

Non-Venomous Species



Rough Tree Snake (*Ophedrys aestivus*)

Adult size: 22 – 32 inches

Small arboreal species, may be seen in or near trees.



Smooth Earth Snake (*Virginia valeriae*)

Adult size: 7 – 10 inches

Often seen on trails and roads following heavy rains.



Yellow-Bellied Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster flavigaster*)

Adult size: 30 – 48 inches

Found mostly around bodies of water but may be seen in all areas of the park.

What to do if you encounter a snake

Whether you find snakes fascinating or frightening, when you encounter a snake within the boundaries of a national park your response should always be the same: **keep your distance**. Following this policy at all times will help ensure your safety as well as that of any wildlife. **A wild snake should never be handled!** Even the most experienced naturalists can sometimes misidentify species, so even if you think you're sure a snake is harmless it's a good idea to simply observe the animal from a safe distance and allow it to continue on its way. Even a non-venomous snake will defend itself by biting what it perceives as a threat. Bites from non-venomous species can become infected and if left untreated can result in severe discomfort or permanent injury. Some snakes have other defense mechanisms, like the secretion of a foul-smelling "musk" from a gland near its cloacal vent. Furthermore, any wild animal could potentially be a carrier of parasites or disease. These are all good reasons to leave snakes alone, but the best reason is this: as a visitor to the park you are a guest in the snake's home. **You should respect the animal by not disturbing it while in its natural habitat.**



Snakes at Ninety Six

A guide to help you identify some of the species of snakes who inhabit the park



Ninety Six National Historic Site
Ninety Six, SC

Phone: (864) 543-4068

www.nps.gov/nisi

Venomous Species



American Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix*)
Adult size: 24 – 36 inches

Highly patterned and well camouflaged in brush and debris. The only commonly seen venomous species on the park, sometimes present on wooded trails.



Canebrake Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*)
Adult size: 36 – 48 inches

Also called Timber rattlesnake. Rarely seen within park boundaries.



Pigmy Rattlesnake (*Sistrurus miliarius*)

Adult size: 12 – 24 inches

When coiled, may resemble a leaf or pinecone. Rarely seen within park boundaries.

Snakes are most active from late spring to early fall but will seek shelter if the temperature becomes excessively hot. Therefore you are most likely to encounter a snake during the warmest times of the day in spring and fall or at dawn or dusk during the summer months. Stay on paths and trails, especially if your group includes young children. Always keep pets secured to a leash to avoid unwanted encounters. If you see a snake that you think might be venomous, notify park staff of its location. Remember that all wildlife is protected within national park boundaries.

What to do if you are bitten by a snake

In the unlikely event that you are bitten by one of the three venomous species that may be present in the park or by a snake you cannot identify, follow these steps:

- Keep calm. Snake bites are rarely fatal.
- Observe the area of the bite. If it begins to swell or change color, you have probably been envenomed.
- Immobilize the area of the bite and keep it below your heart.
- Call 911 and wait for assistance. Do not drive yourself to the hospital.
- Notify park staff of incident.

Do not attempt to remove the venom yourself. Do not tourniquet the wound. Do not ice the wound.

Non-Venomous Species



Black Rat Snake (*Elaphe obsoleta*)

Adult size: 48 – 72 inches

The most commonly seen species on the park. Jet black with white markings on the underside.



Banded Water Snake (*Nerodia fasciata*)

Adult size: 24 – 42 inches

Commonly found in or near bodies of water, often mistaken for Cottonmouths.



Eastern King Snake (*Lampropeltis getula*)

Adult size: 36 – 48 inches

Similar in appearance to Black rat snake but with white or yellow bands.