

# HOW TO IDENTIFY VENOMOUS SNAKES

I love the mountains, and I love the forest. It is a place that we can all share and enjoy. It is a special place I love to share with everyone ... except snakes. Boy, do I hate snakes, unless served up for lunch. But that's a bird thing, forgive me.

## FLIP OVER FOR YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE



### EARN THIS NUGGET

- Look up venomous snakes on the internet and look at these identifiers so you can better understand what to look for. Create a sheet indicating the identifiers for venomous snakes.
- Learn the Coral Snake rhyme on the right and give your family a crash course in what you have learned.

The thing is, not every snake is bad. In fact, most of them are really quite good for the environment. They eat rats and other varmint. So, how can you tell the good from the bad? Well, let's see if we can get a good guide for this.

First of all, there is no fool proof identification. Snakes can have a lot of color and pattern variation. So you need to look for something other than that to identify them. These general guidelines will help. Bottom line, most snakes are harmless, but if in doubt, avoid them like the plague.

- In the US there are really only four type's venomous snakes. They are the Cottonmouth, Rattlesnakes, Copperheads, and Coral Snakes.

- All except for the Coral Snake are pit vipers. They get this name because they have a small pit between the eye and the nostril. This is a heat sensor for hunting. If you see the pit, beware.

- Size is a good giveaway. The venomous snakes are big with fat heads. So if you see a skinny snake, you are generally safe.

- Eyes: these venomous snakes have slits for pupils, like a cat's eyes.

- The Rattlesnake, of course, has a rattle. A bit of a giveaway. Some other snakes try to fake it by shaking their tail and making a noise in the leaves. But they won't have the bulbous detail at the end of the tail.

- The Coral Snake does not follow the above rules. It is not a pit viper and can be relatively thin, but its coloration is a giveaway. There are other snakes that look almost identical, only the order of the stripes are different. If the red stripe is next to a yellow stripe keep well away. If, however, the red stripe touches black, then it is safe. There is a rhyme to help you remember: Red touches yellow, kill a fellow - Red touch black, venom lack.

