

Timber Rattlesnake

Crotalus horridus

Description: Third largest venomous snake in the US, their natural camouflage makes them nearly "invisible" as they lay in wait for prey. They have black coloration with yellow/brown patches. They also have transverse bands of color. Their rattle structure is made of loosely attached horny segments; a new segment is added each time they shed.

Range: US and Southern Canada

Habitat: Wooded upland forest with rocky outcroppings, swampy areas, and floodplains.

Diet: Mice, voles, shrews, chipmunks, squirrels and occasionally birds.

Weight: 1-3 pounds

Length: 3-5 feet

Lifespan: 20-30 years

Status: Least concern

Predators: Red-tailed hawks, foxes, coyotes, owls, and skunks

Threats: Loss of habitat, illegal snake hunters, urban and residential development, collection for pet trade

Relatives: Pit vipers

Breeding: The mating season is July through October. Timber rattlesnakes are ovoviviparous, have a gestation period of 135 days, and give birth to 1 to 20 young. Females only reproduce every 2 to 6 years.

Quick Facts:

- Young snakes are born in a membranous sac which they open with a sharp egg tooth
- They are already equipped with a single tiny rattle segment (button), venom and fangs; they receive no maternal care.
- They rarely attack humans- their bite can be fatal if left untreated
- Rattlesnakes are ectotherms. During winter, dozens of timber rattlesnakes may congregate together in a den to hibernate below the frost line in association with copperheads, other snakes, and skinks.

Conservation: There are laws in multiple states to protect and outlaw the collection of timber rattlesnakes.

GSC Residents:

Name: Bocephus

Date of Birth: ~December 1, 2003 to December 1, 2004

Date of Death: April 15, 2025

Sex: Male

Origin: Private entity



Sources:

https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Crotalus_horridus/

<https://www.fishandboat.com/Conservation/Reptiles-Amphibians/Pages/TimberRattlesnakeConservation.aspx>