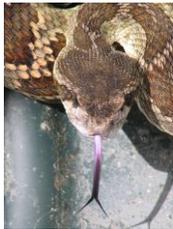


## Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes are fully protected in Blue Sky Ecological Reserve.

Rattlesnakes are beneficial because they keep down the population of mice and rats; some of these mammals harbor disease and destroy crops.

### **SPECIES OF RATTLESNAKE FOUND IN BLUE SKY**



#### **Southern Pacific Rattlesnake** (*Crotalus viridis helleri*)

- ❖ Found virtually everywhere. Length 6 inches – 5 feet. Greenish-brown to black snake has brown to black blotches down its back. The blotches generally have lighter edges.



#### **Red Diamond Rattlesnake** (*Crotalus ruber ruber*)

- ❖ Reddish-brown snake with the outline of cream-colored diamonds down its back. Usually prefers areas of brush and scattered rock (chaparral). Length 9 inches to 5.5 feet.



#### **Southwestern Speckled Rattlesnake** (*Crotalus mitchelli pyrrhus*)

- ❖ Coloring looks like decomposed granite: from cream or tan to sometimes pink or yellowish, and usually with indistinct bands of salt-and-pepper speckling. Found in rocky areas.

All snakes in San Diego are having a hard time surviving as we take away the habitat to build houses and roads. If you encounter a rattlesnake while hiking in Blue Sky, consider yourself lucky. Rattlesnakes can be active year round in San Diego County.

### **Staying Safe in Rattlesnake Country**

The rules are simple. Remember, all snakes are harmless **from a distance.**

- Learn to behave in a way that does not frighten snakes. Always watch where you put your hands and feet. Never reach under rocks or logs. If there is a fallen log on the trail always step on the log and look over the other side. Step way out and over as a snake may be lying on the other side.
- If you are playing in areas where you think there might be rattlesnakes, wear long pants, long sleeves and shoes. Don't play in bare feet or flip-flops.
- Keep your eyes and ears open wide. Try to walk, not run, so that you don't surprise a snake. If you do come upon a snake, take two giant steps backwards. Enjoy watching it from a safe distance, then give it a very wide berth and move on.
- Never tease a snake, or try to corner one.

Rattlesnakes will strike only in self-defense. They are quite shy and do not come after people. All any snake wants to do is to eat to survive and reproduce.

Don't touch even a **dead** rattlesnake. Do not play with, tease or try to capture rattlesnakes.

Using common sense, we can share our open spaces with rattlesnakes.

### **What to do if bitten**

- Move away from the snake.
- Stay calm and do not panic.
- Call 911 or get to the nearest hospital immediately.

- Remove any rings, bracelets, and wrist watch, if bitten on the hand or arm. Remove shoes and any toe rings, or ankle bracelets, if bitten on the leg or foot.
- Keep bitten extremity still, and below the level of the heart.
- If soap and water are available, wash the skin over the bite.

### What not to do if bitten

- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not apply ice to the wound.
- Do not attempt to cut the wound or suck out the venom.
- Do not take any medication.

### Rattlesnakes and Dogs

Dogs are naturally curious and often this curiosity brings them into harms way. Please keep your dog on a leash (of not less than 6') and away from the brush at the sides of the trail. Keep a look out for any rattlesnakes which may be crossing the trail.

If your dog is bitten, seek veterinary care *immediately*.