

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake

Crotalus adamanteus

Description: The largest rattlesnake in the world and arguably the most dangerous snake native to the US; these are heavy-bodied snakes with blackish brown, olive or dusty gray bodies patterned with dark brown to black diamond-shaped blotches edged with narrow white bands on the dorsal (back) surface. The sides of their heads are patterned with two white oblique stripes.

Range: Southeast US

Habitat: pine woods, brush-filled and grassy areas, and palmetto flat lands.

Diet: Small mammals and birds

Weight: Average 5-15 pounds

Length: Average 4 ft but up to 8 ft

Lifespan: 15-20 years

Status: Least concern by IUCN, Endangered under the NC Endangered Species Act

Predators: Birds of prey, mammals, other snakes

Threats: Habitat destruction and purposeful killings by humans

Relatives: Timber rattlesnake, tiger rattlesnake, Arizona black rattlesnake, and red diamond rattlesnake

Breeding: They breed once a year from August through September in the North and from October to December in the South. Eastern diamondbacks are ovoviparous and can have between 4 and 32 offspring. Their gestation is 120-180 days, however, females can store semen for 5 years.

Quick Facts:

- They are pit vipers (a group of snakes that have special thermal receptors on the front of their faces that allow them to see images in infrared, even in total darkness).
- The rattlesnake uses its rattle to warn other animals of its presence. The rattle is a series of hard segments made of keratin. A new segment is added each time a snake sheds. When shaken, the segments vibrate against each other producing the familiar buzz.
- Rattlesnakes find shelter in mammal, gopher, and tortoise burrows and similar sites.

Conservation: The Rattlesnake Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of rattlesnake species. They fund research, educational programs, and training programs on how to handle venomous snakes. Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes are also protected under the NC Endangered Species Act.

GSC Residents:

Name: Eastwood

Date of Birth: ~ March 14, 2003 to January 14, 2004

Sex: Undetermined

Origin: Private donation



Sources:

<https://srelherp.uga.edu/snakes/croada.htm>

https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Crotalus_adamanteus/