

## Western Diamondback

### Rattlesnake

(*Crotalus atrox*)



#### Identification:

Length: 30 - 72 inches.

Coloration: Various tones of gray with darker "diamond" shaped patterns along the back outlined in white or yellow, two prominent stripes on the face.

Other distinguishing features: Vertically elliptical pupils (like a cat's eyes), heat-sensing pits between the eyes and nostrils (characteristic of all pit vipers), a black and white banded tail with a rattle at the tip.

#### Habitat:

Found among canyons and rocky cliffs as well as nearby meadows.

#### Benefits:

This species helps control rodents.

#### Problems / Concerns:

This species is venomous. However, 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:

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. When hiking, wear hiking boots and long, loose fitting pants to provide ankle protection. Citizens are discouraged from climbing on rock outcroppings and/or cliffs.

#### Similar Species:

There are several non-venomous snakes that may superficially resemble a western diamondback rattlesnake, but the lack of a rattle on the tail can quickly reveal that they are not. One such snake may be the corn snake.

Corn Snake (*Elaphe guttata*)

Length: 30 - 48 inches

Coloration: Highly variable. Series of blotches along the back that may range in color from rust to dark brown. Rattle absent.



Corn Snake Photo: John Davis