

Florida Department of Environmental Protection



Venomous Snakes of Northeast Florida

Del Webb Men's Club

October 22, 2015



Snakes of Florida

- 45 species (and many more ssp.)
- Only 6 are venomous
- Approx. 34 species in our area
- Only 4 venomous in our area
- Most commonly encountered (Urban)
 - Black Racer
 - Corn or Rat Snakes
 - Banded Water Snake

Identifying Snakes in Northeast Florida

Venomous snakes in our area:



Coral Snake



Cottonmouth



Eastern
Diamondback Rattlesnake



Dusky Pygmy Rattlesnake

National Statistics on Snake Bites in the U.S.A.

- 40,000 bites occur annually
- 8,000-10,000 of these are venomous
- 8-12 fatalities occur due to bites per year
- 90% of bites are between April and October

Statistic on Venomous Snake Bites

- 10-15% are Dry bites
- 85% mild to moderate
- 15% critical
- 50% of snake bites occur on the hand
- 60% handling the snake
- 20% - 40% are intoxicated
- 80% of people bitten are males between 18 and 45 years old

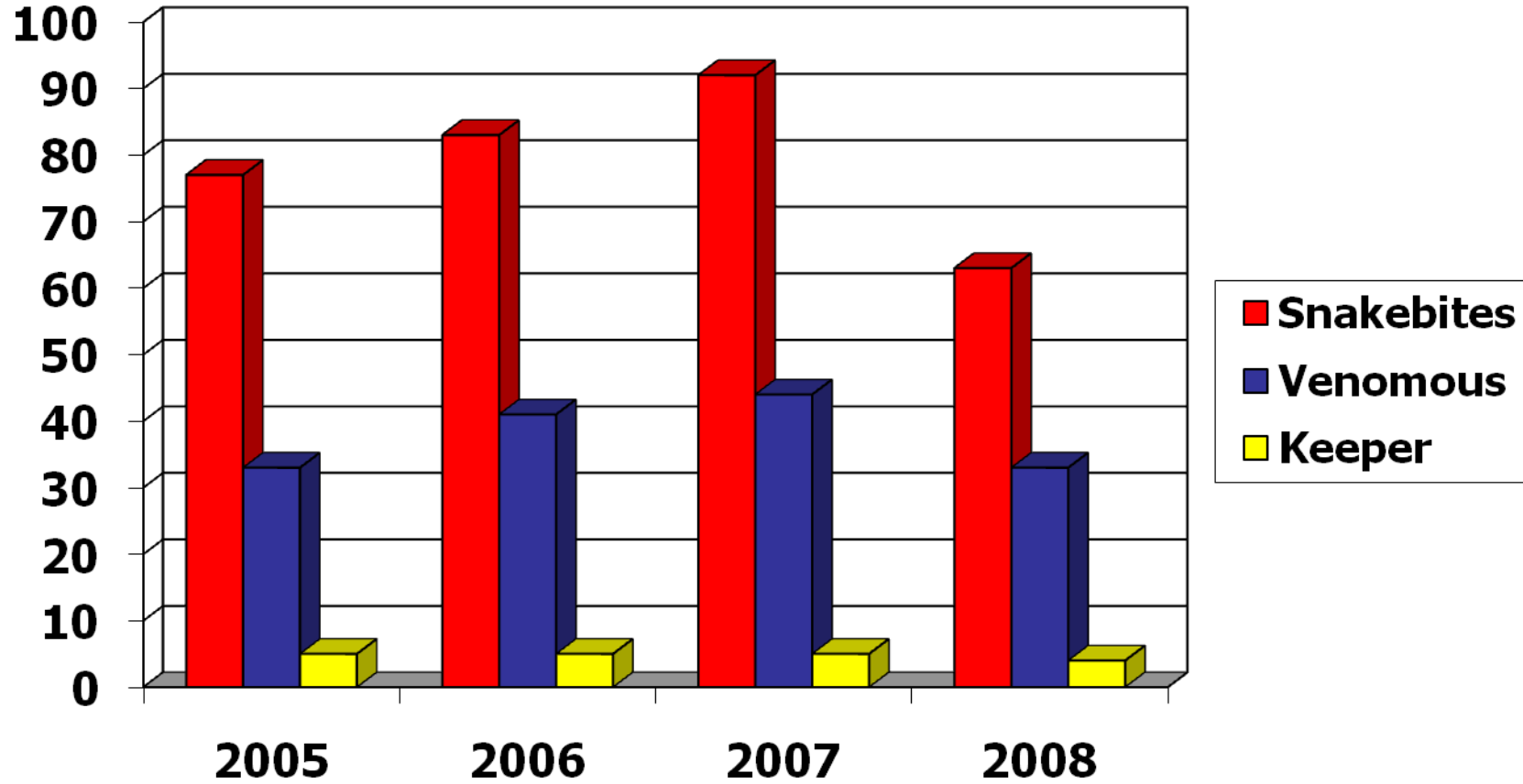
Venom Yields / Lethal Doses

- Cottonmouth (Water Moccasin) yield 100 to 150 mg. The lethal dose is 150 mg
- Pygmy Rattlesnake yield 20 mg. The lethal dose is 100 to 125 mg
- Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake yield 500 mg. The lethal dose is 100 mg. Death may occur in 6 hours

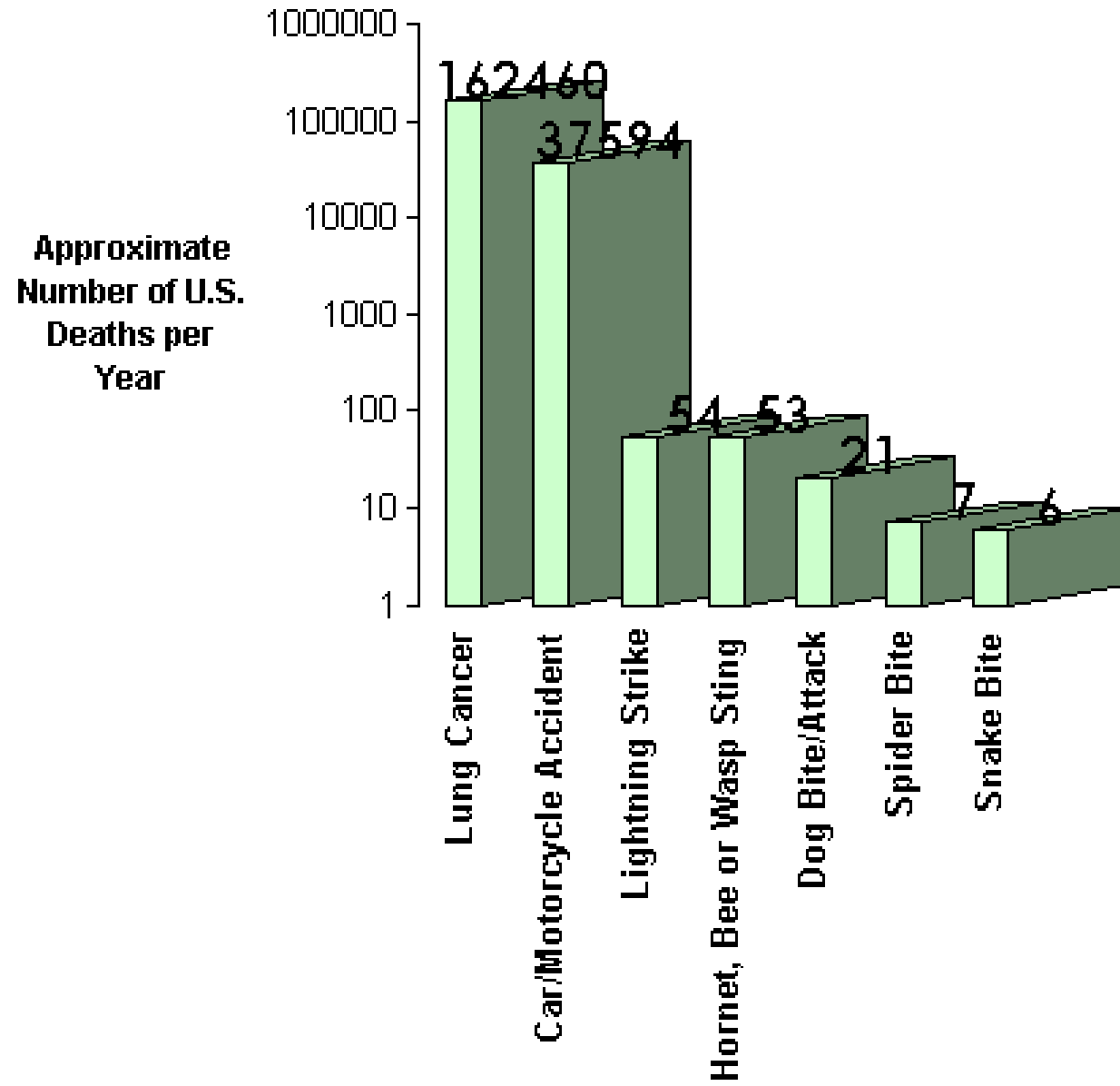
Lethal Doses (continued)

- Eastern Coral Snake yield 3 to 5 mg. The lethal dose is 4 to 6 mg
- Copperhead yield 40 to 70 mg. The lethal dose is 100 mg
- Canebrake Rattlesnake yield 100-200 mg. The lethal dose is 150 mg

Florida Snakebites



United States Fatality Statistics



Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake

- Largest venomous snake in North America
- Average adult size is 3-5 feet, record length, 8 feet
- Occurs throughout the entire state
- Prefers upland habitats

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake



Florida Cottonmouth

- Average adult size is 2-4 feet, record length 6 feet 2 inches
- Occurs throughout the entire state
- Prefers wetlands, waterways and areas near wetlands



Florida Cottonmouth



Dusky Pygmy Rattlesnake

- Average adult size is 1 -2 feet, record length is 2 feet 7 inches
- Occurs throughout the entire state
- Occupies a variety of habitats



Dusky Pygmy Rattlesnake



Eastern Coral Snake

- Average adult size is 2-3 feet, record length is 3 feet 10 inches
- Occurs throughout the entire state
- Occupies a variety of habitats
- Secretive and are usually found under debris or while digging in the ground

Eastern Coral Snake



Snakes of our Area

Non-venomous snakes you may encounter in your yard, while hiking or conducting other outdoor activities

Identifying Snakes in Northeast Florida

- Common non-venomous snakes in our area:



Southern Black Racer



Corn Snake



Eastern Garter Snake



Yellow Rat Snake



Banded Water Snake

Identifying Snakes in Northeast Florida

- Other non-venomous snakes in our area:



Rough Green Snake



Eastern King Snake



Scarlet King Snake



Pine Woods Snake



Southern Ringneck Snake



Peninsular Ribbon Snake

First Aid: Do

- Move away from the snake to avoid multiple bites
- Call 911 Immediately and seek medical care
- Remember any details you can about the snake's color, size, pattern, location (habitat type), head shape
- For humans call the Poison Control Hotline...
800-222-1222 and they will communicate with the emergency crew
- Remain calm – the more you move the faster your heart pumps
- Remove jewelry and tight clothing immediately

First Aid: Do

- Keep the bite at or below the heart if possible
- Note the time of the bite and symptoms
- Wash the wound gently with a mild soap and water – do not irrigate the wound
- Use a pen to mark the edge of the swelling around the bite every 15 minutes. This will help your doctor estimate how the venom is moving in your body.
- Cover lightly with a clean dry dressing but do not apply pressure

First Aid: Don't

- **Do not** attempt to capture the snake – even if you think it's dead
- **Do not** attempt to suck venom from the bite wound
- **Do not** make cuts over the snake bite...this often leads to more tissue trauma and damage
- **Do not** apply a tourniquet or other constricting device
- **Do not** apply a cold pack or ice to the snake bite
- **Do not** apply an electrical shock to the snake bite
- **Do not** take pain reliever or other medications unless instructed to do so by a physician
- **Do not** drink alcoholic beverages
- **Do not** administer anti-venom in the field...treatment for snake bites is best conducted in an appropriate medical facility

Reduce your chances of being bitten

- Be careful when working in gardens
- Roll logs with your foot before reaching under them
- Wear proper attire when in natural areas (boots, long pants)
- Never pick up a snake – even if you think it's nonvenomous
- Give the snake an escape route
- Do not try to get close to ID or take a picture (snakes can strike up to 2/3 their body length)
- **DO NOT TRY TO KILL THE SNAKE** – if you can kill it, you are too close – many snake bites involve people handling or trying to kill a snake
- Call a professional to assist with removal if the snake is stationary or in your home

Snake “Prevention”

- Reduce or manage good snake habitat in your yard
 - Cut grass regularly and do not allow it to get overgrown
 - Keep shrubs and tree branches trimmed away from the house and up off of the ground
 - Keep leaf litter raked
 - Keep brush or wood piles away from the house and any areas you would not want snakes
 - Store firewood on a rack neatly stacked – not on the ground



Snake “Prevention”

- Seal up your house
 - Check doors, windows, walls and the roof for gaps (some snakes can fit through an opening as small as a pencil)
 - Check areas where wiring or plumbing enters the house
 - Use hardware cloth to cover areas that need to stay open (pool drains, chimney stacks, outside vent opening for your dryer)
 - Pet doors don't discriminate against non-domesticated wildlife
 - Outdoor cats don't always kill wildlife, they also bring it inside oftentimes still alive
- Rodent proofing is snake proofing
 - Keep garages and sheds clutter free
 - Seal up pet food and do not leave food outside for pets or wildlife
 - Keep doors for garages and homes closed and seal all holes

Snake “Prevention”

- Fencing such as privacy fencing can deter snakes
- A small low fence (6” deep and 2-3’ high) can also deter snakes
 - Silt fencing or aluminum flashing is often used for this purpose
 - These are optimally placed on your property where it is adjacent to wetlands or natural areas
 - If the whole area is not fenced, point the ends “outward” toward natural habitats to get the snakes going in the right direction
 - Make sure posts are on the inside of the fencing
 - Make sure shrubs and bushes don’t overhang the fencing



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