

Photos of Common

# THAILAND SNAKES



VERN LOVIC - THAILANDSNAKES.COM

# INTRODUCTION



## ***Welcome!***

Now that you've picked up this free ebook, share it with your friends. You can view it on almost any computer, smart phone, or tablet. It is available at the Apple iTunes store (free) and in PDF format at [ThailandSnakes.com/ebook/](http://ThailandSnakes.com/ebook/). This book covers what we believe to be the most common terrestrial (land-based) and freshwater snakes in Thailand, those you are likely to see - if you see any at all. We wrote this book to help educate the public and to hopefully save a few snakes from the shovel or machete.

As you view the photos within, keep in mind that there are albino (no melanin) and melanistic (abundance of melanin) snakes that will not exhibit the same colors as most snakes of the species. Albino snakes can be pure white, or mostly white with a different colored pattern. Melanistic snakes are very dark, even solid black. So, you might see a white snake with a yellow pattern that looks exactly like the deadly Russell's viper (*Daboia russellii siamensis*) - but the color is way off because it's albino. It is still a deadly snake.

We will release FREE UPDATES to this book in the future. If you haven't signed up to be notified of updates - you won't get them. [Sign Up for Free Book Updates and Newsletter HERE](#) (click red link) >

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## **SNAKE BITE?**

Steps to take in the case of snake bite falls outside the scope of this ebook. Get to a hospital quickly. We have another book just released which tells you exactly what to do in case of a snake bite. The name of the book is, "IS THAT SNAKE IN YOUR HOUSE DANGEROUS? Identify Deadly Thaiand Snakes In Under 5 Minutes! You Can Find it [HERE](#) >

If you live in Thailand, or visit frequently, consider joining us at [ThailandSnakes.com](http://ThailandSnakes.com) and [Facebook.com/ThailandSnakes](https://www.facebook.com/ThailandSnakes) for ongoing information about Thailand's snakes.

*Cheers!*

Vern Lovic

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**Disclaimer:** Great care was taken to ensure the information in this guide is accurate, but mistakes happen. If you find something inaccurate, please write Vern Lovic at [info@ThailandSnakes.com](mailto:info@ThailandSnakes.com).

We cannot be responsible for readers' inaccuracy of identifying snakes found on the pages here. There are many variables that go into identifying a snake properly, and even trained snake enthusiasts and experts can make mistakes. Do not use this guide to help you decide whether it is safe to get close to, touch, pick up, handle, catch, or aggravate a snake you find in Thailand. Leave snakes alone, stay outside of striking or spitting distance (4-5 meters minimum) and you will likely have no problem with snakes.

Some snakes found in Thailand are capable of serious bites and envenomation, some are potentially deadly. Do not touch any snake in Thailand, and give them their space, and you will likely have no problem with snakes in the country. Author cannot be held liable for any injuries sustained as a result of coming into contact with any snake in Thailand.

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# RACERS AND RAT SNAKES



Rat snakes are non-venomous, have no fangs, but are known to bite frequently. They do have teeth! They are diurnal (active by day) and generally inhabit trash areas, high grass, trees, caves, and thick brush. These snakes are very common, and yet you will probably not see one during your stay in Thailand.



• *Coelognathus radiata* •

Characteristics

1. Very common, active by day on ground.
2. Grows up to 230 cm. long, and wrist thick.
3. Non-venomous, but quick to bite. These snakes have a lot of energy and are fast moving on the ground.
4. Eats rodents, birds, lizards.
5. Colors - yellow, orange, brown primarily with checkered white/black pattern on neck.



## Copperheaded Racer / Radiated Rat Snake

These are very common snakes across Thailand. We usually find them crossing the roads, otherwise they are very stealthy and hard to find.

These snakes have amazing striking ability and their double-s neck pattern is characteristic of this snake before striking.

The Malayan racer, *Coelognathus flavolineatus*, (next page) is very similar to this snake, but is much darker brown over the body and found in Southern Thailand.

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Malayan Racer / Black Copper Rat Snake - *Coelognathus flavolineatus*

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• *Ptyas korros* •

### Characteristics

1. **Very common, active by day on ground, very fast moving.**
2. **Grows up to 2.5 meters long and 3 fingers thick.**
3. **Non-venomous, no fangs, but quick to bite. Very fast striker.**
4. **Eats rodents, lizards, frogs, other small animals.**
5. **Colors - black or some shade of grey. May have some vague light bands on body. Juveniles can be brown with light bands across the body.**



## Indo-Chinese Rat Snake

This is one of the most commonly seen snakes in Thailand. They are active on the ground during the daylight hours, even on very hot days with full sunshine.

This rat snake is very nervous and moves its head in short little twitches that is different from most snakes.

This snake is able to strike from just about any position, so don't look for it pulling back into a double-S like the Radiated Rat Snake on the previous page. Be ready for a strike any time.

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• *Ptyas mucosa* •

### Characteristics

1. Common and active by day on ground usually, sometimes trees or rock faces.
2. Grows up to 3.2 meters long and wrist to forearm thick.
3. Non-venomous, but bites often.
4. Rat and rodent eater primarily. Also occasionally eats other snakes.
5. Colors - brown, grey, yellow. Light banding on neck and body which turns to dark bands toward the tail. One way to distinguish this snake from *Ptyas carinatus* is the well-defined tail bands. Another way is the dark lines on the lower jaw.



## Oriental Rat Snake

This is a large rat snake that can be very intimidating because it is long, thick, and has a big head.

These are not nearly as common as some of the other rat snakes, in fact here in Krabi in the south, I've not seen one of these snakes. My friend in Hua-Hin, just a few hours north, has seen and caught a couple of them.

This snake is sometimes mistakenly identified as a king cobra because it can grow to 3+ meters and has the general look of a medium-sized king.

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• *Gonyosoma oxycephalum* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active by day usually in trees and bushes, but I've caught them occasionally on the ground.
2. Grows up to 240 cm. long and wrist thick.
3. Non-venomous and doesn't bite much.
4. Bird, rodent, and lizard eater.
5. Colors - always this brilliant green unless in shed. Blue or blue-green eyes and blue and black tongue. Quite stunning colors. Tail can be shade of red, orange, pink, or grey.



## Red-tailed Racer

These are really beautiful snakes that are usually rather tame after a bit of gentle handling. The eyes are green or blue tinted and their tongue is black with bright blue.

These snakes are great climbers and can sometimes be found moving slowly through the trees looking for birds. They are difficult to see

and you likely won't see one in Thailand, even if you're looking for specifically for them.

When agitated they flare their necks vertically, increasing their apparent thickness two-fold.

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• *Orthriophis taeniurus ridleyi* •

### Characteristics

1. **Common in caves, active by day or night in caves, on trees, or on the ground. Sometimes found on limestone karst formations.**
2. **Grows up to 2.5 meters long and wrist thick.**
3. **Non-venomous, but quick to bite. Lots of energy.**
4. **Bat and bird eaters. They hang from cave walls and catch bats in mid-air.**
5. **Colors - white, tan, yellow, black. The photo shown is accurate, they don't have much color variation.**



## Ridley's Racer (Cave Racer)

These racers are beautiful snakes that do remarkable things. I first saw one of these snakes when it was pointed out to me by a Buddhist monk as he showed me through a cave at a remote temple I wandered into. The snake was laying quietly on a ledge and didn't move while I took photos and video. Since then I've found a number of them in caves in Southern Thailand.

I once got a call to remove three of them at a wilderness bungalow. They were inside the restroom and coiled around the pipes of the sink.

Note, I did not catch the snake like this - someone else called me after it was caught.

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• *Ptyas carinatus* •

### Characteristics

1. **Common and active by day on ground.**
2. **The giant of the rat snakes - can reach 3.5 to almost 4 meters in length and forearm thick.**
3. **Non-venomous, but quick to bite and can strike for 15-minutes straight before it tires. Difficult to handle!**
4. **Rat and rodent eater primarily, though probably also eats other snakes as well as lizards, birds, and frogs.**
5. **Colors - very dark grey or black. A diagonal graph pattern toward and on tail.**



## Keeled Rat Snake

This species is my favorite rat snake to catch without a snake hook or tongs. They have endless energy to strike, and each time it is a test of wills to finally tail it and lift it up for photos.

This snake can grow to enormous length and is often misidentified as a king cobra because the length, thickness, color and patterns are all very

similar. The one major difference you can notice quickly is how fast this snake will get away, versus the king cobra - which might ignore you entirely, or just crawl away very slowly, conserving energy.

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# TREE SNAKES



Tree snakes are thin and excellent climbers. They can climb almost smooth walls by wedging themselves in the corner.

Thailand has a lot of different species of tree-dwelling snakes, but we'll only cover the most common here. Photo right © 2014 Alex Bell.



• *Chrysopelea ornata* •

Characteristics

1. Very common, active by day or in the trees or on ground.
2. Grows up to 130 cm. and 2 fingers thick.
3. Mildly venomous, but will not affect humans. Very quick to bite.
4. Eats frogs, lizards, birds, and especially seems to have a taste for tokay geckos.
5. Colors - green and black, or yellow and black checkered pattern. If red pattern on top - it's *Chrysopelea paradisi* - a different species, but basically same snake. Photo on next page.



## Golden Tree Snake

These are very common snakes in Thailand. If you see any snake during your visit, this will probably be the one. A high portion of identification requests I get at [ThailandSnakes.com](http://ThailandSnakes.com) comes from people that saw this snake.

This snake can flatten the body and glide through the air a bit. They sometimes jump from

a hundred feet up a tree. These are probably the fastest tree climbing snakes in Thailand. Try to catch one and see!

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The paradise tree snake (*Chrysopelea paradisi*) is basically the same snake as *Chrysopelea ornata* but with an orange or red pattern on the vertebral area.

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• *Ahaetulla prasina* •

### Characteristics

1. **Very common, active by day in the trees or on ground.**
2. **Grows to 2 meters and only as thick as a small finger.**
3. **Mildly venomous, but venom doesn't affect humans. Bites fairly frequently but adjusts to handling quickly.**
4. **Eats lizards, frogs, and other small animals.**
5. **Colors - green, yellow, grey phases.**



## Oriental Whip Snake

The photo above shows the green phase of this snake. There are a number of different phases including - green, yellow, and grey. There are two other snakes that look very similar to *A. prasina*, they are the *Ahaetulla mycterizans* (Malayan whip snake) and the *Ahaetulla fasciolata* (Speckle-headed whip snake).

These snakes are excellent climbers, and they can be found lounging around on trees waiting for a bird to land. At night they sleep in loose loops high in palm trees or other trees in a place without leaves where they are easily seen.

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Here is the yellow phase of *Ahaetulla prasina*. There is also a grey phase. The green whip snakes are the most common.

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• *Dendrelaphis pictus* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active by day in the trees, bushes, or on ground.
2. Grow to 140 cm. and 1 finger thick.
3. Non-venomous and very quick to bite.
4. Eat frogs, lizards, birds, and other small animals.
5. Colors - there are 6 species in Thailand, with most looking similar to the snake shown in this photo.



## Common Bronzeback Snake

I first saw a bronzeback snake as it climbed over our 2 meter concrete wall surrounding our backyard in Surat Thani. When it hit the ground it glided effortlessly over to grab a big frog on the lawn. After it swallowed it, I went and got a couple photos before it flew back up the wall and over.

These are very fast climbing snakes, and they seem to be able to grab onto and climb even relatively smooth surfaces.

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# CAT-EYED SNAKES



The genus "*Boiga*" has some interesting snakes I find in Thailand on a regular basis. They are basically tree-dwellers (arboreal) and they can get over 2 meters in length. They are some of the most beautiful snakes Thailand has, and they are not deadly to humans, so all in all - a great snake for enthusiasts to find in the wild. Photo right © 2014 Tom Charlton.



• *Boiga cyanea* •

### Characteristics

1. **Common, active at night in the trees and on ground.**
2. **Grows up to 190 cm. long and 2-3 fingers thick.**
3. **Mildly venomous and possibly capable of envenomation with some detrimental effects if able to chew venom into bite-site.**
4. **Eats birds, eggs, geckos, and lizards primarily.**
5. **Colors - green with a very light checkered pattern over the body. Juveniles are brown or red-bodied with a green head - quite different from adults!**



## Green Cat Snake

Green cat snakes are generally not biters when handled correctly. They are one of the most mild of the cat-eyed snakes.

I find these snakes late at night - around midnight or after usually. I have found them in the trees and even on my front porch as they reached up to the windows to try to grab geckos from the window screens.

These snakes generally move slowly and are not very bothered by seeing human beings. They are excellent climbers and spend daytime sleeping in the trees.

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EcoAnimalEncounters.co.uk

• *Boiga dendrophila* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active at night moving from the trees to the ground and water to find prey.
2. Grows to 2.5 meters long and wrist thick.
3. Mild venom, but some of these snakes have caused severe reaction in some individuals. Best not to hand-hold without thick gloves.
4. Eats birds, eggs, and other small animals.
5. Colors - black with yellow bands. The color doesn't deviate from the photo shown.



## Mangrove Cat Snake

These are beautiful snakes that bite often and have a lot of energy when first caught. After a period some lose their proclivity for biting.

These snakes are found during the daytime sleeping in palm trees near water for the most part. At night they can be seen swimming in streams and lakes, looking for frogs or other animals - possibly even other snakes.

One of the most stunning snakes in Thailand.

I've been bitten, and I've seen at least a dozen bites from this species. None were medically significant, but the potential exists for rather severe envenomation.

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• *Boiga cynodon* •

### Characteristics

1. Fairly common snakes near streams and lakes, active by night moving from the trees to the ground in search of prey.
2. Grows to 2.8 meters long and wrist thick.
3. Mildly venomous, and prone to strike when first handled.
4. Eats birds and eggs, but are opportunistic and will eat lizards, frogs, and geckos.
5. Colors - There is a brown phase, pink phase, and melanistic phase of this snake - all have similar patterns.



## Dog-toothed Cat Snake

Cat snakes can grow large, and they have impressive colors and patterns. Bird owners in Thailand that keep their birds in cages hung outside their homes sometimes find a *Boiga cynodon* feasting on their expensive pet birds.

One way to find these, and other snakes that feed on birds and eggs is to listen for birds

squawking loudly - it could mean a snake is attacking their nest.

These snakes get their name from vertical pupils that resemble cat eyes. The snake pictured is rather melanistic.

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• *Boiga multomaculata* •

### Characteristics

1. Common across Thailand, active at night in the trees and on the ground.
2. Grows up to 190 cm. long and wrist thick.
3. Mildly venomous and not usually quick to bite.
4. Bird and egg eater primarily, but preys on most small animals in the rainforest.
5. Colors - black, grey and white, brown, dark brown.



## Many-spotted Cat Snake

This cat snake is sometimes confused with the deadly Russell's viper, which has a very similar pattern of circles, and the color is about the same. The main difference is body type. The cat snakes are long and thin, tapering down to a fine tail. Russell's vipers are thick with a large head. Juveniles and hatchlings are quite hard to distinguish.

These cat snakes are found in the trees, or on their way down from the trees at night to search for prey on the ground. The many-spotted cat snake is rather common in some areas.

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# KEELBACKS

Keelback snakes are usually found very close to water. There are a couple of keelbacks featured in this non-venomous keelback section, and a couple more in the venomous section. The snakes listed here, though not known to be venomous and capable of inflicting serious bites, should be given a wide berth and not caught or handled.

Snakes with rear-fangs have venom, though it is more difficult for them to bite humans and envenomate than front-fanged snakes. When rear-fanged snakes do get a good bite and they are allowed to chew the venom into the wound, serious envenomation can take place from snakes that are not known by the literature to be dangerously venomous. This is what happened with the red-necked keelback (featured later in the book). So, do be careful with all snakes, especially those with front and rear fangs.

• *Xenochrophis flavipunctatus* •

### Characteristics

1. Common and active by day along the ground.
2. Grows to 120 cm. long and 2-3 fingers thick.
3. Not dangerous venom for humans, but this snake bites often and strongly if handled. This snake flares the neck like a cobra hood when aggravated.
4. Eats all sorts of small animals.
5. Colors - yellow to dark brown with checkered pattern.



## Common Keelback

Though these are common snakes, I don't see them much here in Krabi province in the south. I've found only four, and all of them were crossing concrete or dirt roads.

These snakes have an interesting way of fleeing a threat - they will jump forward over and over. The effect is that the snake appears to be like a rolling wheel. Quite amazing to see it in action.

One time I saw this happen from 80 meters away down a road. I knew which snake it was, though I could hardly tell it was a snake. A man was nearby trying to hit it with a stick.

*Xenochrophis piscator* strongly resembles this snake in appearance and behavior.

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• *Amphiesma stolatum* •

### Characteristics

1. **Common and active by day on the ground.**
2. **Grows to around 70 cm. and 1 finger thick.**
3. **Not known to be dangerous to humans. These snakes may bite until comfortable being handheld.**
4. **Eats many different small animals, predominantly frogs and toads.**
5. **Colors - multicolored with checkered pattern. Includes black, white, blue, green, greys, and possibly more.**



## Striped Keelback

These snakes are found primarily in the north and northeast parts of Thailand. I found one on the road in the morning on my way to a Buddhist temple in Ubon Ratchathani. When I stopped the motorbike and looked down, it was frantically trying to get away, but couldn't. One of its teeth was stuck on a road-kill frog it was trying to eat. As I got off the bike, it was able to free itself and disappear into the rice fields.

These are quite common and intricately patterned snakes that eat just about anything they can find. Striped keelbacks are beautiful to see, I wish there were some of these snakes down in the south!

© 2014 Jonathan Fasman.

• *Plagiopholis nuchalis* •

### Characteristics

1. Common in north and northeastern Thailand, active by day on the ground.
2. Grows up to 50 cm. long and 2-3 fingers thick.
3. Not known to be dangerous to humans.
4. Eats primarily earthworms, but probably other prey as well.
5. Colors - The pattern is distinct. The colors can be orange, shades of red - including pink, brown, black, and yellow.



## Assamese Mountain Snake

Beautiful snakes we don't see here in the south at all. These snakes are very common in the Chiang Mai area. I get plenty of requests to identify these snakes because they flatten their necks into a hood like a cobra - which scares people quite a bit. You can see in this image, it looks quite a bit like a cobra.

There is another snake that nearly indistinguishable from this one - it is *Pseudoxenodon macrops*, the "Big-eyed mountain keelback." Very similar pattern, colors, and behavior - but it reaches 120 cm. in length.

© 2014 Dave Sargeant -  
NorthThailandBirding.com.

• *Xenochrophis trianguligerus* •

Characteristics

1. Common around water and streams. Active day and night in or around freshwater.
2. Grows to about 120 cm. and 1 finger thick.
3. Thought to be harmless to humans.
4. Eats small animals found on the ground and in water - especially frogs, fish, geckos and lizards.
5. Colors - A multitude of colors including black, yellow, green, orange, pink, red.



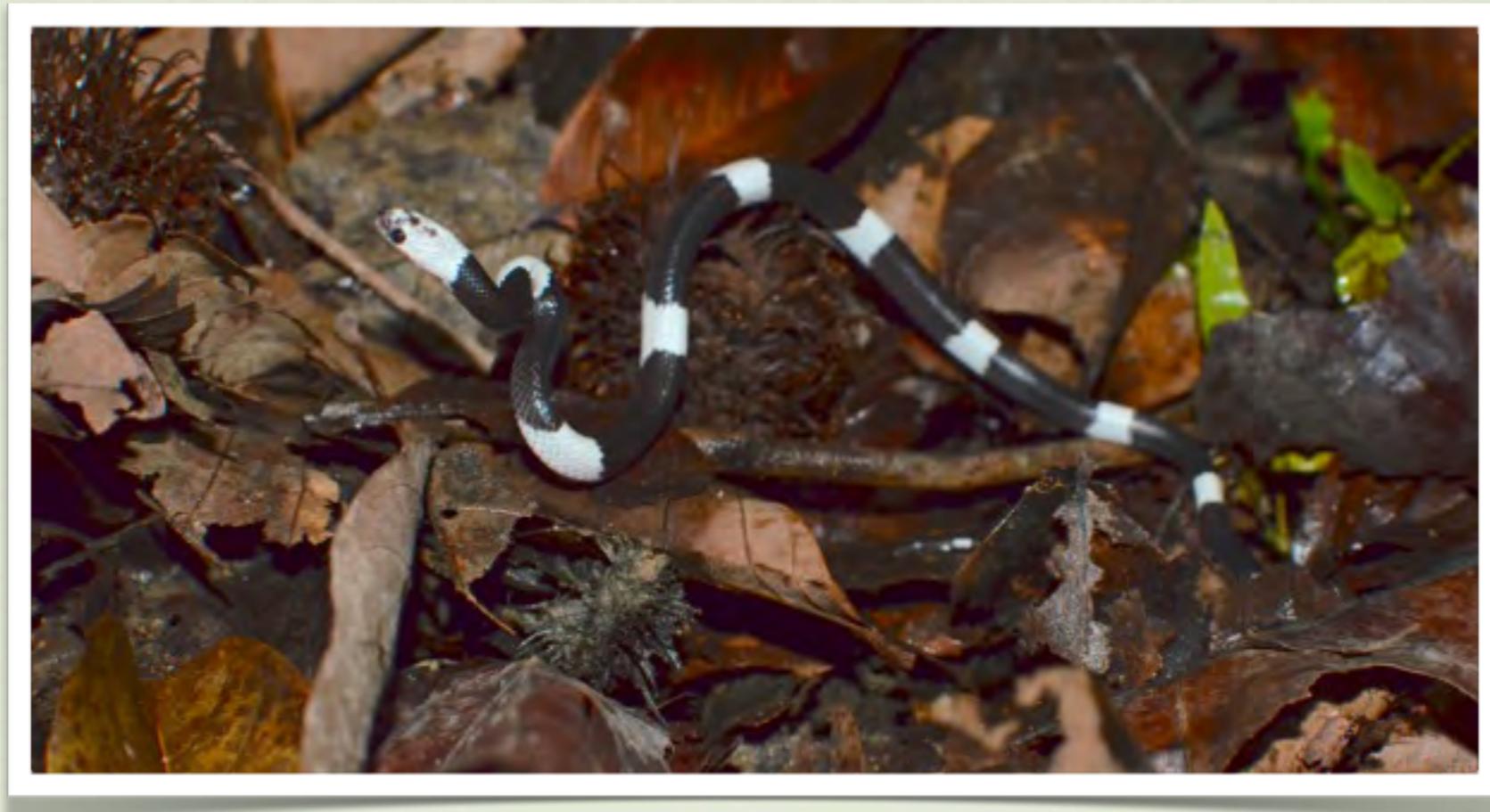
## Triangle Keelback

I have found a number of these beautiful snakes in Southern Thailand over the years. Invariably they are found near or in water where they sit absolutely still waiting for fish or frogs to come close enough to catch. The triangle keelback will flee immediately if they see humans, so they are easy for us to see at night or during the day. I often find these snakes at night.

The snake in this photo was in the living room of a wilderness bungalow, behind the couch on the floor.

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# WOLF AND BRIDLE SNAKES



Wolf and bridle snakes are primarily ground dwelling snakes with thin, tapered bodies that are active at night on the ground, and sometimes climbing on walls and other structure. They are non-venomous and rather easy to find because they are quite active and cover some distance hunting for prey.

• *Lycodon capucinus* •

Characteristics

1. **Very common around homes and in dwellings. Active by night, usually on the ground.**
2. **Grows up to 75 cm. and 1 finger thick.**
3. **Harmless for humans, and not really an active biting snake.**
4. **Eats geckos, skinks, frogs, and other small lizards primarily.**
5. **Colors - brown or black with off-white pattern as shown.**



## Common Wolf Snake

I have found many of these wolf snakes over the years, and I have requests to identify them from visitors and expats living in Thailand constantly.

They are very common in certain places, around bungalows and on porches are where I usually find them the most.

Occasionally they are found up in the rafters of homes, and in the beams across the ceiling as they search for geckos.

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• *Lycodon laoensis* •

### Characteristics

1. **Very common and active at night usually on the ground, but also within dwellings - especially wilderness bungalows.**
2. **Grows up to about 50 cm. long and about 1 finger thick.**
3. **Not dangerous to humans, but they are quick to bite, striking almost randomly in the air. Horrible aim!**
4. **Lizard, skink, gecko, and other small animal eater.**
5. **Colors - black or brown with yellow bands, sometimes some white bands.**



## Laotian Wolf Snake

These are very common snakes that I find often during the night as they crawl through leaves on the ground looking for small lizards, worms, and geckos.

Laotian wolf snakes have a habit of showing up inside bungalows where tourists are sleeping. I have had reports of them in the ceiling, on the walls, behind doors, and in beds. Hopefully, with

this guide we can alleviate some of the fear of snakes people in Thailand have! Most of the snakes you see will not be venomous, and even if they are, they will not hurt you as long as you keep your distance.

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• *Lycodon subcinctus* •

### Characteristics

1. Somewhat common and active at night usually in the leaves on the ground.
2. Grows to about 120 cm. long and 1 finger in thickness.
3. Harmless for humans, but a real possibility exists of misidentifying this snake as a Malayan krait - which has a similar pattern.
4. Eats geckos and skinks primarily.
5. Colors - black with white head and white bands which are thinner than the black sections. Color and pattern same as photo shown. Adults lose white bands and may be solid black.



## Malayan Banded Wolf Snake

These wolf snakes are easy to mistake for the Malayan krait, and every time I see one, there is a moment where I am unsure and I refuse to touch it. These snakes are also found in the same area that I frequently find the Malayan kraits, so I always give myself a minute to come to 100% conclusion which snake it is before I attempt to handle it.

These are some really beautiful snakes, the black and white bands are well-defined and just after shed, rather stunning.

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• *Dryocalamus subannulatus* •

Characteristics

1. Fairly common and active at night on the ground, or climbing trees or structures.
2. Grows to about 50 cm. long and 1 finger thick.
3. Not dangerous to humans, and bite occasionally.
4. Eats lizards, geckos, and other small animals.
5. Colors - brown or black with white or off-white as shown in the photo. Juveniles can have yellow instead of white.



## Malayan Bridle Snake

I have caught these snakes on a couple of occasions here in Southern Thailand. They are completely harmless and I have not seen one strike to bite.

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# KUKRI SNAKES

Kukri snakes are very common in Thailand. We get a lot of requests to identify them. Their venom doesn't affect humans, but they do have large back teeth they use to crack eggs before eating the inside. These teeth are able to come out of the side of the mouth, and cause a laceration in the skin of someone holding the snake by the neck or head.

• *Oligodon cyclurus / fasciolatus* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active by night or day on the ground and in holes in the ground.
2. Grows up to about 115 cm. long and 2 fingers thick.
3. Not dangerous to humans, but they do have rear teeth that can come out sideways and slice the finger of someone holding it.
4. Eats frogs, eggs, lizards, other animals and insects on the ground.
5. Colors - variable green tint, brown tint, creme. The head pattern is fairly consistent.



## Cantor's Kukri Snake

This snake is common across Thailand, and apparently has a pattern that makes people think it is venomous and dangerous because most photos I get are of the snake after beheading or being smashed with a shovel.

These are harmless snakes that eat frogs, eggs, lizards and other animals on the ground. Kukri

snakes come in many shades of brown, pink, and orange.

This snake may be *O. fasciolatus* and not *O. cyclurus*. Not sure. They look similar and I can't say definitively.

© 2014 Tony Igo.

• *Oligodon taeniatus* •

### Characteristics

1. Fairly common, active by day on the ground and in holes in the ground.
2. Grows to 44 cm. and 1 finger thick.
3. Non-venomous, and possibly quick to bite.
4. Eat eggs, frogs, lizards and geckos.
5. Colors - brown, orange, grey, pinks, there are color variations, but the pattern is nearly the same for this species.



## Striped Kukri Snake

Kukri snakes are very common in most parts of Thailand. I have caught a couple of them here in Southern Thailand, and even a new species of kukri! I'll have to catch it again to have it described in the literature. Recently a friend found a kukri snake in his backyard. A large number of snakes I get ID requests for end up being one of the species in this genus (*Oligodon*).

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The undersides of kukri snakes are quite detailed, bright and colorful, compared to the top side.

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# FRESHWATER SNAKES

While most or all of the marine snakes are considered capable of inflicting potentially fatal bites, the freshwater snakes are relatively harmless, though they do tend to bite often.

Some water snakes stay entirely submerged while waiting for a fish or other prey to come within reach, and others lay with body in the water and head out of the water. Water snakes can be found in groups often. If you find one, you should keep looking and you will likely find others.

• *Homalopsis buccata* •

### Characteristics

1. Common around water, active at night waiting in the water or cruising the ground near streams, rivers, or lakes.
2. Grows to around 140 cm. long and wrist thick.
3. Not dangerous to humans, some bite often, and some don't bite at all.
4. Eats fish and frogs primarily.
5. Colors - brown, tan, and black. Juveniles have orange or yellow bands on the top of the back.



## Puff-faced Water Snake

The puff-faced water snake is very common here in Krabi and Trang provinces. There are a couple of places I can go to find them consistently, and so if I'm having a rough night not finding anything while herping, I'll swing by those freshwater ponds and find at least one of these snakes.

I have been bitten numerous times by this hard biting, backward striking snake. Friends of mine report never being bitten by this species. I count this as a species that does not like me.

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• *Enhydris plumbea* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active by day and night on the ground close to water, or in water.
2. Grows to just over 50 cm. long and about wrist thick.
3. Not dangerous to humans, and not prone to biting much.
4. Eats fish and frogs primarily and probably freshwater eels.
5. Colors - grey, brown, or black shades, or yellow - with yellow on the belly.



Yellow-bellied Water Snake

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• *Cerberus rynchops* •

Characteristics

1. Common water snake found in mangroves, brackish rivers, streams, and lakes and active at night.
2. Grows up to 120 cm. and wrist thick.
3. Mildly venomous, Not dangerous to humans, but capable of a strong bite.
4. Eats fish primarily, spends most time in and around brackish or freshwater.
5. Colors - green, brown, or shades of grey. Distinctive head, with eyes far forward.



## Dog-faced Water Snake

I was wondering where I was going to get a photo of this snake for this book. I went down to the mangrove walkway where I usually focus on finding mangrove pit vipers, and I was lucky to see this little *C. rynchops* sitting still on a root a couple inches above the brackish water.

These are very common snakes, and if you find one, you might find a whole handful of them. I

didn't, but I have friends that have found a dozen in a night in the same area.

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# SUNBEAM AND PIPE SNAKES



Harmless to man, these snakes are ideal as a first snake to introduce to children or others afraid of snakes. I have never seen or heard of these snakes biting a human. I have let my two-year-old daughter play with numerous pipe snakes, and she has come to enjoy them.



• *Xenopeltis unicolor* •

### Characteristics

1. Common and active by night cruising the open ground.
2. Grows to 125 cm. long and wrist thick.
3. Harmless to humans, and non-biting. Not to say they would **NEVER** bite, but in 8 years I have not seen one bite.
4. Eats rodents, lizards, frogs, and other snakes.
5. Colors - shade of brown, either like the photo here, or darker. When shedding these snakes are quite grey. Hatchlings have a white band around the neck.



## Sunbeam Snake

Sunbeam snakes are so named because their scales reflect a rainbow of colors when the light hits them, especially the sunshine. Here is a snake found at night crossing a path near a stream at the foot of a mountain.

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EcoAnimalEncounters.co.uk.

These snakes are not known to bite, and can be handheld - even by amateurs, without fear of being bitten. Very occasionally they do bite...

• *Cylindrophis ruffus* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active at night in or near water or soft ground where they can burrow.
2. Grows up to 1 meter long and 2 fingers thick.
3. Not dangerous to humans and not prone to bite.
4. Eats other snakes and eels.
5. Colors - Juveniles have orange bands on top as shown. Adults lose top bands and are solid black with a black and white checkered belly with a red or orange tail tip. They raise their tail to show the red tip when aggravated.



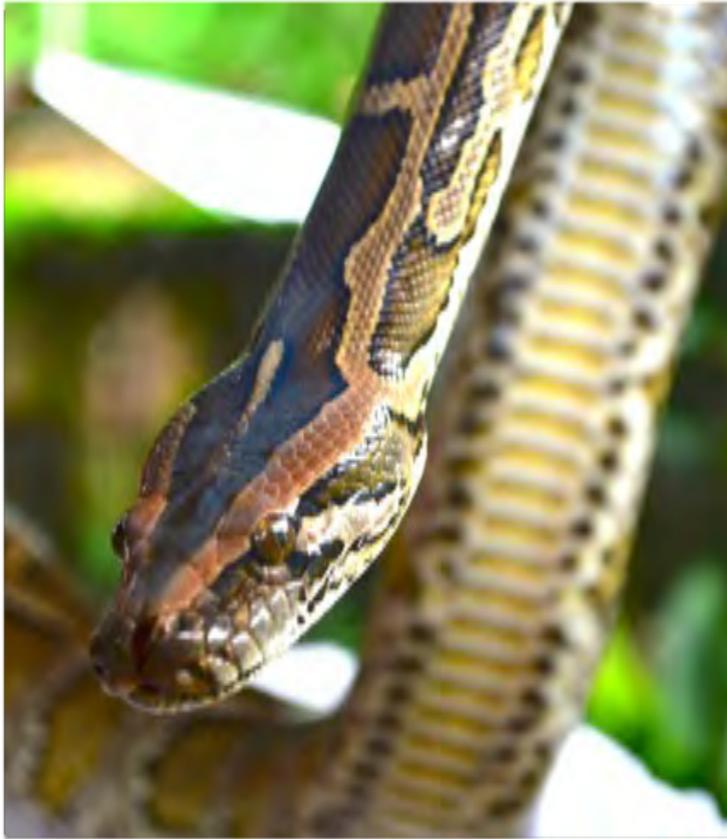
## Red-tailed Pipe Snake

This is a very innocuous snake that has never tried to bite me or my young daughter as we free-handled them. At times they are found on the wet ground next to a stream, and other times resting in a stream, or cruising between roots at the stream's edge.

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These are really beautiful and tame snakes.

# PYTHONS



Thailand's pythons can get big, I mean scary big. There's nothing like finding one where you don't expect it. I remember shining a flashlight by my feet and finding a 4 meter reticulated python within 1.5 meters of me. Reticulated pythons have over 72 very strong angled teeth. Don't get too close!



• *Python reticulatus* •

### Characteristics

1. Uncommon and found at night on the ground or in trees, usually close to water.
2. Grows to 9-10 meters long and human leg thick.
3. Non-venomous, but is a powerful constrictor and frequent and powerful biter.
4. Eats chickens and other farm animals, monitor lizards, rats, frogs, dogs, cats.
5. Colors - Yellow hues vary slightly from image here, but the pattern is always just like shown.



## Reticulated Python

One of the most amazing snakes to see in the wild in the middle of a moonless night is a big reticulated python. This one is about 4 meters long. Later that night around midnight we saw a 5+ meter long specimen swimming in the stream below us. An amazing sight!

These pythons have an attitude problem and cannot usually be hand-held.

I have seen these snakes eat whole goats, they have a big appetite, and it's best not to get close.

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• *Python brongersmai* •

### Characteristics

1. Rare and usually laying in ambush on the ground for prey to walk by.
2. Grows to 275 cm. and human leg thick.
3. Non-venomous, but powerful biters that strike often.
4. Lays in ambush to eat birds and rodents primarily.
5. Colors - yellow, orange, red, grey, black. Color hues vary a bit, to deep reds and very dark - the pattern is always like the photo shown.



## Blood Python

These are not often found slow moving snakes that are very thick and stout. They can climb trees, but spend most of their time on the ground under leaves, trees, and other debris.

In captivity they eat small hens, and chickens, and have a great appetite.

I once went with a friend to catch one of these some rubber tree workers spotted under some sticks and leaves in a small depression in the ground. These are beautiful snakes after shedding.

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• *Python molurus bivittatus* •

Characteristics

1. **Uncommon and active by night. Excellent climbers and usually sleep in the trees.**
2. **Grows to 6 meters long and human leg thick.**
3. **Non-venomous, but strong constrictor. Very strong bites, though most are not prone to biting.**
4. **Eats chickens, lizards, frogs, and other small to large animals.**
5. **Colors - brown, creme, blacks, as shown in photo. Little color variation.**



## Burmese Python

This is one Python I have not caught in the wild yet. They are very strong, and are not a snake you should ever get too close to, though they are less prone to biting than reticulated Pythons.

This snake was found well south of Bangkok in Hua Hin by David Frohlich..

© 2014 David Frohlich.

• CHAPTER 10 •

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# MISCELLANEOUS SNAKES

• *Psammodynastes pulverulentus* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active by night or day along the ground.
2. Grows just under 50 cm. long and about 1 to 2 fingers thick.
3. Harmless for humans, and not prone to bite, though I've been bitten by them.
4. Eats frogs and small lizards. One I found was eating a skink.
5. Colors - brown tones, and the pattern is quite variable.



## Common Mock Viper

These snakes strongly resemble the Malayan pit vipers in pattern, but the body shape is different. The pattern can vary widely as well. The one I caught in Southern Thailand (not this one shown) was very dark brown with some white and yellow scales that really stood out.

© 2014 Elliot Pelling.

• *Ramphotyphlops braminus* •

Characteristics

1. **Very common, active by day or night. Spend lives underground, but frequently climb up through pipes into restrooms and kitchens.**
2. **Grows to about 20 cm. long and smaller in thickness than a pencil.**
3. **Non-venomous, non-biting. Completely harmless.**
4. **Eats ant and termite eggs primarily.**
5. **Colors - black or dark brown and with very smooth scales that makes them shiny.**



## Brahminy or Common Blind Snake

One of the snakes most likely to find its way into your home is the “Brahminy blind snake.” These are subterranean snakes that burrow into dirt, but inevitably find their way up drain pipes and into kitchens and restrooms.

At one place we stayed we must have found 30 of these tiny snakes over a period of months.

This is another snake Thais will swear up and down is deadly. This is probably the most harmless snake in Thailand. Possibly the world!

From Bangkok north and east is also Diard’s blind snake, which looks similar and is harmless.

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• *Typhlops muelleri* •

Characteristics

1. Very common, active in the soil or under logs or debris.
2. Grows up to 45 cm. long and 1 small finger thick.
3. Non-venomous, though most Thais will swear this snake is deadly. Non-biting - mouth is too small.
4. Eats ant and termite eggs.
5. Colors - grey, black, or brown. The belly is white or a shade of yellow or creme.



## Mueller's Blind Snake

These are very common across Thailand and are often found by farm workers planting rice or other crops. They are worm like in appearance and texture. They almost look like worms more than like snakes.

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• *Pareas carinatus* •

### Characteristics

1. Fairly common, active at night in the trees, bushes, or on the ground.
2. Grows up to 60 cm. long and 1 finger thick.
3. Non-venomous, and usually non-biting.
4. Eats small lizards and frogs.
5. Colors - brown or yellow as shown. Pattern is somewhat variable.



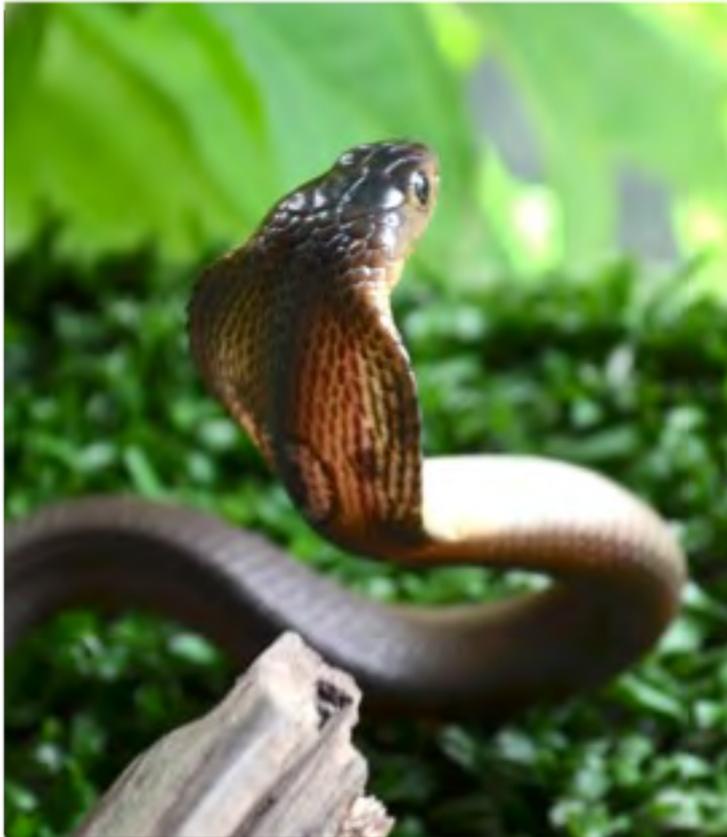
## Keeled Slug Snake

Though I've yet to find this snake, David Frohlich appears to have had no trouble at all finding a bunch of them. It might be worth a trip up to Hua Hin after all. David finds a lot of snakes in that area.

© 2014 David Frohlich.

• CHAPTER 11 •

# COBRAS



Thailand's cobras are some of the most exciting, dangerous, and beautiful snakes in the world. When you see the energy of a monocled cobra in the wild, or a big king cobra so confident it is virtually ignoring you just meters away, these are amazing experiences you'll remember for the rest of your life.

• *Naja kaouthia* •

### Characteristics

1. Common across Thailand, active by day or night on the ground.
2. Grows to 2 meters long and wrist thick.
3. Very strong venom and deadly. Frequent biters. Do be careful, some that look just like this can spit venom 2-3 meters into your eyes.
4. Eats birds, eggs, rodents, lizards, and other snakes.
5. Colors - black or brown with a "monocle" (eye) on the back of the hood. Some are light brown.



## Monocled or Monocellate Cobra

One of the most exciting snake species to catch in Thailand is the monocled cobra. These are common in some areas. I find most of them near the ocean, in the mangroves, or near brackish water. The hotter it is outside (35C+) the more angry they can get if bothered.

These cobras, after hatching, tend to remain around the same area. If under your home, you

have a problem. Don't attempt to remove these snakes yourself, they are very dangerous. Monocled cobras have very strong neurotoxic and cytotoxic venom and are not worth risking your life for. Call the local snake guys in your area to remove them from around your home.

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• *Naja siamensis* •

### Characteristics

1. **Uncommon, active by day in the open forest on the ground.**
2. **Grows to 1.6 meters long and wrist thick.**
3. **Very strong venom, deadly. Can accurately spit venom into enemies eyes to around 3 meters distance.**
4. **Eats other snakes, lizards, birds, eggs, and other animals.**
5. **Colors - sometimes has “spectacles” -like eyeglasses on the hood behind the head, sometimes not. Always very dark in color, but may have white bands or almost random white markings.**



## Indo-Chinese Spitting Cobra

Very exciting (and excitable) snakes that are found (so far) from Hua-Hin and north into all areas of Northern Thailand.

I know a couple of people that have had venom spit into their eyes from this snake. It burns painfully and if untreated, one could go blind or suffer serious visual impairment. Luckily both were able to rinse the venom for 20-30 minutes and there were no long-lasting effects.

Do be careful with the spitting cobras, they are uncannily accurate with spitting venom over 2-3 meters. These snakes look very much like monocled cobras at times, so they are hard to identify in the wild until they spit - then you get the idea!

© 2014 David Frohlich.

• *Naja sumatrana* •

### Characteristics

1. Uncommon, active by day or night on the ground.
2. Grows just over 1.5 meters long and wrist thick.
3. Mild venom, but some of these snakes have caused severe reaction in some individuals. Best not to hand-hold without thick gloves.
4. Eats snakes, lizards, rodents and other small animals.
5. Colors - black or yellow phases. No hood mark on the back of the snake's neck.



## Sumatran or Equatorial Spitting Cobra

This spitting cobra is also not common, but I wanted to feature the venomous snakes of Thailand in case you run into one.

The spitting cobras are known to spit venom accurately straight into eyeballs from 2-3 meters away. Couple that with any sort of wind, and the fine venom mist could be carried 5 meters or more. Do be careful around these snakes, and

any snake that you don't know with 100% certainty what it is.

Both photos © 2014 Hans Breuer - SnakesOfTaiwan.com.



• *Ophiophagus hannah* •

### Characteristics

1. **Uncommon and active during daylight hours usually, though at times also hunt at night.**
2. **Grows to nearly 6 meters, though most are 3-4 meters long and thick as a human calf muscle.**
3. **Strong venom and deadly bites. Very prone to bite, and they sometimes move along the ground to close the distance to bite.**
4. **Eats other snakes primarily, but also monitor lizards in captivity.**
5. **Colors - black, brown, or yellow with light bands.**



## King Cobra

The king cobra is the largest venomous snake in the world. It acts differently than other snakes. It moves slowly and deliberately, even when fleeing humans. Often it will ignore humans as if they weren't there at all as it goes about foraging for prey.

The bite from a king cobra can transfer up to 7

ml. of venom, a massive amount, and enough to kill an elephant.

I have heard stories second hand of two persons dying from king cobra bites. Both were dead within ten minutes. This is not a snake to mess with, even if you think you know what you're doing. The risk is too great. Sometimes the

snake is unpredictable. Recently an expert with the species was bitten and died of a heart attack within minutes.

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• CHAPTER 12 •

KRAITS

Thailand has four different kraits in the Bungarus genus. All of the kraits are very dangerous, not for their behavior, which is quite mellow compared to say, cobras, but because their venom is the most deadly, the most potent of any other group of snakes.

Krait bites are rare, but they do occur. Especially at risk are people in villages sleeping with their doors open, or who fall asleep outside. Kraits are very active at night, and occasionally they end up near someone sleeping on the ground. The person rolls over. The krait bites. After the initial bite, the bite victim may experience no pain at all and just continue sleeping. If the seriousness of the condition isn't realized, some victims die because they don't get on life support at the hospital fast enough.

• *Bungarus fasciatus* •

### Characteristics

1. **Common at night near rice fields, moving on the ground. Sleep in holes in ground.**
2. **Grows to about 2 meters long and wrist thick.**
3. **Venomous and deadly, but not quick to bite during daylight hours. At night, they are more active and bite more often.**
4. **Eats other snakes primarily, but also opportunistic.**
5. **Colors - alternating black and yellow bands from head to tail. Juveniles same. No real color variations.**



## Yellow Banded Krait

The yellow-banded kraits are exceptionally beautiful snakes. The bands are sharply delineated. Their vibrant yellow and black scales after a shed are stunning.

Kraits have primarily neurotoxic venom that affects the nerve impulses. It shuts down muscles and causes respiratory failure and death with strong envenomation.

This snake has a triangular cross-section and a stubby tail.

A man wrote me about a bite he suffered in a bar in Bangkok during an impromptu show. He had lingering effects 2 years later. Potent venom!

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• *Bungarus candidus* •

### Characteristics

1. Uncommon and active at night on the ground.
2. Grows to 160 cm. and almost wrist thick.
3. Venomous and deadly, but not quick to bite at night or daytime. Do not hand-hold.
4. Eats other snakes primarily, but opportunistic feeder as well.
5. Colors - black and white with little color or pattern variation from the photo shown.



## Malayan or Blue Krait

These are similar to the banded krait, but with stronger venom, a smaller less-triangular cross-section, and an even better disposition at night when caught.

There is another krait very similar to this one, that is only found in the far north around Chiang Mai. It is *Bungarus multicinctus*. Same coloring,

but more bands. It is called the “many-banded krait.”

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• *Bungarus flaviceps* •

Characteristics

1. Rare terrestrial snake active at night on the ground.
2. Grows to 1.9 meters and 3 fingers to wrist thick.
3. Venomous and deadly, not quick to bite at night or daytime.
4. Eats other snakes primarily.
5. Colors - red head and tail, body black with white between scales.



## Red-headed Krait

One of my favorite Thailand snakes, the red-headed krait is a very difficult snake to find in the rainforest. This one was caught late at night, and we didn't leave the park until 2:30 am.

Red-headed kraits are sometimes mistaken for the blue coral snake, though they look nothing like each other side-by-side.

For me, the red-headed krait and the king cobra are the "Holy Grail" of snakes in Thailand and I'm happy to have found both!

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# PIT VIPERS



Pit vipers sense hot spots on an animal and strike immediately. Their strike is very fast and deadly accurate.

Photo right © 2014 Tom Charlton -  
EcoAnimalEncounters.co.uk



• *Calloselasma rhodostema* •

### Characteristics

1. **Very common and active by night or day during rain on the ground.**
2. **Grows to about 1 meter and wrist thick.**
3. **Strong venom and capable of deadly bites. The venom is cytotoxic, destroying cells of all kinds - including bone. Immediate hospital visit is necessary.**
4. **Eats rodents, lizards, geckos.**
5. **Colors - colors range from shades of brown, red, pink, and very dark. Pattern is stable, with little variation.**



## Malayan Pit Viper

Though there are around 60 venomous snakes in Thailand, this is the one I really don't want to be bitten by. The fangs on the Malayan pit viper are the largest of all snakes in the country, and the venom is very strong, destroying tissue of all sorts in a very short amount of time. One reason these snakes are so dangerous is that they do not move out of the way when they sense someone coming toward them.

Most bites would not be fatal. Fatalities occur when people don't visit the hospital for treatment because they think it will get better. It only gets worse with a good envenomation.

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• *Daboia russelii siamensis* •

### Characteristics

1. Common around Bangkok and active by night along the ground to find prey.
2. Grows to about 1.5 meters and 1-2 wrists thick.
3. Very strong venom which requires hospitalization to monitor effects of a bite.
4. Eats rodents and other small animals.
5. Colors - light brown with darker brown spots surrounded by white borders. Color varies from lighter to darker brown or pink, orange hues. Pattern remains similar to photo shown.



## Russell's or Chain Viper

Across the globe this snake is said to be responsible for more human deaths than any other. Here in Thailand we are lucky to have it limited in range to a small area around Bangkok and Pattaya. Keep in mind, it could be found other places, it is best not to put too much faith in stated ranges because they are always being extended.

This snake has a very strong bite, and excellent fangs to deliver their venom. The venom has a strong coagulant component which turns blood to thick clots in the body. Not so good for circulation!

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• *Trimeresurus wagleri* •

Characteristics

1. Also called the temple viper. These snakes are more common at some altitude where they are active at night and during overcast and rainy days.
2. Grows to 1 meter long and 2-3 fingers thick.
3. Strong venom and quick to bite.
4. Eats birds, eggs, and other small animals on the ground.
5. Colors - black and yellow, black and green. Large variation in colors and patterns depending where found.



## Wagler's Pit Viper

I found one of these snakes crawling across a hiking trail where I was running around 400 meters elevation in Krabi province. It was 11 am., raining at the time and the sky was very dark. This snake loves those conditions, and comes down from the trees or bushes to find prey.

Wagler's pit viper has long, well developed fangs and bites often. The colors are bright and the pattern is interesting. The head is very triangular shaped. It is a beautiful snake that should be given a lot of space and not handled.

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• *Popeia popeiorum* •

### Characteristics

1. **Common, as far as vipers go, but you'll not likely see one. Active by night on the ground and seem to prefer low bushes during days.**
2. **Grows up to 90 cm. and about wrist thick.**
3. **Venomous and has one of the stronger venoms of the green vipers. Very quick to bite.**
4. **Eats birds, lizards, geckos and rodents.**
5. **Colors - slight variation from greens in photo, depending where in Thailand you find one. Tail can be orange, brown, or red hues.**



## Pope's Pit Viper

This pit viper has a strong venom and is found usually at higher elevations around 1,000 meters.

Pit vipers sense heat with pits in the front of their heads. This makes them very accurate strikers.

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• *Trimeresurus venustus* •

### Characteristics

1. **Uncommon and active at night moving from the trees and bushes to the ground to find prey.**
2. **Grows to 70 cm. long and 1-2 fingers thick.**
3. **Mild venom, but some of these snakes have caused severe reaction in some individuals. Best not to hand-hold without thick gloves.**
4. **Eats birds, eggs, and other small animals.**
5. **Colors - mottled brown and green scales over entire body. Colors will appear muted when near shed.**



## Brown-spotted Pit Viper

*Trimeresurus venustus* is an exceptional looking snake that is difficult to find in the wild when on bushes where it blends in well. Other times this snake can be easily found on limestone cliffs or rocks waiting for prey.

This is a small viper, and the venom is not all that strong. I saw a man with mental health issues hold one to his face while it bit him repeatedly

on the cheek and mouth. Some local swelling and necrosis can occur at the bite site.

Photo purchased at a stock agency.

• *Trimeresurus albolabris* •

Characteristics

1. Common and active by night moving from the trees to the ground and water to find prey.
2. Grows to 1 meter long and 2-3 fingers thick.
3. Strong venom and bites often and quickly.
4. Eats birds, frogs, lizards, and rodents.
5. Colors - shades of green, with yellow or creme colored belly. Tail can be red, orange, or brown hues.



## White-lipped Viper

One of the green vipers to be aware of in the bushes and trees during the day, and moving on the ground at night. It's always a good idea to bring a flashlight with you if walking outside at night in Thailand.

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• *Trimeresurus purpureomaculatus* •

Characteristics

1. **Common and active by day or night moving from the trees to the ground and in brackish or salt water to find prey.**
2. **Grows about 1 meter long and 3 fingers thick.**
3. **Strong venom causes tissue damage. These snakes bite often and are very fast moving.**
4. **Eats birds, lizards, and probably the mud skippers in the mangroves.**
5. **Colors - Brown and yellow, purple and yellow, black and white color are all possible.**



## Mangrove Pit Viper

These snakes are active during the day or night, and they can move very quickly when they want to. Not to mention, their striking speed is quite quick.

I find these snakes in the roots of mangrove trees along the ocean. Sometimes they are on the ground actively looking for prey, but I haven't seen them eat yet. I'm guessing they are eating

the mudskipper fish that come up out of the water and rest on the mud.

This is one of the most beautiful vipers in Thailand. We have some more photos at [ThailandSnakes.com](http://ThailandSnakes.com) of this snake.

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# CORAL SNAKES



Coral snakes are some of the most deadly and most beautiful snakes anywhere on the planet, and Thailand has a couple of the most beautiful. The venter (belly) is bright red or pink.

Though the coral snakes are not exactly “common” I wanted to include them so you know to avoid these snakes if you see them in the wild. Photo top right - © 2014 Tom Charlton - EcoAnimalEncounters.co.uk.

• *Calliophis maculiceps* •

### Characteristics

1. Common, but spend most time underground. Come above ground to mate and escape flooding.
2. Grows to just 50 cm. long and about as thick as a pencil.
3. Strong venom, but bites are unheard of.
4. Eats ant and termite eggs primarily, and other small snakes.
5. Colors - brown and black, little variation from photo. Belly is bright pink, the subcaudal scales at the end of the tail are black and white.



## Small Spotted Coral Snake

I have found these snakes year round, contrary to what some other snake enthusiasts have said about them coming above ground only during September to mate.

These are very small snakes that are presumed deadly, but bites are very rare. I have never seen one attempt to bite a human. The mouth is

probably too small to get a good bite in, but I would never hand-hold this snake.

Many people find these snakes in their potted plants, and in their gardens.

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• *Calliophis bivirgata* •

### Characteristics

1. Not so common, active at night on the ground.
2. Grows to 140 cm. long and about 2 fingers thick at the most.
3. Strong neurotoxic venom which is potentially fatal. This snake is not known to bite much, but stay clear of it, the venom is very strong.
4. Eats other snakes primarily, and other small animals like lizards and frogs as they are found.
5. Colors - blue or black body, red head, red tail, red belly.



## Blue Malaysian Coral Snake

Another beautiful snake, and amazing photo by Tom Charlton. These are sometimes confused with the red-headed krait (*Bungarus flaviceps*), but there are marked differences in pattern, head size, thickness, body type, cross section, and belly color. Both snakes are highly venomous and deadly, but the Blue Malaysian coral snake is more common in Thailand because its range extends across the country whereas the red-

headed krait is only known to occur in Southern Thailand.

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# DANGEROUS KEELBACKS



Some keelback snakes have recently been added to lists of dangerous and deadly snakes after some severe envenomations, some of which caused fatalities. The following keelbacks are to be treated with extreme caution. Other keelbacks, and other snakes, may also have very strong venom, but not all snake venom has been studied extensively. Photo top right © 2014 Elliot Pelling.

• *Rhabdophis subminiatus* •

### Characteristics

1. **Very common snakes and active by day on the ground and in the water.**
2. **Grow to about 130 cm. though average is around 70 cm. Thick as 1-2 fingers.**
3. **Highly venomous, but most bites are without envenomation. Serious bites require hospitalization and intensive care.**
4. **Eat frogs, geckos, lizards, and fish.**
5. **Colors - there is little color variation from what you see in the photo. Juveniles have different coloration.**



## Red-necked Keelback

This snake is popular for collectors keeping them as pets. They are exceptionally beautiful, and usually mild-tempered. Many of them just never strike at all. Others, strike occasionally or often, and yet it didn't cause anyone grief for a long time. Then, someone let one bite down for over 30 seconds. The snake was able to chew the venom into the bite site. This caused severe envenomation.

Recently a father in Phuket contacted me to give him information about this snake. His son was envenomated while playing with one of these snakes. The teen boy nearly died of renal failure.

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• *Macropisthodon rhodomelas* •

Characteristics

1. **Not common. Found in Southern Thailand. Active day or night on ground and in water. Hides under debris, rocks, and wood.**
2. **Grows to about 50 cm. long and 1-2 fingers thick.**
3. **Treat as highly venomous. Serious bites may require hospitalization and intensive care.**
4. **Eats frogs, geckos, lizards, and fish.**
5. **Colors - red or pink, grey and black areas around the neck.**



## Blue-necked Keelback

A few years back I read an account of a biologist that caught a blue-necked keelback in Singapore, which bit down on him, chewing the venom into the bite site. He experienced a rush of symptoms including difficulty breathing, chest pain, massive headache, weakness, giddiness, and forgetfulness over the next couple of days. His body weight was 250+ pounds and it

affected him in seconds as the snake was biting down.

Please show extreme caution with all keelback snakes, they are capable of delivering venom in some quantity if they get a good bite and have time to chew the venom into the wound.

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• *Rhabdophis nigrocinctus* •

Characteristics

1. Common in some locales, active by day on the ground.
2. Grow up to 90 cm. long and about 1-2 fingers thick.
3. Consider this snake Venomous and potentially very dangerous, though the venom has not been well-studied.
4. Eats lizards, geckos, frogs, and other animals on the ground.
5. Colors - green, black bands, red head. red or pink toward the tail. Dark red. Color does not vary much.



## Green Keelback

This colorful little snake is found all over Thailand, but is very common on the island of Phuket for some reason. We get many identification requests from this area.

For this reason, hand-holding without protection is not advised.

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**The green keelback is presumed to be able to potentially deliver deadly levels of venom** because its close relative, the red-necked keelback, has caused fatalities with some bites.

# RESOURCES

## • Resources, Credits, Links •

If you are bitten by a snake in Thailand or anywhere in Southeast Asia, and you don't **know** that it is a non-venomous snake:

1. Find someone to help you get to the hospital immediately– don't wait for symptoms and don't drive yourself.

### **Emergency Numbers from Within Thailand:**

1155 – Tourist Police – English speaking

191 – Thai police nationwide

1669 – Ambulance nationwide

1646 – Bangkok ambulance

**Thailand's "Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute, Thai Red Cross Society" has venomous snake information here:**

Web: [Saovabha.com/en/snakefarm.asp](http://Saovabha.com/en/snakefarm.asp)

Phone: +66 2252-0161 / 0164

Email: [qsmi@redcross.or.th](mailto:qsmi@redcross.or.th)

### **Sources for this eBook:**

Primarily, my own personal experience and information from snake enthusiast friends here in Thailand was drawn on for most of the snakes listed in this book. Special thanks to David Frohlich for his attention to detail in finding errors in the first drafts. In addition, these excellent books were used.

*A Photographic Guide to Snakes and Other Reptiles of Thailand and South-East Asia.* Cox, VanDijk, Nabhitabhata, Thirakhupt. 2010.

*Terralog Volume 14: Venomous Snakes of Asia.* Gernot Vogel. 2006.

### **Websites with Thailand Snakes Information:**

\* [ThailandSnakes.com](http://ThailandSnakes.com)

\* [Thailand Snakes Forum](https://www.facebook.com/ThailandSnakesForum/) at Facebook

### **Videos of Thailand Snakes:**

\* [Youtube.com/ThailandSnakes](https://www.youtube.com/ThailandSnakes)