

Culture & History

The Salish and Pend d'Oreille name for bullsnake is sɣʷnú and the the Kootenai name is tawu. The Salish and Pend d'Oreille name for rattlesnake is ɣeʔulexʷ and the the Kootenai name for rattlesnake is wiɬmaɬ.

Traditionally, the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai tribes have a respectful relationship with bullsnakes. Because bullsnakes chase away and kill rattlesnakes, people are always happy to see them when they are out foraging. For rattlesnakes, though they are dangerous, they do not attack people if they are left alone.

Historically, snake skin had many uses but was mainly used to make bow covers and wraps.

Snakes on the Range

Many snakes, including bullsnakes, make their home on the Bison Range. Please be respectful and always stay a safe distance away from any visible snake. Be cautious around large rocks or tall grass to avoid accidentally provoking a snake that may be hiding. If you do startle a snake, please remember:

1. Stay calm and locate the snake. Back away slowly from the animal and do not try to injure them.
2. Alert any other people in the area to the snake's location.
3. If you do receive a snake bite, remain calm and return to the Visitors Center for first aid. If you do not have a companion to drive you, try to elevate the injured area above your heart and drive carefully.



BULLSNAKE & RATTLESNAKES



Sɣʷnú - Tawu
ɣeʔulexʷ - wiɬmaɬ

If you are interested in learning more about our wildlife, contact us at :

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Interesting Facts

The average size of a bullsnake is 4 ft (1.2 m) but they can reach up to 9 ft (2.7 m) long!

Prairie rattlesnakes average around 3 ft (0.9 m) but can be longer. The largest recorded prairie rattlesnake was 4.97 ft (1.5 m).

Bullsnares can be found all over North America, from Canada all the way down to Mexico! Their status is currently consider to be of least concern.

In order to trick predators into leaving them alone, bullsnares will mimic rattlesnares by shaking their tails and puffing out their cheeks. They will even making a coughing hiss to create the sound of a rattle.

Both bullsnares and rattlesnares are ovoviviparous, which means mothers incubate the eggs inside their body before laying them. After the babies hatch, they immediately leave to survive on their own.

The name 'bullsnake' comes from the hissing, coughing noise they make which some people thought sounded like the grunting of a bull.

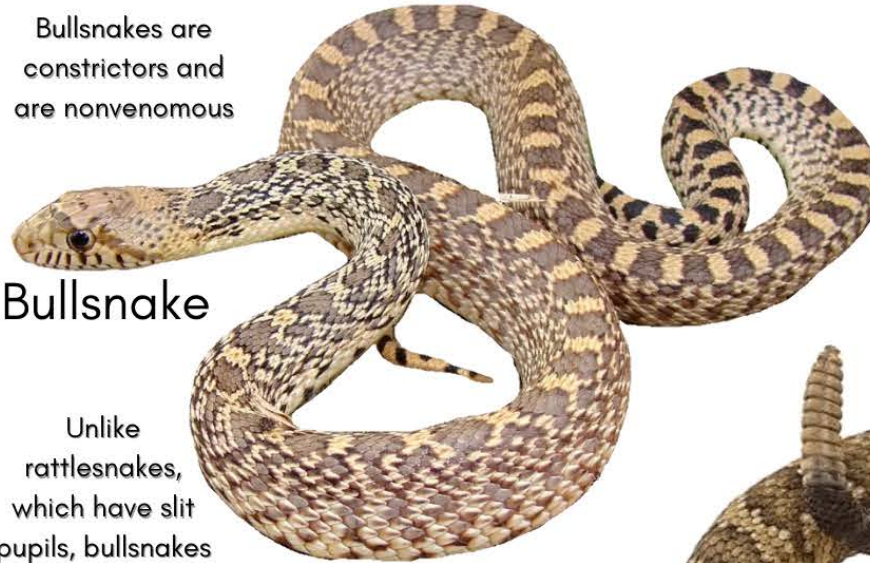
Their other common name, gopher snake comes from their taste for gophers. Bullsnares are an important population control for many small mammal species.

Bullsnares are constrictors and are nonvenomous

Bullsnares

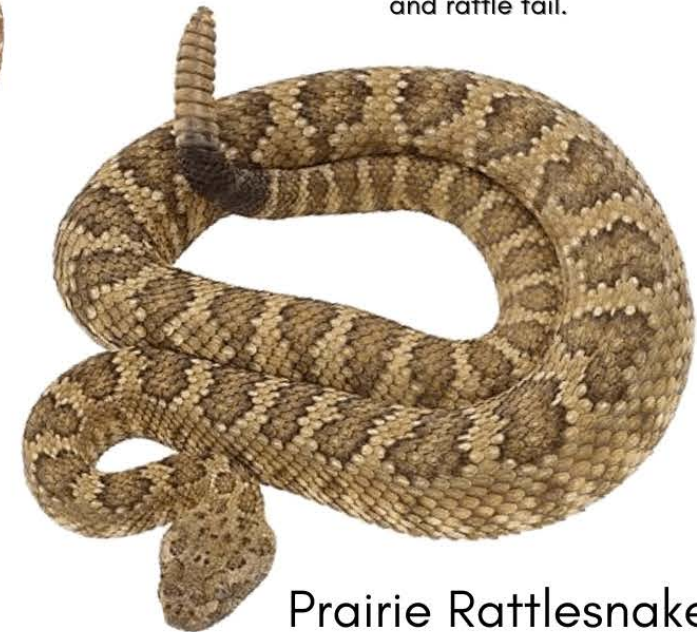
Unlike rattlesnares, which have slit pupils, bullsnares have rounded pupils.

When rattlesnares are born they only have a nub at the end of their tails. Over time, the nub grows with each shedded skin until the adult is able to shake it and produce a rattling sound. The number of nubs reflects how many times they have shed their skins but not their age.



Bullsnares, or gopher snakes, are often confused with rattlesnares due to their similar size and color. The best way to tell the difference between them is to look for a rattlesnake's triangular head and rattle tail.

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Prairie Rattlesnake

Bullsnares: A Visitor Guide