

# Know Florida's Venomous Snakes!

In Florida, there are 45 species of native snakes, but only six of them are venomous, and only four are found everywhere in the state. There are five species of "pit vipers" -- Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, Timber Rattlesnake, Pygmy Rattlesnake, Copperhead and Cottonmouth -- plus the brightly colored Coral Snake, a relative of the Cobras.

## Pygmy Rattlesnake



This tiny rattler has dark blotches, a rust colored line down the middle of his back, and a rattle that is so tiny it doesn't make a sound! It lives in natural wooded areas, but can sometimes be found in neighborhoods.

## Timber Rattlesnake



Timber Rattlers live in wooded areas where the ground is moist. They are tan with a rust color stripe and "V" shaped marks on their backs.

## Copperhead



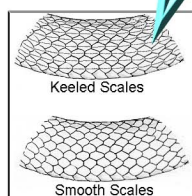
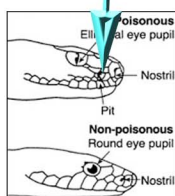
Like Water Moccasins, Copperheads spend most of their time near water. They are a pretty copper-brown color, with darker hourglass shaped marks across their backs.

### Did you know...

After a huge meal, snakes move slowly and could be eaten by hawks or other animals. Pit vipers' venom helps them digest food fast so they won't be in danger for a long time.

## Florida's Pit Vipers

- Pupils of eyes are vertical (like a cat)
- Blocky, triangle shaped head with a narrow neck
- Thick, heavy bodies
- Dark band from eye to corner of jaw
- Scales are rough looking, with ridges called 'keels'
- Heat sensing 'pit' between eye and nostril

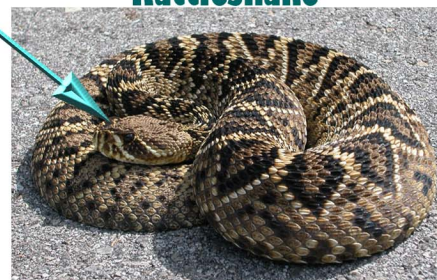


## Water Moccasin



Water Moccasins are also called "Cottonmouths," because they show their white mouth when threatened. These dark colored snakes may have dark, splotchy crossbands, and are usually found near water.

## Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake



These huge snakes like to hang out in dry places, like pine woods or golf courses. Diamondbacks have dark diamonds with cream colored edges on their backs. These snakes rattle loudly to warn you to give them lots of space!

## Where do venomous snakes live in Florida?

- Copperhead
- Timber Rattlesnake
- Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, Water Moccasin, Pygmy Rattlesnake & Coral Snake are found in all of Florida (except parts of the Florida Keys)

### Did you know...

In the U.S., there are more fatal lightning strikes and bee stings than snake bites!



# Florida's Coral Snakes

## Coral Snake



Coral Snakes like to hide under grass and leaves, so you don't see them very often. These snakes are brightly colored, warning predators that they are venomous.

-Some harmless snakes 'mimic' Coral Snakes

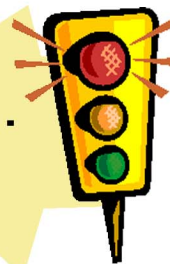
-Coral Snakes AND look-alikes have red, yellow/white and black bands

- Florida's Coral Snakes have RED bands touching YELLOW and the tip of the nose is black (mimics have red touching black)

## Scarlet Snake - NOT VENOMOUS!



**Remember!**  
**If red, then yellow -**  
**STOP!! Just like**  
**a stoplight!**



## Some Good Books on Florida's Snakes -

Florida's Fabulous Reptiles and Amphibians by Pete Carmichael and Winston Williams, World Publications, 2004.

A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America by Roger Conant and Joseph Collins, Houghton Mifflin Company, 3rd edition, 1998 (Peterson Field Guide Series).

Snakes of North America, Revised Edition: Eastern and Central Regions by Alan Tennant, Lone Star Books, 2003.

## Snake Info Online -

Recognizing Florida's Venomous Snakes by Steve Johnson and Martin Main, University of Florida EDIS Publication UW229. Available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UWW229>

Emergency Snakebite Action Plan by Steve Johnson and Martin Main, University of Florida EDIS Publication UW226. Available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW226>

"Black Snakes:" Identification and Ecology by Steve Johnson and Monica McGarrity, University of Florida EDIS Publication UW 251. Available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW251>

Florida Museum of Natural History's Online guide to Florida snakes:  
[www.flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/herpetology/FL-GUIDE/onlineguide.htm](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/herpetology/FL-GUIDE/onlineguide.htm)

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission snake page: [www.myfwc.com/critters/snakes.asp](http://www.myfwc.com/critters/snakes.asp)

Partners in Amphibians and Reptile Conservation (PARC): [www.parcplace.org/index.html](http://www.parcplace.org/index.html)