

If you are bitten

Rattlesnakes will usually (but not always), rattle when you are too close. If you inadvertently get too close and a snake strikes:

- Back away immediately. Sit down in a safe area, relax and examine the bitten area.
- Stay calm. Your life is not in danger. Most bites do not result in permanent damage. Approximately 25% of snake strikes are “dry bites” (with no venom).
- Send someone for help, or dial 911 and tell the operator to contact Grasslands National Park 306-298-2257 (during office hours) or Parks Canada [Emergency Dispatch 877-852-3100](#) (after hours).
- Keep the bitten area below heart level, and if possible keep it immobilized to reduce the venom spread.
- Avoid running or fast walking.
- Never apply a tourniquet, cut the wound or suck out the venom –these actions only make the injury worse.
- Record the time of the strike. Every half hour draw a line around the bruised area as it progresses in size.
- Remove all jewellery or other restrictive items, as the limb may swell.
- The nearest anti-venom is at the Cypress Regional Hospital in Swift Current. If possible phone the Emergency room number (306-778-9412) and provide them with as much information as possible.
- Do not wait for symptoms to appear – seek medical attention immediately!

By following these simple precautions, you will be at very little risk should you meet a rattlesnake in Grasslands National Park. If you do meet one, enjoy the experience from a safe distance of at least four metres.

Visit the Visitor Reception Centre for more information about these fascinating creatures.

Aussi disponible en français.



Grasslands
National Park
parks.canada.gc.ca

YOU ARE IN RATTLESNAKE COUNTRY



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Grassland Snakes

Grasslands National Park is home to five species of snakes:

- Bull snake
- Eastern yellow-bellied racer
- Plains garter snake
- Plains hog nosed snake
- Prairie rattlesnake.

The prairie rattlesnake is the only venomous snake in the park, and your chances of being bitten by one are less than the chances of being struck by lightning.

Identification

The only snake that can be easily confused with the prairie rattlesnake is the bull snake. Both can exceed a metre in length, and both can range in color from light to dark brown.

Rattle snakes:

- Side blotches are much less distinct than on Bull snakes.
- Two light coloured lines behind and below the eyes.
- Poisonous snakes have vertical pupils, like a cat.
- Triangular head—distinct narrowing behind the jaws.
- A “pit” or small hole between nostrils and eyes on either side of head.
- Rattle on the end of body creates unmistakable dry, high pitched “rattle” sound.

Bull snakes:

- Distinct gold and dark brown pattern with clearly edged dark blotches in a line along the back, and another line of spots along either side.
- Non-venomous snakes have round pupils like a dog.
- Narrow heads that grade smoothly into the rest of their body (like all other GNP snakes).
- No “pit” or small hole between nostrils and eyes.



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Visiting rattle snake country

All snakes are very shy and timid. They will always first rely upon their camouflage to stay hidden from you. Visitors to rattlesnake country can take a few simple precautions to prevent unexpected encounters:

- Watch the ground in front of you – try to see the snake before you get too close.
- Do not step on or over rocks or shrubs. Snakes often lie up against rocks and can be startled if you suddenly step over them.
- Wear boots or shoes that cover your ankles, and long, loose fitting pants that reach to your ankles.
- If you are going near a snake hibernacula, wear snake gaiters.
- Don't put your hands and feet into crevices, holes or rock ledges. These are the places snakes seek to find shelter.
- DO NOT TOUCH or attempt to handle any of the snakes you encounter.
- Hike in groups of at least three. This way, if someone should be bitten, one person can go for help while the other remains with the person who's been bitten. -



YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY

Cell phone coverage is unavailable in most areas
Grasslands Information Centre 306-298-2257

EMERGENCY: CALL 911



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