

# Herping in Rain – Should You or Not?



One snake that loves the rain – *T. wagleri* – Wagler's pit viper found during a heavy downpour in Southern Thailand.

Herping in rain is something that either makes sense for where your location is – or it doesn't. It's that simple.

One thing I take into consideration every night I have a herping excursion field trip planned is whether or not it was likely to rain – or whether it was raining currently. Keep in mind, the following applies to night herping – as that is when I go 99% of the time I plan a field herping trip.

Rain affects snakes in different ways. Some snakes you won't find out hunting prey on rainy nights. Others, you will. Still others seem to prefer the rain and you'll see them most often when it is raining, or has just finished.

## WHICH SNAKES CAN YOU FIND

# WHEN HERPING IN RAIN?

Here in Thailand and I guess that can be generalized to Southeast Asia wherever these snakes are present, the [reticulated pythons](#) can often be found in the middle of even a heavy rain. They just seem completely unaffected by rain – light or torrential, and they are on the move when it's raining – you can count on it. You can't necessarily count on seeing one, but if you road cruise enough on a rainy warm night – I think your chances of seeing a reticulated python are high – if the area holds them.



Another snake you'll find herping in the rain – *C. rhodostoma* – Malayan Pit Viper.

Another few snakes you'll see around here are the [Malayan Pit Viper](#), [Wagler's Pit Viper](#), and the [Brown-spotted Pit Viper](#). All of these pit vipers enjoy the very wet ground and humid air, and can both be spotted in a light rain. If it's a very heavy rain – you probably won't see them, as they retreat under some cover. You can be sure they'll come out as the rain slows or stops though – so a good time for herping for these snakes is just after a rain if you don't feel like herping in the rain. In general, the vipers don't mind water at all – and they will be out hunting during rain or wet conditions.

I tend to see a couple of cat-eyed snakes out during rain often. These are the [Green Cat Snake](#), [Dog-toothed Cat Snake](#), and the [Mangrove Cat Snake](#).

Because I see the above snakes regularly during and immediately after a rain, I switch gears to focus on them. There's really no point focusing on finding tree snakes sleeping if it's raining. Just like it's going to be a very hard herp to find a reticulated python in very dry ground and dry air conditions. They are there, some of them are moving around, but it's just nothing like the numbers of them which are active during the rain.

## **WHICH SNAKES WON'T YOU SEE DURING A RAIN?**

This is a tough question, because I can only go by memory. Many snakes that I have found when it was not raining at night – asleep in the trees and bushes, I cannot seem to find during a rain. These are snakes like the [whip snakes](#) and other tree snakes – [golden tree snake](#), [bronzebacks](#), and [rat snakes](#). Where do they go when it rains hard? I think they just head for thicker cover – so they're not getting hammered with big raindrops. Where I go looking for snakes is on the edge of the forest – where the wind and rain can come right in and smack a snake on the nose. During heavy rain, I think they are a bit deeper in the forest, where the raindrops cannot make it through at speed.

## **WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE HERPING IN THE RAIN MORE ENJOYABLE?**

**Here's a Couple of Tips for Herping in Rain:**

- Prepare for it! Rain hits us in Southeast Asia, pretty constantly and you need to be prepared by keeping a good waterproof bag (diving bag) handy in a backpack to access when it starts really pouring down. Have a bag that fits all electronics, or even your entire backpack for the fastest action.

- Bring a wide brimmed hat – and a plastic bag to put around the hat before you put it on your head. Make sure the hole of the bag is under the hat. Just this little tip can keep your head mostly dry – which helps a lot.
- Wear comfortable sports (running) shoes. There's little sense wearing boots when it's raining hard because your feet are going to get wet regardless. If they're not wet from the rain, they'll get wet from sweat as you tuck your pants into them to keep the rain out. You really can't win. Unless you're walking through high grass – forget about rubber boots.
- 40 Thai Baht rain panchos you can buy in every 7-11. I have a couple of these, they tear easily but there is nothing lighter in weight than these.