



Junior Ranger

Review

August - September 1997

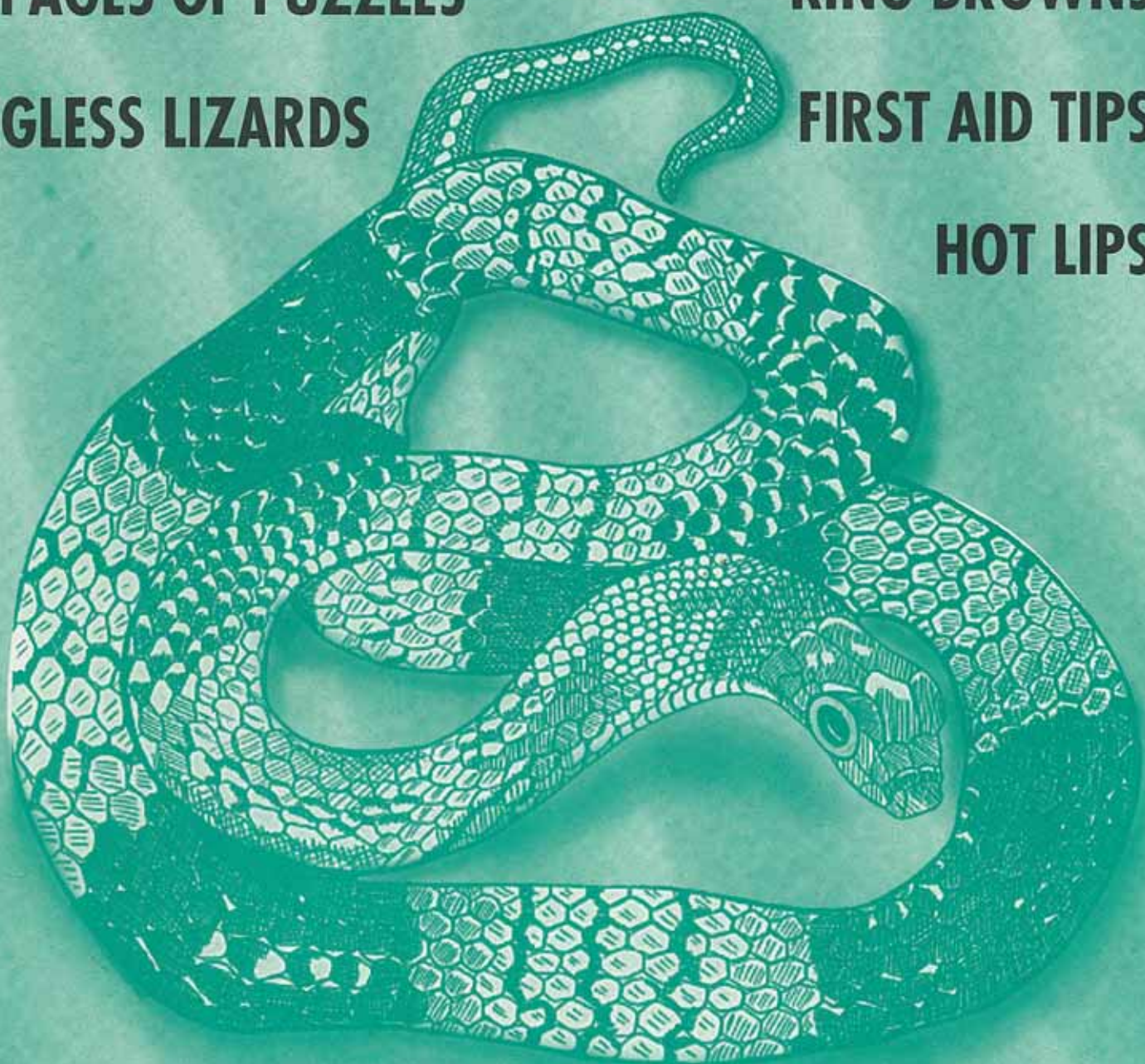
2 PAGES OF PUZZLES

KING BROWNS

LEGLESS LIZARDS

FIRST AID TIPS

HOT LIPS



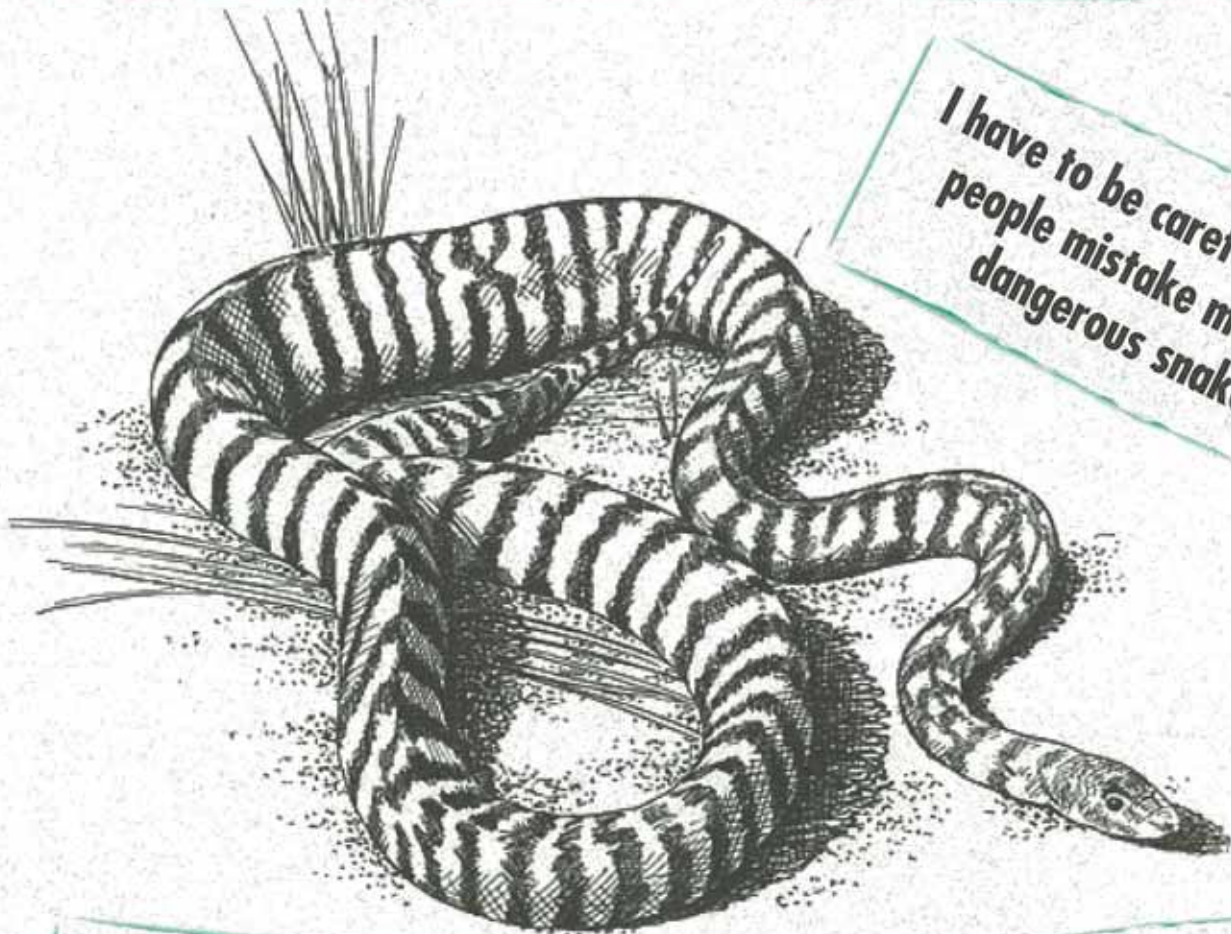
AUSTRALIAN SNAKES

PSSST... Sssnakes inssside!

GENTLE GIANTS

I'm a python but I don't have a broad head like Carpet snakes and Children's Pythons.

I'm a nocturnal creature so I'll probably never get to meet you.



I have to be careful because people mistake me for a dangerous snake.

I'm really very nice. I very rarely bite people and of course, I'm not venomous.

Rabbits and mice don't like me. But I like them.

I like to crawl down and hide in old rabbit warrens.

I'm a Woma from the sandy deserts of Central Australia.

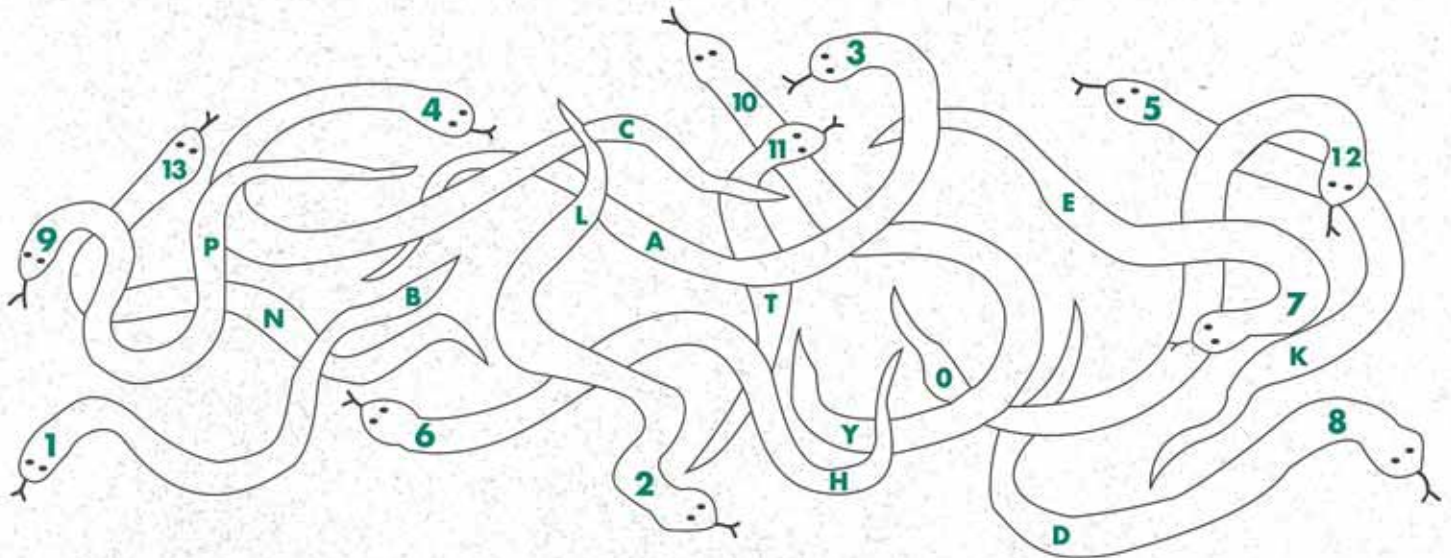
What's my name?

I'm the Woma's cousin from northern Australia.

I can grow to 2.5 metres long and have a shiny black head.

I like woodlands and rocky areas.

These snakes will help you decode my name.



I'm a

1	2	3	4	5

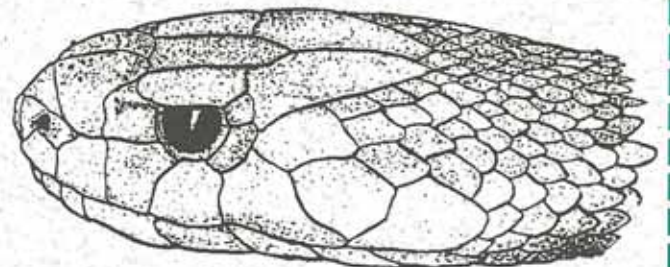
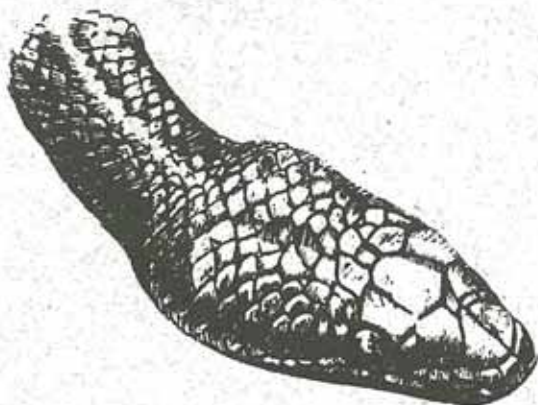
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6	7	3	8	7	8

9	10	11	6	12	13

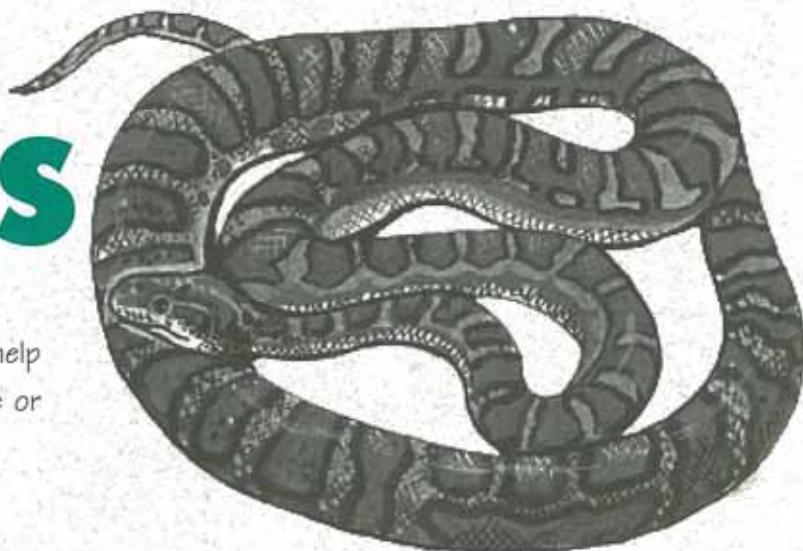
Go down with a bite or stand up and fight !

Venomous snakes have a pair of long teeth called fangs. They are like a doctor's syringe. Poison flows through the hollow fangs into the victim's bloodstream.

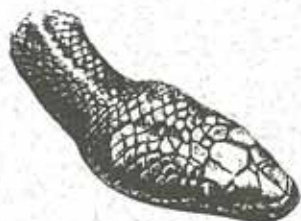


Pythons don't crush their victims, they suffocate them. The python grabs its prey in its jaws and loops its body around it. Each time the victim breathes out, the python squeezes tighter. Soon the poor animal can't expand its chest to suck in air and it suffocates.

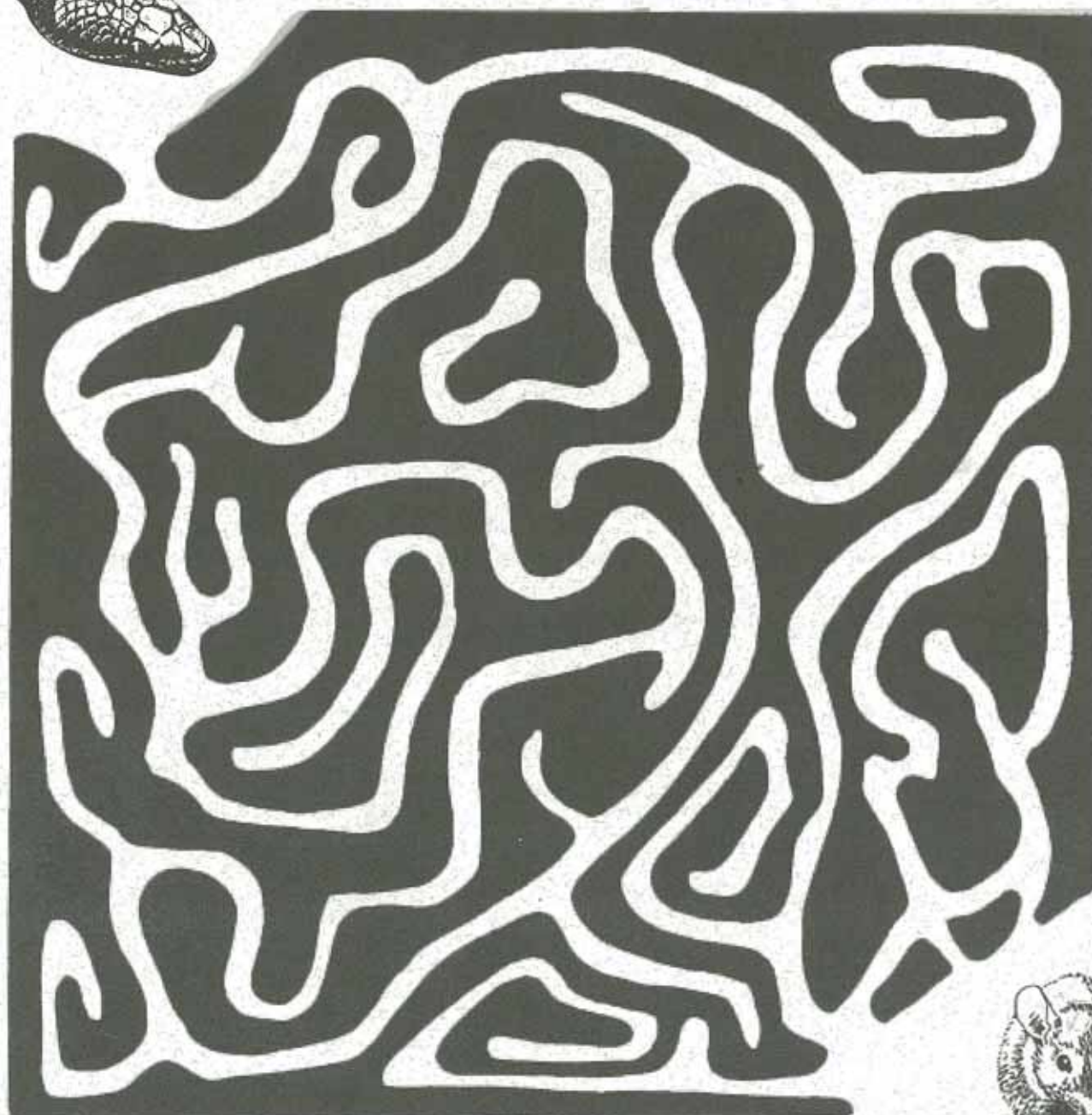
Hot Lips



Pythons have heat sensors in their lips which help them hunt at night. They can find a mouse or bird by its body heat.



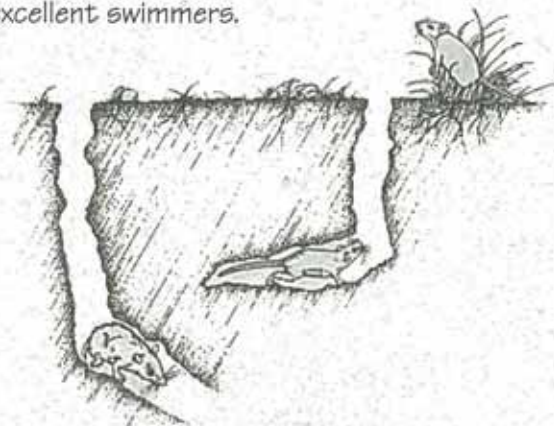
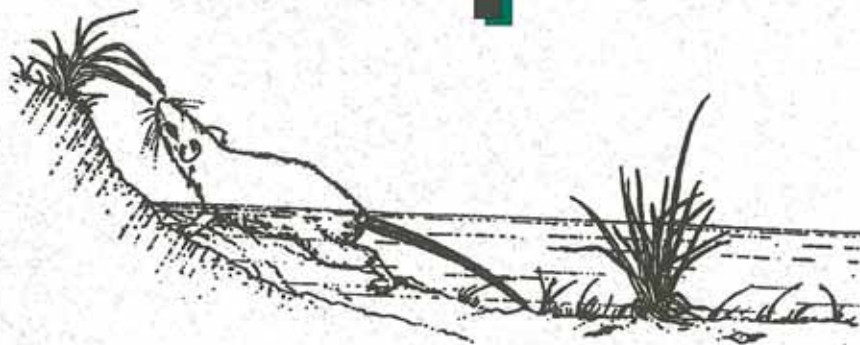
Which way must the python go in the dark to catch the unsuspecting mouse?



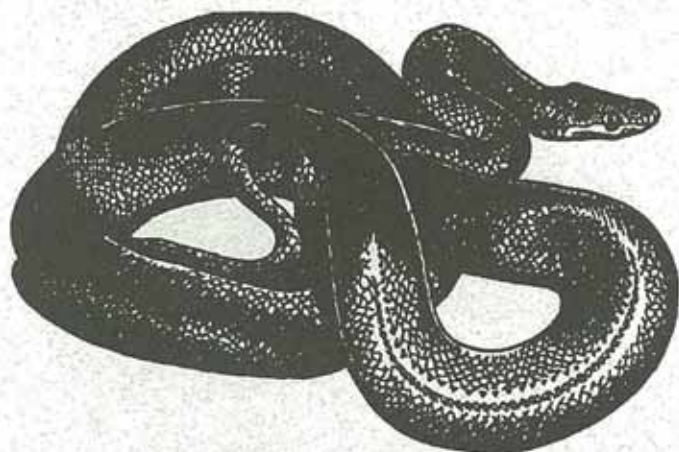
Out on the floodplains

On the floodplains east of Darwin are two animals whose lives are closely linked.

Many thousands of Dusky Rats *Rattus coletti* live on the floodplains. They feed on the roots of grasses and sedges. They are excellent swimmers.



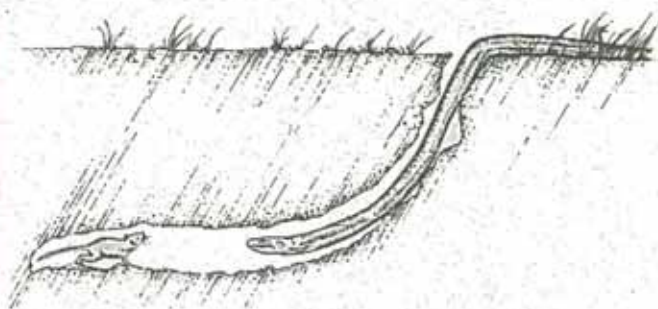
The rats live in burrows beneath the hard soil. They can breed when only one month old. Numbers build up quickly when conditions are good.



The rat's enemy is the Water Python *Liasis fuscus*. Small pythons slide into the burrows to get the rats. Big pythons stay on the surface and wait for the rats to come out at night. They have heat sensors that help them locate the rats in the dark.

Did you know...

If you weighed all the rats and pythons living in one square kilometre of floodplain, they would weigh more than all the large animals (elephants, giraffes, etc) that live on one square kilometre of African savannah.



The python's enemy.

Pythons lay their eggs in the dry season when the soil is hard. They can't dig a burrow so they use someone else's. This is risky business because the burrow's owner is fond of eggs.

Use the number code to find its name: $\overline{6}$ $\overline{10}$ $\overline{3}$ $\overline{14}$ $\overline{1}$ $\overline{22}$ $\overline{24}$ $\overline{23}$ $\overline{18}$ $\overline{3}$ $\overline{24}$ $\overline{1}$

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Snake facts and fallacies.

Snakes are found in all countries except Ireland and New Zealand.

We can swallow things much bigger than our head. I bet you can't do that!

Do you like snakes? A lot of people don't. But I think we're pretty amazing creatures.

There are more than 150 different kinds of snakes in Australia. Most of them are harmless to people.

I flick out my tongue when I want to take a sniff. Your scent sensors are in your nose but mine are in my tongue.

My scales are made of a material called keratin, like your fingernails.

Imagine crawling around on your tummy all day. My skin is like a suit of armour. Underneath is a brand new suit of scaly armour.

There are no Boa Constrictors in Australia but there are a number of pythons.

You can yell at me but I won't hear you because I'm deaf. But my tummy is sensitive to vibrations of the ground, so I can feel your footsteps.

We have no arms or legs, yet we can climb trees and swim.

Our skin isn't slimy. It's dry like yours.

The Taipan is the Northern Territory's most dangerous snake.

It's not really true to call us cold blooded. My blood is as warm as yours after I've laid in the sun for a while.

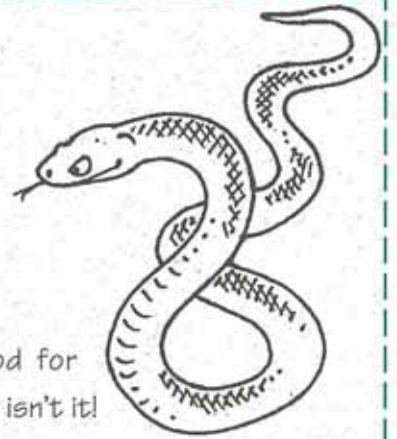
The Childrens Python has nothing to do with kids. Naturalist John Gray named it in 1842 after his former boss at the British Museum: John George Children.

My cousins, the Cobras, aren't charmed by Indian music. They're deaf too. They are charmed by the movements of the musician's body.

Did you know there are no carpet snakes in Tasmania?

We don't hypnotise our prey. I wish we could. That would be fun.

What does a snake do all day?



Our bodies are like high-powered engines that are running warm all day long. We're on the go all day. But we need to eat lots of food to provide the energy our body burns up.

Snakes are different. They rely on solar power a fair bit. They heat their bodies by basking in the sun.

They can go without food for weeks. This is pretty clever, isn't it!

However, it also means they can't afford a very active lifestyle, so what does a snake do all day? It spends a lot of time undercover, doing nothing at all!

Who am I?

I live all over the Northern Territory.

I'm about 1.5 metres long.

I have a slender body and a small head.

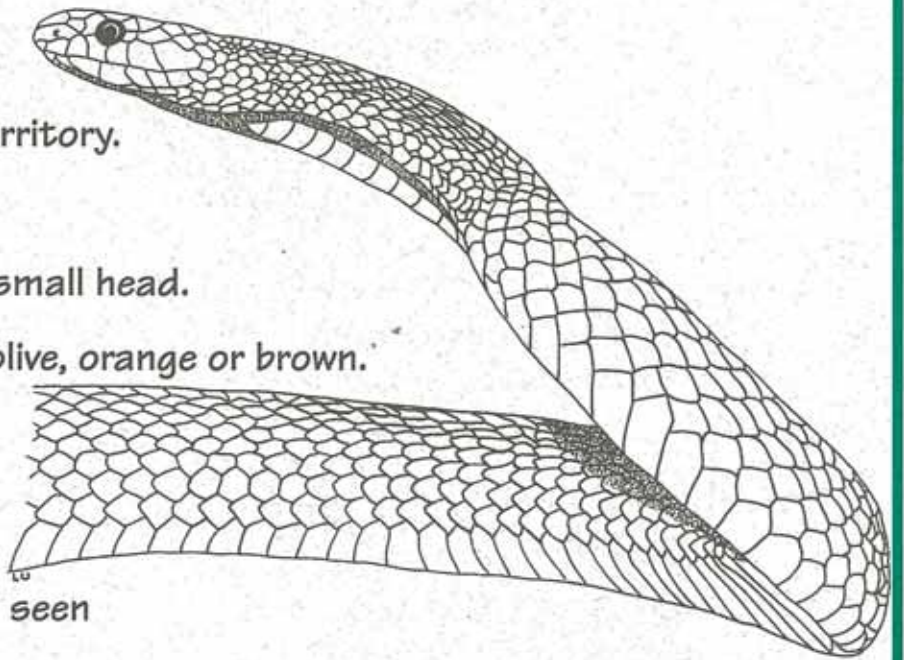
My colour varies a lot: pale olive, orange or brown.

I'm diurnal (which means I'm active in the daytime.)

Of all the venomous snakes I'm the one most likely to be seen in Territory towns.

I mainly eat lizards but I'm also attracted to aviaries, chook houses and places where there's lots of mice.

If you know the 26 letters of the alphabet then you should be able to work out my name.



I'm a

23 5 19 20 5 18 14

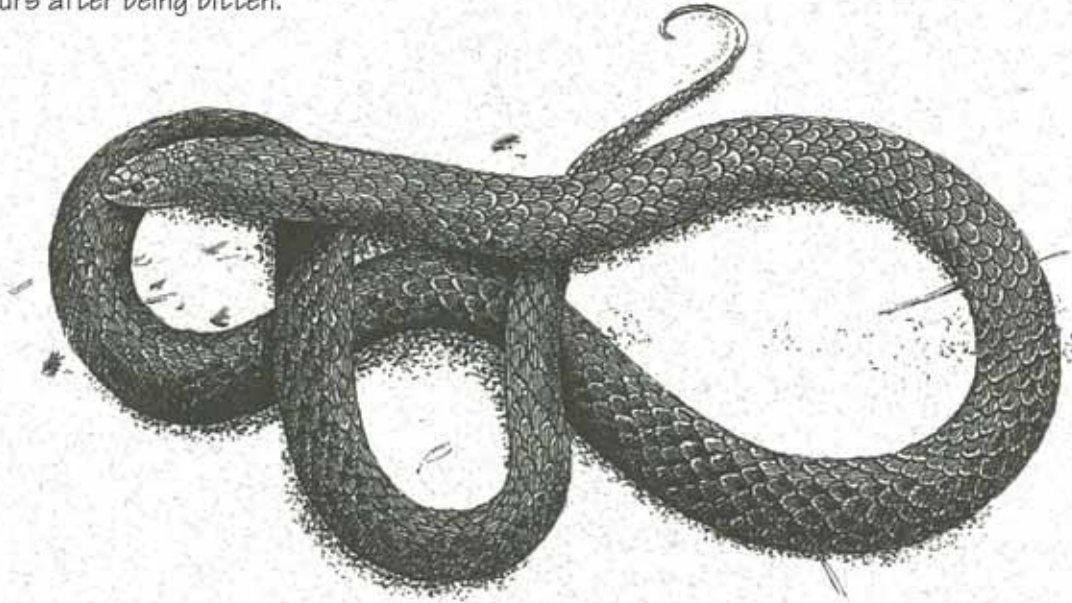
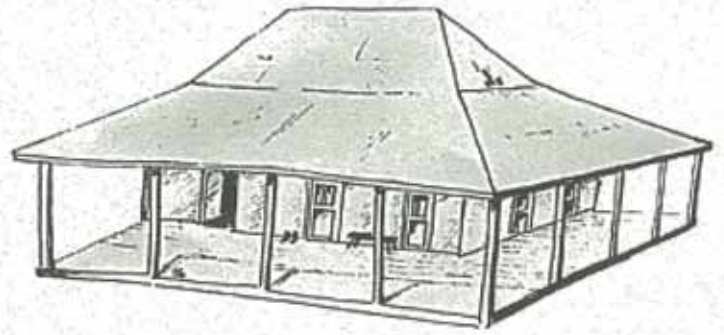
2 18 15 23 14

snake

A case of mistaken identity

It was a hot night. The West Australian farm worker was having trouble sleeping. He reached under his bed on the verandah to grab his cigarettes. They cost him his life because next to them was a large brown-coloured snake. It bit him on the hand.

The local hospital did all they could for him. They injected him with Brown Snake antivenom but it didn't work. He died 37 hours after being bitten.



The Snake that bit him was *Pseudechis australis*. It is commonly called the King Brown but brown snake antivenom is no help to victims of its paralysing bite. It's actually a member of the black snake family even though its skin is always some shade of brown. Snake experts want us to stop calling it the King Brown and use the name Mulga Snake instead.

Mulga Snake

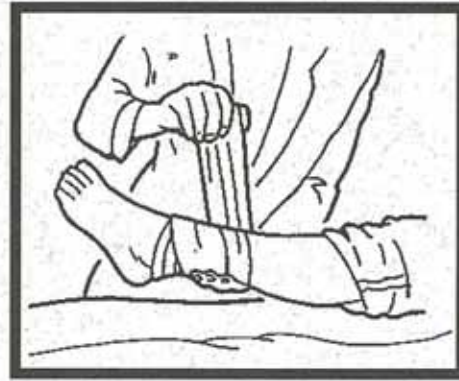
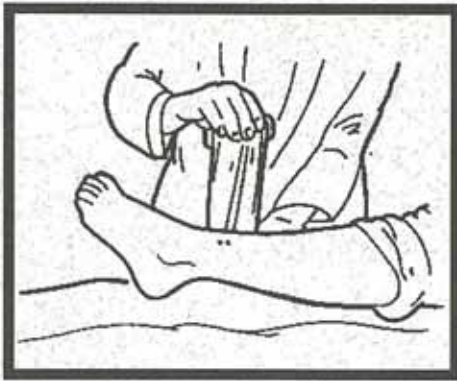
- It's Australia's biggest venomous snake.
- It has a thicker body and a broader head than a Western Brown.
- If it is cornered it flattens its head and body to look more ferocious.

- It's mostly nocturnal in Northern Australia. People in Central Australia may sometimes come across it in the winter sunning itself on rocks.

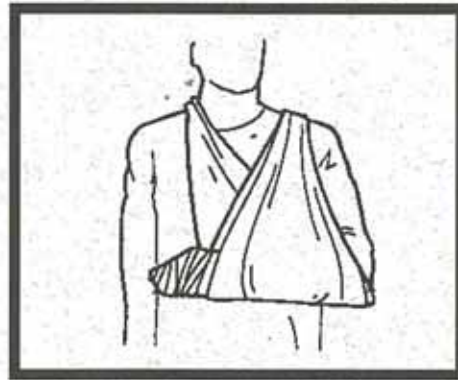
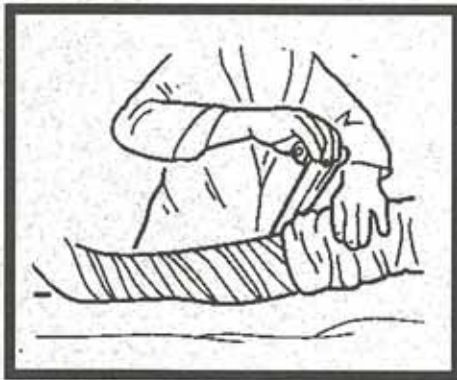
First Aid for Snake Bite

The Do's

1. Stay calm and reassure the victim (death from snake bite is rare). Get the victim to lie or sit still.
2. Apply a bandage over the spot that's been bitten. Wrap the bandage as firmly as you would on a sprained ankle (not so tight that you cut off the blood supply).
3. Bandage as much of the limb as possible. If the bite is on a leg, tie both legs together to stop movement. If the bite is on a hand or arm, tie it to the torso.



4. Get the patient to a hospital as quickly as possible. If possible, ring the hospital giving them details of the snake bite and the time you expect to arrive.



5. Contact a Ranger if the snake is in your backyard.

The Dont's

Don't panic. Try to stay calm.

Don't wash or cut the wound.

Never try to suck the venom out of the skin.

Don't try to catch or kill the snake.

What's the BIGGEST snake?

The Reticulated Python from Southeast Asia is the world's longest snake. One was measured and found to be nearly 10 metres long. But if you're talking heaviest, then the Green Anacondas from South America are king. Anacondas are dark green with black spots. At night they lie in water waiting to catch animals that come for a drink. This puzzle will reveal the identity of the Northern Territory's longest snake. The hidden words go in all directions: across, up, down, diagonally and backwards. Cross out the letters as you go.

- ANACONDA
- BITE
- BOA
- CONstrict
- DEATH ADDER
- EGGS
- FANGS
- MULGA SNAKE
- PYTHON
- REPTILE
- SKINK
- TAIPAN
- TREE SNAKE
- VENOMOUS
- WILD
- WOMA

D	T	C	I	R	T	S	N	O	C
O	E	K	A	N	S	E	E	R	T
B	O	A	N	A	C	O	N	D	A
I	P	Y	T	H	O	N	E	E	W
T	N	T	P	H	E	L	G	I	O
E	K	A	N	S	A	G	L	U	M
K	N	I	K	S	S	D	L	I	A
R	E	P	T	I	L	E	D	P	Y
T	H	A	F	A	N	G	S	E	O
V	E	N	O	M	O	U	S	N	R

You should have 14 letters left over. String them together to spell the name of the Northern Territory giant.

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