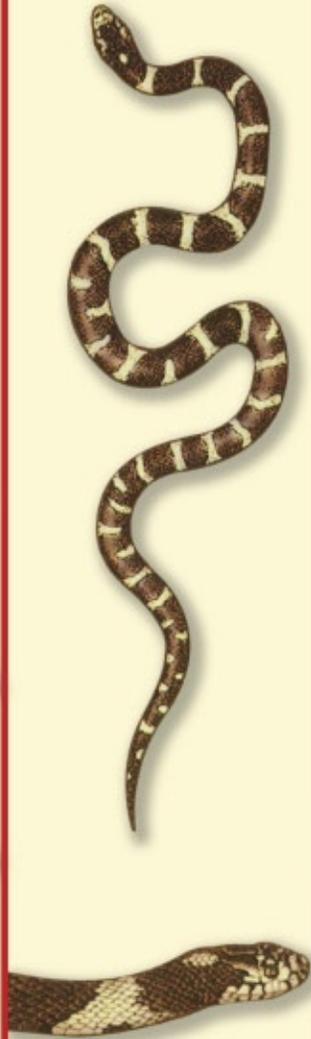


**Gopher Snake**



**King Snake**



**Western Rattlesnake**

◆ **Poisonous**



NOTE: Rattlesnakes have a broad, triangular head and a series of rattles on the end of their tails.

# Living with Snakes in Our Wildlands

Snakes are an important part of our interconnected environment, feeding on a wide variety of smaller animals and being eaten in turn by larger predators. Snakes are wonderfully diverse, living in the water and on land, sometimes in burrows, or in bushes and trees. Depending on their species, they reproduce either by laying eggs or bearing live young. Snakes feed by swallowing their unlucky prey whole, sometimes after grasping and squeezing their quarry, or biting and injecting venom.

Snakes will generally steer clear of people. Most western snakes are harmless, but it is important to learn to identify California's rattlesnakes so you can safely avoid them. The best ways to avoid a rattlesnake are to stay on designated trails and to watch your step. If you hear a rattle or see a snake, back up slowly and give it room to get away.

If you are bitten by a venomous snake or are unsure, get to a hospital as soon as possible. If a nonvenomous snake bites you, wash the bite with soap and water. Watch for infection for several days. If the wound reddens or swells, call your doctor.

