

Cobras and Pythons: A Quick Exploration

By: Mike Casey

So, when I did a quick Bing search on the origins of the word *snake*, it came up with some long winded answer of basically saying, “to crawl, creeping thing.” And you know what? I think that’s pretty dang accurate!

These “little” things absolutely do that. They slither and they slide. All over the world basically. Some are super dangerous (with their powerful squeezing skills or some ridiculously powerful venom) while others are just plain adorable. Like I literally watched a documentary one time about a tiny little snake who is harmless to most things but just loves to give kisses. They will straight up just chill in your pocket and then crawl up your arm to give you a pecking love on your cheek. It's like so cute!

“Wait... pause... ewwwww... snakes of all kinds... ummm... no thanks...” That may be some of you right now. To those people I say, take a few seconds out of your busy life and look at this photo (link in the works cited) where you can actually buy a tiny crown for your little reptilian baby:



Now, am I recommending you go out and buy this crown to try and put on a baby cobra?

Absolutely NOT.

Do not try that without any sort of training (even then... probably not worth trying still...)

Some snakes are downright dangerous (please keep that mind) but that doesn't mean we can't know more about them or admire/ respect just how wild and interesting they truly are.

Let's meander on together in this exploration of fun knowledge shall we

Snake #1: The Forest Cobra



Found in Africa, in mostly the central and western regions, it's actually the largest of the pure cobra species, coming in at a whopping 3.2 meters (10 feet and 6 inches) in length. On top of that, it's actually one of the most aquatic (some consider it actually semi-aquatic) compared to its pure cobra counterparts. Oh, on top of that *even more*, it can also climb trees. Like even

ones of 10 m (33 feet). Dang! It's partly aquatic, airborne and can move quickly on land all while being fairly large. Awesome...

Well... hopefully this inspires you to not mess with it while it hangs out in an old junk pile or near a riverbed, since its venom is strong enough to be a medical emergency, but it will do the typical cobra action of raising up its hood into the air as it hisses at you. Warning you of what may come if you keep up the shenanigans and try to corner it more. So, yeah, it may not be able to spew its venom at you but it can definitely defend itself, if needed.

Snake #2: Central African Rock Python



Moving right along to our next “little” cuddlemonster, we have this huge creature which is known as “Africa’s largest snake.” Like its name suggests, it resides in sub-Saharan Africa and can approach or exceed 6 m (20 feet)! It can be found all over but usually, you’ll mostly see these massive behemoths near the water because if I lived in sub-Saharan Africa and I was cold-blooded, I would probably be doing the same, right? Interestingly, in addition, it actually goes dormant in the dry season. Almost like a hibernating bear. Except with a snake, it’s called “brumation,” and allows their breeding organs to get all ready and whatnot.

Not known for its venom, it actually kills prey using constriction methods and can eat animals at least antelope size, which is just wild. On occasion, somehow even crocodiles too, which is just even wilder. It is very widely feared across the circles it inhabits yet it is actually not venomous or kills humans on a regular basis. In fact, while looking at the data we do have, it says that “few deaths are well-substantiated with no reports of a human being consumed.” ([Central African rock python - Wikipedia](#)). It’s just really big and really strong so that’s probably why it’s feared so heavily. But like... those scales are so cool!

Snake #3: Burmese Python



Looking at another python species, we got the Burmese next. This amazing animal is one of the biggest snakes there is. Now, unfortunately due to the pet trade, it is actually not just in Southeast Asia. You can even find this “little” buddy while getting some delicious Taco Bell in Florida. Great...

And just how big can they get? Well... the number one on record was at 5.74 m (18.8 feet) and 182.8 kg (403 pounds). Dang... that’s a big crawler. Much like the cobra we talked about first in the forest, these animals also like a good and quality water source to call partly home. But it’s not just want, it’s a need for them. They can swim and climb by using their fancy type of tail and can live in a lot of different environments such as grasslands, marshes, swamps, rocky foothills and more. So... yeah, a lot of places. They even can stay in water for up to 30 minutes but they

do still need to come back up eventually to breath. Oh and you know what's super wild? They can reproduce asexually in a moment of captivity too. Crazy...

Snake #4: Green Tree Python



With our last python on the list, we moved on over to the continent of Australia properly so we could look at this lime green stunner. Living mostly in trees above us, it's actually on the smaller end of this list with only 2 meters (6.6 feet) and about 1.6 kg (3.5 pounds). So, not terribly large in comparison with some of the others we looked at so far. While they are outside of captivity, they actually can live up to like 15 or 19 years, which is pretty impressive for a wild animal of most species. Knowing this too, it does also mean that they too can go through some awkward teenage years then... good for them... *Haha*.

Sadly, they are being targeted for their cool color scheme and general ability to be kept as a pet by an expert so their smuggling habits are actually much higher than you would find with one of those cobras on this same list. Also, interestingly enough, they also have a fairly extensive list of birds who hunt them which is another trait not shared much on this list of mostly apex predators. Looking at those two things together, it makes it far more impressive how long they can live in the wild but if I was a betting man, I would think those green scales definitely help with its survival rates up high in the trees.

Snake #5: King Cobra



Circling back to the cobra grouping of snake species, although not technically a “pure cobra,” we land on the iconic mascot of one famous karate dojo in LA's The Valley. But in nature far off in Asia, the King Cobra comes in at an average length of 3.18 to 4 meters (10.4 to 13.1 feet) or a record one of 5.85 meters (19.2 feet). Woah...

So, this incredible reptile has a huge geographical range but is actually not commonly seen. Hunting mostly other snakes, it does occasionally go after lizards and rodents too. Being super venomous (with an untreated bite killing in 30ish minutes on average) and big, it actually doesn't really strike people first that much, nice enough. It really just only does it when being cornered but can you blame it? I would probably react the same to pitchforks and torches... But not all people feel this way, much like a few other snakes on this list, it's threatened by humans so it's been placed on a conservation list as well as some local cultures revering them in rituals, art and dance. Well, they can also take down an elephant in only a few hours too... so... yeah. I would probably acknowledge this little cutie too if I knew that and saw one in the wild.

Oh and adding to all of that, killing one in India can have a punishment of prison for up to six years. So... don't mess with the “king” I guess...

Conclusion:

By the way, the crazy world of these awe-inspiring terrestrial creatures doesn't stop here. Whether you are looking at a quick Bing search about the most deadly snakes in the world where you can find an *Inland Taipan* which is able to kill up to 100 human adults with just one single bite... crazy... or you do a different search which leads to the *Barbados threadsnake* which comes in as the smallest snake in the world, averaging around 3.94 inches or around 10 cm, it's pretty hard to not drop your jaw a few times.

We got snakes which can grow about the length of about "3 LeBron James'" or some that fit on your average children's ruler. That's so epic when you really think about it. Some are dangerous, some are not. But honestly, I feel like that's so true about people too. Some people are dangerous and some people are not as well.

So, maybe if we took the time to learn more about them, like we do with the people we trust or fear, we might learn to not kill, run from or hate every single one that we might possibly do now.

Maybe, just maybe, we could see the beauty (and bonkers majesty) in the natural world that is already all around us.

Sliding and slithering around like the creeping things they really are.

Works Cited:

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