

## THE WORLD'S 20 MOST VENOMOUS SNAKES

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[Ed. Note: Much of this information was taken from an on-line listing at LiveOutdoors.com. It is interesting that the top three most venomous snakes and five of the top 20 are all from Australia. Actually when you study Australian fauna, you will find that almost every creature living there will kill you if you give it a chance. It is also interesting that only one species on the list is endemic to North America and that one lives in southern Mexico and Central America.]

### Inland Taipan

Considered the most venomous snake in the world based on the median lethal dose value in mice, the Inland Taipan (*Oxyuranus microlepidotus*) venom, drop by drop, is by far the most toxic of any snake. One bite has enough lethality to kill at least 100 full grown men. Found in the semi-arid regions of central east Australia, it is commonly known as the Western Taipan, Small-scaled Snake, or the Fierce Snake. Like every Australian snake, the Inland Taipan is protected by law.



*Oxyuranus microlepidotus*  
Austria, 2016, n/a



### Eastern Brown Snake

The Eastern Brown Snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*), or the Common Brown Snake, is considered the second most venomous snake in the world. It is native to Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia. It can be aggressive and is responsible for about 60 percent of snake bite deaths in Australia.

### Coastal Taipan

The Coastal Taipan (*Oxyuranus scutellatus*) is a venomous snake found in northern and eastern Australia and the island of New Guinea. Adults can reach four feet and are most active in early morning. It is the third-most venomous land snake in the world based on its median lethal dose value.



*Oxyuranus scutellatus*  
Papua N.G., 2006, Sc#1230

*Pseudonaja textilis*  
Malawi, 2013, n/a

### Black Mamba

The Black Mamba (*Dendroaspis polylepis*) is found in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. When threatened it opens its inky black mouth, spreads its narrow neck-flap, and sometimes hisses. Although most mamba species are tree-dwelling snakes, the Black Mamba is not generally arboreal. It is the fastest moving snake indigenous to Africa, and perhaps the fastest anywhere.



*Dendroaspis polylepis*  
Comoro Is., 2009, Mi#2119



### Indian Cobra

The Indian Cobra (*Naja naja*) is revered in Indian mythology and culture, and is often seen with snake charmers. It is one of the "big four" venomous species in India and is now protected there. Although its venom is moderate, the rapid-acting qualities of the Indian Cobra venom make it more dangerous than most. For this reason, mortality rates are rather low, although symptoms come on fast.

*Naja naja*  
N. Antilles, 2001, Sc#945

## Saw-scaled Viper

Though small in size, its attitude makes the Saw-scaled Viper (*Echis carinatus*) a venomous force to be reckoned with. It is the second of the Indian “big four” venomous species. This snake ranges from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, parts of the Middle East, and Africa north of the equator, making it responsible for many human fatalities each year.



*Echis carinatus*  
Comoro Is., 2009, Mi#2114



*Daboia russelii*  
Print, de Lacépède, 1832

## Russell's Viper

One of the most painful bites comes from the Russell's Viper (*Daboia russelii*), which is known to cause internal bleeding. It is the third of the Indian “big four” venomous species. It is a very aggressive snake that can be extremely irritable. It is found mostly in India and Southeast Asia.

## Common Krait

Often considered the most dangerous snake in India, the Common Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) can induce muscle paralysis quickly. It is the fourth of the Indian “big four” venomous species. When paralysis has developed after a bite from a Common Krait, it is often impossible to reverse even with anti-venom.



*Bungarus caeruleus*  
Pakistan, 1995, Sc#831a



*Bothrops alternatus* (related sp.)  
Uruguay, 2001, Sc#1904b

## Terciopelo

The Terciopelo (*Bothrops asper*), also known as the Fer-de-lance, considered the most dangerous snake in Costa Rica, is known to move extremely fast, though usually choosing to flee than confront a threat. It is found in eastern Mexico, Central America, and northern South America. In Venezuela, it is responsible for 78 percent of all snakebite fatalities.

## King Cobra

Found mostly in forests throughout India and Southeast Asia, the King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) is the world's longest venomous snake reaching lengths of 18 feet. It preys mostly on other snakes and sometimes rodents. It typically avoids confrontation with humans. Despite its name, it is not a member of the *Naja* genus of true cobras. It is the sole member of its own genus.



*Ophiophagus hannah*  
Thailand, 1981, Sc#977



*Bungarus fasciatus* (related)  
Thailand, 1981, Sc#978

## Many-banded Krait

Also known as the Taiwanese Krait or Chinese Krait, the Many-banded Krait (*Bungarus multicinctus*) is endemic to central and southern China and Southeast Asia. It is mostly found in marshy areas and is nocturnal. Estimated mortality rates associated with untreated bites vary widely between studies from 25 to 70 percent. During the Vietnam War, American soldiers referred to this snake as “two-step Charlies,” in the mistaken belief that its venom was so lethal, if bitten, you will die after taking just two steps.

### Western Green Mamba

The Western Green Mamba (*Dendroaspis viridis*), also known as the West African Green Mamba, is extremely nimble and dangerous, preferring to spend most of its time in the trees. It will also descend to ground level to pursue prey such as rodents and other small mammals. Bites to people are quite uncommon. Their mortality rate, however, is high. Many of the recorded bites have been fatal.



*Dendroaspis viridis*  
Guinea, 1967, Sc#471



*Dendroaspis angusticeps*  
Mali, 2012, n/a

### Eastern Green Mamba

Like other mambas, the Eastern Green Mamba (*Dendroaspis angusticeps*) spends most of its time in the trees. A single bite contains enough venom to kill several humans. The Eastern Green Mamba is typically found in eastern Africa. Bites that produce severe envenomation can be fatal in as little as 30 minutes.

### Jameson's Mamba

The Jameson's Mamba (*Dendroaspis jamesoni*) is a quick, highly arboreal member of the mamba family. Highly venomous, this snake is found in Central and West Africa and



*Dendroaspis jamesoni*  
Gabon, 1972, Sc#302

some parts of East Africa. It is not typically aggressive and will almost always attempt to escape. Untreated envenomation may cause death within 120 minutes.



*Naja oxiana*  
Tanzania, 1993, Sc#1131

### Caspian Cobra

The Caspian Cobra (*Naja oxiana*) is mostly found in Central Asia and averages around one meter in length. It is the most venomous species of cobra in the world, slightly ahead of the Philippine Cobra. Its bite causes severe pain and swelling, along with severe neurotoxicity. This species is generally aggressive and bad-tempered, although they will avoid humans as much as possible. It preys mainly on rodents, toads and frogs, occasionally fish, birds and their eggs. Quick-moving and agile, it lives in holes in embankments or trees.

### Philippine Cobra

The Philippine Cobra (*Naja philippinensis*) is typically found in northern Philippines, and is a stocky, highly venomous, spitting cobra. It feeds predominantly on small mammals, frogs, and even other snakes. These snakes are capable of accurately spitting their venom at a target up to three meters away. The venom is a potent neurotoxin that affects respiratory function and can cause neurotoxicity and respiratory paralysis.



*Naja nivea* (related)  
Gambia, 2015, n/a



*Acanthophis laevis* (related)  
Papua N.G., 2006, Sc#1231

### Common Death Adder

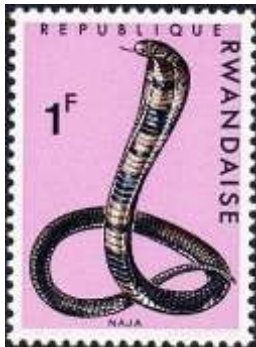
Just your Common Death Adder. Nothing to be worried about here. The Common Death Adder (*Acanthophis antarcticus*) is one of the most venomous land snakes in Australia and worldwide, but is becoming increasingly rare. Death adders possess the longest fangs of any Australian snake and are masters of camouflage hiding beneath loose leaf litter and debris in woodland, shrub, and grassland. It can deliver the fastest strike among all venomous snakes recorded in Australia. Human death can occur within six hours after the bite.

### Tiger Snake

Tiger Snakes (*Notechis ater*) are found in the southern region of Australia. They have several subspecies and come in many colors though always with a banded pattern like a tiger. They give birth to 20 to 30 live young. Mortality rate from untreated bites is reported to be between 40 and 60 percent. In most Australian states, they are protected species, and to kill or injure one incurs a fine up to \$7,500, as well as a jail sentence of 18 months in some states. It is also illegal to export a native Australian snake.



*Notechis ater*  
Australia, 2014, Sc#4180



*Naja melanoleuca*  
Rwanda, 1967, Sc#197

### Forest Cobra

The Forest Cobra (*Naja melanoleuca*) is the largest in the cobra family and can reach a length of 10 feet. It is considered a highly irritable and aggressive snake and is native to the central and western portions of Africa. Its highly varied diet includes insects, small mammals, and other reptiles. It can be highly dangerous due to the quantity of venom it can inject in a single bite and its aggressive nature. Death can occur within 120 minutes in severe cases of envenomation. In one area of Guinea in 2008, 375 bites from the Forest Cobra resulted in 79 deaths.

### Gaboon Viper

Native to the rainforests and savannas of sub-Saharan Africa, the Gaboon Viper (*Bitis gabonica*) has the distinction of being the world's heaviest viper and has the longest fangs that can reach up to two inches in length. Because of this, it has the highest venom yield of any species. They are usually very tolerant snakes. However, they are one of fastest striking snakes in the world, so care should be taken with them. They feed on a variety of birds and mammals.



*Bitis gabonica*  
Guinea, 1967, Sc#472

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## POISONOUS SNAKES

People often refer to venomous snakes as poisonous snakes. This is incorrect. Venom has to be injected to work, while poison is dangerous when inhaled, ingested, or absorbed.

There are few truly poisonous snakes. *Rhabdophis* snakes get their poison from toads in their diet, which makes these snakes poisonous if eaten. The other exception is a small population of garter snakes (*Thamnophis*) in Oregon that become poisonous due the newts they eat.

<http://www.aquaticcommunity.com/snakes/>



*Thamnophis* sp.  
USA, 1996, Sc#3105k