

Characteristics of Venomous Snake

- Elliptical pupil (Figure 7)
- Pit organ: The pit organ is located on each side of the head between the eye and nostril (Figure 1) It detects heat from small mammals and other prey
- The scales under the tail form only a single row (Figure 8)
- The head is distinctly wider than the neck (However, this is also true for many nonvenomous snakes)

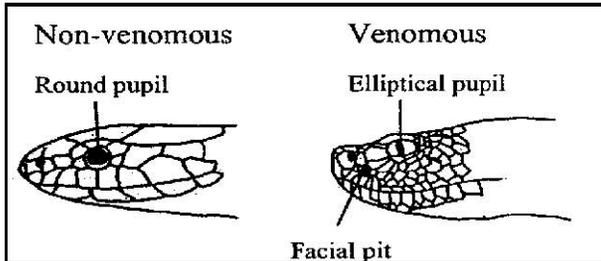


Figure 7. Facial characteristics of nonvenomous and venomous snakes of Virginia.

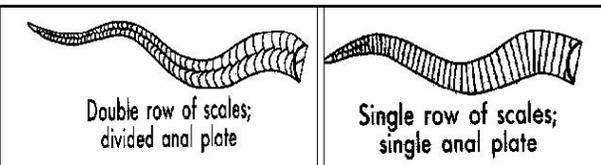


Figure 8. Undersides of tails of a nonvenomous and venomous snake.

Safety

- Wear long pants & hiking boots while in areas known to have snakes.
- Stay on hiking/designated trails.
- Avoid walking through dense piles of brush.
- Do not step over or move logs or rocks without checking for snakes first.
- Do not disturb any snakes you see. Most snakes will not strike unless provoked.
- If you are bitten by a snake seek medical attention immediately.
- DO NOT PANIC!!!

For any emergency, 1st call:
757-433-9111 (NASO/NALFF)

or

757-492-6911 (NASO DNA)

or

757-421-8000 (NSA NWA)

Report all wildlife incidences to your local Environmental Office, Safety Office, or Security Office.

Oceana Environmental and Natural Resources: 433-3461 or 433-2151.

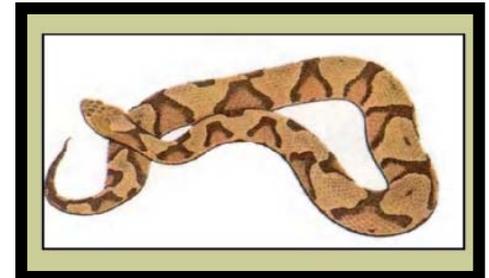
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Venomous Snakes of Naval Facilities in Southeastern Virginia



Canebrake Rattlesnake
(*Crotalus horridus*)



Figure 1. Canebrake Rattlesnake



Figure 2. Rattle of Canebrake. Shape of rattle and number of segments varies.

Description

- Black chevron-shaped markings on a dark yellow, gray or tan background color
- Orange or rust-brown stripe down the middle of the back
- Black tail with distinctive rattle
- Newborns look like adults, but rattle consists of only one segment

Size

Average length: 54 inches
Maximum length in Virginia: 67 inches

Remarks

This snake was listed as State Endangered in 1992, primarily due to habitat loss.

Copperhead
(*Agkistrodon contortrix*)



Figures 3, 4. Copperhead

Description

Chestnut to brown hourglass-shaped bands on a lighter brown to tan background color
Hourglass markings on the sides may not always match up along the back
Newborns and young have a bright yellow tail.

Size

Average length: 45.3 inches
Maximum length in Virginia: 48 inches

Remarks

This snake is often confused with a juvenile rat snake.

Cottonmouth
(*Agkistrodon piscivorus*)



Figures 5, 6. Cottonmouth

Description

Black, olive or brown bands on a lighter olive to gray background
Some individuals may appear to be all back in color, especially when out of the water
Newborns and young have a bright yellow tail.

Size

Average length: 51.8 inches
Maximum length in Virginia: 61 inches

Remarks

Habitats used by this snake include: streams, lakes, rivers and ditches. It is often confused with three common species of nonvenomous water snakes.