



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

Snakes



INTRODUCTION

- Status in CCT:** Least Concern to Endangered, depending on species
- Native range:** Cosmopolitan
- Diet:** Small to medium mammals, reptiles and invertebrates, birds and eggs
- Behaviour:** Mostly nocturnal, solitary, tend to avoid people
- Predators:** Leopards, mongooses, birds of prey
- Threats:** Cars, cats, dogs, poisoning



COMMON ISSUES IN URBAN AREAS

- Snakes are most active in the Western Cape from October to April.
- Snakes will generally avoid urban areas and people, but may be attracted to areas where there are rodents.
- Snakes play an important role in controlling pest numbers.
- However, snakes can be dangerous and difficult to see, and may attack people if approached or disturbed.
- Snakes may hunt for small livestock, but this is relatively rare outside of rural areas.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AT HOME

There are a number of measures to reduce potential impacts from snakes:

- Supervise children when walking or playing in outdoor areas.
- Enclose property adequately (maintain walls and possible entry points into the property).
- Ensure that pets are prevented from free ranging beyond your property.
- Whenever a snake is spotted, be sure to maintain a safe distance between yourself and the animal.
- Take care and stay vigilant when walking in the veld – snakes are unlikely to approach and attack you but may strike if stepped on or approached closely.
- Don't assume that a snake is non-venomous or harmless – treat them with respect and avoid going near them.
- If you do get bitten, contact the nearest hospital and provide them with as much information about the snake as you possibly can. Providing a picture of the snake is also very useful.



Snakes are vulnerable when moving to fragmented habitats.



Mongoose are a natural predator of snakes.

Taking precautions to avoid encountering a snake is ideal. If mitigation measures don't work, or are not feasible, snakes can be removed with the landowner's permission and a valid [CapeNature](#) permit. It is however recommended that a professional snake catcher or company be consulted to carry out a safe removal and translocation. Snakes that are in the urban environment near a City of Cape Town nature reserve can be translocated into the reserve by qualified City staff or contractors.

According to the City of Cape Town [Animal Keeping By-law](#) (2021), snakes are wild animals and may not be kept in captivity on any residential property without a CapeNature permit and a City permit with [CCT Environmental Health](#). If you are aware of snakes being owned or hunted without a permit, contact [CapeNature](#), and the Cape of Good Hope SPCA's [Wildlife Unit](#) if there are welfare concerns.

RESOURCES/FURTHER INFORMATION

[Snake information](#) | [Full list of NEMBA-regulated species](#) | [African Snakebite Institute](#)

CONTACTS

Poison Information Helpline of the Western Cape (PIHWC): 0861 555 777

CCT animal-keeping permit applications:

[CapeNature hunting permits](#) | [CCT Environmental Health](#)

Injured wild animals/welfare concerns: [SPCA Wildlife Unit](#) | [Urban wildlife contact list](#)