

# Venomous Snakes of the Southeast

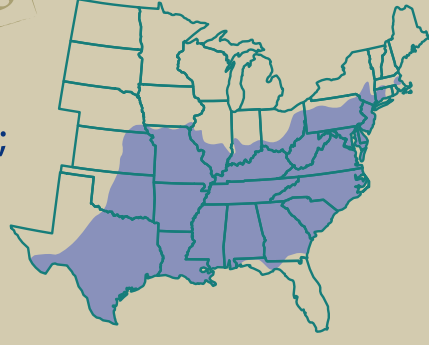


## Copperhead

*Agkistrodon contortrix*

**Size:** Medium-sized snake, usually 2 – 2 ½ feet long  
**Description:** Light brown to gray with darker hourglass-shaped bands; facial band indistinct; young with yellow-tipped tail  
**Habitat:** Lowland areas near rivers, streams, and swamps  
**Factoid:** This master of camouflage can be nearly invisible in leaf litter.

Venomous



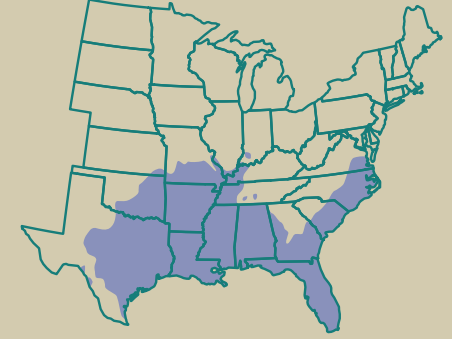
## Cottonmouth aka Water Moccasin

*Agkistrodon piscivorus*



juvenile

Venomous



**Size:** Medium to large-sized snake, usually 2 - 4 feet long  
**Description:** Young are bright reddish-brown and boldly marked with crossbands and dark facial band; tip of tail yellow; markings fade with age in adults – many are nearly uniform olive brown or black; often confused with harmless watersnakes  
**Habitat:** Edges of lakes, ponds, canals, and swamps  
**Factoid:** Cottonmouths show the cotton-white inside of their mouths when threatened.



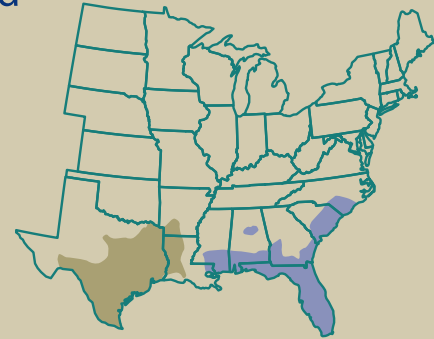
## Coral Snakes

*Micrurus fulvius & Micrurus tener*

**Size:** Slender, medium-sized snake, usually about 2 feet long  
**Description:** Two highly similar species—the Harlequin and Texas Coral Snakes (see map). Black snouts; tail ringed with black and yellow; red, yellow, and black alternating bands encircle body—red touching yellow.  
**Habitat:** Under ground, logs, or debris in a variety of natural habitats, occasionally seen in suburban areas  
**Factoid:** Coral Snakes are the only venomous snakes in the US that lay eggs; others give birth to live young.



To identify a Coral Snake,  
remember the stoplight phrase  
“Yellow, Red, STOP!”  
In Coral Snakes, yellow  
and red bands touch.



## Northern Watersnake

*Nerodia sipedon*

Harmless



## Banded Watersnake

*Nerodia fasciata*

Harmless



## Brown Watersnake

*Nerodia taxipilota*

Harmless



## Florida Green Watersnake

*Nerodia floridana*

Harmless

Not all snakes that live in the water  
are moccasins! Several species  
of harmless watersnakes look  
like the Cottonmouth.



## Scarlet Snake

*Cemophora coccinea*

Harmless



## Scarlet Kingsnake

*Lampropeltis triangulum*

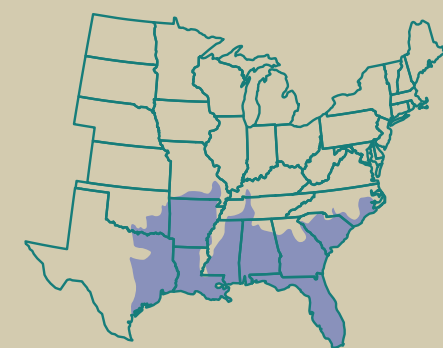
Harmless

Two snakes in the Southeast  
have color patterns that look  
like Coral Snakes. Unlike Coral  
Snakes, these “mimics” have  
red snouts and their red and  
yellow (or whitish) bands do  
not touch.

## Pygmy Rattlesnake

*Sistrurus miliarius*

**Size:** Small snake, usually 1 – 1 ½ feet long  
**Description:** Brown or light gray (can be reddish or very dark colored – see small image); dark splotches on back and sides; “dashed” rust colored line down back between blotches; dark facial band; very small rattle; young with yellow-tipped tail  
**Habitat:** Mainly wooded areas (pine, oak, or palm), often encountered in suburban areas  
**Factoid:** The tiny rattle on these snakes makes only a faint buzz.



Venomous

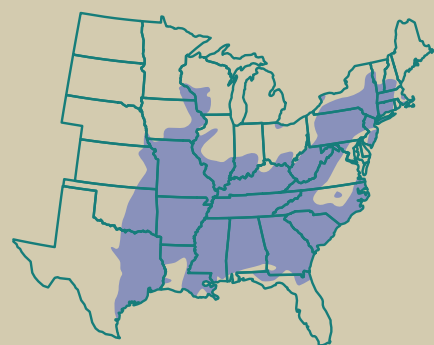


## Timber or Canebrake Rattlesnake

*Crotalus horridus*

**Size:** Large snake, usually 3 – 5 feet long  
**Description:** Yellow-tan (sometimes pinkish), brown, gray, or black with darker V-shaped “chevron” marks down the back; rust colored line down center of back; dark tail with large rattle; dark facial band  
**Habitat:** Heavily wooded areas (hardwoods or pines), cane thickets, lowlands, mountainous terrain  
**Factoid:** This snake is a rare find in suburban neighborhoods.

Venomous



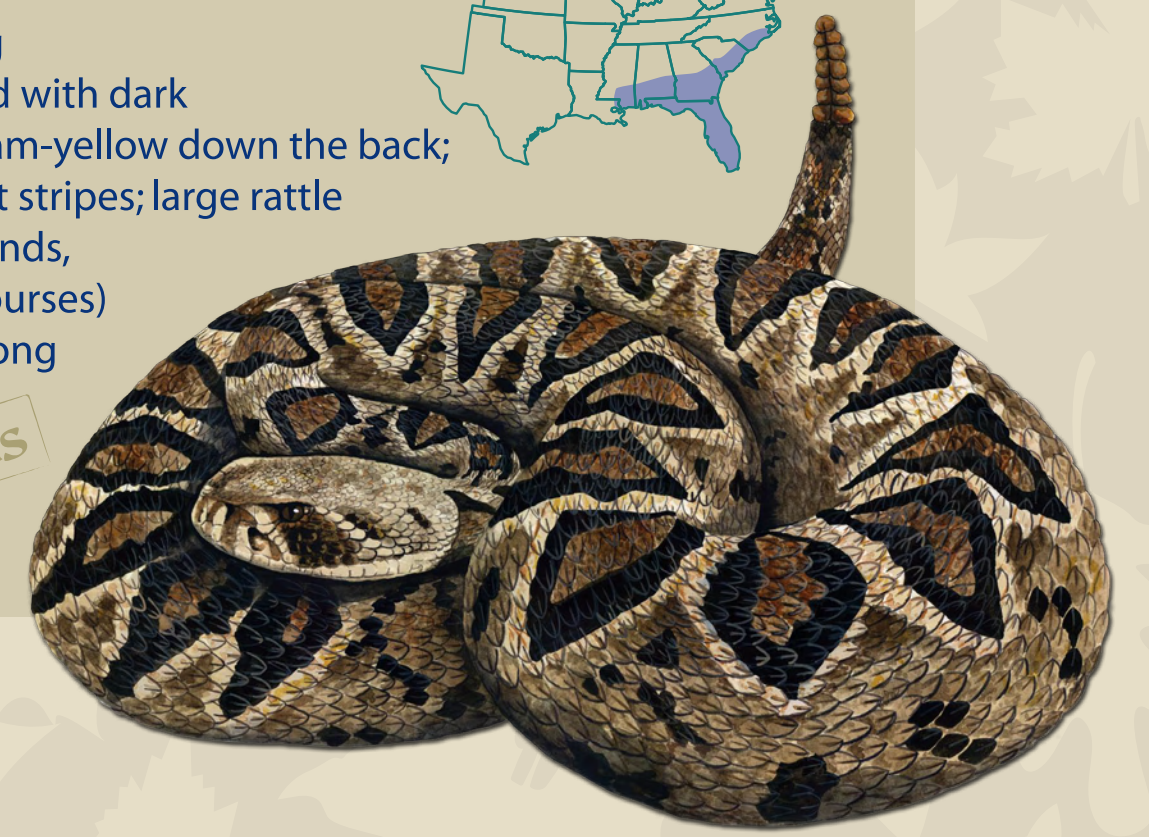
## Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake

*Crotalus adamanteus*

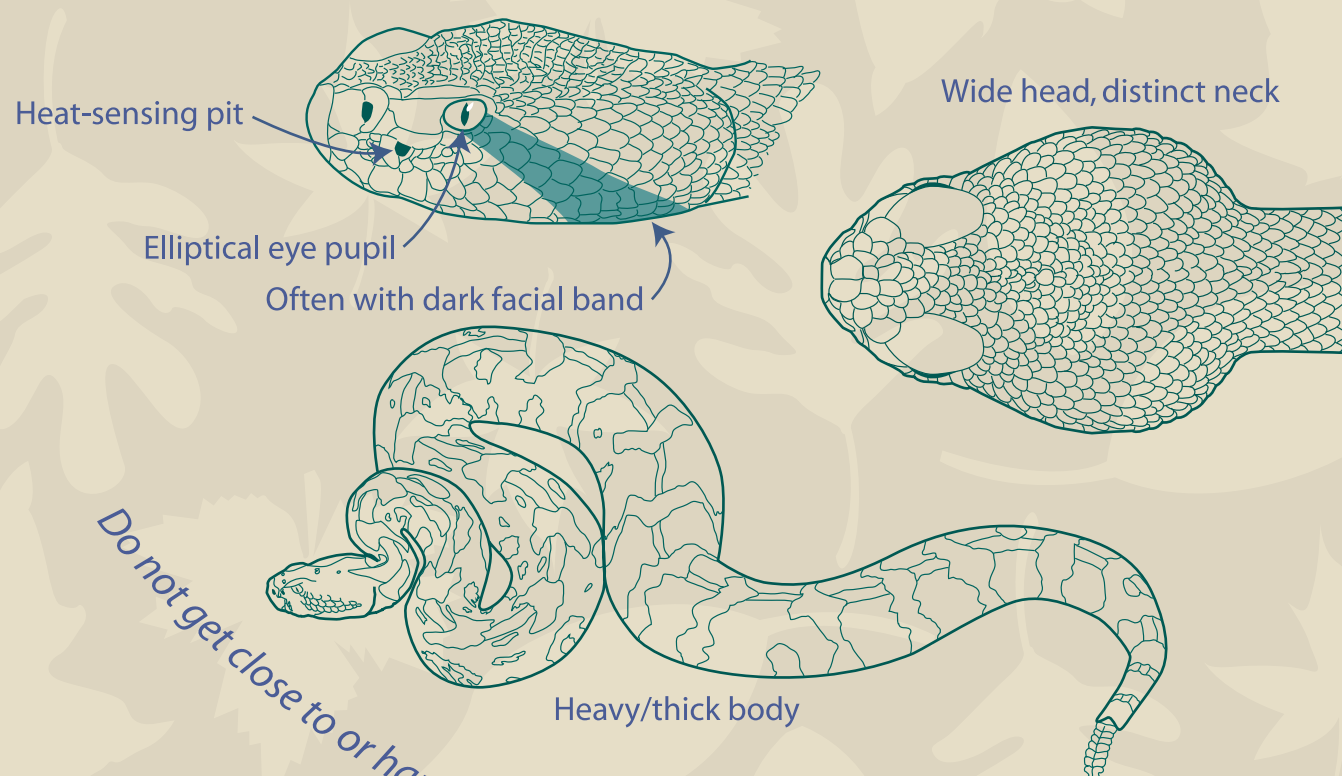
**Size:** Large snake, usually 3 – 6 feet long  
**Description:** Brown or gray background with dark diamond-shaped marks outlined in cream-yellow down the back; prominent facial band bordered by light stripes; large rattle  
**Habitat:** Palmetto flatwoods, dry pinelands, rarely in urban areas (sometimes golf courses)  
**Factoid:** The venom of this snake is among the most toxic of all US snakes.



Venomous



## Rattlesnakes and other pit vipers



Do not get close to or handle a venomous snake—  
live or “dead”—to check for these characteristics.

## A cellular phone is your best snake bite kit!

### How to respond to a venomous snake bite...

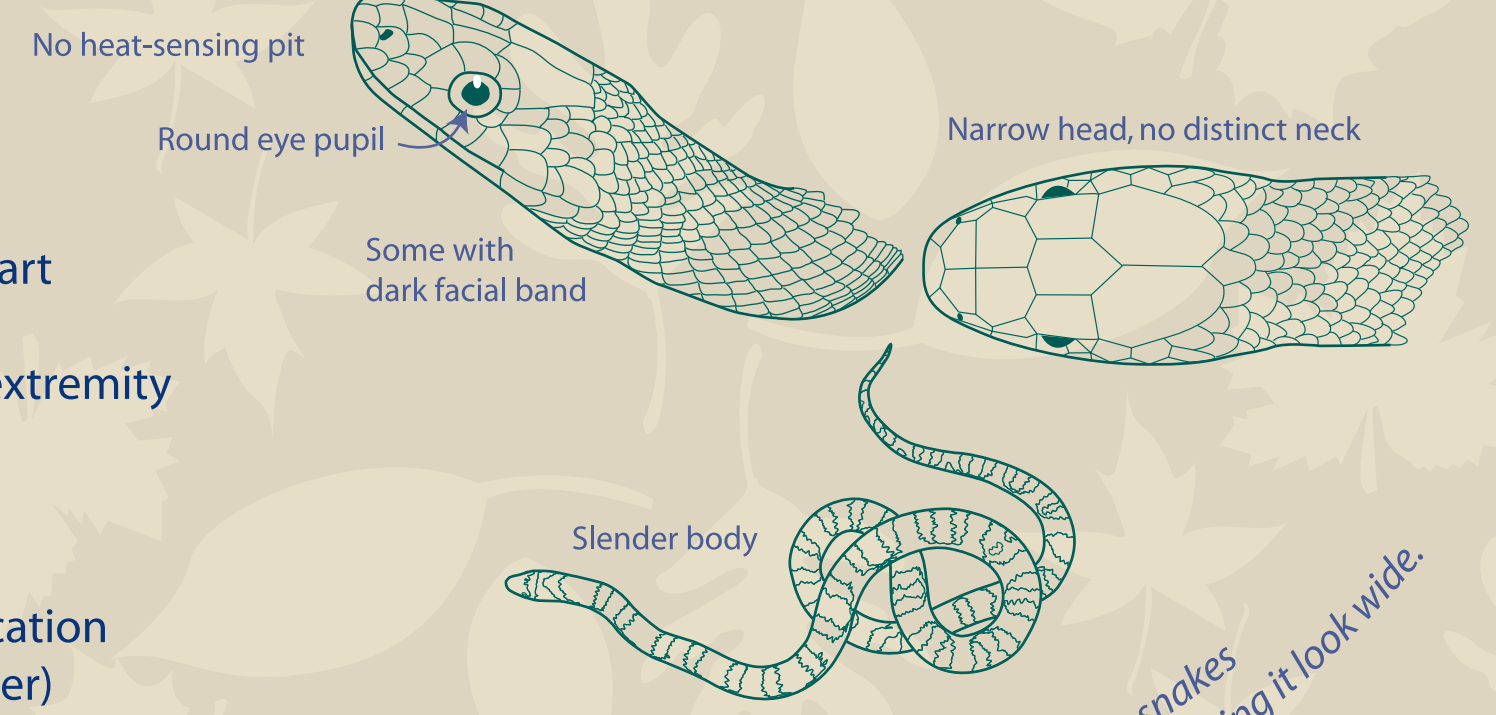
#### DO!

- Call 911 – get medical help immediately!
- Get the victim away from the snake
- Keep bitten extremity (arm, leg, finger) lower than victim’s heart
- Keep the victim warm and calm
- Remove bracelets, rings, watches or tight clothing on bitten extremity

#### DO NOT!

- Do not wait until symptoms develop to seek medical help!
- Do not attempt to capture or kill the snake to ensure identification
- Do not apply a tourniquet to a bitten extremity (arm, leg, finger)
- Do not make an “X” incision and try to suck out venom
- Do not apply ice or heat to the bite
- Do not handle a “dead” venomous snake

## Non-venomous snakes and Coral Snakes



When they feel threatened, some harmless snakes  
flatten their head, making it look wide.