

Научно-исследовательская работа

Иностранный язык

How to Distinguish a Venomous Snake?

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Introduction

It is important to be able to tell a venomous snake. Quick identification in an emergency can keep one safe and even save one's life. According to World Health Organization (WHO) data every year 5.8 million people are bitten by snakes. Half of them are venomous. Up to 138 thousand of people die of such bites. Even those who survive may become disabled.

Are there any easy hints to identify venomous snakes?

The aim of the research is:

- to discuss how to identify a venomous snake and to remain safe.

The tasks of the research are:

- to learn where venomous snakes live in saint-Petersburg and Moscow regions and when they are active;
- to speak of the species of venomous snakes and to identify the most obvious signs of venomous snakes;
- to explore the security measures of behavior with snakes and first medical aid after bites;
- to discuss if nonvenomous snakes can be kept as pets.

Main Part

1. The signs of venomous snakes

Venomous snakes in St. Petersburg and Moscow region are rather rare. They may include vipers and rat snakes.

Rat snakes are normally nonvenomous, but some species possess small amounts of venom. They are not dangerous for humans.

In the South of Russia one can meet rattlesnakes. They are highly venomous.

To tell a venomous snake from a nonvenomous makes one come close to the snake. Sometimes it is better to be safe than sorry. So, if it is not critical and you are all alone avoid such situations. Still, it is sometimes really important to distinguish a venomous snake. Hereby are some helpful and easy hints.

Venomous snakes have long and triangular heads while nonvenomous ones have narrow and bulbous heads. Venomous snakes have thin, black, vertical pupils (“cat eyes”). Nonvenomous snakes have round pupils. The eye-rule does not always work. Some venomous snakes have round eyes. For example, Black Mamba is a deadly venomous snake which lives in Africa and it has round pupils. However, for our region the eye-rule works.

Venomous snakes’ teeth are not uniform. They have two long teeth called fangs. Venomous snakes usually have flat or cylindrical tails. Nonvenomous snakes have short and blunt tails.

Venomous snakes have large belly scales. Nonvenomous snakes have small belly scales. Venomous snakes swim under water, while nonvenomous snakes keep close to the surface.

As to the snakes colouring there is an easy rhyme that helps: “Red and yellow kill a fellow. Red and black friend of Jack”. In other words, if a snake is red and yellow it is a venomous snake, if it is red and black it should be a nonvenomous one.

There is an exception to any rule. When it comes to identifying a venomous snake, this also works. Whenever dealing with snakes one should consider them all venomous and be very careful.

2. How to prevent bites

Snakes in our region are active from May to the end of September. They prefer to get out from their shelters in the evenings and early morning hours.

Common vipers (“the most Russian snake”) can be found in the forests, in swamps and on the bank of the rivers. They also live in the mountains. Vipers can settle in abandoned buildings. Venomous snake off-springs are venomous from their birth. Mice attract snakes. Knowing this information people can be aware where they can run across a venomous snake.

To protect themselves one needs to wear knee-high boots and thick loose pants; before stepping into any grass and bushes move a stick along it; watch where to step and where to sit when outdoors; not to leave one’s backpack or bag open in wild nature. A snake may get there and bite the owner. Do not put hands blindly down inside the backpacks and bags.

If run into a snake, one must keep still until it is gone, be patient. Snakes attack only a moving object.

3. First aid if bitten

There is some important information which may keep one safe or even save one’s life in an emergency if bitten by a snake.

In spring and late autumn venom is more toxic than in summer. The closer the bite is to the head, the more dangerous it is.

If bitten, remove all rings, bracelets and belts from the bitten limb.

Spray or apply antiseptic to the wound. Apply a pressure-pad over the bite. Immobilize the limb and the patient. Venom is a protein and can cause severe allergy. So, it is advisable to take one or two tablets of antihistamine medicine. The patient should drink as much water as possible. Get the patient to hospital as soon as possible. He or she needs to receive a specific antidote.

Never cut the bite. Never try to suck the venom. Do not give the patient any aspirin or other pain-killer because a bleeding can happen.

4. Can we keep snakes as pets?

Snakes are great pets. They do not need much care. Several species are often kept as pets. They include rat snakes, corn snakes and pythons.

Venomous snakes are not suitable as pets. They are too dangerous. Pet-snakes know and trust their owners. They do not show emotions like cats and dogs. They are extremely graceful and calming. Snakes never cause allergies. They are pretty quiet. As pets snakes can live up to 20 years. Pet-snakes can bring joy into your life!

Conclusion

Snake population is declining. Forests are cut down; roads and houses are built. Snakes have many enemies: owls, eagles, crows, foxes and hedgehogs. Snakes of our region are not deadly dangerous though can cause troubles. It is important to tell a venomous snake from a nonvenomous and know how to stay safe running into a venomous one.

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