



Snakes: Removing from Dwellings¹

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Background

Only six of the 44 species of snakes native to Florida are venomous and represent a significant threat to humans and domestic animals. Still, some people are uneasy when any type of snake--poisonous or not--is nearby or inside a dwelling. Fortunately, there are snake removal methods that allow snakes to be caught and released without harm to humans or reptiles.

Snake Removal Methods

Glueboards

One recommended removal method relies on the use of a glueboard. A glueboard is simply a piece of wood with several rodent glue traps tacked to it (see Figure 1). Individual glue traps are about 5 x 12in (12.5 x 30 cm) and can be purchased in most hardware, pest control, and feed stores. Glueboards can be used in living areas, small crawl spaces, basements, garages, or outdoor storage sheds. This technique has been tested and proven to successfully hold 6ft diamondback rattlesnakes.

The best place to put a glueboard is against a wall because snakes tend to follow edges rather than cross open ground. When the snake attempts to move

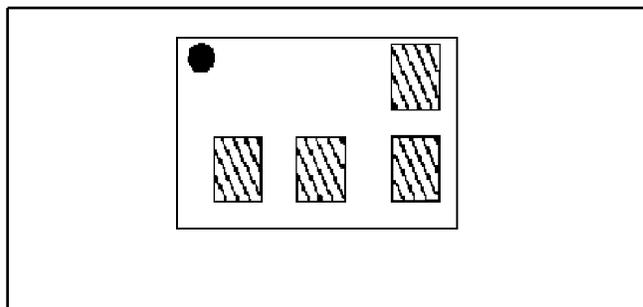


Figure 1 .

across the board, it will stick to the glue. Avoid putting the board near pipes, furniture, etc. to prevent the snake from getting leverage and pulling itself off.

Glueboards also can trap small cats, dogs, and birds. So, do not put them in areas where domestic animals or non-target wildlife species can reach them. Drill a hole in one corner of the board so that it may be retrieved easily with a hook on a long pole. This allows you to stay a good distance from the snake. If you capture a nonvenomous snake you may want to release it in your yard. If it is venomous, you probably want to relocate it far from your dwelling and your neighbor's. One of the best containers for transporting nonvenomous snakes is a pillowcase without holes or weak seams. To release the snake from the board, pour vegetable oil on it. The oil slowly breaks down the glue and the snake will

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eventually move off the board. Some glue residue may stay on the snake for awhile but will be shed with the old skin. Be sure to use only **vegetable** oil. Many other types of oil, such as motor oil, are toxic to animals.

Check the glueboards frequently and do not leave snakes on them for any longer than is absolutely necessary. The boards probably will not hold large snakes indefinitely.

Huegel, C.N. and D.G. Cook. 1991. Florida's nonvenomous snakes. *Florida Wildlife* 45(4):9-14. (Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission pamphlet).

Preventing Future Entry

What You Can Do to Help Conserve Snakes

- Learn more about snakes by reading the references listed below.
- Prevent the unnecessary killing of snakes.
- Encourage the use of non-lethal removal methods of controlling snakes.
- Support conservation measures to protect threatened snakes.

Legal Aspects

There are no laws that prohibit killing or possession of most snakes in Florida unless they are listed as endangered, threatened or species of special concern. Persons who possess live snakes or dead snake parts for sale are required to obtain a permit, as governed by s.372.921, Florida Statute; and Rule 39-25.0011.

There also are special requirements for possessing, exhibiting, and transporting venomous snakes (s.372.86-372.91, F.S).

Selected References

Anonymous. 1979. Florida's venomous snakes. *Florida Wildlife* 33(1):21-26. (Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission pamphlet).

Ashton, R.E., Jr., and P.S. Ashton. 1988. *Handbook of reptiles and amphibians of Florida. Part One: The snakes.* Windward Publishing, Miami, FL.