



How to identify snakes in Zambia

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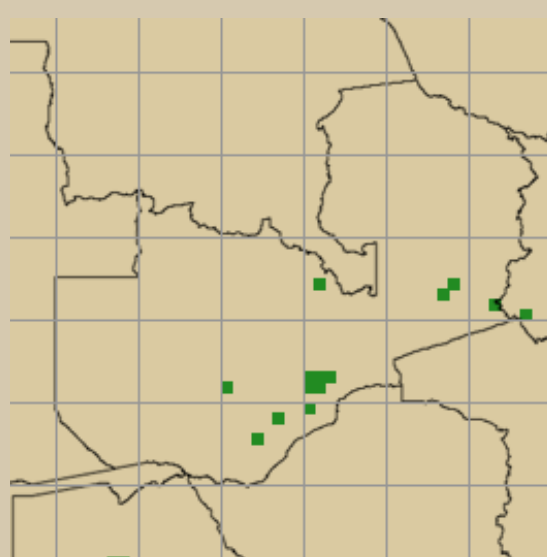


A step—by—step guide on identify Zambia's snakes

WHAT IS THAT SNAKE?

1. DISTRIBUTION

Where in Zambia was the snake found? Some snakes only occur in parts of Zambia, others are found everywhere.



The recently recorded locations of the Zambezi Garter Snake (the snake is in fact found everywhere in Zambia, except west of the Zambezi in Barotse land)

2. LOCATION / HABITAT

In what location was the snake found? On the ground? In a bush,? In a tree? Was it near water? Some snakes are very habitat specific.



The East African Gaboon Adder, found in dense forest.

3. BEHAVIOUR

What was the behaviour of the snake? What was it doing when you saw it? What did it do when it discovered you? Did it hide away? Did it try to flee? Did it stay where it was? Did it hiss? Did it rear up? Did it spread a hood? Did it inflate its neck? Was it active at day or night?

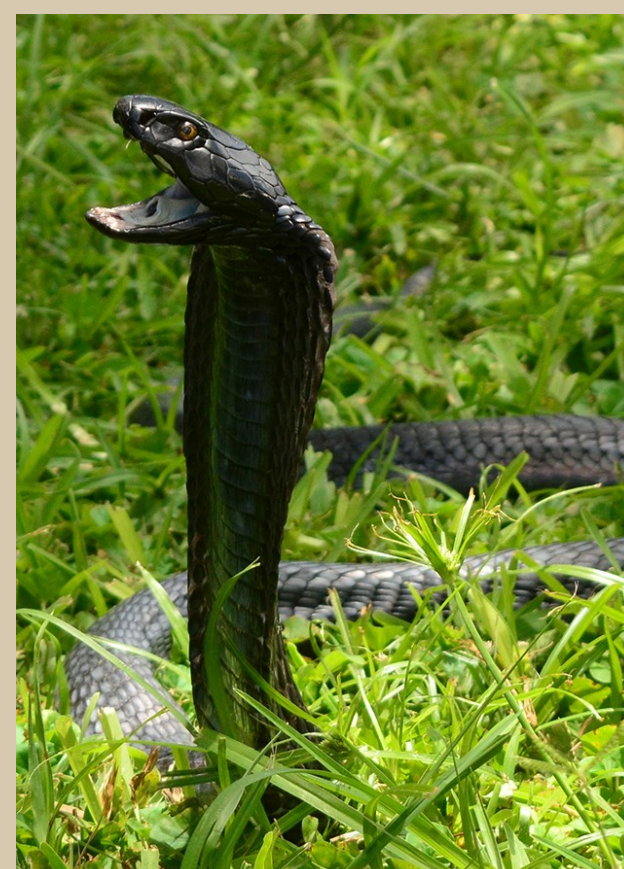


Coiled-up defence pose of the **Rhombic Night Adder**



A young **Boomslang** inflating its neck to look bigger

Black-Necked Spitting Cobra
Rearing up and spreading a hood



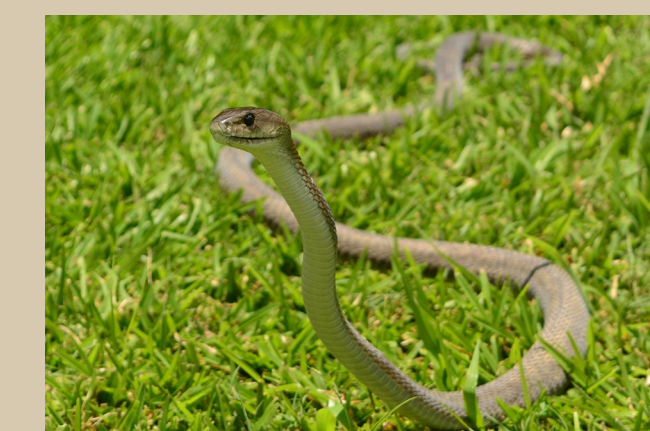
4. APPEARANCE

What does the snake look like?

SIZE

- How long is the snake?
- How thick is the snake?

Make comparisons: “as thick as a finger / an arm”



The long slender body of the **Black Mamba**



The small and thin bodied **Dwarf Whip Snake**

BODY SHAPE

What shape does the snake have? Is it stocky and sort? Is it long and slender? Does it have a clear neck and head? Or not at all? Does it have a short, stubby tail or a long and thin tail?



The stocky, heavy, powerful, short body of the **Gaboon Viper**



The stocky **Puff Adder** has a clear neck and an arrow-head shaped head.

SCALES

What can you tell about the scales on the head? How many scales touch the front of the eye? How many touch the rear of the eye? How many lip scales touch the eye? > see poster on scale counting for more information



Black Mamba in close up.

3 scales in front of the eye, 4 scales behind the eye, 1 upper labial (lip) scale touching the eye from below.

COLOUR

What colour does the snake have? And is it one colour or different colours? Is there a pattern you can describe? Dots? Lines? Other markings?

Is the skin in between the scales different



The slender green body with the black markings of the **Spotted Bush Snake**



The **Gaboon Viper** has geometrical markings on his body, and a broad, whitish head.