



SNAKES

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-SNAKE CONFLICTS:

- **Respect snakes, and their space.** The majority of snake bites happen when a human attempts to handle or harass the snake. If you have a serious snake concern, call a professional.
- **Understand when snakes are most active.** Activity increases in warm weather and at night. For example, they are often drawn to warm asphalt on a spring evening.
- **Wear protective clothing when working outdoors.** Always wear boots and long pants when doing yard work. Leather gloves are recommended when handling brush and debris.
- **A leashed dog is a safer dog.** When out for a walk, keep your pet leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.
- **Understanding reduces fear.** Snakes are often feared and misunderstood by humans, but they are incredibly beneficial creatures. They keep pest populations, such as rats and mice, in check.

BENEFITS OF SNAKES

Like all animals in the web of life, snakes play an important role in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. As both predator and prey, snakes form a key link in the food chain.

Snakes maintain sustainable rodent populations by feeding on mice and other small rodents that may damage crops and carry disease. They also serve as a food source to many animals, like coyotes and raptors. Remember, all creatures on this planet have a role to play. We need snakes, because without them, our local ecosystem would be out of balance.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Snakes can be found throughout the continental United States. They can adapt to a wide variety of habitats, including urban areas, where they are often found in parks and gardens.
- Snakes are carnivores, meaning they eat only meat. Snakes do not have the right type of teeth for chewing, so they eat their prey whole. Snakes commonly eat rats, birds and their eggs, mice, frogs, and other small rodents. Some species, like the DeKay's brownsnake, eat insects and earthworms.
- Snake social behavior varies amongst species. While the majority of snake species prefer a solitary existence (with the exception of mating), studies have found that some species, like the non-venomous garter snake, actually have extensive social networks.
- Location and climate affects when snakes are most active. They can be diurnal (active during the day) or nocturnal (active at night).