minimal. Symptoms may include abdominal discomfort, headache, & giddiness. Neurotoxic symptoms include ptosis, facial paralysis, & inability to open mouth, or extrude tongue. Human fatalities have been reported but are rare.

Bungarus ceylonicus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Bungarus ceylonicus ceylonicus*, *B. c. karavala*

Common Names: Karawala, Ceylon krait, Sri Lanken krait

Description

Medium-sized, cylindrical, smooth-scaled, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 130 cm); a pair of upper fixed front fangs, body usually shiny steel blue-black, w/ about 20 distinct thin white crossbars, 15 longitudinal rows of scales at midbody, & a distinct vertebral ridge. Belly grayish. White dorsal bands reduce to white vertebral spots in older specimens; may eventually disappear.

Habitat

Prefers cool, moist habitat. Generally found in rain forests & hilly grassland areas. Seldom found above 1,000 m elevation. Currently known only from Sri Lanka.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal & terrestrial. During day, may hide under decaying vegetation, in forest & cultivated land, under stones, & in termite mounds, burrows, embankments, & crevices. When provoked, throws body into loose coils w/ head hidden beneath. Eats mainly other snakes, plus occasionally other available small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, neurotoxic, potentially lethal to humans. For generalized symptoms of krait envenomation by a closely-related species, [See *Bungarus caeruleus*](#).

Bungarus fasciatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidoclonion annulare* (in part), *Boa fasciata*, *Bungarus annularis*, *B. fasciatus*, *bifasciatus*, *B. f. fasciatus*, *B. f. insularis*, *Pseudoboa fasciata*

Common Names: Banded Krait, Gelbgebänderter krait

Description

Medium to large-sized, terrestrial, smooth scaled, one pair of upper fixed front fangs, adults usually 100-120 cm long (max. 210 cm); w/ a pattern of alternating light & dark bands circling body. Light bands pale to bright canary yellow; dark bands usually black, & wider; tail blunt. Distinctive light spear-shaped mark, bordered by black, on top of head; & w/ a distinct vertebral ridge most of body length.



Habitat

Most common in grassy fields, meadows, & cultivated areas, often adjacent to streams, rivers, & lakes. Found up to 1,500 m elevation in Burma (Myanmar), Brunei Darussaam, southern China, India, Indonesia & most of Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Normally terrestrial & mainly nocturnal; may prowl in the daytime during & after rains. Usually inoffensive & secretive. Hides head beneath body if molested; may twitch or writhe spasmodically but seldom attempts to bite even when molested. Oviparous (as are all kraits) w/ usually 8-11 eggs per clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin. Minimal local pain, redness, or edema. Systemic symptoms develop slowly; include general achiness, paralysis, shock, & respiratory failure. Bites of humans are rare, but fatalities have been reported.

Bungarus flaviceps

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Bungarus flaviceps baluensis, B. f. flaviceps, Elaps bivirgatus, Megaerophis flaviceps

Common Names: Red-headed krait, Yellow-headed krait, Rotkopf krait

Description

Medium to large, body w/ a mid-dorsal ridge, a pair of upper fixed front fangs, adults usually 100-120 cm long (max. 160 cm); body blue-black above w/ (or w/o) yellow dorsolateral line on each side; 13 parallel longitudinal dorsal rows of smooth shiny scales at midbody, vertebral scales distinctly enlarged, head red or yellow above; tail & sometimes posterior part of body orange-red. Belly paler (usually yellowish to orange). Head not distinct from neck.



Habitat

Found mainly in forests & jungles, mainly in hilly or mountainous areas of Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Slow-moving by day, more active at night. When provoked, raises head & wags tail slowly. Rarely seen. Probably oviparous (no clutch size reported; related spp. reportedly lay 3-12 eggs/ clutch). Probably feeds mainly on other snakes (like most true kraits), & sometimes on other available small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Little known about venom; likely potentially neurotoxic. Few bites of humans recorded, but potentially lethal to humans.

Bungarus lividus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Lesser black krait,

Description

Small, smooth-scaled krait, body w/ a distinct vertebral ridge, w/ a pair of upper fixed front fangs, adults usually <80 cm long; body black to blue-black, w/ thin whitish crossbands, 15 longitudinal, parallel dorsal rows of scales at midbody, vertebral scales enlarged & hexagonal (true for all kraits). Belly dark w/ variable width whitish crossbars.

Habitat

Found mostly in open areas near forests & rice fields, sometimes up to 1,000 m elevation. May come up near human homes. Found in Bangladesh, India, & nepal.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal & mainly terrestrial. Slow moving by day, more active at night. Rarely seen. Probably preys mainly on other snakes, plus available other small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied. Primarily neurotoxic. Systemic symptoms may include difficulty breathing, inability to speak, & paralysis.

Bungarus magnimaculatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Bungarus caeruleus (in part), B. caeruleus var. magnimaculatus

Common Names: Burmese krait

Description

Medium to large-sized krait, body w/ a distinct vertebral ridge, a pair of upper fixed front fangs, adults usually 110-130 cm long (max. 150 cm); body black, w/ 11-14 broad white crossbars, center of each dorsal scale spotted w/ black, belly uniformly white.

Habitat

Not well known. Found mainly along edges of openings in forests or along forest paths. Has been reported from cultivated lands. Limited mainly to Burma, from about sea level to about 1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much is known. Mainly terrestrial, nocturnal, 7 mainly prey on other snakes. Also eat lizards, frogs or small mammals, as available. Probably oviparous (no clutch size reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, probably neurotoxic. Bites of humans apparently rare, no well-documented human fatalities caused by this species, so far.

Bungarus multicinctus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Bungarus caeruleus* (in part), *B. candidus* var. *multicinctus*, *B. semifasciatus*, *B. multicinctus multicinctus*, *B. m. wanghaotingi*, *B. wanghaotingi*

Common Names: Many-banded krait, Chinese banded krait, Vielgebanderter krait

Description

Medium to large-sized, smooth scaled, body w/ a distinct vertebral ridge, one pair of upper fixed front fangs, adults usually 80-100 cm long (max. 180 cm); body black or bluish-black, w/ 21-30 white or creamy white cross bands (7-11 whitish bands on pointed tail), 15 longitudinal dorsal rows of scales at midbody. Belly white or dirty-white.



Habitat

Most commonly found in open woodland, grassy fields, & bamboo groves adjacent to water, such as ditches, rice paddies & streams. May be found in villages & suburban areas. Fairly geographically wide spread. Found up to 1,300 m elevation, in southern China, Burma, Indonesia, & most of Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Terrestrial, strongly nocturnal, sluggish by day, more active at night. Eats mainly other snakes, but also available lizards or amphibians.

Venom Characteristics

Extremely potent neurotoxin. Local symptoms minimal. Bite usually felt as a pin-prick followed by slight itching, numbness, or redness; local swelling minimal. Systemic symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, ptosis, inability to speak, swallow, or open mouth, chest tightness, & breathing difficulties. Human fatalities due to bites by this spp. have been reported.

Bungarus niger

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Great black krait, black krait

Description

Medium to large-sized, smooth scaled, body w/ a distinct vertebral ridge, 15 parallel dorsal rows of scales at midbody, a pair of upper fixed front fangs. Adults usually 70-100 cm long; body black w/ thin whitish dorsal crossbands, whitish belly.

Habitat

Found mainly in forest openings, along trails, & sometimes up near human habitats, in lower areas from sea level possibly up to 1,000 m elevation, in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India & Nepal.

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known. Terrestrial, nocturnal, seldom seen. Sluggish by day, more active after dark. Mainly prey on other snakes. Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Probably mainly neurotoxic. Potentially lethal to humans, but no well-documented fatalities have been reported to have been due to bites by this spp., so far.

Bungarus sindanus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Bungarus caeruleus sindanus*, *B. sindanus sindanus*, *B. s. razai*, *B. s. walli*

Common Names: Sind krait

Description

Medium-sized krait adults about 60 cm long, body w/ distinct mid-dorsal ridge, & vertebral scales enlarged & hexagonal (as for all true kraits). Dorsal scales smooth, usually in 15 parallel rows at midbody. Body dark (brownish to blackish) w/ 30+ pale crossbands above, lighter (usually whitish) below. Has a pair of upper fixed front fangs. Head not distinct from neck. Tail ends in a sharp tip.



Habitat

Mainly reported from low to moderate elevation (up to at least 200 m elevation) forested hills & moist brushy forest margins. Limited to southeastern Pakistan & India. Probably very similar to other closely related species. For generalized habitats of kraits, [See Bungarus caeruleus](#).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Seldom seen. Probably mainly terrestrial, nocturnal, oviparous (no clutch size reported, but probably around 3-12 eggs), & mainly preys on other snakes (& maybe also other available small animals).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly neurotoxic. Human bites, serious envenomations, or fatalities not well-documented, so far. For generalized envenomation effects of closely related species of kraits, [See Bungarus caeruleus](#).

Buthacus arenicola

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus arenicola, Buthotus arenicola

Common Names:

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually about 4-6 cm long. Body medium-brown to dark-brown, w/ yellowish to light-brown legs, relatively few obvious or dark "hairs" (smoother-looking than *Androctonus* spp.), w/ post-abdomen relatively thick & wide (but less so than for *Androctonus* spp.).



Habitat

Found mainly in scrubby, sparsely-vegetated places, sometimes in margins of cultivated areas &/or oases, usually in semi-arid sandy sites, from near sea level to medium elevations (possibly up to 400 m), in Mediterranean coastal regions of northern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, hides in crevices or under various objects during the day. Preys mainly on insects & other arthropods, occasionally on very small lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly neurotoxic, w/ possible additional cytotoxic or myotoxic factors. Sting reportedly causes a lot of local pain, limited local redness & swelling, but no significant systemic effects or fatalities of humans recorded, so far.

Buthus occitanus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus occitanus occitanus

Common Names:

Description

Medium to large scorpion, adults up to 7.5+ cm long. Body, pedipalps & post-abdomen all dark-brown, legs lighter, brown to yellowish-brown; post-abdomen relatively thick & wide (but not as much as for *Androctonus* spp.).



Habitat

Found mainly in semi-arid, arid, or desert areas w/ limited vegetation, sometimes in margins of cultivated land & oases; from near sea level up to at least 300 m elevation. Widely distributed in southern Europe, on several Mediterranean islands, northern Africa & the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, preys mainly on insects & other arthropods, sometimes eats small lizards, too. Mating includes elaborate courtship "dance." Young hatch within female & later crawl out her genital opening. Young sometimes climb onto female's dorsum, & may crawl down & feed on body juices of prey she is concurrently consuming.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ possible cardiotoxic & cytotoxic factors. Usually causes intense local pain, slight local swelling, w/ systemic circulatory problems & shock being the reported cause of death. More than 25% of seriously envenomated people were <10 years old (5 of 28 died in one North African report). The only medically important scorpion found in southern Europe, but venom seems more potent in N. African subspecies.

Buthus spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: [Note: Buthacus, Buthotus, Mesobuthus, Parabuthus, plus >10 more currently valid genera (nearly all containing the term "-buthus") have been split from this genus since it was described in 1815. There are currently at least 26 recognized named species in this genus, but most are rarely encountered by humans & only the most dangerous & commonly encountered species will be addressed here, separately.]

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized scorpions, adults usually 4-7 cm long (some spp. >11 cm) w/ telson extended. Body pale to dark brown (sometimes yellowish or greenish), cephalothorax usually darker than legs & post-abdomen, w/ distinct dorsal "H-shaped" mark formed by central & median dorsal keels. Three longitudinal keels & obvious granulations on dorsum of first & second abdominal segments, serrate dorsal keels (3-10) on most segments of post-abdomen.

Habitat

Most species are found in semi-arid to humid (some in arid; or in wet) habitats, usually w/ sandy soil & loose accumulations of organic debris; often under loose bark, logs or stones. Most species are found in tropical to warmer temperate regions of southern Europe, northern Africa, & central or southern Asia; from sea level up to 1,000+ m elevation (varies w/ species).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, hide in crevices or under objects during the day. Often influenced greatly by local temperature (sometimes also by moisture) conditions. Seem to adapt somewhat to activity patterns, habits & distribution of available local prey (mainly smaller insects & arthropods).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly proteinaceous neurotoxins, w/ certain other factors affecting particular organs or organ systems (varies by species). Symptoms may include: severe (or no) local pain, swelling, discoloration & itching (this is often masked by pain), spreading numbness, nausea, muscle twitching, loss of muscle tone, & coma. Often cause symptoms which are delayed until 1-24 hrs. after the sting. Children are usually most severely affected.

Calliophis bibroni

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Callophis bibroni*, *C. cerasinus*, *Elaps bibroni*, *E. cerasinus*

Common Names: Bibron's coral snake, Asiatic coral snake

Description

Medium-sized cylindrical bodied Elapid, slender, terrestrial, brightly colored w/ bands or stripes, one pair of upper front fixed fangs, adults usually about 100 cm long or less. May have 13-15 parallel rows of smooth dorsal scales at midbody.

Habitat

Found mainly in forests, usually in the loose humus, litter, or sandy soil (or under logs or debris); in southwestern India.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, hide in loose debris or burrow into sandy soil or under logs during day; prey mainly on other snakes or lizards at night. Probably oviparous (some related spp. reportedly lay 1-14 eggs/ clutch).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably neurotoxic. Potentially lethal to humans; but so far, no well-documented bites, serious envenomations, nor fatalities of humans related to bites by this species. For a bit more generalized information, see the closely-related species, "*C. macclellandi*".

Calliophis bivirgatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Adeniophis flaviceps*, *Bioliophis bivirgatus*, *Callophis bivirgatus*, *Calliophis bivirgatus*, *C. b. flaviceps*, *C. b. tetrataenia*, *Doliophis bivirgatus*, *D. flaviceps*, *Elaps bivirgatus*, *E. tetrataenia*, *Maticora bivirgata*, *M. b. bivirgata*, *M. b. flaviceps*, *M. b. tetrataenia*,

Common Names: Blue Malaysian coral snake, Blue long-glanded coral snake, Blaue Bauchdrusenotter

Description

Fairly large but slender, smooth scales, adults up to 140 cm long; body indigo w/ lateral blue or grayish-blue stripe along each side; head, tail & venter are all red (sometimes bright), blunt snout w/ dark eyes set on sides of the head.



Habitat

Found mainly in forested sites in Malaysia, Thailand & western Indonesia, in humid conditions along forest edges or clearings; Not found in open or dry conditions. Usually found from sea level to about 500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial (semi-burrowing), mainly nocturnal; hide under leaf litter, logs or debris in daytime; when threatened, they tend to hide their head under coils & raise their tail (sometimes also jerk it, vibrate it, or pretend to "strike" w/ it). Oviparous, 1-3 eggs/clutch, preys mainly on other snakes, lizards or frogs, & sometimes small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, mainly potently neurotoxic; few bites of humans are reported. Bite usually not very painful & no swelling at site. At least 2 documented human fatalities, an adult male human in Singapore reportedly died within 5 min. of envenomation.

Calliophis gracilis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Calliophis gracilis*, *Elaps nigromaculatus*

Common Names: Gray coral snake, spotted coral snake, Gefleckte korallonotter

Description

Relatively small, slender, smooth scaled coral snake, adults usually less than 100 cm long, a pair of upper front fixed fangs; body grey w/ black vertebral stripe & black spots along each flank, belly has alternating black & white bars. This is the "type species" of the genus *Calliophis*.

Habitat

Limited to localized populations in southern Thailand, peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, & Sumatra. For generalized local example habitat characteristics, see the closely-related species "*C. macclellandi*".

Activity and Behavior

Not well studied, but reportedly terrestrial (at least semi-burrowing) & mainly nocturnal (hiding under leaf litter or debris during day). Probably oviparous & probably mainly prey on available other snakes & lizards. [See *Calliophis macclellandi*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably neurotoxic, but not documented to have ever been lethal to a human. For details about a closely-related species, [See *Calliophis macclellandi*](#).

Calliophis intestinalis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Adenophis nigrotaeniatus*, *Aspis intestinalis*, *Calamaria klossi*, *Calliophis intestinalis*, *C. i. malayana*, *C. i. nigrotaeniatus*, *Doliophis intestinalis*, *D. i. var. vertebralis*, *D. i. forma typica*, *Elaps furcatus*, *E. intestinalis* (in part), *E. melanotaenia*, *E. sumatranus*, *E. thepassi*, *E. trilineatus*, *Maticora intestinalis*, *M. i. bilineata*, *M. i. everetti*, *M. i. intestinalis*, *M. i. lineata*, *M. i. philippina*, *M. i. suluensis*, *M. i. thepassi*, *Vipera furcata*

Common Names: Banded Malaysian coral snake, Brown long-glanded coral snake, Striped coral snake, Gestreifte Bauchdrusenotter

Description

Small, slender, cylindrical, smooth-scaled, one pair of front fixed fangs, adults usually no more than 50 cm long; body dark brown, w/ a narrow faded reddish vertebral stripe, belly pale reddish to pink. Similar to *C. bivirgatus*, but much smaller & brownish.

Habitat

Found mainly in loose debris & litter on open forest floor, near edges of clearings, from sea level up to about 500 m elevation. Reported from Malaysia, Indonesia (Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Brunei Darussalam), Sabah, and the Philippines (Luzon, Palawan, Minainao, Samar, Sulu). [See *Calliophis bivirgatus*.](#)

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, nocturnal, oviparous, & probably preys mainly on other snakes, lizards or frogs. Occurs mainly in Malaysia & Indonesia, but also reported from the Philippine Islands.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably neurotoxic. Not reported to have caused any human fatalities.

Calliophis macclellandi

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Identification

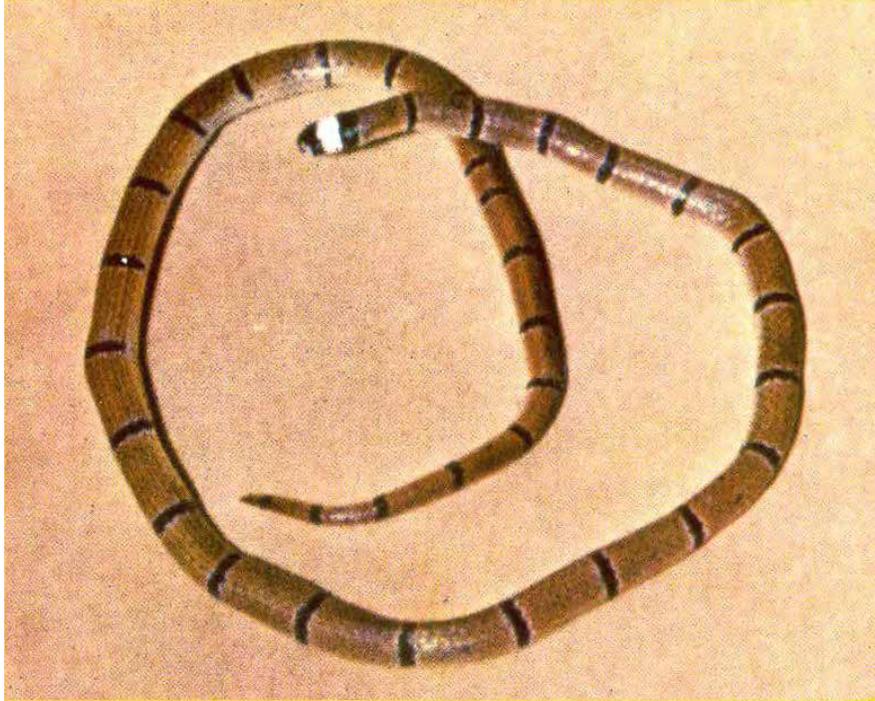
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Calliophis macclellandi iwasakii*, *C. m. macclellandi*, *C. m. swinhoei*, *C. m. univirgatus*, *Callophis annularis*, *C. formosensis*, *C. macclellandi*, *Elaps macclellandi*, *E. personatus*, *Hemibungarus macclellandi*, *Micrurus macclellandi*, *M. m. swinhoei*, *Sinomicrurus macclellandi*

Common Names: Macclelland's coral snake, Macclellands korallenotter,

Description

Small, slender, cylindrical, adults 63-78 cm long (max. 80 cm), body usually dark reddish/ brownish (russet-pink) above, w/ 23-40 thin, widely-spaced, black, light-edged bands (some incomplete on flanks). Head black w/ very broad ivory-colored band behind eyes, bordered behind by broad black band; chin cream, belly yellowish w/ black marks. Tail w/ 2-6 thin black bands. Body scales smooth, in 13 parallel longitudinal midbody dorsal rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in forest litter, near streams of lowlands (up to 1,000 m) throughout most of Southeast Asia. Tend to avoid very dry & very open places.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (semi-burrowing). Mainly eats other snakes & lizards. Oviparous, w/ usually 6-14 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mainly neurotoxic (like most Elapids). Very few reported cases of human envenomation (at least once reported to have caused fatality of a child) & those are not well documented.

Calliophis maculiceps

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Calliophis maculiceps atrofrenalis*, *C. m. hughi*, *C. m. maculiceps*, *C. m. michaelis*, *C. m. smithi*, *C. m. var. univirgatus*, *Callophis hughi*, *C. maculiceps*, *Elaps atrofrenatlis*, *E. maculiceps*, *E. melanusus*, *Maticora maculiceps*, *M. m. hughi*, *M. m. maculiceps*, *M. m. michaelis*

Common Names: Speckled coral snake, Small-spotted coral snake, Gesprenkelte Korallenotter

Description

Small, slender, cylindrical, adults usually 45-50 cm long (max. female 130 cm), body above brown to reddish w/ black spots arranged longitudinally along each side, head not distinct from neck, black dorsally, w/ some yellow marks & spots, belly red to pink, tail pale blue or grey below, w/ two black rings. Some individuals w/ thin black vertebral stripe, some w/ no patterning. Body scales smooth, in 13 parallel longitudinal midbody dorsal rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in forest floor litter, under logs & in similar places (usually fairly near water), up to 1,000 m elevation. Found throughout most of Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (burrowing), secretive. Prey mainly on other available small snakes (especially worm-snakes, like *Typhlops* spp.) & lizards. Oviparous, one captured specimen reported to have laid a clutch of only 2 eggs. Not aggressive. Usually forage in & under leaf litter; also in or around ant hills (where its main prey snakes tend to be found).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably neurotoxic (like most other Elapids). Not reported to have seriously envenomated nor killed humans.

Calliophis spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Currently at least 14 separate named spp. in this genus. See separate entries for more details about each of the 6 most common & widespread spp.

Common Names: Asiatic coral snakes, long-glanded coral snakes, Oriental coral snakes

Description

Small to medium-sized slender, brightly-colored, adults usually 0.3-0.5 m long (max. about 1.0 m); have a pair of upper fixed front fangs, body diameter about size of a finger. Colors usually bright, variable.

Representative patterns exemplified by *Calliophis maccllellandii* & *C. sauteri*: body color usually russet to pink dorsally, usually w/ narrow, contrasting bands, stripes or rows of spots.

Habitat

Found mainly in scrub jungles & monsoon forests. Often found near human habitations. Generally avoid dry & very open terrain. Various species found throughout Asia & SE Asia (see each species listed for its own range).

Activity and Behavior

Most species are mainly nocturnal & semi-burrowing, remaining hidden during the day within humus & leaf litter on forest floor, or under logs, stones or other debris. All (so far reported) are oviparous, & prey mainly on other snakes or various lizards (maybe rarely also on small mammals).

Venom Characteristics

Likely neurotoxic. Little known of venom. Few bites reported, possibly partly because there is usually no significant pain, swelling or other local symptoms at the site & time of a bite (even in cases where a person was fatally envenomated). One case of fatal envenoming by *Calliophis macclellandii univirgatus* reported from Nepal, & a few more by certain other spp. in this genus. No specific antivenom currently produced.

Calloselasma rhodostoma

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Agkistrodon rhodostoma*, *A. annamensis*, *Ancistrodon annamensis*, *A. rhodostoma*, *Calloselasma annamensis*, *C. rhodostoma annamensis*, *C. r. rhodostoma*, *Leiolepis rhodostoma*, *Trionocephalus rhodostoma*

Common Names: Malayan pit viper, Malaiische Mokassin-Grubenotter

Description

Large, heavy-bodied, smooth-scaled terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 100 cm). Body gray, pale brown, or pale reddish brown, w/ 19-31 alternating dorsal dark, triangular markings w/ apices toward vertebral line & series of dark spots on flanks. Belly pinkish-white mottled w/ brown, head light brown, w/ dark postorbital stripe bordered above by a light stripe, snout pointed & up-turned.



Habitat

Found mainly in rather dry coastal forests; bamboo thickets; overgrown, unused farmland; forest next to plantations. Usually inhabit lowlands, but also found in mountains to about 2,000 m elevation. Known from most of Southeast Asia (most common in Thailand & Vietnam).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but sometimes active by day. Oviparous w/ 10-35 eggs/ clutch. Bad-tempered, quick to strike if disturbed, guards eggs to some degree, preys mainly on small mammals & birds, also eats available lizards & amphibians.

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxin. Local swelling may begin within minutes after bite, followed by blistering & local necrosis. Hemoptysis, apathy, thirst, rapid thready pulse, & decreased blood pressure may occur. Bites fairly common. Case fatality rate low, but many human deaths caused by envenomation by this species have been reported.

Causus bilineatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Two-striped night adder, two-lined night adder

Description

Small, medium-stout viper, w/ fairly long head, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. about 65 cm); scales soft, velvety, slightly keeled, typically 17 dorsal midbody scale rows. Body usually brown to grey-brown, w/ a row of irregular rectangular black patches, between two distinct, narrow, pale stripes that run the length of the body. Head w/ a dark "v-shaped" mark, w/ point forward, on top; belly dark to dark cream.

Habitat

Found mainly in moist savannah, swampy areas & forest-savannah mosaic, from southern Zaire to northern Zambia, west to eastern Angola, w/ isolated records from Rwanda.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but probably mainly terrestrial, usually slow moving; mainly nocturnal, oviparous (clutch size not reported but related spp. lay 3-20 eggs/ clutch), active by day & night; inflates its body when angry, hisses & puffs, strikes in a swipe. Mainly preys on frogs & toads. May be locally abundant.

Venom Characteristics

Not well characterized, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Venom not regarded as particularly toxic, typically causes local swelling & pain, but no recently documented human fatalities despite significant numbers of persons bitten, & fairly frequent such bites.

Causus defilippii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Heterodon de filippi

Common Names: Snouted night adder, De Filippi's night adder

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied, terrestrial viper, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 50 cm). Body brownish, greenish, or grayish with 20-30 dark brown, pale-edged rhombic blotches along back & tail. Dorsal scales weakly keeled, in 13-17 (usually 17) midbody rows. Head w/ prominent dark, forward-pointing V-shaped mark on top, short dark bar behind each eye, & upturned snout. Belly cream, pearly-white or pinkish gray (may be glossy black or grey in juveniles).

Habitat

Found mainly in lowveld & arid (& sometimes moist) savanna areas of central & southern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but active in day & at dusk, mainly terrestrial but sometimes climbs into low bushes, oviparous w/ usually 3-9 eggs/ clutch, feeds mainly on frogs & toads. Often hisses or "puffs" when threatened, may be heard before it is seen. Males engage in ritual combat in mating season.

Venom Characteristics

Venom weakly cytotoxic. Bites generally produce local swelling, lymphadenopathy, & mild fever without development of local necrosis; rarely may cause intense local pain at bite site; not considered a serious medical threat to humans. No antivenom currently produced.

Causus lichtensteinii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidelaps lichtensteinii*, *Dinodipsas angulifera*, *Heterodon lichtensteinii*

Common Names: Forest night adder, Lichtenstein's night adder

Description

Small, medium-built night adder, adults usually 30-55 cm long (max. 70 cm). Body usually olive-green, sometimes w/ indistinct dark blotches, bars or chevron markings along its back, distinct white, forward-pointed V-shaped mark atop its neck; short, blunt tail. Head pointed & tip up-turned. Dorsal scales velvety, slightly-keeled, in 15 midbody rows. Belly yellowish, cream or pearly. Juveniles often darker above & below.

Habitat

Found mainly in forests & woodlands of southeastern Africa, from Sierra Leon east to Ghana, in Nigeria east to western Kenya, south to northern Angola, w/ isolated records from Sudan, Zaire, Zambia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial but climbs into low bushes, mainly nocturnal but often active by day & at twilight, oviparous (4-8 eggs/ clutch). Preys mainly on frogs & toads.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Not considered lethal to man. No known antivenom currently produced.

Causus maculatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Causus rhombeatus* (in part), *Distichurus maculatus*

Common Names: Spotted night adder, West African night adder

Description

Small, stout adder, w/ short head, adults usually about 50 cm long; body usually grayish, brownish, or olive green w/ darkish rhomboidal marks along dorsum. Dorsal scales velvety, weakly-keeled, in 17-22 midbody rows, sometimes w/ a dark vertebral line. Top of head & neck have a large, dark-edged forward-pointing V-shaped mark. Rarely w/ no dorsal markings in light colored, sandy areas. Snout pointed & up-turned. Belly white, cream or pinkish-grey, may have faint thin darker cross-bars.



Habitat

Found in very wide variety of habitats in a band across western & central Africa; from forest to savanna to semi-desert. Present from Senegal east to central Chad, southeast to Zaire, northeast into SE Sudan, & the low country & river gorges of SW Ethiopia, then southwest to northern Angola.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but sometimes active in day or at dusk, & mainly terrestrial but may climb low bushes, sometimes basks in sun. When threatened, inflates body & hisses loudly, not aggressive but will bite quickly if further molested. Oviparous w/ 6-20 eggs/ clutch reported. Prey mainly on available frogs, lizards, & sometimes small mammals or birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic, w/ possible cytotoxic factors. Bites generally cause immediate local pain, at least limited local swelling, sometimes fever, & painful regional lymphadenopathy. Second most common cause of snake-bite mortality in Senegal. No known antivenom currently produced.

Causus resimus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Causus jacksoni*, *Heterophis resimus*

Common Names: Green night adder, Grune Nachtotter

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied adder, adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. 75 cm); body usually vivid green (rarely darker forest green, or brown, in some western specimens) w/ indistinct dorsal bars or chevrons, dorsal scales weakly-keeled, w/ a velvety sheen, in 19-21 midbody rows. Hidden scale edges vivid bluish, & show when body is inflated. Very pretty snake. Chin & throat yellow, belly yellowish, cream or pearly, tongue pale blue & black.



Habitat

Found mainly in moist, warm, low-lying areas from sea level up to 2,000 m elevation. Also known from high grassland, wooded hills & valleys in western Kenya & Uganda; can be found along rivers that run through semi-desert, swamps, coastal scrubland, sugar cane plantations & rocky river gorges within its range. Fond of old quarries & borrow pits near roads, where shallow pools attract its amphibian prey. Overall distribution rather disjunct.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but active in day & basks in sun. Mainly terrestrial but often climbs low bushes & swims rather often (& swims very well). Oviparous w/ 4-12 eggs/ clutch laid by captured specimens. Preys mainly on frogs & toads. Defensive behavior similar to that of related species of night adders. [See *Causus bilineatus*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic w/ some cytotoxic factor(s). Envenomation usually results only in local pain, swelling, & sometimes lymphadenopathy. Not considered lethal to humans. No known antivenom currently produced.

Causus rhombeatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Sepedon rhombeatus*

Common Names: Common night adder, Rhombic night adder, Krotenotter

Description

Small, stout-bodied adder w/ dark, forward-pointing V-shaped mark atop its head, adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. 90 cm); body varies from gray to olive to pinkish brown; patterned w/ gray, black, or brown rhombs, chevrons or spots (may be white-edged). Dorsal scales weakly-keeled, velvety, in 15-23 midbody rows. Belly usually gray, but may be cream or yellow. Sometimes w/ dark brown vertebral stripe. Has limited ability to change color from brownish to greenish, or vice versa.



Habitat

Found mainly in open woodland, grassland, & savanna near streams, marshes, or other damp areas. Fairly wide-spread in south-central & southeastern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, but spends much time basking during day &/or sheltered in trash piles, rock crevices, & other hiding places. Generally inoffensive & docile, seldom attempts to bite except under extreme provocation. When threatened, often flattens its body, hisses & "puffs", then may raise the front part of its body in an S-shaped loop. May flatten its neck, extend its tongue & move toward intruder (cobra-like). Oviparous (clutch size not reported, but probably usually <10 eggs.)

Venom Characteristics

Venom mildly cytotoxic (may also have a mild hemotoxic factor) & generally not very dangerous, but may cause acute discomfort. Envenomation usually results only in local pain, swelling, & lymphadenophy (rarely local tissue necrosis) at bite site. No reliable reports of fatalities. No known antivenom currently being produced.

Centruroides elegans

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Centruroides elegans edentulus*, *C. e. elegans*, *C. e. insularis*, *C. e. meisei*, *C. e. var. limpidus*

Common Names: Mexican bark scorpion, "Scorpion of the coast"

Description

Medium-sized, moderately slender scorpion, adults usually 50-70 mm long (max. 80+ mm) w/ cauda extended. body usually pale yellow-brown, darker dorsally, w/ 4 dark longitudinal lines atop the cephalothorax & 2 dark lines & 1 anterior dark spot on top of each preabdominal segment. Looks very similar to *C. exilicauda*.



Habitat

Mainly found in warm, relatively humid to seasonally dry places, mainly in coastal plains of the Pacific versant of central & southwestern Mexico, mainly from sea level to 100+ m elevation. Sometimes found in agricultural areas & near humans' habitations.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, but can quickly climb rough walls, stones or plants. Usually hides within organic debris or under stones or logs (especially under loose bark) during the day. Avoid humans, but will sting quickly (then try to escape) if molested, stepped on, or trapped within clothing being donned. Sometimes come into human living areas. Oviparous & mainly prey on locally available insects or arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Contains mainly fairly potent neurotoxic & cardiotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes local pain, swelling, redness, & may cause discoloration. Systemic effects (often delayed 1-24 hrs.) can include dull ache, headache, nausea, muscle twitching, rapid heartbeat, or slurred speech. Has reportedly caused human deaths. Small children are usually more severely affected than adults.

Centruroides exilicauda

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Centruroides gertschi*, *C. sculpturatus*, *C. s. gertschi*

Common Names: Bark scorpion, sculptured scorpion (Gertschi form), deadly sculptured scorpion

Description

Medium-sized, moderately slender scorpion, adults usually no more than 7.5 cm long w/ tail fully extended. Body usually pale yellowish to medium-dark brown w/ varying patterns of longitudinal dorsal darker brown or grayish stripes or blotches. At least 4 different-looking "forms" (possibly subspecies) have been recognized. Tail (post-abdomen) moderately slender, pincers (pedipalps) not unusually large or dark.



Habitat

Mainly found in warm, relatively dry areas, usually w/ sandy soil & lots of loose bark, leaves or crevices in which they hide. Mainly limited to arid regions of southwestern U.S. & northern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, usually hide above ground but under loose bark, rocks, leaves, sticks or other debris during daytime. Prey mainly on available insects & other arthropods. Avoid humans unless cornered, stepped on, or brushed against (usually while hunting at night, or when trapped in clothing being donned). They will sting quickly & then try to escape. Often come into houses. Ovoviviparous, usually >20 per "litter," young may ride on mother's back until 2nd instar.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic. A sting usually causes a painful local reaction w/ reddening, swelling & discomfort (often local discoloration). It may also cause various systemic effects distant from the sting site, like progressive numbness, swelling, spreading of dull pain, muscle twitching, nausea, rapid heartbeat, slurred speech, etc. The most commonly reported cause of human deaths from stings by this species is cardiac failure.

Centruroides infamatus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Centruroides infamatus infamatus*, *C. i. ornatus*

Common Names: Mexican bark scorpion

Description

Medium-sized, relatively slender scorpions, adults seldom >70 mm long. Body yellowish-brown to medium-brown, w/ variable darker blotches & 2 rather broad longitudinal dark stripes on dorsum of cephalothorax. Legs pale-brown to yellow-brown. Pincers moderately long & thin w/ dark tips & dark sting tip.



Habitat

Not well characterized, but mainly reported from warm, relatively dry or seasonally dry sites, usually w/ sandy soil w/ considerable amounts of organic debris built up beneath scattered vegetation (but sometimes in rocky areas, too). Limited mainly to moderate elevations in central & southwestern Mexico, range overlaps that of *C. suffusus*.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, but can climb any rough surface very well. Usually hide within or under organic debris or crevices under rocks or logs (especially under loose bark) during the day. Ovoviviparous, & prey mainly on locally available insects or arthropods. Usually avoid humans & large animals, unless molested, stepped on or trapped within clothing being donned. Then they will sting quickly & try to escape.

Venom Characteristics

Contains mainly potent neurotoxic & cardiotoxic factors. Stings usually (mainly) cause local pain, swelling, redness & often discoloration, but serious envenomation & deaths of humans have also been reported. Systemic symptoms, when they occur, are often very similar to those caused by the venom of *C. exilicauda*.

Centruroides limpidus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Centruroides limpidus limpidus*, *C. l. tecomanus*

Common Names: Mexican bark scorpion

Description

Medium to large-sized scorpion, adults usually about 50-60 mm long, but often reach 70+ mm. Body usually medium yellowish-brown, cephalothorax darker dorsally, w/ 4 dark longitudinal dorsal lines, & having a dark spot between those lines at both the front & back edge of each tergite. Legs & postabdomen lighter brownish, pincers relatively elongated & narrow w/ dark tips, sting dark at tip.



Habitat

Mainly found in margins of dry to wet forest clearings in lower elevations in central & southern Mexico. Often numerous in crevices of rough adobe walls of peasants' homes & along junctures of such walls & thatched rooves, & similar habitats. May be present in Nicaragua, but not documented there yet.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, but climbs very well. Usually hides under bark, leaves or other organic debris during the day. Preys mainly on insects & other arthropods, sometimes cannibalistic. Ovoviviparous, typically >20 young per "litter".

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxic & cardiotoxic factors, similar to that of *C. suffusus*. Like other members of this genus, these scorpions tend to sting quickly, then try to escape, if brushed against, stepped on, or trapped in clothing being donned. This species has caused a significant number of human fatalities within its range.

Centruroides noxius

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Scorpion of Nayarit, Mexican bark scorpion

Description

Small scorpion, adults seldom 50 mm long. Cephalothorax & abdomen uniformly dark, often w/ lateral margins of pre-abdominal tergites lighter (brownish to dark-yellowish). Body sometimes w/ a reddish tinge. No obvious stripes. Subaculear tooth on telson very strongly developed.

Habitat

Mainly found in dry to arid sites in areas of limited vegetation in sandy & rocky soil. Sometimes found near human habitations. Found mainly on the Pacific slopes of west-central Mexico (mainly Nayarit state, but also from Jalisco & Sinaloa), reported from near sea level to above 500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, usually hides under leaf litter & debris (sometimes under loose bark of trees or bushes) in daytime. Mainly terrestrial, but sometimes climbs rough surfaces. Ovoviviparous, litter numbers not reported (probably <20 young/ litter). Prey mainly on locally available insects & other arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Includes potent neurotoxic & cardiotoxic factors. Has been reported to cause serious human envenomations, including some deaths. Stings usually due to a human brushing against, stepping on, or trapping one of these scorpions in clothing being donned.

Centruroides spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Scorpio spp. (in part), Centruroides spp. (in part), Rhopalurus spp. (in part). [Note: There are currently 50+ named species recognized in this genus, but only about 6 spp. are of medical importance (see medically important spp. addressed separately, individually).]

Common Names: Bark scorpions, house scorpions, common scorpions, "sculptured" scorpions

Description

Medium to large-sized, moderately-slender scorpions, adults usually 50-80 mm long (max. 110+ mm; varies by spp.). Body usually pale yellowish to medium-brown (some spp. dark brown), w/ varying patterns of darker gray or brownish dorsal stripes or blotches. Tail (postabdomen) rather slender, pincers rather slender & not very robust (= usually thin), legs usually pale yellow-brown. Most spp. are sexually dimorphic w/ thinner, longer males & stouter, shorter females.



Habitat

Found mainly in warm, relatively dry areas, usually w/ sandy soil & lots of loose bark (e.g. on or under logs), leaves, surface debris or crevices in which to hide. Most spp. limited to arid or semi-arid regions of the southwestern U.S., Mexico, Central America, the Antilles, &/or northern South America.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, usually hide in crevices or under bark or debris by day, often come into houses. Prey mainly on available insects & other arthropods. Avoid humans unless cornered, stepped on or brushed against (usually while hunting at night or if trapped in clothing being donned), then sting quickly & try to escape. Ovoviviparous, >20 per "litter," young may ride on mother's back until 2nd instar. Whole body fluoresces (usually yellowish-green) in certain wavelengths of UV light.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cytotoxic factors in some spp. Potency varies w/ different spp. A sting (envenomation) usually causes local pain, swelling, redness & discomfort (may be delayed 1-24 hrs.); sometimes spreads & includes numbness. Systemic effects may include muscle twitching, nausea, rapid heartbeat, slurred speech, sweating, coma & death (for some spp.). Cardiac failure reportedly causes most human deaths. Venom effects more severe in children than adults.

Centruroides suffusus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Centruroides suffusus chiaravigli*, *C. s. suffusus*

Common Names: Durango scorpion, Mexican bark scorpion, Alacran de Durango

Description

Medium to large-sized scorpion, adults usually 50-65 mm long (max. 85+ mm). Body usually yellowish to light-brown (rarely reddish-brown), w/ 2 dark longitudinal stripes on pre-abdominal tergites. Males' postabdomen is 8.5X the length of cephalothorax; 5th caudal segment is 4.25-4.75X its own width; Vesicle of telson is >1.78X as long as the aculeus (sting tip).

Habitat

Mainly found in moderately dry, seasonally dry, or semi-arid sites, at a range of elevations (from near sea level to above 1,500 m), mainly in west-central Mexico. Often found near cultivated sites & human homes within its range.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial (but climbs well). Usually hides during the day under available organic debris, bark, stones, or in various natural (or artificial) crevices. Mainly preys on whatever insects or arthropods are locally available, sometimes cannibalistic. Ovoviviparous, but litter size quite variable (5-30+ have been reported).

Venom Characteristics

Has potent neurotoxic & cardiotoxic factors. Will sting quickly then try to escape, if disturbed, stepped on, or if trapped inside clothing items being donned. Has a reputation for causing numerous serious

envenomations & deaths of humans each year (significantly fewer when effective antivenom is available) within its range.

Cerastes cerastes

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Aspis cerastes*, *Cerastes cerastes cerastes*, *C. c. hoofieni*, *C. c. karlhartli*, *C. c. mutila*, *C. cornutus*, *Coluber cerastes*

Common Names: Desert horned viper, Hornviper

Description

Medium-sized, moderately stout-bodied viper, tail short, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 90 cm); body generally yellowish, yellowish-brown, pale-gray, pinkish, or pale-brown, w/ rows of dark spots along back. Belly whitish. May have long spine-like horn above each eye.





Cerastes cerastes



Habitat

Found mainly in deserts where there are rock outcroppings & fine sand, often in very arid places; however, may be found near oases. Limited mainly to northern Africa & the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (semi-fossorial). Can make itself almost invisible by wriggling down into loose sand. Often hides in rodent holes & under stones. When irritated, rubs inflated loops of body together to make a "rasping hiss." Can strike quickly if disturbed.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily hemotoxic. Local symptoms include edema, redness, internal hemorrhage, & areas of gangrene. Venom has coagulant activities at low concentrations, anticoagulant activities at high concentrations. Fatalities rare but have been documented.

Cerastes gasperettii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Aspis cerastes* (in part), *Cerastes cerastes* (in part), *C. c. cerastes* (in part), *C. c. gasperettii*, *Cerastes gasperettii gasperettii*, *C. cornutus* (in part), *C. g. mendelssohni*, *Cerastes cerastes gasperetti*, *Vipera cerastes* (in part)

Common Names: Gasperetti's horned desert viper, Arabian horned viper

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. 85 cm); body usually yellowish, yellowish-brown, pale-gray, pinkish, or pale-brown w/ rows of dark spots along back. Belly whitish. Tip of tail may be black. May have long spine-like horn (at least prominent brow ridge) above each eye.





Habitat

Found mainly in deserts w/ rock outcroppings & fine sand, often in very arid places; however, may be found near oases. Limited to northeastern Africa & the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (semi-fossorial). Can make itself almost invisible by wriggling down into loose sand. Often hides in rodent burrows & under stones. When agitated, rubs inflated loops of its body together to make a "rasping hiss." Can strike quickly if disturbed.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily hemotoxic. Local symptoms may include pain, edema, redness; may have hematoma at site of bite & regional lymphadenopathy. No human fatalities reported (at least not documented), so far. No known antivenom currently produced.

Cerastes vipera

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Aspis vipera*, *Cerastes aegyptiacus*, *C. vipera*, *Coluber vipera* (in part), *Vipera aegyptiaca*, *V. avicennae*, *V. cerastes* (in part)

Common Names: Sahara sand viper, Sahara desert viper, Avicennaviper

Description

Small, moderately heavy-bodied viper, adults usually 20-35 cm long (max. 48 cm); body generally yellowish, gray, or brown, w/ row of dark spots along back. Head lacks supra-orbital "horns."



Habitat

Mainly found in sand dunes, loose sand, & desert shrub from sea level up to about 300 m elevation. Limited to northern Africa & parts of the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, oviparous, mainly nocturnal; usually spends day buried in sand at base of scrub. Not usually aggressive. When provoked, gathers body into coil & rubs its sides together to produce a rasping or "hissing" noise.

Venom Characteristics

Venom contains mainly mild cytotoxic & neurotoxic components. Bites reportedly painful, but usually not serious.

Cerrophidion barbouri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Agkistrodon browni, Bothrops barbouri, Porthidium barbouri, Trimeresurus barbouri

Common Names: Barbour's montane pitviper, nauyaca, vibora colorado, vibora sorda

Description

Small, moderately stout, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 51 cm). Body usually reddish-brown, w/ a darker wavy middorsal stripe, 25-28 dark-brown blotches along sides, & 17-19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Has dark-brown post-ocular stripe. Dorsal pattern becomes obscured w/ age. Belly slightly lighter w/ irregular, slightly-darker blotches along sides. Juveniles usually pale-brown to greenish-brown above, w/ sharper dorsal pattern & chartreuse tail.



Habitat

Most commonly found in pine-oak & cloud forest at 2,400-3,300 m elevation, in the mountains of Guerrero, Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, sometimes climb onto bushes or stumps, often hide under logs, rocks, or debris. Mainly diurnal, very active, fast-moving, often found along forest edges or in clearings; usually quick to retreat

when disturbed. Ovoviviparous w/ at least one observed litter of 6 young. Prey mainly on available arthropods, small mammals, & other reptiles (& sometimes birds).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but mainly hemotoxic w/ additional myotoxic factors. Usual symptoms of envenomation may include: local pain & swelling, general itching, headache, nausea, & light-headedness. No confirmed human deaths, so far, due to envenomation by this species. No known antivenom currently produced.

Cerrophidion godmani

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops godmani*, *Bothriechis godmani*, *B. trianguligera*, *Lachesis godmani*, *Porthidium godmani*, *Trimeresurus godmani*

Common Names: Engl.: Godman's montane pitviper, Ger.: Godman-Berggrubenotter, Costa Ric: borot kabi, dudaban, toboba de altura, Guatemala: cantil frijolillo, sheta, tamagas, Honduras: timbo chingo, tamagas cafe, Mexico: nauyaca del frio, Nicaragua: toboa oscura, toboita

Description

Small, moderately-stout, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 46-50 cm long (max. 82 cm); colors & patterns quite variable, body usually brown, reddish-brown, grayish-brown to nearly orange; dark brown blotches often merge to form a zigzag dorsal stripe, 21 midbody dorsal scale rows, dark postorbital stripe, venter pale yellow to orange w/ no mottling, darker toward tail.



Habitat

Found in a wide range of low montane wet forest & cloud forest, lower montane dry forest, largely pin oak; & high montane forest & meadow. Occurs at 1,400-3,491 m elevation. Limited to higher elevations of parts of southeastern Mexico & Central America.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, & mainly diurnal, often seen crawling or coiled along forest paths. May rarely climb up onto a log or stump, but usually found beside or under logs, rocks, or other large pieces of debris. Can move very rapidly, usually avoids humans, but will strike quickly if disturbed. Ovoviviparous w/ 2-12 young/ litter observed for captured specimens. Prey on a variety of available arthropods, small mammals, reptiles (mainly lizards), salamanders, & sometimes birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic, w/ potent myotoxic & proteolytic factors. Symptoms of envenomation of humans may include: intense local pain, extensive local swelling (may involve whole limb), widespread itching, fever, headache, nausea & light-headedness (to the point of collapse in one observed case). Few bites & no fatalities of humans reported for this species.

Cerrophidion petlalcalensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Cerrophidion petlalcalense*

Common Names: Petlalcala montane pitviper

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied, montane pitviper, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 46+ cm). Body usually dark reddish-brown to gray-brown dorsally, w/ 21-32 darker-brown lateral blotches, each narrowly white-edged, forming a zigzag pattern along vertebral line, w/ 19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Has dark-brown postorbital stripe. Belly dark-brown w/ 1-2 pale marks (usually near middle), tail may have up to 5 thin white crossbands dorsally & is pale yellow to whitish below.

Habitat

Found mainly in pine-oak forest, at 2,100-2,300 m elevation in western Veracruz state, eastern Mexico. Known only from the type locality on Cerro de Petlalcala, Municipio San Andres Tenejapan.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Mainly diurnal & terrestrial (maybe semi-fossorial). Basks in sun & can move very rapidly. Usually avoid humans, but will strike quickly if cornered & molested. Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported. Prey on various available arthropods, small mammals, lizards, salamanders, & occasionally small birds. For details of behavior of a closely-related species, [See *Cerrophidion godmani*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic, possibly also w/ myotoxic factors. Humans rarely bitten by this species, & no confirmed serious envenomations or fatalities due to its bites. For symptoms typical of envenomation by a closely-related species, [See *Cerrophidion godmani*](#).

Cerrophidion tzotzilorum

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops tzotzilorum, Porthidium tzotzilorum

Common Names: Tzotzil montane pit viper

Description

Small, moderately stout-bodied, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually <50 cm long; body color variable, including dark-gray, dark grayish-brown, or rust. Usually w/ a series of many dark-brown oval to rhomboid blotches dorsally, often fused into a zigzag middorsal line. Has dark postorbital stripe (narrowly bordered by white) & 19-23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly light to medium brown, often w/ irregular darker blotches (usually become darker & more extensive toward tail).



Habitat

Most commonly found in humid, but seasonally dry, pine-oak forests, w/ tall pines & epiphyte-laden older (mature) oaks, at 2,000-2,500 m elevation. Most often found under logs, rocks or large pieces of debris. Limited to Chiapas, Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Very secretive, apparently diurnal. Mainly terrestrial, possibly (reportedly almost completely) fossorial. Encountered most frequently under logs, rocks, &/or larger pieces of debris within its typical habitat. Probably ovoviviparous (litter size not known), & probably preys on arthropods, small mammals (e.g., shrews), & lizards available within its habitat.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ myotoxic factors. Seldom encountered by humans, & no well-documented bites, serious envenomations, or fatalities of humans due to this species. No known antivenom currently produced. For more detailed information about the venom of a closely-related species, & its effects in cases of human envenomations, [See *Cerrophidion godmani*](#).

Chironex fleckeri

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Identification

Family: Chirodropidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Box jellyfish, sea wasp, indringa, marine stinger

Description

Semi-transparent bluish "box-shaped" jellyfish w/ four "arms" (pedalia) at the base of its main body (bell), which in full-grown individuals is about 30 cm (1 ft.) in diameter & 20 cm high. Bundles of up to 15 thick tentacles, each nearly covered w/ stinging cells (nematocysts), are inserted on each pedalium. Each tentacle may be extended to 3 m (10 ft.) long or retracted to 75 cm (about 2.5 ft.) long.



Habitat

Found only in marine waters of the southwestern Pacific Ocean, mainly along the northern & eastern coasts of Australia (Northern Territory, northern Queensland), & from waters off New Guinea, Malaysia, Borneo, & certain other Southwest Pacific islands.

Activity and Behavior

These free-swimming jellyfish (medusae) mainly stay in fairly shallow (often very shallow; to less than 65 cm) coastal marine waters above sandy bottoms. They move actively via "jet propulsion" by rhythmically contracting their bell. They feed by engulfing various prey (often small fish) which have been paralyzed by their nematocysts. They tend to avoid areas directly above shallow coral reefs. Most active & numerous near shores during annual "stinger season" (1 Oct.-1 Jun.).

Venom Characteristics

Contains potent cytotoxic (affecting membranes), cardiotoxic, & possibly also neurotoxic proteins. Contact w/ a tentacle usually causes intense local pain, sometimes a spreading numbness, & local tissue necrosis. Death usually due to cardiac problems, sometimes to anaphylactic shock; & may occur within 24 hrs in severe stinging cases. Typical signs include urticarial wheals at each nematocyst sting site. Victims often become cyanotic soon after being seriously stung.

Chiropsalmus quadrigatus

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Identification

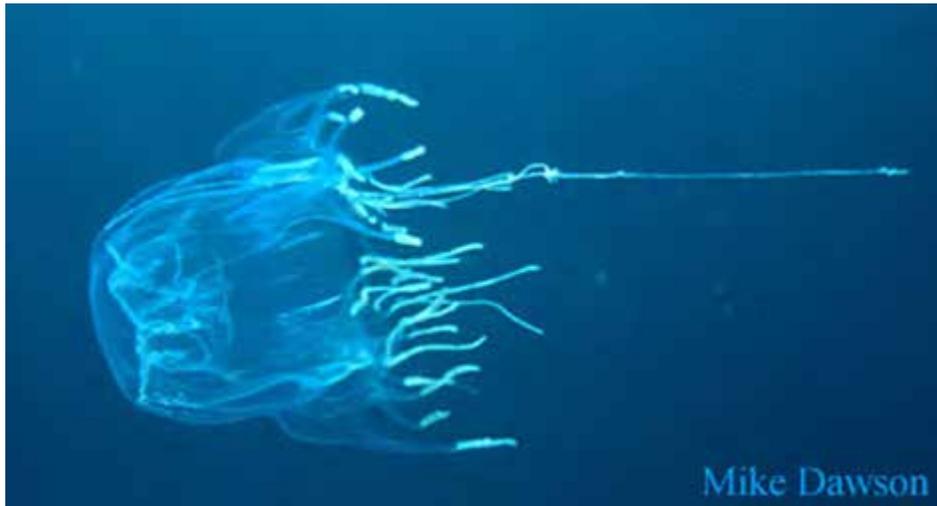
Family: Chiropsidae

Scientific Names: Chiropsalmus sp. [Note: At least three additional species in this genus; *C. quadrumanus*, *C. zYGONEMA*, & an un-named Australian coastal species called the "Gove Jellyfish" all cause many painful stings of fishermen & swimmers every year, NONE of those 3 has been documented to have caused any human deaths, so far.]

Common Names: Box jellyfish, fire medusa, indringa, habukurage (in Japan), marine stinger (causes "Irukandji syndrome")

Description

Semi-transparent bluish, "box-shaped" jellyfish w/ 4 "arms" (pedalia) at the base of the main body (bell), which when full-grown is about the size of a grapefruit. Bundles of up to 15 tentacles, each covered w/ stinging cells (nematocysts), are inserted on each pedalum. Each tentacle may be extended to 3 m (10 ft.) long or retracted to about 75 cm (about 2.5 ft.) long.



Habitat

Found mainly (only) in marine waters in the western Pacific Ocean, from Australia to the Philippines. Appear to travel toward mainland shores during calm weather on a rising tide. Often found in river mouths in shallow (<1 ft. deep) water above sandy bottoms. Have been reported very rarely from the Caribbean, but usually much too rare there to pose a common human health threat.

Activity and Behavior

The free-swimming medusae mainly stay in fairly shallow water (max. 20 m deep) over sandy bottoms, often near mouth of a river or creek. Prey on (engulf) various fish or crustaceans paralyzed by their nematocysts. Move very actively (up to 5 mph) via "jet propulsion" by rhythmic contraction of their bell. Tend to avoid areas directly above shallow coral reefs.

Venom Characteristics

Includes potent cytotoxins (especially affecting membranes), cardiotoxins & neurotoxins. Contact w/ a tentacle usually causes intense pain, numbness, local urticarial wheals at each sting site, & can stop a human's heart in <30 sec. Some victims have had limited local pain, then unconsciousness (even coma) in <24 hrs. Human death is usually due to heart stoppage or anaphylactic shock.

Chrysaora lactea

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Identification

Family: Pelagiidae (**Order:** Coronatae)

Scientific Names: No synonyms

Common Names: Uruguayan summer jellyfish, scalloped-medusate summer jellyfish, Southwestern Atlantic jellyfish

Description

Medium-sized pelagic jellyfish, w/ adult medusa nearly hemispherical and up to 25 cm. in diameter, with up to 40 tentacles, arranged in groups of 5, w/ the central one being longest in each group, in each one-eighth section around the dome (bell, umbrella). The exterior surface of the dome is thickly covered with very small, blunt papillae. The stomach pouches are roughly similar in size and shape, wider at the inner end, sometimes pear-shaped in outline. Color is usually fairly uniform for any given individual specimen, but individuals vary from pale milky-white, with a weak purplish tint, to a pale lilac tint. They may have brownish-red radial lines, spots and/or patches on the outer surface of the umbrella in some populations. Marginal tentacles are usually colorless, but may be pale reddish-purple. Mouth arms and subumbrellar ostia are often spotted dark brown.



Kitahara



Kitahara

Habitat

Mainly found swimming in open southwestern Atlantic Ocean, and sometimes in near-coastal waters and along beaches from Jamaica to Argentina. They sometimes develop in large numbers (called “blooms”) in late spring or summer, with many individuals being washed up onto beaches along the coasts of Uruguay and southeastern Brazil, from near Sao Paulo to the central Atlantic coast of Argentina.

Activity and Behavior

These jellyfish usually swim actively by pulsating contractions of their dome-like bell (medusa) in marine waters, capturing their prey by stinging them w/ special cells (nematocytes) located in large numbers along their fairly long, trailing, filamentous tentacles. Paralyzed prey is drawn into the central stomach through a ventral mouth that extends into the lower surface of their main medusal arms. Adult forms have been observed swimming nearer the ocean surface during the day, but they apparently do not display distinctly diurnal or nocturnal activity. Spring or summer storms often deposit large numbers of adults and larger sized free-swimming immature stages onto beaches where they may pose a stinging hazard to unwary persons or animals.

Venom Characteristics

The nematocytes (stinging cells) of this species deliver a mild to moderately-potent neurotoxic factors. Sting effects usually last 30-60 min. May trigger anaphylactic reaction in some persons. This species reportedly has caused multiple painful stings & a few rare deaths of humans (mainly children) within its range.

Conus clerii

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Identification

Family: Conidae (**Class:** Gastropoda; **Clade:** Neogastropoda)

Scientific Names: *Conus carcellesi*, *C. clenchi*, *C. iheringi*, *C. tostesi*, *C. xanthocinctus*, *Dendroconus xanthocinctus*, *Leptoconus clerii*, *L. iheringi*, *L. tostesi*

Common Names: Clery's cone, (a) Southwestern Atlantic cone shell

Description

Small- to medium-sized marine gastropod (sea snail), shell up to about 6 cm long (max. reported 6.5 cm), w/ a solid calcareous spiral-shaped shell, light in weight w/ a good-to-high gloss. Shell is low biconical in shape w/ a spire w/ straight to slightly concave sides, low-to-medium in height w/ a sharply-pointed apex & sometimes distinctly stepped whorls at the wider end. Whorl tops flat to slightly concave w/ a few faint spiral ridges crossed by stronger axial ridges. Earliest whorls are weakly nodulose becoming smooth on latest whorls. Body whorl has variably angled shoulders (sometimes bluntly, sometimes very sharply), slightly convex-to-straight sides tapering to a narrow base, surface relatively smooth except for a few low spiral ridges at the base & some scattered spiral & axial threads. Shell aperture is uniformly wide & downward sloping below the shoulder, w/ a thin, sharp, straight to slightly convex outer lip. Columella is hidden from external view. Body whorl ground color is white, cream or pinkish tinted, with brown (often w/

an orange tint), irregular, vertically oriented, squiggle shaped markings, sometimes in weakly defined zones above & below a weakly defined, ground colored mid-body band. Some specimens also have a few rows of reddish-brown or brown spots or dashes circling the mid-body. Base is usually ground colored. Spire is white w/ variably sized, brown blotches, often radiating. Apex & shell interior are usually white or pinkish.



Habitat

Mainly found resting or crawling along the sea floor in fairly deep water (usually 10-100 m. deep) in the open southwestern Atlantic Ocean. They are occasionally found in near-coastal waters & along beaches of Argentina, Brazil & Uruguay. Sometimes a number of individuals may be washed up by storms into shallow water or even onto beaches (where they may be stepped on or picked up by persons wading or walking near the water's edge) along the coasts of Argentina, Brazil, & Uruguay. There is one specimen recorded from the Panama Canal Zone, but this species is found mainly from the northeastern coast of Brazil southwards along the southwestern Atlantic shores to northern Argentina (i.e., 22-39 degrees south latitude).

Activity and Behavior

Cone shell mollusks (cone snails, or sea snails) usually crawl along, on or within the mud or sand on the sea floor, in shallow to fairly deep marine waters (10-100 m. deep), capturing prey by stinging it with a special harpoon-like radular tooth connected to a venom gland. Paralyzed prey is drawn into the central mouth (buccal cavity) within the muscular foot. The animal's foot must be protruding out of its shell or it cannot "sting" its prey or inflict a defensive wound on a potential predator. The radula (w/ its dart-like envenoming tooth) is located at the narrow (sharper-pointed) end of the animal's shell. This species has not been reported, so far, to be either mainly diurnal or nocturnal, but observations in their natural habitat have been very limited.

Venom Characteristics

This species has a moderately potent neurotoxin w/ possible (rare) cardiotoxic factors. Sting effects vary w/ individuals, but usually include: localized very sharp pain (sometimes excruciating), inflammation, limited swelling, numbness, & mild cyanosis at the wound site. Some victims' may have mild-to-severe headache, nausea, vomiting, breathing difficulties &/or hearing impairment. Some cases of severe flaccid paralysis have been reportedly caused by envenomation (a "sting") by this species. Their venom can be lethal to adult humans, & even lesser "stings" may trigger an anaphylactic reaction in some persons. This species reportedly has caused multiple painful stings & at least a few humans deaths (mainly young/small children) within its range. Most "stings" inflicted on humans by any cone snail, including by this species, have occurred when the "pretty" shell (still containing the live animal) has been either stepped on or intentionally handled (e.g., picked up & examined) by an incautious person.

Conus geographus

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Identification

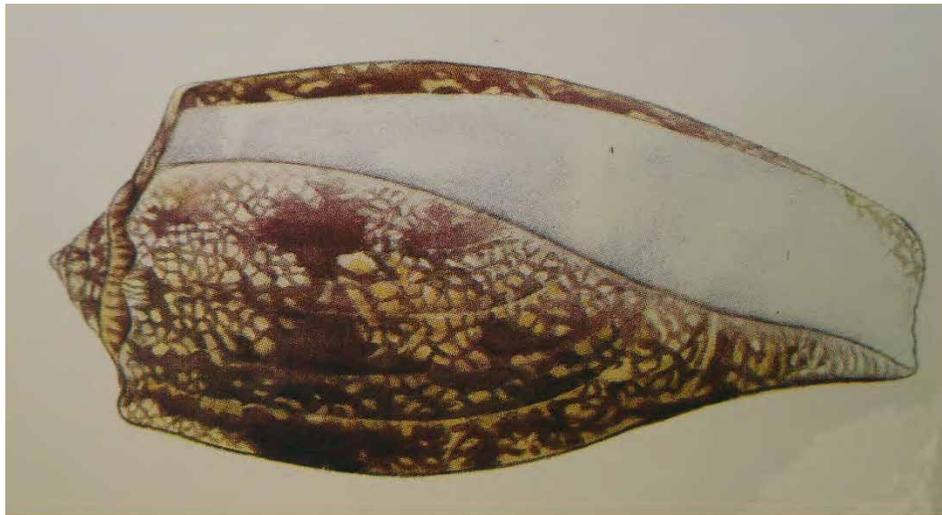
Family: Conidae

Scientific Names: *Rollus geographus* [Note: This is the most lethal species (to humans) of >400 currently named spp. in this genus. At least 8 spp. have been reported to cause human fatalities. All 8 are found mainly in shallow marine sites w/ sandy or rubble-coated bottoms.]

Common Names: Geographer cone, anboina, cone shell

Description

Marine snail w/ cone-shaped shell, usually cream colored w/ irregular blotches of parallel thin dark-brown stripes & small rings on most of shell's surface. When mature, usually 4-6 in. (10-15 cm) long x 2-4 in. (5-10 cm) diameter at large end. A reddish tube (siphon), often w/ dark ring at its end, & whitish root-like probe (proboscis) are protruded through the pointed (front) end of the shell. The foot is everted through the long ventral opening & used to crawl, dig, etc.



Habitat

Mainly found in shallow marine waters down to 100+ ft. (30+ m) deep, & mainly in tropics or subtropics, sometimes wash up onto beaches. Mainly associated w/ coral reefs & near-shore shallows throughout most of the south Pacific & Indian Oceans (Polynesia to East Africa). Most dangerous species (to humans) are usually found in shallow (e.g., <20 ft. deep), fairly clear waters w/ sandy or rubble bottoms.

Activity and Behavior

Usually burrow in bottom debris or sand by day & hunt by night. This species preys mainly on fish (others on marine invertebrates or worms) by harpooning (stinging) prey w/ hollow radular tooth, injecting potent paralytic venom, then consuming body of victim. Many spp. lay egg masses on seaweed or projecting corals. Proboscis is extended & contact w/ prey triggers ejection of tooth into victim. Prey usually surrounded by proboscis & partly digested before being passed into snail's main body.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxins, may have 4 different categories of poisonous factors (conitoxins). Serious & painful envenomations (sometimes fatal) usually occur when swimmers (waders) pick up shells w/ live snails still inside. Human death usually due to respiratory or cardiac stoppage (blockage of nerve signals to heart &/or diaphragm).

Conus textile

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Identification

Family: Conidae

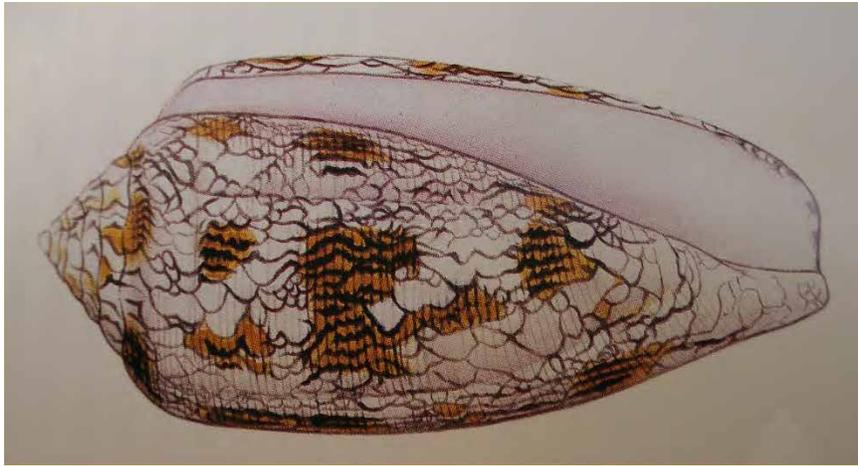
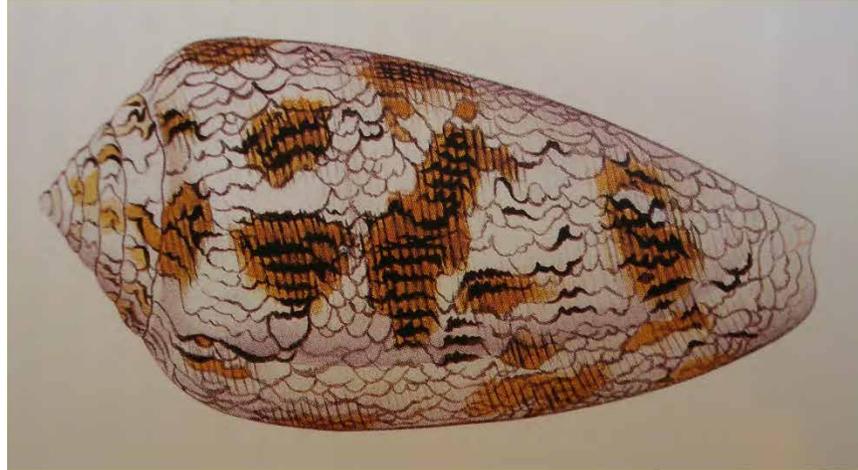
Scientific Names: *Darioconus textile* [Note: This species has one of the most attractive-looking shells (among >400 named spp. in this genus), & is most common in very shallow water. Humans very often notice & pick these up w/ live snails still inside.]

Common Names: Cloth-of-gold cone, textile cone, woven cone, tagayasanminashi, cone shell

Description

Marine snail w/ cone-shaped shell, usually cream patterned w/ goldish blotches (w/ darker brown cross-stripes) interspersed w/ irregular (mainly triangular) reddish-brown marks. Mature specimens usually 3-4 in. (7.5-10 cm) long x 1.5-2 in. (3-5 cm) diameter at large end. Tube-like siphon whitish w/ reddish ring around tip & wide (5+ mm wide) blackish band about 1 cm back from tip. Proboscis cream to pinkish. Foot used to move & dig, is everted through long ventral slot.





Habitat

Mainly found in relatively shallow near-shore fairly clear marine waters w/ sandy bottom (seldom >20 ft. deep). mainly limited to tropical or subtropical regions of the Indian & southern Pacific Oceans (from Polynesia to the Red Sea). Sometimes wash up onto beaches.

Activity and Behavior

Usually burrow into loose sand or bottom debris during day, hunt at night. This species preys mainly on other marine snails & molluscs (rarely on small fish or worms). They harpoon (sting) prey w/ 1-cm. long hollow radular tooth, through which they inject venom, then engulf paralyzed prey w/ their proboscis. Often lay egg masses on seaweed or coral projections. Large specimens of this species can project proboscis >2.5 cm (1 in.).

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin, have up to 4 categories of conotoxins. Serious envenomations (sometimes fatal) usually occur when a swimmer (wader) picks up a shell w/ the live snail still inside. Human death is usually due to the venom blocking nerve signals to the heart &/or diaphragm, stopping blood flow &/or breathing. Symptoms usually include immediate local pain, tingling, difficulty speaking, slowed breathing, progressive hypotension, lethargy, & coma.

Crotalus adamanteus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus durissus* (in part)

Common Names: Engl.: Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, Florida diamondback rattlesnake, water rattlesnake, Ger.: Diamant-Klapperschlange

Description

Heavy-bodied terrestrial pitviper, largest species of rattlesnakes, adults usually 1.2-2.0 m long (max. 2.51 m); body brownish, brownish-yellow, olive or brownish-gray; patterned w/ 24-35 dorsal dark brown to black diamonds, each outlined w/ whitish scales & lighter in the center; 25-31 midbody dorsal scale rows, dark post ocular stripe, belly yellowish or cream w/ dark mottling mainly along sides.



Habitat

Found mainly on lowland coastal plains, up to about 500 m elevation; often along streams & in swamps from southeastern North Carolina south through southern Georgia & most of Florida, then west through southern Alabama & Mississippi to southeastern Louisiana.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, but often bask in sunlight, & sometimes ambush (occasionally actively hunt) prey in the daytime. Usually docile, vibrate tail rapidly ("rattle") but can strike quickly if disturbed.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Relatively long fangs & large venom reservoirs can lead to injection of large amounts of venom during a single bite. Occasionally cause human fatalities, especially in remote sites or w/ delayed treatment.

Crotalus aquilus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus lugubris*, *C. triseriatus*, *C. t. aquilus*, *C. t. quadrangularis*, *C. t. triseriatus*

Common Names: Queretaran dusky rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small to medium-sized, heavy-bodied terrestrial pitviper, adults usually <50 cm long (max. 67.8 cm); body variable, pale to dark brown, greenish, to gray, patterned w/ 21-41 darker quadrangular dorsal blotches, dark postocular stripe; venter yellowish, pinkish or very pale gray, w/ dark brown or gray mottling (heavier toward tail). Has a pair of upper front folding fangs.

Habitat

Found mainly in open grassy & usually rocky habitats north of the Transverse Volcanic Cordillera in central Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, but basks in the sun; preys mainly on small animals, birds, etc. Coils body & vibrates tail ("rattles") when threatened. Generally slow moving, but can strike very quickly if disturbed or surprized. Ovoviviparous w/ avg. of about 7 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not very well known, but mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ myotoxic (proteolytic) factors. Potentially lethal to humans, but not well documented.

Crotalus atrox

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona atrox* var. *sonoriensis*, *Crotalus adamanteus atrox*, *C. a. atrox*, *C. cinereous*, *C. confluentus*, *C. a. sonoriensis*, *C. sonoriensis*

Common Names: Engl.: Western diamondback rattlesnake, coon-tail rattler, Spanish (local names): vibora de cascabel, vibora serrana, Ger.: Texas-Klapperschlange

Description

Large, heavy-bodied, terrestrial pitviper, adults avg. 1.0-2.1 m long (max. 2.3+ m); largest rattlesnake in its range. Body usually gray-brown & dusty-looking; may be pinkish, yellowish, red, or chalky-white (& resembling colors of local soils); w/ 24-45 dorsal dark gray-brown to brown blotches (diamond-like toward tail). Head usually w/ dark postorbital stripes, not reaching corner of head. Belly pale (whitish). Tail pale w/ 2-8 (usually 4-6) black bands, usually not complete below.



Habitat

Most common in seasonally dry to semi-arid lowlands; other habitats include deserts, steep rocky hillsides, thorn forest, & tropical deciduous forest in the south. Found up to 2,450 m, but most common at <1,500 m elevation. Found in Southwestern U.S from California east to Arkansas & southward into Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, activity more temperature-dependent than light-dependent; mainly nocturnal during warmer periods, diurnal during cooler periods. Quick to escape (move away) from humans, it will defend itself w/ a

large supply of potent venom if threatened or if cornered. Prey mainly on available small to medium-sized mammals, birds, etc.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic; venom also has potent necrotic (tissue-destroying) & myotoxic factors. In northern Mexico, responsible for more human deaths than any other snake & responsible for the most snake-bite casualties annually in North America.

Crotalus basiliscus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus basilisca*, *C. basiliscus basiliscus*, *C. terrificus*, *C. t. basiliscus*

Common Names: Mexican west coast rattlesnake, saye, tepocolcoatl, teuhtlacozauiqi, vibora de cascabel

Description

Large, heavy-bodied, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 1.0-1.5 m long (max. 2.05 m); body pale green, pale grayish-green, or pale brown; juveniles reddish-brown to brown; w/ a series of dark, diamond-shaped dorsal blotches, usually edged w/ white; 24-29 (usually 27) midbody dorsal scale rows. Head pale above, tail gray w/ 5-12 darker bands; belly whitish, yellowish or cream anteriorly (suffused w/ gray), darker posteriorly w/ gray mottling or blotches.





Habitat

Most common in forested areas, including thorn forest, at elevations of 600 m in the north to 2,400 m in the south. Limited to Mexico (Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, Michoacan).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal; may bask in early morning. Most active during rainy periods. Quickly defends itself if threatened, & can strike w/ great speed. Assumes defensive posture w/ the upper one-third of body raised & partly coiled in an "S-shape." Ovoviviparous w/ 24-35 young/ litter reported. Preys mainly on available mammals & lizards (rarely, birds or invertebrates).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent tissue-necrotic factor(s). Usually very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic symptoms if envenomation occurred. Humans are sometimes envenomated by this species, but reported fatalities are rare.

Crotalus catalinensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Santa Catalina Island rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel, Santa-Catalina-Klapperschlange

Description

Small, fairly slender, semi-arboreal pitviper, adults usually <70 cm long; body usually tan to pale gray-brown w/ few dark speckles, w/ a series of 26-41 medium-brown dorsal blotches outlined in dark brown to black, each edged w/ thin whitish lines, 25 midbody dorsal scale rows, post orbital stripe, bordered above & below by thin white lines; w/ only a one-segmented, dark-colored rattle (lost & replaced at each molt). Belly pale, tail gray w/ 5-6 black dorsal crossbands.



Habitat

Most common in rocky desert areas w/ brush & cacti. Found only on Santa Catalina Island in the Gulf of California, just off the east coast of Baja California.

Activity and Behavior

Semi-arboreal, & mainly nocturnal, but often active in daytime. Usually not aggressive & will retreat if possible. Has been reported to climb bushes & other vegetation to a height of >1 m. Ovoviviparous w/ litter size not reported (probably <10 young/ litter). Prey mainly on birds, mice & lizards endemic to its habitat (that island).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known; reportedly has a low venom yield. Probably mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent tissue-necrotic factors. May be very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of swelling & discoloration of tissue. Bites & envenomations of humans occur infrequently. No well-documented resultant human deaths have been reported.

Crotalus cerastes

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Aechmophrys cerastes, Caudisona cerastes, Crotalus cerastes cerastes, C. c. cercobombus, C. c. laterorepens [Note: Crotalus scutulatus scutulatus & Crotalus cerastes laterorepens have been reported to have successfully hybridized in captivity.]

Common Names: Sidewinder, awa'ala, chicotera, tl'iish, bicho'hi', vibora cornuda, vibora de cascabel, seitenwinder, Gehornete Klapperschlange

Description

Small, slender, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 50-80 cm long (max. 82 cm); only Mexican rattlesnake w/ raised, horn-like scales above each eye. Body cream, buff, tan, yellowish-brown, pink, or ash-gray; darker dorsal sub-rhombic or sub-elliptical blotches, supraocular scales produced into a hornlike projection above each eye, belly whitish or yellowish w/ dark markings, mainly laterally, tail has dark rings.



Habitat

Found most commonly in dry, wind-blown sandy areas, desert sand dunes, & rocky hillsides w/ some mesquite or shrubs; up to 1,850 m elevation. Found in the southwestern U.S. (SE California, S Nevada, SW Arizona, SW Utah), & northwestern Mexico (Baja California Norte, NW Sonora).

Activity and Behavior

Mostly terrestrial & nocturnal; often shelters in rodent burrows or ditches. Usually inoffensive, but if threatened, w/ no escape route, usually will coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, strikes quickly & repeatedly. Reported to climb >30 cm up into creosote bushes. Moves rapidly by lateral looping (sidewinding) over fine sand. Ovoviviparous w/ 7-18 young/ litter, mainly eats available lizards, mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known; reportedly has a small venom yield, probably mainly hemotoxic; may also contain potent tissue-necrotic factors. Bites may be very painful at the bite site with rapid progression of swelling & tissue necrosis. Envenomation of humans uncommon, human fatalities not well documented, so far.

Crotalus durissus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: CURRENT SUBSPECIES: *Crotalus durissus cascavella*, *C. d. collilineatus*, *C. d. cumanensis*, *C. d. durissus*, *C. d. terrificus*, *C. d. marajoensis*, *C. d. maricelae*, *C. d. ruruima*, *C. d. trigonicus*, *C. d. unicolor*, *C. d. vergandis*; OTHER NAMES: *Crotalus durissus dryinus*, *C. d. pifanorum*, *C. d. trigonicus*, (PLUS > 10 more older names)

Common Names: South American rattlesnake, Neotropical rattlesnake, cascabel, cascabela, vibora de cascabel, caiguara, apat, boiquira, colebre, cascabel chonono, sak-kah-sak, amaru, palla, ma 'ara, maraca, mboi'-chini, mbaraka, (PLUS more than 40 more variation of local names in various languages & dialects).

Description

Large, stout, rattlesnake, adults usually 1.0-1.6 m long; w/ prominent spinal ridge, most evident on front part of the body. Body color & pattern extremely variable; nearly all specimens w/ 18-32 darker dorsal diamond or rhombic blotches, & 25-33 (usually 27) midbody dorsal scale rows. Head usually w/ dark-brown bar across top & dark postorbital stripe. Belly whitish, yellowish or buff, often w/ pale gray mottling (darker toward tail). Tail gray, often w/ vague darker crossbands.



Habitat

Mainly in semi-arid regions & drier openings in more humid environments. Not found in rainforest. Most common at <700 m elevation, has been found at elevations up to 1,000 m in Costa Rica, 2,000 m in Mexico and Colombia, 2,500 in Venezuela. This species is the widest-spread geographically, of all rattlesnakes.

Activity and Behavior

Most active during twilight & early morning hours. Will move away from humans if allowed to do so, but assumes a defensive coil & strikes if cornered or startled. In the defensive position, it raises its head & front one-third of the body in a vertical S-shaped loop. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-8 young/ litter reported. Preys mainly on certain lizards, birds & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Possibly the most dangerous snake in the region; both hemotoxic & neurotoxic components, varying among the subspecies. Mainly hemotoxic in Mexican & Central American races; venom of *C. d. terrificus* in South America has myotoxic & neurotoxic factors.

Crotalus durissus terrificus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: See "C. durissus".

Common Names: See "C. durissus".

Description

This subspecies (1 of 11) is differentiated from others mainly by its relatively dark-brown background body color; & by its body pattern, w/ large dorsal (& smaller lateral) diamond-shaped rhombs, each outlined by light-brown scales. Tips of dorsal & lateral dark rhombs often nearly touch (separated only by a row of light-brown scales). Tail is nearly all black, w/ rattles all light yellow-brown. For details of overall species characters, [See Crotalus durissus](#).



Habitat

For general habitat information, [See Crotalus durissus](#). This subspecies is found only in central & southern South America; including portions of northern Argentina, Bolivia, southern Brazil, southeastern Peru, Paraguay, & Uruguay.

Activity and Behavior

[See Crotalus durissus](#).

Venom Characteristics

[See Crotalus durissus](#). This subspecies apparently often has strong myotoxic & possibly also neurotoxic factors in its venom & MAY require very specific antivenoms, along w/ careful observation & life support for victims.

Crotalus enyo

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona enyo*, *Crotalus confluentus enyo*, *C. enyo cerralvensis*, *C. e. enyo*, *C. e. fulvus*, *C. oregonus* var. *enyo*

Common Names: Baja California rattlesnake, lower California rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Medium-sized, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 89 cm). Head relatively small & narrow w/ rather large eyes. Color & pattern variable, usually punctuated w/ gray & blending in well w/ local soil colors. Usually dark-brown, tan, gray-brown, or silvery-brown (paler toward tail), w/ 28-42 reddish to yellow-brown dorsal blotches (black-edged), 23-27 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly cream or buff, mottled w/ darker gray or brown. Tail w/ 4-8 darker rings on grayish, proximal rattle usually black.



Habitat

Found most commonly in desert areas; mainly in rocky terrain sparsely covered w/ brush & cacti, in western Mexico, mainly the Baja California peninsula & nearby islands.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Mainly nocturnal, terrestrial, & ovoviviparous (2 observed litters w/ 7 young each). If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, will coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, will strike. Feed on lizards (mainly juveniles), small mice (mainly adults), & invertebrates (e.g., centipedes).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known; probably mainly hemotoxic but w/ tissue-necrotic factors. May be very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic symptoms if envenomation occurred. Bites & significant envenomations, of humans occur occasionally, but no well-documented human deaths due to this species.

Crotalus horridus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Caudisona horrida, Crotalus atricaudatus, C. boiquira, C. catesbaei, C. cyanurus, C. durissus concolor, C. d. melanurus, C. fasciatus, C. d. mexicana, C. , C. horridus atricaudatus, C. h. horridus, C. zetazomae

Common Names: Timber rattlesnake, banded rattlesnake, canebrake, Seminole rattler, velvet tail, Wald-Kupperschlange

Description

Large, terrestrial, rattlesnake, adults usually 120-145 cm long (max. 189 cm); body tan, grayish brown, yellowish, or pinkish-gray; 15-34 dark brown to black dorsal crossbands or chevrons, each irregularly edged w/ pale scales; has dark postorbital stripes; belly yellowish, gray or pinkish w/ dark flecks or mottling. Juveniles more distinctly patterned, & w/ dark tail bands.



Habitat

Usually found in moist forests in low bottomlands, & hilly & mountainous uplands; in dry brushy areas and moderately open mixed beech-birch-maple forests; from sea level to 2,000 m elevation. Found throughout most of the eastern U.S., from southeastern Minnesota & southern Maine southward to eastern Texas & northern Florida; also occurs in southern Ontario, Canada.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, but sometimes climbs onto logs or tree stumps at least 1 m above ground; mainly nocturnal, but often basks in the sun. Adults prey mainly on small mammals & birds. For generalized behavior of a fairly closely-related species, [See *Crotalus durissus*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. For more generalized information about a related species, [See *Crotalus durissus*](#).

Crotalus intermedius

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus gloydi gloydi*, *C. g. lautus*, *C. intermedius gloydi*, *C. i. intermedius*, *C. i. omiltemanus*, *C. omiltemanus*, *C. o. omiltemanus*, *C. triseriatus*, *C. t. gloydi*, *C. t. omiltemanus*

Common Names: Mexican small-headed rattlesnake, chilladora, vibora de cascabel, vibora sorda

Description

Small, fairly slender terrestrial, rattlesnake, adults usually 40-60 cm long (max. 60 cm); body usually gray, pale blue-gray, or brownish-gray; pattern varies a lot, usually w/ a series of brownish to dark grayish irregular blotches, each narrowly edged w/ black. Often w/ a pair of dark nape blotches & broad dark brown postorbital stripe, belly pale w/ various amounts of gray stippling.



Habitat

Found most commonly in seasonally dry pine-oak forest at 2,000 m to at least 3,000 m. in the central & southern highlands of Mexico (Hidalgo, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Guerrero).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal. Active during the day on sunny days of wet season; not often encountered during the dry season. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, usually will coil w/ the head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, may strike quickly if further molested. Ovoviviparous; 1 observed litter of 5 young. Eat mainly available lizards, small mammals (mainly mice), & invertebrates (& very rarely birds).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent tissue-necrotic factor(s). Relatively few bites of humans, but may be very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic symptoms if envenomation occurs. No well-documented human deaths due to bites by this species.

Crotalus lannomi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Autlan rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small, relatively stout rattlesnake, adult(s) apparently about 60 cm long (max. 63.8 cm). Body grayish, w/ a series of irregular brownish dorsal blotches, 27 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly grayish w/ 2 series of irregular darker spots laterally. Tail long & slender, cream w/ 4 black crossbands, rattles dark brownish. [Known from a single specimen collected in 1966.]



Habitat

Found in a transitional zone between deciduous forest & pine-oak forest at about 1,000 m elevation, in southwestern Mexico (Jalisco). Known only from type locality.

Activity and Behavior

Very little specific behavioral data. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, most rattlesnakes will usually coil w/ their head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, will strike. Probably mainly terrestrial, nocturnal, & ovoviparous (litter size not known). Probably preys mainly on available lizards, small mammals, & invertebrates (maybe also birds).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic; may also have tissue-necrotic factors. One would expect that bites by this species may be painful at the bite site w/ progression of local & systemic symptoms if envenomation occurs (based on symptoms caused by venoms of closely-related species).

Crotalus lepidus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Aploaspis lepida*, *Caudisona lepida*, *Crotalus lepidus castaneus*, *C. l. klauberi*, *C. l. lepidus*, *C. l. maculosus*, *C. l. maculosus*, *C. l. morulus*, *C. palmeri*, *C. semicornutus*, *C. tigris* var. *palmeri*

Common Names: Rock rattlesnake, banded rock rattlesnake, cha-cha-mu-ri, chamure, vibora, vibora de cascabel, vibora verde de cascabel, Felsen-Klapperschlange

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied rattlesnake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 83 cm); body colors & patterns extremely variable; body usually greenish, olive, reddish-brown, light brown, gray or pinkish-gray; 21-25 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows, dorsal pattern usually has dark, laterally expanded blotches (often white-edged) that may form complete crossbands. Belly lighter, usually w/ various amounts of darker gray mottling.



Habitat

Variable; including pine-oak forest, scrub & cactus grasslands, & Chihuahuan desert, often associated w/ mountains & rugged broken terrain in the vicinity of rocky outcroppings & slides. In forests, usually found in open or barren rocky areas subject to intense sunlight. Found from southeastern Arizona, southern New Mexico to the Edwards plateau in central Texas, then south to south-central Mexico (Jalisco).

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, mostly nocturnal, but can be active during daylight in cooler temperatures. Easily excited & nervous, this snake can quickly assume a defensive posture & will strike if molested or stepped on. Ovoviviparous, 3-9 young/ litter for >5 observed, captured females. Eats a wide variety of available arthropods (insects, like grasshoppers & caterpillars), lizards, & small mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, also w/ pre-synaptically acting neurotoxins; serious human envenomations & deaths have been reported. Envenomation symptoms may include: intense painful at bite site w/ rapid progression of pain, swelling & discoloration up the bitten limb, nausea, blistering, malaise, dizziness, & sometimes heart or breathing problems.

Crotalus mitchellii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus confluentus mitchelli*, *C. c. stephensis*, *C. goldmani*, *C. mitchelli*, *C. m. aureus*, *C. mitchellii*, *C. m. angelenis*, *C. m. angelicus*, *C. m. mitchellii*, *C. m. muertensis*, *C. m. pyrrhus*, *C. m. stephensi*, *C. oregonus* var. *mitcheli*, *C. tigris mitchellii*

Common Names: Speckled rattlesnake, vibora blanca, vibora de cascabel

Description

Medium-large, fairly stout rattlesnake, adults usually 90-100 cm long (max. 136 cm), some island populations dwarfed (max. 64 cm) w/ reduced rattle. Body colors & pattern extremely variable, 21-27 (usually 23-27) midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually brownish to greenish-brown, w/ 23-46 irregular (often interrupted) darker crossbands, rather than blotches, belly lighter w/ darker mottling. Tail w/ 3-9 widely-spaced dark crossbands, each band widest dorsally, basal rattle segment black.



Habitat

Found most commonly inhabiting rocky hillsides, rock ledges & canyons; in desert scrub, Joshua tree, & pinon-juniper woodlands. It also occurs in low shrub areas, tropical deciduous forest, & pine-oak forest in the northern part of its range. Found up to 2,400 m elevation. Occurs in southwestern U.S. from central California, SW Utah, SW Nevada, & W Arizona to Baja California & adjacent islands.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal in midsummer (may be diurnal in spring & fall). Very nervous & quick to strike if disturbed even slightly. Ovoviviparous w/ 1-8 young/ litter for observed captured females. Eat mainly available lizards, small mammals & sometimes birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ potent tissue-necrotic factors. However, the venom of one subspecies (*C. m. mitchellii*) is mainly neurotoxic, lacking significant hemorrhagic & proteolytic activity. Envenomation by this subspecies can cause neurotoxic symptoms. Serious envenomations & deaths of humans have been reported.

Crotalus molossus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona molossa*, *C. molossus*, *Crotalus basiliscus oaxacus*, *C. durissus* var. *molossus*, *C. molossus*, *C. m. estebanensis*, *C. m. molossus*, *C. m. nigrescens*, *C. m. oaxacus*, *C. ornatus*, *C. terrificus* (in part)

Common Names: Black-tailed rattlesnake, green rattler, palanca, palancacoatl, tecutlacotzauhqui, tepocolcoatl, tleua, vibora, cascabel, vibora de cascabel de cola negra

Description

Large, fairly stout rattlesnake, adults usually 80-100 cm long (max. 133 cm), 23-29 midbody dorsal scale rows, w/ dark postorbital stripe. Body color & pattern extremely variable; dorsal body usually tan, brownish-olive or grayish-brown w/ 24-34 dark-brown diamond-like blotches, yellowish-edged (rarely all black, dorsally). Belly cream to pale yellow w/ lateral dark mottling. Tail usually darker than body background color (often black) w/ NO prominent stripes or bars.



Habitat

Found mainly in pine-oak forest, tropical deciduous forest, grassy hillsides, scrub & cactus areas, & upland Sonoran desert; often associated w/ rocky areas such as cliffs & rock slides along streams. Occurs from sea level to 2,930 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but also active at dusk & dawn. Semi-arboreal, often climbs into low bushes & trees up to height of several meters. Temperament variable. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, usually coils w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hisses, rattles, & strikes if further molested. Ovoviviparous w/ 3-16 young/ litter for observed, captured females. Mainly eat available lizards (including Gila Monsters), mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, large venom yield, but no human deaths have been reported, so far. Mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent necrotic (tissue-destroying) factor(s). Can be very painful at bite site w/ swelling & necrosis.

Crotalus oreganus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona lucifer*, *C. l. cerberus*, *Crotalus adamanteus* var. *lucifer*, *C. confluentus abyssus*, *C. c. concolor*, *C. c. decolor*, *C. c. lutosus*, *C. c. oregonus*, *C. c. lucifer*, *C. hallowelli*, *C. lucifer*, *C. oregonus niger*, *C. viridis abyssus*, *C. v. caliginis*, *C. v. cerberus*, *C. v. concolor*, *C. v. decolor*, *C. v. helleri*, *C. v. lutosus*, *C. v. oregonus*,

Common Names: Western rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout, terrestrial pitviper, max. adult length usually <0.9 m; the only rattlesnake species on Isla de Cedros. Body color variable, usually gray-brown to reddish-brown, w/ a series of large, dark diamond-shaped rhombs along dorsal midline, usually lighter in center, & edged w/ lighter scales. Smaller dark blotches along sides. Tail light gray to white w/ black crossbands, chin whitish, belly light-gray to pale brown, often w/ darker brownish-gray blotches.



Habitat

Found most commonly in rocky terrain covered w/ desert vegetation, pine-oak forests from near sea level to 3,355 m elevation. Found from southwestern Canada, throughout much of the western half of the U.S. & into northern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, mainly nocturnal. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, usually will coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, will strike.

Ovoviviparous w/ usually <10 young/ litter. Preys on available small mammals, & sometimes birds (young occasionally prey on lizards &/or amphibian in part of its range).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent tissue-necrotic factor(s). Bites usually are very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic symptoms if envenomation occurred.

Numerous serious envenomations & deaths of humans due to bites by this species have been reported historically.

Crotalus polystictus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona polysticha*, *Crotalus jimenezii*, *C. lugubris*, *C. l. var. multimaculata*, *C. triseriatus var. jimenezii*

Common Names: Mexican lancehead rattlesnake, chiauhcotl, chiauitl, hocico de puerco, tziripa, vibora de cascabel

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout terrestrial rattlesnake, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 100 cm). Body usually pale (grey, buff, tan, or light brown) w/ 30-47 closely-spaced dark-brown rounded-elongated dorsal blotches (looks "Giraffe-like"). Head unusually slender, 25-29 (usually 27) midbody dorsal scale rows, belly white at front, stippled w/ dark-brown at middle of each ventral scale, darker toward tail. Tail yellowish w/ 4-7 dark brown dorsal crossbands & brownish ventral spots.



Habitat

Found mainly in broad valleys, plains, & meadows at 1,450-2,600 m elevation. Most common in rocky outcroppings & grassy, mesquite scrub areas. Particularly common in rocky areas or areas w/ many gopher (rodent) burrows, in which the snakes often hide. Historic reports refer to certain probably semi-aquatic populations of this species, which have apparently been extirpated since.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, but occupy rodent burrows, & reportedly swim readily & very well. Mostly nocturnal during the dry season, but can become active in daylight hours during the rainy season w/ the growth of high grasses. Quick to move away when humans approach. Not usually aggressive, but will strike quickly if cornered.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic (& probably w/ tissue-necrotoxic factors). This species' long fangs & large average venom yield make it a potentially dangerous snake; envenomation of humans has resulted in severe symptoms.

Crotalus pricei

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus pricei miquihuanus*, *C. p. pricei*, *C. triseriatus miquihuanus*, *C. t. pricei*

Common Names: Twin-spotted rattlesnake, mountain sidewinder, chachamuri, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small, moderately stout terrestrial rattlesnake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 66 cm), w/ 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows & a dark postocular stripe. Body color variable; usually light gray, brownish-gray, or reddish-brown w/ 39-64 paired dark para-vertebral dorsal blotches (looks "twin-spotted"); these sometimes merge forming "bow-tie shaped" marks. These marks may be obscured in melanistic or older specimens. Throat whitish, belly whitish & suffused w/ black toward tail.



Habitat

Found most commonly in pine-oak & boreal forest, usually near volcanic rock or limestone outcroppings, at 1,850-3,203(+) m elevation. Occurs from southeastern Arizona into central Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial. Mainly active only by day (diurnal), but below 2,500 m elevation, it may be active at night (nocturnal). Ovoviviparous w/ 4-9 young/ litter observed for captured females. Prey on available lizards, small mammals, ground-nesting birds, & sometimes other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. This species has short fangs & a low venom yield & probably poses little health risk to humans. No human fatalities reported as caused by this species, so far. Rattlesnake venoms are mainly hemotoxic; some spp. also have necrotoxic (tissue-destroying) &/ or neurotoxic factors. Envenomations are often painful at the bite site & may have progressive spreading local or systemic swelling, bleeding, nausea, & for some species, sometimes cardiac or respiratory effects.

Crotalus pusillus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus triseriatus*, *C. t. triseriatus*,

Common Names: Tancitaran dusky rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small, moderately stout, terrestrial rattlesnake, adults usually <70 cm long; body usually grayish-brown, occasionally fawn or grayish w/ greenish overtones; dark brown dorsal blotches sometimes are black-bordered & narrowly & irregularly edged w/ white, 23-25 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows, dark-brown postocular stripe, belly pale w/ speckling of dark gray or brown, heavier & darker toward tail.



Habitat

Most common in pine-oak forest, usually associated w/ volcanic rock or limestone outcroppings, at 1,500-2,400 m elevation. Limited to west-central Mexico (NE Michoacan, S Jalisco).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & terrestrial. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, will usually coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, strike. Ovoviviparous w/ 3-5 young/ litter observed for captured females. Reported to prey on available lizards, small mammals (including a bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*), & arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Venom reportedly has low toxicity & is mainly hemotoxic, but may contain some tissue-necrotic factors. Bites may be painful at the bite site w/ some local &/or systemic symptoms if maximum envenomation occurred. No well-documented human fatalities from bites of this species, so far.

Crotalus ravenus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona rava*, *Crotalophorus ravenus*, *Crotalus miliarius ravenus*, *Sistrurus ravenus*, *S. r. brunneus*, *S. r. exiguus*, *S. r. lutescens*, *S. r. ravenus*, *S. r. sinaloensis*

Common Names: Mexican pygmy rattlesnake, colcoatl, cascabel enana, vibora de cascabel, viborita de cascabel

Description

Small, fairly stout, terrestrial rattlesnake, adults usually 40-65 cm long (max. 70+ cm); body colors & patterns extremely variable; usually pale grayish-brown, dark brown, bluish-gray, or pale rust; w/ 22-44 reddish-brown to dark-brown dorsal blotches, often, each is pale-centered, 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows, usually no obvious postorbital stripe, belly pale w/ lots of darker mottling, 2-8 dark tail bands.

Habitat

Found in pine-oak forest, cloud forest, boreal forest, high tropical scrub, & upper tropical deciduous forest, in temperate montane regions to high elevations across the Mexican plateau; in central-southern Mexico, at 1,490-3,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, & usually diurnal, but have been observed to be active at night. Prey mainly on available small mammals, sometimes birds (rarely lizards). Ovoviviparous w/ 3-7 young/ litter reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic, possibly containing some tissue-necrotic factors. Bites may be painful, w/ local & progressive swelling & necrosis. No human fatalities documented due to bites by this species, so far.

Crotalus ruber

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona atrox sonoraensis*, *Crotalus adamanteus atrox*, *C. a. ruber*, *C. atrox ruber*, *C. a. elegans*, *C. a. lucasensis*, *C. exsul*, *C. e. exsul*, *C. e. lorenzoensis*, *C. e. lucasensis*, *C. lucasensis*, *C. ruber elegans*, *C. r. lorenzoensis*, *C. r. lucasensis*, *C. r. monserratisensis*, *C. r. ruber*

Common Names: Red diamond rattlesnake, monserratisensis, red rattlesnake, Cedros Island diamondback rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel, Rote Diamant-Klapperschlange

Description

Medium to large rattlesnake, adults usually 100-150 cm long (max. 162 cm) 25-33 (usually 27 or 29) midbody dorsal scale rows. Body color & patterns highly variable (overall dull ochre to vividly marked w/ brown, black, & white scales), but the tail is usually ash-gray w/ 3-5 black alternating w/ white bands; white bands usually slightly narrower dorsally.



Habitat

Mainly found in cool coastal areas, pine-oak & tropical deciduous forest, & desert; most often found in brushy grassland, rocky areas w/ heavy brush, or cactus-covered foothills. Found up to 1,500 m elevation. Occurs in southwestern California & Baja California.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (may be considered semi-fossorial, because it often occupies its prey rodents' burrows for extended periods). Ovoviviparous w/ usually <10 young/ litter. Prey mainly on available lizards & burrowing small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

This species has long fangs & a large yield of potent venom; has caused human fatalities. Mainly hemotoxic but may also have potent tissue-necrotic factors. Bite effects may be very painful at the bite site & may include progressive swelling & necrosis.

Crotalus scutulatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona scutulata*, *Crotalus adamanteus scutulatus*, *C. confluentus kellyi*, *C. molossus* (in part), *C. salvini*, *C. scutulatus salvini*, *C. s. scutulatus*,

Common Names: Mohave rattlesnake, Mohave green rattlesnake, chiauhcoatl, vibora de cascabel, Mojave-Klapperachlange

Description

Medium-sized to large, fairly stout-bodied terrestrial rattlesnake, adults usually 90-100 cm long (max. 137 cm), w/ dark postocular stripe & 21-29 (25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Body colors & pattern variable; usually olive-gray, greenish brown, or yellowish-gray w/ 27-44 dark diamond-like dorsal blotches, each rimmed by a row of pale scales. Belly white to yellowish. Tail w/ 2-8 dark rings alternating w/ ash-gray. Snakes from more southern areas are usually much paler overall.



Habitat

Found mainly in semi-arid grassland, brushy flats, open scrubland, & occasionally in forests; mainly in flat terrain, such as valley floors or open plains, up to 2,500+ m elevation. More common & wider-spread in the Chihuahuan Desert than in the Mojave Desert. Found in southern California, southern Nevada, Arizona, southern New Mexico, west Texas, southward & eastward to southeastern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Activity is temperature-dependent; mainly nocturnal at lower elevations & during warmer months, & diurnal at higher elevations & during cooler months. Aggressively defends itself if disturbed. Ovoviviparous w/ 2-17 young/ litter observed for captured females. Prey mainly on available lizards, rodents, arthropods (specifically, centipedes) & amphibians.

Venom Characteristics

Venom is highly potent & mainly hemotoxic, but also has pre-synaptic neurotoxins, & may also have tissue-necrotic factors. Bites may be very painful at the bite site & may produce progressive swelling & necrosis. Serious human envenomations and some fatalities have been reported.

Crotalus simus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus durissus* (in part), *C. d. culminatus*, *C. d. durissus*, *C. d. neoleonensis*, *C. d. tzabcan*, *C. s. culminatus*, *C. s. tzabcan*, *C. s. simus*, *C. terrificus* (in part), *C. t. copeanus*

Common Names: Middle American rattlesnake, cascabel, vibora de cascabel, cascabela, chil-chil, kwechwah, quiakxop, sochaj, ahau-can, ah tsab ti'kkan, sakk ahaw kan, shunu, teotlacozauhqui, tepocolcoatl, teuhltacozauhqui

Description

Medium-to-large, stout rattlesnake, adults usually 130-160 cm long (max. about 180 cm); body gray-brown, reddish-brown, yellowish-gray, yellowish-olive, straw, or orange; w/ 18-35 rhombic or diamond-shaped dorsal blotches, 27-33 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly whitish, yellowish or buff w/ gray blotches darker posteriorly, dark postocular stripe, conspicuous spinal ridge of strongly-keeled scales, tail w/ dark crossbands.

Habitat

Found mainly in semi-arid regions, w/ dry to very dry tropical forest, arid scrub forest, & thorn woodlands, but also sometimes in mesic forests in limestone outcrop areas, & along breaks in cloud forests. Ranges from central Mexico to western Costa Rica. Usually below 1,000 m but sometimes found at 1,500-2,200 m elevation. Also occurs on the Atlantic coast of Columbia; but no verified specimens from Panama.

Activity and Behavior

Not well documented. Mainly diurnal, but often active at night, & mainly terrestrial. Ovoviviparous w/ 21 young/ litter reported for a captured female. Prey on available small mammals (sometimes also lizards &/or other snakes).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, but may have some tissue-necrotic factor(s). Bites often locally painful, may progress to swelling & necrosis if severely envenomated.

Crotalus spp.

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Aploaspis, Aechmophrys, Caudisona, Crotalinus, Crotalophorus, Crotalurus, Haploaspis, Paracrotalus, Urocrotalon, Uropsophus [Note: This genus includes at least 30 currently named spp., & is most diverse on the Mexican plateau & surrounding mountains.]

Common Names: Rattlesnakes, pitvipers ("new world"), vipers

Description

Small to large, mainly terrestrial, fairly stout-bodied pitvipers, w/ multiple hollow "scales" (at least 1) at the tail tip, usually retained through molting & "rattle" if tail is shaken. Body color may be brown, gray, green, red, pink or yellow, usually w/ dorsal pattern of darker rhombs, blotches or spots (varies by spp.), & belly lighter w/ darker spots or blotches, tail usually w/ multiple alternate dark & light rings (blend well w/ usual surroundings), w/ 2 folding, upper front fangs.

Habitat

Found in a wide range of habitats (varies by spp.), but most are found in brushy edges of open areas of forests or margins of dry, or seasonally dry (often desert), & often rocky areas. Found from below sea level to 4,500+ m elevation (varies w/ spp., see individual spp. listed).

Activity and Behavior

Most spp. mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal, but varies w/ physical conditions of typical habitat (esp. temperatures), & sometimes w/ season of the year. Most spp. wait in typical sites to ambush prey (usually small mammals, lizards etc.; & varies by spp.). All are ovoviviparous, litter numbers vary w/ spp. & female's body size.

Venom Characteristics

Most spp. have mainly hemotoxic venom, often w/ additional tissue-necrotic factors (& sometimes neurotoxic or cardiotoxic factors). Many species can & do cause serious human envenomations & deaths each year (varies by individual spp.).

Crotalus stejnegeri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus tigris*

Common Names: Long-tailed rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Relatively small, fairly slender rattlesnake, adults usually <60 cm long (max. 72 cm); disproportionately long, slender tail & a tiny rattle. Usually pale gray brown to light brown, w/ 32-43 dorsal dark blotches usually highly irregular in shape & not diamond-shaped, 23-29 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly white w/ irregular roundish, gray or brown blotches along the sides, tongue black w/ white tip.



Habitat

Found most commonly in ecotone between tropical deciduous & pine-oak forest at 500-1,200 m elevation, limited to western Mexico (Sierra Madre Occidental of western Durango, southern Sinaloa).

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal; sometimes found moving about at dusk or dawn. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, this species will usually coil w/ its head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, will strike. Ovoviviparous (litter size not reported, but probably <10 young/ litter). Preys mainly on locally available lizards, small mammals & arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent tissue-necrotic factors. May be very painful at a bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic symptoms if significant envenomation occurred. Human fatalities have been reported (rarely), but not well documented, so far.

Crotalus tigris

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus tigris tigris*

Common Names: Tiger rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel, Tiger-Klapperschlange

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied rattlesnake, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 88.5 cm), w/ ill-defined postorbital stripe & 21-27 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually gray, lavender, blue-gray, pink or buff; shading to pink, pale orange or cream on sides; w/ 35-52 darker (usually brownish) crossbars that are broadest dorsally, narrowing laterally. Belly straw-colored, yellow or pink & mottled w/ gray or brown. Tail w/ 4-10 indistinct dark brown crossbands.



Habitat

Found mainly in Sonoran desert & low-shrub grassland from near sea level to 1,465+ m elevation; found almost exclusively in rugged, rocky country. Limited to southern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, & northwestern Sonora, Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal, but active any time of day. Avoids prolonged exposure to direct sunlight during hot periods; especially active after summer rains. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, this species will usually coil w/ its head & neck thrown back in a horizontal "S-shaped" loop, & will strike if further provoked. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-6 young/ litter observed for captured females. Mainly preys on available lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ potent tissue-necrotic factors; venom also has pre-synaptic neurotoxins. However, average venom yield is low, & bites usually are not life-threatening for humans. Bites usually are painful locally, & there may be progressive swelling & necrosis, if significant envenomation occurred.

Crotalus tortugensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus atrox tortugensis*

Common Names: Tortuga Island diamond rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout rattlesnake, adults usually 80-90 cm long (max. 105 cm), w/ dark postorbital stripe bordered below by a pale stripe, & 25-27 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body gray to gray-brown (may have purplish or pink tinge), w/ 32-41 dorsal dark brownish diamond-like blotches. Belly paler w/ irregular gray-brown speckling, heavy toward tail. Tail w/ 3-7 black rings (alternating w/ ash-white). Overall appearance very similar to that of *C. atrox*, but w/ proportionally smaller head.



Habitat

Found mainly in desert conditions; w/ rocky, barren terrain w/ sparse brush & cacti. Limited to the Isla Tortuga off the east coast of Baja California Sur in the Gulf of California, Mexico. Also is the only rattlesnake reported from that island.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal, but also active at night. Reportedly quick to assume a defensive posture & rattle, if threatened. If there is no ready escape route, it will usually coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, will strike. Ovoviviparous (litter size not reported, but probably <10 young/ litter). Preys mainly on available lizards, small mammals, (rarely, ground-nesting birds &/or arthropods).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic, but may also have tissue-necrotic factors. Bites of humans very rare, no serious envenomations or fatalities reported as caused by bites of this species. Effects of envenomation would probably be similar to those caused by other rattlesnakes, if envenomation occurred. For generalized envenomation effects of a closely-related species, [See *Crotalus atrox*](#).

Crotalus totonacus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus basiliscus totonacus*, *C. durissus neoleonensis*, *C. d. totonacus*

Common Names: Totonacan rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Medium to large-sized, stout rattlesnake, adults usually 140-150 cm long (max. 167+ cm). Body usually yellowish-brown, straw-yellow, olive-brown or pale gray-brown; patterned by black or dark-brown dorsal blotches, sub-hexagonal to diamond shaped, & bordered by white, cream or yellow lines; 25 midbody dorsal scale rows, vertebral row of dorsal scales strongly keeled, belly cream or yellow w/ darker clumps of pigment laterally.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland tropical thorn forest & tropical deciduous forest, in some areas ranging up into pine-oak forest & lower cloud forest, in northeastern Mexico (Neuva Leon, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro), from sea level up to 1,680 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal, but sometimes active in daytime (depending on temperatures & other local conditions). Will avoid humans if possible, but will defend itself if cornered or molested.

Ovoviviparous, but litter size not reported. Preys mainly on available small mammals (rats & squirrels), & very rarely, on lizards or arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ some tissue-necrotic factors. Very few bites (& no fatalities, so far) of humans reported. For details about envenomation effects of a closely-related species, [See *Crotalus atrox*](#).

Crotalus transversus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus triseriatus anahuacus*

Common Names: Cross-banded mountain rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small, fairly stout rattlesnake, adults usually only 30-40 cm long (max. 46 cm) w/ 21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually either brownish-gray or orangish; w/ 37-43 narrow, dark-brown to black transverse dorsal bars that do not extend very far laterally (5-9 more such bars on tail). Belly pale w/ scattered dark mottling (sometimes almost all black). Basal rattle segment usually the same color as body background.



Habitat

Found mainly on steep volcanic slopes dominated by open pine & bunchgrass; at 3,000-3,710 m elevation. Limited to central southern Mexico south of Mexico City (Distrito Federal & northwestern Morelos).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal; temperament variable. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, will usually coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked,

will strike. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-6 young/ litter reported for captured females. Preys mainly on available lizards (predominantly just certain species) & sometimes small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most rattlesnake venoms are mainly hemotoxic; but may also have potent tissue-necrotic factors. Bites may be very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic swelling & necrotic symptoms if envenomation occurred.

Crotalus triseriatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona lugubris*, *C. triseriata*, *Crotalus lugubris*, *C. pallidus*, *C. polystictus* (in part), *C. triseriatus anahuacus*, *C. t. aquilus*, *C. t. armstrongi*, *C. t. quadrangularis*, *C. t. triseriatus*, *Uropsophus triseriatus*

Common Names: Mexican dusky rattlesnake, central plateau dusky rattlesnake, Queretaran dusky rattlesnake, chiauhcotl, chiauitl, colcoatl, chilladora, hocico de puerco, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small, fairly stout rattlesnake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 68 cm), postorbital dark stripe, 21-25 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows. Body colors extremely variable, from pale gray to reddish-brown; dorsal body pattern usually w/ 30-57 irregular dark-brown mid-dorsal blotches & a row of similar smaller dark blotches along each side. Markings often obscured in darker or older individuals.



Habitat

Found most commonly in pine-oak forest, boreal forest, & mesquite grassland at 1,500-4,300 m elevation, limited to central & western highlands of the trans-volcanic range in southern Mexico. Highest ranging (in elevation) rattlesnake in the Americas.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal, may be active at night at elevations below 2,500 m. Temperament unclear. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, it will often coil w/ its head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further molested, will strike. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-6 young/ litter observed for captured females. Preys mainly on available lizards, small mammals, amphibians, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Reportedly has a small average yield of venom w/ low toxicity. Mainly hemotoxic; may also have tissue-necrotic factors. Bites may be very painful at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local & systemic swelling & necrosis if significant envenomation occurred.

Crotalus viridis

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Identification

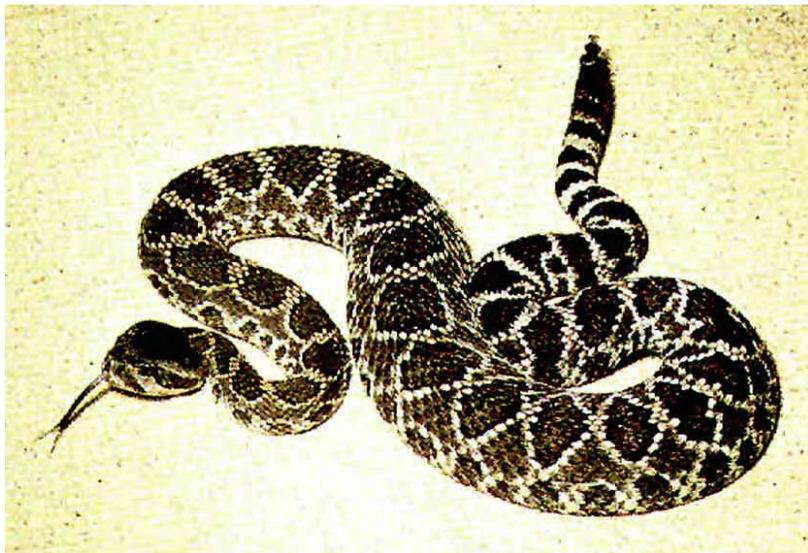
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisona confluenta*, *C. c. confluenta*, *C. c. lecontei*, *Crotalus confluentus*, *C. c. confluentus*, *C. c. lecontei*. *C. c. lucifer*, *C. c. nuntius*, *C. c. pulverulentus*, *C. oregonus cerberus* (in part), *C. concolor* (in part), *C. viridis caliginus*, *C. v. lutosus* (in part), *C. v. nuntius*, *C. v. viridis*

Common Names: Prairie rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied rattlesnake, adults on mainland usually 100-130 cm long (max. 151 cm); island populations usually <70 cm long; Head w/ 2 thin white lateral lines, upper one extends through the eye, or from the eye rearward. Body variable: pale tan, dark brown, pinkish or greenish; w/ 33-57 dark brown mid-dorsal blotches (lighter in center) & smaller lateral blotches . Belly nearly all whitish to pale gray. Closely-related to, & looks very much like, *C. oreganus*.



Habitat

Found in widely variable habitats, mainly in mesquite & brush covered grasslands & deserts; also pine-oak forest. Often found in brush-covered rocky canyons, rocky crevices, & sandy fields along the coast. May shelter in vegetation clumps & animal burrows. Often found near human habitations. Found up to 2,500 m elevation. Found in southern Canada, over much of the Great Plains of the U.S. & into northern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, may be active during the day in cool weather or at higher elevations. If threatened, & w/ no ready escape route, will usually coil w/ head & neck thrown back in S-shaped loop, & may strike if further molested. Ovoviviparous w/ 3-21 young/ litter reported for captured females. Prey mainly on available toads, lizards, & small mammals (may sometimes be cannibalistic).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ potent necrotic (tissue destroying) factors; reportedly also has pre-synaptically acting neurotoxins. Envenomation symptoms usually include intense pain at the bite site w/ rapid progression of local swelling, discoloration & tissue necrosis; may also cause nausea, disorientation & cardiac or respiratory problems. Human deaths have been reportedly caused by envenomation by this species.

Crotalus willardi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus willardi amabilis*, *C. w. meridionalis*, *C. w. obscurus*, *C. w. silus*, *C. w. willardi*

Common Names: Ridge-nosed rattlesnake, Arizona ridge-nosed rattlesnake, New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnake, Willard's rattlesnake, vibora de cascabel, Willard-Klapperschlange

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied rattlesnake, adults usually 45-55 cm long (max. 67 cm). Snout w/ a distinct ridge; head usually dark above w/ 2 prominent lateral white lines, the upper passing below the eye, the lower at the jawline. Colors highly variable; reddish-brown, rust, yellow-brown, gray-brown or gray; w/ 18-45 dark brown dorsal blotches, belly pinkish, reddish or orangish w/ irregular black markings (darker toward tail), basal rattle segment dark brown; w/ 25-29 midbody dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in pine-oak woodlands, oak scrub, & open grassy meadows within pine-oak forest; most abundant in humid canyon bottoms & less exposed slopes. Found at 1,460-2,750 m elevation. Limited to southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico & the Sierra Madre Occidental range in northwestern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal. Reportedly has a mild temperament, but if molested, & w/ no ready escape route, will usually coil w/ head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked, strike. Ovoviviparous w/ 2-9 (usually 4-6) young/ litter observed for captured females. Prey mainly on available lizards (esp. as juveniles) & small mammals (esp. as adults).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom apparently only mildly toxic, mainly hemotoxic, but may also have necrotic factors. Bites may be locally painful w/ local or progressive swelling & some necrosis if significant envenomation occurred. No well documented cases of serious human envenomation or fatalities due to bites by this species, so far.

Daboia russelii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Coluber russellii*, *Daboia russellii formosensis*, *D. r. limitis*, *D. r. russellii*, *D. r. siamensis*, *Vipera russelli*, *V. r. limitis*, *V. r. russelli*, *V. r. siamensis*

Common Names: Russel's viper, tic polonga, Kettenviper

Description

Terrestrial, medium-to-large, stout viper, adults usually 100-150 cm long (max. 160+ cm); body orange, pink or gray, w/ 3 longitudinal rows of large, dark-edged spots, often interspersed by 2 additional rows of smaller but similar markings, 27-33 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly yellowish-white, often w/ dark brown markings, scales strongly keeled, head triangular & distinct from body.





Habitat

Found mainly in fairly open dry woodlands & grassy hills, sometimes in the margins of fields or paths, up to 2,000 m elevation. Found from Pakistan eastward through southern China & southward through Indonesia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, mainly nocturnal; when threatened, produces a very loud drawn-out hissing sound. Bears live young, up to 60 per litter, each 24-30 cm long. Preys mainly on available small mammals, especially rodents (also on birds, & sometimes on lizards).

Venom Characteristics

Responsible for >1/2 of all reported venomous snake bites in southern Asia. Potent mainly hemotoxic venom, known to cause numerous serious human envenomations & fatalities each year.

Deinagkistrodon acutus

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Identification

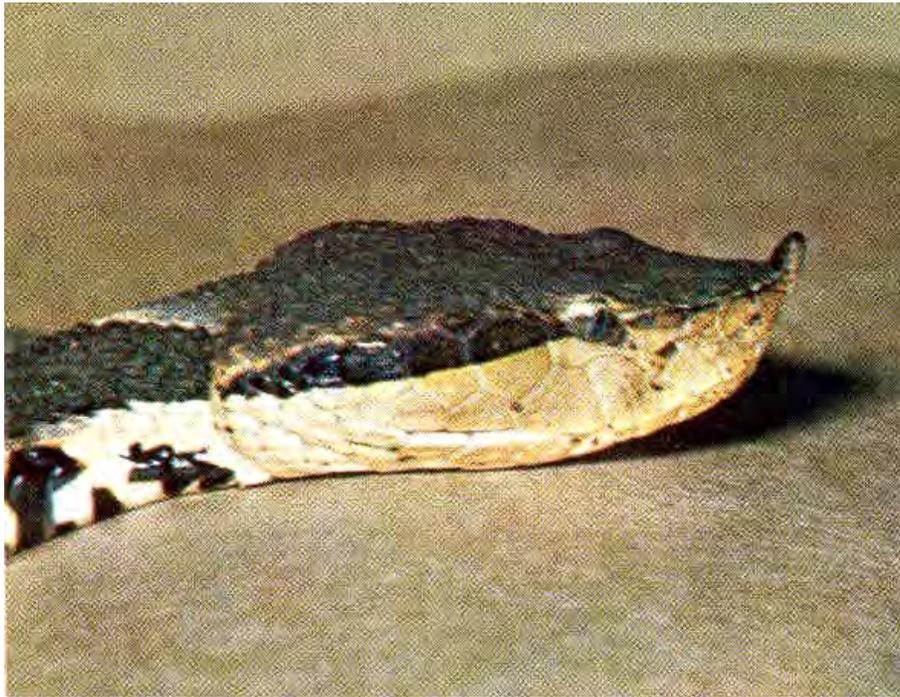
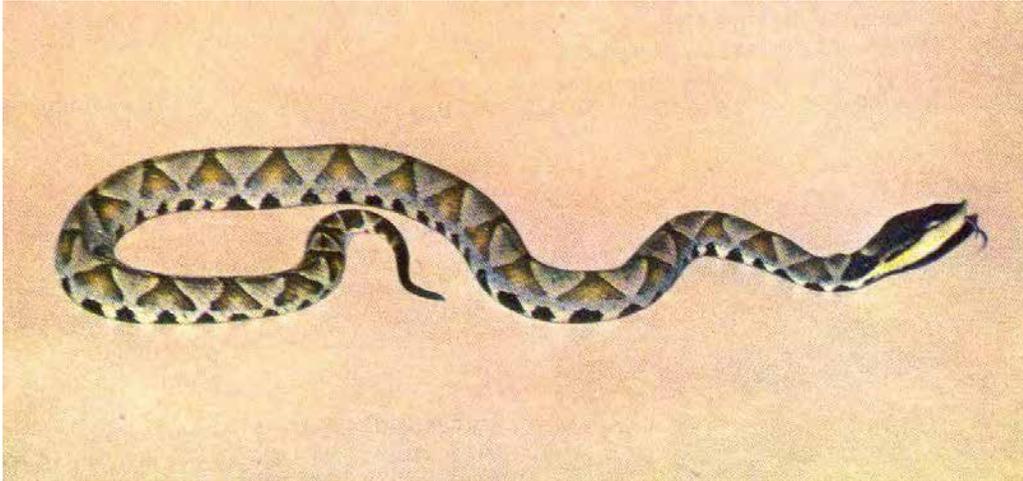
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Agkistrodon acutus, Halys acutus

Common Names: Chinese moccasin, Sharp-nosed pit viper, Hundred pacer, Snorkel viper, Chinesischer Kupferkopf, Chinesischer Nasenotter

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied pitviper, adults usually 0.8-1.0 m long (max. 1.5 m). Usually light brown or grayish-brown w/ a series of dark brown triangles along each side. Pointed tops of 2 opposite triangles join mid-dorsally, creating an effect of alternating triangles of different colors. Head dark brown w/ beige or pinkish sides, w/ upturned, pointed snout & dark brown postorbital stripe running back from each eye to the side of the head. Hatchlings lighter w/ vivid patterns.





Habitat

Found mainly on forested low mountain slopes or rock hills w/ small valleys, but also found in forested mountains up to 1,400 m elevation & low coastal areas at 100 m elevation. During day, may be seen on rocks or in vegetation along streams. Found in eastern, central & southern China, southern Taiwan, northern Vietnam & Laos.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, & most active at night or in evening but sometimes basks in the sun on exposed rocks or logs. Appears sluggish in fields, but strikes & bites vigorously when aroused. Remains coiled ready to strike at any time. Especially during fall season, hunts for rodents in or near paddies, in gardens, along roadsides, or in houses.

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxin; strongly hemorrhagic. Envenomation symptoms include severe local pain & bleeding, which may begin almost immediately, followed by serious swelling, blistering, necrosis, & ulceration. Systemic symptoms may occur early & suddenly, & often include heart palpitations. Human fatalities have been reported.

Demansia olivacea

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Diemenia angusticeps, D. ornaticeps, Demansia olivacea calodera (in part), D. o. rufescens (in part), D. ornaticeps, Elapocephalus ornaticeps, Lycodon olivaceus

Common Names: Olive whipsnake, marble-headed whipsnake

Description

Long, thin, cylindrical body, w/ narrow head, rather large eyes, set well forward on sides of head, w/ round pupils, smooth scales, a pair of fixed upper front fangs; adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. about 110 cm); body dark to light olive color, w/ reticulated dorsal pattern similar to that of D. psammophis, but less distinct; tail often w/ a reddish tinge.

Habitat

Usually found in savannah, savannah forest, open woodlands, & sometimes cultivated areas, & edges of paths or roads. Limited to Australia (Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland).

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly diurnal & terrestrial, very alert & active, fast moving, often seen but difficult to catch. Can defend itself aggressively if cornered, & may raise front of body, threaten & bite (quickly & repeatedly). Mainly eats lizards, frogs & occasionally small mammals. Oviparous, females reportedly lay about 10 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly neurotoxic w/ mildly coagulant factors, may cause locally painful bite w/ limited swelling & numbness for extended period. Not reported to have caused any human fatalities, so far. Apparently reluctant to bite, but could be dangerous to humans.

Demansia papuensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Diemenia papuensis, D. psommophis (in part), Demansia olivacea papuensis, D. papuensis melaena, D. p. papuensis

Common Names: Greater black whip snake, Papuan whip snake

Description

Long, slender, cylindrical snake w/ rather short head, a long, whip-like tail; eyes relatively large, set forward on sides of its head, w/ round pupils; adults usually 70-120 cm long (max. 170+ cm); body black to dark-brown, w/ smooth, shiny scales, tail sometimes dark reddish color; two fixed upper front fangs.



Habitat

Found mainly in savannah & savannah woodlands, sometimes in cultivated areas or along paths or roads. Despite its scientific & common names, this species is limited to northern & northeastern Australia only.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Very alert, active, fast-moving; often seen but hard to capture, when cornered, may aggressively defend itself & bite readily. Eat mainly lizards, frogs, & sometimes rodents. Oviparous, females have been reported to have laid 3-12 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, may include hemotoxic (coagulant) factors. Bites can be very painful for extended periods (e.g., 20+ min.) & may include local swelling & numbness of a bitten digit or limb. Not reported to have caused any human fatalities.

Demansia psammophis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Demnsia psammophis cupreiceps, D. p. psammophis, D. p. reticulata, Diemenia psammophis, Elaps psammophis, Lycodon reticulatus, Pseudelaps psammophidius, Trachylepis psammophis

Common Names: Yellow-faced whipsnake, yellow-faced whip snake,

Description

Medium-sized, long, thin, cylindrical body, w/ a pair of fixed upper front fangs, narrow head, large eyes, set well forward; smooth scales are light-yellowish colored, & appear to each be outlined in black or dark brown; body may be olive or reddish, tail almost solid reddish, dark circle around each eye, which extends backward as a stripe to the angle of the jaw.



Habitat

Usually found in savannah, savannah forest, or open edges of woods or along trails. Found in every state in Australia & from Dirk Hartog Island, south of Harvey, Western Australia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & mainly terrestrial; very fast, viviparous, may lay 4-13 eggs/ individual clutch, sometimes multiple females will lay clutches together in a "communal" nest (one such w/ >600 egg reported). Often seen but hard to catch. May defend itself aggressively if cornered.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mildly coagulant factors, may cause a painful bite & sometimes localized numbing of a hand or limb. Apparently reluctant to bite but potentially dangerous to humans. No human fatalities reported to have been due to envenomation by this species, so far.

Demansia spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Currently 11 or 12 species in this genus, but only 4 species (listed individually, separately, in this data base) are often encountered by humans. [Image w/ this entry shows *D. torquata* - not otherwise addressed in this database.]

Common Names: Australian, or Asian, whip snakes

Description

Very long slender snakes w/ relatively short heads & long, whip-like tails; eyes large, set far forward on head, w/ round pupils. Adults of most species 60-100 cm long (max. 120 cm). Background color usually uniformly glossy green-black to olive or dark reddish; most are plain dark-colored or have a reticulated dorsal pattern; smooth, shiny scales, w/ 2 fixed upper front fangs.



Habitat

Primarily found in savannah & open savannah woodlands; several species may be found in cultivated areas or near trails/ roads. All are mainly limited to Australia or New Guinea, or both (plus certain nearby islands).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & terrestrial. Very active & nervous; fast-moving; feed mainly on lizards & frogs, sometimes on rodents. Reportedly usually secretive & evasive, but may act aggressive & bite quickly if provoked. Oviparous, females of most species lay 4-12 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic; possibly w/ hemotoxic factor(s). Bites may result in severe local pain & swelling persisting for a week or more. No specific antivenom currently produced, but Tiger Snake antivenom reportedly may be effective. Not reported to cause human fatalities, so far.

Demansia vestigiata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Demansia atra* (in part), *D. maculiceps*, *D. superba*, *Hoplocephalus vestigiatus*

Common Names: Lesser black whip snake

Description

Small to medium-sized, w/ long, thin, cylindrical body, smooth, shiny scales, a pair of fixed upper front fangs, very prominent eyes set forward on the sides of their head, mainly dark brownish to black dorsally, adults usually 120-170 cm long. Tail whip-like & often dull reddish-brown to reddish colored.



Habitat

Found mainly in savannah, savannah forest, along paths/ roads, & sometimes in cultivated land, in northern & eastern Australia & southern New Guinea. This is apparently the most common, & one of the 2 most widely distributed, species in this genus.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & diurnal, very fast-moving, prey mainly on lizards, & possibly also frogs. Often seen, but very hard to capture, if cornered, may confront the threat & may sometimes aggressively defend itself. Oviparous, lays clutches of about 12 eggs each.

Venom Characteristics

Reportedly has relatively mild venom, mainly neurotoxic w/ one or more coagulant factors, can inflict a painful bite on humans & possibly cause a numbing effect which involves a whole limb (e.g., arm). Apparently reluctant to bite, but could be dangerous to humans.

Dendroaspis angusticeps

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Dendroaspis sjostedti*, *Naja angusticeps*

Common Names: Eastern green mamba, green mamba, Blattgrüne Mamba, Gewöhnliche Mamba

Description

Large, relatively slender, arboreal Elapid, adults usually 1.5-2.0 m long (max. 2.5 m), w/ narrow, coffin-shaped head. Body uniformly bright green on back w/ yellowish-green belly; & 17-19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Smooth, narrow scales, small eyes, round pupils, interior of mouth white. Young (<60 cm long) often bluish-green (vs. grayish for young boomslangs).



Habitat

Mainly found in coastal bush, evergreen coastal forests, bamboo thickets &, where these have been destroyed, found in tea & mango plantations.

Activity and Behavior

Active, mainly arboreal & diurnal (active at dusk & dawn, too); seldom ventures to ground. Shy & rarely seen. Relatively nonaggressive; when cornered, will threaten & bite, but usually only as a last resort. Oviparous (up to 17 eggs/ clutch), & mainly eat available small mammals, birds & bats (& maybe lizards).

Venom Characteristics

Venom contains potent neurotoxins. This species is common throughout its range, but bites of humans are rare. Deaths of humans have been reported, but are uncommon. Seriously envenomated humans may need ventilation support in addition to aggressive antivenom therapy.

Dendroaspis jamesoni

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Dendroaspis angusticeps, D. jamesoni, D. jamesonii, D. neglectus, D. welwitschii, Dendroaspis jamesoni jamesoni, D. j. kaimosae, Dinophis fasciolatus, Elaps jamesoni

Common Names: Jameson's mamba, Jameson-Mamba

Description

Large, slender, w/ narrow head, smooth, narrow scales, adults usually 1.5-2.2 m long (max. 2.5 m); usually dull-green above, pale-green below; scales narrowly edged w/ black; w/ 15-17 midbody dorsal scale rows. Overall color becomes darker toward tail. Long thin tail all black (or w/ "netlike" yellow & black pattern in some populations). Eyes rather small (vs. large eyes in boomslangs).

Habitat

Tropical rain forest regions, woodlands, & sometimes isolated patches of thick vegetation w/ one or more trees. Found throughout equatorial tropical forest belt of central & western Africa, from Kenya to Ghana & south to Angola & Burundi.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal & mainly diurnal, very active & agile, but sometimes descend to the ground. If cornered, it spreads a hood or inflates its throat. Seldom aggressive, but will defend itself if cornered or persistently molested. Oviparous (clutch size not reported) & mainly eats available rodents &/or birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied. Mainly contains very potent neurotoxins, may also contain some hemotoxic or myotoxic factors. This species is common throughout its range, but bites of humans are rare. Human fatalities have been reported, & seriously envenomated humans may need ventilation support in addition to antivenom therapy.

Dendroaspis polylepis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Dendroaspis angusticeps*, *D. polylepis*, *Dendroaspis polylepis antinori*, *D. p. antinorii*, *D. p. polylepis*

Common Names: Black mamba

Description

Large, active, slender, semi-arboreal, adults usually 2.2-2.7 m long (max. 3.5 m). May be brown, olive brown, dark olive, greenish brown or dark blackish gray; w/ long, narrow head & 23-25 (rarely 21) midbody dorsal scale rows, scales smooth (may have purplish "bloom"). Belly cream, ivory or pale green. Mouth blue-gray to blackish inside. Has a pair of fixed upper front fangs.





Habitat

Found most commonly (rather wide-spread) in well-wooded low-lying savannahs of southern & eastern Africa, especially in area of rocky outcroppings, but not in true grassland, rain forest, or desert. Also frequents abandoned termite mounds, mammal burrows, & even thatched roofs; usually found at <1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & mainly terrestrial, but also climbs trees rapidly & agilely in search of prey or shelter. Usually shy & elusive; moves off rapidly at first sign of danger. If cornered, may raise forepart of body from ground & spread narrow hood. If intruder persists, it can strike a long way out & up. Extremely fast, largest poisonous snake in Africa. Oviparous, 6-17 eggs/ clutch, eats various prey, mainly small mammals, birds, & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Most dreaded African venomous snake; few people survive its bite unless antivenom administered promptly. Vemon very potent neurotoxin & cardiotoxin, death usually due to respiratory failure. Can deliver a large amount (10 times estimated human LD50) in 1 bite. Envenomations w/ symptoms showing within 1 hour are serious. Usually starts w/ tightening of chest & throat muscles, then gradual paralysis of facial muscles.

Dendroaspis viridis

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Identification

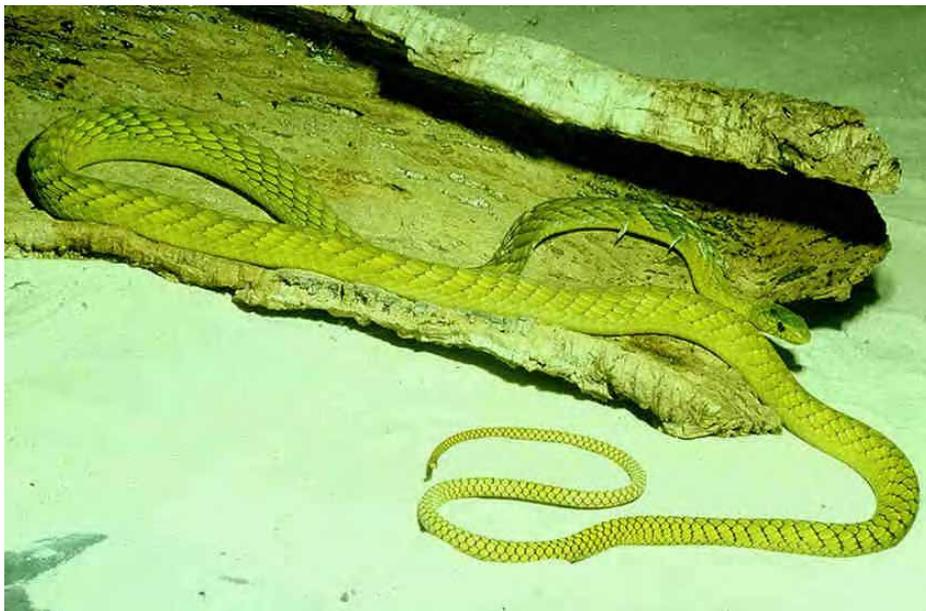
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Leptophis viridis*

Common Names: West African green mamba, Western green mamba, Grune Mamba

Description

Long, thin, quick-moving alert, green & black tree snake w/ narrow head. Adults usually 1.4-2.1 m long (max. 2.3+ m). Usually medium-green to yellowish-green; scales usually edged w/ black (especially on head). Smooth dorsal scales relatively very large, in 13 midbody rows, & long thin tail w/ yellow scales edged w/ black. Fixed upper front fangs. Belly pale green.



Habitat

Found mainly in coastal rain forests &, sometimes, isolated patches of thick vegetation w/ 1 or more trees. Limited to sub-Saharan western Africa, from Nigeria westward to Guinea.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & mainly arboreal, but quite often descends to ground if disturbed. Reportedly fairly common throughout its range, but shy & seldom seen. If cornered, may (only very rarely) spread a small hood or inflate its throat. Oviparous (clutch size unknown) & eats mainly available small mammals (e.g., squirrels), birds, & bats.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily neurotoxic, but not much known. Potentially dangerous, but bites of humans rare. A few reported envenomations & human deaths due to bites by this species had symptoms very similar to those caused by Black Mamba venom.

Dispholidus typus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Bucephalus capensis*, *B. typus*, *Dispholidus typus kivuenis*, *D. t. punctatus*, *D. t. typus*

Common Names: Boomslang, Grune Boomslang

Description

Large, rather slender, rear-fanged tree-snake, adults usually 1.2-1.5 m long (max. 2+ m). May be black to drab olive-brown, to almost all green; no blotches or distinct spots, juveniles change color (becoming darker & duller) as they become adults. Sexes often different colored. Short stubby head & enormous emerald-green eyes. Scales strongly keeled & overlapping, look like they are in 17-21 diagonal (angled) midbody dorsal rows.





Habitat

Most common in most kinds of wooded habitats; dry woodlands, thorn scrub, savannahs, & swamps bordering or close to streams, rivers, & lakes. Found throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa except continuous rain forests of the Congo basin or true deserts. Reported from

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal, strongly arboreal, spends most of time in trees & shrubs. Notably nonaggressive & shy; quickly retreats if surprised. If cornered, inflates neck to more than twice usual size showing bright yellow or orangish skin beneath. Oviparous, usually lay up to 25 eggs in moist rotting logs on the ground. Prey mainly on tree lizards, birds & eggs, & sometimes arboreal rodents & bats. Do not attempt to constrict prey.

Venom Characteristics

Very potently hemotoxic; can cause severe bleeding internally, within critical organs, & from mucous membranes. Human deaths reported in as short as 3-5 days.

Echis carinatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis carinata*, *Echis carinatus*, *E. c. astolae*, *E. c. astoles*, *E. c. carinatus*, *E. c. multisquamatus*, *E. c. sochureki*, *E. multisquamatus*, *E. sochureki*, *Pseudoboa carinata*

Common Names: Saw-scaled viper, carpet viper, African carpet viper, Egyptian saw-scaled viper, Indian saw-scaled viper, phoorsa, Sandrasselotter, Sochurek's saw-scaled viper, Central Asian saw-scaled viper

Description

Small, rather stout, flat, sand viper, adults avg. 20-30 cm long (max. 80 cm); body grayish, greenish, or yellowish brown; belly white speckled w/ brown or black. Moveable front fangs. Series of middorsal white cross-bars edged w/ black & whitish zigzag along each side. Distinctive cruciform white mark on top of head (differs for each recognized subspecies).



Habitat

Found mainly in open, dry or semi-desert areas, dry savannahs, or even forest edges. Found under small thorny plants, leaf litter, rocks, & in dry scrub jungle. Mainly found in semi-arid regions of southern Asia, India, & Astola Island off the Pakistan coast. Despite some of its common names, it does not occur in Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal in hot weather; often diurnal in cool weather. Mainly terrestrial (semi-fossorial; buries itself in sand) but climbs up to 2 m into bushes. When alarmed, throws itself into double coil like a figure-8 & rubs sides of body together, producing violent rustling sounds. Very nervous; quick to strike at slightest provocation. Reportedly oviparous w/ usually 4-20 eggs/ clutch. Main preys on lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Fangs rather large compared to size of snake. Common cause of snake bites in its range. Local symptoms generally include pain, swelling, & enlarged tender lymph glands. After 10-12 hours, some victims begin to bleed from gums & later develop deep-organ or cerebral bleeding (sometimes fatal).

Echis carinatus multisquamatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis multisquamatus*

Common Names: Central Asian saw-scaled viper

Description

Small, fairly stout, flat, sand viper, adults usually 40-60 cm long (max. 85 cm). Body usually grayish, greenish, or yellowish-brown; belly white, speckled w/ brown or black. Well-defined pale, continuous, undulating line along flanks. Distinctive cruciform white marking on top of head.

Habitat

Mainly found in open scrubby, dry, sandy, & rocky areas.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal in hot weather; sometimes diurnal in cool weather. When alarmed, throws itself into double coil somewhat like a "figure 8" & rubs sides of body together, making a violent rustling sound. Very nervous; quick to strike at slightest provocation. Probably oviparous, & probably preys on available small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Little known about venom. Characteristics likely similar to other *Echis* spp. Probably mainly hemotoxic. Fangs relatively large compared to size of snake. Local symptoms include pain, swelling, & enlarged tender lymph glands. Serious envenomation can cause bleeding in places distant from bite site or in deep

organs or the brain. Human fatalities have been recorded.

Echis carinatus sochureki

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis carinata* (in part), *Echis carinatus* (in part), *Echis sochureki*

Common Names: Sochurek's saw-scaled viper, Sochurek's (or Sind) sand viper, carpet viper, Indian saw-scaled viper, phoorsa, Asian saw-scaled viper, Sandrasselotter

Description

Small to medium-sized stout, flat sand viper, adults usually 40-75 cm long (max 85+ cm), w/ a pair of upper front fangs, rather large for its body size. Body grayish, yellowish-brown (rarely greenish) above, belly white, may be speckled w/ brown or black. Has well-defined continuous, pale, undulating line along flanks & distinctive cruciform white marking on top of head.



Echis carinatus sochureki

Habitat

Found mainly in dry or semi-desert opensites, usually on sandy & rocky soils. Often found in margins of oases or edges of dry forests or scrubby thorny bushes. Limited to semi-arid & arid regions of southern Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan & western India.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial (may climb >1 m up into bushes) & nocturnal (often diurnal in cool weather or season). If alarmed, throws its body into double coil (figure-8) & rubs sides together, making violent rasping or rustling sound. Nervous, quick to strike w/ slight provocation. Regional medical experts report it is often very aggressive. Oviparous w/ <20 eggs/ clutch. Mainly eats available lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ possible cytotoxic factors. Very often envenomates humans within its range, & causes many human deaths annually. No effective specific antivenom against it currently available.

Symptoms 10-12 hrs. after bite may include: local pain at bite site, lymph glands swollen & tender, bleeding from gums, deep organs, & sometimes in the brain (this is often fatal).

Echis coloratus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis colorata*, *Echis coloratus coloratus*, *E. c. terraesanctae*, *E. froenatus*

Common Names: Burton's carpet viper, Palestine saw-scaled viper, adder, Egyptian viper, saw-scaled viper, ep'eh (in Hebrew), Arabische Sandrasselotter

Description

Small, moderately stout, pale sand viper, adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. 80 cm); body usually yellowish-gray, light brownish-gray, or pale blue-gray, w/ gray to tan, bright reddish or pinkish, dark-edged dorsal blotches, 31-37 midbody dorsal scale rows, movable front fangs, keeled scales; belly white, grayish white or pale pinkish-white w/ brown or black speckles. Often w/ dark spots on flanks, dark postorbital stripe.



Habitat

Can exist in extreme desert conditions, often in dry rocky wadis, but prefers firm, rocky ground & usually avoids loose sand. Found from sea level up to 2,500 m elevation. Several widely disjunct populations, but mainly limited to eastern Egypt, Sinai peninsula, Israel, Jordan & southeastern Arabian peninsula, possibly also in southwestern Qatar.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, nocturnal in hot weather; may be active at dusk, may be diurnal in cool weather. Often most active after rains or on humid nights. Often basks during early morning in bushes >2 m above ground. Basks in the open when cooler. When alarmed, throws body into C-shaped coils & rubs scales together making violent rustling sounds. Less irritable than *E. carinatus*, but aggressively defends itself if molested. Main prey are lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Important cause of snakebite accidents & fatalities throughout its range; venom highly toxic to man. Venom primarily hemotoxic; internal & external hemorrhages common. Envenomation usually causes pain & swelling at bite site.

Echis leucogaster

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis arenicola*, *E. a. leucogaster*, *Echis carinatus leucogaster*, *Echis jogeri*

Common Names: White-bellied carpet viper, Roman's saw-scaled viper

Description

Small, fairly stout, sand viper, adults usually 30-70 cm long (max. 87 cm); color variable, usually brown, gray, or reddish; may have a dorsal series of oblique pale crossbars, interspersed w/ dark spaces, keeled scales, moveable front fangs, 27-33 midbody dorsal scale rows. Usually has row of triangular or circular markings along flanks. Belly pale cream, white, or ivory w/ no markings.



Habitat

Found mainly in arid savanna, semi-desert, & well-vegetated wadis. Not in true desert, but occurs on desert's edge, oases, & elevated vegetated areas within deserts. Mainly limited to arid areas of western Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, but climbs into low bushes to avoid hot or wet surfaces. Can move quickly; most active during first few hours of darkness. Hides in holes, under logs, rocks, & brush piles during daytime. When disturbed, forms C-shaped coils & rubs scales together vigorously, making a loud rustling sound. Mainly eats available lizards & small mammals, but also scorpions & centipedes. Oviparous, clutch size not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably potent & mainly hemotoxic. Symptomatology likely similar to that of other African carpet vipers including local swelling, incoagulable blood, systemic bleeding, & possibly death.

Echis ocellatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis carinatus ocellatus*, *E. c. pyramidum*

Common Names: West African carpet viper

Description

Small, stout-bodied carpet viper, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. 65 cm). Body usually brown or gray or shades in between, w/ heavily-keeled scales in 27-34 midbody dorsal rows. Usually one of 2 different conspicuous dorsal patterns: a series of dark irregular crossbars on lighter background or a series of pale saddles w/ darker interspaces, belly lighter.



Habitat

Mainly found in Savanna, well-wooded areas, & edges of forests. Limited to western Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, occasionally climbs into low bushes to avoid hot or wet surfaces. Moves rather quickly. Mainly nocturnal; most active during first few hours of darkness. Hides in holes, under logs, rocks, & brush piles during daytime. Not aggressive unless disturbed. Oviparous w/ usually 6-20 eggs/ clutch. Eats varied prey, including available small mammals, birds, arthropods, lizards, amphibians, & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Important cause of snakebite accidents & fatalities almost everywhere it is found; venom highly toxic to man. Venom primarily hemotoxic; internal & external hemorrhages common. Envenomation usually causes pain & swelling at bite site.

Echis omanensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis carinatus pyrimidum* (in part), *Echis colorata*, *E. coloratus*, *E. ferox*

Common Names: Oman saw-scaled viper, Oman-Sanrasselotter

Description

For description of the most closely-related species to this one, [See *Echis coloratus*](#). Several scalation differences separate this from that species, & from other closely-related species, but these characters are not obvious without very close examination of carefully-restrained or preserved specimens.

Habitat

Found mainly in habitats which are very similar to those where *E. carinatus* is most common. Limited to eastern Oman & the United Arab Emirates

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly terrestrial, & mainly nocturnal. Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported), & probably preys on a variety of available small animals (mammals, lizards, birds, arthropods, etc.). For details about behavior of a closely related species, [See *Echis coloratus*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic & causing symptoms similar to those caused by venoms of other, related members of this genus. For details about envenomation effects caused by one such closely-related species, [See *Echis coloratus*](#).

Echis pyramidum

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Echis carinatus aliaborri*, *Echis khosatskii*, *E. megalcephalus*, *E. c. pyramidum*, *Echis pyramidum aliaborri*, *E. p. leakeyi*, *E. p. lucidus*, *E. p. pyramidum*, *Echis varia*, *E. varius borkini*, *E. v. darevskii*, *Scytale pyrimidum*

Common Names: Egyptian carpet viper, Cherlin's saw-scaled viper, red carpet viper

Description

Small, rather stout sand viper, adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. 85 cm); body color variable, usually yellowish, brown, gray, or reddish (in Kenya); may have series of oblique pale crossbars, interspersed w/ dark spaces, along back, 25-33 midbody dorsal scale rows, moveable front fangs, keeled scales. Usually has lateral rows of triangular or circular dark markings w/ white edges. Belly pale usually w/ brown or reddish spots.



Habitat

Mainly found near oases, semi-desert, dry savanna, & rocky areas. Not often found in extensive areas of soft sand or in true desert. Widely distributed, sometimes disjunct populations, over northern Africa & the Arabian peninsula, from sea level up to 1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, but sometimes climbs into low bushes to avoid hot or wet surfaces. Moves relatively quickly. Mainly nocturnal, oviparous (usually 4-20 eggs/ clutch). Hides in holes, under logs, rocks, & brush piles during daytime; may partially bury itself in sand or coil up in or around grass tufts. Preys on whatever is available, including: lizards, small mammals, invertebrates, birds, & sometimes other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Probably hemotoxic. No known antivenom currently produced. Bites & significant envenomations of humans are fairly frequent throughout its range, but human fatalities are apparently relatively rare. For generalized symptoms of envenomation, [See *Echis carinatus*](#).

Elapsoidea guentheri

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elapechis guentheri*, *E. hessii*, *Elapsoidea decosteri scalaris*, *E. guentheri*, *E. guntherii*, *E. hessei*, *E. loveridgei scalaris*, *E. sundevallii decosteri*, *E. s. guntherii*

Common Names: Gunther's (African) garter snake

Description

Small glossy, moderately stout snake, cylindrical body, fairly short tail, smooth scales in 13 parallel midbody dorsal rows, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. 62 cm); head short, bullet-shaped, eyes set well forward, w/ round pupils; body black w/ 18-24 white to light gray-white crossbands which fade & darken w/ age.

Habitat

Found mainly in woodland, moist savannah mosaic & sometimes dry savannah woodlands. Found in Dem. Republic of Congo (Zaire) & northern Angola, from sea level to 1,500 m elevation; also in Zambia & Zimbabwe, & possibly northern Mozambique.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, & fairly slow-moving. Usually hides in holes underground cover or in logs during the day. Inoffensive, allows itself to be handled but if teased or molested, may flatten & inflate its body, lift its front half off the surface & jerk side-to-side, may bite if restrained.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably neurotoxic. Seldom bite humans, no serious envenomations nor deaths of humans reported as caused by this species.

Elapsoidea laticincta

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elapechis laticinctus*, *Elapsoidea sundevallii laticincta*

Common Names: Werner's (African) garter snake

Description

Small, cylindrical, glossy snake (neither fat nor thin), w/ short head, dark eyes set well forward on bullet-shaped head, smooth scales in 13 midbody dorsal rows, adults usually 25-40 cm long (max. 55 cm); body black or dark brown, w/ 8-17 pale brown to reddish-brown cross bands (may look like paired, fine, pale bands in older individuals). Juveniles more brightly colored. Fixed upper front fangs.

Habitat

Mainly found in savannah & woodlands, but up to forest edge, known from forest-savannah mosaic in Bangangai, Sudan. Limited to several sub-Saharan countries in central Africa, north of the equator.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, mainly mainly nocturnal, becomes active at dusk. Slow-moving, docile, will not bite if handled, unless seriously molested & restrained. If irritated, may flatten or inflate its body, or lift front half of its body off the ground & jerk from side to side. Oviparous (typical clutch size not known); main prey probably smooth-bodied lizards, frogs, & even other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably neurotoxic, like other Elapids.

Elapsoidea loveridgei

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elapsoidea decosteri colleti*, *E. d. multicincta*, *E. loveridgei colleti*, *E. l. loveridgei*, *E. l. multicincta*, *E. l. scalaris*, *E. sundevallii colleti*, *E. s. loveridgei*, *E. s. multicincta*

Common Names: East African garter snake, Loveridge's garter snake

Description

Small, slender, smooth Elapid, adults usually 30-55 cm long (max. about 65 cm). Very similar to *E. semiannulata* in body structural characters, but light body crossbands persist in older adults, & colors vary, some have bright pinkish or red bands (very rarely very old individuals will become almost totally gray or black).

Habitat

Found mainly in woodland, savannah & grassland (mostly at fairly high altitudes) or in forest-savannah mosaic, but not in deep forest or semi-desert. Rarely found below 800 m elevation; in parts of its range, may be found up to 2,200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

[See *Elapsoidea semiannulata*.](#)

Venom Characteristics

[See *Elapsoidea semiannulata*.](#)

Elapsoidea nigra

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elapechis niger*, *Elapsoidea sundevallii nigra*

Common Names: Usambara (African) garter snake, Black (African) garter snake

Description

Very similar to *E. semiannulata* in most body structure characters. Small, fairly slender, smooth-scaled Elapid, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. about 60 cm); body black to gray, w/ 18-23 light crossbands, which may be light brown to pinkish, chin white, belly brown, tail has 2 or 3 crossbands. Juveniles always banded, adults have thinner & less obvious bands. One pair of fixed upper front fangs.

Habitat

Found mainly in evergreen montane forest, but may also occur in moist savannah. Limited to northeastern Tanzania at moderately high elevations (but NOT reported from the Kilimanjaro massif itself).

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial (burrowing) & mainly nocturnal (also active at dusk). Eats mainly (maybe exclusively) burrowing legless amphibians (Cecilians), possibly occasionally other snakes, or frogs. Oviparous, females usually lay 2-5 eggs/ clutch. For details about behavior of a closely-related species, [See *Elapsoidea semiannulata*](#).

Venom Characteristics

[See *Elapsoidea semiannulata*](#).

Elapsoidea semiannulata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elapechis boulengeri*, *E. guentheri*, *E. sundevallii*, *Elapsoidea boulengeri*, *E. decosteri moebiusi*, *E. d. huilensis*, *E. guntherii*, *E. moebiusi*, *E. semiannulata boulengeri*, *E. s. moebiusi*, *E. s. semiannulata*, *E. sundevallii guentheri*, *E. s. moebiusi*, *E. s. semiannulata*

Common Names: Half-banded (Africa) garter snake

Description

Small, moderately stout, glossy, dark snake; adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. 70 cm); body black, short tail, fixed front fangs, smooth-scaled, 13 longitudinal midbody dorsal scale rows. Young individuals have

8-24 distinct narrow white or yellow crossbands which fade w/ age, at about 20 cm long, bands become pale grey & fade, very dark adults may be hard to ID.



Habitat

Found in a wide range of woodlands, savannahs & forest clearing edges. Two distinctly separated populations; one from the western-most African coast eastward through northwestern Uganda; the other from the western coast of Angola eastward to the eastern coasts of Tanzania, Zimbabwe & South Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, burrowing, mainly nocturnal, more active just after a rain. Hides in holes, underground cover or under logs in daytime. Inoffensive, can be handled, but may flatten & inflate body if molested, & may even bite if restrained too much. May lift front half of body & jerk body sideways. Eats mainly other snakes, lizards, frogs, & occasionally rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably neurotoxic, but few reported bites of humans, & none of those reported to result in serious bite effects or envenomations of humans, so far.

Elapsoidea spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Elapsoidea spp.; there are currently 8 named species, but both *E. chelazzii* & *E. trapei* are extremely rare (the former may be extinct) & only the other 6 (addressed individually in this data base) are likely to be encountered by people at all.

Common Names: African garter snakes

Description

Small, moderately slender Elapids, adults usually 40-60 cm long; moderately slender, smooth-scaled, terrestrial, & nocturnal. Body of most species generally uniformly black or gray-black, w/ lighter dorsal crossbanding on adults of most species. Head bullet-shaped, not distinct from the neck. Fixed upper front fangs. Tail short.

Habitat

Generally found in coastal forest, highveld grassland, or arid savanna. All are limited to central & southern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Shy, secretive, mainly nocturnal & mainly terrestrial (semi-fossorial) snakes that spend their days hiding under stones or in burrows. Sluggish, inoffensive, & seldom bite even in self-defense. Oviparous (clutch size not reported), probably prey on lizards, frogs, & other snakes, & maybe rarely on small rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely neurotoxic. Not considered lethal to man. No known antivenom produced.

Elapsoidea sundevallii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elapsoidea sundevallii decosteri*, *E. s. fitzsimonsi*, *E. s. longicauda*, *E. s. media*, *E. s. sundevallii*,

Common Names: Sundevall's (African) garter snake, Southern African garter snake, Natal garter snake (*E. s. sundevallii*), Kalahari garter snake (*E. s. fitzsimonsi*), high veld garter snake (*E. s. media*), long-tailed garter snake (*E. s. longicauda*), De Coster's garter snake (*E. s. decosteri*)

Description

Very similar to *E. semiannulata* in physical characters. Colors & patterns vary, smooth-scaled, 13 midbody dorsal scale rows, head bullet-shaped w/ eyes set well forward. Juveniles of all subspecies are strongly marked w/ 21-38 dark & light bands which are all nearly equally wide. Most subspecies lose distinct bands fairly early in life. Usually small, but long-tailed subspecies can reach 1.4 m long.



Habitat

Found in a wide range of habitats, from coastal woodlands & dune thickets to high altitude grassland & slopes of Drakenberg mountains, & moist & dry savannah, from sea level to 1,600 m elevation. The Kalahari garter snake lives in semi-desert, & dry, rocky hill country.

Activity and Behavior

[See *Elapsoidea semiannulata*.](#)

Venom Characteristics

[See *Elapsoidea semiannulata*.](#)

Enhydrina schistosa

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New Name: [Hydrophis schistosus](#) , changed Jan. 2013; see NOTE: under *Hydrophis* spp. (general)

Eristocophis macmahoni

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Eristocophis macmahonii

Common Names: McMahon's desert viper, Macmahon-viper, Asian sand viper, leaf-nosed viper

Description

Small, stout-bodied, sand viper, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 80 cm); Body usually pale reddish-brown, tan or khaki, w/ lateral rows of dark spots w/ pale edges. Belly may be uniform or marked w/ faint irregular spots. Relatively large broad head w/ scattered dark flecks on top.



Habitat

Found almost exclusively on sand dunes below 1,200 m elevation, in southwestern Afghanistan, southeastern Iran, & western Pakistan.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial (semi-fossorial). Most active during twilight & at night. Alert, bad-tempered. Buries itself in sand. Resorts to sidewinding movement when hurried or alarmed. When agitated, hisses loudly, raises head & loop of body well above ground, & strikes w/ great vigor. Rarely encountered.

Venom Characteristics

Venom shows strong hemorrhagic activity. Symptoms may include local swelling & inflammation; abdominal pain & distention; & inability to swallow & open the eyes, suggesting possible neurotoxicity. Has caused serious human envenomations & deaths. No known antivenom currently produced.

eastern Russia (Kunashir Island).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal, but active at twilight in hot weather. Usually docile, inoffensive & sluggish. Vibrates end of tail rapidly & flattens entire body when annoyed; may strike if further harassed. Preys mainly on small mammals & birds. Ovoviviparous, 3-12 young per litter.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ neurotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes pain & slight bleeding at site, swelling, & tender & enlarged local lymph nodes. Systemic symptoms usually begin 1-6 hours after significant envenomation & may include double vision, neck rigidity, general aches, difficulty breathing. Mortality rates due to bites of this species are low (possibly due to availability & use of effective antivenoms).

Gloydius halys

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Ancistrodon halys cognatus*, *A. h. stejnegeri*, *Agkistrodon blomhoffi affinis*, *A. halys*, *A. h. affinis*, *A. h. caraganus*, *A. h. caucasicus*, *Coluber halys*, *Gloydius halys affinis*, *G. h. boehmei*, *G. h. caraganus*, *G. h. caucasicus*, *G. h. cognatus*, *G. h. halys*, *G. h. mogoi*, *G. h. liupanensis*, *G. h. stejnegeri*, *Trygonocephalus affinis*, *T. caraganus*, *T. halys*, *T. h. halys*

Common Names: Asian pitviper, Alsashan pitviper, Bohme's pitviper, Caucasian pitviper, Gobi pitviper, Halys' viper, Halys' pitviper, Karaganda pitviper, Mumushi, Pallas' viper, Siberian mumushi, Siberian pitviper, Halys-Grubenotter, Halyskaarme, Halysorm, Vipere Halys, Mokasyn hali

Description

Medium-sized, rather stout-bodied, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 55-70 cm long (max. 90 cm). Body pale gray, olive, yellowish or dark brown; marked w/ dark gray crossbands w/ light olive or pale yellowish intervals between. Belly gray to dark gray w/ indistinct darker spots. Tail short, its tip yellowish, dark brown or black. Snout rounded, sometimes slightly upturned at tip.



Habitat

Typically found in dry, rocky areas, from desert shrub to short grass or wooded steppes, coniferous forests, & in mountainous areas usually found at 500-4,000 m elevation. Widely distributed at higher elevations in central & southwestern Asia & Iran.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. During warmer months, emerges only after sunset. Reports vary as to aggressiveness. Some say it usually will not strike unless repeatedly disturbed or hurt; others say it will bite w/ only minor provocation. Ovoviviparous (Clutch size not reported), mainly prey on small mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ neurotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes sharp pain at site, followed by edema & necrosis. May develop blood-filled blisters at bite site. Heart rate & blood pressure usually increase. Human deaths are uncommon & usually due to respiratory problems.

Gloydius himalayanus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Ancistrodon himalayanus, Agkistrodon himalayana, A. himalayanus, Halys himalayanus

Common Names: Himalayan pit viper, Asiatic pit viper

Description

Medium-sized, rather stout, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 90 cm); body usually darkish brown. Dorsal surface w/ series of dark longitudinal lines interrupted by paler crossbands. Belly white w/ black & red flecks. Relatively narrow dark postocular stripe.

Habitat

Mainly found in forest & rocky areas in high mountains at 1,500-5,000 m elevation, in the Hymalayan & nearby mountains of southern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal. Often seen close to hiding place to which it retreats when disturbed. Takes refuge under fallen timber, in crevices in or under rocks, beneath boulders, ledges, stones, & fallen leaves. Usually sluggish & inoffensive; moves slowly. Ovoviviparous (litter size not reported), mainly preys on small mammals (& sometimes birds).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Symptoms may include immediate burning pain, blood blisters, & edema. Victims generally recover within a few days. Human fatalities from envenomation by this species are not common. No known specific antivenom currently produced.

Gloydius intermedius

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Ancistrodon blomhoffi intermedius*, *Agkistrodon blomhoffi intermedius* (in part), *A. halys cognatus*, *A. h. intermedius*, *A. intermedius intermedius*, *Halys intermedia*, *Trigonocephalus intermedius*

Common Names: Asiatic pitviper, Central Asian pitviper, Amur viper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout pitviper, adults up to 80 cm long; body whitish, grayish, brownish, reddish, or olive; pale dorsal crossbands w/ dark edges which may not meet exactly at vertebral line. Belly may be heavily or lightly speckled w/ gray. Head dark, w/ dark postocular stripe & various lighter longitudinal striping.



Habitat

Found mainly in open woodlands, rocky grasslands & scrublands in mountainous areas of eastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Little known. For generalized behavior & habit of closely-related species, [See Gloydius blomhoffi](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Likely hemotoxic & w/ neurotoxic factors. Clinical symptoms may be similar to those of *G. blomhoffi* envenomation, w/ pain & slight bleeding at site, swelling, & rapid tender enlargement of local lymph nodes. No confirmed fatalities reported, but no known specific antivenom currently available.

Gloydius monticola

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Agkistrodon blomhoffi monticola, A. monticola, A. strauchi popei

Common Names: Likiang pitviper, mamushi, Asian pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied, terrestrial pitviper, adults usually about 70 cm long; 19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Closely related to *G. blomhoffi* but closer to *G. strauchi* in size & body color, w/ deeper gray-to-brownish dorsal color & thin white markings on face & chin. Dorsal pattern indistinct, juveniles often w/ greenish or yellowish tinge.

Habitat

Known only from mountainous northwestern Yunan Province, China. Mainly found in fairly dry to seasonally wet & swampy, rocky hillsides or scrubby brush areas at 3,600-4,000 m (about 13,000 ft.) elevation. Also, [See Gloydius blomhoffi](#).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal or active at dusk, also [See Gloydius blomhoffi](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic w/ neurotoxic factors. For general description of envenomation effects of closely-related species, [See Gloydius blomhoffi](#). No documented case of serious human envenomation or fatality due to this species, so far.

Gloydius saxatilis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Ancistrodon halys intermedius, A. intermedius, A. saxatilis, Agkistrodon blomhoffi saxatilis, A. intermedius saxatilis, A. saxatilis, A. shedasensis continentalis

Common Names: Amur viper, Asiatic pit viper, brown mamushi, Rock mamushi

Description

Medium-sized, relatively stout terrestrial pitviper, adults up to 80 cm long; body light gray to light brown; dark dorsolateral crossbands of various shades of brown, & ventrolateral series of small brown spots. Belly light brownish or pinkish. Top of head w/ dark asymmetrical spots.

Habitat

Found on rocky slopes, along stream banks, & forest borders; mainly in mountainous areas in central & eastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Rare but widely-distributed species. For activity & behavior of closely-related species, [See *Gloydus blomhoffi*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Hemotoxic & neurotoxic. Local symptoms may include edema, ecchymoses, blistering, & severe pain. Systemic symptoms may include blurred vision, ptosis, & ataxia. No confirmed human deaths from envenomation by this species.

Gloydus spp.

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: See individually listed species for scientific names, common names, & more details. There are currently 8 recognized species in this genus; plus 2 more which are each limited to a single island & not likely to be encountered anywhere else. [*G. shedaoensis* is limited to Shedao Island, Liaoning, China; *G. tsushimaensis* is limited to Tsushima island near Nagasaki, Japan].

Common Names: Numerous common names (some unique to one species) include: Asiatic pitviper; Chinese, Japanese, Caucasian, & Siberian mamushis; Bohme's, Halys', Himaylian & Pallas' vipers (or pitvipers), etc.

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout terrestrial pitvipers, adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. about 90 cm); body usually pale gray, brown, reddish brown, or yellow brown. Typically w/ large dark irregular to circular markings on each flank w/ darker margin, light inner area, & sometimes white edges.

Habitat

Found in widely varied habitats (differs w/ species); marshes, swamps, rocky hillsides, open woodland, montane rock outcroppings, &/or meadows. Found from sea level to >4,000 m elevation (differs w/ species).

Activity and Behavior

Generally nocturnal (some species of colder zones or higher elevations mainly diurnal), but active at twilight during hot weather. Usually docile, inoffensive, & sluggish. Most species prey on small mammals & birds, & all are ovoviviparous.

Venom Characteristics

Varies w/ species. Mainly hemotoxic w/ neurotoxic factors. Painful swelling at bite site. Systemic symptoms usually begin 1-6 hours after bite, may include double vision, neck rigidity, general achiness, & difficulty breathing. Deaths recorded for several species, antivenom produced for some species.

Gloydus strauchi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Ancistrodon strauchi, Agkistrodon halys strauchi, A. h. quinlingensis, A. strauchi, A. tibetensis

Common Names: Strauch's pit viper

Description

Very similar in body size, stoutness, colors & patterns to both *G. intermedius* & *G. saxatilis*; paler overall, & more generally gray, w/ less obvious markings. Species diagnostic differences in scalation may require close examination to determine. [See Gloydus saxatilis](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in open woodlands & rocky hillsides w/ grass & scrub brush on high hillsides, mainly in central & southern China (esp. Tibet).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly diurnal, mainly terrestrial, ovoviviparous (clutch size not reported, but probably <20); prey mainly on available small mammals & birds. For generalized behavior of a similar species, [See Gloydus blomhoffi](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic. For generalized symptoms caused by envenomation of humans by a related species, [See Gloydus blomhoffi](#).

Gloydius ussuriensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Ancistrodon blomhoffi ussuriensis, Agkistrodon blomhoffi ussuriensis, A. b. intermedius (in part), A. caliginosus, A. halys ussuriensis, A. ussuriensis, Gloydius blomhoffi ussuriensis, G. caliginosus

Common Names: Ussuri mamushi, Asiatic pit viper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout terrestrial pitviper, adults usually < 70 cm long; body usually pale to dark brown or reddish; row of large dark bullseye markings along both flanks. May have pale transverse stripe between bullseyes. Dark postocular stripe. Belly grayish. Head distinct, dark w/ lighter markings along sides.

Habitat

Mainly found in low mountains, rocky hills, grassy areas near streams, open fields, forest edges, & marshes; from near sea level to >500 m elevation, in eastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, sometimes crepuscular. Generally sluggish & slow during day. Often basks on rocks or logs at edge of forest clearings or paths. When confronted, vibrates tail rapidly & attempts to hide. Ovoviviparous (clutch size not recorded), mainly preys on small mammals (& birds)

Venom Characteristics

Has both hemotoxic & neurotoxic factors. Local symptoms may include edema, ecchymoses, blistering, & severe pain. Systemic symptoms may include blurred vision, ptosis, & ataxia. Occasional serious envenomation of humans has been reported, but human deaths not well documented. No known antivenom currently produced.

Hadronyche formidabilis

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Identification

Family: Hexathelidae

Scientific Names: *Atrax formidabilis*, *Atrax* sp., *Hadronyche* sp.

Common Names: Funnel-web spider, North Coast Funnel-web spider, Tree Funnel-web spider, Australian (black) trapdoor spider

Description

A large Mygalomorph spider w/ mature females reaching 4 cm body length. Builds a tubular or Funnel-shaped web. Usually dark brown to black (especially dorsally), w/ obvious "hairy" appearance except for the smooth, shiny dorsal top (carapace) of the cephalothorax.



Habitat

Found mainly in margins of open forested sites or rocky areas w/ trees or brushy vegetation, often along paths or other sites where it can build its funnel web. Sometimes comes up near humans' houses. Limited to Australia (northeastern New South Wales & adjacent Queensland).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, run rapidly, climb well. Usually build a tubular or funnel-shaped web, then wait in it & ambush prey (usually insects & other arthropods; but may include small birds, lizards, frogs, etc.). Not quite as aggressive as *A. robustus*, but will rapidly attack & bite any intruder, including pets or humans. If threatened, will usually raise the front part of their body w/ first 4 legs spread & fangs extended forward.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent (maybe more potent & quicker-acting than the venom of *A. robustus*), neurotoxin. Envenomation symptoms may include: immediately severe pain, muscle twitching, salivation, lacrymation, nausea, vomiting, hypertension, confusion & coma. This is the only species in this genus which is known to have caused human deaths.

Hadronyche spp.

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Identification

Family: Hexathelidae

Scientific Names: *Atrax* spp. [Note: There are currently 32 named species recognized in this genus, but only one, *H. formidabilis* (addressed separately), poses a significant health threat, & potential lethality, to humans. Three other species (*H. cerbera*, *H. infensa*, & *H. versuta*) have reportedly inflicted very painful, relatively slow-healing bites on humans.]

Common Names: Funnel-web spiders (Australian), Australian trapdoor spiders

Description

Large, dark brown to black (dorsally) Mygalomorph spiders w/ body of a mature female about 3-4 cm long. Overall appearance "hairy" except for the smooth, shiny dorsal cephalothorax (carapace). Abdomen usually lighter colored than carapace. "See *H. formidabilis*".

Habitat

Found mainly in margins of forested or rocky areas, often along paths, wherever it can build its funnel-shaped web & await passing prey. Sometimes comes up near (or rarely) into human habitations. Limited to Australia (northeastern New South Wales & adjacent Queensland).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, run rapidly, climb very well. Mainly prey on insects & arthropods, but also sometimes on small birds & frogs. Easily provoked, aggressive, & bites if disturbed or approached (varies by species).

Venom Characteristics

Very potent, fast-acting neurotoxin, very lethal to humans. May be more potent than the venom of *A. robustus*. Very few human envenomations have been reported. "See *H. formidabilis*".

Hapalochlaena maculosa

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Identification

Family: Octopodidae

Scientific Names: *Octopus maculosus*, *O. rugosus* [Note: This is one of only 2 species in this genus (the other species is *H. lunulata*) which have been reported to cause human fatalities. There are >650 named spp. of octopi (singular: octopus) currently recognized, & large specimens of many species can inflict a physically painful bite w/ their "parrot-like" beak (& all have slightly toxic salivary factors, too).]

Common Names: Blue-ringed octopus, Australian blue-ringed octopus, spotted octopus, common ringed octopus

Description

Very small octopus (widest spread of tentacles seldom spans 8 inches across, tip-to-tip). Body usually pale yellowish-brown (often tinged w/ pink or darker brownish), covered nearly all over (dorsally) w/ highly variable pattern of irregularly-shaped bright blue rings. Physical shape typical of all octopi (singular: octopus).



Habitat

Mainly found along the eastern & southeastern coast of Australia, but has also been reported from other places in the tropical & sub-tropical western & southwestern Pacific & Indian Ocean. Mainly found above coral reefs, and in shallow near-shore marine water where lots of its typical prey are available. Probably

also occurs in (but has not yet been reported from) coastal waters of New Caledonia, Taiwan & Vanuatu (et al.).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly prey on fish, crabs, & other small animals, in fairly shallow marine waters, usually in fairly clear water, above or near a coral reef or a sandy bottom. Not aggressive. Tries to avoid humans & larger animals, hiding in crevices or holes of reef or in bottom debris.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin (almost identical to tetrodotoxin of puffer fish). Human deaths are due to respiratory paralysis. Due to its small size, this species' bites & envenomation may hardly be noticed at first. Bites usually occur when a person picks up one of these in shallow water & puts it on bare skin to show it to someone else. Symptoms may include: muscle weakness, tingling around mouth, numbness, breathing problems, nausea, vomiting, & death (often within 2-3 hrs.).

Heloderma horridum

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Identification

Family: Helodermatidae

Scientific Names: *Heloderma hernandesii*, *H. horridum alvarezii*, *H. h. charlesbogerti*, *H. h. exasperatum*, *H. h. horridum*, *Trachyderma horridum*

Common Names: Beaded lizard, escorpion, heloderma negro, lagarto enchaquirado, talachini, tolechini, galwemma, ciyx, siy, acaltetepon, caltetepon, guchachigishe, temacuil, temacuilcahuya

Description

Large, stout lizard w/ adults usually about 70 cm long (max. about 1 m), may weigh up to 6 lb., & live up to 30 yrs. Color & pattern varies, but usually dark brown w/ distinct reticulate yellowish (sometimes pinkish) markings. Skin covered w/ bead-like boney bumps (osteoderms). Tongue pinkish (vs. black for Gila monsters). Tail usually w/ 5-7 pairs of pale rings on dark background.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forests, but also in thornforest & tropical scrub, & some lower portions of pine-oak forests, along moderate elevations of western & southwestern Mexico, into southern & southeastern Guatemala (possibly along the border of western-most Honduras). Sometimes found near sea level but most common at 400-1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal, nocturnal in hot periods. Eat other lizards (& esp. eggs of spiny-tailed iguana; or of other lizards or birds), other small animals, & sometimes insects. Usually sluggish, can flex sideways very quickly, activity temperature dependent, most active in cooler times of day (early morning, early night). Usually overwinter in mammal burrows or dens in rocky outcrops. Oviparous w/ average of 4-15 eggs/clutch. Males may fight in mating season. Can climb 5 m up in a bush.

Venom Characteristics

Venom has several very toxic components, mainly potent neurotoxins, cardiotoxins or vasodilators. Reported toxicity varies, but sometimes comparable to some cobra venoms. Documented to have caused human deaths. Venom from glands in lower jaw, introduced along grooved teeth, via normal bites & is always expelled during a bite (i.e., have no separate control of venom release as do most venomous snakes). Hang on doggedly when they bite.

Heloderma suspectum

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Identification

Family: Helodermatidae

Scientific Names: *Heloderma suspectum cinctum*, *H. s. suspectum*

Common Names: Gila monster, escorpion

Description

Moderately large, rather stout terrestrial lizard, adults usually 35-45 cm long (rarely >55 cm), may weigh up to about 3 lb., & may live 30 yrs. Body covered w/ smooth, rounded beadlike bumps (osteoderms). Color & pattern vary w/ age, subspecies & locality. Usually w/ a mixed yellowish, pink & orangish dorsal body background w/ black legs & dark dorsal cross-bands or saddles. Tail usually w/ 4-5 dark rings; forked tongue black (not pink, as in beaded lizards).



Habitat

Most common & wide-spread in desert & mesquite-grassland, but also in pine-oak forest, tropical deciduous forest, & thornforest; usually in fairly moist rocky foothill regions. Found from southwestern Utah southern Nevada & California southward through Arizona & southwestern New Mexico, into Sonora & Sinaloa states of northwestern Mexico; from sea level to >1,500 m elevation. May be sympatric w/ beaded lizards in parts of Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial; often hide in burrows or rocky dens in night & hotter parts of the day. Usually sluggish, activity is usually temperature-dependent, but can flex sideways very quickly. Eat other lizards, reptile or bird eggs, & other small animals & birds (& insects). Males may fight during mating season. Oviparous w/ usually 2-12 eggs/ clutch reported. Can climb 2.5 m up into a bush.

Venom Characteristics

Venom contains several factors, mainly potent neurotoxins, cardiotoxins or vasodilators. Bites may be very painful, w/ edema, nausea, vomiting, numbness, heart disfunction, etc.; & envenomated humans' recovery is slow. Reported to cause human deaths, but not well documented. Venom from glands in lower jaw, introduced via grooved teeth & is always extruded during a bite (i.e., no voluntary control of venom release, as for most venomous snakes). Hang on doggedly when they bite.

Hemachatus haemachatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidelaps haemachates*, *Coluber haemachates*, *Naja capensis*, *N. haemachates*, *Sepedon haemachates*, *Sipedon haemachates*, *Vipera haemachate*, *V. haemachates*

Common Names: Rinkhals, ring-necked spitting cobra, ringhals, Ringhalskobra

Description

Medium-sized to large, fairly stocky, keeled scales in 17-19 dorsal rows, fixed front fangs, adults avg. about 1.0 m long (max. 1.5 m); body usually olive to dark-brown or dull black above & below, w/ many irregular pale whitish or yellowish (maybe pale brown) crossbands; one or 2 white crossbars on the underside of the throat.



Habitat

Found mainly in veld & open country, coastal plains, & grasslands, from sea level up to 2,500 m elevation. Limited to southern & eastern South Africa & 4 adjacent countries.

Activity and Behavior

Most highly specialized of "spitting" cobras; ejects venom in fine spray to 1-2 m., approached suddenly, rears up & expands hood, displaying vivid black throat (may be bright red or yellowish). If approached closely, may drop to ground, roll over w/ belly up & feign death. Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, but may bask. Ovoviviparous w/ 9-60 (avg. 20-30) young/litter; eats various small animals (toads, birds, mammals).

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin, usually "spits" venom at victim, although bites & fatalities rare. Humans encounter these fairly often within their range.

Hemiaspis daemelia

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Denisonia daemelia, Drepanodontis daemelia, Hemiaspis daemelia, Hoplocephalus daemelia, H. suboccipitalis

Common Names: Grey snake, Daemel's marsh snake, marsh snake

Description

Small, slender, smooth, keeled scales, adults about 70 cm long; body mainly plain grey or brownish-gray, w/ scales appearing to be outlined by the darker underlying body. Sometimes w/ small lighter lines on head & along lips; belly only slightly paler than dorsum; few or no other contrasting marks.



Habitat

Closely associated w/ aquatic habitats. Mainly found in coastal marshes & watercourses in forests & grasslands. Limited to coastal Queensland & New South Wales.

Activity and Behavior

Probably mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, secretive, hides under logs & vegetation. Not aggressive, even when disturbed. Viviparous 3-20 young/ litter, mainly eats skinks & their eggs & frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably mainly neurotoxic, like other Elapids; only a few bites (human envenomations) recorded, w/ pain, swelling & limited local edema. No fatalities reported.

Hemiaspis signata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Alecto signata*, *Denisonia signata*, *D. vagrans*, *Drepanodontis signata*

Common Names: Red-bellied swamp snake, marsh snake, swamp snake, black-bellied swamp snake

Description

Small, slender, cylindrical snake, w/ smooth, keeled scales, adults about 70 cm long; body brownish-red or brownish-gray, a thin pale yellowish line along each side of head (through the dark, round-pupiled eye), & a wider yellow or cream line along lips. Body scales appear faintly outlined by darker underlying body color. Belly may be either distinctly reddish or blackish (not well explained in lit., but possibly differing w/ age, sex, or different subspecies).





Habitat

Strongly associated w/ aquatic habitats along coastal swamps & streams through grasslands & forests. Limited to coastal areas of eastern Australia (Queensland & New South Wales).

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but probably mainly nocturnal or active at dusk & dawn. Hides under logs & vegetation, eats mainly skinks & their eggs & frogs. Ovoviviparous w/ 3-20 young/ litter. Reportedly innocuous & non-aggressive even when disturbed.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably (mildly) neurotoxic like other Elapids, Human bites (envenomations) have been reported to produce local pain, swelling & edema, but no fatalities reported, so far.

Hemiscorpius lepturus

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Identification

Family: Hemiscorpidae

Scientific Names: [Note: Of 4 currently recognized species in this genus, this is the only one which humans encounter very often, & the only one which poses a significant medical threat.]

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 50-85 mm long, w/ very flat-looking body (dorsoventrally thin). Usually yellow or pale yellow-brown w/ a dark dorsal median longitudinal stripe on cephalothorax & pre-abdomen. Postabdomen (& each of its individual segments) very long & thin (longer than the rest of the body combined), more pronounced in males than females. Pincers thick at base. Adults look similar to *Centruroides* spp. w/ long tails.



Habitat

Most commonly reported from hot & humid sites (like near certain rivers or permanent oases) in the Middle East & southwestern Asia. Commonly comes into humans' homes located within its range.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly nocturnal, preys mainly on insects & other arthropods. Usually hides its dorso-ventrally very flat body in very thin crevices or under objects.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent cytotoxin, w/ neurotoxic, cardiotoxic, & hemotoxic factors. Causes progressive spreading surface tissue necrosis (similar to effects of some *Loxosceles* venoms), often looks like 3rd degree burned areas & very slow to heal; hemolysis & secondary renal failure occur. A number of reported envenomations of humans have ended in death (in Iran, about 2-5% of stings reportedly show systemic effects). Human envenomations more common in colder months.

Homoroselaps dorsalis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps dorsalis*, *Poecilophis dorsalis*

Common Names: Striped harlequin snake, striped dwarf garter snake

Description

Small, cylindrical, very slender, adults usually 20-25 cm (max. 30 cm); 15 midbody dorsal scale rows, body black w/ conspicuous yellow vertebral stripe entire length, belly yellow-white. One of smallest snakes in Africa. Very short, fixed front fangs.

Habitat

Typically in high veld & montane grasslands, found mainly in old termite mounds, under logs or stones. Limited to northern regions of South Africa & Swaziland.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & fossorial (burrowing). Docile; reportedly "wiggles in ones hand, but rarely bites." Forages underground in tunnels & cracks. Rare & seldom seen. Ovoviviparous, very few eggs/ clutch (No. not reported). Feeds almost exclusively on thread snakes (*Leptotyphlops* spp.).

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely neurotoxic but considered to have very little effect on man. Venom yield minute. Fangs probably too small & short to effectively penetrate normal human skin & enable envenomation. No known antivenom produced.

Homoroselaps lacteus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Coluber lacteus, Elaps lacteus

Common Names: Spotted harlequin snake

Description

Small, slender, cylindrical, adults avg. 30-40 cm long (max. 61 cm); dorsal scales smooth, in 15 midbody rows, body color varies, head mostly black above w/ most scales dotted yellow & orange; brightly colored, usually w/ alternating black & yellow bands & a row of dorsal orange (rarely yellow) spots, each at the top of a yellow band. Belly dark to yellow-white w/ each scale yellow-edged.



Habitat

Found in a wide range of habitats from loose coastal bush to savanna & even semi-desert; mainly in sandy soils. Limited to Lesotho, South Africa, & Swaziland.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & fossorial. Spends much time underground; particularly partial to termite nests. Docile; generally does not strike when molested, but wiggles violently as an evasive measure to escape as quickly as possible. Ovoviparous, 6-16 young/ litter, eats mainly other fossorial lizards & snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Venom likely neurotoxic but considered to have very little effect on man. Venom yield minute. Fangs may be too short to penetrate skin except in webbing between fingers or toes. A young boy bitten (envenomated) in webbing between his fingers by a 25 cm long *H. lacteus*, had immediate pain, swelling for 3 days, & pain lasting 5 days. No known antivenom produced.

Hoplocephalus bitorquatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Alecto bitorquata, Denisonia angulata, D. revelata, Hoplocephalus sulcans, H. waitii

Common Names: Pale-headed snake, broad-headed snake

Description

Small, slender, adults usually 80-100 cm long; dark body w/ thin light yellow patterning of irregular crossbands, pale head, head unusually broad for size & proportions of body.

Habitat

Found in rock outcroppings, under rock slabs & in crevices between rocks, w/ no contact w/ soil or vegetation. Limited to eastern Australia (Queensland & New South Wales).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, mainly diurnal & terrestrial (saxicolous), hiding under & between rocks on barren rock outcroppings. Feed on lizards, frogs & small mammals which share their general habitat. Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 4-20 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, mainly hemotoxic, procoagulant, few reported bites of humans, no reported fatalities, but still considered potentially dangerous.

Hoplocephalus bungaroides

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Alecto bungaroides, A. variegata, Elapocormus bungaroides, Naja bungaroides
[currently Australia's most endangered snake, due to destruction of their habitat.]

Common Names: Broad-headed snake, Breitkopfnatter

Description

Small, slender, agile, adults usually 80-100 cm long; body black, w/ dorsal pattern of yellowish scales roughly resembling chain links, head unusually broad for body size & shape.



Habitat

Found only in rock outcroppings in eastern Australia (Queensland & New South Wales).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & secretive (saxicolous), hide under rock slabs or in crevices between rocks (not near soil or any vegetation) on rock outcroppings, feeding on velvet geckoes, frogs & small small mammals that share their habitat. Ovoviviparous, 4-20 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, few bites or envenomations of humans, no reported fatalities, but considered potentially dangerous. Mainly hemotoxic, procoagulants.

Hoplocephalus stephensii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Stephens's broadheaded snake, Stephens's banded snake

Description

Small, slender, agile, strong, w/ unusually broad heads for their body size, adults usually 80-100 cm long; body mainly black w/ irregular stripes or crossbands of pale yellow or whitish scales.



Habitat

Mainly found in rocky outcroppings away from soil, vegetation, or rock-on-soil contact. Limited to moderately large rock outcroppings of coastal regions of Queensland & New South Wales, Australia.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal, mainly diurnal, rock-dwelling (saxicolous), hiding below rock slabs, or in crevices between rocks, on large outcroppings. Feed mainly on lizards, frogs, & small mammals which live in the same habitats.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but mainly hemotoxic, procoagulants, few bites or envenomations reported, no fatalities reported. Still considered potentially dangerous to humans.

Hottentotta alticola

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus alticola (in part)

Common Names: Black scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 50-70 mm long (max. 80+ mm). Body usually very dark brown above (sometimes tinged w/ green or dull yellowish-brown), lighter greenish or yellowish along sides. Legs & pedipalps yellowish-green; cauda mainly yellowish-green, except 5th segment very dark. Tips of pincers dark brown.

Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats, from seasonally dry to semiarid sites (sometimes in desert margins), w/ mainly sandy & rocky soil & scattered vegetation. Has been reported from some agricultural sites, but is not common in urban settings. Found mainly at moderate to higher elevations (mainly at 500-1,000+ m) in various parts of its fairly extensive geographic range in south-central Asia.

Activity and Behavior

May be both diurnal (in colder months) and nocturnal (during warmer months), & mainly terrestrial (but often climbs rough surfaces). Ovoviviparous, & preys on available insects & arthropods. Tends to avoid humans (& other larger animals) but will sting quickly if molested, stepped on, or trapped within clothing being donned.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mainly neurotoxic w/ some cytotoxic factors. Has reportedly caused a number of painful human envenomations, w/ localized swelling, redness & discoloration, but no human fatalities documented, so far.

Hottentotta minax

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus minax, Buthotus minax, Hottentotta minax minax, H. m. niloticus, H. m. occidentalis, H. m. tigrinus

Common Names:

Description

Medium-sized fairly stout-bodied scorpion, adults seldom exceed 70 mm long. Body usually medium to dark brown (often reddish), darker on top, w/ lighter margins, often w/ dark spots or blotches, & obvious keels on dorsal carapace & preabdomen form an "H-shaped" & a lyre-shaped pattern, legs & pedipalps (& pincers) lighter brown to yellow-brown. Pincers rather thick-based w/ long, thin tips; often w/ 5th (& often 4th) caudal segment & telson very dark.



Habitat

Mainly found in seasonally dry to semi-arid sandy-soiled or rocky areas w/ sparse (generally scrubby) vegetation. Found in north-central & eastern Africa (from Tanzania to Egypt & west into Chad & Libya). Sometimes found near human homes.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, but sometimes active in morning or evening twilight (ambient temperature affects activity). Mainly terrestrial, occasionally climbs rough surfaces (onto rocks, logs, walls or tree trunks). Preys on available insects & other arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but mainly neurotoxic, has reportedly caused human fatalities within its range. Localized & systemic symptoms are similar to those caused by venom of *H. saulcyi*.

Hottentotta saulcyi

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus saulcyi, Buthotus saulcyi

Common Names: Black scorpion, Saulcy's scorpion

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied scorpion, adults usually 60-70 mm long (max. 80+ mm). Body very dark brown to black, w/ distinct keels on dorsal carapace & preabdomen which form an "H-shaped" & a lyre-shaped pattern. Body margins, legs & pedipalps all lighter (usually medium to dark brown), 5th (& often 4th) caudal segment & telson very dark (almost black). Pincers thick at base but have relatively long, thin tips.



Habitat

Most often found in dry to semi-arid sites, sometimes in accumulated organic debris or rock crevices in sparsely-vegetated areas. May come into agricultural sites & occasionally around houses. Only reported from the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, but may hunt during dusk or dawn periods or soon after a rain. Usually hide under debris or in natural or artificial crevices, or under rocks during the day. Mainly prey on available insects or other arthropods, sometimes cannibalistic. Tend to avoid humans but will sting defensively when molested, stepped on, etc.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxic factors can cause serious systemic effects (often delayed 1-24 hrs.) in humans, including: hypertension, rapid heart rate (tachycardia), fluid in the lungs (pulmonary oedema), & death. Usually causes moderate local pain, swelling & redness at sting site. Small children usually more severely affected than adults.

Hottentotta schach

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized, moderately stout-bodied scorpion, adults usually 40-60 mm long (max. about 70 mm). Body medium to dark brown, sometimes w/ slight yellowish or reddish tinge. Dorsal keels on carapace form an "H" & a lyre-shaped pattern, 5th (often 4th) caudal segment & telson very dark. Body margins, legs & cauda usually mainly lighter brownish.

Habitat

Found mainly in seasonally dry to arid sites w/ sandy soil, often rocky. Reported only from Iran & Iraq, so far. Sometimes found around edges of oases or agricultural lands.

Activity and Behavior

Not well documented, but mainly nocturnal (may be active at dusk or dawn, or after a rain), & terrestrial (but can climb rough surfaces). Preys mainly on available insects & arthropods. Activity level & timing affected by ambient temperature & prey availability.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, causing similar symptoms to those listed for *H. minax*. Has been reported to cause serious envenomation & occasional fatalities of humans.

Hottentotta spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: [Note: There are currently 19 recognized named species in this genus, but only a few, which are detailed individually (separately) here, are of human health significance. Others are very seldom encountered &/ or have much less potent venom.]

Common Names: Some spp. are called "black scorpions."

Description

Most species in this genus are medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied scorpions 40-80 mm long, usually brownish, dark-bodied (above) w/ lighter brown or yellowish legs & pincers (patterns vary by spp.). Cauda of most species are pale brownish to yellowish w/ 5th (& sometimes 4th) segment & telson very dark (often nearly black). Dorsal keels form "H-shaped" & lyre-shaped patterns on their dorsal carapace.

Habitat

Most species live in seasonally dry to desert conditions, often among rocks, in sandy soil & near scattered vegetation. Sometimes they are found in agricultural areas or near human homes. Various species (see individual spp.) are found from north-central Africa through the Middle East, to Pakistan & China.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal (sometimes active at twilight or after a rain) & terrestrial (but most can easily climb various rough surfaces). Activity level & timing often influenced by ambient local temperature, rainfall & prey availability.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (often w/ some cardiotoxic factors). Usually a sting will cause local pain, swelling, & redness. The venom of some spp. can cause systemic effects & death in humans (see individual spp.).

Hydrophis caerulescens

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: *Aturia caerulescens*, *Hydrus caerulescens*, *Hydrophis caerulescens* *thai*, *H. frontalis*, *H. hydrida*, *H. polydonta*, *H. protervus*, *Polydontognathus caerulescens*

Common Names: Banded sea snake, bluish small-headed sea snake, chittul, many-toothed sea snake, Merram's sea snake, dwarf sea snake

Description

Small-to-medium sized sea snake, adults usually about 70 cm long (max. 80 cm); body bluish-gray w/ bluish-black or dark purple crossbands, belly whitish, head dark gray; juveniles sometimes have yellow markings on their head which fade w/ age.

Habitat

Usually found in near-shore shallow water, near bottom among rock crevices, coral boulders or pilings. Found from along the Pakistan coast east to Australia, southern China, & Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

During regional rainy season, this species breeds in estuaries among rocks. Usually non-aggressive, even when handled. Both diurnal & nocturnal, stays in marine waters, probably feeds on various bottom-dwelling fish, & probably ovoviviparous (w/ no litter size reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably has potent neurotoxins & myotoxins. Very few bites or envenomations of humans reported, & no human fatalities reported, so far.

Hydrophis cantorus

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: *Distira gillespieae*, *Microcephalophis cantoris*

Common Names: Cantor's small-headed sea snake, sea snake

Description

Large sea snake, adults usually 110-140 cm long (max. 190 cm); front part of body very slender, olive to yellow, back part of body dark olive; has black vertebral stripe, yellowish along sides, w/ gray to black crossbands, head olive-colored, belly whitish. Body similar in general shape to *H. gracilis*.

Habitat

Found in coastal waters of the Persian Gulf. Has very similar habitat to *H. gracilis*. Found mainly near bottom, or among rocks or pilings, in fairly shallow near-shore marine waters of the eastern Indian & southwestern Pacific Oceans.

Activity and Behavior

Behavior probably very similar to *H. gracilis*, & probably feeds mainly on eels. Both diurnal & nocturnal, & ovoviviparous w/ no litter size reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably has potent neurotoxins & myotoxins. Very few human bites or envenomations, no fatalities reported.

Hydrophis curtus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: Enhydris curtus, Hydrophis abbreviatus, H. brevis, H. fayreriana, H. hardwickei, H. pelamidoides, H. p. annulata, H. pelamoides, H. propinquus, Hydrus curtus, Lapemis curtus, L. loreatus

Common Names: Shaw's sea snake, short sea snake

Description

Large, powerfully built sea snake, with a short tail, broad head; adults usually 0.8-1.1 m long (max. 1.5 m); body scales hexagonal, scales on belly & chin keeled or tuberculate in males, have relatively large mouths. Body usually tan with dorsal olive crossbands which sometimes look almost diamond-shaped from above, belly pale yellowish or cream.



Habitat

Found mainly in marine water varying from clear (above coral reefs) to silty shorelines & turbid estuaries; in near-shore marine waters of Persian Gulf, & northern Indian & southwestern Pacific Oceans (to Taiwan).

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal, stays in marine water, feeds on a variety of fish, crustaceans & squid; ovoviviparous, with usually 1-15 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Potent venom, with neurotoxic & myotoxic factors; causes renal failure. Relatively few humans reported to have been bitten, but envenomations by this species have caused human fatalities.

Hydrophis cyanocinctus

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: *Disteira cyanocincta*, *Distira cyanocincta*, *Hydrophis aspera*, *H. chittal*, *H. crassicallis*, *H. phipsoni*, *H. striata*, *H. striatus*, *H. subannulata*, *H. tenuicollis*, *H. trachyceps*, *H. trapobanica*, *H. westermanni*, *H. westermanni*, *Leioselasma cyanocincta*, *L. cyanocinctus*, *L. striata*

Common Names: Annulated sea snake, chittul, common sea serpent

Description

Large sea snake, adults usually 140-170 cm long (max. 190 cm); body dirty-white, usually w/ darker dorsal cross-stripes (reddish or brownish in some specimens), juveniles often have pale greenish overall body color.





Habitat

Found in shallow near-shore marine waters throughout the Persian Gulf & northern Indian Ocean. One of the most common sea snakes in these regions. Sometimes may be found in mouths of freshwater streams, & sometimes comes out onto land near the water.

Activity and Behavior

Swims in fairly shallow near-shore marine waters, especially common in the Persian Gulf & eastward throughout most of the northern Indian Ocean. Sometimes comes out onto land. Breeds in estuary areas among rocks & inlets. Diurnal & nocturnal, preys on various available fish. Sometimes attracted toward lights on boats or docks at night.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly highly potent neurotoxins & myotoxins; larger than most other sea snakes, w/ relatively larger fangs & more venom; has caused numerous human envenomations & fatalities.

Hydrophis gracilis

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: *Disteira gracilis*, *Distira gracilis*, *Hydrus gracilis*, *H. kadellnagam*, *Hydrophis guentheri*, *H. microcephala*, *H. microcephalus*, *Microcephalophis gracilis*, *M. g. gracilis*, *Thalassophis microcephala*

Common Names: Small-headed sea snake, graceful sea snake, slender sea snake

Description

Front third of body very slender, head small, posterior two-thirds of body very stout; adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 110 cm); front part of body black or dark olive w/ white or yellow spots or crossbands, back

part of body greenish-gray, pale yellow or white w/ darker crossbands (sometimes all gray), laterally flattened ("oarlike") tail.

Habitat

Found only in marine waters, usually found along bottom over near-shore sand & silted seabeds, often dives deeper than 30 m, where eels are found. Found from the Persian Gulf to Sri Lanka & Hong Kong.

Activity and Behavior

Swim only in marine waters. Feed on eels, which is facilitated by their unusual body structure. Ovoviviparous, 1-16 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Probably highly potent post-synaptic neurotoxins & myotoxins, no bites of humans reported (possibly due to their mouth being too small).

Hydrophis hardwickii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: Enhydris hardwickii, Hydrophis hardwickei, H. hardwickii, Hypsirhina hardwickii, Lapemis hardwickii, L. curtus hardwickii

Common Names: Hardwicke's spine-bellied sea snake, short sea snake

Description

Medium-to-large, stout, short, large-headed sea snake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 86 cm); keeled or tuberculate scales along belly & chin, body usually pale olive to tan, with darker olive to dark-gray dorsal crossbands (sometimes encircling the whole body), belly whitish, sometimes whole body is drab olive above with no obvious patterning, head pale olive to black on top. Tail laterally flattened & "oarlike."

Habitat

Range limited to Australia-Asian region; swims only in marine waters & eats various available fish, crustaceans & squid over marine near-shore reef & silted sea beds.

Activity and Behavior

Very similar to L. curtus in activity & general biology. Very aggressive, often tries to bite intruders without provocation. For details of closest related species, [See Hydrophis curtus](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. For details about a closely-related species , [See Hydrophis curtus](#).

Hydrophis lapemoides

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: Aturia lapemoides, Distira lapemoides, Hydrophis holdsworthii, H. stewartii, H.lapemidoides, Lioselasma lapemidoides

Common Names: Persian Gulf sea snake

Description

Medium-sized sea snake, adults usually about 90 cm long (max. 110 cm); body yellow to olive or gray, shading into white on sides, w/ olive to black dorsal crossbands which may encircle body, belly whitish, head olive, sometimes w/ yellow mark on top; juveniles have yellow mark on head. Tail laterally flattened & "oarlike."

Habitat

Mainly found near the bottom in moderately shallow, near-shore marine waters of the Persian gulf & nearby Indian Ocean. Has been reported from waters of Shatt al-Arab, Iraq.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal; mostly stays in marine waters but frequently will enter & stay for an extended time in fresh water. Very similar behavior to H. cyanocinctus.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably has potent neurotoxins & myotoxins. Very few reports of humans being bitten, envenomated or killed by bites by this species.

Hydrophis mamillaris

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: Anguis mamillaris, Aturia mamillaris, Hydrophis mammillaris, Leioselasma mamillaris, lioselasma mamillaris

Common Names: Bombay sea snake

Description

Small to medium-sized sea snake, adults usually about 80 cm long (max. 90 cm); body white or light gray w/ black crossbands, sometimes a vertebral black stripe present, Belly lighter, head black, juveniles white w/ dark crossbands. Tail shaped like a vertical oar blade.

Habitat

Found mainly near the bottom in shallow near-shore marine waters, often among rocks or pilings; has been found in mangrove creeks.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal; mainly stay in marine waters, swimming near bottom (usually within 30 m of surface). Reportedly not aggressive even when handled.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably has potent neurotoxins & myotoxins. No well-documented bites or envenomations of human, & no reported fatalities due to bites by this species.

Hydrophis ornatus

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: *Aturia ocellata*, *A. ornata*, *Disteira godeffroyi*, *D. ornata*, *Distira andamanica*, *D. godeffroyi*, *D. mjobergi*, *Hydrophis ellioti*, *H. godeffroyi*, *H. inornatus*, *H. laevis*, *H. lamberti*, *H. ornata*, *H. ornatus*, *H. o. godeffroyi*, *H. o. maresianus*, *H. ocellatus*, *H. o. ornatus*

Common Names: Gray's sea snake, ornate sea snake, ornate reef sea snake

Description

Rather large sea snake, adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 130 cm); body dark gray, pale greenish-white, olive or yellow w/ dark gray crossbands or diamond-shaped dorsal spots, head olive-colored, juveniles often have yellow marks on their head which fade w/ age.

Habitat

One of the most wide-ranging species of sea snakes; found mainly in shallow to moderately deep (deeper than 30 m) marine waters & reefs near the shores of most countries of the Indian & southwestern Pacific Oceans. Rare in the Persian Gulf, but fairly common around Australia, New Guinea, & most of Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal. Relatively docile & non-aggressive even when handled by fishermen.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly potently neurotoxic & myotoxic. Few human bites & envenomations reported, no fatalities reported, so far.

Hydrophis peronii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: *Acalyptophis peronei*, *Acalyptus peronii*, *Pseudodisteira horrida*

Common Names: Spiney-headed sea snake, horned sea snake, Peron's sea snake

Description

Medium to large, fairly thick-bodied sea snake, adults usually 1.0-1.3 m long. Pale grey, beige, or pale brown colored body patterned with dark crossbands. Scales above & behind the eyes (supraoculars & postoculars) are raised & form conspicuous spines which are most highly developed in mature individuals. Most body scales with distinct, dark spine-like central keels.



Habitat

Found mainly in surface waters adjacent to reefs. Reported from South China Sea & waters around Indonesia, the Philippines, & New Guinea, but it is probably rare outside Australian coastal waters.

Activity and Behavior

Prey on small or medium-sized fish while swimming in coastal marine waters, usually above coral reefs or fairly shallow sandy bottoms, sometimes in silty estuaries. Juveniles often eat shrimp. Ovoviviparous, usually 1-8 young per litter. Seldom encountered by humans in recreational swimming or diving sites, only occasionally by fishermen. May be more active after dark than during daytime.

Venom Characteristics

Has mainly post-synaptic neurotoxins (reportedly contains myotoxic factors, too), but not well studied. No reported human envenomations (obviously, therefore, no fatalities reported either).

Hydrophis platurus

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Identification

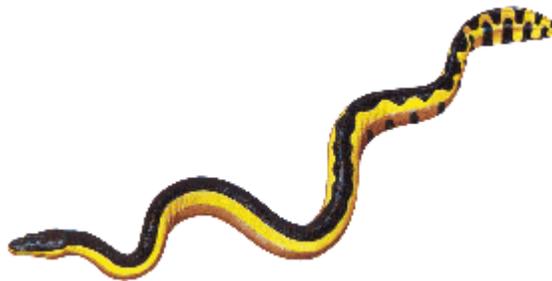
Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: *Anguis platura*, *Hydrophis bicolor* var. *sinuata*, *H. pelamis*, *Hydrus bicolor*, *H. platurus*, *Pelamis bicolor*, *P. b.* var. *sinuata*, *P. b.* var. *variegata*, *P. ornata*, *P. platurus*, *P. schneideri*

Common Names: Yellow-bellied sea snake, Pelagic sea snake, cantil listada, zapatilla, serpiente de mar

Description

Medium-sized, slender sea snake, adults usually <75 cm long (max. 113 cm). The tail is laterally flattened & oar-like. Body color pattern is highly variable (in detail) but basically involves a black or brown dorsum with a yellow or cream venter (lower half). Color of tail is yellow, with alternating upper & lower large dark blotches (sometimes with one or more stripes) on both sides.



Habitat

Found only in the Pacific & Indian Oceans; sometimes drifts in large numbers in offshore waters with temperatures >20 degrees C. Can be found in coastal (or even open ocean) marine waters from South

Africa, to the Persian Gulf, to India, to Australia, to the western coasts of Central & northern South America. Rarely, individual specimens may be found outside this range (e.g, on the western Mexican coast).

Activity and Behavior

Usually floats among flotsam or floating seaweed at the surface in tropical or sub-tropical zones of the Pacific & northern Indian Oceans. They capture small fish that happen to pass nearby using a quick sideways lunge. Quite inoffensive, but when restrained or when stranded on a beach it will bite (& may actively strike) to defend itself.

Venom Characteristics

Highly potent venom containing post-synaptic neurotoxins. Most natural marine predators, like predatory fish & even sharks, usually avoid this snake. Scavengers also tend to avoid specimens which have been washed up onto a beach & are dying.

Hydrophis schistosus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: *Disteira russellii*, *D. schistosa*, *Enhydrina valakadien*, *E. velakadien*, *E. valakadyn*, *E. valakadyen*, *E. vikadien*, *Hydrophis bengalensis*, *H. fasciata*, *H. schistosa*, *H. schistosus*, *H. subfasciata*, *Hydrus valakadyn*, *Polydotes annulatus*, *Thalassophis wernerii*

Common Names: Beaked sea snake, common sea snake

Description

Large sea snake, adults usually 1-1.2 m long (max. 1.6 m); rostral scale projects down past supra-labial scales, head distinct, anterior body thick, posterior part of body very thick, skin looks "loose," scales somewhat imbricate (juxtaposed), with short central keel, 43-55 mid-body scale rows, no suborbital stripe, with front fixed fangs, young dark gray above, whitish below, with dark gray or black annuli (most obvious dorsally), pattern obscured in adults (uniformly gray), tail oar-like.



Habitat

Mainly found in shallow, muddy coastal waters, sometimes goes up into estuaries or rivers. Found in Indo-Pacific waters including both coasts of Thailand, Malaysia, & Indonesia; & from the Persian Gulf

(south to Madagascar & the Seychelles) to coastal waters of Queensland, Australia & western coast of New Guinea.

Activity and Behavior

Hunt bottom-dwelling fish (main prey) by touch in low-visibility estuarine waters. Often come into contact w/ native fishermen (or persons wading) in near-shore waters, leading to bites & envenomation. Not known to leave the water voluntarily, awkward on land. Grasps & holds onto victim when it bites. Ovoviviparous, with an average of 3-30 young.

Venom Characteristics

Very dangerous, with potent venom (LD50 in mice = 0.01 mg/kg) containing myotoxins & postsynaptic neurotoxins. One bite by this species could potentially deliver enough venom in a single bite to kill 22 adult humans. These are extremely dangerous & are responsible for most of the human envenomations by sea snakes. They have caused numerous human fatalities.

Hydrophis spiralis

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Identification

Family: Hydrophiidae

Scientific Names: *Hydrus spiralis*, *Leioselasma spiralis*, *Leiocephalus spiralis*

Common Names: Sea snake, Yellow sea snake

Description

Large sea snake, adults usually 170-180 cm long (max. 270 cm); body golden yellow, yellow-green, or olive, w/ black crossbands that may encircle body, head yellow, juveniles have black heads w/ yellow mark on top. Tail distinctly "oarlike."

Habitat

Found mainly in deep to moderately deep, yet relatively near-shore, coastal marine waters throughout the Persian Gulf & much of the northern Indian Ocean, then eastward to Indonesia & the Philippines.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal, preys mainly on eels & other elongate fish along bottom of partly or completely sandy or silted seabeds or shallow reefs, commonly inhabits bottom zones at depths below 10 m.

Venom Characteristics

Contains very potent neurotoxins & myotoxins. Larger than most other sea snakes, & has relatively longer fangs & greater supply of venom. Untreated envenomation likely to be fatal. This species causes many human deaths every year (mainly fishermen or divers). One of the most aggressive sea snakes, reportedly bites w/ little provocation.

Hydrophis spp. (general)

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Identification

Family: Elapidae; **Subfamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: Currently, more than 45 named species are recognized as belonging to the Genus: *Hydrophis* by taxonomic experts (go to: www.reptile-database.org/elapidae). Only about 20 of these species are wide-spread enough, and encountered often enough by people, to pose any significant threat of human envenomation.

Note: An extensive revision of a major subfamily of the sea snakes was published in December 2013 [see - Sanders, K., M. Lee, Mumpuni, T. Bertozzi, and A. Rasmussen. 2013. Multilocus phylogeny and recent rapid radiation of the viviparous sea snakes (Elapidae: Hydrophiinae). *Molecular phylogenetics and evolution*, 66 (2013):575-591. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ympev.2012.09.021>]. Eight former numerically small or monotypic sea snake genera were sunk within the revised genus *Hydrophis*, including: *Acalyptophis*, *Astrotia*, *Disteira*, *Enhydrina*, *Kerilia*, *Lapemis*, *Pelamis*, and *Thalassophina*. All species from these former genera that had previously been listed separately in this LHD (i.e., the ones that have been reported to pose a serious human envenomation hazard) have now been incorporated into this genus in alphabetic order by their revised species names, as of September 2013.

Common Names: Sea snakes (see individual species listings for their own scientific and common names and for other potentially helpful details)

Description

All *Hydrophis* spp. have small heads, short, fixed, upper front fangs, slender necks & bodies which become thicker toward their laterally-flattened tails (shaped like a vertical oar blade); all have darker crossbands, sometimes encircling their body, with their belly lighter, dorsum darker; some have light (usually yellowish) markings on their heads (esp. juveniles), which fade with age.

Habitat

Found mainly in marine, brackish, & sometimes fresh water along coasts of mainly subtropical regions of the world, most often associated with shallow near-shore sea beds & reefs. All but *Hydrophis platurus* (formerly *Pelamis platura*) are mainly limited to the southwestern Pacific & Indian Oceans. *Hydrophis semperi* lives only in a lake on the Philippine Island of Luzon. Some (e.g., *H. cyanocinctus*) may crawl onto land, and some (e.g., *H. sibauensis*) often are found miles up fresh-water rivers.

Activity and Behavior

May be both diurnal & nocturnal, mainly stay in the water, usually very awkward on land. Some species rarely do intentionally come onto land. Mainly feed on fish, eels, etc. (food preference varies by species). Most are docile, unless threatened, repeatedly disturbed, or stepped on (fishermen are most often bitten

while removing these from their nets). Many species are seldom seen. Experts report that roughly 75% of bites of humans by *Hydrophis* spp. result in no envenomation, and only about 17% of those actual envenomations have reportedly been fatal.

Venom Characteristics

Most *Hydrophis* spp. have very potent neurotoxic venom with myotoxic (and sometimes additional) active factors. Fishermen & divers are most frequently bitten. Fatalities have been reported from envenomation by several of these species, but most species are relatively docile unless threatened.

Hydrophis stokesii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: *Astrotia schizopholis*, *A. stokesii*, *Disteira stokesii*, *Hydrophis guentheri*, *H. granosa*, *H. guttata*, *H. schizopholis*

Common Names: Stokes's sea snake

Description

Largest of the sea snakes, reaching a maximum length of about 6 feet (1.8 m). Very heavy-bodied, with colors varying from black through shades of grey to dull white. Indistinct pattern of blotches, reticulations or crossbands may be present. Has a raised ventral keel formed by its elongated & divided ventral scales.



Habitat

Found only in marine waters (usually found at >10 m deep), mainly in coastal areas from western India & Sri Lanka west through the Gulf of Siam to the China Sea, western Malaysia, Indonesia, east to New Guinea & the northern & eastern coasts of Australia, southeastern Asian Sea (Pakistan to Australia), & the Philippine Islands. May also occur in coastal waters of additional nearby countries, or islands, but specimens not yet documented from them.

Activity and Behavior

Usually found in deep, open marine water, especially where there is turbidity or silting. Very agile swimmers. Females bear litters of about 12 live young, each about 12 inches long at "birth." Probably both diurnal & nocturnal, but seldom observed at night. Prey mainly on various available fish.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, but not well studied.

Hydrophis viperinus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **SubFamily:** Hydrophiinae

Scientific Names: *Diseira praescutata*, *Disteira viperina*, *Distira viperina*, *Hydrophis doliata*, *H. jayakari*, *H. nigra*, *H. plumbea*, *H. shistosus*, *Lapemis viperina*, *Praescutata viperina*, *Thalassophina viperinus*, *Thalassophis viperina*, *T. viperinus*

Common Names: Schmidt's Sea Snake, viperine sea snake, sea snake

Description

Medium-sized fairly stout sea snake, adults usually 82-92 cm long. Body usually gray above, yellow-gray to white below (all gray, unmarked specimens are known); upper & lower colors sharply divided along sides, often with 25-35 dark brownish rhomboidal dorsal spots (rarely with dark crossbands). Crown of head dark or black, chin & throat cream. Scales hexagonal, overlapping, most scales on dorsal half of body are keeled (with distinct ridge along mid-dorsal line), 37-50 mid-body dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Found only in marine waters of the southwestern Pacific & Indian Oceans; from Gulf of Oman & Persian Gulf eastward through northern Indian Ocean & most of southwestern Pacific Ocean.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known about this snake. It only swims in marine waters. It is probably both diurnal & nocturnal, & may be attracted to lights of boats or docks at night. Biting behavior has not been reported, but probably hangs onto bitten object (or person) fairly persistently (as documented for some other sea snakes). Probably ovoviviparous (typical litter size has not been reported) & probably feeds on various available fish, eels, or other marine animals.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly potent cytotoxic, neurotoxic, & myotoxic factors. Seldom encountered by humans & has a pair of very small, fragile, fixed upper front fangs. Not aggressive & tends to avoid humans, but bites have been recorded. Occasional human envenomations, & even deaths, have been reported but have not been well documented.

Hypnale hypnale

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Ancistrodon hypnale*, *Agkistrodon hypnale*, *Cophias hypnale*, *Trionocephalus hypnale*

Common Names: Hump-nose moccasin, hump-nose pitviper, Indische Nasenotter

Description

Small, fairly stout pitviper, w/ distinctly upturned snout, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 60 cm); body color highly variable; may be grayish, brownish, yellowish, or reddish-brown. Belly dark. Dorsal pattern of dark tips of triangles w/ apices meeting at dorsal midline.

Habitat

Found mainly in leaf litter in plantations, forests, & grasslands up to about 1,500 m elevation. Limited to southwestern India & Sri Lanka.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal. Terrestrial to semi-arboreal. When on ground, keeps head raised at 45 degree angle. During day, lays at base of small shrubs & grass or under logs & leaf litter. Active & fierce; strikes without hesitation. When threatened, forms body into C-shaped coil w/ head raised toward intruder. Ovoviviparous, 4-10 young/ litter. Preys mainly on available small animals.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic (procoagulant). Fatalities rare. Local symptoms include pain & swelling. Severe systemic effects include cardiovascular, neurological, hematological, & irreversible renal failure. No known antivenom produced.

Hypnale nepa

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Ancistrodon nepa, A. hypnale, Agkistrodon nepa, Coluber nepa

Common Names: Sri Lankan humnose viper, humnose pitviper

Description

Very similar to *H. hypnale*, but w/ slightly different dorsal color pattern & scalation. For general description of closely-related species, [See Hypnale hypnale](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in leaf litter or under logs or other debris at edges of forest clearings or edges of cultivated fields. Found from near sea level up to >300 m elevation. Limited to Sri Lanka.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. A fairly rare species. For more details on the behavior of a closely-related species, [See Hypnale hypnale](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. For similar information about a closely-related species, [See Hypnale hypnale](#).

Hypnale walli

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Agkistrodon walli

Common Names: Wall's humnose viper, humnose pitviper, Wall's pitviper

Description

Very similar in size & appearance to *H. hypnale*, but species separated by minor color (& pattern) differences, & certain scale differences. For general description of closely-related species, [See Hypnale hypnale](#).

Habitat

Mainly found in leaf litter & debris (maybe under logs or stones) near edges of forest clearings or paths. Limited to Kamaliya Forest on Sri Lanka at 1,000+ m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal. Feeds mainly on locally available small mammals, lizards & maybe birds. Ovoviviparous w/ clutch size not reported. For example activity described for a closely-related species, [See Hypnale hypnale](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic, w/ renal damaging factor(s). Bites & envenomations of humans is rare; no well-documented human fatalities caused by bite of this species, so far.

Ixodes holocyclus

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Identification

Family: Ixodidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Paralysis tick, Australian paralysis tick

Description

Small (about 3 mm long, unengorged), dark, eyeless, apple-seed-shaped & -sized, tick (the female is of greatest concern); body pale gray-brown & flat (unengorged) to dark reddish & grape-like shaped (engorged), w/ relatively darker "bib" on front of dorsum, immediately behind mouthparts.





Habitat

Found in places where its hosts (various sized mammals) occur; usually forest edges or brushy sites w/ fruits or grain sources nearby (typical food for its hosts). Limited mainly to eastern coastal areas of Queensland & Victoria, Australia.

Activity and Behavior

This species is a 3-host tick, which can feed on humans or domestic animals or pets in any of its active stages (larva, nymph or adult). Host-seeking activity varies w/ temperature, moisture, time of year, & presence of certain host cues. Most dangerous feeding sites are around back of host's head & ears.

Venom Characteristics

A protein factor (holocyclotoxin) in the saliva (mainly of females) of this species can cause gradual "ascending flaccid paralysis" in livestock animals &/or humans. Usually only happens when tick attaches & engorges at certain anatomical sites. Death is from respiratory arrest. Removing tick usually leads to "miraculous" rapid host recovery, otherwise victim dies. Feeding by one tick can cause death of a human or cow.

Lachesis acrochorda

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops arachorda, B. verrugosa, Lachesis calcaratus, L. muta (in part)

Common Names: Chocoan Bushmaster, verrugosa, diamante, mapana rayo, martiguaja, montuno, pudridora, verrugosa del Choco, guacama

Description

Very large, relatively slender, big-headed terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 1.8-2.3 m long (max. 3+ m); w/ pronounced mid-dorsal ridge (esp. front 1/4 of body), head lanceolate, reddish or brown w/ dark spots, snout not elevated; body yellowish-brown to reddish-tan w/ 23-31 dark dorsal rhombs, 31-39 (usually 35) midbody dorsal scale rows, belly white or cream w/ small darker blotches along sides.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical wet & moist forests w/ rainfall of 2.5-6.0 m/year; found on both Atlantic & pacific slopes of eastern Panama & western Columbia, then south along the pacific slope into northwestern Ecuador. Lives from near sea level to about 1,600 m elevation, most records are from 500-1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, inactive during day, generally nonaggressive, but males often active & engage in ritual combat in the daytime during mating season; Usually hide under logs, in rodent burrows or rock crevices. Feed mainly on small mammals or birds. Oviparous, females often remain coiled around or on their clutch (often up to 10 eggs).

Venom Characteristics

Venom includes factors that are proteolytic, hemorrhagic, myotoxic, clotting inhibitors & possibly neurotoxic. The sheer volume which can potentially be injected in one bite make these snakes (esp. adults) very dangerous. All 4 currently recognized *Lachesis* species combined probably cause >100 human deaths/ year in Central & South America.

Lachesis melanocephala

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Crotalus mutus*, *Lachesis muta melanocephala*, *Lachesis mutus*

Common Names: Black-headed bushmaster, cascabel muda, matabuey, plato negro

Description

Large, fairly slender, terrestrial, big-headed pitviper, adults usually 1.9-2.0 m long (max. 2.4 m); top of head all black, body yellow, yellowish-tan, creamy-tan or reddish-tan, w/ 26-33 dark diamond-shaped dorsal blotches, edged w/ a darker line, a series of cream to yellow-tan vertebral spots are interspersed between the dark blotches; 36-41 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly white or cream colored.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical moist forest, wet forest, & premontane wet forest which receive 2.5-4.5 m of rain/year, usually at 500 m elevation, or higher. Limited to Pacific slopes of southern Costa Rica (possibly also occurs in adjacent areas of Panama, but no verified specimens from there, so far).

Activity and Behavior

Very similar in biology & behavior to other closely-related species. For more probable typical behavior details (i.e., based on a closely-related species), [See Lachesis muta](#).

Venom Characteristics

Similar to some closely-related species. [See Lachesis muta](#).

Lachesis muta

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops surucucu, Coluber alecto, C. crotalinus, Cophius crotalinus, Crasedocephalus crotalinus, Crotalus mutus, Lachesis ater, Lachesis muta muta, L. m. rhombeata, L. m. noctivaga, L. mutus, L. rhombeata, Lachopsis rhombeata, Scytale ammodytes, S. catenata, S. catenatus, Trionocephalus ammodytes, T. brasiliensis, T. crotalinus, T. rhumbeatus

Common Names: Bushmaster, South American Bushmaster, cascabela muda, cascabel pua, cuanira, diamonte, shuchupe, matabuey, mapepire, parariapu, surucucu, urukuku, verrugosa [PLUS more than 50 additional local common names]

Description

Very large, rather slender, big-headed terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 2.0-3.0 m long (max. 3.6+ m); longest poisonous snake in the Americas. Prominent mid-dorsal ridge, esp. on the front 1/2 of body. Body reddish-brown, yellowish-tan, or pinkish-tan, w/ dark brown or black diamond-shaped dorsal blotches (often edged w/yellow or cream). Belly white or ivory, head lanceolate; tan, brown or reddish-brown w/ dark postocular stripe, & dark speckling/ spots.



Habitat

Mainly found in tropical rainforests & lower montane wet forests that get 2.0-4.0 m annual rainfall; may occur along rivers in drier regions. Often found near large, buttressed trees or fallen logs, from near sea level up to 1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, most likely to respond quickly to disturbance near dawn (often inflating neck & vibrating tail rapidly). The southeastern Costa Rican population reportedly is highly aggressive when disturbed. Oviparous, w/ 5-18 eggs/ clutch. Prey mainly on small mammals. Large adult captive specimens reportedly occasionally emit a long "whistling" sound.

Venom Characteristics

Has potent proteolysins; envenomation causes intense pain, swelling, & necrosis (often extensive) at the bite site, sometimes followed by gangrene. Bites from this species in Panama & Atlantic lowlands of Costa Rica have historically had a high case fatality rate.

Lachesis stenophrys

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops acrocordus, Lachesis acrocorda (in part), L. muta stenophrys

Common Names: Central American Bushmaster, bushmaster, boccaraca de javillo, cascabel muda, cascabela muda, ija, mapana, matabuey, mazacuata, toboa real, verrugosa

Description

Very large, rather slender, big-headed terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 2.0-2.5 m long (max. 3.48 m); pronounced mid-dorsal ridge (esp. on front 1/4 of body), head lanceolate, reddish-tan or brown, sometimes w/ sparse black speckling; body grayish-yellow, dull tan, yellowish-tan, or reddish-brown, w/ 23-29 dorsal rhombs w/ darker edges, 33-38 (usually 35) midbody dorsal scale rows, belly white or cream w/ irregular dark clumps or mottling on posterior 1/4 of body.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical rainforest & lower montane wet forest w/ rainfall of 2.0-4.0 m/year, also along streams in drier sites, usually on steep hillsides, of primary forest, sheltering under fallen trees; in the Atlantic lowlands from sea level to about 1,000 m elevation in Nicaragua, Costa Rica & Panama.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, generally not aggressive (males are irritable & engage in ritual combat in daytime during mating season). Usually hide under fallen trees in daytime, prey mainly on small mammals (sometimes birds), oviparous (clutch size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Highly potent proteolytic, hemorrhagic, myotoxic, clotting & possibly even neurotoxic factors present. Human envenomations fairly frequent, often quickly fatal; symptoms of even limited envenomation (by even young specimens) often include immediate pain, rapidly progressive swelling & numbness, rapid pulse, shock, vomiting, diarrhea, stabbing muscle pains, & respiratory distress.

Lapemis curtus

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New Name: [Hydrophis curtus](#) , changed Jan. 2013; see NOTE: under Hydrophis spp. (general)

Lapemis hardwickii

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New Name: [Hydrophis hardwickii](#) , changed Jan. 2013; see NOTE: under Hydrophis spp. (general)

Laticauda colubrina

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **Subfamily:** Laticaudinae

Scientific Names: Anguis platura, Coluber laticaudatus, C. platycaudatus, Hydrophis colubrina, Hydrus colubrinus, Laticauda scutata, Platurus colubrinus, P. fasciatus, P. frontalis, P. laticaudatus (in part)

Common Names: Yellow-lipped sea krait, Nattern-Plattschwanz

Description

Rather large, fairly thick-bodied sea krait, adults usually 90-120 cm long (max. about 140 cm); body bluish-gray w/ black crossbands which often encircle whole body; belly whitish to cream (w/ expanded scales or scutes), front of head w/ a broad cream or whitish band (from one eye around to the other) which includes both lips. Tail "oarlike."



Habitat

Mainly found in marine waters & (sometimes) on adjacent land along nearby coasts, mainly in the regions of the eastern Indian & southwestern Pacific Oceans.

Activity and Behavior

Very docile, seldom ever attempts to bite even when handled. Feeds almost exclusively on eels (e.g., moray, zebra & conger eels). Very agile while crawling over land (usually at night), for considerable distances. Hunt prey in marine waters, come ashore (or onto rocks & pilings) to mate, lay eggs, digest meals & drink fresh water. Oviparous, usually 4-20 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic w/ myotoxic factor(s). Produce & inject a rather small volume of venom in a given bite. Bites of humans are rare but a few have been reported. No significant human envenomations or fatalities documented, so far.

Laticauda laticaudata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **Subfamily:** Laticaudinae

Scientific Names: Coluber laticaudatus, Laticauda laticaudata affinis, L. l. laticaudata, L. l. wolffi, L. scutata, L. wolffi, Platyrus affinis, P. fischeri, P. laticaudatus, P. laurenti, P. muelleri,

Common Names: Common seakrait, blue-lipped seakrait, brown-lipped seakrait

Description

Medium-to-large fairly thick-bodied seakrait, adults usually 90-110 cm long (max. 120+ cm); body deep blue to light blue dorsally, w/ wide black bands (usually completely encircling body), cream to whitish belly, upper lip (labial scales) usually dark brown.

Habitat

Found in shallow marine waters & nearby lands in the Austral-asian region of the northeastern Indian & southwestern Pacific Oceans.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly feed on moray eels & elongate fish (like gobies) in their marine burrows, oviparous, mate, digest meals, & lay eggs on land (1-14/ clutch). Usually come onto land mainly at night.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxins & myotoxins, may cause renal failure. No serious human bites or envenomations reported.

Laticauda semifasciata

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Identification

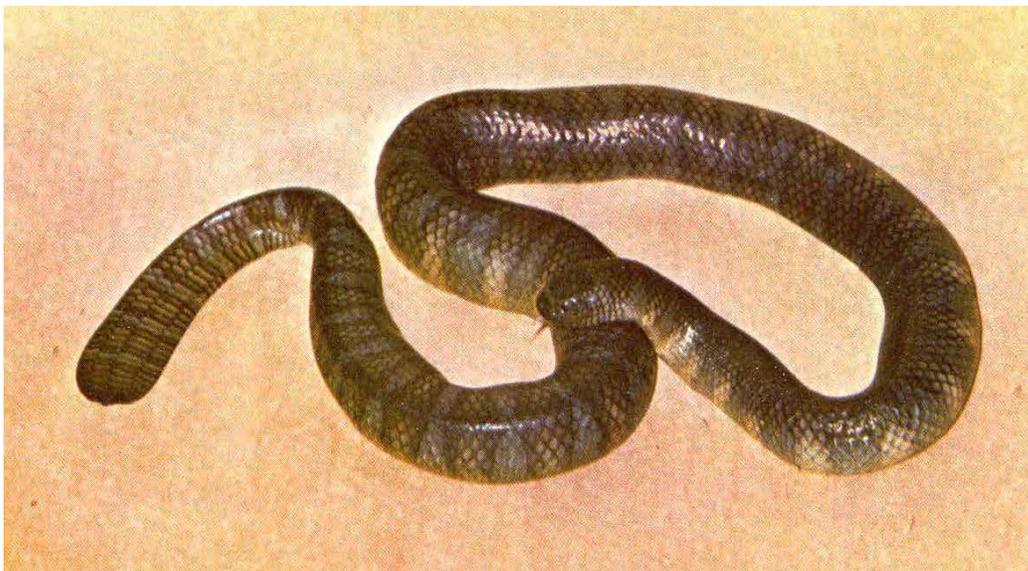
Family: Elapidae **Subfamily:** Laticaudinae

Scientific Names: *Platurus fasciatus*, *P. f. var. semifasciata*, *P. semifasciata*, *Pseudolaticauda semifasciata*

Common Names: Erabu seakrait, Chinese seasnake

Description

Large, blunt-nosed, stout-bodied seakraits, adults usually 0.8-1.5 m long (max. >2.0 m), body light blue-grayish & encircled w/ 35-40+ dark brownish-red bands, each widest at dorsal midline (more than twice as wide as on belly). Head mostly dark brownish-red above, lighter below. Belly w/ wider scales (scutes), tail "oarlike."



Habitat

Mainly found in marine waters &/or on adjacent shores (land) from Indonesia to Japan. Often found in large numbers in rainy season, especially near or on rocky near-shore islands along east Asian coasts (Japan, China, etc.). Often caught in local fishermen's nets (several in each cast of a net), & skins are sold.

Activity and Behavior

For details of behavior & habits of a closely-related species, [See *Laticauda laticaudata*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic & myotoxic. Tests on lab animals have shown the main effect is respiratory disfunction. Amount of venom available for injection by large individuals at each bite (17+ mg) makes these potentially dangerous. Apparently seldom bite or envenomate humans, & no human fatalities documented, so far, from bites by this species.

Laticauda spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae **Subfamily:** Laticaudinae

Scientific Names: There are currently at least 8 recognized named species in the genus *Laticauda*, but only a few are commonly enough encountered by humans to be of concern or interest. Some species are limited to relatively small or remote ranges (*L. schistorhynchus*) or to a single land-locked brackish lake (e.g., *L. cickeri*).

Common Names: Seakraits (see individual listed species)

Description

Fairly large, cylindrical, fairly thick-bodied seakraits, w/ blunt rounded snouts; most of which are about 1.0-1.2 m long (some >1.5 m), usually w/ brightly colored bodies which are dark above, whitish below, & patterned w/ broad obvious dark bands (often encircling the body). Some have contrasting markings on their head or lips.

Habitat

Mainly found in moderately-shallow to shallow marine waters & adjacent land (often islands) along the margins of the northern Indian & western or southwestern Pacific Oceans.

Activity and Behavior

Most species hunt their prey in marine waters, then come onto dry land (shore, rocks, or pilings) to digest the meal, mate, & lay their eggs. Most species feed on various near-shore or reef marine fish or eels. Mainly come out of water only at night.

Venom Characteristics

Main venom factors are either neurotoxins or myotoxins, & although potentially deadly, reported bites & envenomations of humans by these snakes are rare.

Latrodectus curacaviensis

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: South American Black Widow, Arana del trigo, Brazilian Black Widow

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, adult females w/ body (= cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 11-17 mm long. Female's abdomen rather large, rounded like a grape; w/ several bright red irregular stripes & blotches covering >1/2 its surface. Body & legs dark brownish to black, "satiny" surface (not shiny). Males much smaller, thinner w/ relatively longer legs. Males & young usually w/ varying patterns of many reddish, white, &/or brown stripes & spots.



Habitat

Usually found hanging in its cobweb type web in upper corners of outbuildings, under logs, in sheds, stone fireplaces, etc.; often near trash & debris. Wherever it is usually fairly dry, dark, & prey insects are adequate (i.e., not exposed to direct sun, rain, or general predators, like birds or lizards). Limited to South America. Probably also occurs in Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, & Peru, but no confirmed specimens from there so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, tries to avoid large animals & people; but female may aggressively defend her egg sac. Feed on wide range of available insects that are caught in its cobweb, which is usually about 1 ft. (30 cm)

across (in 3-dimensions). Males may be eaten by females (usually after mating) if prey has been scarce, but this does not always happen.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (presynaptic sites). Bite often hardly noticed until >15 min later, then intense local pain, often spreading, & other systemic effects like sweating, rapid breathing & heart beat, eyelids swelling, salivation, rigid & painful abdominal muscles, sometimes nausea, vomiting & impaired sight. Human fatalities occur (up to 5% in untreated cases), but are infrequent, & children are most severely affected.

Latrodectus geometricus

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: *Latrodectus concinnus*, *L. obscurior*, *L. mactans* (in part), *L. m. tredecimguttatus*, *L. zickzack*

Common Names: Brown widow, grey widow, brown button spider, geometric button spider, knoppie spider, knoppie

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, female's body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 7-14 mm long (male's body 3-5 mm long & much thinner). Female's globular abdomen usually w/ red-orange "hourglass" mark on ventral surface; dorsally tan to very dark-brown w/ prominent but variable-shaped black-&-white geometric pattern. Males & young variously patterned w/ black, white, & orange stripes & spots dorsally. Each egg sac is covered w/ small raised bump-like papules.





Habitat

Found mainly hanging in its cobweb in an upper corner of a partly shaded, partly sheltered moderately humid site, like under eaves, in a basement corner, in wood piles, crawl space, or windows (often below projecting sill). Common in & around humans' homes, wherever adequate prey populations occur. Cosmopolitan, found essentially everywhere but the arctic & antarctic, & is one of the 2 most wide-spread of 31 currently named species in this genus. Probably is often moved in commerce.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal. Usually hang in their web until some prey contacts it. Then the spider rushes to the spot, wraps the prey in more stands of silk, bites (envenomates) it, & waits a while before sucking out the prey's body juices. Hangs egg sacs in its coarse 3-D cobweb. Usually avoids big animals & people, but may aggressively defend egg sacs. Human envenomations (bites) occur when the spider is molested, brushed against, stepped on, or trapped in clothing being donned.

Venom Characteristics

Neurotoxic (at pre-synaptic sites), but less potent than that of many typical black-colored species in this genus. Effects of envenomation can include severe local pain, sweating, lachrymation, limited muscle spasms, breathing & heart difficulties. Deaths due to this species are cited in older literature, but no recent (e.g., in past 20 yrs.) well-documented case. Prior reported fatalities may have been due to other spp. (misidentified), or facilitated by other contributing medical problems.

Latrodectus hasselti

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: *Latrodectus agoyangyang*, *L. ancorifer*, *L. dahli*, *L. elegans*, *L. hasselti aruensis*, *L. kapito*, *L. luzonicus*, *L. mactans hasselti*, *L. scelio*, *L. s. var. indica*, *Theridium malanogantha*, *T. zebrina*

Common Names: Red-backed spider, Australian red-back, red-backed widow spider, stripe-backed spider, katipo, nin'lau, laba pantat merah

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spiders, females' body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 10-16 mm long, satiny jet-black, w/ a variable, but obvious, red stripe along the mid-dorsum of their spherical abdomen (from before the mid-point around to their posterior ventral spinnerettes. Males rarely seen, usually about 3 mm long, slender, lighter colored usually brownish w/ reddish (sometimes yellowish) & white markings.



Habitat

Mainly found in moderately dry, built up areas, often around buildings, outdoor furniture, machinery, & stacked material (e.g., firewood). Widespread in Australia, but also in several Southeast Asian countries & India & probably occurs in several other countries (e.g., Malaysia), but no confirmed specimens have been reported from them so far. Has probably been dispersed in commerce (e.g., the record from Saudi Arabia).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, usually build (& hangs in) undefined "cobweb type" webs under logs, ledges, large rocks, or in corners of open buildings. Prey on whatever (mainly insects) gets caught in their web. Not usually aggressive, but female will sometimes defend her egg sacs. Male not always eaten after mating, unless other prey is scarce, but he often dies soon afterward anyway.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (at pre-synaptic sites). Pain from bite usually delayed up to 15 min. Envenomation can cause intense local & spreading pain, muscle twitching, sweating, lacrymation, breathing & heartbeat irregularities, salivation, nausea, vomiting, restlessness, fever, & general weakness. Fatalities have been documented, but have not caused a human death (in Australia) in the past several decades, partly due to availability of effective antivenom.

Latrodectus hesperus

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: *Latrodectus mactans* (in part)

Common Names: Western Black Widow, southwestern jockey spider, widow spider

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, female's body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 11-14 mm long, satiny dark brown to black w/ reddish "hourglass" mark on posterior ventral abdomen (the front part of hourglass distinctly longer & wider than back part). Female abdomen rounded & globular. Males much smaller, rather slender w/ relatively long legs. Males & young often w/ varying pattern of multiple stripes or blotches of red, white & brown on abdomen.



Habitat

Usually found hanging in typical "cobweb," usually near ground level under various objects, often in small animal burrows, often near garbage or debris, wherever insect prey is abundant. Well adapted to semi-arid areas. Natural range mainly limited to southwestern U.S. Well adapted to semi-arid sites. (Kansas south to Texas, and westward) & northwestern Mexico. Has been reported from Israel (probably as an introduced species).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, hangs in web awaiting prey, usually tries to avoid large animals & people, but may aggressively defend egg sacs, which it hangs in its web. Preys on nearly any kind of arthropod or insect which gets caught in its web. Males not always eaten after mating w/ female, usually only if female has not fed recently, but he is often "biologically spent" & dies soon afterward anyway.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (at presynaptic sites). Bite often not felt 'til several min. later, then pain may be locally intense. Severe envenomation can cause spreading intense pain, sweating, fast & shallow breathing, swollen or drooping eyelids, excess (or no) salivation, cardiac rhythm irregularities, & sight impairment. Human fatalities are rare & usually due to secondary complications or concurrent, but separate, additional medical problems.

Latrodectus indistinctus

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Black Button Spider, Widow Spider, knoppie, knoppe-spinnekop

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, adult females' body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 7-16 mm long. Abdomen spherical, w/ dark-brown to black, satiny (silky) appearance. Abdomen variably patterned w/ white or red flecks or bands above (may be unmarked), many of which fade w/ each molt, often indistinct at maturity. Most retain at least short red stripes radiating up the dorsal abdomen tip, just above (& often also ventral to) the spinnerets. Males usually 2.5-5 mm long.



Habitat

Mainly found in edges of tangled brush & uncut grass or tall vegetation in fairly dry sites, often at edges of agricultural areas or sparse forest, & often associated w/ a side of a ditch, trench or banked soil. Not common around buildings. Limited to southern Africa. May also occur in Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique & Zimbabwe, but no specimens confirmed from those countries so far.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, usually not aggressive; often drop to ground & "play dead" if disturbed. Hangs egg sacs in cobweb, which is usually built in brushy vegetation or debris, w/ prey available nearby. Prey mainly on insects or arthropods. Females will sometimes aggressively defend their egg sacs; many will bite if molested or their body or a foot/leg is pinched.

Venom Characteristics

Neurotoxic. Envenomation can cause slightly delayed (by a few minutes) sharp, burning pain at bite site (spreads to lymph nodes in about 15 min.); severe muscle pain & cramps within 1 hr.; anxiety, sweating, fever, slurred speech, nausea, & headaches. Fewer than 5% of human envenomations are fatal, usually due to respiratory failure, & mainly affect children.

Latrodectus mactans

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: Aranea mactans, Latrodectus albomaculatus, L. formidabilis, L. insularis insularis, L. i. lunulifer, L. intersector, L. mactans mexicanus, L. m. texanus, L. perfidus, L. sagittifer, Tetragnatha zorilla, Theridion lineatum, T. lineamentum, T. verecundum [Note: This is one of the 2 most geographically wide-spread & best known of at least 31 currently valid species in this genus.]

Common Names: Black Widow Spider, Southern Black Widow, red-back spider, jockey spider, Katipo, viuda negra, chiranthahua, arana brava, casampulga, la coya, arana naranja

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, females' body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 10-15 mm long, satiny dark-brown to black w/ reddish "hourglass" mark on posterior ventral abdomen, often w/ a reddish spot on dorsal abdomen just above its tip. Female abdomen rounded & globular. Males much smaller, rather slender w/ relatively long legs. Males & young often w/ varying pattern of many stripes or blotches of red, white & brown on body.





Habitat

Most often found hanging in typical "cobwebs" in upper corners of basements, crawl spaces, outbuildings, & under seats of outdoor privies, usually near garbage or debris, wherever insect prey is abundant. Geographically wide spread. Found in southern U.S. (New York to northern California & southward), several Caribbean islands, Mexico, & Central & parts of South America.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, hangs in web awaiting prey, usually tries to get away from large animals & people, but will often aggressively defend its egg clusters (sacs) which it has hung in its web. Feeds on nearly any kind of insect or arthropod which gets caught in its web. Males are not always eaten after mating w/ a female, usually only if female has not fed recently, but he is often "biologically spent" & dies soon afterward anyway.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (presynaptic sites). Bite usually like a pinprick, often not felt 'til 15 min. later, then pain may be locally intense. Severe envenomation causes symptoms like spreading intense pain, lots of sweating, fast & shallow breathing, eyelids swollen, alternating excess & lack of salivation, cardiac rate & rhythm changes, rigid abdominal muscles, sight impaired (seeing "light" spots). Human fatalities rare (<5%, untreated) & often due to additional medical problems.

Latrodectus spp.

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: Aranea sp. (in part), Tetragnatha sp. (in part), Theridion sp. [Note: There are at least 31 currently recognized named spp. in this genus; 8 of the most important ones are addressed separately, individually.]

Common Names: Widow spiders, Black Widows, Shoe-button spiders, jockey spiders

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spiders. Some characters vary a lot between species, sexes, & growth stages. Females w/ body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 8-18 mm long, males of all spp. much smaller (body usually 3-7 mm long) & thinner. Female's abdomen usually globular, satiny, dark brown to black (some spp. pale tan), most spp. w/ bright red or orange marks (hourglass-like is classic), pattern varies a lot in some spp.



Habitat

Mainly found hanging in a coarse cobweb, in upper corners of partly sheltered, semi-dark spaces w/ presence of adequate prey (usually insects or other arthropods). Various species are found regionally throughout temperate & tropical areas world wide. Individual species usually much more restricted in their natural distribution (e.g., see individual species detailed separately).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal. Usually hang in a coarse cobweb in upper corner of partly sheltered sites like basements, crawl spaces, under eaves, etc., wherever prey (mainly insects) are present. When any prey is caught in web, the spider rushes to it, wraps it w/ more silk, bites it (injects venom) & waits a while to suck out its body liquids (partly predigested). Hangs drop-shaped egg masses in its web to hatch. Male not always eaten after mating, unless prey is scarce.

Venom Characteristics

Neurotoxic (at pre-synaptic sites). Bite (envenomation) not usually felt for several minutes; usually causes intense local pain & can cause sweating, fast & shallow breathing, heart arhythmias, salivation, rigid abdomen, muscle spasms, sight impairment, etc. Fatalities (mainly children) have been reported for several spp., & a few occur annually, but symptoms & risk vary significantly by spider species & many other factors.

Latrodectus tredecimguttatus

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: *Latrodectus argus*, *L. conglobatus*, *L. erebus*, *L. lugubris*, *L. malmignatus*, *L. martius*, *L. oculatus*, *L. quinqueguttatus*, *L. venator*, *Meta hispida*, *M. schuchii*, *Theridion lugubre*

Common Names: Mediterranean widow spider, European widow spider, North African Widow spider, 13-spotted widow spider, ragno rosso, malmignatte, la malmignatte, roga, marmaga, bou siha, tendarman, saeuss, crna baba, crve-ni pauk, karakurt, chim

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, female's body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 9-18 mm long (male's body usually 4-7 mm long & much thinner). Female abdomen globular, very dark-brown to black, usually w/ many (typically 13, up to 17; rarely no markings) moderately large dorsal red blotches in an irregular pattern. Young w/ paler body, red, orange, & white stripes &/or spots in various patterns.



Habitat

Mainly found outdoors, hanging in its typical cobweb in partly sheltered, partly shaded, moderately humid situations (like under an awning, crawl space, wood pile, eave, or window frame) w/ adequate populations of prey insects (or arthropods) nearby. This species is very wide spread around the Mediterranean Sea in southern Europe, northern Africa & the Middle East, also found in Russia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal. Usually avoids large animals & humans, but females sometimes will aggressively defend their egg sacs hanging in their web. Prey mainly on available insects or arthropods which get caught in its web. Males may be eaten by females after mating, but not always (unless female has not fed recently). Usually bite humans only if molested, stepped on, or pinched in clothing being donned.

Venom Characteristics

Neurotoxic (at pre-synaptic sites). Envenomation (bite) not usually felt for several minutes. May cause intense local pain, followed by spreading pain, sweating, lacrymation, muscle spasms, heart or breathing difficulties, impaired vision, rigid (& painful) abdominal muscle wall, sometimes nausea & vomiting. Envenomation by this species currently causes a few human fatalities annually, mainly of children (about 5% of untreated severe envenomations).

Latrodectus variolus

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Identification

Family: Theridiidae

Scientific Names: *Latrodectus mactans* (in part), *L. m. variolus*

Common Names: Northern Black Widow, Black Widow, shoe-button spider, hourglass spider

Description

Medium-sized cobweb spider, female's body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 9-11 mm long (male's body usually 4-5 mm long & much thinner). Female satiny dark brown or black, w/ distinct red or orange "broken (divided) hourglass" mark on ventral side near posterior tip of globular abdomen.





Habitat

Most often found hanging in a cobweb in an upper corner of any partly shaded, partly sheltered moderately humid site w/ prey insects (or arthropods) available nearby. This species mainly limited to Canada & northern U.S., but may also be present in (but no specimens yet documented from) Mexico. Specimens are sometimes moved in commerce.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, usually hangs in its coarse cobweb in an upper corner of a shaded, partly covered site like a basement, crawl space, low building eaves, or under a privy seat, near a source of prey (insects or other arthropods). Tend to avoid large animals & humans, but female will sometimes aggressively defend egg sacs. Envenomations usually occur when spider is molested, brushed against, stepped on, or pinched in clothing being donned.

Venom Characteristics

Neurotoxic (at pre-synaptic sites). Bite like a pinprick, envenomation usually not felt for >15 min., can cause intense local pain (sometimes spreading), heart arrhythmias, sweating, lacrymation, muscle spasms, rigid abdominal muscles, breathing & sight impairment (seeing light "spots"), etc. Serious human envenomations & rare fatalities (mostly children) have occurred. Calcium gluconate (IV) may reduce symptoms. Full recovery from serious envenomation may take >1 mo.

Leiurus quinquestriatus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Androctonus quinquestriatus (in part), Buthus quinquestriatus, Leiurus sp.

Common Names: The death stalker, five-striped desert scorpion, Israeli yellow scorpion, yellow scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults up to 90 mm long. Body usually pale yellow-brownish (sometimes w/ greenish tinge), cephalothorax darker (brownish or gray-brown) than legs & post-abdomen, 5 dorsal longitudinal keels on top of first 2 abdominal segments, 5th post-abdominal segment (next to the telson) distinctly darker than remainder of abdomen & legs. Legs & post-abdomen w/ many strong, erect hairs & spines; pincers relatively long & thin.



Habitat

Mainly found in dry habitats (deserts) on various substrate surfaces but not in loose-sand dunes, & not common near towns, nor near (nor in) houses. Often hide in small natural crevices, burrows, under stones, etc. Widely distributed across northern & central Africa & the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, often hunt available prey (insects, arthropods &, occasionally, small lizards) near oases, or along edges of vegetation in desert margin sites. Ovoviviparous, young (usually 20+) hatch inside female's body & crawl out her genital opening. Young often remain w/ female & ride on her back until they are 2nd instars.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent neurotoxin, one of the world's most dangerous scorpions (partly because stings usually occur at locations very remote from necessary supportive medical care). Causes mainly localized reactions, swelling & pain in >90% of stings, but kills several humans annually. Children most severely affected because severity of venom effects are weight-dependent.

Leiurus spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names:

Description

Habitat

Activity and Behavior

Venom Characteristics

Leptomicrurus collaris

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Elaps collaris, Hemibungarus collaris, Leptomicrurus collaris breviventris, Micrurus collaris

Common Names: Guianan black-backed coral snake, Guianan slender coral snake, coral, cobra coral, costa-preta, espalda-negra, Kraalslang, krarasneke, la negra, vibora de coral

Description

Slender, dark, terrestrial coral snake adults usually <40 cm long (max. 45.6 cm). Body mostly dark dorsally w/ a distinctive pattern of 35-50 oval white, yellow, or orange-red blotches on black or dark brown venter. This species lacks body rings, & the head & dorsum are black or very dark-brown w/ a red, white, or yellow neck ring; tail short, one pair of fixed upper front fangs. Dorsal scales are smooth & in 15 mid-body rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in lowland rainforest & lower montane wet forests from near sea level up to 800 m elevation. Limited to Caribbean & Atlantic coastal countries of northern South America.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, at least semi-fossorial (burrowing) in sandy soil & accumulations of forest litter. Oviparous, clutch size not documented. Reportedly prey mainly on available lizards, other snakes, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably mainly neurotoxic. Venom is injected through grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, this species could probably only bite humans on a finger, a toe, or in webbing between such digits. No serious human envenomations or fatalities reported due to bites by this species.

Leptomicrurus narduccii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps melanotus*, *E. narducci*, *Leptomicrurus narducci melanotus*, *L. n. narducci*, *Micrurus narduccii*

Common Names: Andean black-backed coral snake, Andean slender coral snake, cobra coral costa preta Andina, coral, coral espalda negra Andina, coralillo, culebra de dos cabezas, Coral, Naca-Naca, yamong

Description

Adults usually 30-60 cm long (max. 110 cm); body usually uniformly black dorsally, except for a pale (usually yellow) ring around the neck; some rare specimens also have 2-8 very narrow pale rings around the body (look like thin cross-stripes dorsally), usually mid-dorsally & toward the tail, & a fairly short tail. Belly w/ 38-62 obvious oval orange, red or yellow blotches on a black background. Has a pair of fixed upper front fangs.



Habitat

Mainly found in lowland rainforest & lower montane wet forest, usually in accumulated leaf litter in shaded sites at 100-1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, at least partly fossorial (burrowing) in soft soil or forest litter. May raise & curl tail when disturbed. Seldom seen & usually not aggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake. Oviparous, usually <20 eggs per clutch. Mainly prey on available lizards, invertebrates or other small snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through grooved fixed front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, bites to humans by this species usually occur on a finger, toe or webbing between those. No serious human envenomations or fatalities reported to have been caused by this species, so far.

Leptomicrurus renjifo

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Ringed slender coral snake, coral

Description

Small, slender coralsnake, adults about 42 cm long. Unusual pattern for a coral snake, body w/ roughly equally wide, alternating black & pinkish-orange rings. Has a pair of fixed upper front fangs, & fairly short, relatively blunt tail. Only 2 specimens known.

Habitat

Found in leaf litter in a gallery forest by the river Rio Tomo, in northeastern Colombia; at that location, the river was flanked by savannah & grain fields. Only known from that single locality in Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

Unknown, but probably similar to other related species; being mainly nocturnal, terrestrial (semi-fossorial), not aggressive, oviparous, & predatory on a variety of small, locally available lizards, invertebrates & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not known, but probably neurotoxic. No human bites nor envenomations reported.

Leptomicrurus scutiventris

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Elaps scutiventris, Leptomicrurus schmidti, Micrurus karlschmidti, M. narducci (in part)

Common Names: Pygmy slender coral snake, pygmy black-backed coral snake, coral, cobra-coral preta pequena, coral negra pequena

Description

Small, slender, dark coralsnake, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 44.5 cm). Head & body uniformly dark brown to black dorsally, except for a pale (white, yellow, or reddish) ring at the back of the head & another near the tail tip. Belly dark brown w/ 24-38 rounded yellow, orange or red blotches; these blotches sometimes have blackish speckling. Has a pair of fixed upper front fangs & a relatively short tail.

Habitat

Found mainly in pluvial forests & lower montane wet forests of the Northwestern Amazon basin. Mainly a lowland species, but has been reported up to 1,200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

No data. Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, bites to humans by this species usually occur on a toe or finger. No serious human envenomation or fatality reported as caused by this species, so far.

Lonomia achelous

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Identification

Family: Saturniidae

Scientific Names: *Lonomia diabolous*, *Lonomia obliqua* (in part), *Phalaena achelous*

Common Names: Stinging caterpillar

Description

Larvae are large, often 50+ mm long in 6th (largest) stage (instar). Very spiny, thick-bodied, usually greenish-brown w/ dark brown or black head capsule. Younger instars lighter green (darken w/ age), eggs pale greenish-yellow, barrel-shaped, laid in clusters on suitable host plant leaf or stem. Adults dull, various shades of pale to medium-brown, w/ wings held partially closed at rest & greatly resembling a dead leaf, w/ a darker "midrib" stripe from wing-tip to wing-tip.



Habitat

Larvae are found on several species of trees & woody shrubs; most active feeding at night on host leaves, gather in clusters & remain inactive on lower trunk or branches of host plant during the day. Known distribution includes most of northeastern & central South America, from northern Argentina &

northern Brazil to Venezuela & Peru; not yet reported from Bolivia or eastern (Amazonian) Ecuador, but probably occurs there.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnally active larvae eat leaves of various woody shrubs & trees. They congregate & remain inactive, clustered on trunks or lower branches of the same plants, during the day. Larvae are covered w/ strong, pointed, many-branched hollow spines. Venom in those spines (spicules) is passively injected into any intruder when the spine tips stick into it & are broken off there.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent anticoagulant & pro-coagulant factors, & possibly other factors affecting blot clotting. Very minor dermal contact w/ a L. achelous larva usually causes immediate burning sensation, & within a few hours, discomfort, weakness, headache, & various external & internal bleeding (w/ opening of any partially-healed wounds). Acute renal failure (ARF) or cerebral hemorrhage can cause human deaths (many each year). Eggs, pupae & adults do not cause such effects.

Lonomia obliqua

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Identification

Family: Saturniidae

Scientific Names: *Lonomia achelous* (in part), *Phalaena achelous* (in part)

Common Names: Stinging caterpillar, electric caterpillar

Description

Larvae are large, w/ largest (6th) stages (instars) averaging 53.5 mm long, very spiny, thick-bodied, usually greenish-brown w/ a dark-brown to blackish head capsule. Younger instars usually lighter green, Eggs pale green, somewhat barrel-shaped, laid together on host plant stems or leaves. Adults have various shades & patterns of dull brown, rest w/ wings partly folded & very much resemble dead leaves, w/ a distinct dark "midrib" line from wing-tip to wing-tip.



Habitat

Larvae are found on several species of trees & woody shrubs (most actively feeding on leaves at night; congregated in large inactive groups on trunks & lower branches during the day). This species is mainly (possibly only) found in southern Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnally active larvae eat leaves of certain woody shrubs & trees. They congregate & remain inactive, clustered on trunks or lower branches of the same plants, during the day. Larvae are covered w/ multi-branched, strong, pointed, hollow spines. Venom is passively injected through those spines (spicules) into intruders who contact & break the tips off. Humans are envenomated (sometimes fatally) when they step on, or merely brush against, a larva.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent venom w/ anticoagulant, pro-coagulant, & several additional factors affecting blood clotting. Dermal contact w/ a *L. obliqua* larva usually causes immediate burning sensation, & within a few hours, discomfort, weakness, headache, & various external & internal bleeding (w/ re-opening of any partially-

healed wounds). Acute renal failure (ARF) or cerebral hemorrhage have caused human deaths (many each year). Eggs, pupae & adults not known to cause any such effects.

Lonomia spp.

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Identification

Family: Saturniidae

Scientific Names: *Lonomia* (formerly *Phalaena*) spp. [There are currently 5 recognized species in this genus, mainly distributed throughout northern South America, w/ one species also occurring throughout Mexico & Central America, & one limited to southern Brazil. All can "sting," but only two species (detailed separately) are known to cause human fatalities.]

Common Names: Stinging caterpillars, electric caterpillars

Description

Larvae usually grow to 50+ mm in their largest (6th) stage (instar). Very spiny, thick-bodied, & usually greenish-brown w/ dark head capsules when fully grown. Younger instars are usually lighter greenish-brown. Eggs usually pale greenish, laid in clusters on host plant stems or leaves. Adults dull brownish, hold wings partly closed at rest, & look very much like dead leaves w/ a dark "midrib" stripe from wing-tip to wing-tip.

Habitat

Larvae usually found on various species of host plant shrubs or trees, actively feeding on upper leaves at night; inactive & clustered on stem or lower branches during the day. Mainly limited to central & northern South America (east of the Andes) & Central America, w/ 1 species found in Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnally active larvae eat leaves of various host plants (usually woody shrubs or trees). They congregate & remain in inactive clusters on stems, trunks or lower branches of host plants during the day. Larvae are covered w/ strong, sharp-pointed, multi-branched, hollow spines containing their venom; which is passively injected when any intruder breaks off any spine tips in itself (usually in its skin).

Venom Characteristics

Contains very potent anticoagulant, pro-coagulant, & possibly other clot-inhibiting factors. Very minor dermal contact w/ a larva can cause immediate intense burning sensation, & within hours, discomfort, weakness, headache, & various external & internal bleeding (often re-opening any partially-healed wounds). Acute renal failure & cerebral hemorrhage can cause human deaths (many per year, by two species). Eggs, pupae & adults do not cause such effects.

Loxosceles deserta

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: *Loxosceles unicolor* (in part)

Common Names: Desert brown spider (North American), desert fiddle-back spider

Description

Adult females' bodies average about 9 mm long (males smaller), w/ relatively longer, thinner legs than most spiders, 2nd pair longest in this species. Body light-gray, tan or medium brown w/ darker brown "fiddle-shaped" mark on top of cephalothorax, w/ 3 pairs of eyes (diads) along the fiddle's front edge. No distinct contrasting stripes, spots or darker strong spines on legs or body. Closely resembles *L. reclusa*, but slightly smaller & paler, w/ relatively slightly longer legs.

Habitat

Found mainly in arid desert sites, below 5,000 ft. (1,500 m) elevation. Wide-spread in the Mojave & Sonoran Deserts of southern Utah, Nevada, California, Arizona & Baja California Norte (probably also occurs in adjacent Sonora but no specimens known from there, so far).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, unless a large population is present. Usually spin irregular webs in crevices & openings alongside or under stones, logs, or available "chunks" (large physical pieces) of debris in dry desert margin situations. Tend to stay in contact w/ that web except when trying to capture prey nearby. Essentially behave as "wandering hunters" foraging out from their moderately open, sparsely-webbed retreat to capture locally available insects or arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Contains potent cytotoxic, hemotoxic & neurotoxic factors (& hyaluronidase). Envenomation causes various effects in humans, from limited, localized cutaneous (& underlying tissue) necrosis; to spreading, progressive, much deeper tissue necrosis (very slow to heal); to death. Human fatalities have not been documented due to venom of this species, but serious, extensive tissue necroses have been reported, & venom of closely related species, like *L. reclusa*, has proven lethal to humans.

Loxosceles gaucho

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: *Loxosceles laeta* (in part)

Common Names: Brown spider, violin spider, "Gaucho Spider"

Description

Adult females usually w/ body 7-12 mm long (up to 14 mm) w/ males smaller than females. Body usually pale to dark-brown (often w/ reddish tinge), w/ slightly darker "violin-shaped" dorsal mark on carapace, w/ its base at anterior edge. Only 6 eyes (in 3 pairs, or diads) along the "violin's" base. Legs relatively long & slender, w/ no marks, stripes or obvious darker spines. Looks very much like *L. laeta*, but most specimens darker or more reddish where the 2 spp. occur together.

Habitat

Mainly found in dark, fairly warm, fairly dry, undisturbed sites, often under loose bark, or in crevices beneath stones or logs. Often live around the outsides of (& even inside) houses in central & southern Brazil (e.g., Sao Paulo). May be moved in commerce.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, usually spin irregular webs in cracks, crevices, & "corners" along or under large rocks, logs or items of solid debris, then stay in contact with that webbing except to forage out short distances & capture insects or arthropods which wander nearby. Tend to avoid humans or other large animals, but will bite defensively if pinched or bothered.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably contains cytotoxic, haemotoxic, & neurotoxic factors. Bites (& envenomations) of humans are usually due to the spider being molested, pinched, rolled onto or trapped inside clothing being donned. Human fatalities have been reported from bites of this species.

Loxosceles intermedia

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: *Loxosceles laeta* (in part)

Common Names: Brown spider, violin spider

Description

Female usually w/ body 7-12 mm long (up to 14 mm), male smaller. Body usually light-tan to dark-brown, w/ slightly darker "violin-shaped" dorsal mark on top of carapace (w/ 3 pairs of eyes along violin's base at

front margin), abdomen often grayish-brown. Legs fairly long, slender & w/ no marks, stripes, bands or obvious dark spines. Looks very much like *L. laeta*, but usually slightly smaller in areas where they both occur.

Habitat

Mainly found in dark, protected, fairly dry, crevices in warm regions at low elevations (below 500 m). Commonly found around & inside humans' homes, mainly in central & southern Brazil. Overlaps part of the range of *L. laeta*, but they are seldom found in same local habitats (*L. laeta* predominate inside "drier," wooden buildings).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, mainly a wandering hunter type predator on available insects or arthropods. Usually spin only a loose web in their harborage crevices or to cover eggs. Usually avoid humans & other large animals, but will bite defensively if molested, pinched, rolled onto, stepped on, or trapped in clothing being donned.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly potent cytotoxic, neurotoxic, & hemotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes significant local pain, redness & inflammation, & local tissue necrosis. Systemic effects (sometimes delayed 1-5 days) may include spreading tissue necrosis, cardiac problems, distant vascular collapse & small hemorrhages, acute kidney failure & death. Causes a number of human fatalities each year within its range.

Loxosceles laeta

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: *Scytodes laeta*, *Scytodes nigella*, *Scytodes rufipes*

Common Names: Brown spider (South American), (Chilean) violin spider, Chilean Recluse, Chilean fiddle-backed spider

Description

Adult female's body usually 12 mm long (up to 15 mm), male usually smaller. Carapace & appendages bright yellowish to orange or reddish-brown. Abdomen grey to white, covered w/ black hairs, giving it a dusky appearance. Eyes relatively smaller than those of the "*L. reclusa* group," 3 diads in a strongly recurved row (along the base of the "fiddle-shaped" dorsal mark), 4th pair of legs distinctly longer than any other pair.



Habitat

Mainly found in fairly dry (sometimes in seasonally moist) sites, often transported in commerce & found in drier, less actively occupied parts of humans' structures (e.g., in edges of garages or closet, or among & under stored boxes or furniture). Original natural distribution was probably limited to northwestern South America, but now very wide spread (usually established in open dry, heated buildings in temperate regions). Specimens reported from Australia & Finland.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, usually spins irregular web in corners (when in buildings) or in cracks under edges of stones logs, blocks, etc. Usually remains in contact w/ web except to forage out short distances to catch prey insects or arthropods which happen nearby.

Venom Characteristics

Contains potent cytotoxic, hemotoxic, & neurotoxic factors (& hyaluronidase). Envenomation usually causes at least some local tissue necrosis around bite site, well documented to cause serious spreading human tissue destruction (necrosis), & occasional human deaths.

Loxosceles reclusa

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: *Loxosceles rufescens* (in part), *Loxosceles rufipes* (in part). [Note: This is the species of this genus most commonly encountered by humans in North America. Of the 70 described species in this genus, 50 are found in the Americas (14 in the U.S.). A few are found (rarely) in Europe & in Africa.]

Common Names: Brown recluse spider, fiddle-back, violin spider, brown spider

Description

Adult female typically w/ body 7-12 mm long (male smaller), various shades of brown from grayish-tan to nearly black, w/ only 6 eyes in 3 pairs (diads) along front margin of dorsum (along base of distinct "fiddle-shaped" mark, which is usually slightly darker than background body color). No other distinct, contrasting stripes or spots on the body, nor on any legs. Legs thin, 2nd pair usually longest, no strong spines on legs or body.





Habitat

Mainly found in dark, undisturbed corners or cracks (often indoors or within structures), w/ fairly warm temperatures (65-80 degrees F). Natural distribution limited to a big oval-shaped area of central & southeastern U.S. (from Iowa south to Arkansas, Louisiana, & east to Alabama, most of Tennessee & Kentucky). Sometimes moved to other areas in commerce, but seldom establish more than temporary populations (usually only indoors) there. May occur in Mexico, but no confirmed specimens so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal unless local population is very large. Mainly a wandering hunter preying on insects & other available arthropods. Builds only limited webbed retreats or protective web coverings for eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly cytotoxic (several different such factors), often causing serious local & progressive tissue necrosis; also includes potentially lethal neurotoxic factors. A number of serious slow-healing wounds (necrotic arachnidism), sometimes including very large body areas occur yearly within its range, & occasional human deaths have been reported from envenomation by this species. Symptoms of an antibiotic-resistant bacterium (MRSA) can resemble surface effects of this spider's bites.

Loxosceles rufescens

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: Scytodes rufescens, Loxosceles marylandica

Common Names: The Mediterranean Recluse, Brown spider, violin spider

Description

Female w/ body usually 7-12 mm long (up to 15 mm). Usually medium-brown to dark chestnut-brown, w/ slightly darker brown "violin shaped" mark on top of carapace (its base along the front margin). Only 6 eyes (in 3 pairs, or diads) around the front edge of the "violin's" base. Abdomen often lighter, legs fairly long, slender & w/ no marks, stripes or obvious strong spines. Usually looks very much like *L. reclusa* but carapace darker & usually reddish-brown.



Foto Luciana Bartolini

Habitat

Found mainly in fairly dry, warm, cryptic, dark, undisturbed sites, often in crevices/ narrow spaces under or beside logs, stones, boxes, or wall voids. Frequently found in sub-basements of older, heated large buildings in temperate zones. Reportedly originated in Mediterranean Europe & N. Africa, but now wide spread in tropical, sub-tropical & many temperate areas (may be nearly cosmopolitan in buildings). Sometimes found outdoors under loose bark near ground level in warm regions.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, "wandering hunter," typically preying on locally available insects & arthropods. Builds only a loose web in or near harborage (usually in crevices beside or under logs, stones, boxes, etc.), or to

cover a clutch of eggs. Usually one of the most reclusive species in this genus & seldom encountered by humans.

Venom Characteristics

Contains moderately potent cytotoxic, hemotoxic, & neurotoxic factors. Very few human envenomations, & no well-documented human fatalities, reported as having been caused by envenomation by this species. But often misidentified as *L. reclusa*, or other *Loxosceles* spp.

Loxosceles spp.

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Identification

Family: Loxoscelidae

Scientific Names: *Scytodes* spp. [Note: This genus currently includes about 70 recognized named species, w/ about 50 found mainly in the Americas, another 15 found mainly in Africa, & at least 3 which have obviously been translocated widely by commerce (2 spp. have repeatedly established populations in heated buildings in sites far too cold for an outdoor population to survive over winter).]

Common Names: Brown spiders, violin spiders, fiddle-back spiders, "Brown Recluse" spiders

Description

Medium-sized spiders, females of most spp. w/ body usually 6-14 mm long. Usually some shades of brown (tan to very dark brown), w/ a slightly darker "violin-shaped" mark on top of the carapace, & w/ its base at the front (anterior) edge of the carapace. No other distinct marks, stripes or bands on body or legs. Only 6 eyes, in 3 pairs (diads), around the "violin's" base. Abdomen often lighter colored. Legs fairly long & slender, lacking obvious spines, stripes, or spurs.

Habitat

Exact typical local habitat (& natural species range) varies w/ individual species. Most spp. are mainly found in dark, fairly warm, fairly dry, protected (cryptic) sites, which are relatively undisturbed & have adequate insect (arthropod) prey available. Some spp. often establish populations (sometimes very large numbers) inside buildings. Found throughout much of the tropical, subtropical & some temperate zones of the world.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, unless local population is very large. Mainly "wandering hunter" type predators on available insects or arthropods. Usually spin only a limited loose web in, or at the mouth of, a crevice or similar retreat, females may spin a sheet of web to cover their clutch of eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Contains potent tissue necrotic, neurotoxic, haemotoxic &, in some spp., also cardiotoxic factors. Envenomation by some spp. may cause intense local pain, but more often seems like a "pin-prick." Venom of this genus nearly always causes some tissue necrosis (often progressively spreading) at a bite

site. Systemic effects can be delayed 1-24 hrs., & sometimes include acute renal (kidney) failure &/ or cardiac problems.

Macrelaps microlepidotus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis natalensis*, *Uriechis microlepidotus*

Common Names: Natal black snake, Natal-Schwarzschlange

Description

Medium-sized, stout, burrowing snake, adults usually 60-90 cm long (max. 120 cm); body color uniform black to jet-black above & slightly lighter below. Dorsal scales smooth, & in 23-27 midbody rows. Small head w/ minute eyes, not distinct from neck. Fixed small upper fangs located below the eyes, not in the front of the mouth.

Habitat

Mainly found in damp localities in forests & along streams. Limited to coastal regions of eastern South Africa (Zululand to East London). Cryptic even within its limited range.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, apparently semi-fossorial (burrowing). Often shelters beneath rotting logs, under stones, in leaf litter, animal burrows, or stormwater drains. May be seen moving about on warm overcast or rainy days. Swims well. Seldom tries to bite, even when handled. Preys on small mammals, other snakes, etc. Oviparous w/ up to 10 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Very little is known about its venom, however, although they are very rare, bites may be serious. May bite unexpectedly, even after being very docile for a long period of captivity. Collapse & loss of consciousness for up to 30 minutes has been reported. No known antivenom produced.

Macroprotodon cucullatus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: Coluber cucullatus, Coronella brevis, C. cucullata, Lycognathus cucullatus, L. textilis, Macroprotodon brevis, M. cucullatus brevis, M. c. cucullatus, M. c. ibericus, M. c. mauritanicus, M. mauritanicus, M. moroccanus, M. textilis, Psammophytax cucullatus

Common Names: Balearic false smooth snake, culebra de copulla, kapuzennatter, cobra-de-capuz, colubra dal cappuccio, mutslang, crowned snake, hooded snake, cowl snake

Description

Small to medium-sized, relatively slender, adults seldom more than 65 cm long. Body usually light brown, gray or yellowish, sometimes w/ shades of pink mixed in; w/ faint black markings on sides. Often has scattered dark brown to black dorsal flecks or blotches, in no definite pattern. Usually has a dark "horse-shoe" shaped mark on top of its head. Belly usually pink, yellow, or white, often checkered w/ dark (blackish) blotches.



Habitat

Found mainly in open woodlands, sandy scrub, hedgerows, grassy hillsides, rock slides, meadows, fields near rocky hillsides, & in rock walls. Often shelters in damp rock crevices & tunnels. Widespread through much of southwestern Europe & northern Africa. Occurs from near sea level to about 500 m elevation. Oviparous, w/ usually 5-7 eggs per clutch.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & terrestrial, basks in sunlight; constricts smaller prey (mainly lizards, but also small snakes & snake eggs, mice, & occasionally small birds). Usually avoids humans & other large animals. Often shelters in damp rock crevices & tunnels.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but apparently at least mildly neurotoxic, & has caused numbness in a human's whole limb (e.g., arm) for a few hours.

Macrovipera deserti

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Daboia lebetina deserti*, *Vipera lebetina deserti*, *V. mauritanica* (in part), *V. mauritanica deserti*

Common Names: Desert viper, North African desert adder

Description

Large, stout-bodied viper (adder), w/ short, broad head, rounded snout, keeled scales, 27 midbody dorsal scale rows, adults up to 1.3 m long; body grayish to dirty cream, heavily patterned w/ 24-25 rounded dark gray-brown blotches in zig-zag pattern w/ appearance of irregular narrow cream dorsolateral bars that reach the vertebral line but seldom meet. Head gray w/ dark postocular stripe, pattern fades w/ age, belly light gray, rather long tail.

Habitat

Found mainly on well-vegetated rocky mountain slopes, in southern Morocco, Algeria, Libya, & Tunisia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, slow moving, nocturnal (most active from dusk through early night hours); hides in rock caves, under debris, or in rodent burrows in daytime, preys mainly on small mammals. When threatened, coils, flattens body, hisses, & will strike suddenly if further disturbed.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably mainly hemotoxic; no reported serious bites (envenomations) of humans.

Macrovipera lebetina

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Coluber lebetinus, Daboia lebetina, D. I. lebetina, D. I. obtusa, D. I. peilei, D. I. transmediterranea, D. I. turanica, Macrovipera lebetina cernovi, M. I. lebetina, M. I. obtusa, M. I. peilei, M. I. transmediterranea, M. I. turanica, M. deserti, M. mauritanica, Vipera euphratica, Vipera lebetina, V. I. euphratica, V. I. lebetina, V. I. mauritanica, V. I. obtusa, V. I. peilei, V. I. schweizeri, V. I. transmediterranea, V. I. turanica, V. mauritanica, V. obtusa, V. xanthina

Common Names: Levantine viper, Blunt-nosed viper, Levantenotter, Lebetine viper, Lavantadder, Vipere lebetine, kufi

Description

Medium to large, robust snake, adults usually 70-115 cm long (max. 180 cm); body usually light gray, khaki, or buff, to reddish-brown, w/ double row of opposing or alternating dorsal spots from head to tail. Dark lines usually form a "V-mark", pointing forward, on top of the head. Females usually darker, background color brownish; males usually lighter, background color grayish. Belly light gray to yellow, w/ small dark brown spots; tail short, tapers abruptly, underside of tip yellow.





Habitat

Found in a wide variety of habitats from marshes & plains at sea level to mountainous areas up to 2,000 m elevation. Also semi-desert areas & rocky, hilly country at moderate elevations, w/ scattered bushes & adequate water supply. Often near farms. Rather wide spread in southern Europe, northern Africa, the Middle East, & southern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Most active & alert at night, usually very slow-moving & almost oblivious to stimuli during day, but temperament unpredictable, & may suddenly strike quickly & savagely.

Venom Characteristics

Venom mainly hemotoxic. Envenomation causes sharp pain at site of bite, followed by local swelling & necrosis. Numerous serious envenomations & deaths of humans reported each year.

Macrovipera mauritanica

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Clotho mauritanica*, *Daboia lebetina mauritanica*, *Echidna mauritanica*, *Macrovipera mauretana*, *Vipera confluenta*, *V. lebetina mauritanica*, *V. mauritanica mauritanica*

Common Names: Moorish viper, blunt-nosed African viper, Altasotter

Description

Large, fat-bodied viper (adder), w/ distinct head, narrow snout, keeled scales, adults up to 1.8 m long; body brownish-gray (rarely pale reddish or brown) w/ conspicuous pattern of 23-33 dorso-lateral blotches which touch along vertebral line, forming a darker broad dorsal zig-zag mark, belly lighter, 26-27 midbody dorsal scale rows, relatively long tail.



Habitat

Mainly found in wooded steppe & rocky mountain slopes. Limited to Morocco, northern Algeria, & Tunisia near the coast.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal (dusk & early night hours), slow-moving, hides in rock caves, rodent burrows or under brush in daytime. When disturbed, adopts a striking posture, flattens head, & give a deep hiss. Mainly preys on small mammals, sometimes birds; young also eat lizards. Oviparous, w/ up to 18 eggs/clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic; >60 known bites (envenomations) of humans; most w/ local swelling & bruising, pain, & hematological abnormalities (3 fatalities reported). Large amount of venom & long fangs may make significant envenomation more likely.

Macrovipera schweizeri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Daboia lebetina schweizeri*, *Vipera lebetina siphnensis*, *V. l. schweizeri*, *V. schweizeri*

Common Names: Milos viper, Milosotter

Description

Moderately large, semi-arboreal, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults usually 70-100 cm long; body light gray to orange or black, w/ (or without) faint dorsal crossbars, moderately long tail.

Habitat

Found mainly in brushy, rocky hillsides, often near water. Limited to four small Greek islands (Miols, Syphnos, Kimolos, & Polynos). Possibly Europe's most endangered snake species.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly crepuscular or nocturnal, but sometimes ambushes prey in daytime. Preys mainly on migrating passerine birds & sometimes small rodents. Ambush prey by water holes, or climb into bushes to capture roosting birds. Oviparous, w/ up to 10 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, probably mainly hemotoxic, procoagulant & hemorrhagic. Bites of humans have been reported (but no documented fatalities).

Malpolon monspessulanus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Coelopeltis insignitus*, *C. lacertina*, *C. monspessulanus*, *Coluber insignitus*, *C. monspessulanus*, *Malpolon monspessulanus*, *Malpolon monspessulanus indignitus*, *M. m. monspessulanus*, *Natrix lacertina*

Common Names: Montpellier snake, Eidechsenater, Hagedisslang

Description

Large, moderately slender, rear-fanged (opisthoglyphous) snake, adults 1.2-1.5 m long (max. 2.5 m); body usually blackish, grayish, brown, or olive; belly yellowish-white. May have indistinct pattern of brown spots along sides. Head distinctive; large fixed upper rear fangs.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry, open, or stony areas, w/ low bushy vegetation, or semi-desert areas along coast. Found at greater than 2,000 m elevation; mainly found in countries bordering the Mediterranean or Black Seas.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & mainly terrestrial (but climbs into bushes). Aggressive; will bite if pestered or restrained. Sometimes a savage biter. Mainly preys on small mammals, sometimes also on birds or lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Venom moderately neurotoxic; may cause immediate pain, stiffness, swelling, & fever. Neurological symptoms, such as Central Nervous System depression, ptosis, & paresis of affected limb, difficulty swallowing, observed for up to 48 hours in severe cases.

Mesobuthus eupeus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthotus eupeus, Buthus eupeus

Common Names: Lesser Asian scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpions (adults usually 50-80 mm long). Body usually medium yellow-brown to darker brown dorsally, w/ legs & cauda lighter brown or yellowish-brown (often w/ greenish tinge), 5th caudal segment often dark. Median dorsal ocular tubercle prominent, 2 darker brown longitudinal stripes on dorsal cephalothorax. Dorsal keels form distinct "H-shaped" & lyre-shaped designs on top of carapace.



Habitat

Typically found under stones & similar cool, moist sites within relatively dry, rocky, sparsely vegetated places, & usually remote from human habitations. Very wide-spread geographically in the Palearctic

region. May be present but not yet documented from additional Middle Eastern & southwestern Asian countries (e.g., Kazakhstan, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, northern India).

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal (but sometimes active at dawn or dusk), & mainly terrestrial, but can climb well. Ovoviviparous, & preys on locally available insects & arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Not well documented, but mainly neurotoxic, w/ cytotoxic (& possibly cardiotoxic) factors. Envenomations by this species usually cause localized pain, swelling, redness, & often discoloration. Stings of nomadic & rural humans are fairly common in remote locations (usually due to their disturbing stones in sandaled feet, or while sleeping on the ground), but serious systemic effects or fatalities are reportedly rare.

Mesobuthus martensii

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Buthotus martensi*, *Buthus martensi*

Common Names: Martens' scorpion

Description

Small to Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually about 35-50 mm long (max. 60+ mm). Cephalothorax & preabdomen brown to blackish dorsally, legs, pedipalps & postabdomen (cauda) & telson usually yellow (except 5th caudal segment darker). Pincer tips & telson spine (sting) very dark. Distinct "H-shaped" & "lyre-shaped" pattern of keels on top of carapace. Young specimens (juveniles) often have a distinct reddish tinge in their legs, pedipalps, & cauda.



Foto: Ondřej Řehák



© Eric Ythier

Mesobuthus martensii

Habitat

Mainly found under stones or in similarly cool, moist sites within relatively dry or seasonally dry & sparsely-vegetated areas. Mainly occur naturally in sites outside human habitations, but sometimes found inside buildings. Distribution includes some seasonally very cold regions (e.g., Mongolia, North Korea), where it is most active during the summer (hottest) months.

Activity and Behavior

Usually remain relatively inactive during colder months, usually nocturnal but sometimes diurnal; depending on ambient temperatures, any recent rains, & the habits & abundance of locally available primary prey insects & arthropods. Terrestrial, but climb well. Tend to avoid humans, but sting readily if molested, stepped on, or trapped inside clothing being donned. Ovoviviparous, typical litter size not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cytotoxic (& possibly also cardiotoxic) factors. Stings usually cause localized pain, swelling, & redness (& occasionally discoloration). This species causes a considerable number of stings of humans annually in parts of its range, but serious envenomations are not common, & human fatalities (reported to have been caused by this species) have not been well documented.

Mesobuthus spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthotus spp., Buthus spp. [Note: There are currently at least 13 valid named species in this Old World genus, but only a few cause significant or frequent human envenomations & only one, *M. tamulus*, causes significant numbers of human deaths annually.]

Common Names:

Description

Most species in this genus are medium-sized scorpions (adults usually 50-90 mm long), dorsally dark (usually brownish) scorpions w/ lighter (usually yellowish or greenish) legs, pedipalps & cauda. Most species have keels that form raised "H-shaped" & "lyre-shaped" patterns on the dorsal carapace, & most have darker dorsal longitudinal stripes (w/ pattern varied by spp.) on their cephalothorax.

Habitat

Found most often outdoors, under rocks or in similar fairly cool, moist situations within a relatively dry (sometimes seasonally dry, or even arid), rocky, sparsely-vegetated landscape. Limited to the Middle-East & Asia (Palearctic; w/ distribution varied by individual species).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (see details for individual species presented separately).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cytotoxic (& cardiotoxic) factors in the venom of some species (see individual species details presented separately).

Mesobuthus tamulus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthotus tamulus, Buthus grammurus, B. tamulus, B. t. concanensis, B. t. gangeticus, B. t. grammurus, B. t. gujaratensis, B. t. indicus, B. t. typicus, Mesobuthus tamulus concanensis, M. t. gangeticus, M. t. grammurus, M. t. gujaratensis, M. t. indicus, M. t. typicus, Scorpio martensii (in part), S. nigro-lineatus

Common Names: Indian red scorpion, red scorpion

Description

Medium to large-sized scorpion, adults usually 65-90 mm long (max. 94+ mm). Body color variable, may be mainly black, brown, reddish-brown, greenish, or yellow. Often most of body has reddish tinge. Appendages usually yellow to pale brown, sometimes w/ longitudinal, median, dorsal, double stripe on mesosoma. Reddish body color often very pronounced in young (immature) specimens.





Habitat

Found under stones, seldom inside humans' houses, throughout India, at a range from near sea level to >500 m elevation. Apparently seems to "prefer" cool, moist sites. So far only reported from India, but may occur in suitable habitats in adjacent Pakistan & Bangladesh.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, sometimes active at dusk, & terrestrial (but climbs very well). Ovoviviparous, reported litter size 30-61. Prey on available insects & other arthropods (sometimes cannibalistic in captivity).

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin(s). Causes a large number of human envenomations & some deaths (especially of small children) each year in India.

Micropechis ikaheka

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Coluber ikaheka, Micropechis ikaheka fasciatus, M. i. ikaheka, Ophiophagus ikaheka var. fasciatus

Common Names: New Guinea small-eyed snake, ikaheka snake

Description

Medium to large-sized, rather stout-bodied, smooth scaled semi-aquatic snake, adults usually 0.6-1 m long (max. 2.0 m); body color variable, usually yellowish, cream, or light brownish, often w/ darker brown or reddish crossbands (narrower toward tail). Head narrow, distinct from neck, gray (may be black above), blunt, w/ tiny dark eyes. Belly yellow. Tip of tail black above.



Habitat

Mainly found in monsoon & rain forest areas, swamps, & plantations. When on land, often found under old coconut husks, from sea level up to 1,500 m elevation. Most commonly seen in drier months. Limited to Indonesia & New Guinea.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal, but seldom seen during day. Semi-aquatic, & generally secretive, species which frequently also burrows in leaf litter or loose soil. Eats lizards, other snakes (including its own species), small mammals, & frogs. Has a tenacious "chewing" biting behavior. Oviparous w/ no clutch size reported.

Venom Characteristics

Highly myotoxic, hemotoxic, & neurotoxic; causes myalgia, muscle tenderness, & severe neuromuscular paralysis. Minor symptoms include nausea, severe headache, & prolonged weakness. Unconsciousness & respiratory arrest reported within 2 hours; death reported within 7 hours. No known antivenom currently produced.

Micropechis spp.

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: [Note: Some VERY rare genera of related Elapid snakes (not included here), also sometimes called "small-eyed" or "coral" snakes, w/ biologies similar to Micropechis, are restricted to parts

of Bouganville, Fiji, New Guinea, or the Solomon Is. These include: *Aspidomorphus* (3 spp.); *Loveridgelaps* (1 sp.); *Ogmonon* (1 sp.), *Parapistocalamus* (1 sp.), *Solomonelaps* (1 sp.); & *Toxicocalamus* (9 spp.).]

Common Names: Small-eyed snakes

Description

Small to medium-sized, moderately stocky-bodied snakes, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. about 120 cm). Body color variable, usually yellowish to brownish, w/ darker brownish rings (which become narrower toward tail). Belly usually yellowish. Head & tip of tail black above. Head narrow, distinct from neck, w/ relatively small eyes.

Habitat

Monsoon & rain forest areas, swamps, & plantations. Often found in in swamps & along forest creeks. When on land, frequently found under old coconut husks & similar organic debris. Most commonly encountered in drier months.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal, semi-aquatic &/or semi-fossorial (burrowing); but some spp. may be nocturnal, or both. Seldom seen in daytime. Generally secretive, burrow in leaf litter or loose, sandy soil. Oviparous, w/ clutch size not reported. Mainly eat available small mammals, lizards & frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Highly myotoxic, causing myalgia, muscle tenderness, & severe neuromuscular paralysis. Minor symptoms include nausea, severe headache, & prolonged weakness. Unconsciousness & respiratory arrest reported within 2 hours; death within 7 hours, due to bites (envenomation) by one spp. in this genus (see *M. ikaheka*).

Micruroides euryxanthus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps euryxanthus*, *Micrurus euryxanthus*, *Micruroides euryxanthus australis*, *M. e. euryxanthus*, *M. e. neglectus*

Common Names: Sonoran coral snake, western coral snake, Arizona coral snake, Arizona-Korallenotter, corallito, corallito de Sonora, sikkucha'a, s-wawpani

Description

Small, slender, tricolored coral snake, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 55 cm); Snout black to behind eyes, yellow or white nuchal (neck/ back part of head) ring. Dorsal pattern usually broad to very broad red rings alternating w/ black rings, w/ narrower yellowish rings between each other 2 colors of rings, producing a red-yellow-black-yellow-red-yellow (RYBYRY) sequence. Dorsal scales smooth, in 17 parallel longitudinal midbody rows.



Habitat

Mainly found in deserts, mesquite grasslands, tropical deciduous forest, thorn forest & lower pine-oak forest; found in loose, sandy soil in rocky areas, open woodlands, & plains, up to at least 1,800 m elevation. Limited to the U.S. (southern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico) & Mexico (Sonora, Sinaloa).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal; may appear on the surface during overcast or rainy days. When disturbed, usually tries to escape or will raise & curl tail. If agitated, will bite, & expel gas loudly for its size. Most bites occur during attempts to capture a specimen. Oviparous w/ usually 1-3 eggs/ clutch. Eats mainly other snakes (cannibalistic) & lizards, rarely also small mammals & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but most coral snakes have venom which is mainly neurotoxic. Although seldom aggressive, even when handled gently, this species has historically caused numerous human fatalities via its envenomations. Death is reportedly most often due to nerve blockage causing respiratory failure.

Micrurus albicinctus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus ornatissimus*, *M. waehnerorum*

Common Names: White-ringed coral snake, cobra-coral, cobra-coral de cincta branca

Description

Small, bi-colored black-&-white coral snake, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 57.3 cm); body has appearance of generally black w/ row of dorsal white blotches or spots (instead of white cross bands) encircling the body.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland rainforest, in Mato Grosso, Rondonia, & Amazonas, in the middle Amazon in northwestern Brazil (may also occur in similar habitats in southeastern tip of Colombia &/or northeastern tip of Peru, but no specimens confirmed from there, so far).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Not much known.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but nearly all coral snakes have mainly neurotoxic venom. No human envenomations reported, so far.

Micrurus alleni

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus alleni alleni*, *M. a. richardi*, *M. a. yatesi*, *M. nigrocinctus alleni*, *M. n. yatesi*, *M. yatesi*

Common Names: Allen's coral snake, coral, coralillo, coral cabeza flecha, coral de agua, coral macho

Description

Medium-sized, tricolored coral snake, adults usually 0.6-0.8 m long (max. 1.3 m). Black cap on top of head extends rearward, nearly bisecting a broad yellow crossband; body usually w/ alternating broad dull red & black rings separated by much narrower yellow or white rings (rybyr). Color patterns differ between some Atlantic versant vs. Pacific versant populations.



Habitat

Found most commonly in lowland rainforest & subtropical wet forest, occasionally along rivers in drier areas. Mainly found below 1,000 m; but has been found up to 2,000 m elevation in Costa Rica.

Activity and Behavior

A secretive, but a fairly common snake (*M. alleni* is responsible for many coral snakebites in Central America). Sometimes found close to human dwellings. Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking; coral snake venoms primarily are neurotoxic.

Micrurus altirostris

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps altirostris*, *E. heterochilus*, *Micrurus frontalis altirostris*, *M. f. multicinctus*, *M. lemniscatus multicinctus*

Common Names: Uruguayan coral snake, boipinima, cobra-coral-pampeana, cobra-coral uraguaia, coral uraguaia, vibora de coral

Description

Small to medium-sized, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 131 cm); a tricolored coral w/ 11-18 complete triads of black rings (bwbwb) on body, each red ring nearly as wide as each adjacent triad. Dorsal scales smooth, edges of red & black rings look "jagged" because each scale is all red (or all black). Tail rather short w/ <2 whole triads.

Habitat

Lowland deciduous forest & open areas, like savannahs, & pampas, survives well in areas moderately altered by human activity. Found from sea level to about 400 m elevation in Uruguay, northeastern Argentina, southern Brazil, & possibly also in extreme southeastern Paraguay (but no specimens reported from there, yet).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, mainly terrestrial, mainly nocturnal.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species, but most coral snake venoms are mainly neurotoxic.

Micrurus ancoralis

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Identification

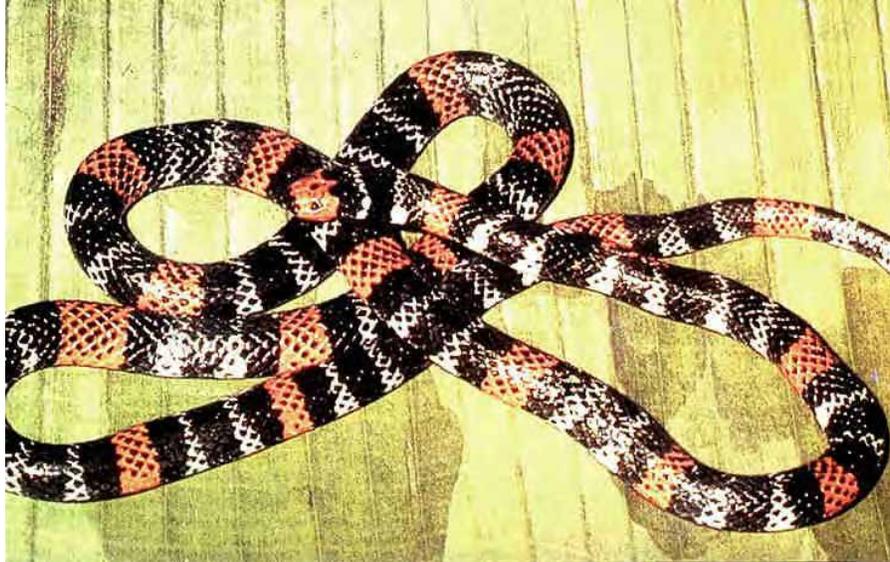
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps marcgravii* var. *ancoralis*, *E. ancoralis*, *E. rosenbergi*, *Micrurus ancoralis ancoralis*, *M. a. jani*

Common Names: Regal coral snake, coral, coralillo, Gargantilla, coral rey

Description

Medium-sized tricolored coral, adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 151 cm); most of head red (*M. ancoralis jani* w/ a distinct oblique white marking on each side of neck), body w/ a series of broad red rings (often heavily stippled w/ black in *M. a. ancoralis*) alternating w/ 12-24 triads (bwbwb) on body & 1-2 more on tail. Individual white rings may often (each) be wider along flanks & may run at a slightly oblique angle.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical rainforest & lower montane wet forest usually at <1,500 m elevation; but reported up to 2,300 m in Colombia. Probably limited to Pacific lowland of eastern Panama, western Colombia, southern Ecuador & far northwestern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (semi-burrowing). Not well known. Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive. Oviparous w/ clutch size not reported (but probably <10 eggs/ clutch). This species eat mainly available other snakes, lizards, & frogs, & (less often) invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Most coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom in glands located in the upper jaw, which can be injected through grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, most coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe. Bites usually occur during attempts to catch the snake.

Micrurus annellatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Elaps annelatus, E. balzani, E. regularis, Micrurus annellatus annellatus, M. a. balzani, M. a. bolivianus, M. a. montanus, M. balzani, M. langsdorffii [Note: Tri-colored forms of this sp. MAY be a related, but undescribed, species w/ a very limited distribution within Peru.]

Common Names: Annelated coral snake, cobra-coral anelada, coral anilada, naca-naca

Description

Small, thin tricolored (bicolored in some specimens) coral snake, adults usually 20-30 cm long (max. 70 cm); Usually overall dark blue to blackish, w/ narrow rings of white, yellow, pale blue (*M. a. annellatus*), or dull red (*M. a. balzani*). When tricolored, it is black, red, & yellow; & does NOT have any "triads."



Habitat

Mainly found in montane wet forest & cloud forest; may be found in lower montane dry forest in Bolivia. Occurs at 300-2,000 m elevation. Limited to Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, & Peru (a record from southernmost Colombia not yet verified).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snakes usually are nonaggressive. Probably preys on locally available lizards, invertebrates or other small snakes. Probably oviparous w/ typical clutch size <15 eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. Most coral snakes have highly potent mainly neurotoxic venom, produced by glands in the upper jaw, which can be injected through grooved, fixed upper front fangs. Due to their small mouth, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger, toe, or webbing between such digits; & bites occur during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus averyi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Black-headed coral snake, cobra-coral cabeça preta, coral cabeça negra, kraka sneki, kraka sneki nanimak

Description

Small to medium-sized, thin-bodied coral snake, w/ max. adult length 70+ cm. Body w/ 8-13 very narrow black rings (edged on each side w/ a thin white/yellow ring or row of spots) separated by very broad (wide) red rings (rybyr); tail is black w/ 4-7 more narrow "yby" bands. Has a pair of fixed upper front fangs.



Habitat

Mainly found in wetter forested areas from sea level up to at least 600 m elevation. Limited to Manaus, Brazil, Guyana, & Suriname.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snakes are mainly terrestrial, partly fossorial (burrowing in leaf litter or soft soil), & usually are nonaggressive. Most species prey on locally available lizards, invertebrates or other small snakes. Most spp. are oviparous w/ typical clutch size <15 eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. Most species of coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger, toe or on webbing between such digits; & occur during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus baliocoryphus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps baliocoryphus*, *Micrurus frontalis baliocoryphus*, *M. f. frontalis* (in part), *M. f. mesopotamicus*

Common Names: Mesopotamian coral snake, biopinima, coral, coral mesopotamica, cobra coral mesopotamica

Description

Small to medium-sized, tri-colored coral snake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 144 cm). Usually 9-16 black triads on body (bwb), many white dorsal scales bordered w/ a thin black margin, snout & chin white (often w/ black spotting). Dorsal junctions of red & black rings often look "jagged" because scales tend to be all black or all red. Tail short (w/ <2 complete triads).

Habitat

Found mostly in open areas such as pampas & in deciduous forest, from sea level to 200 m elevation. Limited to northeastern Argentina & Paraguay.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snake spp. are mainly nocturnal, terrestrial or semi-fossorial (burrowing in soft soil & leaf litter) & not aggressive. Most spp. of coral snakes are oviparous w/ typically <15 eggs/clutch. Most species feed on available lizards, other snakes, or invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most coral snake venoms mainly contain potent neurotoxins. Coral snakes have small mouths, & bites to humans are usually on a finger, toe, or webbing between such digits, & usually occur when the snake was being caught or molested.

Micrurus bernadi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps bernadi*, *Micrurus diastema bernadi*

Common Names: Blotched coral snake, coral, coral ensillado, coralillo

Description

Medium-sized bi-colored coral snake, adults usually 55-65 cm long (max. 82+ cm). Body mainly reddish (sometimes orange) w/ 24-42 dark-brown to black dorsal spots or rounded crossbands (often divided by red scales at middorsal line). These bands sometimes go down the sides, but do not form complete rings. The head is nearly entirely dark brown or black. Tail usually w/ yellow rings alternating w/ 5-12 black rings. Rarely, some yellow scales on head.



Habitat

Found mainly in cloud forest & tropical evergreen forest, at 1,400-2,100 m elevation, but rarely as low as 50 m elevation. Limited to southeastern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known; reportedly this species is very uncommon. Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive. Mainly prey on locally available small lizards, invertebrates or other small snakes (may be cannibalistic). Most coral snakes are oviparous w/ typically <15 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most coral snakes' venom is mainly potently neurotoxic. Because their mouths are so small, most coral snake bites of humans are on a finger, toe, or webbing between such digits; & usually occurs during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus bocourti

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps bocourti*, *Micrurus bocourti bocourti*, *M. circinalis*, *M. ecuadorianus*, *M. e. ecuadorianus*

Common Names: Ecuadorian coral snake, coral, coralillo, coral de triadas falsas, naca-naca

Description

Medium-sized coral snake, adults usually 45-70 cm long (max. 82 cm). Top of head nearly entirely black; body usually mainly reddish, w/ a series of narrow/broad/narrow black rings separated by narrow yellow rings (rbybybr), 14-22 such triads on body. Black rings often less distinct or misshapen on belly. Tails bicolored w/ 5-8 alternating black & white (or yellow) rings. One pair of fixed upper front fangs.

Habitat

Found mainly in coastal lowland dry forest, thorn forest, & lower montane dry forest (sometimes extending into more moist habitats); up to nearly 1,500 m elevation; limited to Pacific versant of Ecuador & northwestern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (& semi-burrowing in leaf litter & loose soil). Coral snakes usually are not aggressive, are oviparous (w/ <15 eggs/clutch), & mainly feed on available lizards, other snakes, frogs, & invertebrates (& rarely on small mammals).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species, but most coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe or webbing between digits; & during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus bogerti

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Bogert's coral snake, coral, coralillo, coralillo castanero

Description

Small coral snake, adults usually 45-60 cm long (max. 77 cm). Body mainly red, w/ a series of 16-19 black rings, each narrowly bordered w/ yellow (rybyr), black neck (nuchal) ring 6-7 scales wide (long). Snout black, tail w/ alternating wide black & narrow yellow rings.

Habitat

Tropical deciduous forest & dry coastal thorn & scrub forest. Limited to southwestern Mexico (Oaxaca), from near sea level to 400 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Coral snakes usually are nocturnal, terrestrial (sometimes burrow in loose soil or litter) & are nonaggressive. Probably mainly prey on available small lizards, invertebrates, or other small snakes, & are oviparous w/ typically <15 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but coral snake venom is mainly neurotoxic. Because of their small mouth, coral snake bites of humans occur usually on a toe, finger, or webbing between such digits; & usually during attempts to catch or bother the snake.

Micrurus brasiliensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus frontalis brasiliensis*, *M. frontalis* (in part)

Common Names: Brazilian coral snake, cobra-coral, coral verdadeira, coral

Description

Medium to large tri-colored coral snake, adults usually 65-85 cm long (max. 151 cm). Body reddish w/ 11-14 triads of black rings, tail short (w/ <2 full triads). Snout & chin white (usually w/ scales edged w/ black; & often w/ black spots), head w/ wide red band around middle. Dorsal junctions of red & black rings looks "jagged" because scale tend to be all red or all black. One pair of fixed, upper, front fangs.

Habitat

Found mainly in deciduous subtropical & tropical forests, cerrado savannas, & scrub-palm associations; from near sea level to about 600 m elevation. Limited to southeastern & south-central Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal, terrestrial &/or fossorial (burrowing in loose soil or forest floor litter). Probably not aggressive toward people. Main prey probably local lizards, invertebrates, & other smaller snakes. Probably oviparous w/ expected clutch size <15 eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Most coral snakes have potent neurotoxic venom, which can be injected w/ their pair of fixed upper front fangs. Bites of humans by these or other coral snakes usually occur on a toe, finger or in webbing between such digits; & usually result from the victim trying to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus browni

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus browni browni*, *M. b. importunus*, *M. b. taylori*, *M. nigrocinctus browni*, *M. nuchalis*, *M. n. taylori*

Common Names: Brown's coral snake, coral, coral de Acapulco, coral de Antigua, coral (or coralillo) de canutos, vibora de coral

Description

Medium-sized coral snake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 100 cm). Body tricolored, w/ broad red rings separated by 10-27 broad black rings, each narrowly bordered w/ yellow (rybyr). Red dorsal scales usually dusky & w/ blackish posterior tips. Snout & chin black, tail w/ 3-8 alternating black & yellow rings.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest, pine-oak forest, & cloud forest. Found at sea level to 2,000 m elevation. Limited to southwestern Mexico (Quintana Roo), & western Guatemala (Sacatepequez). Had been reported from Honduras (in some older literature), but those specimen IDs have recently been reported to be incorrect.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snakes are mainly nocturnal, terrestrial (or fossorial, burrowing in loose soil &/ or litter) & usually are not aggressive. They mainly prey on locally available invertebrates, small lizards or other snakes. They are typically oviparous w/ <15 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species; coral snake venoms are mainly neurotoxic. Due to these snakes' small mouths, bites on humans are usually on toes, fingers or webbing between digits; & usually occur during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus catamayensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus ecuadorianus*

Common Names: Catamayo coral snake, coral, coral catamayense

Description

Medium-sized tricolored coral snake, adults usually 45-65 cm long (max. 91+ cm). Top of head, snout & chin black; body pattern consisting of broad red rings (often w/ some black pigment present) separated by 22-32 broad black rings, each narrowly bordered on each side w/ a narrow band of white or yellow (rwbwr). Tail w/ 5-9 alternating wide black & narrow white rings.

Habitat

Mainly found in dry scrub & subhumid gallery forest at 1,000-1,800 m elevation, in southern Ecuador & northern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Most coral snakes are usually nocturnal, terrestrial (or burrow in loose soil or forest litter) & are nonaggressive. They usually prey on available invertebrates, lizards or other snakes, & are oviparous (w/ <15 eggs/ clutch).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but most coral snake venoms are primarily neurotoxic. Because they have rather small mouths, bites of humans usually occur on a finger, toe or adjacent webbing. Bites also usually occur while trying to catch the snake.

Micrurus circinalis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps circinalis*, *E. riisei*, *E. corallinus* var. *circinalis*, *Micrurus coralinus* *risei*, *M. c. risei*, *M. psyches* *riesii* [Note: This is one of only 2 coral snake species reported from Trinidad; the other being *M. lemniscatus*]

Common Names: Trinidad coral snake, coral, common coral, corail, coralsnake, male coral, small coral, serpent-corail, coral nortena trinitaria

Description

Small tricolored coral, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 53+ cm); body w/ black, white & red rings (21-31 black rings, sometimes as triads). Snout & chin mostly black, tail w/ 6-12 alternating wide black & narrow white rings.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical lowland forest & lower montane wet forest, old secondary growth, & agricultural areas. Limited to Trinidad, Gasparee Island, & adjacent Venezuela. One questionable early reference to specimens of this species from northern Guyana is still unconfirmed.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal, terrestrial (or fossorial - burrowing in loose soil or leaf litter), & oviparous (w/ <15 eggs/ clutch). Probably eats locally available lizards, invertebrates, & other smaller snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly neurotoxic, like most coral snakes. Bites of humans by coral snakes usually are on a finger or toe, due to the snakes' small mouths, & usually only occur during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus clarki

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus clarki*,

Common Names: Clark's coral snake, coral, coralillo, coral macho, gargantilla

Description

Small to medium-sized coral snake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 90 cm); Top of head black; posterior yellow rings narrow mid-dorsally (some incomplete). Body pattern of very broad red rings (usually including some black pigment) separated by 13-20 broad black rings narrowly bordered by yellow or cream bands. Tail has 5-9 black rings.



Habitat

Primarily found in rain forest; found along river banks in drier areas transitional between tropical wet & tropical dry forest. Occurs up to 900 m (usually <500 m) elevation, in Pacific lowlands of extreme southeastern Costa Rica, Panama & western Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known for this species, but coral snakes are usually mainly nocturnal, & mainly terrestrial (or burrowing). They usually are nonaggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake. They are usually oviparous w/ <15 eggs/ clutch) & mainly eat available lizards, other snakes, frogs, or invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species, but coral snake have mainly highly potent neurotoxic venom, injected through grooved, fixed upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on fingers, toes, or webbing between them.

Micrurus corallinus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps corallinus*, *Micrurus corallinus corallinus*, *M. psyches corallinus*

Common Names: Painted coral snake, mboi-chumbe, vibora de coral, boicora, bocora, cobra-coral, coral, coral-verdadeira, ibiboboca, ibiboca, mboi-yvyvovo,

Description

Medium-sized, brightly-colored, tri-colored coral snake, adults usually 65-85 cm long (max. 98+ cm). Head black w/ a posterior yellow or white band that narrows strongly dorsally (may be incomplete). Body pattern of broad red rings separated by a series of 15-27 (usually 17-21) fairly wide black rings narrowly bordered w/ white. Tail w/ 3-8 black & alternating yellow rings.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous & evergreen forest at low to intermediate elevations (near sea level to about 500 m), mainly in the Amazon basin. One old, unsubstantiated, report of a specimen from Argentina.

Activity and Behavior

No data. Coral snakes usually are nocturnal, terrestrial (or burrow in loose soil & litter), & are nonaggressive. They eat locally available invertebrates, lizards, & other snakes; & are oviparous (w/ clutch size typically <15 eggs).

Venom Characteristics

Most coral snakes have potent neurotoxic venom, which can be injected through grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to their rather small mouths, coral snake bites of humans usually occur on a finger, toe or webbing between such digits; & usually during an attempt to capture the snake. This species has historically been reported to inflict numerous bites on humans in South America, but a few other (misidentified) very similar spp. may have been involved, too.

Micrurus decoratus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps decoratus*, *E. ezequieli*, *E. fischeri*, *Micrurus fischeri*

Common Names: Decorated coral snake, Brazilian coral snake, Cobra-coral

Description

Small coral snake, adults usually <67 cm long; head black w/ a broad yellow band (may be incomplete). Body pattern of broad red rings separated by triads (13-19 on body); each is a series of 3 black & 2 yellow rings, w/ middle black ring wider than the other two. Tip of snout & chin black, w/ a wider yellow ring encircling the head. Many of the black rings tend to be narrower on the belly. Tail w/ <2 black triads.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest, humid lowlands, & lower montane wet forest at the fringes of the central highlands of Brazil. Found from near sea level up to 1,500 m elevation. Limited to the southeastern coastal region of Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snakes are mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (often burrow in loose soil & leaf litter), & are not aggressive. Feed mainly on locally available lizards, invertebrates, & smaller snakes. Probably oviparous w/ clutch size typically <15 eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom, which can be injected through grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snake bites of humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually when the victim tries to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus diana

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus frontalis diana*

Common Names: Diana's coral snake, coral, coral Diana

Description

Medium-sized, tricolored coral snake, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 100+ cm). Body has 9-11 triads (each w/ 3 thin black rings separated by wider white rings; bwbwb), alternating w/ wide red rings (each red ring more than 1/2 as wide as each triad). Overall pattern is (rbwbwbr). Head red & black above, chin white. Tail short w/ <2 complete triads. Red & black ring junctions look "jagged," smooth dorsal scales all-red or all-black.

Habitat

Found mainly in subhumid deciduous forest & wet palm grassland, in low isolated mountain ranges in eastern Bolivia. Found up to 700 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Terrestrial (possibly semi-aquatic) & mainly nocturnal. Probably very similar to the behavior of the closely-related species *M. altirostris* or *M. frontalis*.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but presumably neurotoxic, like that of other coral snakes. No well documented human envenomations or fatalities, so far.

Micrurus diastema

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps affinis*, *E. aglaeope*, *E. alienus*, *E. apiatus*, *E. corallinus*, *E. diastema*, *E. epistema*, *E. fulvius*, *E. guatemalensis*, *Micrurus affinis*, *M. a. affinis*, *M. a. aglaeope*, *M. a. alienus*, *M. a. apiatus*, *M. a. mayensis*, *M. a. stantoni*, *M. diastema affinis*, *M. d. alienus*, *M. d. apiatus*, *M. d. diastema*, *M. d. macdougalli*

Common Names: Variable coral snake, cantil coral, gargantilla

Description

Medium-sized coral snake, adults usually 60-75 cm long (max. about 90 cm). Snout & head usually black w/ broad yellow ring behind the eyes. Body pattern extremely variable, even within subspecies. Usually w/ broad to very broad reddish rings separated by up to 62 black rings (rarely, no black rings). Black or yellow rings may be broken dorsally or ventrally. Red ventrals often w/ black spots. Red dorsal scales often black-tipped.



Habitat

Mainly found in tropical rain forest, tropical evergreen forest, tropical deciduous forest, lower cloud forest, & pine-oak forest. Occurs from sea level to 1,350 m elevation, mainly in Atlantic drainage of Southeastern Mexico (including most of the Yucatan), most of Belize, northeastern Guatemala, & the northwestern tip of Honduras.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snakes are mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (often burrow in loose soil & litter) & usually are not aggressive. Mainly eat locally available lizards, invertebrates & other small snakes. Probably oviparous w/ <15 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Most coral snakes have mainly neurotoxic venom. This species is a major cause of coral snake bites in Mexico & Guatemala, due to it often being confused w/ non-venomous look-a-likes. Most bites occur, mainly on fingers or toes, during attempts to capture or molest the snake.

Micrurus dissoleucus

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Identification

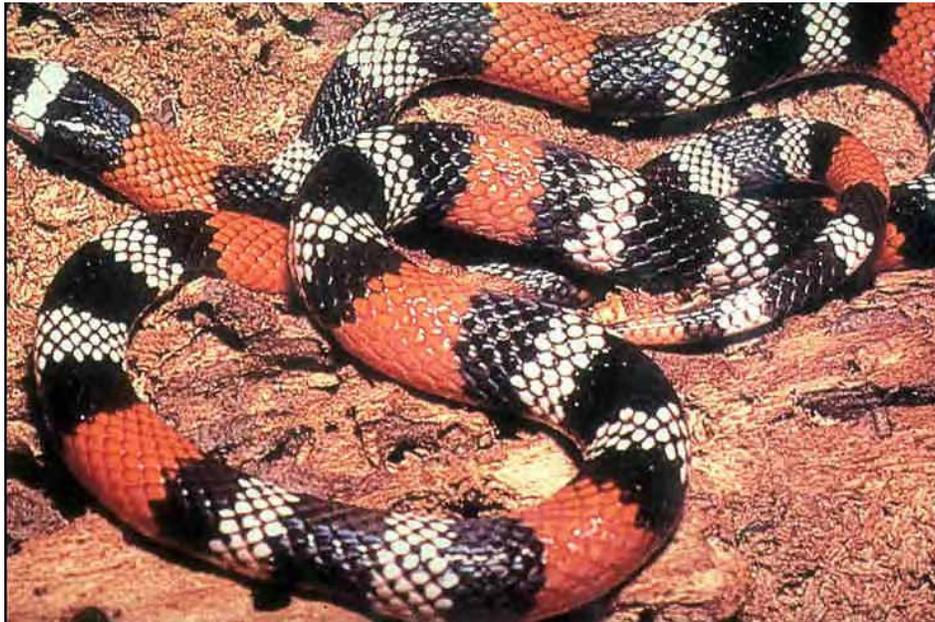
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps dissoleucus*, *E. gravenhorsti*, *E. hollandi*, *E. marcgravi* var. *gravenhorsti*, *E. melanogenys*, *Micrurus dissoleucus dissoleucus*, *M. d. dunni*, *M. d. melanogenys*, *M. d. meridensis*, *M. d. nigrirostris*, *M. dunni*, *M. hollandi*, *M. meridensis*

Common Names: Pygmy coral snake, candelilla, candelilla barranquillera, candelilla panamena, candelilla santamartense, candelilla venezolana, coral, coralillo, coralito, coral comun, coral llanera, gargantilla

Description

Small coral snake, adults usually 28-40 cm long (max. 65 cm). Head black, w/ a white ring just behind the eyes. Neck red. Body w/ broad red rings separated by a series of 6-11 triads w/ 3 black & 2 white rings (rbwbwbr), middle black ring of each set usually somewhat broader. Both white & red dorsal scales often edged w/ black. Tail short, stout, w/ <2 triads & black-tipped.



Habitat

Mainly found in tropical dry forest, deciduous forest, coastal scrub, lower montane dry & humid forests, llanos, & savannah (mainly semi-arid or seasonally dry areas). Found mainly below 500 m elevation. Reported from central Panama east into the Choco region, the Caribbean coastal region, lower Magdalena Valley & north-central Colombia, & extends into northern Venezuela.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Probably mainly nocturnal, terrestrial (may also burrow in loose soil or leaf litter) & not aggressive toward humans. Apparently abundant throughout its range & often seen around human habitations. Reportedly eats available local lizards, invertebrates & other small snakes, & is oviparous w/ small clutch sizes (not reported, but likely <12 eggs).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Most coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom, which can be injected through grooved fixed upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snake bites of humans usually occur on a finger, toe, or webbing between them & usually during an attempt to catch the snake.

Micrurus distans

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps distans*, *E. d. michoacanus*, *E. michoacanus*, *M. diastema diastema* (in part), *M. d. distans*, *M. d. michoacanus*, *Micrurus distans distans*, *M. d. michoacanus*, *M. d. oliveri*, *M. d. proximans*, *M. d. zweifeli*

Common Names: West Mexican coral snake, coral, coralilla bandas claras, coralillo

Description

Medium-sized coral snake, adults usually 65-80 cm long (max. 107+ cm); tri-colored, but yellow bands very narrow or absent in some specimens from Michoacan. Red bands on body usually at least twice as wide as 6-20 black bands, tail w/ 3-6 black & alternating yellow bands.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest & thorn forest up to 1,300 m elevation. Limited to western Mexico, Pacific drainage.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (often burrowing in soft soil or leaf litter). Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive; most bites of humans occur during attempts to capture the snake. Most species in this genus are oviparous w/ clutch size <15 eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably potently neurotoxic. This species reportedly is responsible for many bites (& envenomations) of humans in western Mexico.

Micrurus dumerilii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps columbianus*, *E. dumerilii*, *E. marcgravi* (in part), *Micrurus antioquiensis*, *M. carinicauda*, *M. c. columbianus*, *M. c. dumerilii*, *Micrurus carinicaudus antioquiensis*, *M. c. transandinus*, *M. carollinus dumerilii*, *Micrurus dumerilii antioquiensis*, *M. d. carinicaudus*, *M. d. columbianus*, *M. d. dumerilii*, *M. d. transandinus*, *M. d. venezuelensis*, *M. transandinus*

Common Names: Dumeril's coral snake, coral, coralilla

Description

Medium-sized tri-colored coral, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 94.8 cm); Body pattern variable; usually w/ very broad red rings separated by a series of 10-27 single fairly broad black rings narrowly bordered by yellow (rybyr) or up to 14 triads (ybybyby). In some specimens, red bands are much duller, w/ most red scaled black at tip, & appear "dusky," yellow bands may be so pale they are almost white. Tail w/ 4-10 black rings alternating w/ yellow.



Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest, tropical rainforest, tropical dry forest, & thorn forest; often found near rivers in less humid areas. Mainly below 600 m elevation, but has been reported up to 2,150 m in Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (maybe semi-fossorial). Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive, oviparous (typically <15 eggs/ clutch), & eat locally available lizards, invertebrates & other small snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably potent, mainly neurotoxic venom, which is injected through a pair of grooved, fixed upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usually during an attempt to catch the snake. This species reportedly inflicts many bites on humans annually within its range. No well-documented human fatalities, so far.

Micrurus elegans

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps elegans*, *Micrurus elegans elegans*, *M. e. veraepacis*

Common Names: Elegant coral snake, coral, coral elegante, coralillo, coralilla elegante, coral punteado

Description

Medium to large coral snake, adults usually <70 cm long (max. 100+ cm); Head black w/ incomplete white ring behind eyes. Tricolored, w/ black, white (or yellow) & orange rings. Usually w/ yellowish rings separated by very broad blackish rings, each containing 2 narrower, indistinct, whitish rings that may be irregular or broken. Adults usually w/ 10-19 complete triads of black rings on body & 4-12 black rings on tail alternating w/ yellow.



Habitat

Mainly found in lower montane dry & wet forest, pine-oak forest, cloud forest, & infrequently, in tropical deciduous forest. Found at 800-1,850 m elevation. Limited to southeastern Mexico & west-central Guatemala.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Most active at dawn, dusk, & early night, have been seen crawling in leaves during overcast days. Coral snakes usually are nonaggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake, & *M. elegans* reportedly is quick to bite if restrained. Terrestrial & oviparous w/ small clutch size (usual number of eggs not reported). Prey mainly on available lizards, invertebrates & smaller snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but venom of most species of coral snakes is mainly neurotoxic. Human bites reported, but no reported human fatalities.

Micrurus ephippifer

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps ephippifer*, *Micrurus ephippifer ephippifer*, *M. e. zapotecus*

Common Names: Oaxacan coral snake, coral, coralillo

Description

Medium-sized, tricolored coral snake, adults usually 50-75 cm long (max. 92+ cm). Head black w/ very broad orangish ring. Dorsal pattern usually w/ 13-29 fairly broad black rings alternating w/ narrower yellowish rings. Red rings usually heavily infused w/ a black "saddle" dorsally (often totally masked by black), only showing red on sides & belly. Thus, actual pattern is red-yellow-black-yellow-red (rybyr). Tail w/ 4-7 black rings.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest, pine-oak forest, & oak manzanita forest, from near sea level to >2,300 m elevation. Limited to the Pacific versant of extreme southern Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (may burrow in loose soil or organic debris). Coral snakes usually are not aggressive. Probably prey mainly on various available local lizards, invertebrates (& maybe other smaller snakes). Probably oviparous w/ usual clutch size <15 eggs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom of most species of coral snakes is mainly neurotoxic. Some bites, but no serious human envenomations or fatalities due to this species documented, so far. Reported bites have been associated w/ attempts to capture or molest the snake.

Micrurus filiformis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps filiformis*, *Micrurus filiformis filiformis*, *M. f. subtilis*

Common Names: Slender coral snake, cobra-coral, cobra-coral-fina, naca-naca

Description

Small to medium-sized, very slender, tricolored coral snake, adults usually 30-55 cm long (max. 96 cm). Front of head black, interrupted by a white ring just in front of eyes; rear of head & neck red. Dorsal pattern of broad red rings separated by a series of 12-20 black triads each including a pair of very thin white rings (rbwbwbr) & tail w/ 1 1/3-2 2/3 triads.



Habitat

Mainly found in lower montane wet forests, gallery forest, & primary & secondary lowland rainforest, usually near waterways. Found up to 400 m elevation. Probably also present in southern parts of French Guiana, Guyana, & Venezuela, but no specimens confirmed yet from those areas.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (also burrows in loose substrate & enters water). Locally common around human habitation. Will defend itself aggressively. Will flatten itself, raise & curl its tail, then strike & bite violently while thrashing from side to side w/ such force that it sometimes raises itself off the ground. Oviparous (probably <15 eggs/ clutch, but not reported) & prey on locally available invertebrates, lizards, etc.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venoms of most species of coral snakes have very potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snake bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger.

Micrurus frontalis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps frontalis*, *Micrurus frontalis frontalis*, *M. f. altirostris* (in part), *M. f. baliocoryphus* (in part), *M. f. brasiliensis*, *M. f. diana* (in part), *M. f. mesopotamicus*, *M. f. multicinctus*, *M. f. pyrrhocryptus* (in part)

Common Names: Cerrado coral snake, southern coral snake, boipinima, cobra-coral, mboi-chumbe, mboi-yvyvovo, mil colores, tres colores, vibora de coral

Description

Large, tricolored coral snake, adults usually 70-100 cm long (max. 141+ cm); Head color variable, w/ considerable white pigment on top of the snout. Body pattern usually consists of fairly broad red bands separated by a series of 10-15 narrower black triads w/ 3 black separated by 2 narrower white bands (rbwbwbr). Dorsal red scales usually tipped w/ black, may look "dusky." Tail w/ <2 complete triads.

Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest, tropical & subtropical deciduous forest, & savannas, temperate forest, sandy or rocky areas, & secondary growth, such as pastures or farm lands; often found near swamps & streams. Most common in lowlands; mainly a lowland species, found from sea level to 700 m elevation. May be present on northeastern Argentina, but no specimens confirming that, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Secretive & mainly nocturnal; mainly terrestrial or fossorial (burrowing in loose soil or leaf litter). Responsible for many coral snake bites in southeastern South America. Usually are not aggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake. Oviparous (usual egg numbers/ clutch not reported), probably prey on available local invertebrates, lizards & smaller snakes. Cannibalism by this species has been reported.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily neurotoxic (at post-synaptic junctions); also has myonecrotic factor(s). Serious human envenomations & deaths have been reported resulting from bites by this species (but identification to species is sometimes difficult within this "species group," even for professional herpetologists).

Micrurus fulvius

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Coluber fulvius, Elaps fulvius, E. trictis, Micrurus fulvius barbouri, M. f. fulvius, Vipera fulvia

Common Names: Harlequin coral snake, candy-stick snake, coral adder, eastern coral snake, Florida coral snake, garter snake, red beaded snake, thunder-and-lightening snake

Description

Medium-sized, tricolored coral snake, adults usually <80 cm long (max. 121+ cm); Head flat & very blunt, black w/ broad yellow band; moderately distinct from neck (also black). Body pattern usually consists of broad to very broad red rings (may be blotched w/ black), each bordered by a narrow yellow ring, alternating w/ 11-19 broad black rings (rybyr). Tail w/ 3-5 black rings.



Habitat

Found mainly in fairly open (not dense) upland, mesophytic, & tropical hammocks, gladeland; high pine, scrub, & live-oak hammocks, along sand ridges, & sandy creek bottoms; mainly along sparsely-vegetated

sandy-soiled coastal plains; from southeastern North Carolina through peninsular Florida & then west to southeastern Louisiana. Occurs up to 400 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but may be active in early morning, after rains, or on overcast days. Mainly terrestrial (burrows in soft, sandy soil & leaf litter). Usually are nonaggressive. Oviparous, 3-13 eggs/ clutch. Preys mainly on other snakes (sometimes cannibalistic).

Venom Characteristics

Venom is mainly neurotoxic, but has cardiotoxic & myonecrotic factors. Envenomation can result in major neurologic disorders, including cranial nerve paralysis; has caused a number of human fatalities. Most bites of humans occur during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus hemprichii

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Identification

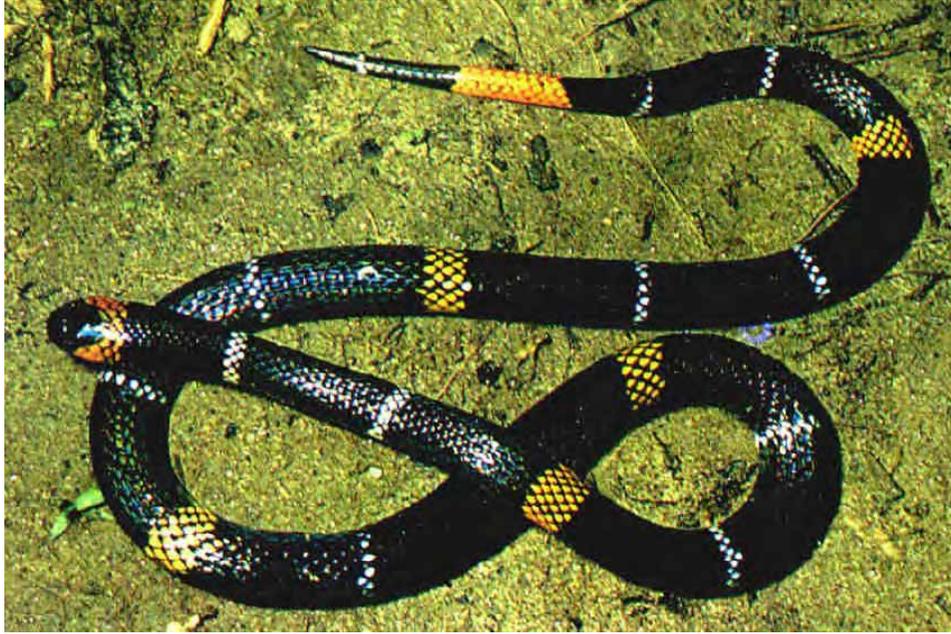
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps hemprichii*, *Micrurus hemprichii hemprichii*, *M.h. ortonii*, *M. h. rondonianus*, *M. psyches*, *M. rondonianus*

Common Names: Hemprich's coral snake, cobra coral, corail, coral de ponzona de Mocoa, coral verdadero, coralillo, naca-naca, kraalslange, kraralsneke, kraka sneki, nanim-uxirimake, nanimuxirimkyk, serpent-corail, T'dadema, watamio

Description

Medium-sized, 2-colored coral snake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 91+ cm). Front of head black, followed by very broad orangish ring; neck black. Body pattern unique for the genus, consisting of narrow orange to orange-yellow rings separated by 5-10 black triads (each triad w/ 3 black rings separated by a pair of very thin white rings; bwbwb). Tail usually w/ very broad yellow-orange band & 1/3-2 complete black triads.



Habitat

Found mainly in moist leaf litter on the forest floor; in lower montane wet forest, seasonally dry gallery forest, & rain forest. Most common in lowlands; found from near sea level to about 1,200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial or burrowing (in loose soil & leaf litter). Most species of coral snakes usually are nonaggressive. Oviparous (usual clutch size not reported), prey on locally available smaller snakes (may be cannibalistic), lizards, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger. Most bites of humans occur when the victim tries to catch or molested the snake.

Micrurus hippocrepis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps hippocrepis*, *Micrurus affinis affinis* (in part), *M. a. hippocrepis* (in part)

Common Names: Mayan coral snake, bead and coral, coral, coral de Belize, coralillo, coralsnake

Description

Small tri-colored coral snake, adults usually 50-65 cm long (max. 71 cm). Head & neck w/ alternating yellow & black rings (ybyby). Body pattern consists of moderately to very broad red rings alternating w/ 9-24 much narrower black rings (often incomplete), which are bordered w/ narrower yellow rings. Tail w/ 4-6 black rings.



Habitat

Mainly found in tropical wet & moist forest (lowland rainforest), from sea level up to 1,000 m elevation. Limited to southern Belize & northeastern Guatemala.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (or burrowing in loose substrate). May be active during cooler parts of the day (early morning & late afternoon). Usually are nonaggressive. Oviparous (clutch size not reported), prey mainly on locally available snakes, lizards & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom of most species of coral snakes is mainly neurotoxic. Most bites of humans occur during attempt to capture the snake. No serious envenomations or human deaths reported, yet, due to the bite of this species.

Micrurus ibiboboca

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps ibiboboca*, *E. marcgravi* (in part), *Micrurus lemniscatus* (in part), *M. l. ibiboboca* (in part)

Common Names: Caatinga coral snake, coral, cobra de coral, coral-verdadeira, ibiboboca, kraalslang, krarasneke

Description

Medium to large 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 75-85 cm long (max. 133 cm). Front of head black & white, followed by a narrow black ring & a broad red ring. Body pattern usually broad red to reddish-brown rings separated by 7-13 triads of 5 almost equally-wide rings (3 black rings w/ 2 white rings dividing them) overall (rbwbwbr). Tail w/ <2 complete black triads.



Habitat

Mainly found in semiarid regions of caatinga scrub, semideciduous upland forest, & cerrado savanna in northeastern Brazil; also found in more humid eastern coastal mesic forests. Probably savanna or thorn

forest in the Guianas. Most common in relatively dry lowlands, but from near sea level up to 1,200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal but may be active into dusk. Not usually aggressive, tend to avoid humans & larger animals. Oviparous (clutch size probably <15 eggs, but not reported), mainly prey on other snakes, lizards & amphibians (& possibly invertebrates when young).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Venom of most species of coral snakes is highly potent & mainly neurotoxic. It can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, and usually during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus isozonus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps isozonus*, *E. omissus*

Common Names: Venezuelan coral snake, culebra coral, acavai, cobra-coral de faixes iguais, cobra de franjas iguales, coralillo, huaymacaicha, coral norteno

Description

Medium-sized to large, 3-colored coral snake, adult usually 50-70 cm long (max. 150 cm); Head w/ snout varying from grey-white to nearly all black; remainder of head is red. Body pattern usually consists of broad red to rusty-red rings separated by 10-14 black triads (bwb) w/ the black & white bands each about equal in width. Tail w/ <2 complete black triads.

Habitat

Found mainly in semiarid & seasonally dry tropical deciduous forest, tropical thorn woodlands, & forests along watercourses. Commonly found in open or semiopen secondary growth & pasture. Occurs from near sea level to 1,400 m elevation. Limited to northern South America.

Activity and Behavior

Widespread & fairly common throughout its range, mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (will burrow in soft soil or litter). Although most coral snakes are nonaggressive, this species will often raise & curl its tail & vigorously defend itself if disturbed. Oviparous usually w/ 6-17 eggs/ clutch. Mainly preys on other snakes, lizards, amphibians & sometimes on invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Has highly potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to their small mouths, most coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe & usually when victim tried to catch or molest the snake. Numerous human envenomations & some fatalities due to bites by this rather large species have been reported.

Micrurus langsdorffii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps batesii*, *E. impeator*, *E. langsdorffii*, *Micrurus langsdorffii langsdorffii*, *M. mimosus*

Common Names: Langsdorff's coral snake, coral, cobra-coral, coralillo, naca-naca, serpiente de coral

Description

Medium-sized coral snake, usually 3-colored (sometimes 2-colored), adults usually 45-65 cm long (max. 77 cm); Appearance variable; body pattern usually w/ 18-47 fairly broad red rings alternating w/ 36-91 narrower rings of yellow, brown, or maroon (but no truly black rings), each ring separated from the next by a narrow dorsal row of 5-8 white spots (becomes a narrow white ring on belly). Tail w/ 5-11 red rings. Polychromatic populations have been reported.



Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest & lowland rainforest; primary & secondary semi-open forests & border areas; usually at 80-500 m elevation, but has been collected at 1,500 m elevation. Seems to be most common in sites w/ accumulations of riparian leaf litter.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, but routinely burrows in leaf litter, if that is present. Like most coral snakes, this species is usually not aggressive. Oviparous (litter size not reported, but probably <15 eggs). Mainly eats other snakes (may be cannibalistic), lizards, amphibians & possibly also invertebrates, especially when young.

Venom Characteristics

Has potent neurotoxic venom that can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed frontal fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger & usually during an attempt to capture or molest the snake. Few human bites & no serious envenomations of humans reported as caused by this species, but still should be considered a health threat.

Micrurus laticollaris

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps marcgravii*, *Micrurus laticollaris laticollaris*, *M. l. maculirostris*, *M. maculirostris*

Common Names: Balsan coral snake, coral, coralillo

Description

Small to medium-sized 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 80+ cm). Head nearly all black (snout may be grayish), w/ broad pale-yellow ring on back of head & very wide black neck ring. Body pattern usually w/ very broad red rings separated by 5-9 triads of 3 narrow black & 2 wider pale-yellow rings (rbybybr), tail has alternating wide black & pale-yellow rings. Pale-yellow rings usually so light they are almost white.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest, arid tropical scrub forest, & transition zones between pine-oak & tropical deciduous forest. Found mainly in coastal foothills of western Mexico at 300-1,800 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (& burrows in sandy soil & leaf litter). Reportedly fairly common & widespread throughout its limited range. Not very aggressive. Oviparous (litter size not reported), & preys on available other snakes, lizards, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but a number of reported bites of humans by this species have resulted in severe neurotoxic symptoms. No human fatalities reported, so far.

Micrurus latifasciatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus nuchalis*, *M. n. nuchalis*,

Common Names: Broad-ringed coral snake, long-ringed coral snake, coral, coralillo, coralillo de bandas largas

Description

Medium-sized 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 65-85 cm long (max. 114 cm). Snout black, followed by a very broad yellow ring; back of head & neck black. Body pattern consists of very broad reddish rings (black-spotted dorsally) & 6-9 broad black rings, separated by slightly narrower yellow rings. Tail w/ 2-3 very broad black rings alternating w/ yellow rings. Red dorsal scales are uniformly black spotted.



Habitat

Mainly found in lowland rainforest, lower montane wet forest, & lower montane moist forest (i.e., wetter forested areas) at 300-1,350 m elevation. Limited to the Pacific versant of southern Mexico (Oaxaca, Chiapas) to eastern Guatemala.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (may burrow into soft substrates like sand or leaf litter). Most coral snakes usually are nonaggressive; w/ bites occurring on humans' toes or fingers, & usually during attempts to capture the snake. Probably oviparous (litter size unknown). Probably preys mainly on other local snakes, lizards & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom of most coral snakes is neurotoxic. No reported serious human envenomations or fatalities due to bites by this species, so far.

Micrurus lemniscates

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Coluber lemniscatus, Elaps frontifasciatus, E. gravenhorstii, E. heterochilus, E. lemniscatus, Micrurus helleri, Micrurus lemniscatus carvalhoi, M. l. diutius, M. l. frontifasciatus, M. l. helleri, M. l. lemniscatus, Natrix lemniscatus, Vipera lemniscata

Common Names: South American coral snake, coralillo, boichumbeguacu naca-naca, coral venenosa, boi-cora, ibiboboca, corail, hot bead snake, juba, maccourracourra, kamung, koo-mung

Description

Large rather slender, brightly marked 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 60-90 cm long (max. 145 cm). Front of head black, w/ narrow white ring in front of eyes; remainder of head red, eyes fairly small. Body pattern consists of moderately broad red rings separated by 7-17 triads of 3 black & 2 white rings, tail w/ no more than 2 black triads alternating w/ white rings.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland forest & lower montane wet forest, often in more open savanna & gallery forest areas, & lowland flood plains, including cleared areas & near human habitations. Usually in humid areas or near aquatic sites. Occurs from near sea level to 1,000 m elevation. Widespread in South America.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (may burrow in loose soil or leaf litter). Usually not aggressive, but will bite if disturbed. Oviparous (clutch size not known, but probably <20 eggs). Eat mainly locally available other snakes, lizards or invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, mainly potentially neurotoxic & can be injected by a pair of grooved, fixed front fangs in the upper jaw. Due to their small mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually during an attempt to catch the snake.

Micrurus limbatus

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Identification

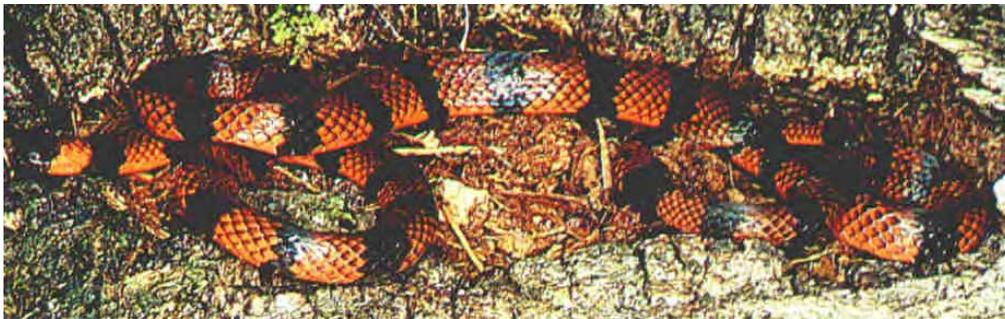
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus limbatus limbatus*, *M. l. spilosomus*

Common Names: Tuxtlan coral snake, coral, coralillo, coral de anillado de Tuxtla

Description

Medium-sized 2-colored coral snake, adults usually 55-65 cm long (max. 73+ cm). Front of head black, remainder reddish or orange. Body color reddish to orange, w/ 14-45 irregular or interrupted black rings (may be reduced to dorsal blotches in some specimens). Most dorsal red scales w/ black pigment bordering the back half, including the tip. Tail orange or reddish w/ 4-5 black rings. One pair of grooved, fixed upper front fangs.



Habitat

Mainly found in lowland rainforest & lower montane wet forest (generally wetter forested areas); often under logs &/or in leaf litter. Occurs at low & moderate (150-1,050 m) elevations. Limited primarily to the southern slopes of Veracruz, Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly nocturnal, also active at dusk &/or dawn (or after rain). Mainly terrestrial & burrows in loose soil & leaf litter. Most species of coral snakes are usually not aggressive & most bites occur during attempts to capture the snake, but this species will bite readily if restrained. Oviparous w/ usually 3-14 eggs/ clutch. Mainly preys on other local snakes, lizards, possibly also frogs & some invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom of most coral snakes is mainly potently neurotoxic (sometimes w/ cytotoxic or cardiotoxic factors). Even the limited number of reports of bites &/or envenomations of humans by this species are not well documented, & no human fatalities have been reported, so far.

Micrurus margaritiferus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Speckled coral snake, coral, coral salpicada, naca-naca

Description

Small to medium-sized 2-colored coral snake, max. adult length is 77.3 cm. Head mostly black, w/ a few small white markings. Body is black dorsally, interrupted by numerous paired narrow transverse rows of white dots. Some specimens have belly tricolored w/ black-white-brown-white-black (blk-w-brn-w-blk)sequences of rings (crossbands).



Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest & tropical rainforest at 200-400 m elevation. Known only from vicinity of the confluence of the Rios Santiago & Marañon in Amazonas, Peru. May occur in similar habitat in adjacent southeastern Ecuador, but no specimens documented from there, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (& probably burrows into soft soil & litter). Most coral snakes are usually not aggressive; most bites occur during attempts to capture or molest the snake. Probably oviparous (not reported) & probably preys on locally available other snakes, lizards, frogs & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom (often w/ other factors), which can be injected through grooved, fixed front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snakes' bites on humans usually occur on a finger or toe or webbing between such digits.

Micrurus medemi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus psyches* (in part), *M. p. medemi*

Common Names: Medem's coral snake, coral, coral de Villavicencio, culebra de corbata

Description

Small to medium-sized, 3-colored, coral snake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 66+ cm). Body w/ 15-25 alternating single wide black & wide red rings separated by narrow white rings. Head black above, nearly all white scales on head & body are tinged w/ black. Red rings often melanized & some look black in dorsal view. Tail w/ 5-9 black rings.

Habitat

Mainly found in lower montane pluvial forest, including forest edge, at 250-600 m elevation. Known only from the vicinity of Villavicencio at the base of the eastern versant of the Andes, in central Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, & apparently semi-fossorial (burrowing). Often burrows under surface organic debris or leaf litter. Sometimes active at dusk or after a rain. Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported) & probably preys on other snakes, lizards & invertebrates available locally.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but presumably mainly neurotoxic, like that of most other coral snakes. No reported human envenomations or fatalities.

Micrurus meridensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus dissoleucus meridensis*

Common Names: Merida pygmy coralsnake, candelilla meridena, cobra-coral, coral

Description

Small, slender, 3-colored coral snake. The single known specimen (apparently an adult) is 39 cm long. Body has a relatively large number of rings (13-18 triads of bwbb), many of the rings are narrow, most have irregular edges, & some are "broken" on the belly. Red rings are about 1/2 as wide as each triad. Most of the red scales have small black tips.

Habitat

Found in lower montane dry forest on the western slope of the Andes, in Venezuela, at about 900 m elevation. Known from only one specimen (the type).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, & oviparous. Probably similar in behavior & habits to the closely-related species *M. dissoleucus*.

Venom Characteristics

Nothing known. Presumably neurotoxic like that of other species of coral snakes. No reports of human envenomations or fatalities.

Micrurus mertensi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps circinalis*

Common Names: Merten's coral snake, Chaquira, coral, coral del desierto, coralillo

Description

Medium-sized 3-colored coral snake without triads, adults usually 50-80 cm long (max. 111+ cm). Top of head nearly all black; sides of the head behind the eyes are yellow. Body pattern consists of red rings

(usually strongly black-stippled) alternating w/ 18-31 black rings narrowly bordered w/ yellow (rybyr). Tail w/ 5-9 black rings alternating w/ white rings.

Habitat

Mainly found in tropical deciduous forest, dry tropical forest, thorn-scrub & desert; most commonly found near streams. Occurs from near sea level to 1,600 m elevation. Limited to semi-arid coastal regions of southern Ecuador through most of western Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal (or crepuscular) & terrestrial (also probably burrows in loose soil or forest floor litter). Most species of coral snakes are usually not aggressive, but some will bite readily if restrained or molested. Probably oviparous (but not reported) & probably feed mainly on other snakes, lizards, frogs, or invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom (some have cytotoxic or cardiotoxic factors, too) which can be injected through a pair of grooved, upper, fixed front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snakes bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usually during attempts to capture or molest the snake.

Micrurus mipartitus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps aequicinctus*, *E. anomalus*, *E. calamus*, *E. decipiens*, *E. decussatus*, *E. fraseri*, *E. mentalis*, *E. microps*, *E. mipartitus*, *E. semipartitus*, *Micrurus anomalus*, *Micrurus mipartitus anomalus*, *M. m. decussatus*, *M. m. mipartitus*, *M. m. semipartitus*, *M. m. popayanensis*, *M. m. rozei*

Common Names: Red-tailed coral snake, coral, coralillo, gargantilla, coral rabo de aji, cabeza de choco, candelilla, coral cabeza de choco, metagato, mataganado, carol montanera, coral rabo de candela

Description

Medium to large, slender, 2-colored coral snake (w/ a reddish ring on its head & 2-5 on its tail), adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 120 cm); snout usually black; remainder of the head bright orange/red. Body pattern consists of alternating pale (may be white, cream, pink, or red) & 34-84 black rings. Pale rings usually narrower on dorsum, black rings usually narrower on belly. Tail usually w/ 1-9 black rings alternating w/ 2-8 red-orange rings.



Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest, cloud forest, & secondary areas, including coffee groves. Occurs at up to 2,400 m elevation. Occupies the Darien region of Panama, Pacific lowlands of Colombia (including Isla Gorgona), & the Cordilleras Occidental of Ecuador.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (semi-fossorial), but often active during the day & often found around human habitation & agricultural sites. Most species of coral snakes are not aggressive, but this species vigorously defends itself if disturbed. Oviparous (clutch size not stated) & usually preys on available other snakes, lizards & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

This species has potent, mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through grooved, upper, fixed front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snakes usually bite humans on a finger or toe; & most such bites occur during attempts to catch or molest the snake. This species is a major cause of bites & envenomation within its range. It causes many human deaths.

Micrurus multifasciatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Elaps hertwigi, E. multifasciatus, Micrurus mipartitus (in part), M. m. hertwigi, M. m. multifasciatus, M. multifasciatus hertwigi, M. m. multifasciatus

Common Names: Many-banded coral snake, coral, coralilla, coral macho, gargantilla

Description

This is a long, slender 2-colored (sometimes 3-colored) coral snake, adults usually 75-90 cm long (max. 120 cm). Snout is black & the black pigment includes most or all of the body. Body color pattern varies. Pale rings on body may also be red, pink, cream or white w/ a few black flecks. Usually 40-73 black body rings. Tail w/ 2-5 black dorsal crossbands, & underside red or pink. Some specimens may be bicolored black-&-white, others black-&-orange, some are 3-colored black-white-&-orange.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland moist & wet forests (rainforest), subtropical wet forest, & lower montane wet forest. In northwestern Costa Rica, this snake may be found in tropical dry forest. Limited to Nicaragua, Costa Rica, & Panama; from near sea level to 1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial (also burrows in loose soil or accumulated litter). Mainly diurnal, & most active during early morning & late afternoon. Although most species of coral snakes are not very aggressive, this species is reported to be nervous & will bite readily if disturbed. Oviparous & preys on locally available other snakes, lizards, frogs & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably has mainly potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouth, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually during attempts by the victim to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus multiscutatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Cauca coral snake, coral, coral caucana, rabo de aji

Description

Medium-sized, 2-colored (red & black) coral snake, longest recorded adult specimen is 84.2 cm long. Snout is black, parietal ring is sometimes yellow, remainder of head & body w/ alternating red (sometimes quite dull) & black rings. There are 59-68 black rings on the body & 3-4 more on the tail.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland moist & wet forests, subtropical wet forests, & lower montane wet forests at 100-900 m elevation. Limited to a few sites on the Pacific versant of the Cordillera Occidental in western Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

No specific data. Most species of coral snakes usually are nonaggressive, mainly nocturnal, mainly terrestrial (& burrow in loose soil or litter), oviparous (w/ clutches of <15 eggs), & prey on other snakes, lizards or invertebrates which are available locally.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but most species of coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom, which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, most coral snake bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usuallu during attempts to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus nebularis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Ixtlan coral snake, Cloud forest coral snake, coral, coralillo, coralilla

Description

Small 3-colored coral snake, only 7 specimens known, the longest was 55.7 cm. Head blunt & black except for a yellow ring at the back. Body pattern consists of broad red (may be quite dull) & black rings (usually 23-28 black body rings) separated by narrow to very narrow yellow rings. The tail has alternating wide black (usually 5-8) & narrower yellow rings.

Habitat

This species is known only from pine-oak forest & vegetational associations between pine-oak & arid scrub (previous literature references to occurrence in cloud forest are in error). Occurs at 1585-2256 m elevation. Limited to southern slopes of the Sierra de Juarez in central Mexico (central Oaxaca).

Activity and Behavior

No data for this species. Most coral snakes are usually nonaggressive, mainly nocturnal, mainly terrestrial (but burrow in loose soil & litter), oviparous (w/ small clutch sizes), & mainly eat locally available other snakes (are often cannibalistic), lizards, frogs, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Nothing known for this species. Most coral snakes have venom which is mainly neurotoxic, & can be injected via a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Coral snakes have relatively small mouths & bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usually when the victim was trying to catch or bother the snake.

Micrurus nigrocinctus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps divaricatus*, *E. fulvius*, *E. melanocephalus*, *E. nigrocinctus*, *Micrurus nigrocinctus* *babaspul*, *M. n. coibensis*, *M. n. divaricatus*, *M. n. mosquitensis*, *M. n. nigrocinctus*, *M. n. ovandoensis*, *M. n. ruatanus*, *M. n. wagneri*, *M. n. yatesi*, *M. n. zunilensis*, *Micrurus pacheoi*

Common Names: Central American coral snake, coral, Coral Centroamericana, coralillo, gargantilla, salviara, limlim, babaspul, coral macho

Description

Medium-sized 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 60-75 cm long (max. 115 cm). Quite variable; may be 2- or 3-colored. Snout black, usually w/ a yellow ring (red in bicolored specimens) of variable width on head at about the midpoint. Body pattern usually fairly broad red rings separated by much narrower sets of yellow-black-yellow rings (rybyr). Usually w/ 10-24 black rings on body, & 3-8 more on tail.



Habitat

Found mainly in lowland rain forest, lowland dry forest, thorn forest, lower montane wet (or moist) forest, & lower montane dry forest. Occurs mainly from sea level to 1,300 m elevation (one report at 2,000 m). Occurs from southern Mexico to northwestern Colombia, except no specimens from Belize, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but active at dusk, dawn & sometimes after rains. Mainly terrestrial & burrows in loose soil & leaf litter. Usually not aggressive, but will bite if restrained or molested. Oviparous (clutch size reportedly 2-11 eggs) & eats locally available other snakes (cannibalistic), lizards, amphibians, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Has mainly potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, upper, fixed front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snake bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually during attempts to catch the snake. This species is abundant throughout most of its range, & is the main cause of coralsnake bites of humans within its range.

Micrurus oligoanellatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Tambo coral snake, coral

Description

Small slender 3-colored coralsnake, adults usually about 62 cm long; body usually w/ relatively few crossbands, black rings (usually 21) each bordered by 2 narrow white rings; red bands very wide; no black nuchal (neck) ring. Tail all black on top, alternating 3 white & 3 black crossbands, some black bands on body not complete on belly.

Habitat

Found mainly in lower montane wet forest in a region w/ pastures & clearings. Known only from the type locality on the Pacific versant of Colombia, at 1,000-1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but apparently mainly diurnal, & terrestrial (probably also burrows in loose substrate); apparently preys on available lizards, large invertebrates & sometimes other smaller snakes. Oviparous, litter size not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly neurotoxic, no human envenomations or fatalities reported.

Micrurus ornatissimus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Elaps buckleyi, E. ornatissimus, Micrurus buckleyi, M. langsdorffi ornatissimus (in part)

Common Names: Ornate coral snake, cobra-coral, coral, coral ornamentada, naca-naca

Description

Small tri-colored coralsnake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 84+ cm). Black head-cap often touches black nuchal (neck) ring. Body w/ 38-67 single black rings, alternating w/ wider red rings, each bordered by 2 very narrow white rings (each of these looks like a dorsal cross-band of white spots). Tail w/ 8-17 wide black rings, each much longer than the combined red & white rings that separate them.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland rainforest & lower montane wet forest, at 500-1,200 m elevation. Mainly limited to the Amazon basin of southern Colombia, northern Peru, Ecuador & northwestern Brazil.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly diurnal & terrestrial (burrows in loose soil & leaf litter). Apparently feeds on locally available lizards, amphibians, larger invertebrates & possibly smaller snakes. Oviparous, litter size not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly neurotoxic. No well documented serious envenomations or fatalities of humans due to bites by this species.

Micrurus pachecogili

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Zapotitlan coral snake, coral, coralillo, coralilla

Description

Medium-sized, relatively slender, 3-colored coralsnake, adults usually 63-70 cm long (max. 79+ cm). Body w/ 24-30 black rings (including a black nuchal ring), separated by slightly narrower bright red rings, each bordered by 2 narrower yellow rings (byryb). Tail w/ 5-7 black rings separated by narrower yellow rings.

Habitat

Found in high arid forest (desert) characterized by mesquite, many species of cacti, & scattered large Beaucarnia. Known only from the floor of the Zapotitlan Basin in southeastern Puebla, Mexico, at about 1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but apparently mainly diurnal (but often active at dusk) & terrestrial (but burrows in loose soil & litter). Oviparous (clutch size not reported). Probably eats other local snakes, lizards, frogs & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly neurotoxic. No human envenomations or fatalities reported, so far.

Micrurus paraensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus psyches debruini*, *M. p. donosoi*, *M. p. paraensis*, *Micrurus donosoi*

Common Names: Para coral snake, cobra-coral do Para, coral de Para

Description

Small, 3-colored coralsnake, adults usually 35-45 cm long (max. 53 cm). Body w/ 10-20 black rings arranged singly, separated by much wider red rings, each bordered by white rings which are often reduced to rows of spots dorsally (rwbwr). Both red & white dorsal scales smooth, usually dusky & black-tipped. Tail w/ 3-14 black rings alternating w/ white rings (black rings each 3 times as wide as adjacent white rings).

Habitat

Found in tropical rainforest & lower montane wet forests; mainly lowlands from sea level to 400 m elevation, in northeast & central Brazil & Suriname.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but terrestrial (burrowing) & apparently mainly diurnal or crepuscular (active at dusk). Oviparous (but litter size not reported). Reportedly mainly prey on locally available lizards, frogs, larger invertebrates & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly neurotoxic. No well-documented envenomations of humans or fatalities have been reported, so far.

Micrurus peruvianus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus corallinus* (in part)

Common Names: Peruvian coral snake, coral, coral Peruana, naca-naca, serpiente de coral

Description

Small 3-colored coralsnakes, adults usually <60 cm long. Snout & top of head all black. Body w/ relatively broad reddish rings alternating w/ 16-27 somewhat narrower black rings, which are each edged w/ yellow or white (rybyr or rwbwr). On some specimens, reddish rings are completely melanic (black), especially dorsally. Tail usually w/ 4-9 wide black rings alternating w/ narrower yellow ones.

Habitat

Lower montane dry forest in the semiarid foothills of the inter-Andean basins, at 500-1,500 m elevation. Limited to southern Ecuador & northern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

No data. Most species of coral snakes usually are not aggressive, are mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, are mainly terrestrial (& burrow into soft soil & litter), are oviparous, & prey on local other snakes, lizards, frogs & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes have highly potent neurotoxic venom, which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usually during an attempt to capture the snake.

Micrurus petersi

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus steindachneri petersi*

Common Names: Peters' coral snake, coral, coral montanera

Description

Medium-sized usually 3-colored coralsnake (obscured red rings make some specimens look 2-colored), adults usually <70 cm long. Head mostly black on top, circled by a white ring behind eyes. Body w/ 20-21 moderately broad red & 20-21 black rings, separated by narrower yellowish rings (rybyr), some red rings often obscured, at least dorsally. Tail usually w/ 5 wide black rings separated by yellow rings.

Habitat

Found in cloud forest & lower montane wet forest at 1,000-1,700 m elevation. Known specimens so far limited to Ecuador, but may also occur in suitable habitats in nearby Brazil & Peru.

Activity and Behavior

No data. Most species of coral snakes are usually not aggressive, are mainly nocturnal (or crepuscular), are mainly terrestrial (& may burrow in loose soil & litter), are oviparous (w/ clutches of <15 eggs), & usually eat locally available other snakes, lizards, amphibians & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but most species of coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper, front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snake bites to humans usually occur on fingers or toes, & usually when the victim tried to catch the snake.

Micrurus proximans

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus diastema proxmans* (in part)

Common Names: Nayarit coral snake, coral, coral de Nayarit, coralillo

Description

Small 3-colored coralsnake, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 56+ cm). Top of head mostly black. Body w/ broad red rings (often speckled w/ black dorsally) alternating w/ 17-24 narrower black rings; red & black rings separated by very narrow yellow rings (rybyr). Tail w/ 4-7 wide black rings alternating w/ narrower yellow rings.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest & thorn forest at up to 150 m elevation. Limited to Nayarit to Jalisco coastal area of western Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

No detailed data for this species; a rare snake. Most species of coral snakes are usually nonaggressive, mainly nocturnal (or crepuscular), terrestrial (often burrow in loose soil or litter), oviparous (w/ small number of eggs/ clutch, usually <15), & usually prey on other snakes, lizards, amphibians or invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Specific data are lacking. Most species of coral snakes have mainly neurotoxic venom, which can be injected via a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Their mouths are small & most bites to humans are usually on a toe or finger, & usually during an attempt to catch or molest the snake. No documented serious envenomations of humans by this species, so far.

Micrurus psyches

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps circinalis*, *E. corallinus* (in part), *E. psyches*, *E. riisei*, *Micrurus psyches circinalis*, *M. p. donosoi*, *M. p. psyches*, *Micrurus circinalis*, *Vipera psyches*

Common Names: Duaden's coral snake, Carib coral snake, blakka drarasneki, cobra-coral, corail, culebra de corbata, coral morada, serpent-corail, kuwasakala, kraalslang, krarasneke, blakka kraka sneki

Description

Small to medium-sized 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 55-70 cm (max. 91 cm). Appearance extremely variable; dorsally melanized red rings may make specimens look entirely black, essentially looking bicolored (i.e., black, w/ a series of very narrow to narrow whitish or yellowish rings), or 3-colored [broad red rings, alternating w/ 22-41 narrower black rings each bordered by very thin white rings (rwbwr)]. Tail w/ 5-10 black rings.



Habitat

Most common in lower montane wet forest & lowland rainforest; occurs from near sea level to 500 m elevation. Limited mainly to northern South America & some Caribbean islands (including Trinidad).

Activity and Behavior

Often active during daytime on forest floor. Mainly terrestrial, commonly burrows in loose soil & forest floor litter. Most species of coral snakes not usually aggressive, are oviparous (w/ small numbers of eggs/clutch), & prey on locally available other snakes, lizards, frogs & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom, which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snake bites to humans usually occur on fingers or toes, & usually during attempts to capture or molest the snake.

Micrurus putumayensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus schmidtii*

Common Names: Putumayo coral snake, biocoral, cobra-coral do Putumayo, coral putumayense, naca-naca

Description

Medium-sized 2-colored coral snake, adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 80+ cm). Head mostly black (above & below), w/ a yellowish ring at neck juncture. Body patterned w/ alternating broad yellowish (often obscured w/ black pigment) & 7-14 black rings, w/ yellow rings usually shorter than adjacent black rings. Tail w/ 2-3 black rings. Yellow rings on belly often w/ red or orange tinge (rarely appear more orange-reddish than yellow). Dorsal yellow scales tipped w/ black.

Habitat

Found mainly in tropical rainforest in primary or slightly open, mature secondary forest, in Amazon basin in northwestern Brazil, southeastern Colombia, & northeastern Peru, from near sea level to at least 300 m elevation. Especially common in Mauritia palm swamp forest & wet non-flooded forest.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal or crepuscular & terrestrial (often burrow in loose soil & litter). Most coral snakes usually are not aggressive, but will bite readily if restrained or molested. Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported) & prey on locally available other snakes, lizards, amphibians, & invertebrates (especially as juveniles).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but most species of coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snake bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usually when the victim was trying to catch or molest the snake.

Micrurus pyrrhocryptus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps simonsii*, *E. pyrrhocryptus*, *Micrurus frontalis pyrrhocryptus*, *M. f. tricolor*, *Micrurus pyrrhocryptus pyrrhocryptus*, *M. p. tricolor*, *Micrurus tricolor*

Common Names: Argentinian coral snake, coral, cobra-coral, mboi chumbo, mboi chumbe-guazu

Description

Medium-sized 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 124+ cm); snout & top of head black, 6-12 triads of black rings on body, junctions between red & black rings look "jagged" because each scale is entirely red, or black. Most dorsal red scales heavily outlined w/ black. Dorsal white scales often w/ black tips, especially along posterior border of the ring.

Habitat

Found mainly in dry tropical deciduous forest, pampas, grassland, savannah, pantanal, semideciduous shrubland, & chaco formations; at 100-500 m elevation. Limited to south-central South America east of the Andes, including parts of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, & Paraguay.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly nocturnal & crepuscular (active at dusk & dawn) & terrestrial. Routinely burrows in loose soil & accumulated litter on the ground. Reportedly very secretive & not aggressive, but will bite if restrained or handled roughly. Probably oviparous (clutch size unknown, but probably <15 eggs) & mainly preys on locally available other snakes (possibly cannibalistic), lizards, frogs & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most coral snakes have mainly a potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their relatively small mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually during attempts to catch or molest the snake. There are no well documented cases of serious envenomations or deaths of humans from bites by this species, so far.

Micrurus remotus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus psyches remotus*

Common Names: Neblina coral snake, cobra-coral, cobra-coral remota, coral, coral remota

Description

Small 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 45-50 cm long (max. 56+ cm). Head black. Black rings (25-40) on body arranged singly, w/ red rings about twice as wide as black rings & bordered by 2 pale yellow rings which are very narrow (often only a series of spots across body). Tail w/ 6-11 alternating black & yellow rings, which are usually reddish-brown above. Dorsal red scales usually black-tipped & dusky.

Habitat

Mainly found in mesic forests, including tropical rainforests, lower montane wet forest, & cloud forest. Occurs in eastern Colombia, southern Venezuela, & adjacent Brazil at 90-1,700 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Reportedly mainly nocturnal, sometimes active at dusk or dawn, & terrestrial (burrows readily in loose sandy soil or forest floor litter). Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported, but probably a small number of eggs) & mainly preys on available other snakes, lizards, amphibians & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably has mainly neurotoxic venom. Partly due to its relatively remote distribution, no serious envenomations or deaths of humans from bites by this species have been documented, so far. The few reported bites to humans have usually been on a toe or finger, often occurring while the victim tried to catch the snake.

Micrurus ruatanus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps fulvius*, *E. ruatanus*, *Micrurus nigrocinctus ruatanus*

Common Names: Roatan coral snake, coral, coralillo, coral de la Isla de Roatan, coral roatanense, lim lin, silbara

Description

Small, fairly slender, 2-colored coral snake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 68+ cm). Body w/ alternating 33-45 black & dark red rings; black rings may each vary in width. This is the only coral snake (or ring-patterned snake) on Isla de Roatan (in the Departamento de Islas de Bahia of Honduras). Probably closely related to the mainland species *M. nigrocinctus*.

Habitat

Found in tropical moist forest on the north & south sides of Isla de Roatan, which is about 65 Km off the north coast of Honduras. Occurs from near sea level to nearly the highest point on the island (235 m elevation).

Activity and Behavior

Mostly nocturnal (& maybe crepuscular), terrestrial (probably also burrows in loose sandy soil or vegetative litter), & reportedly very secretive. Not aggressive, & seldom reported to bite humans, even when handled. Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported, but probably <15 eggs). Probabaly preys mainly on local lizards, amphibians, other snakes, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known; reportedly considered nonvenomous by some inhabitants of the island on which it occurs. Venom of most coral snakes is mainly potently neurotoxic. Reported bites to humans have usually been on a toe or finger & occurred during the victim's attempt to catch or handle the snake. No well documented serious envenomations nor fatalities of humans due to bites by this species, so far.

Micrurus sangilensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus bocourti sangilensis*, *M. ecuadorianus sangilensis*

Common Names: Santander coral snake, coral, coral sangilense

Description

Small 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 45-55 cm long (max. 60 cm). Head black, w/ yellow crescent-shaped posterior band. Body patterned w/ broad red rings alternating w/ 17-22 triads, each w/ 3 black (middle black ring widest) & 2 yellow rings (rbybybr). Tail w/ 5-10 black rings separated by yellow rings suffused w/ black. May be related to *M. bocourti*.

Habitat

Found mainly in dry tropical forest, lower montane dry forest, & lower montane humid forest. Occur at 1,018-1,737 m elevation. Limited to drainage areas of the Rio Suarez & Rio Lebrija in the eastern Andes within eastern Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most coral snake species are mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, terrestrial, & burrow in loose soil or litter. They are usually not aggressive, but many will bite if restrained or molested. Most coral snake species (all reported so far) are oviparous (w/ usual clutch sizes of <15 eggs), & prey on other snakes, lizards, amphibians, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes have potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually during attempts to catch or molest the snake. No well documented serious envenomations or deaths of humans due to bites by this species, so far.

Micrurus serranus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus frontifasciatus* (in part)

Common Names: Bolivian coral snake, coral

Description

Small, 3-colored coral snake, max. adult length 82+ cm. Front half of head black, w/ broken white band (or spots) near nostrils; back of head & neck red. Snout distinctly acuminate, chin yellow. Body patterned w/ moderately broad red rings separated by 10-14 triads of 3 black & 2 narrower white rings each (rbwbwbr). Both red & yellow smooth dorsal scales edged w/ black.

Habitat

Not well characterized. Probably either lower montane wet forest or dry forest, w/ sandy soil & rock outcrops, altered by humans in many places. Limited to certain intermontane valleys in central Bolivia, at 1,200-2,150 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes are mainly nocturnal or crepuscular; terrestrial; often burrow in loose, sandy soil or litter; & usually are nonaggressive. This species is probably oviparous (w/ <15 eggs/ clutch) & probably preys on locally available other snakes, lizards, amphibians, & invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. Most coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom that can be injected via grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, or webbing between, & usually when the victim tries to catch or handle the snake. No serious envenomations or deaths of humans documented from bites of this species, so far.

Micrurus spixii

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Identification

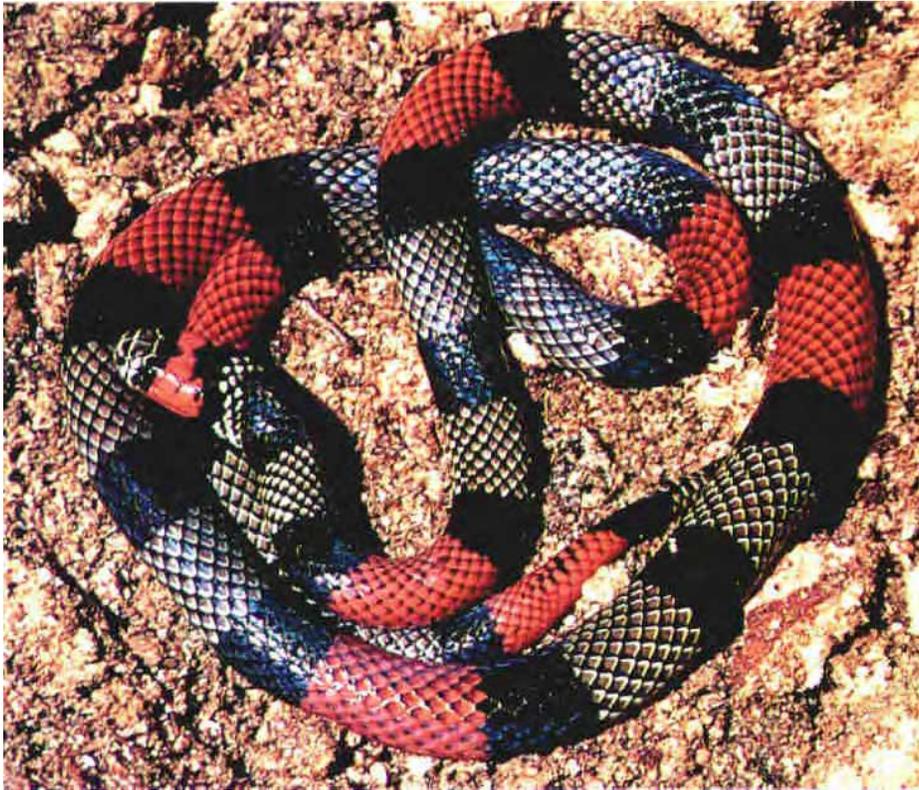
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps corallinus* var. *obscurus*, *Elaps ehrhardti*, *E. heterozonus*, *E. princeps*, *E. spixii*, *Micrurus heterozonus*, *M. obscurus*, *Micrurus spixii martiusi*, *M. s. obscurus*, *M. s. princeps*, *M. s. spixii*

Common Names: Amazonian coral snake, South American Coral snake, coral venenosa, acavai, naca-naca

Description

Large, heavy-bodied, 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 80-110 cm long (max. 141+ cm). Head w/ area in front of eyes usually whitish w/ scattered black pigment, followed by a red ring (may be incomplete dorsally) & a black ring. Dorsal pattern varies, but usually has rather broad red rings separated by 4-9 (rarely 10) triads, each w/ 3 black separated by 2 white, yellow, or greenish rings (bwbwb, bybyb, or bgbgb), triads sometimes fuse (& become quincads). Tail w/ no more than 1 triad.



Habitat

Mainly found on forest floors in tropical rainforest, but also found around human habitations & in savanna/gallery forest areas in the llanos of eastern Colombia; most common in humid areas close to water. Occurs throughout most of the Amazon & Orinoco basins, from near sea level to at least 1,200 m elevation. May also occur in the French Guiana, Guyana, & Suriname, but no specimens confirmed from those countries, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Unpredictable temperament, can be highly irritable; its mouth is large enough to bite even through moderately thick clothing. Mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, but may be active in daytime on overcast days or after rain. Oviparous (clutch size not known, but probably 8-16 eggs). Preys mainly on other snakes, lizards, & amphibians (rarely, certain fish or eels).

Venom Characteristics

Venom is potently neurotoxic & this species' large size ensures ample volume available for injection. This species is one of the most dangerous coral snakes in South America. It inflicts many bites to humans each year, & often causes human fatalities, throughout its relatively large range.

Micrurus spurrelli

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps spurrelli*, *Micrurus mipartitus* (in part), *M. nicefori*

Common Names: Colombian coral snake, coral

Description

Small, 2-colored coral snake, adults usually 25-40 cm long (max. 63+ cm). Head w/ black snout, followed by narrow white band, then a wider black band, & narrow white band. Body usually w/ 47-53 alternating narrow black rings (bands) & white rings. Tail w/ 4-7 black & alternating red bands. Some dorsal white scales have black tips. Known from only a few specimens & rarely seen.

Habitat

Found in tropical rainforest from near sea level to about 400 m elevation. Limited to western Colombia near the Pacific coast (the region of Pena Lisa, Rio Condoto drainage, Choco).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes are mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, are mainly terrestrial (& burrow in loose soil & leaf litter), usually are nonaggressive, are oviparous (w/ a small number of eggs/clutch), & mainly eat other snakes, lizards, amphibians, invertebrates & sometimes fish or eels.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Like most coral snakes, it probably has potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, & usually only when the victim tries to catch or molest the snake. No well documented serious envenomations or deaths of humans caused by bites of this snake, so far.

Micrurus steindachneri

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps fasslii*, *E. steindachneri*, *Micrurus langsdorffii*, *M. steindachneri orcesi*, *M. s. steindachneri*

Common Names: Steindachner's coral snake, coral, coral de Steindachner

Description

Medium-sized, 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 55-70 cm long (max. 88 cm). Snout & top of head all black. Dorsal pattern 3-colored but subdued; alternating relatively wide reddish rings & 22-42 black rings, separated by much narrower yellowish rings (rybyr), yellow rings often just a row of spots across body, red rings often melanistic dorsally. Tail w/ 4-12 black rings, sometimes looks "all black" dorsally. Known from only a few (mainly preserved) specimens.



Habitat

Mainly found in lower montane wet forest & cloud forest, mainly from about 650-2,000 m elevation. Limited to eastern slopes of the Andes in central Ecuador & northwestern Peru.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly nocturnal or crepuscular & terrestrial (reportedly does burrow in loose soil & leaf litter). Reportedly not aggressive, & raises tail when disturbed. Probably oviparous (clutch size not reported). Probably preys on available other snakes, lizards, amphibians & possibly some invertebrates (at least when young).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably has mainly neurotoxic venom (like most other species of coral snakes), which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their relatively small mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, & usually during a victim's attempts to catch or molest the snake. No serious envenomations or deaths of humans reported as due to bites by this species, so far.

Micrurus stewarti

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus schmidti*, *M. smithi*, *M. stewarti schmidti*, *M. s. stewarti*

Common Names: Panamanian coral snake, coral, coralilla, gargantilla

Description

Medium-sized, relatively stout, bicolored coral snake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 83+ cm). Front of head black & the back part red. Body patterned w/ relatively broad reddish (or orange, rarely white) rings separated by 13-25 black rings of varying width. Tail w/ 3-5 black rings. Dorsal scales of red (or orange, or white) rings usually w/ obvious black tips. A 2-colored yellow-&-black form of this species has been reported.

Habitat

Mainly found in subtropical wet forest & lower montane wet forest, at 100-1,200 m elevation. Known only from El Valle de Anton & Cerro Bruja & associated uplands (Sabanita). These localities lie in highlands of moderate elevation that flank either side of the Panama Canal.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mostly nocturnal & terrestrial (burrows in loose soil & litter); quite secretive, mainly lives underground & rarely comes out in daytime. Reportedly has a mild disposition, but may occasionally bite if restrained. Most species of coral snakes usually are nonaggressive. Probably oviparous (clutch size not known, but probably small). Probably preys on locally available other snakes, lizards, amphibians, & maybe invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most species of coral snakes have highly potent, mainly neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a finger or toe, or webbing between them, & usually during attempts to catch or handle the snake.

Micrurus stuarti

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Micrurus wagneri*

Common Names: Stuart's coral snake, coral, coralillo, coral de los volcanes, coral de Stuart

Description

Medium-sized 3-colored coral snake, adults usually about 50-60 cm long (max. 74+ cm). Body patterned w/ 13-19 alternating relatively broad black rings & very broad red rings, separated by very narrow yellow rings (rybyr). Dorsal smooth scales of red rings usually w/ black tips or spots. Tail usually w/ 3-4 wide black rings, separated by narrow brownish-red rings, & a black tip. Known from only a very few specimens (some preserved).

Habitat

Mainly found in subtropical wet forest & lower montane wet forest. Only known specimen w/ elevation data was collected at 1,350 m elevation. Limited to the pacific versant of southwestern Guatemala. May also occur in similar habitats in adjacent southeastern Mexico, but no specimens verified from there, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Like most known species of coral snakes, this species is probably mainly nocturnal or crepuscular (active at dusk or dawn), terrestrial (& may burrow in loose soil & leaf litter), is oviparous (w/ small number of eggs/ clutch), & preys mainly on other snakes, lizards, amphibians & possibly invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Most coral snake species have highly potent neurotoxic venom which can be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to the small size of their mouths, coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a toe, finger, or webbing between such digits; & usually during attempts to catch or molest the snake. No serious human envenomations or fatalities reported due to bites by this species, so far.

Micrurus surinamensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps surinamensis*, *Micrurus surinamensis nattereri*, *M. s. surinamensis*

Common Names: Aquatic coral snake, cobra-coral aquatica, coral, coralillo, coral de agua, coral venenosa, culebra del agua, boichumbeguacu, culebra de agua, wata mio, himeralli, itinkia, naca-naca, naca naca de agua, kraalslang, krarasneke, kraka sneki, koraalslang

Description

One of largest & stoutest of all coral snakes, 3-colored, adults usually 0.8-1.0 m long (max. 1.35 m). Snout compressed, head swollen posteriorly, & eyes & nostrils situated more dorsally than those of other coral snakes. Head mostly red (scales edged w/ black), body w/ red rings separated by 5-8 complete triads, each w/ a wide middle & 2 narrow black rings, separated by 2 narrow cream or yellowish rings. Rarely, some head scales keeled or divided. Tail w/ >1 complete triad.



Habitat

Found in lower montane wet forest & tropical rain forest along streams, rivers or bodies of water. Most common in wet lowland forested areas, from near sea level to about 600 m elevation. Occurs throughout much of the Orinoco & Amazon drainages of Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, & most of northern & central South America.

Activity and Behavior

Swims very well & can remain submerged for extended periods. Mainly nocturnal, but may be active during the day. Flattens body, curls & raises tail when disturbed. Reportedly not usually aggressive, but will quickly defend itself if disturbed or restrained. Oviparous w/ clutch size not reported (probably <20 eggs). Eats mainly swamp eels, other boney fishes, & probably other snakes (& amphibians), as available.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly potent neurotoxins, w/ myonecrotic factors, & a neurotoxic factor that appears to mainly affect cranial nerve centers. This species is large enough to bite major human body surfaces, not just fingers or toes. It causes a number of serious human envenomations annually within its range. Its bite has been reported to cause human fatalities.

Micrurus tener

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps fitzingeri*, *E. fulvius*, *E. f. fitzingeri*, *E. f. tener*, *E. tener*, *E. tenere*, *E. tristis*, *Micrurus fitzinger*, *M. f. fitzingeri*, *M. f. microgalbineus*, *Micrurus fulvius*, *M. f. fitzingeri*, *M. f. maculatus*, *M. f. microgalbineus*, *M. f. tener*,

Common Names: Texas coral snake, coral coralillo, corn snake, kolkohkachinto, thunder snake

Description

Medium-sized, 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 121+ cm). Head black above w/ yellow crossband near middle, body w/ wide red bands (dorsal red scales often w/ black tips or mainly black), separated from 10-30 slightly narrower single black bands by thin yellow bands. Tail w/ 2-7 wide black bands separated by narrow yellow bands. Some totally melanistic (black) & one amelanistic (white bands replacing black bands) specimens have been reported.

Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats from mixed hardwoods, to pine forests, subtropical thornscrub, tall-grass prairie, to riparian sites (within otherwise dry areas). Occurs in the southwestern U.S. (Arkansas, Louisiana, & Texas) & several states of northeastern & central Mexico. Found from near sea level to about 500 m elevation in the U.S. & from near sea level to about 2,000 m elevation in Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial (burrows in sandy soil or accumulated litter) & mainly diurnal (this varies w/ season & temperatures). Mainly preys on lizards, other snakes, & frogs (& probably invertebrates when young). Oviparous (clutches of 3-9 eggs observed for captured specimens).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly potently neurotoxic. Very brief, directly observed single bites by this species have caused serious human envenomation & fatality. Several bites & significant envenomations (occasionally, deaths) by this species occur each year within its range. Melanistic specimens can pose a risk of delayed treatment due to minimum trauma of the bite, misidentification of the snake, & the usually slow onset of effects of even a serious envenomation.

Micrurus tschudii

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Elaps tschudii*, *Micrurus olsoni*, *M. tschudii tschudii*, *M. t. tschudii*

Common Names: Desert coral snake, chaquira, coral, coral de desierto, serpiente de coral, vibora de coral, wara watu, naca-naca

Description

Small, 3-colored coral snake, adults usually 45-55 cm (max. 88 cm). Snout & front half of head black above, rest of head red. Body pattern consists of 10-22 black triads (bybyb; w/ yellow sometimes replaced by white), dividing fairly wide red rings (width variable; rarely, only a spot). Borders of yellow rings usually jagged. Black spots or stippling common on dorsal yellow & red scales. Tail w/ 1-2 1/3 triads.

Habitat

Found in tropical deciduous forest, dry tropical forest & thorn scrub; mainly along watercourses. Occurs from near sea level to 1,450 m elevation. Limited to the semi-arid Pacific coast of South America, from southern Ecuador to southwestern Peru. A report of a specimen from Bolivia could not be confirmed by prominent snake taxonomists & was likely a mis-identification.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & terrestrial, but will climb into low trees. Most species of coral snakes usually are not aggressive, but will defend themselves (& bite) if disturbed. This species probably burrows in loose soil & leaf litter, & is probably oviparous but clutch size has not been reported (for most coral snakes, <15 eggs). It probably preys mainly on available lizards, other snakes, amphibians, & maybe also certain invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. Probably has neurotoxic venom, like most other species of coral snakes, which could be injected through a pair of grooved, fixed, upper front fangs. Due to their small mouths, most coral snakes' bites to humans usually occur on a toe or finger, or webbing between, & usually occur during attempts to catch or handle the snake.

Montatheris hindii

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Identification

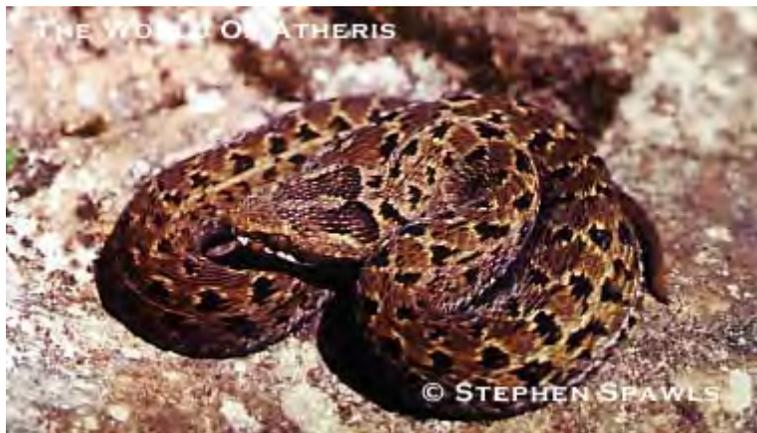
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris hindii*, *Bitis hindii*, *Hindius hindii*, *Vipera hindii*

Common Names: Kenya montane viper, Kenya mountain viper, montane viper

Description

Small, slender terrestrial viper w/ elongate head & white lips, adults usually 20-30 cm long (max. 35 cm); body dull gray or brownish, w/ a paired series of pale-edged black, triangular blotches along its back; dorsal scales keeled, w/ 24-27 midbody rows; Belly grayish, speckled w/ darker gray, distinctive white patches on both lips, dark V-shaped mark on top of head (points forward), wide, dark postorbital stripe.



Habitat

Found only in treeless montane moorlands, at high elevations (2,700-3,800 m). Limited to Mt. Kenya & the Aberdare range in south-central Kenya.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, diurnal; lives deep in large grass tufts, which provide insulation from intensely cold nights. Often seen sunning on top of these tufts in morning. Activity is temperature dependent. Irrascible, & will bite if threatened. Ovoviviparous w/ small litter (only 2 young from a captured female). Eats chameleons, skinks, frogs, & sometimes small rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Venom likely hemotoxic. Not considered harmful to man. No serious bites or envenomations of humans reported. No known antivenom currently produced.

Naja anchietae

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja annulifera anchietae*, *N. haje* (in part), *N. h. anchietae*

Common Names: Anchieta's cobra, Anchieta's Egyptian cobra, Angolan cobra

Description

Large, thick-bodied cobra, w/ short, broad head & fairly large eyes, adults usually 1.3-1.8 m long (max. 2.5 m); body yellowish brown, to dark brown, dark band on neck fades w/ age, 17 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly yellow, heavily blotched w/ dark brown. A pair of fixed, upper front fangs.

Habitat

Mainly found in savannah or grassland (never forest or desert), usually at low altitudes but has been reported up to 2,000 m elevation. Often lives in old termite nests, rock holes, or rodent burrows. Mainly limited to southeastern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, & Zambia).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, but active day & night, basks in sun; not very aggressive unless cornered or molested, then usually rears front of body & spreads 10-12 cm wide hood. Will strike suddenly if bothered more. Preys mainly on small mammals. Oviparous, w/ 8-30 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly potent neurotoxic, possibly also has cardiotoxic factors, large volume & rather large fangs can lead to serious envenomation. Known to cause human deaths every year.

Naja annulifera

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja haje* (in part), *N. h. haje* (in part), *N. haje annulifera*, *N. nigricola*

Common Names: Snouted cobra, annulated cobra

Description

Big, fairly stout-bodied cobra w/ short, broad head & large eyes, adults usually 1.3-1.8 m long (max. 2.5 m); body yellowish-brown to olive above, yellowish w/ dark brown blotches below, dark brown band on venter of throat, 19 midbody dorsal scale rows; a common banded form has black body w/ 7-9 yellow bands on body (& 2 on tail). This color phase is widespread within the species's range; only develops bands after growing to about 60 cm long.

Habitat

Mainly found in savannah, grassland, or near agricultural land; never in forests or desert, at low elevations; fairly widespread in southeastern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, but active & basks in sun, preys mainly on small mammals, often found near human habitations. Generally not very aggressive, but will raise body & spread 10-11 cm wide hood if cornered or disturbed, may strike suddenly if further molested.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly contains a potent neurotoxin, & maybe also a cardiotoxic factor, large fangs & venom glands can produce serious envenomation; a number of human bites & fatalities have been reported to have been caused by this species.

Naja ashei

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja* (*Afronaja*) *ashei*

Common Names: Ashe's spitting cobra, Large brown spitting cobra, East African light-bellied brown spitting cobra

Description

This is the largest (based on average adult size) "spitting" cobra species, with adults usually about 2.1 m long (max. slightly longer than 2.7 m). Both head and body color are fairly uniform olive-brown; with no red, pink, or orange pigment under the throat. Body paler on belly, shaded darker along sides with hood not expanded, but lacks any distinctly dark (or contrasting-colored) throat band. Juveniles usually have a uniformly lighter body color. Their dorsal scales are smooth, w/ 21-23 rows at midbody, at least 195 ventral scales, and at least 21 (usually more) scale rows around their neck. They frequently have only 2 post-ocular scales, as versus the typical 3 post-ocular scales usually found on both of the closest related species of spitting cobras that are also found in East Africa (i.e., *Naja nigricollis* and *Naja mossambica*). This species looks very similar to the sympatric, slightly larger Brown Cobra, *Naja haje*, but *N. haje* does not have fangs modified for "spitting" venom.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry lowlands of eastern Africa, where they shelter in various natural cavities or under natural projections, like fallen or hollow trees or piles of vegetative debris, in rodent burrows, or gaps in piled rocks. Reported, so far, from lowlands in northern and eastern Kenya, north-eastern Uganda, southern Somalia, and southern Ethiopia. It likely occurs in northeastern Tanzania, and may occur in suitable habitats in other East African countries adjacent to those listed here.

Activity and Behavior

Generally nocturnal (or crepuscular), juveniles and some adults may be active during the day. They are mainly terrestrial, but are fairly good climbers (e.g., into small trees, rock outcroppings, and under, onto, or over man-made structures). Oviparous, may lay 10-20 eggs/ clutch. They prey on a wide variety of available animals, including toads, chickens or their eggs (they often raid chicken runs), other birds &/or eggs, small mammals, lizards, and sometimes accessible fresh-water fish.

Venom Characteristics

This species can produce very large amounts of venom. One large specimen "milked" at the Bio-Ken Snake Farm in Watamu, Kenya, yielded 6.2 ml. of liquid venom, weighing 7.1 g (dry weight not measured, but later estimated at >3 g). Venom is primarily cytotoxic, causing serious local tissue damage, but more limited systemic effects. Large specimens can "spit" venom as far as 3 m, usually aiming at intruders' eyes (or heads). Their venom usually does not affect unbroken skin, but it can cause great pain & possibly serious tissue destruction in the eyes.

Naja atra

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia atra*, *N. naja atra*, *N. sputatrix atra*, *N. tripudians* var. *fasciata*, *N. t.* var. *scopinucha*, *N. j. unicolor*

Common Names: Chinese cobra, Chinesische Kobra

Description

Large, fairly heavy-bodied cobra, adults usually 1.4-1.6 m long (max. 2.0 m); Body varies from gray-brown to black; belly pale. Back of hood unmarked or w/ pale, black-edged band w/ central dark spot or spectacle marking. May have 2 separate dark-rimmed white circles.

Habitat

Common in various habitats including rice fields, marshy areas, forests, & human settlements. Limited to southeastern China, Laos, Taiwan, & Vietnam.

Activity and Behavior

When threatened, rears up & spreads prominent hood. Capable of "spitting" venom into the face of an aggressor.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily neurotoxic; also cytotoxic. May cause immediate pain & swelling at site, followed by blistering & discoloration. Within hours after bite, victim may have vomiting & abdominal pain followed by drowsiness, ptosis, & inability to open mouth. Human deaths have been reported (documented) to have been caused by this species.

Naja haje

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Coluber candidissimus*, *C. haje*, *Cerastes candidus*, *Naja haje anchietae*, *N. h. arabica*, *N. j. haje*, *N. h. legionis*, *N. h. var. viridis*, *Vipera haje*

Common Names: Egyptian cobra, African banded cobra, banded cobra, brown cobra, Cleopatra's asp, Arabian cobra

Description

Big, thick-bodied cobra, w/ broad head & fairly large eyes, adults usually 1.3-1.8 m (max. 2.5 m); body usually yellow-gray to brown or blue-black, but extremely variable. Belly yellowish w/ dark blotches. Most specimens have dark brown or black band across throat (ventral).



Habitat

Various habitats: flat land, scrubby bushes, grass clumps, irrigated fields, rocky hillsides, old ruins; may hide in old termite mound or rodent burrow; often near villages. Found at sea level to 1,600 m elevation. Not found in rain forests or extreme desert conditions. Geographically widespread in Africa & southern Arabian peninsula.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal; emerges at dusk, often seen basking in sun near a retreat in early morning. Often occupies abandoned rodent burrows or termite mounds. While not overtly aggressive, if molested, it will rear & spread an impressive hood up to 12 cm wide. Can bite, & sometimes spreads hood, without rearing. Preys mainly on small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Venom mainly neurotoxic, affecting nerves controlling respiratory muscles, & possibly w/ cardiotoxins. Untreated cases may die of respiratory failure, sometimes within 5 hrs. Large volume of venom available, & w/ relatively large fangs, it can produce serious envenomation. Many human bites & fatalities annually.

Naja kaouthia

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia kaouthia*, *N. k. suphanensis*, *Naja naja kaouthia*, *N. n. sputatrix*, *Naja tripudians* var. *fasciata* [Note: *Naja naja siamensis* has reportedly been used to refer to this species (instead of the actual species, *Naja siamensis*) in some past toxicological literature.]

Common Names: Monocellate cobra, monacled cobra, Monokelkobra, Thai cobra

Description

Adults exceed 1.5 m long (max. 2.2+ m). Color & pattern varies widely. Body usually yellow, yellow-tan, brown, greenish brown, olive, or black; may show alternate wide & narrow transverse dark bands. Dorsal side of hood often w/ white annular marks like a pair of (or single) monacle or spectacles.



Habitat

Occurs in virtually all habitats except dense forests; frequently occurs in cities and villages. Most common cobra in much of Southeast Asia; mainly from sea level to 700 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Most active at twilight, but may bask in sun during day. Shelters in areas such as rock piles, termite mounds, fallen logs, mammal burrows, & building foundations. Does not "spit" venom at aggressor. Eats a wide range of prey, from lizards to mammals & birds. Oviparous w/ 8-45 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Contains potent neurotoxin & cytotoxin. Pain & swelling at bite site often followed by blistering & extensive necrosis. Neurotoxic symptoms may include ptosis, drowsiness, dysphagia, dysphonia, & generalized weakness. High mortality rate following envenomation.

Naja katiensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja mozambica katiensis*, *Naja nigricolis katiensis*, *Naja trilepis*

Common Names: Mali cobra, West African (brown) spitting cobra

Description

A small, moderately thick-bodied cobra, adults usually 0.5-0.8 m long (max. about 1 m); body usually reddish-brown, warm brown, or maroon, w/ orange-brown on flanks, belly light orange-brown, w/ smooth dorsal scales in 23-27 midbody rows. A broad dark band on underside of throat may form a ring, but this usually fades in older specimens.

Habitat

Found mainly in savannah & semi-desert, from Senegal & southern Mauritania east to Nigeria & Cameroon.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial but climbs into low bushes; Mainly crepuscular, but often basks in sun. Fast-moving & alert. Usually tries to get away if disturbed, but if cornered or molested, raises front of its body & spreads a narrow hood. If further disturbed, it often "spits" (sprays) 2 jets of venom at the intruder's head & eyes. Oviparous (clutch size not reported), preys mainly on amphibians, also other snakes & sometimes rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic venom. One of the most common causes of venomous snake bites in Senegal. Has been reported to have caused human deaths.

Naja mandalayensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Mandalay spitting cobra

Description

Moderately large, fairly stout cobra, adults about 82 cm long; body yellowish-brown to dull brown, w/ darker brownish mottling, belly pale w/ very few dark speckles, dark under chin & throat, followed by paler clear area, then by 2 or 3 dark bands across venter of hood, no obvious markings on dorsum (back/ top) of hood. Fixed front upper pair of fangs modified for "spitting" venom.

Habitat

Found mainly in the central dry zone of Burma (Myanmar).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but often basks in sun & hunts at dusk. Usually avoids large animals & humans, but if threatened, will rear up & spread an obvious hood. If further molested, will often "spit" (spray) venom toward eyes (head) of any aggressor (can spray fairly accurately for nearly 2 m distance).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly neurotoxic, w/ cytotoxic factors.

Naja melanoleuca

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Aspidelaps bocagii*, *Naja annulata* (in part), *Naja haje* var. *leucosticta*, *N. h.* var. *melanoleuca*, *Naja melanoleuca aurata*, *N. m. melanoleuca*, *N. m. subflava*

Common Names: Forest cobra, Black-and-white-lipped cobra, White-lipped cobra, Schwarzweisse Kobra

Description

Large, fairly slender cobra, adults usually 1.5-2.0 m long (max. 2.7 m), w/ 19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Background color usually glossy black, dark gray or dark brown above; belly creamy white to yellow, often w/ darker blotches.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical rain forest & subtropical forest areas; seldom found far from water. Fairly widespread along (near) rivers & surface waters throughout central & western Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (maybe semi-aquatic) Very active snake, climbs & swims well. May forage (hunt) on overcast days. Equally at home in trees, on ground, or swimming in lakes or rivers. When disturbed, rears to a great height; usually more than two-thirds of body raised off ground.

Venom Characteristics

Bites of humans reported infrequent, venom highly neurotoxic; human fatalities have been reported. Considered by many to be one of the most dangerous (to humans) snakes in West Africa, partly due to its aggressive behavior, rapid movement, rather large size, & potent venom.

Naja mossambica

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja mossambica mossambica*, *N. nigricollis mossambica*, *N. n. nigricollis* (in part)

Common Names: Mozambique spitting cobra, Mosambik-Speikobra

Description

Small to medium-sized cobra, adults usually 0.9-1.2 m long (max. 1.5 m). Background color generally pale-gray to olive-brown or black; each dorsal scale edged in black, dorsal scales smooth & in 23-25 midbody rows. Belly salmon-pink. Irregular black crossbands on throat (ventral side).



Habitat

Most often found in open woodlands, plains, savanna, & rocky hillsides. Usually near water. Mainly limited to southeastern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but adults may emerge from shelters & bask in the sun during the day & forage at night. Young specimens much more diurnal & frequently encountered in the open at any time of day. React to intruders by rearing body & will often spray venom at aggressor (intruder) after only minimal provocation.

Venom Characteristics

Venom mainly cytotoxic & can cause considerable tissue damage; neurotoxic symptoms generally minor. Bites of humans infrequent & fatalities rare. Neurotoxic symptoms may occur if unusually large dose of venom is injected. Large specimens can "spit" venom >1.0 m.

Naja naja

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja naja naja*

Common Names: Indian spectacled cobra, Indian cobra, common Asian cobra, spectacled cobra

Description

Large, heavy-bodied cobra, adults usually 1.5-2.0 m long (max. 2.4 m). Body usually dark-brown or black to yellowish-white above & white or yellowish below. Distinctive markings include spectacle mark on top

(dorsal surface) of expanded hood, w/ dark spot in middle of lighter ring, or within each "lens" of the "spectacles."

Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats: flat grasslands & jungles, among scattered trees, near rice fields & other cultivated areas, & near settlements. Occurs at sea level & higher elevations (to at least 300 m). Widespread throughout India & southern & southeastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal; most active in evening & early morning. Not usually aggressive. When threatened or cornered, lifts upper body & spreads hood. When biting, holds on & chews savagely. Quick-moving & agile. Often lives in holes in embankments, hollows of trees. Oviparous w/ 8-32 (up to 45) eggs/ clutch. Preys on small mammals, birds, other snakes, lizards, frogs & toads.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin w/ some hemotoxic factors. May cause severe local pain & swelling immediately after bite; dark discoloration, necrosis, & blistering may occur within 72 hours. Systemic symptoms include headache, nausea, vomiting, drooping eyelids. Thousands of bites of human & amny deaths each year due to bites by this species.

Naja nigricollis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja mossambica nigricincta*, *Naja nigricollis atriceps*, *N. n. nigricollis*, *N. n. nigricincta*, *N. n. occidentalis*, *N. n. woodi*, *N. n. var. crawshayi*, *Naja woodi*

Common Names: Black-necked spitting cobra, western barred spitting cobra, black spitting cobra, Afrikanische Speikobra

Description

Medium to large cobra, adults usually 1.0-1.5 m long (max. 2.8 m). Body color highly variable, ranging from pinkish-tan in some geographical areas to uniformly black in others, most forms have 1 red(ish) & 1 black band across the underside (venter) of their throat. Dorsal scales smooth, w/ 17-25 rows at midbody. All-black & red-black specimens have been collected in some areas.



Habitat

Found mainly in moist or dry savanna or sahel, where they shelter in abandoned termite mounds, rodent burrows, or hollow trees. Widespread across many countries in central & southern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Generally nocturnal (or crepuscular), juveniles often active during day. Mainly terrestrial, but fairly good swimmers & climbers. Oviparous, usually 8-20 eggs/ clutch. Prey on a wide variety of animals, including toads, chickens (often raid chicken runs), other birds &/or eggs, small mammals, & lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily cytotoxic, causing serious local tissue damage. Large specimens can "spit" venom as far as 3 m, usually aiming at intruders' eyes (or heads). Venom does not affect unbroken skin, but can cause great pain & possible tissue destruction in the eyes.

Naja nivea

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Coluber nivea, Naja flava, Naja gutturalis, Naja haje var. capensis, Naja intermixta, Vipera flava

Common Names: Cape cobra, Kap-Kobra

Description

Medium-sized, slender cobra, adults usually 1.2-1.5 m long (max. 2.0 m); body colors extremely variable, usually yellowish to reddish-brown but occasionally uniformly black; lighter below. Smooth, glossy scales, 19-21 midbody dorsal scale rows, most have broad brown ventral neck band that fades w/ age.



Habitat

Found mainly in arid areas, particularly along rivers & well-drained open areas. Often near human habitations on farms or in partially developed suburbs where they may enter houses to escape heat of day.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & crepuscular (or diurnal), active during day & at twilight when they forage for food (hunt). Agile & alert; will escape if possible when molested. If retreat is not possible, rears, spreads hood, & strikes out aggressively, may even advance on the intruder. Oviparous, eats mainly small mammals, frogs, toads, & small birds. In the Kalahari Desert region, this species is sometimes preyed upon by meerkats.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily neurotoxic; most toxic of African cobra venoms. Bites of humans are common, & fatalities often result, especially if untreated.

Naja oxiana

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja naja oxiana*, *Naja tripudians* var. *caeca* (in part), *Tomyris oxiana*

Common Names: Transcaspian cobra, central Asian cobra, Oxus cobra, Mittelasiatische Kobra, Caspian cobra

Description

Large cobra, adults usually about 1.8 m long. Body uniform yellowish, brownish, grayish, or black; may have traces of wide dark crossbands. Belly pale, w/ two dark ventral bands on neck. No distinct hood mark present.

Habitat

Found mainly in stony, rocky, shrub-covered foothills. In some areas, found above 3,000 m elevation. Westernmost species of the "Asian Cobras."

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal; most active during evening & early morning. Not generally aggressive. When threatened or cornered, lifts upper body & spreads hood. When biting, holds on & chews savagely. Quick-moving & agile. Lives in holes in embankments, hollows of trees. Oviparous w/ 6-19 eggs/ clutch reported; eats mainly small mammals, amphibians & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily neurotoxic. May cause severe local pain & swelling immediately following bite. Symptoms such as weakness, drowsiness, & paralysis of throat may appear less than 1 hour after bite & rapidly progress to respiratory failure & death.

Naja pallida

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja mozambica pallida*, *Naja nigricollis pallida*

Common Names: Red spitting cobra, African cobra, Rote Speikobra

Description

Small to medium-sized cobra, adults usually 0.7-1.2 m long (max. 1.5 m). Body color variable, including red or orange (particularly in areas w/ reddish soil), pale red, pinkish, brown, yellow, or gray. Underside of the neck has a broad dark band (sometimes 2 or 3 crossbars), belly reddish sometimes w/ white chin & throat. Head fairly broad. Dorsal scales smooth, w/ 21-27 midbody rows.

Habitat

Primarily found in dry savanna & semi-desert areas, including oases & hilly areas; reportedly not found either in extreme desert or dense woodland habitats. Mainly limited to northeastern & eastern Africa (mainly east of the Rift Valley).

Activity and Behavior

Both nocturnal (mainly adults) & diurnal (mainly juveniles); reportedly found under brush piles or other ground cover or in holes when not active. Mainly terrestrial, but will climb into bushes or low trees. Fast moving & alert, it rears up relatively high if disturbed & spreads a long narrow hood. If further molested, will often spit (spray) twin jets of venom at the intruder.

Venom Characteristics

Not well characterized; as w/ other spitting cobras, venom may be more cytotoxic than neurotoxic in effect. Effectiveness of available antivenoms is not known. *N. pallida* has been reported from several countries in central & eastern Africa.

Naja philippinensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia samarensis*, *N. naja philippinensis*, *N. sputatrix samarensis*, *N. tripudians* var. *caeca*

Common Names: Northern Philippine cobra, Philippine cobra, Philippinen-Kobra

Description

Medium to large cobra, adults usually about 1 m long, (max. about 1.3 m). Background color yellowish to olive-brown above becoming paler on outer scale rows. Belly usually yellowish-white. Adult specimens lack obvious dorsal markings.

Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats. Common in open plains, jungles, & areas populated by humans. Limited to the Philippine Islands (mainly Luzon & Minoro).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Timid, usually tries to escape when encountered. If cornered, rears up & spreads hood; bites quickly as a last resort. Most dangerous when surprised in close quarters. When biting, tends to hold on & chew savagely.

Venom Characteristics

Potent, fast-acting neurotoxin. Symptoms usually include ptosis, slurred speech, & difficulty breathing. May cause severe local pain & swelling immediately following bite; local necrosis in less than 10% of bite cases. If venom enters eyes, may cause damage to corneas.

Naja sagittifera

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia* (in part), *N. k. sagittifera*, *Naja naja sagittifera*, *Naja tripudians* var. *sagittifera*

Common Names: Andaman cobra

Description

Not well known. Medium-sized cobra, adults usually about 1 m long. Body usually yellowish to dark brownish, some specimens w/ limited, indistinct darker brownish dorsal mottling or crossbanding (apparently fades w/ age). Resembles the Indian Cobra, *N. naja*, in overall appearance & form (usually smaller), but does not have that species' distinctive "spectacle" dorsal hood marking.

Habitat

Not well known. Reportedly found in a variety of habitats from grassy areas, open forests, & agricultural areas near human habitations. Limited to the Andaman Islands (a territory of India), almost due south of Burma.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, probably mainly terrestrial & nocturnal (or crepuscular), oviparous (clutch size not reported); mainly preys on available small mammals (especially rats in agricultural crop areas), amphibians & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly neurotoxic. Occasional serious envenomations of humans, & (rarely) fatalities have been reported.

Naja samarensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia samarensis*, *Naja naja samarensis*, *Naja sputatrix samarensis*, *Naja tripudians* var. *samarensis*

Common Names: Samar cobra, Peters cobra, Samar-Kobra, southern Philippine cobra

Description

Medium-sized cobra, adults usually 0.8-0.9 m long (max. about 1.0 m). Body iridescent brownish-black above w/ yellowish reticular pattern on scales & interstitial skin. Chin & upper neck yellowish w/ broad black ventral band.

Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats. Common in open plains, jungles, & areas populated by man. Limited to certain southern Philippine Islands (e.g., Mindanao, Samar, Leyte, Bohol, Carniguin).

Activity and Behavior

Generally nocturnal. Timid; tries to escape when encountered. When cornered, rears up & spreads hood; bites as last resort. Most dangerous when surprised in close quarters. When biting, tends to hold on & chew savagely.

Venom Characteristics

Little known about its venom. Most likely mainly neurotoxic. May cause severe local pain & swelling immediately following bite. If venom enters eyes, may cause immediate burning pain w/ inflammation & possibly even permanent blindness.

Naja siamensis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja atra* (in part), *N. isanensis*, *N. naja atra*, *N. n. isanensis*, *N. n. sputatrix*, *N. n. kaouthia*, *N. n. kaouthis variety C*, *N. oxiana* (in part), *N. sputatrix atra*, *N. s. isanensis*, *N. tripudians* (in part)

Common Names: Thai spitting cobra, Indo-Chinese spitting cobra, Indochinesische Speikobra

Description

Medium-sized, rather thick-bodied cobra, adults usually 75-90 cm long (max. 1.2 m). Body color variable. May be entirely black or brown, largely white w/ dorsal surface of hood black, or pale brown w/ whitish yellow anterior neck w/ dark band (or dark central blotch) below. Often has a narrow dark-brown to black vertebral stripe, w/ a series of "slightly widened" areas, from its head to its tail tip.



Habitat

Found in a wide variety of habitats. Common in open plains, jungles, & areas populated by man. Mainly limited to Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Generally nocturnal. Timid; tries to escape when encountered. If cornered, rears up & spreads hood; may spit (spray) venom at intruder's eyes (head); bites as a last resort. Most dangerous when surprised in close quarters. When biting, tends to hold on & chew savagely. Oviparous (13-19 eggs/ clutch), preys mainly on rodents, toads & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily neurotoxic. Usually causes local pain, swelling, & necrosis. If venom gets into eyes, it may cause immediate burning pain w/ lasting inflammation & possibly even permanent blindness. No specific antivenom produced, but paraspecific activity has been claimed for certain other antivenoms. Human fatalities from bites have been reported.

Naja sputatrix

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia sputatrix* (in part), *N. leptocoryphaea*, *N. naja sputatrix*, *N. tripudians sputatrix*

Common Names: Javan spitting cobra, southern Indonesian spitting cobra, Indonesian spitting cobra, Javanische Speikobra

Description

Medium to large cobra, adults usually about 0.8-1.0 m long (max. 1.5 m). Background color usually uniformly gray, brown, or black above; belly paler, grayish black; throat whitish. Hood unmarked or w/ binocellate marking. Dorsal body scales often paler than visible darker underlying skin, giving an appearance that they are outlined w/ dark-brown or black.

Habitat

Mainly found in lowland dry forests or cultivated hills. Also fairly common in open plains, jungles, & areas populated by humans. Limited to Indonesia (Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Komodo, Alor, Lombok, Sulawesi).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Not aggressive, usually tries to escape when encountered. If cornered, rears up & spreads hood; may spit (spray) venom at eyes (head) of intruder (>1 m); bites as a last resort. Most dangerous when surprised in close quarters. When biting, it tends to hold on & chew savagely. Oviparous w/ 13-19 eggs/ clutch reported. Preys mainly on rodents, toads, & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (at postsynaptic sites), w/ cytotoxic (local necrotic) factors. May cause local pain, swelling, & necrosis. If venom gets into eyes, may cause immediate burning pain w/ long-lasting inflammation & possibly even permanent blindness. Only a few confirmed human fatalities due to bites (most were untreated) by this species.

Naja sumatrana

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naja kaouthia sputatrix* (in part), *N. naja leucodira*, *Naja naja miolepis*, *N. n. paucisquamis*, *N. n. sputatrix* (in part), *N. n. sumatrana*, *Naja sputatrix malayae*, *N. s. miolepis*, *N. s. sputatrix*, *Naja sumatrana miolepis*, *Naja tripudians* var. *caeca*, *N. t. leucodira*, *N. t. var. miolepis*, *N. t. var. nigra*, *N. t. var. sputatrix*, *N. t. sumatrana*

Common Names: Sumatran spitting cobra, Equatorial spitting cobra, golden spitting cobra, Aquatoriale Speikobra

Description

Medium to large cobra, adults usually 0.9-1.1 m long (max. 1.5 m). Body color variable. In some areas, usually uniformly yellow or yellowish-green; elsewhere, uniformly jet-black w/ bluish-black belly & pale markings on neck & chin.



Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats. Fairly common in open plains, jungles, & areas populated or cultivated by humans within its range. Apparently limited to Southeast Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Timid; usually tries to escape if encountered. If cornered, rears up & spreads hood; may spit venom at head (eyes) of intruder w/ good accuracy >1 m; bites as a last resort. Most dangerous when surprised in close quarters. When biting, tends to hold on & chew savagely. Oviparous (clutch size not known, but likely 12-20 eggs, based on closely-related species). Probably preys mainly on rodents, toads, & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin. Local symptoms may include pain, swelling, & necrosis. If venom gets into eyes, it may cause immediate burning pain w/ lasting inflammation & possibly even permanent blindness. Occasional human envenomations & fatalities due to bites by this species have been reported.

Notechis ater

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Hoplocephalus ater, Notechis ater ater, N. a. humphreysi, N. a. niger, N. a. severityi, N. scutatus ater, N. s. niger

Common Names: Black tiger snake, Krefft's tiger snake, Tasmanian tiger snake, peninsular tiger snake, Chappell Island tiger snake, Schwarze Tigerrotter

Description

Large, stout-bodied snake, w/ large head, blunt snout, small eyes, smooth, glossy scales, often darker at their tips; adults usually 1.2-2.0 m long (max. about 2.4 m); a pair of fixed upper front fangs; body uniformly black to matt-brown (Tasmanian forms sometimes completely dark yellowish), belly lighter; some juveniles have crossbands. Usually 17 (range 17-21) mid-body dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Found in marshland, dry coastal grassland, & on rocky inlands; on southeastern Australia & Tasmania.

Activity and Behavior

Both diurnal & nocturnal, mainly terrestrial. Feeds on frogs, small mammals, birds, & lizards (often prey choice is limited in their natural habitats). Usually avoids large animals & humans, but will strike rapidly & vigorously if molested. Ovoviviparous, w/ 6-90 young/ litter. Individual snakes may live 30 years.

Venom Characteristics

Contains neurotoxic (affecting both pre- & post-synaptic sites), myotoxic & procoagulant factors. Bites & envenomations of humans by this species are fairly common each year within its range. Human fatalities are currently rare, probably mainly due to availability of effective antivenom (but were historically common, before such antivenom availability).

Notechis scutatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Alecto fasciolata*, *Hoplocephalus fuscus*, *Naja scutata*, *Notechis ater occidentalis*, *Notechis scutatus occidentalis*, *N. s. scutatus*

Common Names: Mainland tiger snake, eastern tiger snake, western tiger snake, Ostliche Tigerotter

Description

Large, stout-bodied snakes w/ large head, blunt snout, small eyes, smooth, glossy scales, adults usually 1.2-1.8 m long (max. about 2.1 m). Body matt-black or brown above, yellow belly w/ fine yellow bars extending upward on sides (sometimes these become thin dorsal crossbands). Usually 19 (range 17-21) mid-body dorsal scale rows. A pair of fixed upper front fangs.



Habitat

Found in rain forests, flooded river valleys, swamps, & near human habitations. Most common in temperate, cool, damp habitats. Known from southeastern & southwestern Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia).

Activity and Behavior

Both nocturnal & diurnal, bask in sun; terrestrial, may be sluggish during cold periods or before they warm up in the morning. Usually tries to avoid a threat from large animals or humans. If cornered, may flatten their neck laterally (forming a vertical hood-like shape) as a warning shortly before they strike (a strike is quick & vigorous). Mainly eat frogs, small mammals, birds, or lizards. Ovoviviparous, reportedly bear 14-80 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Contains factors that are mainly neurotoxic (affecting both pre- & post synaptic sites), but also myotoxic & procoagulant. Bites & envenomations of humans by this species are fairly common each year within its range, but human fatalities are rare, probably mainly due to availability of effective antivenom. Historically, human fatalities were common.

Odontobuthus doriae

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus doriae [Note: This is the more common & more aggressive of only 2 spp. currently named in this genus.]

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 40-60 mm long. Body usually pale, clear, yellowish to medium-brown, w/ distinct dentate structures on ventral sides of caudal segments. Pincers fairly robust at base w/ longer, thin claws.



Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats, mainly in dry or seasonally dry areas, usually w/ rocky & sandy ground w/ limited vegetation, mainly in the Middle East. Sometimes found in agricultural sites, margins of oases, & around & in human homes. Reported from Iran & Iraq but may also be present in, but not yet reported from, similar habitats in adjacent countries (e.g., Jordan, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey).

Activity and Behavior

Active, very aggressive, sting very readily w/ minimum provocation. Mainly nocturnal, but sometimes active around dawn & dusk, & sometimes soon after a rain. Often comes into humans' habitations. Usually preys on available insects & arthropods. Ovoviviparous (clutch size not reported). Can strike (sting) in all directions w/ a strong agile tail (cauda).

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but reportedly mainly shows local hemolytic action. Envenomation causes localized pain, limited swelling & redness (but no reported systemic effects). Has been compared to a bee sting in severity. No human fatalities reported due to its venom.

Olindias sambaquiensis

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Identification

Family: Olindiidae (**Order:** Limnomedusae)

Scientific Names: No synonyms

Common Names: Stinging medusa, stinging hydromedusa, aqua viva

Description

Olindias sambaquiensis is a small- to medium-sized marine jellyfish, w/ a circular, or rounded, flat, transparent bell (medusa, umbrella) up to 10 cm in diameter (rarely 20 cm) w/ no ocelli (visual organs). There is an internal circular shelf (velum), that partially blocks the open (ventral) end of the bell. Young free-swimming stages and even some smaller mature adults, have a small, simple bell (medusa). There is a central manubrium w/ 4 radial canals & typically 60-70 reddish blind radial channels. Each medusa has about 380 tentacles (primary & secondary). The primary tentacles are shorter, usually reddish-brown colored, & the longer (up to 50 cm long) secondary tentacles are thin, yellowish-to-pinkish colored. Gonads, extending along part of the radial canals, are yellowish when mature.



Habitat

This species is mainly found swimming in the open southwestern Atlantic Ocean, approximately from 23 to 42 degrees south latitude, and are often encountered in near-coastal waters close to beaches of Argentina, Uruguay, & Brazil. They sometimes develop in large numbers (called “blooms”) in January through February, w/ large numbers of individuals being washed up onto beaches along the coasts of Argentina, Uruguay, & southeastern Brazil during storms.

Activity and Behavior

These usually swim actively by pulsating contractions of their clear dome-like medusa in marine waters, capturing prey by stinging w/ special cells (nematocysts) located on their relatively long, trailing, filamentous tentacles. Paralyzed prey is drawn into a central stomach through a mouth in the ventral portion of their medusa (bell). Adult forms have sometimes been observed swimming nearer the ocean surface during the day, but may not display any distinct preference for diurnal or nocturnal activity.

Venom Characteristics

Moderately potent neurotoxic factors. Stings can be very painful and cause a long-lasting rash wherever the nematocysts contacted the stinging victim.. Such stings (often in great numbers, >100) may trigger anaphylactic reactions in some persons. This species reportedly has caused multiple painful stings & a few rare deaths of humans (mainly children) within its range. A recent report (2012) indicated that this species is responsible for about 80% of all the reported stinging incidents cause by marine organisms annually along the southern and southeastern coasts of Brazil.

Ophiophagus hannah

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Dendraspis bungarus, D. hannah boreensis, D. h. brunnea, D. h. bungarus, D. h. elaps, D. h. hannah, D. h. nordicus, D. h. sinensis, D. h. vittata, Hamadryas elaps, H. hannah, H. ophiophagus, Naja bungarus, N. fasciata, N. ingens, N. hannah, N. vittata

Common Names: King cobra, hamadryad, Konigskobra

Description

World's largest venomous snake, adults usually 3.0-4.0 m long (max. 5.5 m). Body olive, brown, or greenish yellow, becoming darker on tail. Head scales edged w/ black, throat yellow or orange, juveniles w/ yellow chevron-like bands on dorsum of hood. These fade w/ age.





Habitat

Found in open country, cultivated areas, dense or open forests, bamboo thickets, dense mangrove swamps, & hilly jungles (mainly found in deep forests). Often found near streams. Range extends from sea level up to 1,800 m elevation. Species widespread but uncommon.

Activity and Behavior

Active both day & night, feed mainly on other snakes, & occasionally on rats or lizards. Pairs mate, build a nest of vegetation, & both "guard" their usual clutch of 20-50 eggs. When threatened, a king cobra will raise up to 1/3 of its body, spread its relatively narrow hood, growl, & expose one fang before striking.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin. Severe local pain & tenderness almost immediately following bite. Bites of humans uncommon, but usually severe & may be rapidly fatal. Huge amounts of venom & relatively very long fangs combine to pose a very great risk whenever a king cobra envenomates a human.

Ophryacus melanurus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops melanura, B. melanurus, Porthidium melanurum, Trimeresurus garciae, T. garciai, T. melanurus

Common Names: Black-tailed montane pitviper, Black-tailed horned pitviper, cornuzuela, necascuatl, torito, vibora de cachitos

Description

Small, moderately stout pitviper, w/ upturned snout & erect, horn-like scales above each eye, & a dark postocular stripe, adults usually 37-50 cm long (max. 57+ cm). Body varies from pale ash-gray to orangish-brown, most specimens w/ a series of darker blotches that touch along vertebral line in a zig-zag pattern. Long, pointed, upward curving tail spine. Belly pale, flecked w/ lots of dark speckles, 21 midbody dorsal scale rows, tail of juveniles bright yellow.

Habitat

Found mainly in high arid tropical scrub & tropical deciduous forest in the northern part of its range, & pine-oak forest in the south; primarily found in overgrazed, eroded areas. Occurs at 1,600-2,400 m elevation. Limited to south-central Mexico (Puebla & Oaxaca).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal or crepuscular; apparently semi-arboreal, found 1-4 m above ground level in bushes or trees, but also often found resting beneath clumps of vegetation or on, or under, pine logs & beside lizard burrows. Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 5-8 young/ litter reported. Prey mainly on available lizards & small mammals, & may sometimes eat other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. Pitviper venoms mainly have hemotoxic, & sometimes necrotic (tissue-destroying) factors. Most species have relatively low venom yield, & envenomation usually has mild to moderately severe effects. Occasional human bites (envenomations) have been reported, but no human fatalities clearly documented as having been caused by this species, so far.

Ophryacus undulatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atropos undulatus*, *Bothriechis undulatus*, *Bothrops undulata*, *B. undulatus*, *B. sphenophrys*, *Lachesis undulatus*, *Teleuraspis undulatus*, *Trigonocephalus undulatus*, *Trimeresurus undulatus*

Common Names: Mexican horned pitviper, cuernillos, mazacoatl, nauyaca, torito, vibora cornuda, vibora de cachitos, vibora de cuernecitos

Description

Small, moderately stout pitviper, usually w/ prominent erect scales above each eye, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 70 cm). Body color variable, including pale to dark gray & yellowish- to brownish-green; a series of darker dorsal blotches often arranged so they form a zig-zag pattern. Dorsal scales heavily spotted w/ small black flecks, w/ 21 midbody dorsal rows. Juveniles usually paler, w/ very distinct patterning.



Habitat

Found mainly in highland pine-oak & cloud forest at 1,800-2,800 m elevation; frequently found under logs or rocks. Limited to southern central Mexico (including states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Veracruz, & Hidalgo, & possibly also eastern Puebla).

Activity and Behavior

Semi-arboreal; found up to 4 m above ground level. Mainly diurnal, active during daytime (& crepuscular). Ovoviviparous w/ 5-8 young/ litter reported. Prey mainly on locally available lizards & small mammals, & may sometimes eat other snakes, too.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known for this species. Probably mainly hemotoxic (w/ possible cytotoxic factors), like most other pitvipers. No serious human envenomations nor fatalities reported as having been caused by this species, so far. No specific antivenoms to *Ophryacus* are currently being produced.

Ovophis chaseni

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trimeresurus chaseni*, *Garthia chaseni*

Common Names: Chasen's pit viper, Chasen's mountain pitviper, Mount Kinabalu pitviper

Description

Small, stocky terrestrial pitviper, adult max. length about 0.7 m. Body color brownish above w/ irregular blackish, light-edged blotches which become transverse bands posteriorly. Belly yellow w/ gray specks. Oblique black stripe behind eye bordered below w/ white.

Habitat

Found on rocky oak & coniferous hillsides; limited to Mt. Kinabalu, Borneo (Indonesia).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, probably mainly terrestrial, mainly nocturnal, but occasionally basks in sun in forest openings or along paths. Feeds mainly on available mice, birds, lizards, & frogs. Oviparous, few (probably <20) eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably mainly hemotoxic, like most pitvipers. Reported symptoms include severe pain, swelling, & bruising. No known antivenom currently produced.

Ovophis monticola

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis monticola*, *Ovophis monticola convictus*, *O. m. monticola*, *O. m. makazayazaya*, *O. m. meridionalis*, *O. m. orientalis*, *O. m. tonkinensis* (in part), *O. m. zhaokentangi*, *O. m. zayuensis*, *O. zayuensis*, *Trimeresurus makazayazaya*, *T. monticola*, *T. m. formosensis*, *T. m. meridionalis*, *T. m. makazayazaya*, *T. m. zayuensis*, *T. m. zhaokentangi*, *T. orientalis*

Common Names: Chinese mountain pit viper, Oriental mountain pitviper, Taiwan mountain pitviper, Gaoligong mountain pitviper, Berg-Grubenotter, mountain pitviper

Description

Small to medium-sized, stocky terrestrial pitviper, w/ short snout, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 110 cm). Body color light olive, reddish, or orange-brown; 1 or 2 dorsal rows of dark squarish patches meeting or alternating at vertebral line (often form a dark zig-zag dorsal pattern), 19-21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly pale, spotted w/ squarish, usually darker brown markings w/ dark-brown spot on top of head.

Habitat

Found in mountains or plateaus at 610 m to above 2,000 m elevation (mainly 1,000-2,000 m). Found in tea fields, cultivated areas, under shrubs, & among vegetation. Often found near human habitation & sometimes inside homes.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, mainly nocturnal, & mainly terrestrial but often climbs into trees or bushes. Preys mainly on available small mammals, birds, frogs & lizards. Oviparous w/ 4-18 eggs/ clutch reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Reported human envenomation symptoms include severe local bleeding & swelling, thrombocytopenia, & coagulopathy. At least 1 human fatality reported.

Ovophis okinavensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis okinavensis*, *Trimeresurus okinavensis*

Common Names: Hemihabu, Kufah, Ryukyu Island pitviper, Okinawa pitviper, Hime-habu kufah, Okinawa hime-habu

Description

Medium-sized, stocky terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 50-90 cm long (max. 100+ cm). Body medium-brown, gray, or olive-brown (often tinged orange or reddish); w/ darker (usually brownish) square-ish markings on either side of vertebral line. Lateral row of similar dark markings along flanks. Sometimes dorsal & lateral blotches nearly touch, producing almost a "gray cross-banded" dorsal pattern. Darker spot on top of head, dark postocular stripe bordered above by white, short snout.

Habitat

Found mainly in open woodland fields & agricultural areas near streams, ponds, or other water sources in the mountains of the Amami & Okinawa Islands. Range overlaps most of the exact same range as the Okinawan Habu, *P. flavoviridis*. Limited to Japan (Ryukyu Islands).

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Generally sluggish by day, & seldom go near humans' houses. Prey mainly on small mammals (mainly rodents), & maybe also on available birds or lizards. Oviparous, reportedly 8-15 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably hemotoxic. Reported human envenomation symptoms include pain, swelling, & redness. Humans seldom encounter this species & are far more often bitten by the Okinawan Habu, which is found in most of the same areas. No well documented serious human envenomations, nor fatalities, due to this species.

Ovophis tonkinensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Ovophis monticola* (in part), *O. m. tonkinensis*, *Trimeresurus tonkinensis*

Common Names: Tonkin pitviper

Description

Small to medium-sized, stocky terrestrial pitviper w/ very short snout, adults usually <80 cm long. Body pale brown, reddish-brown, or olive-brown, darker brownish dorsal blotches often form a zig-zag pattern along the dorsal mid-line, 19-21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head w/ darker brownish central blotch on top, brown postorbital stripe.

Habitat

Found in mountains & plateaus from coastal lowlands to above 1,000 m. Usually found in shrubby, partly open vegetation, & sometimes in cultivated areas. Limited to southern China (including the island of Hainan) & Vietnam.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly terrestrial, probably mainly nocturnal, probably feeds on small mammals or birds, & sometimes on lizards or frogs. Oviparous, probably <15 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Some human envenomations, but no documented human deaths due to bites by this species, so far.

Oxyuranus microlepidotus

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Identification

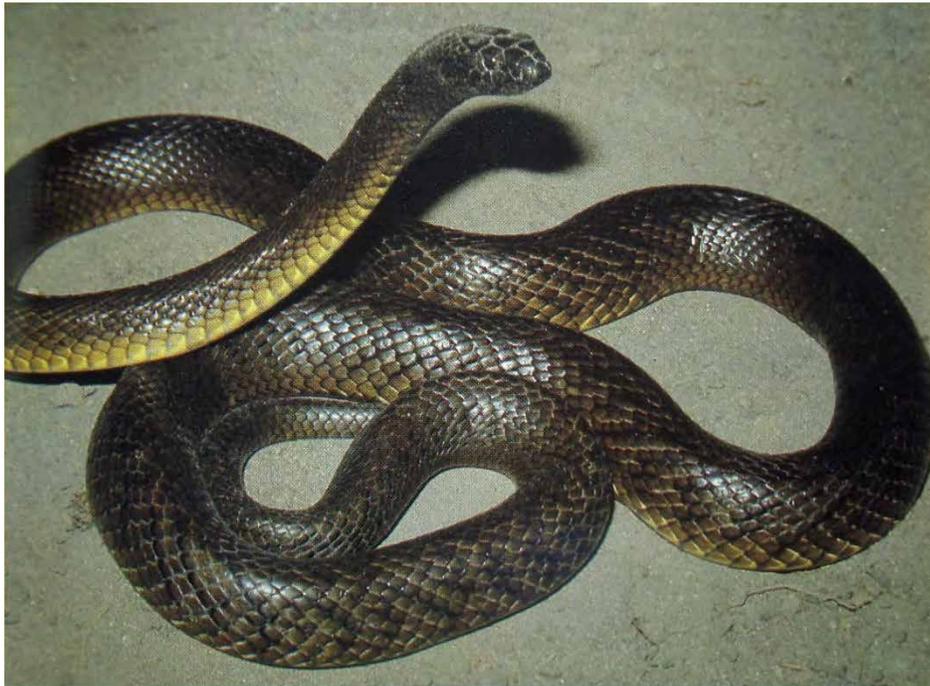
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Diemenia ferox, D. microlepidota, Oxyuranus scutellatus microlepidotus, Parademansia microlepidotus, Pseudechis ferox, P. microlepidotus

Common Names: Fierce snake, Inland taipan, Schreckensotter, Kleinschuppenschlange, Australischer Inlandtaipan

Description

Large, rather stout-bodied Elapid snake, w/ blunt head. Adults usually 1.8-2.2 m long (max. 2.5 m). Body yellow w/ black flecking to uniformly dark-brown dorsally, belly mostly dark yellow to orange.





Habitat

Usually found in arid or semi-desert plains, often in or near dried river beds, in central Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, & Victoria).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal or crepuscular, but sometimes out in daytime. Prey mainly on available small mammals (e.g., rodents & bandicoots). Usually shy, & will avoid an intruder, but if cornered, will defend itself by a rapid series of strike-and-release bites. Fast moving, w/ relatively long fangs & large venom reservoir & very dangerous. Oviparous, w/ usually 9-18 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent, contains both pre- & post-synaptic neurotoxins, plus myotoxins & procoagulants. Death is usually due to respiratory paralysis. One of the most deadly snakes in the world. A number of human deaths have been documented due to bites of this species. Lives in isolated areas seldom visited by people, so most reported envenomations have been suffered by herpetologists trying to collect, or maintain captive, specimens of this snake.

Oxyuranus scutellatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Oxyuranus scutellatus scutellatus*, *Pseudechis scutellatus*, *P. wilesmithii*

Common Names: Common taipan, coastal taipan, Papuan taipan, New Guinea taipan, taipan

Description

Large, fairly stout-bodied Elapid snake, adults usually 1.8-2.4 m long (max. 3.4 m). Body generally brown, black, coppery red, or olive; pale, creamish color around head. Large rectangular shaped head, narrow

neck, & cylindrical body. Often w/ a rather wide reddish-orange vertebral stripe. Head sometimes pale on top (at least the front half). Belly lighter, usually yellowish-brown to pale orange.



Habitat

Found in coastal areas, open woodland, grasslands, tropical forests, & sugar cane fields. Shelter in mammal burrows, rock crevices, fallen logs, & piles of forest litter. Found on southern New Guinea & northern & eastern Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory, & Western Australia).

Activity and Behavior

Active during day & on hot nights. Usually attempts to escape if disturbed, but strikes (often repeatedly) w/ speed & aggression, if startled, threatened, cornered, or molested. Often bites more than once in quick succession. Moves very rapidly. Preys mainly on small mammals, sometimes on birds (& rarely on lizards). Oviparous, w/ usually 13-18 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent, fast-acting; strongly neurotoxic, myotoxic, & coagulant; also weakly hemolytic. Many human fatalities, some within hours after envenomation. Bites may be painless, & local reaction usually minimal. Death is usually due to respiratory failure.

Pandinus imperator

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Identification

Family: Scorpionidae

Scientific Names: *Pandinus imperator* (Koch, 1842)

Common Names: West African emperor scorpion

Description

Enlarged body divided into three parts: cephalothorax (prosoma) bearing the eyes, prominent scissors-like pedipalps (pincers) and legs; preabdomen (mesosoma); and post abdomen (metasoma) comprising the tail terminated with a stinger. Integument deep brown to glossy black. Size ranges from under 2 inch (2.5 cm) at birth up to 6 inches (15 cm) in length for adults. Some exceed 2 ounces (60 g) in weight. On the underside are pectines, comb-like structures used to sense vibrations, behind the fourth pair of legs; they tend to be longer in males than in females. Tail short, with a large, blunt stinger. Pedipalps very large and covered with coarse tubercles. Integument fluoresces bluish to greenish under ultraviolet light.

P. imperator is a popular scorpion in the exotic pet trade, resulting in over-collecting in the wild that has caused it to become a CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)-listed animal.



Habitat

Found in warm, humid locales in West Africa, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Togo, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Most commonly imported from Ghana for the exotic pet trade. Species in the genus are found from Ivory Coast through Central Africa east to Yemen, but not adapted to xeric (desert) climates.

Activity and Behavior

Active day and night, but especially in the evening hours from 3:00pm through 9:00pm. Most often sting when teased or cornered, but normally non-aggressive, preferring to avoid contact. Young more likely to sting than adults; adults capture prey with the pedipalps and sting if prey cannot be otherwise subdued. Communal, mother and young cooperating to build chambers in burrows or under rocks. Gestation lasts about 7 months with average litter size of 32.

Venom Characteristics

Sting usually mild, causing localized pain; described as being similar to a bee sting. May also cause an allergic reaction. Contains imperatoxins and pandinotoxins, which have not all been characterized. Sting of other species in the genus, i.e., *P. exitialis*, *gambiensis*, *gregoryi*, and *pallidus* not as well described and may be more dangerous.

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Parabuthus granulatus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Androctonus ganulatus*, *Buthus granulatus* var. *B-segnis*, *Buthus fulvipes*, *Parabuthus fulvipes*, *Parabuthus granulatus bergeri*, *P. g. fulvipes*, *P. g. fuscus*, *P. g. granulatus*, *P. g. strenuus*, *Scorpio granulatus*

Common Names: Granulated thick-tailed scorpion

Description

Large, thick-tailed scorpion, adults usually 70-110 mm long (max. 140+ mm). Body dark-brown to black dorsally, stout, w/ thick caudal segments (size increasing toward telson). Legs & pedipalps lighter brown, but most caudal segments very dark. Pedipalp chelae bases robust, bare & shiny (no setae), caudal segments I-V & telson nearly bare (few/ no setae). Dorsal surface of carapace, chelae, & cauda w/ distinctly dark & "granular". Largest & most widespread *Parabuthus* sp. in southern Africa.



Habitat

Found in semi-psammophilous (sandy) locations without many rocks, where it burrows in open ground at bases of shrubs or grass tufts; less often burrows under logs or stones. More common than other *Parabuthus* spp. in disturbed areas, like dry riverbeds, & more commonly comes into human contact, too. Sometimes found in agricultural sites & enters humans' houses. May also occur in Mozambique, but not yet reported from there.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but active at dusk, & mainly terrestrial, but climbs, too. Hunts actively over ground surface, instead of waiting "in ambush" as do most other large spp. of *Parabuthus* in southern Africa. Oviviparous, litter numbers not reported, but probably usually 20+ young. Preys mainly on available insects or arthropods (may occasionally eat a small lizard).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, possibly also contains myotoxic & cytotoxic factors. Envenomation by this species is a significant cause of annual human morbidity (& frequent mortality) throughout its range, despite at least fluctuant availability of an effective antivenom. Human deaths reportedly are usually due to respiratory failure or paralysis. Children are reportedly more severely affected than adults.

Parabuthus spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Buthus spp. (in part), Heterobuthus spp. [Note: This genus includes at least 27 currently recognized named species; Most are seldom encountered or have less potent stings, but 2 spp. (detailed separately) pose significant health threats by causing frequent, serious envenomations or fatalities of humans within their range.]

Common Names: Thick-tailed scorpions, large thick-tailed scorpions

Description

Large, thick-tailed scorpions, adults usually 60-100 mm long, some spp. up to 140+ mm (varies by spp.). Body usually dark-brown to nearly black dorsally, stout, w/ very robust caudal segments. Only 1 median keel on mesosomal tergites. Legs & edges of body of most spp. usually lighter brown (often yellowish), pincers thick, strong, & relatively short.

Habitat

Found mainly in arid or semi-arid sites (usually w/ no more than 600 mm of annual rainfall). Most often encountered by humans in the edges of desert oases or similar sites. Most (20 spp.) are limited to southern & southwestern Africa, but some are found in arid northeastern Africa & the Arabian peninsula.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal (1 sp. mainly diurnal), but also often active at dusk or dawn. Mainly terrestrial, but most spp. can climb well. Will strike (try to sting) intruders w/ very little provocation when encountered. Ovoviviparous (litter numbers vary w/ spp. & female's size) & prey mainly on available insects & arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, also w/ cytotoxic & myotoxic factors in venom of some spp. Human deaths have been reportedly due to respiratory arrest, & fatalities have mainly been small children. This genus includes some of the most dangerous species of African scorpions.

Parabuthus transvaalicus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Androctonus teter, Parabuthus obscurus, P. pachysoba, Scorpio teter

Common Names: Thick-tailed scorpion, Transvaal thick-tailed scorpion

Description

Large-sized thick-tailed scorpion, adults usually 80-120 mm long (max. 140+ mm). Carapace, mesosoma, metasoma (postabdomen; or cauda), legs & pedipalps uniformly dark-brown to black. Caudal segments I-IV each (progressively) wider & thicker at posterior than at anterior end. Fixed digit of each pincer (pedipalp chela) distinctly curved dorsally. Distinct granular stridulatory surfaces on dorsum of metasomal segments I & II & caudal tergite VII. Carapace lacks dorsal carinae.



Habitat

Found in semi-psammophilous (sandy) sites, w/ semi-consolidated to consolidated sandy, gritty, & loamy substrates (often in rocky habitats), where it excavates burrows under stones or fallen trees. Mainly found in arid or semi-arid places w/ sandy soil & sparse scrubby vegetation (& occasional trees), like margins of oases. Limited to southern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal (sometimes active at dusk or dawn) & terrestrial (but will readily climb rough surfaces). If disturbed, will try to sting an intruder w/ little or no further provocation. Ovoviviparous, litters of 18-30+ young reported; preys on available insects, arthropods, & occasionally also on small lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ possibly some myotoxic or cytotoxic factors. Envenomation (stings) by this species are a significant cause of human morbidity & mortality in the sparsely-populated western regions of southern Africa. It has caused many human fatalities, usually due to respiratory failure, despite availability (fluctuantly) of an effective antivenom. Children are usually most seriously affected.

Paranaja multifasciata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naia multifasciata*, *Paranaja multifasciata anomala*, *P. m. duttoni*, *P. m. multifasciata*

Common Names: Burrowing cobra, many-banded cobra, many-banded burrowing snake

Description

Small, stout cobra, w/ fairly large eyes, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 80 cm). Has relatively large fangs. Head short, flattened, & slightly distinct from body, chin & belly totally cream colored (turn pale yellow-brown w/ age). Body moderately slender; smooth scales, 15-17 midbody dorsal rows, individual dorsal body scales nearly all cream on their front half, black on back half. Dorsal scales darken w/ age, become all dark brownish or blackish; tail short, no obvious hood.



Habitat

Mainly found burrowing in loose sandy soil & forest floor debris; in forests, well-wooded savannahs, or forest edges in west-central Africa, mainly in the drainage area of the Zaire River.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly fossorial (burrowing), probably mainly diurnal, often coming out onto the surface of the forest floor after rains. Moves fairly quickly. Oviparous (clutch size not reported). Probably preys on lizards & other snakes.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but venom probably mildly neurotoxic. Although no bites or envenomations of humans reported for this species, it has relatively very long (for its body size) fixed front fangs, & must be regarded as potentially dangerous. No known antivenom currently produced.

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Pelamis platurus

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New Name: [Hydrophis platurus](#) , changed Jan. 2013; see NOTE: under Hydrophis spp. (general)

Phoneutria nigriventer

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Identification

Family: Ctenidae

Scientific Names: [Note: This is the most common (within its range), & has the most potent venom, of at least 5 named species in this genus which may each occasionally envenomate humans or pets. Other 4 spp. all have generally lighter, usually yellowish or light-brown, overall body colors.]

Common Names: Wandering spider, Brazilian wandering spider, banana spider, arana del banano

Description

Large, stout spider, w/ body (cephalothorax + abdomen) usually 3.5 cm long (legs usually span 5+ cm). Body dark brown to black, covered w/ thick, short medium to dark brown hairs. Dorsal pattern w/ paired light spots in longitudinal bands, w/ oblique lines of smaller light spots along sides of abdomen. Front 2 pairs of legs w/ distinct yellow/ white ventral crossbands at many joints, distinctly visible in threat display. Carapace w/ longitudinal dark median dorsal stripe.



Habitat

Found in moist to seasonally dry sites w/ plenty of vegetation, organic debris, & places to hide (e.g., between or under palm fronds, loose bark, or bricks & logs). Very common around & inside humans' homes in tropical & sub-tropical South America. Mainly reported from central & southern Brazil. Probably occurs in several adjacent countries but specimens not yet confirmed from them. Have been moved internationally in commerce. Recently reported from Azerbaijan.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, often comes into agricultural sites & houses. Often hide inside shoes & clothing. Very quick & agile. Aggressive if slightly disturbed, usually raise front 4 legs very high & straight (fully extended), & show large fangs in a "threat" display. Prey mainly on available insects & arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly a peripheral neurotoxin, w/ cardiotoxic & possibly other factors. Envenomation of humans usually causes intense local pain, violent muscle spasms, lacrimation, salivation, vomiting, priapism, heart

palpitations, dyspnea, often causes nervous depression, seizures, pulmonary edema, & cardiac & respiratory problems (rarely, collapse). Human deaths (usually of children) have been caused by such envenomations.

Phoneutria spp.

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Identification

Family: Ctenidae

Scientific Names: [Note: This genus currently includes 5 named species: *Phoneutria bahiensis*, *P. boliviensis*, *P. fera* (the largest, & shown here), *P. nigriventer* (bites sometimes lethal without use of antivenom), & *P. reidyi*.]

Common Names: Wandering spiders, banana spiders, South American wandering spiders

Description

Large, stout spiders w/ body (cephalothorax + abdomen) about 3.5 cm long, legs usually span 5+ cm. Body color light to dark-brown to black, covered w/ thick, short yellow to dark-brown hairs. Pattern varies by spp., usually a middorsal dark line on carapace & lines &/or bands of whitish spots (some spp. w/ dark-brown spots too) on top &/or sides of abdomen. Front 2 pairs of legs w/ distinct lighter ventral crossbands which show during threat displays.



Habitat

Most spp. are found mainly at or near ground level in moist to seasonally dry margins of forest clearings or at agricultural sites (esp. around bananas), w/ vegetation, organic debris, & lots of hiding places (like between palm fronds) & ample prey. Some spp. common in & around humans' buildings. Individual species' ranges differ, most limited to central & northern South America (1 sp. in Central America) at low to moderate elevations. Often carried long distances in commerce.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, respond to vibrations, usually wait in hiding & "ambush" a wide variety of prey (mainly insects & other arthropods, but often small vertebrates, too). Surprisingly quick, fast, & agile for their relatively large size. Adult females can jump about 1 ft. laterally at the same level as their resting place. Aggressive if even slightly disturbed, usually raise front 2 pairs of legs (fully extended) in a threat display, just before rushing at an intruder.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic (w/ possible cardiotoxic factors), most spp. have large volume of venom available. Several spp. are easily provoked to bite if disturbed, stepped on (or near), or brushed against. Only 1 sp. (detailed separately) is known to cause human fatalities, but others can inflict very painful bites & may pose a health risk, especially to persons w/ other medical problems. For details of typical symptoms of serious envenomation, [See *Physalia physalis*](#).

Physalia physalis

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Identification

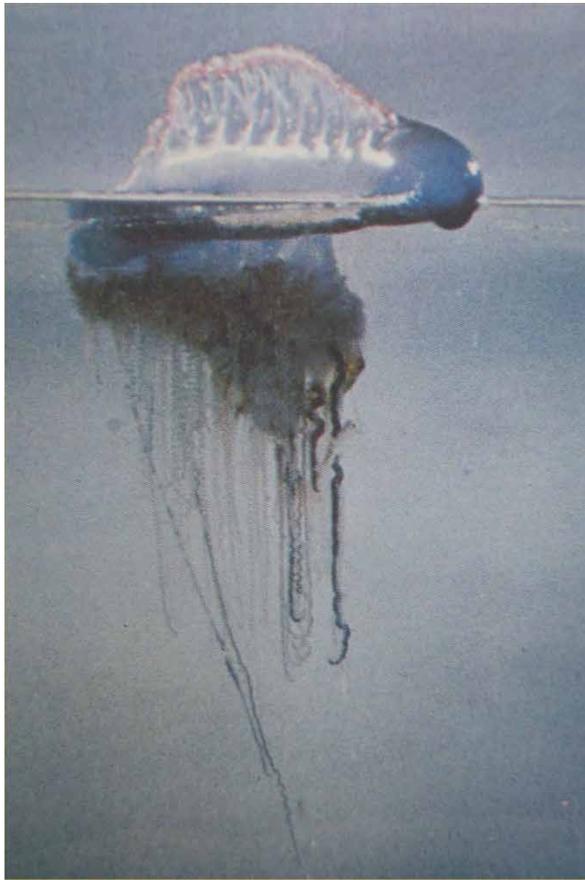
Family: Hydrozoa

Scientific Names: *Physalia arethusa*, *P. megalista*, *P. pelagica* (in part) [Note: This species belongs to the Hydrozoa, colonial marine animals related & very similar to, yet different from, true Jellyfishes. At least one other closely-related species (*P. urticulus*) causes occasional serious stinging of swimming or wading humans along marine shores.]

Common Names: Portugese man-o-war, bluebottle, 'Ili Mane 'o, Pa 'imalau, Palalia, Pololia, caravelle, galere, physalie, vaisseau de guerre portugais, vaisseau portugais, vessie de mer, caravela, schwimm-polypen

Description

Semi-transparent, oblong, up to 6+ in. (15+ cm) long, robustly spindle-shaped, bladder w/ pointed ends (one more blunt than the other), a broad fin-like, inflated upper crest, often rising 6 in. (15 cm) above water, & w/ many tentacles (each up to 30 ft.; 10 m long) dangling below it. Usually various shades of pale bluish, pinkish &/or purplish in color.



Habitat

Found world-wide in tropical & subtropical marine waters of the Pacific, Indian, & North Atlantic Oceans (mainly in the Caribbean Sea & Gulf Stream of the Atlantic), & Mediterranean Sea. Float on the surface, often in large numbers somewhat closely clustered. Found in warm open oceans & shallow waters, & often wash up onto beaches.

Activity and Behavior

Float on ocean surface, can swim (not very well) but are mainly moved around passively by wind force on the part of their body ("sail") which projects above the water surface. Three other "kinds" of cells (polyps) each do their own respective specialized functions of: prey capture (stinging), digesting of food, & reproduction for the whole individual man-o-war (each floating unit could be considered a "colony"). Preys on small planktonic forms to medium-sized fish.

Venom Characteristics

Venom contains very potent cytotoxic & neurotoxic factors, delivered by countless nematocysts on 30-ft. long hanging tentacles. Contact w/ tentacle (nematocysts) usually causes intense local pain, spreading numbness, local tissue necrosis, sometimes cardiac problems & shock within 1-24 hrs. Typical signs include reddened wheals at each nematocyst sting site, usually in long, fairly straight lines. Cause many serious stinging cases & some fatalities of humans world-wide yearly.

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Porthidium arcosae

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops boussingaultii, Porthidium lansbergii arcosae, Thanatophis boussingaultii, Thanatos boussingaultii

Common Names: Manabi hognosed pitviper

Description

Small, moderately slender, terrestrial hognosed pitviper, adults usually about 63 cm long. Body color & patterns highly variable; usually a fairly dark snake overall, w/ 19-24 darker quadrangular blotches along each side, w/ shorter lighter spaces between, venter cream or tan w/ darker spotting near sides; 27 midbody dorsal scale rows, thin yellow-brown vertebral line, contrasting postorbital stripe often dark, bordered by whitish. Known from only a few specimens.



Habitat

Known only from dry forests in the Pacific coastal lowlands of western Ecuador from near sea level to about 100 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but often active during the day (especially after a rain); sometimes encountered crawling or coiled by forest paths. Not known to be aggressive, but would probably defend itself if cornered. Ovoviviparous, 3-15 young/ litter observed. Preys mainly on lizards, but also eats frogs, other snakes, & rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known; presumably mainly hemotoxic, no bites nor fatalities of humans have been reported.

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Porthidium dunnii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis brachystoma, B. lansbergii, Bothrops brachystoma, Bothrops brachystoma, B. dunnii, B. lansbergii, Lachesis brachystoma, Trimeresurus dunnii

Common Names: Dunn's hog-nosed pit viper, Benda-gubisi, chatills, vibora chata, vibora chatilla

Description

Small, moderately stout, terrestrial hog-nosed pitviper, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 54+ cm). Body color variable, including gray, tan, & pale orange-brown, usually w/ a thin, pale, middorsal stripe separating dorsolateral series of 13-23 dark brown blotches, usually 23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly white or cream, w/ darker speckling, more pigmented toward tail.



Habitat

Found mainly in tropical deciduous forest, including semiarid areas of Pacific coast plains of southwestern Mexico (southern Oaxaca). Occurs from sea level to 700 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal, but has been observed active in forenoon, especially after a rain. Known to eat lizards, frogs, & small mammals (sometimes even other smaller snakes). Ovoviviparous, w/ 3-15 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic w/ tissue-necrotic factors. Reportedly has relatively low venom yield, & envenomation reportedly has only mild to moderately severe effects. No specific antivenoms currently produced.

Porthidium hespere

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops hesperus*

Common Names: Western hog-nosed pitviper, Colima hognosed viper, Colmillo de puerco

Description

Small, fairly stout, terrestrial hog-nosed pitviper, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 57+ cm). Body usually grayish-buff, w/ narrow golden brown middorsal stripe bi-secting dorso-lateral series of (>25) greenish-brown blotches, & 23 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head uniform grayish-pink on top, w/ darker postorbital stripe, belly pale pink near head, shades to salmon toward tail, usually mottled w/ dark blotches (especially near the sides). Tail yellow below w/ dense black stippling along sides.



Habitat

Found in low tropical deciduous forest (w/ trees <10 m tall) in a region w/ a long, harsh dry season (November-May). Occurs up to 300 m elevation. Known mainly from a limited area along Pacific coastal hills of southwestern Mexico (Jalisco, near Colima).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Terrestrial & mainly nocturnal; more active after rains. Probably eats mostly lizards, & possibly small mammals. Ovoviviparous, number not stated, but probably <15 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

The only recorded bite resulted in severe pain & local swelling. Venoms probably hemotoxic w/ tissue-necrotic factors. Probably has relatively low venom yield, & envenomation usually causes only mild to moderately severe pain & local swelling. No human fatalities reported to have been caused by this species.

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Porthidium lansbergii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis brachystoma (in part), B. lansbergi, Bothriopsis castelnavi var. brachystoma, B. brachystoma, Bothrops brachystoma, B. lansbergi, B. lansbergii, B. l. huttmanni, B. l. janisrosei, lansbergii, B. l. rozei, Lachesis brachystoma, L. lansbergi, Porthidium brachystoma, P. lansbergii huttmanni, P. l. lansbergii, P. l. rozei, Teleuraspis castelnavi var. brachystoma, T. lansbergi, Thanatos lansbergi, Thanatopsis lansbergi, Trionocephalus lansbergii, Trimeresurus brachystoma

Common Names: Lansberg's hog-nosed pitviper, mapana, mapana barriga del moncholo, panoco, patoco, patoco salton, patoquilla veinticuatro, saltona, trabichuri, tamagas, daya, deroya, macagua amarilla, mapanare del monte, mapanare rabo frito, mataballo, morona, petaca, rabo amarillo, rabo de candela, sapa, sapamanare, talla equis

Description

Small to medium-sized moderately slender, terrestrial pitviper w/ upturned snout, adults usually 30-50 cm long (max. 90 cm). Body usually w/ thin, pale (white to tan) line down middle of the back. Color quite variable, but overall tan to greenish-brown, w/ 16-25 dark quadrangular blotches along each side, w/ a tan postorbital stripe, 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly tan to cream w/ dark blotches.



Habitat

Mainly found in lowland arid & semiarid belts of thorn forest & dry tropical forest; also occurs in humid coastal & foothill forests of eastern Panama from sea level to 1,000 m elevation. In Venezuela, this species occurs up to 1,270 m elevation. Limited to Panama, northern Colombia & northern Venezuela.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial & mainly nocturnal; most active during local wet seasons. Usually relatively lethargic, usually coils tightly when disturbed. This species has been observed crossing roads at night. Eats mainly lizards, also small mammals. Ovoviviparous w/ litter size not reported (but likely <15 young).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ some tissue-necrotic factors. Few reported bites or envenomations of humans, typical reported symptoms have included severe local pain & local swelling, but no fatalities reported, so far.

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Porthidium nasutum

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Identification

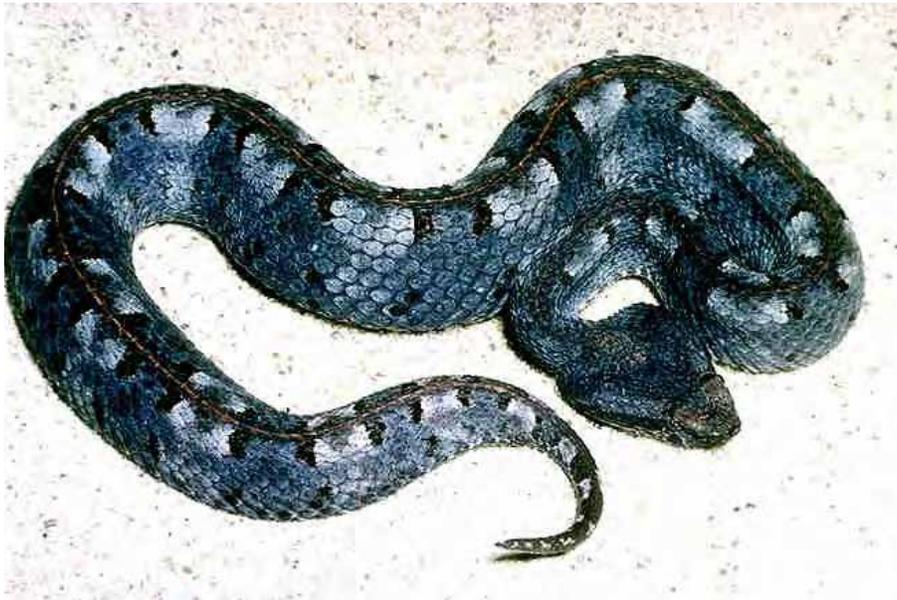
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriopsis brachystoma (in part), B. proboscideus, Bothrops brachystoma, B. nasuta, B. nasutum, Lachesis brachystoma, Porthidium nasutum nasutum, P. n. sutum, Thanatos sutus, Thanatophis sutus, Trimeresurus brachystoma, T. nasutus

Common Names: Rainforest hog-nosed pit viper, hog-nosed pitviper, Tommygoff, cbeza de candado, cachetona, equis-vientequatro, vibora pajonero, tamaga, toboba, toboba chinga, vibora, chalpate, chatilla, tepemechin, xalpate de palo, chatia, kukuypal, pyuta, tamagas de nariz chata, ek shush, nauyaca chatilla, aspid

Description

Small, fairly stout, terrestrial pitviper w/ distinct snout, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 60 cm). Body may be tan, brown, reddish-brown, yellowish-brown, grayish-brown, or gray. Most specimens have a very narrow reddish vertebral line & a series of 13-23 dark quadrangular blotches along each side, has 21-25 (usually 23) midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly pale tan to grayish w/ darker speckling.



Habitat

Mainly found in lowland rainforest, tropical moist forest, & lower montane wet forest, usually at less than 900 m elevation; has been reported up to 1,900 m in Colombia.

Activity and Behavior

Active day & night. Mostly terrestrial, but has been found climbing in shrubs or small trees. Frequently found coiled in patchy sunlight in leaf litter (very hard to see because of coloration & small size). Ovoviviparous, w/ reported litters of 2-15 young. Eats mainly lizards, frogs, small rodents, & other snakes (cannibalistic), & juveniles often eat invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Venom may be more toxic than usual for this genus; human fatalities have been attributed to its bite. Venoms mainly hemotoxic w/ tissue-necrotic factors. Apparently has relatively low venom yield, & envenomation usually causes mainly severe local pain & some local swelling.

Porthidium ophryomegas

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothriechis ophryomegas, Bothrops ophryomegas, Bothrops ophryomegas, B. lansbergii annectens, Trimeresurus lansbergii annectens, T. ophryomegas

Common Names: Slender hog-nosed pit viper, Western hog-nosed pit viper, vibora castellana, tamagas negro, toboba, toboba chinga, toboba gata, corniz, chatilla

Description

Small, fairly slender pitviper w/ upturned snout, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 80 cm). Body may be tan, brown, gray, or grayish-brown, w/ a narrow white, yellow, or rust brown middorsal line, 23-28 (usually 25) midbody dorsal scale rows, & 24-40 dark rhombs along each side. Dark postocular stripe, belly paler w/ heavy dark brown mottling (esp. along front edge of each ventral scale). Some specimens very pale w/ much lighter markings. Tail heavily mottled on basal half, paler near tip.





Habitat

Mainly found in seasonally dry forests, including tropical dry & arid forest, subtropical dry forest, & the drier portions of tropical moist forest. Occurs from sea level to 1,000 m elevation. May occur in suitable habitats in southeastern Mexico, but no specimens documented from there, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly nocturnal; most active during local rainy seasons. Alert & quick to strike, especially if molested. Ovoviviparous w/ 12-19 young/ litter observed for captured specimens. Preys mainly on lizards, frogs, & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic w/ tissue-necrotic factors. Reportedly has relatively low venom yield, & envenomation should usually have only mild to moderately severe effects (mainly pain & swelling). No human fatalities reported, so far, from bites by this species.

Porthidium porrasi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops nasuta, Porthidium nasutum (in part)

Common Names: White-tailed hognosed pitviper, Tamaga

Description

Small, rather stout pitviper w/ upturned snout, adults usually <50 cm long (max. 70+ cm). Body dark-brown alternating w/ paler patches, often creates a dorsally banded appearance, w/ contrast increasing

toward tail. Dark brown postocular stripe, thin white, yellow or rusty vertebral stripe; w/ 17-20 darker blotches along sides, 23-29 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly paler w/ variable darker blotching. Tail tip white.

Habitat

Found mainly in rainforest or very humid tropical forest, usually near water, in leaf litter on elevated ground. Occurs from near sea level to 1,000 m elevation; only on the Osa Peninsula & adjacent mainland of southern Costa Rica.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & mainly active at dusk or early night; general activity greatest during local rainy season. When disturbed, adults tend to move about vigorously, but appear reluctant to strike. Ovoviviparous w/ an observed litter of 6 young. Eat mainly small mammals, lizards, & occasionally frogs.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic w/ tissue-necrotic factors. Reportedly has a relatively low venom yield, & envenomation should usually cause only relatively mild to moderately severe local effects (pain & swelling). Has reportedly not caused serious human envenomations nor fatalities, so far. No specific antivenom currently available.

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Porthidium volcanicum

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothrops volcanica*, *Porthidium lansbergii* (in part)

Common Names: Ujarran hognosed pitviper, Chinilla, toboba

Description

Small, moderately stout, terrestrial pitviper w/ upturned snout, adults usually 25-50 cm long (max. 53+ cm). Body usually various shades of gray or brown, often w/ pinkish, reddish, or purplish undertones; dorsum usually w/ a thin cream vertebral line, & 22-24 darker, lateral, roughly diamond-shaped blotches; 25-27 midbody dorsal scale rows; belly lighter w/ dark brownish mottling. Tail dark brown above, pale below.



Habitat

Found in forested area, including tropical rainforest (w/ a distinct dry season) & lower cloud forest at 400-600 m elevation. Limited to the vicinity of the type locality (in the Valle del General, Puntarenas Province) in southern Costa Rica.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, but has been reported to climb >1 m into bushes. Has been reported coiled on forest floor or beside paths. Mainly nocturnal; usually slow-moving & nonaggressive in daytime, but may make a wide-open mouth display when disturbed, & can strike effectively up to one-half its body length.

Ovoviviparous w/ litter size not reported (but likely <15 young). Probably eats mainly lizards, frogs, & rodents (& possibly other snakes).

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic & relatively mild; many snakebite victims reportedly have experienced only localized pain & swelling, w/ no permanent damage. No human fatalities reported to have been due to bites by this species, so far.

Porthidium yucatanicum

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Bothriechis lansbergii* (in part), *Bothrops labsbergii* (in part), *B. yucatanicus*, *B. yucatannicus*, *Trimeresurus lansbergii lansbergii*, *T. yucatanicus*, *T. yucatannicus*

Common Names: Yucatan hog-nosed pit viper, chac-can, vibora

Description

Small, moderately stout pitviper w/ upturned snout, adults usually 35-45 cm long (max. >55 cm). Body may be reddish-brown, tan, gray, or grayish-brown, w/ a pale yellow to orange vertebral stripe, w/ 13-21 roughly square darker brownish blotches along each side (sometimes looks banded), 23-27 (usually 25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly white or yellowish-tan w/ brown flecks.



Habitat

Mainly found in tropical deciduous forest & thorn forest in an area characterized by porous limestone overlain by scrubby xerophytic vegetation. Occurs from near sea level to 250 m elevation. Limited to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial. Locally abundant; mainly nocturnal, especially active after a rain. Not very aggressive, but will defend itself if cornered or molested. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-10 young/ litter reported. Mainly preys on lizards, frogs, & small mammals (esp. rodents).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic w/ tissue-necrotic factors. Probably has relatively low venom yield, & envenomation should usually have only mild to moderately severe effects (pain & swelling). No human fatalities reported from bites by this species, so far. No specific antivenom currently available.

Proatheris superciliaris

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Atheris superciliaris*, *Bitis superciliaris*, *Vipera superciliaris*

Common Names: Lowland swamp viper, lowland viper, swamp viper

Description

Small, fairly robust snake w/ elongate head & short tail. Adults usually 45-55 cm long (max. 60 cm). Dorsal scales strongly keeled. Body usually gray-brown to reddish-brown; w/ vertebral row of black crossbars, broken laterally by interrupted yellowish stripe. Belly off-white to pale yellow-orange w/ distinct black blotches in irregular rows. Underside of tail straw-yellow to bright orange.



Habitat

Usually found in grassland bordering swamps or floodplains, & low-lying marshes. Mainly limited to the lower drainage of the Zambezi River in southeastern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Very little known of habits & behavior. Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal (crepuscular) active in evening & early hours of night. Inhabits abandoned rodent burrows, often basking at burrow entrances. Sometimes locally numerous. Eats mainly various available frogs & occasionally small mammals. Ovoviviparous, 3-16 young per litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, probably mainly hemotoxic, procoagulant (can cause renal failure); possibly also has tissue-necrotic factors. Few recorded bites of humans, all (so far reported) by juveniles being handled by herpetologists, have caused immediate pain, mild swelling & blistering at bite site. Potentially very dangerous. No known antivenom currently produced.

Protobothrops elegans

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Craspedocephalus elegans*, *Lachesis lutea*, *L. luteus*, *L. mucrosquamatus*, *Trimeresurus elegans*, *T. luteus*

Common Names: Sakishima, Sakishima habu, elegant pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied, pitviper, adults usually 50-90 cm long (max. 100+ cm). Usually resembles the Okinawan Habu, *P. flavoviridis*, in general color & pattern but is much smaller. Okinawan form often has a more grayish dorsal background color, w/ a distinct orange-ish tinge to its alternating dorsal blotches. [See *Protobothrops flavoviridis*](#).

Habitat

Found mainly in moist or wet forest edges, by openings or paths, often near cultivated crops & human habitations. Limited to the Ryukyu Islands of Japan (Irimoke, Ishigaki & Miyako).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, but will climb >1 m up into bushes, bamboo or sugar cane stalks. Mainly feeds on small mammals, & possibly on lizards or frogs. Oviparous (clutch size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic w/ hemorrhagin & procoagulants. Human envenomations have been reported, but rare reports of human fatalities caused by this species have not been well-documented.

Protobothrops flavoviridis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops flavoviridis, Lachesis flavoviridis, Protobothrops flavoviridis flavoviridis, P. f. tinkhami, Trimeresurus flavoviridis, T. f. flavoviridis, T. okinavensis (in part), T. riukiensis

Common Names: Okinawan habu

Description

Longest Asian pitviper, adults usually 1.1-1.7 m long (max. 3.0 m). Body usually pale greenish-brown, or yellowish-olive (sometimes pale brown), w/ alternating, darker brownish or greenish dorsal blotches, each bordered w/ yellowish scales. Head large, triangular, distinct from neck, narrow dark postocular stripe.



Habitat

Found in a wide variety of habitats from rainforest to open areas, most numerous in sugar-cane fields, limited to the higher volcanic Ryukyu Islands of southern Japan (esp. Amami & Okinawa groups).

Commonly lives near human habitations, often coming inside to hunt rodents at night.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal (most active 10:00 P.M.-2:00 A.M.), semi-arboreal. Thrives on rodents associated w/ human agricultural settings (esp. cane fields) & may eat amphibians, too. Oviparous, 5-17 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic w/ haemorrhagin & potent cytotoxic factors. Until recent greater availability of effective antivenom, this species was the cause of most human envenomations & deaths within its range. Still causes many serious human envenomations & at least a few deaths every year. People most often bitten tending crops by day or walking along roads/paths at night.

Protobothrops jerdonii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis melli*, *L. jerdonii*, *Trimeresurus jerdonii*, *T. j. xanthomelas*, *T. xanthomelas*

Common Names: Jerdon's pitviper, Bourret's pitviper, Red-spotted pitviper

Description

Rather large pitviper, adults usually 1.0-1.2 m long (max. about 1.4 m). Body lime to olive-green, w/ every scale edged w/ black, usually 21 midbody dorsal scale rows. A series of black-edged brown saddles along the back, black stripes on broad green head. Belly usually blackish w/ scattered yellowish-to-orange spots & speckling (spots bigger & more numerous laterally).



Habitat

Mainly found in montane forests & scrubland, in southern & southeastern Asia, up to 2,800 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known. Semi-arboreal & crepuscular (or nocturnal), mainly feeds on small mammals & birds. Oviparous (clutch size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic, w/ procoagulins & possibly cytotoxic factors. No serious human envenomations or deaths reported, so far.

Protobothrops mucrosquamatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis mucrosquamatus*, *Trionocephalus mucrosquamatus*, *Trimeresurus mucrosquamatus*

Common Names: Brown-spotted pitviper, Chinese habu, Taiwanese pit viper

Description

Rather long, thin pitviper, adults usually 0.8-1.0 m long (max. 1.3 m). Body light-brown or grayish-brown; vertebral row of large purplish-brown or chocolate-colored spots sometimes edged w/ a yellow line. Lateral row of small dark blotches on each side. Head brown above, white below, belly white but heavily powdered w/ brown, 25 midbody dorsal scale rows.

Habitat

Mainly found in open agricultural country & forests up to 1,400 m elevation. Also found in bamboo forests, shrubs, stream banks, tea fields, & around human dwellings. Limited mainly to southern & southeastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial, mainly nocturnal but sometimes active (& basking) in daytime. Usually slow-moving, but can strike quickly if disturbed. Ovoviviparous, clutch size not reported. Mainly feeds on small mammals, lizards, & sometimes birds.

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxin. Usually causes severe local pain & swelling, may involve entire bitten limb w/ tender enlargement of regional lymph nodes. Systemic symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, epigastric pain, fever, & shock. Humans have been bitten, envenomated & a number die each year from bites by this species throughout its range.

Protobothrops spp. (general)

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Varies w/ individual species, but many were formerly in one or more of the genera: Bothrops, Lachesis, or Trimeresurus. At least 6 named species are currently considered valid in this genus, but only 3 or 4 of these species (addressed in separately here) are numerous enough, widespread enough, & have typical behaviors that combine to pose serious human envenomation risks.

Common Names: Most are called pitvipers, some are called "habu's" (see individual species).

Description

Large moderately slender pitvipers. Adults of most species average 1 m or longer, have large, triangular heads obviously distinct from their neck, bright body colors & striking patterns. For typical example description, [See Protobothrops flavoviridis](#).

Habitat

Most species are found in very moist to seasonally dry forest edges, cultivated crops & often live near human habitations. Found throughout eastern & southeastern Asia, some are limited to one or a few sites (see individual species), & usually at higher elevations.

Activity and Behavior

Most are semi-arboreal & nocturnal, some tend to be mainly crepuscular, many bask in sunlight by edges of forests, fields, or paths. Most eat mainly available small mammals, birds, or lizards. Most spp. are oviparous w/ clutch sizes usually 5-20 eggs, partly dependent on size of the gravid females.

Venom Characteristics

Most species have hemotoxic venom, some also w/ procoagulant &/or cytotoxic factors. Some, especially the Okinawan Habu (*P. flavoviridis*), cause many human envenomations & deaths every year.

Pseudechis australis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Cania weigeli*, *Denisonia brunnea*, *Naja australis*, *Pailsus rosignoli*, *P. weigeli*, *Pseudechis cupreus*, *P. darwiniensis*, *P. denisonioides*, *P. platycephalus*, *P. rosignoli*, *P. weigeli*

Common Names: King brown snake, Mulga snake, Mulgaschlange

Description

Large, heavy-bodied snake, adults usually 1.5-1.8 m long (max. 2.7 m). Body uniformly brown, red-brown or dull yellowish; belly yellowish-cream. Broad head, slightly distinct from neck. Scales smooth.



Habitat

Found mainly in savanna & savanna woodlands, but also in tropical forests & deserts. Not found in swamps. Most wide-spread venomous snake in Australia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, & diurnal or crepuscular; becomes nocturnal in hot weather. Not active in heat of day. Usually slow moving. Unpredictable. Becomes aggressive when disturbed; often flattens its neck in a long narrow hood, arches front of its body, rushes toward intruder, & may strike repeatedly. When it bites, it often holds on & chews hard. Preys mainly on lizards, small mammals & frogs. Oviparous, w/ usually 4-19 eggs/clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic & cytotoxic; & weakly neurotoxic & may have myotoxic factors. Can inject large quantity of venom. Pain & swelling at site of bite are common, but only rarely is their bite lethal to humans (but human deaths have been reported).

Pseudechis colletti

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Collett's snake, Collet-Schwarzotter

Description

Large, moderately heavy-bodied terrestrial Elapid. Very similar physically to the king brownsnake, but slightly smaller (max. <2.4 m long), & body colors are mainly shiny black dorsally, w/ reddish (sometimes bright) belly & chin.

Habitat

Found mainly in margins of grassland along forests & riverbeds. Limited to Australia (Queensland).

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known, but mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal or crepuscular. May be active at night during hot periods. [See Pseudechis australis](#). Probably oviparous w/ usually <20 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably contains factors which are mainly neurotoxic, plus some that are procoagulant, cytotoxic, & myotoxic. Probably also fairly mild in their effects, like the venom of *P. australis*.

Pseudechis guttatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Pseudechis mortonensis*, *P. colletti guttatus*

Common Names: Spotted blacksnake, blue-bellied blacksnake, Gefleckte Schwarzotter

Description

Similar in most general physical characteristics to the King Brownsnake, except it is slightly smaller (adults seldom >1.5 m long) & has different colors & patterning. A rather large, primarily black (dorsally), smooth-scaled Elapid snake, w/ a lighter bluish-gray underside & a dorsal pattern of lighter spots.



Habitat

Found mainly in savanna, forest edges, & along dry riverbeds. Very similar to closely-related species. Limited to Australia (New South Wales, Queensland). [See *Pseudechis australis*](#)

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal, sometimes active at night in hot part of the year. Very similar to other closely-related species. Usually slow moving, but can be aggressive if disturbed & may strike quickly & bite repeatedly. Preys mainly on available frogs, toads & lizards. Oviparous (clutch size not reported). [See *Pseudechis australis*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly neurotoxic, w/ factors that are cytotoxic, hemotoxic, &/or myotoxic. No human deaths reported from bites by this species, so far, but potentially dangerous.

Pseudechis papuanus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Papuan black snake, auguma, "pap blak" (this snake has reportedly been used historically by native shamen for murder or assassination).

Description

Large, smooth-scaled, adults usually 1.8-2.0 m long (max. 2.4 m). Body black or brown above & below; neck yellow to off-white w/ black specks. No distinctive color pattern. Head broad, flat, distinct from neck.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland savanna & savanna woodland, but prefers damper, swampy ground or at least is usually found near water. Most common in late dry season. Limited to southern Papua New Guinea & certain nearby islands.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & crepuscular, but avoids being active during the hottest part of the day. Nervous; tends to flee when approached. When cornered, attacks w/ power & tenacity. Feeds mainly on frogs, small mammals, lizards & birds. Oviparous (clutch size not reported). Recent population decline may partly be due to this species' dying after eating the introduced (& poisonous) Cane Toad, *Bufo marinus*.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Very strongly hemolytic & neurotoxic; possibly hemorrhagic. Serious human envenomations & a number of human deaths have been reported each year as having been caused by this species, within its range.

Pseudechis porphyriacus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Acanthophis tortor*, *Coluber porphyriacus*, *Naja porphyrica*, *Pseudechis porphyriacus* eipperii, *P. p. porphyriacus*, *P. p. rentoni*, *Trimeresurus porphyreus*

Common Names: Red-bellied blacksnake, Rotbauchige Schwarzotter

Description

Medium to large terrestrial Elapid (adults usually 1.0-1.4 m long), very similar in general physical characters to other closely-related species, except that this species has a distinctly red belly. For description of closely related & similar species, [See *Pseudechis australis*](#).



Habitat

Found mainly in margins of moist savannas & forests. Limited to Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, & Victoria).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, & nocturnal or crepuscular (nocturnal during hot periods). Feeds mainly on small mammals, birds, & lizards. Oviparous; female often holds eggs until just before they are due to hatch, then deposits them, & they hatch within a few days. Typical number of eggs/ clutch not reported, but probably <20 eggs (or neonates)/ clutch (or litter), respectively.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly neurotoxic, w/ hemotoxic & possible cytotoxic factors. Large fangs & poison glands, along w/ aggressive defensive reaction when cornered make this a potentially very dangerous snake. Some envenomations, but no human fatalities reported, so far.

Pseudocerastes fieldi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Daboia persicus fieldi*, *Pseudocerastes persicus fieldi*, *Vipera persicus fieldi*

Common Names: Field's horned viper, false horned viper, eye-horned viper, shepigon, trans-Jordanian viper

Description

Medium-sized, wide-bodied, horned viper, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 90 cm). Body pale gray to bluish-gray to pale tan; w/ dorsal gray or brownish-gray blotches (sometimes crossbands). Often has alternating faintly darker spots on throat & sides. Belly white, tail slender & black.



Pseudocerastes persicus fieldi

Source: R. Rebmann



Habitat

Found mainly in arid sandy places w/ limited scrubby or brushy vegetation, & near, or in, rodent burrows or rock crevices. Found from near sea level to 2,000 m elevation in the Middle East.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal, very active at night. Sluggish during the day, & if disturbed then, tends to try to escape, but will coil, hiss, rub scales together (a dry, "rustling" sound) & strike if further molested.

Venom Characteristics

Venom seems to be mainly neurotoxic, possibly w/ limited hemotoxic factors. More dangerous than the more widely distributed related species, *P. persicus*. Has been reported to have caused human fatalities.

Pseudocerastes persicus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Cerastes persicus*, *Daboia persica persica*, *Pseudocerastes bicornis*, *P. fieldi* (in part), *P. persicus fieldi*, *P. p. persicus*, *Vipera persica persica*

Common Names: Persian horned viper, Persian desert horned viper, eye-horned viper, horned desert viper, horned snake, shepion, Field's horned viper, Persiche Trughornviper, False-horned viper

Description

Medium-sized, wide-bodied viper, w/ blunt snout & small scale-covered horn above each eye; adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 90 cm). Body usually pale gray or bluish-gray to khaki; w/ dorsal gray or brownish-gray blotches or crossbands. Alternating faint spots on throat & sides. Belly white; tail slender & black.



Pseudocerastes persicus persicus



Habitat

Found mainly in desert bushes, & in sandy, rocky terrain or flat sandy areas w/ limited vegetation, & in burrows & crevices, up to 2,000 m elevation. Widespread in the Middle East & Southwestern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal. Usually sluggish, placid, less likely to bite during day; but dangerously active & aggressive at night. Hisses loudly (often makes typical "rustling" noise by rubbing side scales together) if disturbed, but will usually try to escape first. Often travels over sand by sidewinding. Frequently hides in rodent tunnels & underneath bushes. Feeds mainly on small mammals, & occasionally lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Venom varies for different named subspecies, mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ neurotoxic factors. Most bites to humans produce limited envenomation, w/ mainly local symptoms of minor pain, mild local tingling & stiffness. Serious envenomation can cause internal hemorrhaging, extensive progressive swelling, weakness & ptosis. Victim may be conscious but can't respond due to paralysis. Reports of human envenomation fairly common, but fatalities not very common.

Pseudohaje goldii

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Identification

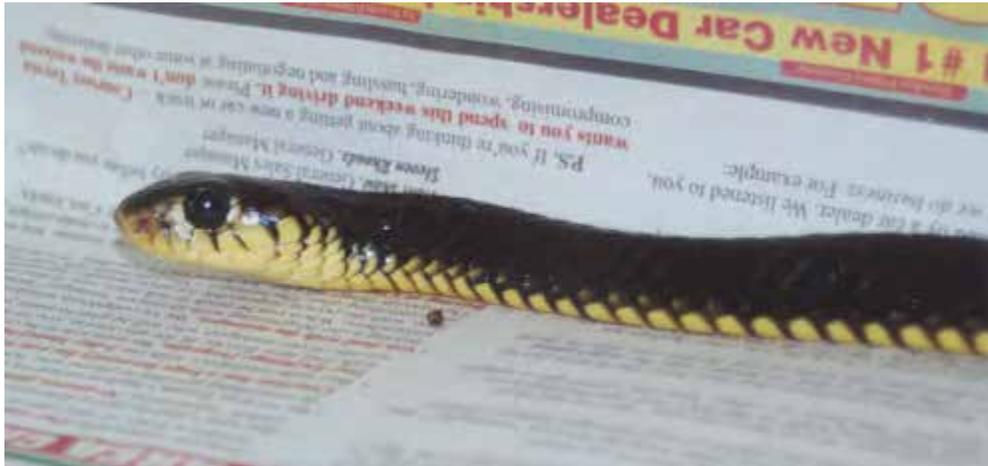
Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naia goldii*, *N. guentheri*

Common Names: Gold's tree cobra, Gold's forest cobra, Gold's false cobra, tree cobra, African tree cobra

Description

Big, shiny, thin-bodied tree cobra, adults usually 1.5-2.2 m long (max. 2.7 m). Body uniformly glossy black, cylindrical, tail long & thin ending in a spike; ventral surface yellow, w/ no crossbars; 15 (rarely 17) midbody dorsal scale rows. Head fairly short & conspicuously barred on lateral surfaces; eyes very large & prominent, w/ round pupils.



Habitat

Found mainly in forest or thick woodland, usually near rivers, may extend into riverine forests. Mainly in forested equatorial African countries.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal & mainly nocturnal; spends most of time in trees, moving gracefully & rapidly. Usually forages (hunts) in trees or brush along banks of rivers/ streams. Rarely encountered. Preys mainly on arboreal mammals & descends to ground to prey on terrestrial amphibians. Oviparous, w/ usually 10-20 eggs/ clutch. Flattens its neck into slight hood if threatened & may use tail spike to defend itself if restrained.

Venom Characteristics

Venom has extremely potent neurotoxins; an untreated bite (w/ envenomation) by a large specimen could be human lethal. No specific antivenom currently produced, but effectiveness of paraspecific antivenoms has been claimed. Bites &/or envenomations of humans not well documented.

Pseudohaje nigra

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Naia guentheri*, *Pseudohaje guentheri*

Common Names: Black tree cobra, hoodless cobra

Description

Big, shiny, thin-bodied tree cobra, adults usually 1.6-2.1 m long (max. 2.2+ m). Body uniformly glossy black or dark brownish-black; ventral surface yellow w/ no cross-banding; tail long & thin, ending in a spike. Eyes large, prominent, w/ round pupils; 13 (rarely 15) midbody dorsal scale rows. Scales on head, chin & throat are yellow, edged w/ black.

Habitat

Found mainly in forest or thick woodlands, usually near rivers, streams, or in moist riverine forests. Mainly found in countries along the southern coast of West Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Rarely encountered. Semi-arboreal. May be both diurnal & nocturnal. Very agile & fast in trees, also very fast on ground. Will pause w/ head up & alert. Can slightly flatten its neck & threaten if disturbed or cornered. May use tail spike to help defend itself if restrained. Probably preys mainly on small mammals & amphibians. Oviparous, but captives' clutch sizes not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but venom is probably very potently neurotoxic, like that of the closely-related species, Gold's tree cobra. Should be considered dangerous, even though no envenomations or fatalities of humans have yet been documented.

Pseudonaja affinis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Demansia nuchalis affinis*, *D. n. tanneri*, *Demansia textilis affinis*, *Dugitophis affinis affinis*, *D. a. tanneri*, *Pseudonaja affinis affinis*, *P. a. exilis*, *P.a. tanneri*

Common Names: Dugite, brownsnake

Description

Medium-sized to large snake, adults usually about 1 m long (often longer), moderately slender, medium-brown to dark-brown w/ few or no dorsal markings, belly usually lighter colored. Dorsal scales smooth,

usually in 15-21 midbody rows. Head relatively long & narrowed, w/ rather large eyes & round pupils. Tail fairly long & tapered.

Habitat

Mainly found near watercourses. Limited to Australia (southern Western Australia & adjacent South Australia).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Mainly diurnal, & mainly terrestrial. Probably very similar to closely related species. [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly neurotoxic. There may not be much local pain or swelling at bite site. For more information about a closely related species, [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Pseudonaja guttata

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Demansia guttata*, *Placidaserpens guttata*

Common Names: Speckled brown snake, spotted brown snake

Description

Medium-sized terrestrial Elapid, adults reportedly about 1.0 m long. Probably similar in appearance to related species (but little such information available), w/ slender body, narrowed head, large eyes w/ round pupils, & rather long, tapered tail. Body brownish-gray, darker above (dorsum) & lighter below (belly). Its name implies it has distinctive spots. For details about closely related species see "*P. textilis*."



Habitat

Not much known. Probably found mainly in relatively open vegetated areas near streams or bodies of water, like most closely related species. Limited to Australia (Northern Territory, Queensland & South Australia).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly diurnal & terrestrial, feeding mainly on available lizards & amphibians, maybe also small mammals; & oviparous (clutch size not known). [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly neurotoxic, but possibly also w/ cardiotoxic &/or myotoxic factors. Human envenomations or fatalities not documented for this species' bites. For details about a related species, [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Pseudonaja inframacula

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Demansia textilis inframaculata*, *Eupeipiosoma inframacula*, *Pseudonaja affinis inframacula*, *P. textilis* (in part), *P. t. inframacula*

Common Names: Peninsula brown snake

Description

Small to medium-sized, terrestrial Elapid, adults usually <0.9 m long. Similar in general appearance to closely related species (but little information available), w/ a slender, brownish-gray body, smooth dorsal scales in 15-21 rows at midbody, narrowed head, w/ big eyes & round pupils, & rather long tapered tail. Its name (inframacula) implies it usually has blotches or irregular contrasting markings "within" the visible pattern on its body (probably on its belly).

Habitat

Limited to 2 peninsulas in West Australia & South Australia; specifically, the north end of Coffin's Bay Peninsula & the western coast of Eyre Peninsula.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly diurnal, terrestrial, oviparous (unknown clutch size), & probably preys mainly on available lizards, small mammals, & birds. For information about a closely-related species, [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly neurotoxic. For information about a closely-related species, [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Pseudonaja ingrami

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Diemenia ingrami, Demansia ingrami, Euprepiosoma ingrami

Common Names: Ingram's brown snake

Description

Medium-sized terrestrial Elapid snake, adults usually <0.9 m long, w/ head relatively long & narrowed, large eyes w/ round pupils, body slender w/ 15-21 midbody dorsal scale rows, color variable, but usually uniformly brown to gray-brown dorsally, belly lighter. Tail fairly long & tapered.

Habitat

Not much known. Found mainly in rather open vegetated areas, usually near watercourses. Limited to Australia (Northern Territory, Queensland & West Australia).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly diurnal, terrestrial, oviparous (clutch size not reported), & probably preys mainly on available lizards, small mammals & birds. For details about a closely related species, [See Pseudonaja textilis](#).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly neurotoxic, but possibly also w/ cardiotoxic &/or myotoxic factors. Serious human envenomations or fatalities not well documented from bites by this species. For information about a related species, [See Pseudonaja textilis](#).

Pseudonaja modesta

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Brachysoma sutherlandi, Cacophis modesta, Demansia modesta, Furina ramsayi, Notopseudonaja modesta, N. ramsayi, N. sutherlandi

Common Names: Ringed brown snake

Description

Medium-sized to large Elapid, adults usually about 1.0 m long. Probably similar in overall appearance to closely related species (but little information available), w/ slender body, smooth dorsal scales in 15-21 midbody rows, fairly long, rather narrowed head, w/ relatively large eyes & round pupils, & tail fairly long & tapered. The common name of this species indicates it has a "ringed" body pattern.

Habitat

Not much known. Found mainly in moderately open vegetated sites, usually near watercourses. Limited to Australia (New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, & Western Australia).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, rarely seen, but probably mainly diurnal, mainly terrestrial, oviparous (clutch size not reported), & probably mainly preys on lizards, small mammals, & birds. For details about a closely related species, [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#)

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly neurotoxic w/ possible cardiotoxic &/or myotoxic factors, as well. This species is widespread & potentially dangerous within its range in Australia, but serious human envenomations or fatalities due to its bites have not been well documented. For details about a closely related species, [See *Pseudonaja textilis*](#).

Pseudonaja nuchalis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Diemenia aspidorhyncha, D. carinata, Demansia acutirostris, Pseudelaps bancrofti, Pseudonaja acutirostris, P. aspidorhyncha, P. carinata, P. imperitor, P. gowi, P. jukesi, P. kellyi, P. mengdeni, P. ohnoi, P. vanderstraateni

Common Names: Gwardar, western brownsnake, brownsnake

Description

Large, fairly slender, smooth-scaled Elapid, adults usually 1.4-1.6 m long (max. 1.8 m). Body usually yellow-brown to dark-brown, belly yellowish to light-gray, speckled w/ darker gray or brown spots. Pattern varies in different geographic populations. Usually the front half of each dorsal body scale is yellowish & back half much darker brown; creating a two-tone reticulated pattern. Head long, narrow, barely distinct from neck, w/ large eyes & round pupils.



Habitat

Found mainly in arid & semi-arid savanna & woodlands, but usually near a watercourse. Found in most territories of Australia, except NOT along eastern & southern coasts.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal. Very fast moving, Usually avoids humans, but if cornered or molested, it will open its mouth, hiss, raise the front of its body into a S-shaped loop, flatten its neck, & "rush" at an intruder. Equally nervous, but slightly less aggressive than the Eastern Brownsnake. May strike several times in quick succession. Preys mainly on lizards & small mammals. Oviparous, 9-38 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Venom contains mainly potent neurotoxins, plus some hemotoxic, cytotoxic & myotoxic factors. Can cause very rapid human death (in less than an hour) by cardiac arrest, renal failure, or cerebral hemorrhage. Sudden severe headache after a snake bite is one early sign of serious envenomation. Causes several human fatalities each year. Very dangerous species. Probably the second most dangerous (human lethal) of 7 species in this genus.

Pseudonaja textilis

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Diemenia superciliaris, Diemennia superciliosa, Demansia annulata, D. textilis, Furina bicucullata, F. cucullata, F. textilis, Euprepiosoma textilis, Pseudechis cupreus, Pseudoelaps beckeri, P. kumbingii, P. kubinyi, P. sordellii, P. superciliosus, P. superciliosus var. beckeri, Pseudonaia textilis, Pseudonaja textilis pughi, P. t. textilis

Common Names: Eastern brownsnake, Gewöhnliche Braunschlange, Australian Brownsnake, brownsnake

Description

Large, rather slender, smooth-scaled, adults usually 1.6-1.8 m long (max. 2.4 m). Body usually yellow-brown, dark-brown, or black; belly off-white to creamy-yellow, speckled w/ pink, brown, or gray; tail rather long & tapered. Head fairly narrow, barely distinct from neck, w/large eyes & round pupils. Pattern varies a lot, often due to scales which are 2-colored or edged w/ a color contrasting w/ its main surface area (sometimes "net" or reticulated patterns result).



Habitat

Found mainly in open, wet country, especially near watercourses; sometimes in upland grasslands & sandy or rocky areas, but also in swampland & cultivated areas. Widespread in Australia, also found in central & northern New Guinea.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & diurnal. Very fast moving. Usually flees from humans, but defends itself vigorously if cornered or molested. Will often open its mouth, hiss, flatten its neck into slight hood, curve its body into an S-shaped loop, & raise front part from the ground & attack. May strike several times in quick succession. Oviparous, w/ 8-35 eggs/ clutch. Preys mainly on lizards, small mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Potently neurotoxic (both pre- & post-synaptic) & procoagulant w/ mildly cytotoxic & myotoxic factors. Causes very rapid fatalities from cardiac arrest, renal failure, or cerebral hemorrhage. Severe headache often develops within 15 min. Because there is no local pain or swelling, & fang marks are not very obvious, bites are often ignored at first. Causes many human fatalities yearly. This is the most lethal of at least 7 species in this genus.

Pterois volitans

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Identification

Family: Scorpaenidae

Scientific Names: *Pterois miles*, *P. muricata* [NOTE: This is the most wide-spread & typical of 10 currently recognized species in this genus; other spp. are native to the same, or to other (different), regions of the Atlantic, Pacific &/or Indian Oceans & adjoining marine waters.]

Common Names: Lionfish, butterfly-cod, firefish, turkeyfish, zebrafish, red lionfish, red firefish, ornate butterfly-cod, tigerfish, featherfish, sausaulele, e si ed, smu e, o ses, lepu pangantien, ikan, sowanggi, lalong, lalong, liaung, purroah, cheeb-ta-ta-dah, kurrum, mino-kasago, stingfish, yamanokami, flying dragon, toombi, fini maja, rathu gini maha, saval min, navire, fireworks-fish, devilfish

Description

Adults can be >17 in. long & weigh >2.5 lbs., w/ distinctive red, maroon, & white stripes; fleshy tentacles above eyes & below mouth; fan-like pectoral fins, & long separated dorsal spines. well developed venom glands associated w/ dorsal, pectoral & anal (fin) spines.



Habitat

Found only in marine waters, mainly around coral reefs at 100+ feet depth. Originally widespread along suitable reefs throughout most of the Pacific & Indian Oceans, including the Red Sea, they have become established (since early 1990's) in the northeastern Caribbean & along Atlantic coasts of U.S. Very popular in international aquarium pet trade.

Activity and Behavior

Usually slow-swimming predatory fish, feeding on various available marine organisms (mainly other, smaller fish), often rest in crevices or swim slowly along near surface of coral reef. If approached, will often turn to point dorsal spines toward intruder. Not usually aggressive, but if molested, will actively try to "stick" intruder w/ dorsal, pectoral or anal spines.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic & cytotoxic w/ strong cardiotoxic & possibly myotoxic factors, too. Envenomation (sting) usually causes intense local pain at wound site, often radiating from there; hypotension, vasodilation, cardiac rhythm changes, respiratory difficulty, & sometimes primary shock, cardiac or respiratory arrest, & death.

Rhabdophis callichroma

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Natrix auchenia*, *N. callichroma*, *N. chrysarga callichroma*, *Rhabdophis chrysargus callichromus*

Common Names: Speckle-bellied keelback

Description

Medium-sized, slender, cylindrical, freshwater snake, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 77 cm), w/ dorsal scales keeled. Body greenish-brown w/ small red spots along flanks (these fade toward tail), chin & belly white w/ black spots along sides. Head dark brown to black above, juveniles w/ white to yellow chevron (points toward tail) on top of their neck (this disappears w/ age).

Habitat

Found mainly in brushy or grassy sites in fairly open montane forests, relatively near edges of streams, ditches, or rice paddies. Occur up to 1,700 m elevation. Limited to Vietnam, southern China, Philippines & Indonesia. Probably also occurs in Cambodia, Laos, & Thailand, but no confirmed specimens yet.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal (active during the day, especially soon after rain; or at dusk), semi-aquatic, not very aggressive unless molested or greatly restrained. Oviparous, usually w/ 3-10 eggs/ clutch. Eat mainly available mice, small birds, frogs, & lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic w/ some neurotoxic factors. For generalized potential effects of envenomation by a closely-related species, [See Rhabdophis subminiatus](#).

Rhabdophis himalayanus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Macropisthodon himalayanus*, *Natrix himalayanus*, *N. speciosus*, *Rhabdophis himalayana*, *Tropidonotus himalayanus*

Common Names: Orange-collared keelback

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly slender water snake (usually only in fresh water), adults usually about 50-60 cm long. Body varies from pale to medium brown (often w/ orange tinge) above, w/ lighter gray-brown to yellowish-brown belly, & narrow distinct orange-red ring around its neck. Dorsal scales rough (keeled), ungrooved fixed enlarged rear fangs.

Habitat

Mainly found in brushy or grassy areas alongside streams, ditches or paddies. Found from near sea level to above 400 m elevation. Limited to southern & southeastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, semi-aquatic, spreads its neck ("hood-like") when threatened, usually seems reluctant to bite humans. Seldom encountered by humans. Eats mainly frogs, toads, &/or fish. Oviparous (usually <12 eggs/ clutch).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ neurotoxic factors. Related species (2) in this genus have caused human deaths, mainly due to acute renal failure.

Rhabdophis murudensis

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Natrix murudensis*

Common Names: Muruden keelback, Gunung Murud keelback

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender freshwater snake, adults usually about 45-60 cm long. Body variable in color, usually grayish to brown above, w/ relatively rough dorsal scales, sometimes w/ indistinct darker "speckling" above. Belly lighter, usually gray to cream or very pale brown, & may have a few small scattered darker (grayish to brownish) blotches. Ungrooved, fixed rear fangs.

Habitat

Mainly found in brushy or grassy sites beside or very near streams, ditches or paddies. This species is known from a limited number of specimens & is rarely encountered in nature by people. Found only at 5,500-6,000 ft. elevation in Malaysia (Borneo, Sarawak).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, semi-aquatic, reluctant to bite humans, but will spread their neck & defend themselves if molested or restrained. Eat mainly frogs, toads &/or fish. Oviparous (clutch size not reported, but probably <20 eggs).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic possibly w/ neurotoxic factors. Envenomations by closely-related species have caused human deaths, mainly due to acute kidney failure.

Rhabdophis nigrocinctus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Natrix nigrocincta*, *Pseudoxenodon fruhstorferi*, *Rhabdophis nigrocincta*, *Tropidonotus eisenhofferi*, *T. nigrocinctus*

Common Names: Green keelback, banded keelback

Description

Medium-sized, slender, cylindrical, freshwater snake, adults usually 65-80 cm long (max. 95 cm). Body usually dark green in front, becomes brownish toward tail, w/ slightly slanted (toward head, at their upper end) very thin vertical black bands along each side which sometimes meet at middorsal line. Dorsal scales rather rough (keeled), w/ 15-21 midbody rows. Head dark brown w/ variable pattern of black lines & fixed rear fangs. Chin, throat & belly white (grayish toward tail).

Habitat

Mainly found in brush-covered or grassy fields adjacent to streams, ditches or paddies. Occurs up to 2,100 m elevation. Limited to several southeastern Asian countries.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, semi-aquatic, reluctant to bite humans unless molested. Mainly eats frogs & fish. Oviparous w/ 5-11 eggs in observed clutches of captive specimens.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Probably mainly hemotoxic (procoagulants), & possibly also w/ mild neurotoxic factors. No reported serious envenomations or deaths of humans from bites by this species. For more details about a closely related species, [See *Rhabdophis subminiatus*](#).

Rhabdophis nuchalis

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Natrix nivalis*, *N. nuchalis*, *N. n. pentasupralabialis*, *Nuchisulcophis nuchalis*, *Rhabdophis nuchalis nuchalis*, *R. n. pentasupralabialis*, *Tropidonotus nuchalis*, *T. n. var. collaris*

Common Names: Hubei keelback

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender, cylindrical freshwater snake, adults usually <80 cm long. Dorsal scales keeled, head dark gray to brown above, & w/ fixed rear fangs. Body color variable, usually gray-brown, medium brown or greenish-brown above (darker brown toward tail), some w/ small scattered darker speckling or blotches along flanks. Chin & throat usually white or light gray. Belly usually pale brownish to gray to dull white w/ irregular dark spots along sides (especially toward tail).

Habitat

Found mainly in grassy or brushy areas beside or near streams, ditches or paddies. Reported only from Burma, southern China, & Vietnam. May also occur in suitable habitats in adjacent countries, but no specimens reported from them, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, semi-aquatic; reluctant to bite humans, but may spread its neck & threaten if molested or restrained. Eats mainly frogs, toads or fish. Oviparous (clutch size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic, possibly w/ some neurotoxic factors. Envenomations by closely-related species have caused human deaths due to renal failure ([See *Rhabdophis subminiatus*](#)).

Rhabdophis spp.

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: See individual listed species. There are currently at least 20 named species in this genus, but mainly only 2 of these, *R. subminiatus* & *R. tigrinis*, are commonly enough encountered by humans to pose a significant envenomation risk. Both those species have been reported to cause human deaths.

Common Names: Many are called "Keelbacks" [See individual species listed separately, or independent taxonomic/ biologic publications].

Description

Medium-sized, moderately slender, freshwater snakes, usually w/ rough (keeled) scales, ungrooved enlarged upper rear fangs, adults usually about 40-70 cm long; usually brightly colored & patterned.

Habitat

Found mainly in brushy or grassy places beside or very near streams, ditches or paddies. Occur in eastern & southeastern Asia (see individual species listed separately).

Activity and Behavior

Most species are mainly nocturnal, semi-aquatic, & non-aggressive. Eat mainly frogs, toads, or fish. Oviparous, clutch size varies by species & body size of individual females.

Venom Characteristics

Not very well studied, but mainly fairly mild procoagulant hemotoxins, sometimes w/ neurotoxic factors, too. At least 2 of the more common species (in the pet trade), *R. subminiatus* & *R. tigrinus*, have caused human deaths, mainly due to renal failure.

Rhabdophis subminiatus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Amphiesma subminiatum*, *Natrix helleri*, *N. subminiata*, *N. s. hongkongensis*, *N. s. subminiata*, *N. subminiatus*, *Pseudoxenodon intermedius*, *Rhabdophis subminiata*, *R. s. helleri*, *Rhabdophis subminiatus helleri*, *R. s. subminiatus*, *Tropidonotus subminiatus*

Common Names: Red-necked keelback, Rothals-Wassernatter

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender freshwater snake w/ rough scales, ungrooved enlarged upper rear fangs; adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 100+ cm). Body olive, greenish-gray, or greenish-brown w/ indistinct flecks of black & yellow may appear as a mid-dorsal stripe, belly gray. Neck & forepart of body vivid red; sides of head yellow, w/ black subocular streak. Juveniles often w/ dark band around neck which fades w/ age, by the time they are 40 in. (100 cm) long.

Habitat

Found mainly in moderately to very wet brush-covered or grassy fields adjacent to streams, ditches, or paddies. Found up to 1,780 m elevation. This genus is indigenous to eastern & southeastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & semi-aquatic (usually in fresh water only). When threatened, rears forepart of body & flattens its neck, showing bright red skin between scales. Usually reluctant to bite unless seriously molested or restrained. Mainly eat available amphibians or fish. Oviparous, w/ usually 5-17 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly procoagulants, which can cause renal failure; plus mild neurotoxic factors. Envenomation does not always occur. Bite may be almost painless w/ minimal local swelling. Symptoms of envenomation may include local numbness, headache, nausea, & vomiting; in severe cases renal failure has caused human deaths. No known antivenom currently produced.

Rhabdophis tigrinus

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Amphiesma tigrinum*, *Natrix tigrina*, *N. t. formosana*, *N. t. lateralis*, *Rhabdophis tigrina*, *R. t. lateralis*, *R. tigrinus formosanus*, *R. t. tigrinus*, *Tropidonotus lateralis*, *T. orientalis*, *T. tigrinus*

Common Names: Yamakagashi, tiger keelback, Tiger-Wassernotter, Tigernotter

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender, cylindrical, freshwater snake w/ keeled dorsal scales, ungrooved enlarged upper rear fangs; adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 70+ cm). Body color variable from almost uniform greenish-brown w/ pale belly, to striped pattern w/ black bands on reddish or greenish-brown background.



Habitat

Found mainly in lowland brush-covered or grassy fields adjacent to streams, ditches, or paddies. Occurs mainly in eastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but often active in daytime, & semi-aquatic. When threatened, rears forepart of body, & laterally flattens its neck ("hood"), showing very bright yellow (sometimes orange) underlying skin. Usually reluctant to bite unless seriously molested or restrained. Mainly prey on frogs & toads, or fish. Oviparous, usually w/ 18-25 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic; symptoms may include local swelling, progressive numbness spreading from bite site, bleeding from bite site, bleeding gums, & hematuria. Fatal human brain hemorrhage & renal failure have been reported. Numerous bites by this snake are reported in Japan each year.

Scorpaena braziliensis

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Identification

Family: Scorpaenidae

Scientific Names: *Scorpaena grandicornis* (in part) [Note: Taxonomy of this whole family is currently unsettled. There are at least 59 currently recognized species in this genus. Some experts split this genus into several genera, & some recognize more than 60 spp. within this genus.]

Common Names: Brazilian scorpionfish, scorpionfish, barbfish, escorpiao, roscacio (ganso), manganga, escorpion pardo, goosehead scorpionfish

Description

Body relatively large, adults often >25 cm (1 ft.) long, body larger & rounded in front, tapered rapidly to rather blunt (in side view) laterally-flattened, tail. Eyes dorsal, w/ 13 grooved venom-dispensing spines within the dorsal fin, each w/ a pair of venom glands, & more such spines in the fairly short, wide pectoral & anal fins. Usually medium to deep reddish body w/ many mottled brown & whitish irregular blotches, bumps & projections. Usually blends well w/ bottom debris.





Habitat

Found mainly in shallow coastal marine waters, usually above rocky & silted bottom or reefs usually <20 m deep. Some related spp. occasionally found at >100 fathoms (600 ft.; 183 m). This species is limited to coastal areas along the western Atlantic Ocean & Caribbean Sea (from Virginia, U.S.A. to Bahia, Brazil).

Activity and Behavior

Typically slow-moving well-camouflaged bottom-dwelling fish of coral reefs w/ silted bottom (& often among protrusions or kelp). Usually waits partly-buried in bottom sand or debris for suitable prey to swim or crawl close enough for it to grab. If disturbed, usually erect dorsal fins w/ venom spines (may arch body toward threat, as well). Mainly eat marine invertebrates & fish. Bear live young. Much less active than Lionfish (Genus: Pterois).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ potent cytotoxic & hemotoxic factors, too. Usually causes immediate intense pain at envenomation site; pain, redness & swelling often radiate toward groin or armpit, may last several hours. Sometimes causes sweating, paleness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cardiac problems, unconsciousness, shock & occasionally even death.

Scorpio maurus

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Identification

Family: Scorpionidae

Scientific Names: [Note: This geographically wide-spread species includes at least 19 currently recognized (named) subspecies, separable mainly via color differences, which vary in their reliability. One subspecies, *S. m. palmatus*, is of enough human concern (& interest) to be addressed separately.]

Common Names: Large-clawed scorpion, Israeli golden scorpion

Description

Small scorpion, adults usually 40-60 mm long (max. about 80 mm). Color varies from yellow (often w/ greenish tinge) to red-brown to dark brown. Dorsal prosoma smooth, tips of pincers (chela) & sting (aculeus) usually dark reddish-brown to blackish. Relatively large, relatively short, thick pincers (pedipalpal chelae); relatively small, thin postabdoman (metasoma, or cauda) & stinger.



Habitat

Mainly found in deserts or semi-arid sites, but can also be found in dry (or seasonally dry) forests. Only found where some loose substrate (e.g., sandy soil, organic debris) allows it to burrow 20-70 cm deep, often under a larger rock. Usually found in warm locations, but can survive down to 10-15 degrees C.

Activity and Behavior

Terrestrial (but climbs), & mainly nocturnal. Hides in its burrow w/ a slightly enlarged terminal chamber during the day. In some areas, may enter diapause ("hibernate") during cold months. Preys on available insects & other arthropods. Burrows often found in clusters ("colonies"), each scorpion w/ its own burrow. If disturbed, it seldom tries to sting, but very quickly attacks any intruder w/ its claws (pincers).

Venom Characteristics

Relatively mild neurotoxic venom, w/ cytotoxic & hemotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes moderate to severe local pain, sometimes limited local swelling & redness, which usually resolves in less than 24 hrs. w/ only symptomatic treatment.

Scorpio maurus palmatus

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Identification

Family: Scorpionidae

Scientific Names: Scorpio maurus (in part) [Note: This is only one of at least 19 subspecies of this species, which are distinguishable (to some degree) mainly based on color/ color pattern differences. The morphology & physiology of this subspecies has been rather well-studied, as has the structure, biochemistry, & action of its venom.]

Common Names: Golden desert scorpion, large-clawed yellow scorpion, large-clawed palm scorpion

Description

For a good general physical description, [See Scorpio maurus](#). This subspecies is typically yellow to greenish to pale olive-brown (rarely w/ red-brown tinge).



Habitat

Mainly found in warm, drier (more xeric) or semi-desert habitats, w/ sandy soil, organic debris or other loose, semi-consolidated substrate in which it can construct a burrow 20-70 cm long, usually w/ a slightly enlarged chamber at its end. Mainly found in suitable habitats across northern Africa & the Middle East. May be present in, but not yet reported from, several additional countries (e.g, Mauritania, Oman, Afghanistan, Pakistan).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial (actually burrowing, or 'fossorial') but climbs rough surfaces well. Ovoviviparous, litter size varies (8-20+ reported). Preys on available small insects & other arthropods. Tend to congregate in many closely-clustered burrows ("colonies") in rather small suitable sites. Readily & aggressively attacks any intruder w/ its claws, but seldom attempts to sting, except to subdue larger prey.

Venom Characteristics

Mildly neurotoxic, w/ cytotoxic & possibly hemotoxic factors; usually causes only local pain, slight swelling & redness at sting site. No human fatalities reported. Maurotoxin, a new type of toxin w/ 4 disulfide bridges, was first isolated from specimens of this subspecies from northern Africa (Tunisia). This represented a new class of natural biologic toxins which have since been extensively characterized & studied, mainly in European labs.

Sistrurus catenatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisoma edwardsii*, *C. tergemina*, *Crotalinus catenatus*, *Crotalophorus consors*, *C. catenatus catenatus*, *C. c. edwardsii*, *C. edwardsii*, *C. kirtlandi*, *C. tergeminus*, *Crotulurus catenatus*, *Crotalus consors*, *C. massasauga*, *C. miliarius*, *C. catenatus edwardsii*, *Sistrurus catenatus consors*, *S. c. catenatus*, *S. c. edwardsii*, *S. c. tergeminus*, *S. edwardsii*

Common Names: Massasauga, black massasauga, black rattler, black snapper, gray rattlesnake, little gray rattlesnake, muck rattler, prairie rattlesnake, pygmy rattler, sauger, spotted rattler, swamp rattler, vibora de cascabel

Description

Relatively small rattlesnake, adults usually 50-70 cm long (max. 100+ cm). Top of head w/ several very large scales vs. many small ones. Body pale brown to gray-brown, w/ a series of darker brown irregular ovoid mid-dorsal blotches (edged w/ white or pale gray), & various additional smaller lateral blotches. Belly white or cream w/ dark gray or brownish blotches along sides. Dark postocular stripe, tail ends in series of paired "rattles," 23-27 midbody dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Found mainly in open, low-lying areas like moist bogs, marshes, grassy meadows, rolling plains, prairies, open deciduous forest, rocky hillsides, limestone outcroppings, brushy sand dunes, & desert margins. Occurs from Ontario, Canada (north of the Great Lakes) in a wide band down through the central & midwestern U.S. & into northern Mexico (limited relict populations). Usually found near streams or other water sources, up to 1,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Sluggish & relatively nonaggressive, but if threatened, w/ no ready escape route, rattlesnakes usually will coil w/ the head & neck thrown back in a horizontal S-shaped loop, hiss, rattle, & if further provoked can strike quickly. Ovoviviparous, 4-20 young/ litter. Prey on small mammals, lizards, & occasionally, invertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic; may also have potent tissue-necrotic factors. Thus, some symptoms similar to those of Elapid bites could be expected. Capable of producing moderate local pain & swelling. Envenomations are rarely very serious, & human fatalities are recorded, but are extremely uncommon.

Sistrurus miliarius

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Caudisonia miliaria*, *Crotalophosus miliarius*, *Crotalus miliarius*, *Sistrurus miliarius* barbouri, *S. m. miliarius*, *S. m. streckeri*

Common Names: Pygmy rattlesnake, bastard rattlesnake, dwarf rattlesnake, ground rattler, hog-nosed rattler, alba, ihaanikosi, haco-layci, hacolaycosi, oak-leaf rattler, pygmy ground rattlesnake, southern pygmy rattlesnake, spotted rattlesnake, (plus several more very similar common names)

Description

Small rattlesnake, adults usually 40-60 cm long (max. 80+ cm). Top of head w/ several very large scales instead of only lots of small ones. Side of head usually lacking both a distinct pale stripe & a dark postorbital stripe. Dorsal body pattern is usually a series of dark brownish (almost black) irregular rhomboidal blotches, w/ a row of smaller ones along each side. Belly white to pale gray, w/ darker speckling along sides. Tail ends in paired "rattles," usually 23 midbody dorsal scale rows.



Habitat

Primarily found in open areas like meadows or areas covered in low vegetation, most abundant in flat areas like plateaus, floodplains, alluvial fans, or basins. Occurs throughout most of the southeastern U.S.; from North Carolina through peninsular Florida, then west to central Oklahoma, & east-central Texas; found from sea level to about 500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Sluggish & non-aggressive by day, but if threatened, will coil, hold head & neck in a raised S-shaped loop, hiss, & rattle; may strike if further molested. Ovoviviparous, 2-18/ litter. Prey mainly on various available toads, small mammals, lizards, & arthropods.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic; possibly also w/ tissue-necrotic factors. This species has venom of relatively low toxicity, & produces only moderate envenomation. Usually very painful at the bite site (sometimes for several days) w/ limited local swelling & necrosis. No human fatalities reported.

Synanceja trachynis

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Identification

Family: Scorpaenidae

Scientific Names: *Synanceia trachynis* [Note: There are >1,000 currently named species in at least 67 current genera in this boney-fish Family (Scorpaenidae). This is one of 3 current very similar-looking species in this genus which can cause severe human envenomations & fatalities. The other 2 are *Synanceja horrida* & *S. verrucosa*. Other species in this family, some Scorpion fish & some Zebra (Lion) fish (some common in the pet trade), can also cause serious human envenomation & rarely, death.]

Common Names: Stone fish, goblin fish, nofu, warty-ghoul, rock fish, lump fish, poison fish, scorpion fish

Description

Usually mottled greenish-brown (often w/ red or gray flecks/ blotches), many stone-like bumps & flap-like projections over most of its body make it very hard to detect in typical resting sites. Body relatively large, rounded in front, tapers to much smaller, rounded tail, eyes dorsal, w/ 13 grooved poison-dispensing spines within the dorsal fin, each w/ a pair of venom glands, & more such spines in the relatively short, wide pectoral & anal fins. Adults usually about 30 cm long.



Habitat

Found mainly in moderately shallow (mainly marine, sometimes brackish) waters above coral reefs or in near-shore coastal shallows usually over at least partly sandy bottoms. Widespread along the coasts of nearly every country that borders the Indian & southwestern Pacific Oceans (not yet reported from some), mainly north of the Tropic of Capricorn & mainly south of the Tropic of Cancer.

Activity and Behavior

Typically rest on the bottom among protruding coral knobs, & any bottom plants or animals (e.g., sponges, annemonies), usually in water <20 m deep. Often lie partly hidden under sand & bottom debris. Can live out of water for many hours. Usually ambush & eat mainly smaller fish & marine arthropods that pass by them.

Venom Characteristics

Very potent neurotoxin w/ cytotoxic & possibly hemolytic factors (some spp. also have hyaluronidase & pre-synaptic transmitter blockers). Venom of most spp. is unstable at pH <5.5 or >9.0, & at temperatures above 50 degrees C. Spines can usually penetrate sand shoes when the fish is stepped on (or gloves when handled). Numerous human envenomations & deaths have been documented.

Thalassophina viperina

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New Name: [Hydrophis viperinus](#) , changed Jan. 2013; see NOTE: under Hydrophis spp. (general)

Thelotornis capensis

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Dryiophis oatesi*, *Dryiophis kirtlandii* var. *mossambicana*, *Thelotornis capensis capensis*, *T. c. mossambicanus*, *T. c. oatesi*, *T. c. schilsi*, *T. mossambicanus*, *Thelotornis kirtlandi capensis* [NOTE: This is the only one, of 4 currently named species of this genus, which has been reported to cause lethal human envenomations. The 2 species NOT addressed in this data base are quite rare, not reported to have bitten nor envenomated a human, & are seldom even encountered by humans.]

Common Names: Savannah vine snake, bird snake, twig snake, Oates vine snake, Eastern vine snake, Eastern twig snake

Description

Very long, extremely slender vine snake, adults usually 0.8-1.2 m (max. 1.6 m). Body gray-brown w/ black & pink flecks. Tongue bright red-orange w/ black tip. Lance-shaped head & large eyes w/ keyhole-shaped pupils. Belly pink-gray w/ many dark gray blotches, 19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Top of head blue-green, w/ lots of black & some pink spots. Tail very long & thin.



Habitat

Found mainly in savannah, in moist miombo woodlands & riparian forest, & sometimes in coastal forests, as well a dry savannah w/ mopane & acacia trees. Occurs in southern & southeastern Africa.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal; most common in low shrubs, bushes, & dead trees. Usually timid, although easily aroused. When aroused, inflates neck region vertically, displaying bright lateral interstitial coloration. Eats mainly lizards, birds, frogs, other snakes, & occasionally, bats or other arboreal small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Venom primarily hemotoxic. Bites & envenomations of humans are rare, but at least a few fatalities have been confirmed. Such bites require the snake to chew because the fixed rear fangs are rather short & not grooved. After envenomation & a latent period of 1-24 hrs., generalized bleeding & necrosis quite distant from the bite can occur.

Thelotornis kirtlandii

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Identification

Family: Colubridae

Scientific Names: *Dryiophis kirtlandii*, *Leptophis kirtlandii*, *Oxybelis kirtlandii*, *O. violacea*, *O. lecomptei*, *Tragophis rufulus*, *Thelotornis kirtlandi kirtlandi*, *Thelotornis kirtlandi oatesi*

Common Names: Bird snake, twig snake, forest vine snake, forest twig snake, Lianennatter, Vogelnatter, Graue Baumnatter

Description

Long, very thin tree snake, adults usually 1.0-1.5 m long (max. 1.7 m). Body ashy-gray to pinkish-brown above; uniform or w/ poorly distinguished blotches & crossbands anteriorly, 17 midbody dorsal scale rows, belly paler. Large fixed rear fangs. Long, flat head & eyes w/ horizontally elongated pupils. Top of head usually solid green, but has turned to solid brown in some captive specimens exposed to strong bright sun.



Habitat

Mainly found in forest & thick woodland, but also in moist savannah & extensive reedbeds. Seems most common around natural glades. Often found in & around farmland, parks, & gardens within forests. Distributed in several equatorial central African countries.

Activity and Behavior

Arboreal; intricate coloration & pattern make it almost invisible when in trees or shrubbery. Usually timid; seldom bites unless strongly provoked, then makes spectacular display w/ greatly (vertically) inflated neck before striking. Eats mainly lizards, birds, & sometimes other snakes. Catches & usually consumes prey while hanging from a bush or tree. Oviparous, w/ usually 4-12 eggs/ clutch.

Venom Characteristics

Venom mainly hemotoxic; few bites, fewer significant envenomations, & no deaths of humans known to have been caused by this snake.

Tityus bahiensis

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Scorpio bahiensis, Tityus eichstedtae

Common Names: Brazilian common brown scorpion, brown scorpion

Description

Small to medium-sized, adults usually 45-70+ mm long. Cephalothorax & tergites usually medium to dark reddish-brown above, legs paler w/ black spots, pedipalps light brown w/ dark brown spot on tibiae, postabdomen (cauda) pale brown (often tinged reddish-brown), often w/ indistinct darker brown dorsal blotches or spots, 5th caudal segment often very dark. Telson bulb often reddish. Pincer tips & sting dark brown to black. Immatures may be distinctly reddish.





Habitat

Found in moderately moist to semi-arid (seasonally dry) sites, often near a water source, in warm regions. Often found in agricultural areas, sometimes enters homes. Apparently limited to east-central South America (Argentina, Brazil, & Paraguay). [Note: Specimens reportedly collected from El Salvador may have been mislabelled.]

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, terrestrial (fossorial), often burrows 20-30 cm deep into semi-consolidated sandy soil or accumulated leaf litter or organic debris (usually under edge of a rock or log). Ovoviviparous, litter size not reported (probably >20). Prey on available insects & arthropods. Usually avoid humans & large animals, but will quickly try to sting any intruder if disturbed even slightly.

Venom Characteristics

Potent cardiotoxic & neurotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes intense local pain, often also swelling, discoloration & systemic effects, like rapid heartbeat, nausea, breathing difficulties (pulmonary oedema), sweating, & lethargy. May cause serious pancreatic & gastrointestinal complications. Causes a significant number of serious, & some lethal, human envenomations annually within its range (especially in Sao Paulo & nearby states of Brazil).

Tityus clathratus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Tityus fahrenheitzi*, *T. guianensis*, *T. quelchi*, *T. quelchii*

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized, dark scorpion, adults usually 40-65+ mm long. Cephalothorax & tergites usually dark reddish-brown, legs paler brown w/ dark (often blackish) spots, pedipalps medium to light brown w/ dark brown spots on tibiae. Cauda medium-brown (often tinged reddish-brown) w/ large & small irregular dark blotches on top & sides. 5th caudal segment dark, nearly black. Pincer tips & sting blackish, telson bulb w/ reddish-brown tinge. Young lighter & more reddish.

Habitat

Usually found around soil banks or leaf litter near paths or forest margins of humid fairly open areas in coastal lowland neotropical moist or wet forests, at low elevations. Found (wide-spread) in similar habitats associated w/ rivers or streams in interior lowlands of northern & northeastern South America (east of the Andes).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, terrestrial & burrows up to 20-40 cm into moderately-loose soil or substrate. Seldom observed above local ground level. Ovoviviparous, litter size variable (12-20 young reported). Preys on available insects & arthropods. Tends to avoid humans, not as aggressive as several other species in this genus, but will sting if molested or pinched.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic w/ cardiotoxic (& possibly some cytotoxic) factors. Envenomation reportedly usually causes intense local pain, limited swelling, occasional discoloration, spreading numbness, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, & sometimes sweating & muscle twitching. Human deaths due to envenomation by this species have been reported, but many of those have not been well documented.

Tityus discrepans

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Androcottus discrepans*, *Tityus spinipalpis*

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized scorpion, w/ adults usually 40-60 mm long. Body usually light to medium brown (often darker above, sometimes w/ yellowish-green or reddish tinge) w/ lighter brown legs, pedipalps & cauda. Bases of pincers (chela) relatively thick & bulbous, a single ventromedial carina (ridge) on metasomal (caudal) segments II-IV, 5th caudal segment often distinctly darker on its ventral side, pincer tips & sting very dark (nearly black).

Habitat

Mainly found in warm regions, in fairly moist to seasonally dry areas, often near a water source. May burrow 20+ cm deep into semi-consolidated sandy soil, leaf litter, or organic debris. Often found in margins of paths or near edges of open spaces in fairly sparse moist to wet coastal lowland forests (sometimes in agricultural areas) in northern & northeastern South America.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial. Burrows into semi-consolidated sandy soil or leaf litter (as deep as 20+ cm) often under the edge of a large rock or log. Ovoviviparous (litter size variable, but 10+ is common). Preys on locally available insects & arthropods. Tends to avoid humans, but will sting defensively at minimal provocation (e.g., if brushed against, stepped on, or trapped in clothing being donned).

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cardiotoxic & possibly cytotoxic factors. Causes many serious envenomations (stings) annually, & rather frequent deaths, of humans (especially small children) in parts of its range (especially parts of Venezuela).

Tityus isabelceciliae

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Tityus discrepans* (in part)

Common Names: Isabel Cecilia's scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpions, adults usually 50-80+ mm long (males larger than females). Body nearly all dark brown, caudal segments 5 & 6 (telson) nearly black. Carapace covered w/ varying pattern of multiple sizes of granulations (mostly small). Males have more pronounced dorsal keels & granulation. Chelae rather large & bulbous at base, tips black.

Habitat

Mainly found associated w/ loose soil or leaf litter (or organic debris) in wet, moist, or seasonally dry margins of open forest, agricultural land or peri-urban settings (e.g., very near major cities like Caracas) mainly along the northern slope of the Cordillera de la Costa of Venezuela. May also be present in (but not yet reported from) suitable habitats in nearby Columbia, French Guiana, & Brazil. Not found in dry, open grasslands or higher, colder elevations.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, & terrestrial (burrows in loose substrate, if available), & rather aggressive toward any intruder which gets close to it. Will grasp & try to sting w/ little or no provocation. Preys on available insects & arthropods. Frequently enters humans' houses. Ovoviviparous, reportedly 15-25 young/ litter.

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin, w/ cardiotoxic & possibly also myoptoxic factors. Has been documented to have caused a significant number of serious human envenomations & several fatalities in Venezuela in the few years since it was named as a new species.

Tityus paraensis

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Tityus amazonicus*, *T. cambridgei*, *T. piceus*, *T. sampaiocrulsi*, *T. weneri*

Common Names: Black forest scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 45-65 mm long. Body looks relatively thin & vertically flattened, usually uniformly dark-brown to blackish, legs, pedipalps, & segments of post-abdomen (cauda, including telson) relatively long & narrow, w/ low surface keels & granulations giving a generally "rough" appearance to most dorsal body surfaces.



Habitat

Mainly found in wet to seasonally dry tropical or sub-tropical forests, mainly on Atlantic slopes of Panama & northern South America. Especially common in the Amazon basin (mainly in lowlands or relatively low forested hillsides), usually in sites w/ accumulations of organic debris & often near a stream or other water source, sometimes near a coast. Fairly wide-spread geographically, seldom encountered by humans except workers who spend time in the forest at dusk or night.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal & terrestrial (burrows into & under organic debris), can climb rough surfaces well. Often hides under stones, logs or loose bark during the day. Typically avoids humans but will quickly sting defensively if molested even slightly or stepped on. Preys mainly on available insects & arthropods. Probably ovoviviparous, but not well known & litter sizes not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly neurotoxic w/ cardiotoxic & cytotoxic factors. Stings reported to cause intense local pain, then profuse sweating, salivation & vomiting. Severe envenomations sometimes cause spreading numbness, muscle twitches, convulsions & semi-coma. Usually not lethal to humans. Human fatalities have been reported, but not well documented (in some cases, the stinging scorpion may have been misidentified).

Tityus pittieri

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 40-65 mm long. Body color & pattern can vary greatly, but usually medium to dark brown above (often w/ reddish tinge), legs & pedipalps lighter brown often w/ slightly darker bands or spots on some segments. Cauda light brown, 5th segment often much darker brown. Telson bulb sometimes reddish-brown, tips of pincers & sting very dark (often black). Often looks very similar to *T. bahiensis* (easily misidentified).

Habitat

Mainly found in moderately moist to seasonally dry sites in warm regions, often found near water sources like wells or cisterns & in agricultural areas. Not found in very dry (nor very cold) sites & seldom enters buildings. Because it often looks very much like several other species found in the same areas, it may be more widely distributed than so far reported.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, terrestrial & sometimes burrows as far as 30 cm into semi-consolidated sandy soil or leaf litter layers (often under edges of rocks or logs). Ovoviviparous, but litter sizes not reported. Preys on available insects & arthropods. Seems to avoid humans, but will try to pinch & sting if molested or cornered.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but neurotoxic, possibly also w/ cytotoxic factors. This species has been reported to have caused serious envenomations & at least a few deaths of humans.

Tityus serrulatus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Isometrus cylindricus*, *Isometrus stigmurus*, *Tityus lamottei*, *T. stigmurus*, *T. vellardi*

Common Names: Yellow scorpion, yellow house scorpion, Brazilian yellow house scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 50-70+ mm long. Cephalothorax & all but last segment of preabdomen usually yellow to blackish-brown (sometimes dark) above; legs, pedipalps & most of cauda paler yellow (may have a greenish tinge), at least the ventral side of 5th caudal segment usually black. Digits of pedipalps & telson reddish-brown, w/ black tips. Median dorsal keel of 3rd & 4th caudal segments distinctly enlarged & look serrated in side view.



Habitat

Found mainly in warm, moist to semi-arid or seasonally dry places w/ semi-consolidated soils or leaf litter layers. Often found near water sources & very frequently come into houses (some authorities call this a "domestic" species). Apparently primarily limited to peri-urban areas in eastern Brazil, but may also be present in (but not yet reported from) suitable habitats in nearby Paraguay or Argentina.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, often burrow into loose substrate, under rocks or logs. Commonly come into houses & frequently sting humans if brushed against, stepped on, or trapped in clothes being donned.

Mainly prey on available insects & arthropods. Reproduce almost exclusively via parthenogenesis (which is rare for scorpions).

Venom Characteristics

Potent neurotoxin & cardiotoxin w/ cytotoxic factors. Annually causes many serious human envenomations & fatalities (especially children). Symptoms usually include immediate intense local pain, limited local swelling, & very often systemic effects like progressively spreading numbness, nausea, headache, sweating, disorientation, rapid heart rate, difficulty breathing (pulmonary oedema), disfunction of critical organs (e.g., pancreas), & death in as little as 24-48 hrs.

Tityus spp.

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: [Note: This genus currently includes more than 100 named species of which at least 8 pose significant health risks to humans within their range (see some of the most important species detailed individually, separately).]

Common Names:

Description

Small to medium-sized scorpions, adults range from 30 to >80 mm long (varies by species & sex). Body usually light to medium yellowish or brownish (sometimes darker brown, greenish, or blackish), w/ 5th (& 4th, in some spp.) postabdominal (caudal) segment very dark, tips of pincer digits & telson reddish-brown, & sting tip (aculeus) almost black. Most spp. have dorsum of mesosoma darker than legs & cauda.

Habitat

Found mainly in moderately-moist to semi-arid sites (sometimes hunting near water sources), may burrow into sandy soil or under leaves or organic debris. Some spp. found in suitable local habitats in moderately warm regions, mainly from sea level up to 500+ m elevation. Limited to Central & South America & certain of the Caribbean islands, including Cuba.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial (but many spp. climb rough surfaces very well), hide under debris or rocks or in natural or artificial crevices by day. Some species come into human habitations frequently. Usually prey mainly on available insects & other arthropods. Ovoviviparous, litter size varies w/ spp. & female's size. Most spp. usually avoid humans, but will sting quickly & then try to escape if disturbed, stepped on, or trapped in clothing being donned.

Venom Characteristics

Potent cardiotoxic & neurotoxic (& sometimes cytotoxic) factors. Several species cause human deaths via envenomation & are especially dangerous to small children.

Tityus trinitatus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Isometrus androcottoides*, *Tityus androcottoides*

Common Names: Trinidad scorpion, coconut scorpion, sugarcane scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 50-70 mm long. Dorsum of body of females usually dark-brown to black, males dark reddish-brown (sometimes w/ distinct yellowish tinge & some specimens much lighter overall); w/ legs & cauda lighter, usually medium to dark brown, pedipalps lighter brown (sometimes yellowish), w/ pincer tips black. Last 3 segments of cauda black.

Habitat

Mainly found in warm, usually humid, sites among vegetative debris. Numerous in edges of cane fields & coconut groves (especially under loose leaves, fallen stalks, & fronds & accumulated coconut husk fragments) & similar agricultural sites. So far, only reported from Trinidad & Tobago, & Venezuela. May also be present in (but not yet reported from) suitable habitats in the countries between & adjacent to these two.

Activity and Behavior

Nocturnal, mainly terrestrial, sometimes creates burrows (20-30+ cm long) into or under organic debris, climbs well & often hides behind loose fronds still on a coconut tree. Mainly preys on available insects & arthropods. Does not usually come into houses. Generally avoids humans, but will sting quickly if molested or stepped on.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly neurotoxic, w/ cardiotoxic & probably also cytotoxic factors. Envenomation (sting) usually causes significant pain & fairly short-term, mainly localized, effects immediately after a sting. Serious systemic effects & (rarely) fatalities of human children have been reported.

Tityus trivittatus

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: Tityus trivittatus charrenyroni, T. t. trivittatus

Common Names: Brazilian red house scorpion

Description

Medium-sized scorpion, adults usually 50-70 mm long. Body usually yellow to yellowish-red dorsally, w/ 3 sometimes obscure dark longitudinal stripes. Legs, pedipalps & cauda usually paler, yellow to yellowish-brown (rarely w/ a greenish tinge), 5th & sometimes 4th caudal segment much darker brown on ventral side. Legs & pedipalps w/ dark marks on segments. Dark leg markings & reddish body color most obvious in immature specimens.



Habitat

Mainly found in warm regions in moderately moist sites w/ loose soil or leaf litter. Common around rough poorly-sealed buildings (like adobe or brick). Often found near a water source, & frequently come inside

human's homes. Not found in very dry (nor cold) sites. Apparently limited to Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, sometimes burrows under edges of rocks or logs, climbs rough surfaces well. Usually avoids humans, but will quickly sting if molested, stepped on or trapped in clothes being donned. Preys mainly on available insects & arthropods (sometimes cannibalistic). Is often considered a "peri-domestic" species within its range.

Venom Characteristics

Moderately potent neurotoxin w/ cardiotoxic & cytotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes very intense local pain at sting site, often followed by anxiety, nausea, difficulty swallowing, rapid heart rate, & breathing difficulty. This species reportedly causes many painful stings & a few deaths of humans (mainly children) annually within its range.

Tityus uruguayensis

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Identification

Family: Buthidae

Scientific Names: *Tityus tityus uruguayensis*, *T. trivittatis* (in part)

Common Names: Uruguayan (or house) scorpion

Description

Small- to medium-sized scorpion, adults up to 40 mm long. General body color usually yellowish with darker patches dorsally, Prosoma: yellowish w/ brownish patches scattered over the whole surface. Mesosoma: yellowish above w/ brownish median line and two brownish lateral lines for most of its length. Tail: segments I through IV yellowish, segment V reddish, vesicle and aculeus base reddish. Aculeus tip black, legs yellowish, Pedipalps yellowish w/ brownish patches, pincers' fingers reddish-yellow cutting edge of fixed finger w/ 12-14 rows of granules, Pectines have 12-17 teeth.

Habitat

Mainly found under tree bark, or under debris on the ground in warm regions w/ moderately moist loose soil or leaf litter. Common around rough poorly-sealed buildings (like adobe or brick). Often found near a water source, & frequently come inside human's homes. Not found in very dry (nor cold) sites. Reported from Argentina, Brazil & Uruguay.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & terrestrial, sometimes burrows under edges of rocks or logs, climbs rough surfaces well. Usually avoids humans, but will quickly sting if molested, stepped on or trapped in clothes being donned. Preys mainly on available insects & arthropods (sometimes cannibalistic). This species is often considered to be "peri-domestic" within its range.

Venom Characteristics

Moderately potent neurotoxin w/ cardiotoxic and possibly also cytotoxic factors. Envenomation can cause intense local pain at sting site, often followed by anxiety, nausea, difficulty swallowing, rapid heartbeat, and difficulty breathing. This species reportedly has caused painful stings & a few deaths of humans (mainly children) within its range.

Triceratolepidophis sieversorum

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Three-horned pitviper, Vietnamese: Ran luc gam (= "clouded snake"), ngou kaba (= "brown viper")

Description

Medium-to-large, fairly slender pitviper, adults 1.0-1.25 m long, w/ a row of 3 horn-like projections above each eye & rather blunt, slightly upturned snout. Brown to grayish-brown w/ 2 parallel rows of dark brown to black dorsal blotches, each edged along front & back w/ a thin yellowish line; often touching or joined at midline. Scales keeled. Belly lighter brownish-gray w/ darker speckling.



Habitat

Known only from semi-evergreen forest in limestone karst in the Annam mountains along the border of Vietnam & Laos. Usually found at moderate elevations of about 100-300 m.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & mainly terrestrial, but sometimes climbs up into bushes to >1 m above ground. Not reported, but probably oviparous w/ <15 eggs/ clutch. Probably feeds on available small mammals

(maybe even bats in local karst caves) & other small animals. May vibrate tail rapidly when threatened, making a rustling noise in leaf litter.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably has mainly hemorrhagic action, & possibly also cytotoxic factors. No bites or envenomations of humans reported, so far. No specific antivenom currently produced against venom of this species.

Trimeresurus albolabris

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops erythrus, Coluber gramineus, Cryptelytrops albolabris, Lachesis gramineus, L. g. albolabris, L. gramineus, Trionocephalus viridis, Trimeresurus albolabris albolabris, T. bicolor, T. gramineus, T. g. albolabris, T. purpleomaculatus var. bicolor

Common Names: White-lipped pitviper, white-lipped tree viper, white-lipped green pit viper, Weisslippen-Bambusotter, green bamboo pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, long, thin arboreal, pitviper w/ triangular head, distinct from neck; adults usually 40-60 cm long (max. 100 cm). Body uniformly green, varies from yellowish-green to bright grass-green. May have darker crossbands. Belly greenish, yellow or white; 21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head w/ a pair of heat-sensing pits between nostrils & eyes, & w/ a pair of hinged (folding) upper front fangs.



Habitat

Found mainly in open tropical forests or bamboo thickets, & cultivated land, at low elevations. Often found around human habitations & in gardens. Rather widespread in southeastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & arboreal; rarely seen on ground except after dark. Usually slow moving, especially during the daytime, & not aggressive except when disturbed. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-25 neonates/ litter reported. Preys mainly on frogs, lizards, small birds & rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Symptoms may include local pain, swelling, bruising, & tender enlargement of local lymph nodes. Systemic symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, lethargy, gastrointestinal bleeding, & hematuria. Bites common, but few reported human deaths.

Trimeresurus erythrurus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trionocephalus erythrurus*, *Trimeresurus bicolor*, *T. carinatus*

Common Names: Red-tailed green pit viper, red-tail pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, rather slender pitviper, adults usually 50-60 cm long (max. 140 cm). Body usually leaf-green dorsally; belly uniform pale green w/ yellow tinge; 23-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Prehensile tail usually spotted w/ brown; looks "dry" compared to rest of body.

Habitat

Found in lowlands, low hills, orchards, & plantations.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly nocturnal & mainly arboreal; but frequently comes to ground in search of food. Seldom encountered by humans. Probably ovoviviparous (litter size unknown), & probably mainly preys on available small mammals & birds (possibly occasionally on lizards or amphibians, too).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Primarily hemotoxic. Bites uncommon. No human fatalities recorded.

Trimeresurus flavomaculatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Lachesis flavomaculatus*, *Megaera flavomaculatus*, *M. ornata*, *M. variegata*, *Parias flavomaculatus*, *P. ornatua*, *P. variegatus*, *Trimeresurus flavomaculatus flavomaculatus*, *T. f. halieus*, *T. f. mcgregori*, *T. halieus*, *T. mcgregori*

Common Names: Philippine pitviper, Yellow-spotted pitviper, McGregor's pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, slender, adults may be >0.9 m long. Dorsal color & markings vary a lot; usually bright or olive-green, rarely yellow or white, often w/ a row of irregular brown crossbands, belly bluish-green (often yellowish along sides), w/ broken or continuous line of yellow dots along each side (usually in lowest few dorsal scale rows). Head w/ a pair of heat-sensing pits & folding upper front fangs. Rare captive-bred specimens have been mainly blue dorsally.



Habitat

Found mainly along banks of streams or in damp localities. Limited to the Philippine Islands, based on collections, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known. Mainly terrestrial & nocturnal. Probably ovoviparous (litter size unknown), & probably preys mainly on small mammals available in its normal habitat, & maybe also birds. Probably ovoviparous (litter size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic. Symptoms generally mild. Few bites (fewer envenomations) & no fatalities of humans recorded, so far.

Trimeresurus gramineus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Coluber gramineus, C. viridis, Lachesis gramineus, L. gramineus, Trimeresurus elegans (in part), Trimeresurus gramineus, T. occidentalis, Vipera viridis

Common Names: Common bamboo viper, Indian bamboo pit viper, green bamboo pitviper, Grune Bambusotter, Gewöhnliche Bambusotter

Description

Medium-sized, slender arboreal pitviper, adults usually 60-80 cm long (max. 110 cm). Body usually uniformly green (sometimes bronze-green), w/ irregular pattern of black, or bronze-green flecks. Belly pale white, yellow, or pale green. Narrow, longitudinal whitish, yellowish, or bluish lateral line along side. Head w/ a pair of latero-frontal heat-sensing pits & a pair of folding, upper front fangs. Tail usually mainly reddish-brown.

Habitat

Mainly found in bamboo thickets, vine tangles, & dense foliage adjacent to streams or other water sources; usually from near sea level to about 400 m elevation. Often comes up around human habitations & agricultural areas.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, arboreal, & slow-moving (at least by day). Usually remains quiet when approached, but often strikes quickly if touched or otherwise threatened. Ovoviviparous (usually 7-16 young/ litter), & prey mainly on available small mammals, birds or other vertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Primarily hemotoxic. Envenomation symptoms usually include: local pain & swelling, nausea, vomiting, & fever reported. Human deaths "rarely, if ever" occur.

Trimeresurus kanburiensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Kanburi pitviper, Kanchanaburi pitviper, Kanburi Bambusotter, tiger pitviper

Description

Small, moderately heavy-bodied arboreal pitviper, adults' max. length about 70 cm. Body usually olive green above w/ brownish-green blotches forming vague dorsal crossbands, usually w/ a variable zigzag pattern. Head spotted purplish-brown on top; belly pale green w/ dark flecks. White ventrolateral stripe along body. Dorsal scales keeled. Some specimens may be almost uniformly medium-brown w/ little or no contrasting pattern, but w/ lighter brown belly.



Habitat

Found mainly in evergreen forests & open woodland, in areas of limestone hills. Limited to western & southern Thailand, from near sea level to about 1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal, & mainly nocturnal, but also a diurnal basker, retiring to shelter during hottest hours of day. Ovoviviparous, w/ 12-16 young/ litter observed for captured specimens. Mainly prey on available small mammals & other vertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not very well known. Mainly hemotoxic. Few bites, fewer envenomations, & no human deaths recorded, so far.

Trimeresurus macrolepis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Lachesis macrolepis, Peltopelorus macrolepis, Trionocephalus macolepis

Common Names: Large-scaled pitviper

Description

Small, fairly slender arboreal pitviper, adults' max. length about 60 cm. Body usually bright green; belly pale green w/ whitish or yellowish line along most lateral scale rows. Dorsal scales relatively large for size of the rest of its body (as implied by its specific name, macrolepis).

Habitat

Found mainly in moderately open forests in hilly country, at 600-2,200 m elevation. Limited to southern India (Tamil Nadu, Kerala).

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known. Mainly arboreal & mainly nocturnal, but sometimes basks in sun. Ovoviviparous (litter size not reported, but likely about 12 young), & preys mainly on small mammals & birds (& sometimes frogs & lizards) within its habitat.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Bites usually followed, almost immediately, by intense burning pain at bite site w/ swelling extending to affected limb, persisting for 3 or 4 days. No human fatalities recorded, so far, due to envenomation by this species. No known specific antivenom currently produced.

Trimeresurus macrops

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names: Kramer's pitviper, large-eyed pitviper, dark-green pit viper, Grossaugen-Bambusotter, big-eyed green pitviper

Description

Small, fairly slender arboreal pitviper, adults' max. length about 72 cm. Usually uniformly dark blue-green body w/ belly light bluish-white. Broad head, distinct from neck, w/ large, golden-yellow eyes & vertical pupils. Chin & throat bluish-white. Dorsal scales keeled. May have darker dorsal crossbands on scales & interstitial skin. Tail reddish-brown above, blue (often bright blue) below. Has latero-frontal heat-sensing pits & folding upper front fangs.



Habitat

Most commonly found in moist, open country w/ mixed vegetation at low elevations. Frequently found around human habitations & in gardens. Limited to lowlands of Cambodia, Thailand & southern Vietnam.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal (at least rests up off ground during the day). Usually hunts on the ground during dusk & dawn hours (sometimes also at night). Not especially aggressive, but will defend itself if cornered or molested. Ovoviviparous (usually 6-12 young/ litter), & preys mainly on available small mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Local symptoms usually include pain & swelling. Occasional bites & envenomations of humans have been reported, but rare reports of human fatalities have not been well documented.

Trimeresurus malabaricus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Lachesis anamallensis, L. coorgensis, Trionocephalus malabaricus, T. wardii, Trimeresurus anamallensis

Common Names: Malabarian pitviper, Malabar rock pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 1 m). Body color variable; usually greenish, olive-yellow, or brownish above, w/ darker brown or black blotches or crossbands, separate or confluent w/ yellowish spots along flanks. Belly yellow, pale line along each side of body.

Habitat

Found mainly in shrubby, rocky hills at 600-2,200 m elevation. Found mainly in open sparsely forested slopes of western India.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Semi-arboreal (but often rests & hunts prey on ground) & mainly nocturnal (but often active during dusk). Apparently not very aggressive, but will defend itself if cornered or molested. Seldom encountered by humans. Ovoviviparous (clutch size not specified). Mainly preys on available small mammals, birds, & other vertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Symptoms generally include pain, swelling, & local bleeding. No human fatalities recorded, so far. No known antivenom currently produced.

Trimeresurus popeorum

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Popeia popeiorum, Trimeresurus popeiorum

Common Names: Pope's pit viper, Pope's tree viper, Pope's bamboo pitviper, Popes Bambusotter, Pope's Lanzenotter

Description

Small to medium-sized arboreal pitviper, adults usually 60-75 cm long (max. 82 cm). Body usually uniformly medium-green above; lighter green or yellow below. Dorsal scales keeled & usually w/ 21 (rarely 23) midbody rows. May have indistinct white or yellow stripe (often w/ a narrower red or orange

stripe along its ventral edge) along each side near abdomen. Head scales smooth. Tail usually reddish-brown above. Distinctive triangular head & pointed snout.



Habitat

Most often found in low bushes or shrubs in hilly & mountainous country from 900-1,500+ m elevation. Common on tea plantations.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal (sometimes hunts on the ground) & mainly nocturnal, but sometimes active at dusk or dawn. Generally not aggressive; often permits a human intruder to approach closely without striking. When aroused, it threatens w/ open mouth &, if further disturbed, strikes vigorously & quickly. Ovoviviparous w/ usually 7-12 young/ litter. Mainly eats available small mammals, birds, or other vertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Mainly hemotoxic. No reliable reports of bites, envenomations, or deaths of humans from this species.

Trimeresurus puniceus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Atropophis puniceus, Atropis acontia, A. puniceus, Bothrops puniceus, Cophias punicea, Lachesis puniceus, Vipera punicea

Common Names: Flat-nosed pit viper, ashy pitviper, Bornean pitviper

Description

Small, stout-bodied arboreal pitviper, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 64 cm). Usually uniformly light reddish-brown above, w/ irregular darker blotches, usually slightly darkerer gray-brown below. Light, dark-edged streak behind each eye. Tail & belly mottled w/ brown. Flattened, slightly upturned snout, w/ an elevated ridge from each eye to snout. Scales on head smooth, on body weakly-keeled.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland forest, from near sea level to 1,450 m elevation. Limited to southern Thailand, most of Malasia, & Indonesia (Borneo, Java, Mentawai, the Natuna Archipelago, Simular, & Sumatra).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal. Strictly arboreal; found as high as 20 m above ground. Very sluggish in daytime, not aggressive, but will defend itself if molested. Rarely encountered by humans. Oviparous; female incubates usually 7-14 eggs/ clutch. Mainly preys on arboreal small mammals & birds (& rarely, lizards or frogs).

Venom Characteristics

Not very well known. Mainly hemotoxic. Few bites of humans (& no resultant human deaths) reported. Reported symptoms include immediate burning pain & swelling, w/ limited local discoloration (& rarely, some localized tissue necrosis at bite site).

Trimeresurus purpureomaculatus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Lachesis purpureomaculatus, Trionocephalus purpureo-maculatus, Tirmeresurus puniceus (in part), T. purpureomaculatus purpureomaculatus, Trimesurus purpureus,

Common Names: Mangrove pit viper, shore pitviper, Mangrovnotter

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied pitviper, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 105+ cm). Body purplish-brown, olive or grayish; often w/ white line along each side. May have series of large brownish saddle-shaped markings w/ small spots on flanks (rarely, totally unmarked), 25-27 midbody dorsal rows of strongly-keeled scales. Belly whitish (scales black-edged), light greenish, or pale brown; often w/ darker gray or light-brown speckling along sides. Head dark above w/ keeled scales.



Habitat

Widely distributed along rocky coastal areas in mangrove & coastal swampy forests within its range. Occur very often on offshore islands, but may also be found in inland bamboo jungles up to 600 m elevation. Limited mainly to coastal areas of Southeast Asia (several countries), Singapore & Indonesia.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but active during day; mainly terrestrial, but commonly encountered in low bushes. Very aggressive, strikes w/ little provocation. Readily enter & swim in salt water & often move to & from near-shore islands. Mainly eat lizards & birds (juveniles eat frogs & lizards). Ovoviviparous w/ 7-14 young/litter.

Venom Characteristics

Potent hemotoxin. Envenomation may cause severe pain, local swelling involving entire bitten limb, tender enlargement of local lymph nodes, local necrosis, & incoagulable blood. Bites common. Human deaths reported but not very common.

Trimeresurus spp. (general)

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: This genus was recently split into 2+ new genera and includes at least 36 different spp. (even more, by some taxonomists). Only the ones known (so far), or apparently likely, to cause human health risks have been detailed (separately) here. See individual listed species for more details.

Common Names: Most are called Asian pitvipers. See individual listed spp.

Description

Most spp. are small to medium-sized, slender to fairly stout bodied mainly arboreal pitvipers, w/ adults usually 40-90 cm long. Body colors of most spp. are usually greenish or brownish, w/ contrasting blotches, lines or spots, lighter belly, & dorsally brownish tail. Most spp. usually have smooth head scales & keeled body scales.

Habitat

Most spp. are mainly found in or near forested or brushy areas, or bamboo stands, often near a stream. Some spp. live & hunt in agricultural or human living areas. Most spp. occur from near sea level up to 500+ m elevation (some much higher). This genus is limited mainly to southern & southeastern Asia.

Activity and Behavior

Most spp. are mainly nocturnal, & arboreal (or semi-arboreal), but this varies by species (see individual spp. for details). Nearly all are ovoviviparous w/ litter size varying w/ spp. (3-17+ young/ litter observed for certain spp.); but some incubate small clutches of eggs. Nearly all prey mainly on small mammals, birds, & sometimes other vertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, sometimes w/ additional toxic factors. Although several spp. commonly bite people, & some are aggressive or easily agitated; most spp. tend to avoid people, and serious envenomations & deaths of humans are relatively uncommon & usually due to only a very few species (see individual spp. for more details).

Trimeresurus sumatranus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops formosus, B. sumatranus, Coluber sumatranus, C. sumatrensis, Lachesis sumatranus, Trionocephalus formosus, T. sumatranus, Trimeresurus formosus, T. hageni, T. sumatranus sumatranus

Common Names: Sumatran pitviper, Sumatra-Bambusotter, Hagen's pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender & arboreal, adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 160 cm). Body uniformly bright-green w/ dark crossbands (often incomplete); row of pale brownish or pinkish spots on both sides of vertebral line. White line along flanks bordered below by dark line or row of spots. Tail green w/ brown (rarely pinkish) spots; belly usually greenish-gray to light-brown, sometimes w/ darker speckling along sides, especially nearer tail. Head scales often w/ black borders.

Habitat

Found mainly in lowland forested hills, & in cocoa & pepper plantations adjacent to fringes of forest, from near sea level to 1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal but sometimes basks in sun. Mainly arboreal, but may sometimes hunt on the ground. Usually very aggressive. Will strike at slightest movement or disturbance. Ovoviviparous w/ reports of 13-17 young/ litter. Preys mainly on available amphibians, lizards & occasionally small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Mainly hemotoxic. Reported bites of humans have been followed by very severe local pain & swelling. Relatively few bites of humans & no human fatalities documented.

Trimeresurus trigonocephalus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops nigro-marginatus (in part), Lachesis trigonocephalus, Magaera olivacea, M. trigonocephala, Trigonocephalus nigromarginatus, Trimeresurus capitetriangulatus, Vipera trigonocephala

Common Names: Sri Lankan green pitviper, Ceylon pitviper, Sri Lankan green tree pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender arboreal pitviper, adults usually 70-80 cm long (max. 130 cm). Body usually pale yellowish-green, mottled & variegated w/ black markings from head to tail (often w/ rows of black-edged lighter green dorsal blotches). Black postocular stripe on each side. Belly light greenish-yellow. Tip of tail dark. Occasional specimens are dark green w/ indigo speckling dorsally.

Habitat

Found on tall trees or low shrubs & bushes in montane forests & rain forests, on reeds near streams, & often in tea plantations. Rarely seen around human dwellings.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal, but often descends to ground in search of food. Mainly diurnal, but becomes nocturnal during warmer months. Hides in dense foliage. Sluggish, but may strike quickly if disturbed or surprised. When threatened, raises & retracts front of body & strikes. May vibrate tail rapidly when disturbed. Ovoviviparous, usually fewer than 6 young/ litter. Adults prey mainly on small rodents & birds, juveniles mainly on frogs & lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Reported human envenomation symptoms of local pain & swelling generally subside within a few days. Bites & envenomations of plantation workers are relatively common, but only a few human fatalities from bites by this species have been reported.

Tropidechis carinatus

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: Hoplocephalus carinatus

Common Names: Rough-scaled snake, Clarence River snake

Description

Medium-sized, semi-aquatic Elapid snake w/ rough, strongly-keeled scales & 5 mm long fixed front fangs. Adults usually 80-90 cm long (max. 100+ cm). Body usually medium to dark-brown often mottled w/ darker brown, & sometimes w/ darker dorsal crossbars. Head rounded w/ large eyes set well forward, w/ round pupils. Belly cream to gray.



Habitat

Found mainly in freshwater, scrub, wet woodlands & coastal swamps & in or near watercourses, in eastern Australia (limited to northeastern New South Wales; extreme southern & southeastern Queensland).

Activity and Behavior

Semi-aquatic & semi-arboreal, mainly nocturnal, very quick, agile, & fast moving. Often shelter in arboreal ferns or tree holes 1 m above ground or higher. Not usually very aggressive, but sometimes will become agitated at a minor disturbance. Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 5-18 young/ litter. Preys mainly on small mammals, frogs, birds & lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly has very potent neurotoxic (w/ pre- & post-synaptic) factors, can cause unconsciousness of adult human within 5 min. Many bites occur when this species is mistaken for locally common, non-poisonous (& usually diurnal) common keelbacks, but only one human fatality reported (documented), so far.

Tropidolaemus wagleri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Bothrops wagleri, Cophias wagleri, Lachesis wagleri, Trionocephalus formosus, T. sumatranus, T. wagleri, Trimeresurus hombroni, T. maculatus, T. philippensis (in part), T. subannulatus, T. sumatranus (in part), Tropidolaemus maculatus, Tropidolaemus sumatranus, T. wagleri wagleri, T. w. albovidis, T. w. subannulatus [NOTE: A recently named, closely-related species, Tropidolaemus huttoni, is known from only 2 specimens from a 1940s collection in Wavy Mountains, Tamil Nadu, India.]

Common Names: Temple pitviper, Wagler's pitviper, Wagler's palm viper, Waglers Bambusotter, Wagler's temple viper

Description

Medium-sized, stout-bodied arboreal pitviper, adults usually about 1.0 m long (max. 1.3 m). Body colors & patterns quite variable, usually green or blue-green w/ each scale black-edged (often black-tipped); w/ narrow bright yellow or greenish-yellow cross-stripes, green on flanks, often w/ green & yellow spots. Relatively large head, black on top, eyes high on sides, lighter stripes along sides. Juveniles green w/ scattered white & red-brown spots.





Habitat

Mainly found in lowland forests & swamps, but also found at higher elevations if conditions are moist enough; often found in low shrubs & bushes, & small trees, up to 600 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal & mainly nocturnal. Usually sluggish & docile during the day. Rarely strikes even when severely threatened or handled roughly. Preys on available birds, frogs, lizards & rodents. Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 15-41 young/ litter reported.

Venom Characteristics

Range of clinical effects not very well known. Mainly hemotoxic. Symptoms may include immediate bleeding, pain, & swelling at bite site. Because of its popularity as a pretty captive species, numerous bites of humans should be expected, but not many have been reported. No human deaths recorded, so far. No specific antivenom currently produced.

Vipera ammodytes

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Coluber ammodytes*, *Macrovipera ammodytes*, *Vipera ammodytes ammodytes*, *V. a. gregorwallneri*, *V. a. meridionalis*, *V. a. montandoni*, *V. a. ruffoi*, *V. a. transcaucasiana*, *Vipera aspis balcanica*

Common Names: Nose-horned viper, sand viper, horned viper, long-nosed viper, Europäische Honrotter, Europäische Sandotter, *Vipera dal corno*, *Pepeljanka*, *Zmije ruzkata*, *Vipera-cu-corn*, European sand viper, eastern sand viper

Description

Medium-sized, stout-bodied viper, adults usually 60-75 cm long (max. 95 cm), w/ distinct horn (formed of small soft scales) atop its snout, 21-23 (rarely 25) midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually ash gray in males & gray-brown or brick-red in females (much variation), w/ dark brown to black zig-zag along top of back, smaller spots along sides. Belly yellow, brownish, or pinkish w/ small dark spots or blotches.



Habitat

Found in various (mainly arid or semi-arid) habitats from lower plains to 2,500 m elevation, most often at moderately high elevations in dry terrain w/ scattered bushes. Seeks gravelly, rocky hills w/ slopes facing

sun. Frequently found in open areas w/ few trees & often associated w/ sandy sites. May move downslope into shaded forested areas in hot season, & back up to drier sites when temperature falls.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly terrestrial, occasionally climb into bushes. Most active in evening, except during colder weather. Generally sluggish & slow-moving by day. Not very aggressive. When annoyed, coils & hisses loudly, but usually does not bite unless disturbance continues. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-15 young/ litter. Preys mainly on small mammals, birds & other vertebrates.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly an extremely potent hemotoxin. Symptoms may include ecchymosis, progressive swelling, lymphedema, shortness of breath, marked limb stiffness, nausea, local hemorrhage, & internal bleeding. Many bites of humans, some w/ significant envenomation, annually. Human fatalities recorded. Fangs relatively long; up to 13 mm.

Vipera aspis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Coluber aspis*, *Vipera aspis aspis*, *V. a. atra*, *V. a. balcanica*, *V. a. francisciredi*, *V. a. hugyi*, *V. a. montecristi*, *V. a. zinnikeri*, *Vipera francisci*, *Vipera hugyi*, *V. zinnikeri*

Common Names: Asp viper, aspic viper, Aspisviper, Aspis-Otter, vipera aspide, European asp, European viper, vipere commune, vibora aspid, Italian asp viper, Monte Cristo asp viper, Gascony asp viper, jura viper

Description

Small viper, adults usually 50-65 cm long (max. 75 cm) w/ 21-23 midbody dorsal scale rows (rarely 19 or 25), dorsal scales strongly keeled. Body usually gray, yellowish, light brown, or reddish-brown (Alpine specimens may be black). Belly may be light gray, yellowish, or dark-gray w/ lighter flecks. Series of elongated rectangular dark blotches along back from neck to tail, slightly upturned snout, often w/ dark "V" or "X" atop back of head. Tail tip often yellow or orange below.



Habitat

Most often found in fairly warm dry, hilly areas at lower elevations, on open rocky hillsides exposed to the sun, and which have structured vegetation. Can also tolerate high, wet mountainous regions; found up to 3,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Diurnal in cooler months, nocturnal in hot summer months. Tolerates very cold weather; observed to move about in temperatures as low as 5 degrees C. Usually sluggish & not aggressive. When approached, generally will stop & freeze. Will bite if threatened. Ovoviviparous w/ 2-9 young/ litter reported; eats available lizards, small mammal & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Moderately potent hemotoxin. Symptoms may include pain, swelling & discoloration, necrosis, vomiting, weakened pulse, subnormal body temperatures. Later symptoms may include jaundice, renal impairment, & liver damage. Numerous bites & envenomations of humans by this species & a few (about 4% untreated) subsequent fatalities reported.

Vipera barani

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera barani nikolskii*, *V. berus* (in part), *V. pontica*

Common Names: Turkish viper, Barans Otter, Baran's viper, Nikolsky's viper (for a subspecies), Waldsteppen-Otter, Black Sea viper, Pontische viper (for a junior synonym)

Description

Small to medium-sized, body slightly flattened dorso-ventrally, rather stout-bodied, terrestrial viper, adults seldom reach 50 cm (max. 60+ cm) long. Body usually uniformly black w/ white scales along lips, dorsal scales strongly keeled, in 21 (rarely 23) midbody rows. Head ovoid, wider at back, snout broadly rounded, overhangs lower jaw slightly. Belly lighter, usually dark- to medium-gray. Tail bright yellow below, moderately short & pointed.

Habitat

Found mainly in edges of forests, woodlands, croplands, & grazing areas in hilly places along the southern coast of the Black Sea, reported from 400-2,000 m elevation. Known only from northwestern Turkey, so far; may occur in adjacent similar habitats in Georgia & possibly also in southeastern Bulgaria.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly terrestrial, & mainly active in daytime during cool months (may bask in sun), most active after dark in warm months. Apparently not very aggressive, but quick to react & will strike (for up to about 20 cm distance) if bothered or stepped on. Probably ovoviviparous, & probably preys mainly on small mammals (maybe also on available birds, lizards or amphibians).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Venom reported to be mildly hemotoxic, but no human bites (& no serious human envenomations or deaths) reported, so far. Bites w/ envenomation should be expected to at least cause local pain, swelling, & discoloration.

Vipera berus

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Berus vulgaris*, *Coluber berus*, *Chersea vulgaris*, *Pelias berus*, *Vipera berus berus*, *V. b. bosniensis*, *V. b. pseudoaspis*, *V. b. sachalinensis*, *V. b. soeonei*, *Vipera seoanei* (in part)

Common Names: Northern cross adder, common adder, cross adder, adder, European viper, Kreuzotter, northern viper, vipera rossa, Vipera Peliade, Balkan cross adder, Iberian cross adder

Description

Short, w/ fairly-stout body, a bit flattened dorso-ventrally, adults avg. 55 cm (max. 90 cm) long, dorsal scales strongly keeled, in 21 midbody rows. Body color varies by geographic location. Males usually smaller & lighter, gray w/ more vivid black zig-zag dorsal pattern; females usually larger & darker; usually light-brown w/ dark brown zig-zag dorsal pattern. Juveniles usually red-brown w/ darker dorsal zig-zag pattern.



Habitat

Found in diverse habitats, like rocky or bushy hillsides, open fields, woods, shady areas, moors, swamps, marshes, & bogs. In northern parts of range, found mainly near sea level; to nearly 3,000 m elevation in southern parts of range. Most wide-spread species of viper in the world. Found in suitable habitats throughout most of Europe & Asia; from the Arctic Circle to below 40 degrees North latitude, & from 5 to 145 degrees East longitude.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal in cold months; nocturnal in warm months. Cold-adapted in northern range, may crawl over melting snow in Spring. Basking behavior is complex. Mainly terrestrial, but climbs low bushes. Generally timid; not aggressive. Tends to freeze when danger present; but easily alarmed & bites if threatened or stepped on. Usually congregates into groups ("colonies") during annual hibernation (in rocky dens) during cold months. Mainly eats available small mammals & birds.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic, w/ neurotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes sharp pain or severe burning at bite site, followed by swelling & inflammation of lymph system. Victim usually develops nausea, headaches, vomiting, chest pains & labored breathing. Humans are sometimes bitten, and fatalities have been reported, but are not common.

Vipera bornmuelleri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Daboia raddei bornmuelleri*, *Lachesis libanotica*, *Montivipera bornmuelleri*, *Vipera lebetina bornmuelleri*, *V. (Montivipera) bornmuelleri*, *V. (M.) bulgardaghica*, *V. xanthina bornmuelleri*

Common Names: Bornmueller' viper, Hermon viper, Lebanon adder, Lebanon dwarf viper, Lebanon viper

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults avg. 45-55 cm (max. 75 cm) long, dorsal scales strongly keeled, w/ usually 23 (rarely 21) midbody rows. Body grayish to brownish w/ series of 47-64 thin, irregular, dark crossbands along dorsal midline (head to tail). Head w/ 2 larger, weakly-developed dark spots & dark postocular stripe to angle of jaw. Belly grayish speckled w/ fine darker dots, but no dark blotches.



Habitat

Found mainly in cedar forests, grasslands, & west-facing sparsely vegetated rocky talus slopes of high mountains (including snowy sites) of the Lebanese Mountains & nearby high hills in Israel, Lebanon & Syria mainly at >1,600 m elevation. Found on Mt. Hermon, on the Syrian & Lebanon border. An uncommon species throughout its limited range.

Activity and Behavior

Not very well known. Mainly diurnal & terrestrial. Seldom encountered by people, & reportedly not aggressive, but will strike if persistently provoked or stepped on. Captive specimens were ovoviviparous w/ 2-18 young/ litter; normal prey not known, but readily eat mice in captivity.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but mainly hemolytic w/ additional protein factors, probably similar to that of related species (e.g., *V. raddei*). Bites of humans rare & no serious envenomations nor human fatalities reported to have been caused by this species, so far.

Vipera darevskii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera kaznakovi dinniki* (in part), *V. (Pelias) darevskii*, *V. renardi* (in part), *V. ursini eriwanensis*

Common Names: Darevsky's viper, Darevski-Kreutzotter, Darevsky's Kaukasusotter

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults avg. 20-35 cm (max. 42 cm) long, keeled dorsal scales in 21 (rarely 19) midbody rows. Head w/ light yellowish spots around edges & sides; & w/ flat, nearly vertical sides & a low ridge on snout tip. Dark stripe from eye to jaw, separated from body pattern. Body yellowish-gray w/ brown middorsal zigzag band (maybe broken into spots) & sides w/ row of spots or light brown stripe. Belly black w/ light contours on ventrals. Tail ends in horny point.

Habitat

Found typically in alpine meadows w/ local black volcanic rock outcrops & small moraines; reported from 2,500-3,000 m elevation. Limited to suitable montane sites in Armenia, Georgia & possibly also Turkey.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but apparently terrestrial & mainly diurnal, active in warm periods. Often found under flat stones in its natural habitat, a behavior probably related to thermoregulation. Not aggressive.

Ovoviviparous w/ 3-5 young/litter observed. Females breed biennially (once every 2 years). Normal prey not known, but lizards & Orthopteran insects fairly common in its usual habitats.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably hemolytic & similar to the venom of closely-related species (e.g., *V. ursinii*). No bites, envenomations or fatalities of human reported, so far. A rather rare species, & seldom encountered by people.

Vipera dinniki

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Coluber berus dinniki*, *Montivipera dinniki*, *Pelias cherssea*, *Vipera berus dinniki*, *V. kaznakovi* (in part), *V. k. dinniki*, *V. k. orientalis*, *V. (P.) dinniki*, *V. tigrina*, *V. ursini kaznakovi*, *V. u. renardi*, *V. xanthina* (in part)

Common Names: Dinnik's viper, Westkaukasische-Kreuzotter, Dinnikis Kaukasusotter

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults avg. 30-40 cm (max. 50 cm) long, dorsal scales strongly keeled, in 21 (rarely 23) midbody rows. Head dark w/ dark postorbital stripe (continues as row of dark spots on flanks) & low ridge on snout. Often w/ light triangle mark atop neck. Body color & pattern variable, usually grayish (maybe tinged silver, green, orange or yellow) w/ dark middorsal zigzag stripe. Some specimens all black. Belly black. Tail ends in a horny point.

Habitat

Found mainly in upper forest belt, subalpine & alpine meadows, w/ rocky outcroppings & montane moraines, often near water; typically at 1,500-3,000 m elevation. Limited to Caucasus regions of southern Russia, Georgia & Azerbaijan.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but mainly terrestrial and diurnal (active in warm conditions). Prey mainly on available small mammals & birds; juveniles eat mainly Orthopteran insects. Ovoviviparous w/ usually 3-5 young/ litter (clutch); females breed biennially (once every 2 yrs.), usually need 3 yrs. to mature to breeding stage.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic, and similar to the venoms of closely-related species (e.g., *V. ursinni*, *V. kasnakovi*). Specimens observed in field & captivity not aggressive, but will strike if provoked or stepped on. No significant bites, envenomations or fatalities of humans reported to have been caused by this species, so far.

Vipera eriwanensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Acridophaga renardi eriwanensis*, *Vipera* (*Pelias*) *eriwanensis*, *V. renardi eriwanensis*, *V. ursinii* (in part), *V. u. ebneri*, *V. u. eriwanensis*, *V. u. renardi*

Common Names: Armenian mountain steppe viper

Description

Small to medium-sized moderately slender viper, adults max. about 50 cm long, dorsal scales highly keeled in 21 midbody rows, dorsal scales "wavy" in cross section. Head w/ dark occipital & postorbital stripes on top & sides; about 50% w/ snout concave above. Body ash-gray to olive-gray w/ dark zigzag dorsal stripe (w/ its "corners" rounded) & weakly developed lateral blotches or spots. Belly white.

Habitat

Found mainly in dry high mountain meadows, or hilly grasslands, always w/ dry grass tussocks, & often w/ occasional rocky outcrops. Sometimes found only in mossy, dense oak thickets w/ 20-30 cm deep surface litter layer; or in dry grassy-rocky sites in juniperus belts. Found mainly at about 2,000 m elevation & limited to Armenia, NW Iran & NE Turkey.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly terrestrial and diurnal (most active during warm conditions). Field observations indicate it is not very aggressive, & probably ovoviviparous (clutch size not reported but probably <10 young/ clutch). Eats mainly available insects, lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known but probably mainly hemotoxic and similar to venoms of closely-related species (e.g., *V. ursinii*). A rare species, seldom encountered by people. No serious bites, envenomations or fatalities of humans reported to have been caused by this species, so far.

Vipera kaznakovi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Coluber kasnakowi*, *Vipera berus* var. *ornata*, *V. renardi*, *V. ursini kasnakowi*

Common Names: Caucasus viper, Kaukasusotter, Zmija Zyzakowata

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 70 cm). Body light yellow, brownish, or dark red (in northern populations, often all black), w/ 18-21 midbody dorsal scale rows. Dark-edged rectangular dark blotches, may join in a mid-dorsal zig-zag line. Sometimes w/ a row of small light spots along flanks. Dorsal dark "V-shaped" mark on top of head, pointed forward. Belly lighter, usually w/ darker blotches or speckling. Snout rounded & fairly blunt.





Habitat

Found mainly in wooded hillsides & meadows up to 1,800 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Behavior not well characterized, but probably similar to that of *Vipera ammodytes*. Usually not aggressive; avoids confrontation when possible. Will bite if persistently disturbed, stepped on, or hurt. Mainly terrestrial & diurnal, often basks in sun. Ovoviviparous, 3-5 young/ litter. Mainly preys on lizards, small mammals, & sometimes birds.

Venom Characteristics

Moderately potent hemotoxin. Envenomation may cause pain at bite site, followed by swelling, discoloration, & internal bleeding. Severe envenomation may cause shock. Human fatalities have been recorded, but only very low numbers.

Vipera latastei

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera latastei latastei*, *V. l. monticola*, *V. l. gaditana*, *V. latasti*, *V. l. gaditana*, *V. l. latasti*, *V. latastii*

Common Names: Lataste's viper, snub-nosed viper, Stulpnasenotter, Vibora comun, Vipere de Lataste, Pequena vibora

Description

Small, rather stout-bodied viper w/ moderately upturned snout & nasal "horn," adults usually 40-50 cm long (max. 75 cm). Body pale gray, brown, or reddish-brown (more common in females), w/ well-defined black or dark brown zig-zag dorsal pattern, often w/ a row of smaller diamond-like spots along flanks, w/ dark postocular stripe. Males usually larger than females. Belly gray to yellowish w/ small light or dark spots, underside of tail tip usually yellow.



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Habitat

Mainly found in lowlands & moderate elevations, mainly in fairly open, brushy, dry sandy (sometimes found in dunes) or rocky terrain; sometimes in open woodlands or thick forests, up to 1,200 m elevation. Usually not found near water or damp places. Limited to northwestern Africa & the Iberian peninsula (nearly to the Pyrenees Mountains).

Activity and Behavior

Not well known. Mainly terrestrial & usually diurnal, but can become nocturnal in warmer summer months. Reportedly irascible & will bite w/ little provocation. Very good at sidewinding across loose sand.

Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 2-13 young/ litter. Preys on small mammals, birds, lizards & large invertebrates. Young often eat available insects.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic (procoagulant) w/ mildly neurotoxic factors. Occasional bites by this species have been reported, but none fatal, so far. For typical envenomation effects by closest-related species, [See *Vipera berus*](#).

Vipera latifii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Doboia raddei latifii*

Common Names: Latifi's viper

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults up to 78 cm long. Four color forms: brownish gray w/ distinct dark brown zig-zag pattern; yellowish-gray w/ spots or blotches, darker than body color; or grayish or brownish w/ narrow dark vertebral stripe; grayish or brownish w/ no dorsal pattern. Usually 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly w/ fine dark spotting, neck w/ 2 oblique spots.

Habitat

Found only in the Lar Valley of the Alburz Mountains of Iran, usually in well-drained, sparsely-vegetated rocky areas along the steep sides of valleys at about 3,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Little known about behavior; likely resembles other *Vipera* spp., which generally are nocturnal but in cool weather may be active during daytime. Usually lethargic & slow-moving in daytime, but can be very aggressive if disturbed or stepped on. When disturbed, may coil, hiss & strike. Ovoviviparous w/ 5-10 young/ litter. Eats mainly insects, lizards & mice.

Venom Characteristics

Little known about venom. Likely hemotoxic w/ hemorrhagic activity. Symptoms may include local swelling, tissue necrosis, nausea, vomiting, increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, & regional lymphadenitis.

Vipera lotievi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera berus* (in part), *V. (Pelias) lotievi*, *V. ursini renardi*

Common Names: Lotiev's viper, Caucasian meadow viper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender viper, adults max. about 60 cm long. Dorsal scales highly keeled, "wavy" in cross section, in 21 midbody rows. Head oval, not distinct from neck, w/ dark occipital & weakly-dark postorbital stripes on top & sides. Body usually light brown w/ dark zigzag dorsal stripe (w/ "rounded" corners), or pronounced bilineate pattern, rarely unicolored bronze; sides light w/ pronounced darker blotches or spots (except unicolored specimens). Belly white.

Habitat

Found mainly in oreoxerophytic sites w/ semiarid forests w/ shrubs & brushwood (shibliak), & thorny & summer deciduous vegetation (phrygana), similar to eastern Mediterranean vegetation types. Reaches the subalpine mountain belt habitat type at higher elevations. Known distribution covers the northern slopes & main range of the Greater Caucasus, at 1,200-2,700 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably terrestrial & mainly diurnal. Probably active mainly during warmer parts of the year & day. Limited field observations indicate it is not very aggressive; eats mainly available insects, lizards & small mammals; & is probably ovoviviparous (clutch size not reported).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic & similar to venom of closely-related species (e.g., *V. ursinii*). A rare species seldom encountered by people. No serious bites, envenomations, or fatalities of humans reported to have been caused by this species, so far.

Vipera magnifica

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera kaznakovi* (in part)

Common Names: The magnificent viper

Description

Small to medium-sized, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults max. 60+ cm long, dorsal scales keeled, in 21-25 midbody rows. Head oval, barely distinct from neck, sides & chin whitish w/ medium-brown postorbital stripe. Body light gray w/ goldish middorsal stripe about 3 scales wide, bordered by alternating dark-brown spots (about 60 on each side), like "tips" of a zigzag pattern. A row of pale blotches (each w/ mixed gold & brown) along flanks. Belly whitish.

Habitat

Found mainly in light grassy oak woods & areas of dry meadows & bushes on the rocky margins of limestone massifs at 700-1,000 m elevation. Only known from the southern slope of the Skalistyi mountain range in southeastern Russia. Sometimes associated w/ rocky ravines or river valleys.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal (most active in warm periods). Probably not very aggressive, ovoviviparous w/ small clutch size (i.e., probably <10 young/clutch), & probably eats available insects, lizards &/or small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic & similar to the venom of related species (e.g., *V. kaznakovi*). A rare species, not often seen by humans. No serious human envenomations nor fatalities due to this species have been reported, so far.

Vipera monticola

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera latastei montana*

Common Names: Atlas Mountain viper, Mountain viper

Description

Very small terrestrial viper, adults seldom more than 40 cm long. Body mainly grayish-brown to brown, w/ darker dorsal zig-zag stripe, & sometimes additional small, irregular dark-brown blotches along sides, belly paler. Dorsal scales slightly keeled, w/ usually 19 (rarely 20) midbody rows. Snout slightly prominent & slightly upturned.

Habitat

Mainly found in rocky, sparsely-vegetated & moderately dry slopes, w/ small thorny bushes & grass tufts. Limited to higher regions of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, usually at 2,100-3,900 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal & terrestrial. Preys on lizards, & insects (typically, no rodents are present in its usual habitat). Ovoviparous, w/ 2-12 (usually 2-4) young/ litter reported.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but mainly hemotoxic. Human bites & envenomations occur, but are infrequent. No significant human envenomations or fatalities reported, so far.

Vipera orlovi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera kaznakovi* (in part)

Common Names: Orlov's viper

Description

Medium-sized, rather stout-bodied viper, adults may reach 50+ cm long, dorsal scales keeled. Head slightly distinct from neck, w/ pale scales along upper front margin, lips & chin; postorbital stripe often indistinct. Body color & pattern quite variable, usually pale gray-brown (often tinged yellow or reddish; sometimes all bronze, or all black) w/ darker middorsal zigzag stripe & dark spots, blotches or lines along each side. Belly usually paler.

Habitat

Found in various Mediterranean & sub-Mediterranean landscapes; from intrazonal clearings by rivers to meadows grading into steppes & ecotones of juniper forests; at 450-950 m elevation above sea level. Known range includes both slopes of the lower northwestern part of the Great Caucasus, from Mt. Papai in the west to Mt. Bol'shoy Pseushkho in the east.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly terrestrial and diurnal (most active during warm parts of the day & year). Probably ovoviviparous & probably eats available insects, lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic & similar to venom of closely-related species (e.g., *V. kaznakovi*). A rare species seldom encountered by people. No serious bites, envenomations or fatalities of humans due to this species have been reported, so far.

Vipera palaestinae

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Daboia palaestinae*, *Vipera xanthina* (in part), *V. x. palaestinae*

Common Names: Palestine viper, Palistinian viper, Palastinaviper

Description

Medium-sized to large terrestrial viper, adults usually 70-90 cm long (max. 130 cm wild-caught; captive-bred specimens reportedly up to 180 cm). Body gray, yellowish, or reddish. Dorsal zig-zag pattern of dark reddish brown edged w/ black & surrounded by bright, narrow line, 24-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Head w/ dorsal dark "V-shaped" mark (w/ point forward). Belly pale gray or yellow; may be speckled w/ dark gray or brown.

Habitat

Found in rocky hillsides, cultivated areas, & areas overgrown w/ brush & trees. Most numerous in fairly open, patches of canopied oak forest. Not found in sandy, desert regions. Often found along stream banks & irrigation ditches, & near human dwellings. Mainly a lowland species. Occurs from Mediterranean coastal plains to inland hills in Lebanon, Israel, & adjacent areas of Jordan & Syria.

Activity and Behavior

Generally nocturnal, but may be seen during day basking in sun amid vegetation in marshy areas. Mainly terrestrial, but may also be seen in shrubs & low trees. Usually alert; will strike quickly if disturbed. Oviparous w/ 7-22 eggs/ clutch for wild-caught specimens. Prey mainly on small mammals, birds & occasionally on lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Has both neurotoxic & hemorrhagic factors. Usual symptoms include local swelling, which may spread within a few hours; hemorrhagic or serous blisters at bite; & regional lymphadenitis. Severe envenomation may cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, perspiration, weakness, difficulty swallowing, heart dysfunction, & bloody or watery stools (usually within a few hours of the bite).

Vipera raddei

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Vipera albicornuta*, *V. raddei kurdistanica*, *V. r. raddei*

Common Names: Caucasus viper, Radde's rock viper, Russian viper, rock viper, Armenian mountain viper

Description

Medium-sized to large, terrestrial viper, adults usually no more than 1.0 m long. Background color grayish brown, grayish black, or blackish. Dorsal pattern of reddish orange spots may join to form zigzag pattern, often w/ row of dark blotches along each side, 21-25 midbody dorsal scale rows. Belly usually dark gray, often mottled w/ black. Tail yellowish orange.





Habitat

Mainly found in rocky terrain w/ sparse growth of oaks & bushes among rock fragments. Also found in cultivated areas at 1,200-3,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Little known about behavior. Mainly nocturnal (or crepuscular) but may be diurnal during cool months. Usually lethargic & slow-moving, but can become aggressive if suddenly disturbed. When threatened, typically quickly dives into a hiding place or under protective cover, while hissing loudly & repeatedly. Ovoviviparous w/ 3-18 young/ litter, usually born in Autumn. Eats mainly insects (especially Orthopterans after first emerging from hibernation), later switches to lizards & mice.

Venom Characteristics

Little known of venom. Likely hemotoxic w/ hemorrhagic action. Few bites (& no deaths) of humans reported. Envenomation symptoms may include local swelling, tissue necrosis, nausea, vomiting, increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, & regional lymphadenitis. Bites & envenomation by this species have killed domestic animals.

Vipera renardi

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Pelias renardi*, *P. renardii*, *Vipera* (*Pelias*) *renardi*, *V. renardi bashkirovi*, *V. r. parursinii*, *V. r. renardi*, *V. ursinii* (in part), *V. u. renardi*

Common Names: Renard's viper, Steppe viper, Steppenotter

Description

Medium-sized, fairly slender-bodied viper, adults max. 70 cm long, dorsal scales highly keeled, 21 midbody rows, each scale is "wavy" in cross section. Head not distinct from neck, w/ broad dark occipital & postocular stripes on top & sides, snout concave above. Body ash-gray, yellow-brown, or olive-gray w/ dark zigzag (w/ "corners" rounded) dorsal stripe, often broken into spots or saddles. Dark markings often edged w/ thick black line. Sides light w/ dark blotches or spots. Belly dark.

Habitat

Found mainly in microhabitats w/ dry grass tussocks, but often found in dry plains, flatlands w/ few trees or bushes, moist grasslands, & open areas w/ dry clay or loamy soil, hilly grassland w/ occasional rock outcrops & near water. Range includes much of eastern Europe & western Asia: China, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan & Kyrgystan; found mainly at low to moderate (200-1,000 m) elevations.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known, but probably mainly terrestrial and mainly diurnal (most active in warm conditions). Probably not very aggressive toward humans unless disturbed or stepped on. Probably ovoviviparous w/ small clutch of <10 young. Prey on insects, lizards & small mammals; chosen food apparently is proportional to relative current local availability (often seasonal).

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic & similar to venom of closely-related species, *V. ursinii*. Not very common. Few reported bites or envenomations of people (& no reported human deaths) due to this species, so far.

Vipera sachalinensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Coluber sachalinensis continentalis, C. s. sachalinensis, Vipera berus (in part), V. b. sachalinensis

Common Names: Sachalin viper, East Asian viper

Description

Habitat

Found mainly along banks of rivers & streams, or along rocky & sandy edges where forest & beach meet. Not found in swampy nor true tundra sites. On Sachalin Island, it lives in all types of montane-forest sites. Limited to far eastern Russia (incl. Sachalin Island), northeastern China & North Korea. Reported from >200 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Probably mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal (most active during warmest parts of the day & year). Probably ovoviviparous, & females probably do not breed every year. Most likely prey is any available small mammal.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Rarely encountered by people. No well-documented cases of serious bites, envenomations, nor deaths of humans reported to have been caused by this species.

Vipera seoanei

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Vipera berus seoanei, Vipera seoanei cantabrica, V. s. seoanei

Common Names: Portugese viper, Basque cross adder, Nordiberische Kreuzotter, Baskian viper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout viper, adults avg. 55+ cm (max. 75 cm) long. Head triangular, distinct, w/ 2 dorsal dark-brown oblique bands, dark postorbital stripe & snout w/ raised edge. Dorsal scales highly keeled, 21 midbody rows, usually each twice as wide near sides as those at dorsal midline. Body pattern quite variable, usually grayish-brown to dark gray, w/ darker zig-zag pattern along dorsal midline, belly lighter. Usually looks similar to the closely-related species, *V. berus*.

Habitat

Not well known. Found mainly in margins & open glades of lower montane moist forests & on rocky slopes, occasionally found in edges of cultivated areas, orchards or vineyards & in nearby rock walls. Found at sea level to 1,500 m elevation. Limited to northern Portugal, northwestern Spain & (rare) in extreme southwestern France.

Activity and Behavior

Not well known, but similar to the closely related Northern Cross Adder, *V. berus*. Mainly terrestrial & mainly diurnal. Not usually very aggressive, but will defend itself actively if cornered or molested. Mainly preys on available small mammals, birds, & lizards. Ovoviparous, litter size usually <15 young.

Venom Characteristics

Not well known. Probably mainly hemotoxic. Human envenomations occur occasionally, but very few well-documented serious human envenomations or fatalities reported, so far.

Vipera spp. (general)

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names:

Common Names:

Description

Habitat

Activity and Behavior

Venom Characteristics

Vipera transcaucasiana

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Coluber ammodytes (in part), Vipera ammodytes (in part), *V. a. transcaucasiana*, *V. (Rhinaspis) transcaucasiana*

Common Names: Transcaucasus viper, transcaucasian sand viper, Armenian sand viper

Description

Medium-sized viper, adults seldom >60 cm (max. about 75 cm) long, dorsal scales strongly keeled, in 21 midbody rows. Head w/ distinct nasal "horn," but w/ only weakly darkened "v" mark on top. Body light gray, ash-gray, to grayish-white, w/ a series of irregular narrow dark transverse bands along dorsal midline. Belly lighter w/ dark spots or speckling, tail may be tinged w/ yellow.

Habitat

Found in dry, brushy, rocky hillsides w/ sparse vegetation & scrubby, rather barren rocky slopes. Sometimes in rocky, open coniferous woods, or along river edges. Found up to 1,700 m elevation. Within typical habitats, this species is very thinly dispersed. Limited mainly to Georgia & northeastern Turkey, w/ historic reports from Azerbaijan & Iran (may not occur in Armenia).

Activity and Behavior

Not much known. Mainly terrestrial & probably mainly diurnal, most active during warmest part of the day & year. Not usually aggressive, but will strike quickly if disturbed or stepped on. Ovoviviparous w/ 2-15 young/ litter observed for captured specimens. Mainly eat available birds, small mammals & lizards (juveniles also eat insects).

Venom Characteristics

Not well known, but probably mainly hemotoxic & similar in nature & effects to venom of closely-related species (e.g., *V. ammodytes*). Rarely encountered by people, few documented reports of bites or envenomations of humans by this species, so far.

Vipera ursinii

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Identification

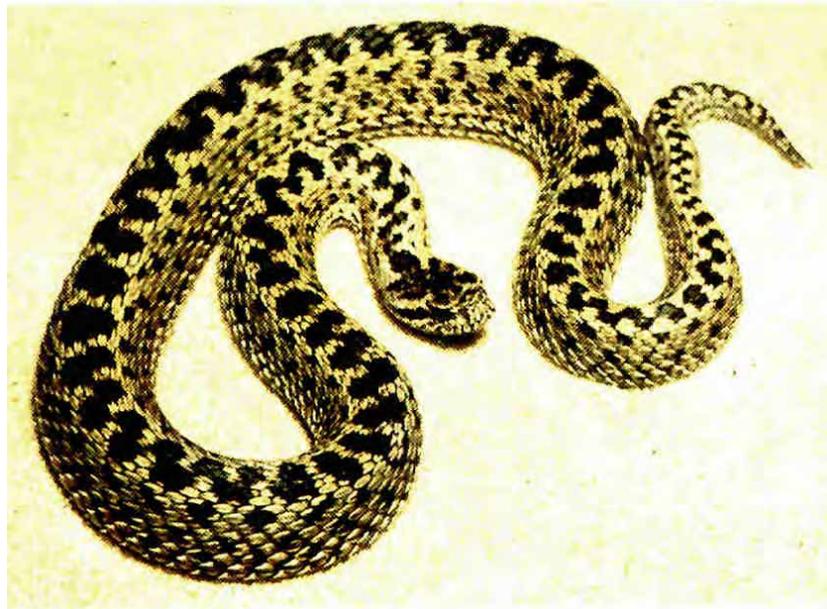
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Pelias ursinii*, *Vipera ursinii ebneri*, *V. u. graeca*, *V. u. macrops*, *V. u. moldavica*, *V. u. rakosiensis*, *V. u. renardi*, *V. u. ursinii*, *V. u. wettsteini*

Common Names: Orsini's viper, Steppe viper, meadow viper, field viper, Vipere d'Orsini, Vipers-de-Stepa, Wiesenotter, Ostromunucesta, karst viper, Italian meadow viper, Danubian meadow viper, French meadow viper, Ebner's viper (for a subspecies), Wettstein's viper (for a subspecies)

Description

Smallest true viper found in Europe, adults fairly slender, usually 40-50 cm long (max. 80 cm). Body usually gray, yellowish, greenish, or light brown. Belly light or dark gray, maybe w/ yellow markings or small dark spots. All-black specimens occur. Dorsal (vertebral) pattern usually dark, wavy, zig-zag line w/ black edges, sometimes discontinuous; flanks usually darker than middle of back, 19 midbody dorsal scale rows. Snout rounded, slightly upturned. Females larger than males.



Habitat

Found mainly in dry plains, grasslands, flatlands w/ few trees or bushes, & montane grasslands; more common at higher elevations (i.e., 2,000-3,000 m). Also found on wooded hillsides in mountainous regions. Generally seeks open areas on limestone slopes, near dry clay or loamy soil (found on some sandy islands in the Danube River delta). Often hides in rodent dens & small animal burrows.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly diurnal, but may be nocturnal during hot summer months. More active than most other vipers; can move rapidly. Hibernates in aggregated groups ("colonies") during winter months. Not aggressive; usually avoids humans. Seldom bites, even when bothered, but will bite if continuously molested. Ovoviviparous w/ usually 5-8 young/ litter (18 for one captive-reared female). Eats mainly beetles, grasshoppers, lizards & small rodents.

Venom Characteristics

Mildly hemotoxic. Rarely encountered by people in recent years. Rare cases of known human envenomation by this species have caused mainly local pain & swelling, followed by dizziness & nausea. Recovery is usually relatively rapid. No human fatalities reported, so far.

Vipera wagneri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Montivipera wagneri*, *Vipera wagneri albizona*, *Viperus wagneri*

Common Names: Wagner's viper, Wagners Bergotter, ocellated mountain viper

Description

Small, fairly stout-bodied viper, adults usually 30-40 cm long (max. 95 cm) w/ 23 keeled midbody dorsal scale rows. Body usually grayish w/ dorsal pattern of yellowish brown round blotches w/ dark borders on front & back. Head w/ 2 large dark blotches forming open "V-shaped" dorsal mark. Two isolated oblique spots on neck & dark narrow post-ocular stripe from eye to corner of mouth. Belly whitish, usually speckled w/ dark spots.



Habitat

Found mainly in rocky areas of high plateaus & mountain ranges, usually in moister, vegetated, fairly shaded North-facing slopes within overall "dry" regions. Occurs up to 3,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Little known about behavior; probably mainly nocturnal (or crepuscular) in warmer months, & diurnal in cool weather. Usually lethargic & slow-moving, but can be aggressive if suddenly disturbed or stepped on. When disturbed, may coil, hiss, & strike. Ovoviviparous w/ 4-8 young/ litter for some captured specimens. Eats mainly available small mammals, birds &/or lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known. Likely hemotoxic w/ hemorrhagic activity. Envenomation symptoms may include local swelling, tissue necrosis, nausea, vomiting, increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, & regional lymphadenitis. No known antivenom currently produced.

Vipera xanthina

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Identification

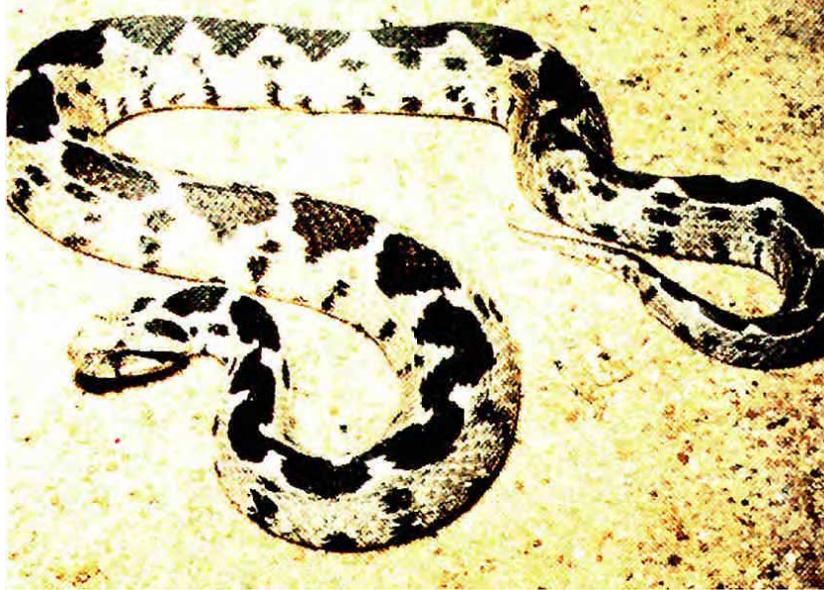
Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Daboia xanthina, Montiviper xanthina, Vipera bulgardaghica

Common Names: Bornmueller's viper, Ottoman viper, coastal viper, KleinasiatISChe Bergotter, Near-East viper, Berhuggorm, Bergotter

Description

Large, stout-bodied viper, adults usually 70-95 cm long (max. 135 cm). Body yellow, olive, or reddish-brown. Series of dark circular or rectangular spots along each flank. Pattern more vivid in males than females. Belly gray to yellowish, often w/ black or dark grayish mottling. Snout rounded & blunt. Tail slender, short, underside of tip may be yellow.



Habitat

Found in various habitats, including swamps, rocky hillsides, & open grassy areas w/ few bushes or trees. Most often found in areas w/ ample water, moisture, & vegetation. Often found in populated areas in yards, fields, irrigation ditches, & gardens. Found from near sea level to 2,500 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal, but active in the day during cooler months. Mainly terrestrial, but can climb into small trees & bushes. Lethargic & slow-moving, but can move rapidly & strike quickly. Not aggressive; avoids human confrontation, but easily agitated, & will defend itself if molested. Ovoviviparous w/ 2-15 young/litter in captivity. Mainly eats available mice, birds & lizards.

Venom Characteristics

Moderately potent hemotoxin & some neurotoxic factor(s). Envenomation causes sharp pain & local swelling, which may spread. Discoloration, blisters, & pus-filled or fluid-filled vesicles may appear within hours. Other symptoms may include dizziness, weakness, vomiting, & cold sweats.

Viridovipera gumprechtii

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trimeresurus gumprechtii*, *T. stejnegeri* (in part)

Common Names: Gumprecht's green pitviper

Description

Medium-to-large, fairly slender semi-arboreal pitviper, adults seldom >1 m long, w/ most dorsal scales keeled, & 2 upper front folding fangs. Body usually medium to dark greenish above, yellowish below, often w/ a very narrow pale (whitish) ventrolateral stripe along each side (may be indistinct). Prehensile tail mainly brownish or reddish-brown above, lighter below. Often confused w/ *V.* (formerly known as *Trimeresurus*) *stejnegeri*.

Habitat

Mainly found in montane forests up to 2,000+ m elevation in eastern & southeastern Asia. Most often encountered along margins of forest paths, clearings or streams.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal & semi-arboreal. Often awaits prey to ambush at edge of forest clearing, path or stream. Not reported, but probably ovoviviparous w/ <12 young/ litter; probably eats available small mammals, birds, frogs & lizards. Not usually aggressive but can strike quickly if disturbed.

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Difficult to identify, so may have bitten & envenomated humans in cases which were historically blamed on a closely related species, *V. stejnegeri*, from which this & 2 more species were very recently split. No specific antivenom is currently produced against this species.

Viridovipera medoensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trimeresurus medoensis*, *T. stejnegeri* (in part)

Common Names: Green bamboo leaf pitviper, Motuo bamboo pitviper

Description

Medium-sized slender pitviper, adults usually 65-67 cm long (max. about 75 cm) w/ 17 midbody dorsal rows of keeled scales. Usually green or bluish-green above w/ yellowish-white belly, 2-colored (red below, white above) ventrolateral stripe along both sides of the body in both sexes. Has a pair of movable, upper, front fangs & a loreal heat-detecting pit between the eye & nostril on each side of its head. Prehensile tail usually dull reddish-brown above.

Habitat

Found mainly in margins & along paths in seasonally wet sub-tropical forests of southern & southeastern Asia. Typically found in stands of bamboo and associated plants, often found near streams, at moderate elevations (up to 1200+ m).

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal & mainly nocturnal, but not well studied. Probably ovoviparous (litter size not reported, so far). Probably preys on available lizards, small mammals, birds & frogs (juveniles probably eat arthropods, too).

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Reports of human envenomations by this species are not well documented & may have been confused because this is one of 3 new species recently split from *V. stejnegeri* (formerly called *Trimeresurus stejnegeri*). No specific antivenom is currently being produced against this species.

Viridovipera stejnegeri

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trimeresurus gramineus formosensis*, *T. g. kodairai*, *T. gramineus*, *T. g. formosensis*, *T. g. kodairai*, *Trimeresurus stejnegeri*, *T. s. chenbihuii*, *T. s. kodairai*, *T. s. makii*, *T. s. stejnegeri*, *T. s. yunnanensis*, *Trimeresurus yunnanensis*, *Viridovipera yunnanensis*

Common Names: Chinese bamboo pitviper, Chinese green tree viper, Stejneger's bamboo viper, chenbihuii, Chen's bamboo pitviper, Formosan green tree pitviper, Stejnegers Bambusotter, Chinesische Bambusotter, bamboo pitviper

Description

Medium-sized, fairly stout, arboreal pitviper; adults usually 60-70 cm long (max. 100 cm). Body uniformly leaf-green to chartreuse-green; no markings except thin white, yellowish-white, or red-&-white (red below, white above) stripe along each side, usually 21 midbody dorsal rows of keeled scales. Belly pale green, prehensile tail terracotta or rust-colored above. Very similar in appearance to Pope's pitviper, *Trimeresurus popeorum*.



Habitat

Mainly found in montane forest areas, usually in bamboo thickets, bushes, & trees along water courses; found more frequently on hillsides than on level terrain, often in edges of agricultural areas. Occurs up to 2,845 m elevation. Most common in Cambodia, southern China, isolated sites in Myanmar & Thailand, & Vietnam; occurs but rarely in certain other southern Asian & southeastern Asian countries.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal (maybe semi-arboreal) & mainly nocturnal. Sluggish by day. Usually calm disposition, but strikes quickly if surprised or brushed against while resting in arboreal shelters. When threatened while on the ground, may coil & rapidly vibrate tail as a warning. Ovoviviparous, w/ usually 3-10 young/ litter. Eats mainly small frogs, lizards & small mammals.

Venom Characteristics

Mainly hemotoxic. Envenomation symptoms include severe local pain, oozing from fang marks, extensive local swelling, bruising, nausea, & vomiting. Many bites of humans in agricultural areas, or people who walk along narrow bamboo forest trails. Human fatalities recorded but not common.

Viridovipera vogeli

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: *Trimeresurus vogeli*, *Trimeresurus stejnegeri* (in part)

Common Names: Vogel's pitviper, bamboo pitviper

Description

Medium-sized slender pitviper, adults usually 65-70 cm long w/ usually 17 midbody rows of keeled dorsal scales. Body usually medium-green above, whitish below, w/ a narrow whitish ventrolateral stripe along each side (this may be 2-colored w/ reddish-brown below, whitish above). Has a pair of movable upper, front fangs & a loreal heat-detecting pit between eye & nostril on each side of its head. Prehensile tail usually brownish above.

Habitat

Mainly found in seasonally wet subtropical forests which include bamboo. Usually found by edges of clearings, paths, or streams at moderate elevations (up to 1,000+ m). Reported only from 4 Southeast Asian countries, so far.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly arboreal & mainly nocturnal, but not well studied. Probably ovoviviparous (litter size not reported, so far), Probably preys on available small animals like lizards, frogs, birds & small mammals (juveniles probably also eat available arthropods).

Venom Characteristics

Not well studied, but probably mainly hemotoxic. Reports of human envenomations by this species are not well documented, and may have been confused in past because this is one of 3 new species recently split from *V. stejnegeri* (formerly known as *Trimeresurus stejnegeri*). No specific antivenom is currently being produced against venom of this species.

Walterinnesia aegyptia

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Identification

Family: Elapidae

Scientific Names: *Atractaspis wilsoni*, *Naja morgani*, *Walterinnesia aegypti*

Common Names: Desert cobra, desert black snake, Innes' cobra, black snake, desert cobra, Innes' snake, Sinai desert cobra, happeter hashshahor, Schwarze Wusten-Kobra

Description

Medium-sized, moderately stout, desert cobra, adults usually 0.7-1.1 m long (max. 1.3 m). Body generally glossy black sometimes w/ brownish tinge; belly paler. Scales smooth, hood usually not apparent, head small, not distinct from neck.



Habitat

Various arid habitats, including open desert; but usually found at edges of desert, in oases, cultivated fields, gardens, irrigated areas, & around buildings. Also found in barren, rocky mountain hillsides & sandy desert w/ sparse bushes. Occurs in several Middle Eastern countries, in some places, up to 1,000 m elevation.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal; spends much time underground. Apparently has poor eyesight in daylight. Can be very aggressive. When molested, threatened, or provoked, will hiss violently & strike (generally w/ closed mouth). Can strike at a distance of 2/3 of its body length. Does not usually spread its hood, nor hold the front of its body up off the ground. Mainly eats desert lizards, but also available small mammals, amphibians & birds. Oviparous, clutch size not reported.

Venom Characteristics

Venom strongly neurotoxic, w/ some milder hemotoxic factors. Envenomation usually causes some combination of: local pain, swelling, fever, general weakness, headache, & vomiting. Human deaths from envenomations have been reported.

Zhaoermia mangshanensis

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Identification

Family: Viperidae

Scientific Names: Ermia mangshanensis, Trimeresurus mangshanensis

Common Names: Mangshan pitviper, Chinese montane forest pitviper, ironhead pitviper

Description

Large, fairly slender terrestrial pitviper, adults usually 1.0-1.5 m long (max. 1.7 m). Body medium yellow-green w/ irregular dark-brown dorsal saddle-markings & keeled dorsal scales. Belly lighter greenish, often w/ irregular darker brownish speckling. Has a pair of folding upper front fangs. Head broad, distinctly triangular if viewed from above.



Habitat

Found only in montane forests of southern Hunan Province, China; at 700-1,300 m elevation. Mainly reported from Mangshan, Nan Ling Mountains. Known natural geographic range is very limited.

Activity and Behavior

Mainly nocturnal or crepuscular, & mainly terrestrial, but often rests (basks in sun) on low, slanted tree trunks or nearby rocks partly covered w/ vegetation, often up to 1-5 m above ground. Not usually aggressive, but may "spit" venom when threatened. Oviparous w/ 13-21 eggs/ clutch reported. Mainly eats available rodents, frogs & insects.

Venom Characteristics

Not much known, but probably has mainly hemotoxic factors & possibly cytotoxic factors. Captive specimens known to sometimes "spit" venom at an aggressor. This is the only non-cobra snake species known to do that. Historical reports of human fatalities due to envenomation by this species are not well documented, but any pitviper this large could pose a significant risk to people. No specific antivenom is currently produced.