

## Copperhead

(*Agkistrodon contortrix*)



### Identification:

Length: 24 - 36 inches.

Coloration: Tan to rusty brown with darker brown bands that are narrower on top than the sides giving the band an hourglass shape.

Other distinguishing features: Vertically elliptical pupils (like a cat's eyes), heat-sensing pits between the eyes and nostrils (characteristic of all pit vipers).

### Habitat:

Usually found on the forest floor in dried leaves.

### Benefits:

This species helps control rodents.

### Problems / Concerns:

This species is venomous. However, its venom is not highly potent. It is also not an aggressive species. It seldom strikes unless handled or stepped on. According to the Antivenin Institute of America, of all the Copperhead bites in the nation over a 10-year period, not one resulted in death. According to the National Safety Council, a person is 5 times more likely to be killed by lightning (odds are 1 in 4,210,857 per year) than by snakebite (odds are less than 1 in 20,406,462).

### City Management Policy:

Since this species is not large or aggressive, it poses little threat to trail users. As a result, the city's management policy for this species may range from "no action" to relocating individuals to the closest suitable habitat.

### Citizen's Responsibility:

To coexist peacefully with these animals, citizens are encouraged to stay on designated trails and remain alert. While hiking, wear hiking boots and long, loose fitting pants to provide ankle protection. Citizens are discouraged from rolling fallen logs and digging in leaves on the forest floor.

### Similar Species:

Hognose snake (*Heterodon platyrhinos*).

Length: 20- 33 inches

Coloration: light brown with darker brown blotches.

Other distinguishing features: Round pupils, heat-sensing pits absent, pointed and upturned snout, neck flattens and spreads when scared, is known to "play dead".

