

Snake Fact File



Name: Snakes; around 3,000 different species, 600 of which are venomous.

Diet: What a snake eats depends on its species and size. But a snake's menu can include: birds, mice, rats, snails, spiders, insects, worms, other snakes, fish, frogs, toads and rabbits

One snake, the Tentacled Snake eats aquatic plants and is the only known snake to eat vegetation.

Habitat: Can be found all over the planet in lots of different terrains, including: oceans, deserts and rainforests.

Stereotypes

Snakes are often thought to be slimy, sneaky and sly. Snakes are far from slimy, their scales are dry and do not feel slimy at all.

Myths

- Rat snakes are poisonous – FALSE. Rat snakes are non-poisonous snakes that eat rodents.
- Snakes drink milk – FALSE. Snakes drink water, not milk, as they are reptiles and have no association with milk.
- Snake charmers use the music of the flute to charm the snakes – FALSE. Snakes cannot hear the music made by the flute; they follow the movement of the flute and are tired out beforehand so they don't attack the charmer!

Facts

- Snakes' fangs are hollow, which allows them to inject the venom into their victim.
- The venom of a cobra can kill an elephant.
- The fastest land snake is the Black Mamba that lives in Africa. It can travel up to 12mph.
- Spitting cobras spray venom from their fangs, it can travel up to 3 metres away.
- Snakes' scales are made from keratin, a tough fibrous protein, which is the same substance that makes up our nails.
- The biggest snake is the Reticulated Python capable of growing up to 10.05 metres long (33 feet).
- The smallest snake is called the Thread Snake and is the size of a toothpick, reaching a maximum of 10 cm (4 inches) long.
- The venom of the Inland Taipan of Australia is so powerful it could kill 100 people in a single bite.
- Baby snakes can be more harmful than adult snakes, as they release a higher dose of venom than the adults.
- Some African cultures worshipped Rock Pythons and killing a python was a very serious crime.
- Scientists use snake venom to create anti-venom which helps treat people who have been bitten by a snake.
- Scientists test snake venom to see how it can help prevent heart attacks, strokes and even help those with cancer.