

— SNAKES OF THE —

# SUNSHINE COAST REGION

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01

Coastal Carpet Python

*(Morelia spilota mcdowelli)*


Danger: Non-venomous. Bites may cause substantial lacerations or punctures.

Description: Large, heavy bodied snake with a highly variable, mottled and blotched pattern and colour. Mostly white to cream on the underside.

Average size: 2.3 metres long but large specimens can exceed 3 metres. Largest reliable record is 4.2 metres.

General: Most commonly encountered snake in the region. Often lives in ceilings. Active day and night. Large specimens can devour small pests such as dogs, cats and chickens, with smaller specimens taking caged birds.

Diet: Mostly mammals such as rodents, possums, bats, etc; also some reptiles, birds and frogs.



02

Spotted Python

*(Antaresia maculosa)*


Danger: Non-venomous. Bites may cause minor lacerations or punctures.

Description: Solidly-built snake but not as large as the Coastal Carpet Python. Fawn or pale-brown ground colour with contrasting dark, chocolate-brown mottled and blotched pattern and colour. Mostly cream on the underside.

Average size: 75cm-1 metre. Large specimens may reach 1.5 metres.

General: Nocturnal. Preferred habitat includes rocky outcrops and associated ridges within dry forests and woodland. Will inhabit areas where ground timber is frequent. Mostly found in the Hinterland it is also infrequently found across the coast in and around mountain areas such as Mt Coolom, Buderim and the Glasshouse Mountains.

Diet: Small mammals, birds and lizards.



03

Common tree snake

*(Dendrelaphis punctulata)*

Common names: Green Tree Snake, Yellow-Bellied Black Snake, Grass Snake.

Danger: Non-venomous and bites infrequently. Emits strong odour if threatened.

Description: Sleek slender body with long, thin tail. Colour ranges from green, olive, yellow, brown and black to rare blue-grey on upper body. Belly yellow or creamy, with bright yellow on throat. Some specimens with blue or grey belly. Large eyes.

Average size: 1.2 metres long and up to 2 metres.

General: Active by day. The most common species to enter homes on the Sunshine Coast. Fast-moving and hard to see in heavy cover.

Diet: Frogs and skinks but will also take small fish.



04

Keelback

*(Tropidonophis mairii)*

Common names: Freshwater Snake, Water Snake, Swamp Tiger.

Danger: Non-venomous. Reluctant to bite. Generally strikes with mouth closed. Emits strong odour when threatened.

Description: Variable colouring but typically shades of grey, brown or olive with irregular, broken cross-bands or flecks of darker brown and flecks of paler cream colour. Belly surfaces cream or pale rusty colour with dark scale edges. Feature is each scale has a distinct raised longitudinal ridge, giving snake an appearance of parallel ridges down length of body.

Average size: 60cm but can reach 90cm.

General: Active by day and night. Often encountered in suburban homes and yards throughout moist suburbs or areas where creeks and drainage lines.

Diet: Frogs, lizards and occasionally fish and tadpoles. Often noted for its ability to eat cane toads.



05

Brown Tree snake

*(Boiga irregularis)*

Common names: Night Tiger, Eastern Brown Tree Snake.


Danger: Mildly venomous. Bites can cause localised pain and swelling and possibly headaches and nausea. Most experts regard it as a minimal risk to all but young children.

Description: Slender-bodied with bulbous head and narrow neck. Large eyes with vertical pupils. Upper brown to reddish-brown or even dark orange, with irregular, indistinct darker cross-bands. Belly creamy, apricot or orange.

Average size: 1.2 metres up to 2 metres.

General: Strictly nocturnal. Skilled climber often found in the heavy foliage of trees and shrubs and in roofs.

Diet: Birds, bird eggs, small mammals, frogs and reptiles.



06

Yellow-faced Whip Snake

*(Demansia psammophis)*

Other common names: Whip Snake, Grass Snake.


Danger: Potentially dangerous, especially to children. Bite may cause pain and severe symptoms.

Description: Very slender snake with long, thin whip-like tail. Large prominent eyes. Colour generally pale olive or bluish-grey, often with rusty flush or longitudinal stripes along front-third of body. Belly greyish-green, often yellowish under tail. Distinctive face markings. Obvious pale cream or yellow rim around eye, with dark comma-shaped marking curving back below eye.

Average Length: 65-70cm but can grow over 90cm.

General: Swift-moving, alert and with good vision; an active hunter by day or hot nights. Quick to retreat. Often seen in suburban yards in and around rock and timber retaining walls.

Diet: Small lizards, frogs and lizard eggs.



07

Lesser Black Whip Snake

*(Demansia vestigiata)*


Danger: Larger specimens can be potentially dangerous, especially to children. Bite may cause localised pain.

Description: Large prominent eyes. Colour rich dark brown through reddish brown to dark grey, often reddish-brown flush towards tail. Body has pattern of black and white flecks or spots caused by dark and light markings on individual scales. Top of head usually has dark brown spots and flecks, and narrow, pale edge around eye. Belly greenish-grey.

Average size: 1.2 metres

General: Swift-moving, alert and active by day. Very shy and infrequently encountered

Diet: Small lizards and frogs.



08

Eastern Brown Snake

*(Pseudonaja textilis)*

Common names: Common Brown Snake, Brown Snake


Danger: Highly venomous. Accounts for more fatalities than any other Australian snake. A nervous, ready biter it will defend itself if threatened. The second most toxic land snake in the world.

Description: Highly variable in colour and pattern. Colour ranges from pale tan through orange, russet, dark brown and almost black, sometimes with cross-body banding. Belly usually cream, yellow or orange.

Average size: 1.4 metres and up to 1.8 metres.

General: Active hunter by day but active on hot nights. Occasionally climbs in search of prey. Often encountered in and around localities with a strong rodent presence such as bird aviaries and stock feed sheds.

Diet: Primarily small mammals (rats, mice etc) but also lizards and frogs.



09

Red-bellied Black

*(Pseudechis porphyriacus)*


Danger: Highly venomous.

Description: Uniform glossy black along whole body. Belly has red or pink flush, brighter on the sides and paler in the middle. Hind edge of belly-scales is black, creating an even red and black striped appearance. Belly colour is visible along flanks and sides.

Average size: 1.5 metres up to 2 metres

General: Active by day but has known to be active on hot nights. Favours wet habitats; rainforest and near water. Reluctant but will inflate and flatten the body and neck to intimidate an aggressor. Fearsome reputation is exaggerated.

Diet: Primarily frogs but also other reptiles (including other snakes) and small mammals.



10

Marsh snake

*(Hemiaspis signata)*

Common names: Black-bellied Swamp Snake, Swamp Snake

Danger: Mildly venomous. Bites have been known to cause pain and swelling, possible headaches and nausea. Most authorities regarding it as a minimal risk to all but young children.

Description: Fairly uniform brown, olive or black above with dark grey or black belly surface. Two prominent narrow pale-yellowish stripes on each side of face, one running from snout, through eye and onto neck area, and one below eye running from snout to corner of mouth.

Average size: 50cm up to 70cm.

General: Diurnal, although may also be active at night in hot weather. Shelters under rocks and debris. Uncommon throughout most of the region although common near Beerwah.

Diet: Small frogs and lizards.



11

White Crowned Snake

*(Cacophis harriettae)*


Danger: Weakly venomous. Not considered dangerous to humans. Reluctant biter, relying more on bluff than bite. Tiny mouth and short fangs. Will rear up and "mock strike" with mouth closed.

Description: Small snake with small eyes. Dark steely-grey both upper and belly. Distinctive "crown", broad white or pale yellowish band on nape of the neck extends forward around sides of head to meet at snout.

Average size: 30-40cm

General: Secretive, nocturnal snakes. Shelters by day in moist litter, under rocks, and logs. Possibly the most abundant of the region's smaller snake species.

Diet: Lizard and skink specialist



12

Golden Crowned

*(Cacophis squamulosus)*

Danger: Weakly venomous. Reluctant biters which will rear up in bluff display and "mock strike" with mouth closed. The largest Crowned snake and will bite if highly provoked.

Description: Grayish-brown to dark brown with salmon to orange belly with mid line of black spots. Crown of parallel creamy-yellow or paler yellow-brown single stripe starting at snout and sweeping back either side of face and along neck, generally across eyes.

Average size: 50cm up to 90cm.

General: Nocturnal. Mostly found in rainforests and sheltered, moist areas within open forest eg; creek lines amongst litter, rocks, logs etc. Wherever good, lush ground cover prevails. Encountered under compost, logs and stones in well-vegetated gardens. Often seen crossing roads at night in the Hinterland.

Diet: Lizards such as skinks and their eggs. Also small frogs.



13

Dwarf Crowned

*(Cacophis kreftii)*

Danger: Weakly venomous. Not considered dangerous. Reluctant biters, relying more on bluff. Tiny mouths and short fangs, will generally rear up and "mock strike" with mouth closed.

Description: Small snake with small eyes. Dark steely-grey to black above, belly creamy-yellow with thin, dark cross-bands. Crown is a narrow, cream or white collar on nape of neck which extends forward along sides of head.

Average size: 25cm up to 35cm

General: Secretive, ground-dwelling snake. Hunts small skinks in leaf-litter at night. Shelters by day in moist litter, under rocks, logs and bark.

Diet: Small skinks.



14

Rough-Scaled

*(Tropidechis carinatus)*


Danger: Highly venomous. Bites have caused fatalities.

Description: Brown to olive with narrow, irregular cross-bands or blotches of darker brown. Belly surfaces greenish-grey or olive-cream often with darker blotches. Midbody scales have a raised keel or carinated appearance.

Average size: 70cm up to 1 metre.

General: Active both day and night, it is a very capable climber which means it often enters roof cavities in search of geckos and frogs. Reluctant by nature but will inflate and flatten the body and neck in an effort to intimidate an aggressor and if provoked further it will readily strike. It's usually only encountered in predominately moist areas within forest at altitude.

Diet: Variety of small vertebrates; frogs, lizards, small mammals, birds. Generally forages at ground level but can climb to take prey.



15

Stephens Banded

*(Hoplocephalus stephensi)*

Danger: Highly venomous. Bites can cause severe local symptoms plus headaches and nausea.

Description: Broad head distinct from neck. Body usually banded with pale grey/ yellowish bands across rusty brown or black, strongly marked in mid-body area and weaker contrast at head and tail. Darker face and head has distinctive pale brown, cream or white blotches or bars on either side and lips. Belly cream to grey, often with dark edging.

Average size: 90cm up to 1.2 metres.

General: Nocturnal. Good climber. Shelters in tree hollows, under loose bark and ground cover. Favours rainforests and mostly restricted to the region's hinterland.

Diet: Small mammals, lizards and frogs.



16

Bandy-Bandy

*(Vermicella annulata)*


Danger: Weakly venomous with localised symptoms around bite area. Generally considered harmless due to small size of mouth and inoffensive nature.

Description: Smooth skinned, glossy snake with distinctive pattern of sharply contrasting black and white rings that continue right around the body. Snout black, rounded. Short, blunt tail. Small eyes.

Average size: 50-60cm but up to 90cm.

General: Nocturnal, burrowing snake, found beneath the soil surface, under stumps, rocks and logs. Emerges at night to forage, especially after rain and is often seen crossing rural roads. It has a unique alarm posture of holding braced loops of its body off the ground when feeling threatened. Found across a wide range of habitats, from coastal forest to scrubland.

Diet: Feeds mostly on Blind Snakes.



17

Small-eyed snake

*(Cryptophis nigrescens)*

Danger: Highly venomous. Bites from this species have caused one human fatality. Will bite readily and thrash about if handled.

Description: Small black eyes barely discernible from surrounding dark scales. Colour generally glossy dark grey to black with cream or pink belly, sometimes with dark spots. Belly colour does not extend onto sides, and is not visible as it is on the Red-bellied Black Snake.

Average size: 50cm up to 90cm.

General: Secretive, nocturnal species which shelters under rocks, logs, sheets of bark, etc during the day. Encountered often across most of the Region and is regularly confused with the Red-Bellied Black Snake. This species is a common victim to roaming cats at night.

Diet: Small skinks and other small reptiles, their eggs, and occasionally frogs.



18

Tiger Snake

*(Notechis scutatus)*


Danger: Highly venomous.

Description: Solid build with a large broad flat head. From light grey to olive, brown through to black. Cross-bands of lighter scales continue down the length of the body. Belly lighter than main colour, usually cream or grey, often darker on throat and under tail.

Average size: 1 metre up to 1.3 metres.

General: Active day and night. Reluctant but will inflate and flatten body to intimidate. Will readily bite. Pockets found between Beerwah and Caloundra and several have been found as far north as far as Mountain Creek. No other confirmed finds within region.

Diet: Small vertebrates such as frogs, lizards and birds.



19

Common Death Adder

*(Acanthopis antarcticus)*


Danger: Highly venomous. Bites have caused fatalities. A ready biter only if provoked.

Description: Short, thick body with distinct large triangular head. Narrow neck and abruptly short, thin tail, usually cream or black. Colour variable, generally shades of grey to reddish-brown with irregular cross-banding. Belly greyish-cream with dark flecks. Lips usually barred or striped. Scales may be roughish or weakly keeled.

Average Length: 40-50cm but up to 75cm.

General: Nocturnal, secretive. It lies half-buried in substrate to ambush prey, often using its tail tip to attract prey. Thought to be mostly restricted to the Kenilworth and Conondale Ranges areas and is infrequently seen.

Diet: Small mammals, lizards, frogs and other reptiles.



20

Coastal Taipan

*(Oxyuranus scutellatus)*

Danger: Highly venomous. Bites can be fatal. Will make multiple strikes.

Description: Long head long with distinct angular brow. Snout and face generally paler than body colour, otherwise uniform colouring along upper body ranging from pale brown to almost black. Belly cream with orange spots and blotches.

Average size: Up to 2 metres.

General: Mostly active during the day. Secretive, highly alert and rarely seen. Rarely sighted in Sunshine Coast but has been reported in northern end, including Noosa, Tewantin, Tinbeerwah, Cooroy.

Diet: Mammals like mice, rats and bandicoots.

