



WILDLIFE WINDOW: Common Snakes In Your Yard.

Don't be Scared of these Non-venomous Snakes.

By the Ponds & Preserves Committee

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That “Scary” time of year is upon us. Halloween! Another thing many of us are scared of is snakes. But we don't need to be!

Florida is home to 46 species of native snakes, only 6 are venomous. Most are harmless and beneficial. Snakes play important roles in our natural ecosystems and should be respected rather than feared. They are important predators that help control rodent populations which can spread disease to humans. They are also important prey for birds, mammals, alligators, and even other snakes. Let's explore two of the most common ones seen in Rivendell and dispel some fear.

Black Racer or Blacksnake (*Coluber constrictor*)

Black Racers snakes measure about 20-56 inches as adults. The Black Racer sheds its skin once a year, less than the average snake who usually shed their skin twice to four times a year.

The habits and behavior of a Black Racer snake are unique. It is excellent at swimming and climbing and can move at very high speeds, which is why it is known as a 'racer'. Although they are not venomous, the Black Racer will often bite its prey when said prey is cornered. Typically, a Black Racer will run away rather than fight.

A telling characteristic of the Black Racer is that they are very active during the day. Some ways to identify a Black Racer are by their black dorsal side, grey bellies, and white under neck & chin.

(Bing image)



Banded Water Snake (*Nerodia fasciata*)

The Banded Watersnake (or Southern Watersnake) is a mostly aquatic, nonvenomous snake native to the United States. Most adult banded watersnakes are about 22-42 inches. Typically they are gray, greenish-gray, or brown in color, with dark crossbanding.

Many specimens are so dark in color that their patterning is barely discernible. They have flat heads and are fairly heavy-bodied.

Banded Water Snakes are found in nearly all freshwater habitats, preferring the shallow waters of swamps, marshes, ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers.

(Photos: L-Bob Frank, R-Bing)



These snakes, shown above, in fact most snakes in Florida, are not dangerous to humans in the slightest and usually attempt to flee if confronted. Like all creatures, they have a role in their environment. Working together, we can keep our ponds and preserves healthy and attractive to all wildlife.

Here's the Scary News - Just in Time for Halloween!

Beware of the **Coral Snake** – it is venomous! Both of the snakes pictured below have been spotted in our area. The color similarity between these two is confusing – and can be dangerous if you are wrong. Learn the little rhyme to tell the difference between these venomous and non-venomous snakes. Teach your kids too.

Words of wisdom!

(Bing image)

Coral Snake = Venomous!

“Red touch Yellow, Kill a Fellow”

Small, vibrantly colored, highly venomous snakes.



Scarlet Kingsnake = Non-venomous

“Red touch Black, Friend of Jack” (or “Red on Black, Venom Lack”) Adults are 14-20 inches long.

