

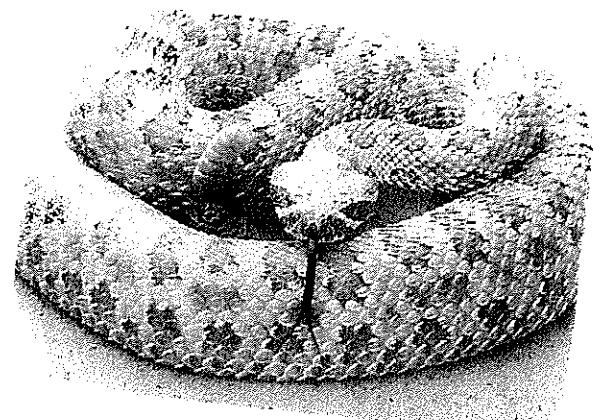
# Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes are found in the following areas of Orange County: desert-like and brush covered regions, the foothills and adjacent districts, mountainous areas, and around subdivisions located in formerly "wild" areas.

The active season for rattlesnakes starts toward the end of spring when they come out of hibernation. Most snakes will go back into hibernation when the colder weather months set in.

The main food source for rattlesnakes is rodents, therefore, rodent and snake control go together. A rodent-free area is unattractive to rattlers, so remove rodent harborage by: 1) poling wood 18' above the ground; 2) keeping all rubbish and garbage cleared away; 3) removing grass cuttings, weeds, tree trimmings, and the like where rats and mice may nest. Remember that gophers and squirrels are rodents!

Snakes will hunt for food day or night so long as the outdoor temperature is not too cold. When the sun is too hot or when it is chilly, snakes will seek shelter under shrubs, logs, rocks, or any other place that offers protection against the weather.

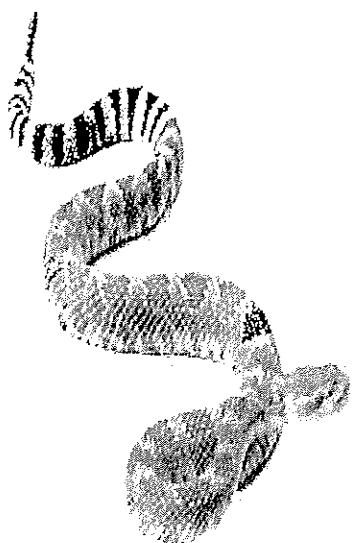


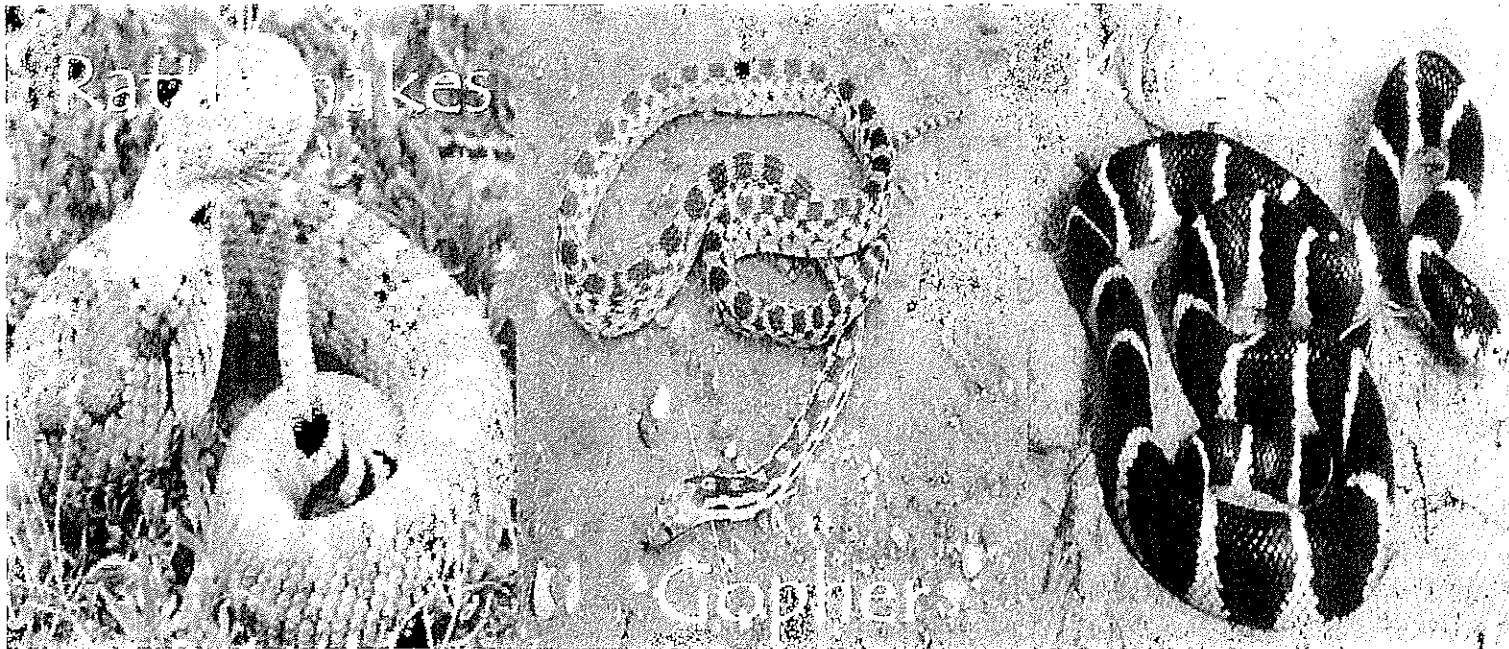
In areas served by Mission Viejo Animal Services (Mission Viejo, Laguna Niguel and Aliso Viejo), we will respond to and impound any rattlesnake that is:

- Injured, sick or dead
- Has had intimate contact with a domestic animal
- On private property or in a location that would be a direct threat to the public.

## **How to discourage rattlesnake activity around your home:**

- Snakes like to move through areas where they are not easily detected. Clear any land (shrubs, broken branches, overgrown bushes, etc.) surrounding your property.
- A fence of heavy galvanized 1/4" mesh hardware cloth will keep snakes out of the premises when the lower edge is inserted 6" under the ground.
- Seal openings in or under buildings, and cover ventilators close to the ground with 1/4" hardware cloth to keep snakes from nesting under the property.
- Fill up gopher and squirrel holes with stones and dirt. Snakes use these as passageways, and will be deterred away from property if the route is closed.
- When looking for snakes in concealed areas such as ivy, lawns, and untrimmed shrubbery, poke ahead with a long stick. If a snake is there, it will either attack the stick or glide away quickly. The desire to avoid direct contact is mutual.





Gopher snakes are members of the Colubridae Family, the common, large, gopher snake is usually between 36 and 96 inches long. Gopher snakes range in color from cream-yellow to green-gray to tan, with large black, brown or reddish blotches on their back and smaller ones along their sides. Most specimens have a dark line between the eyes and another from behind the eyes to the angle of the jaw. Slow moving, the gopher snake investigates burrows, rocky crevices and even climbs trees in search of prey.

They are also non-venomous snakes. (Credit from [www.desertusa.com](http://www.desertusa.com))

The most common thing to remember when distinguishing a rattlesnake from any other snake is that it will always have a diamond shape head that is somewhat separated from the body and rattles at the end of the tail.

Check with your vet for information about the new rattlesnake vaccine that is available for dogs incase they happened to be bit.

King Snakes are great to have around since they are non-venomous and eat rattlesnakes, thus they are the "king" of the snakes.

For More Information, contact:  
**Mission Viejo Animal Services Center**  
**(949)470-3045**  
**28095 Hillcrest**  
**Mission Viejo, CA. 92692**



**MISSION VIEJO**



SOUTHWESTERN  
HERPETOLOGISTS SOCIETY

# WHAT TO DO (and what NOT to do) in RATTLESNAKE COUNTRY!

*As many as 45,000 poisonous snake bites occur each year in the United States, most of these from rattlesnakes. While only 15 to 20 of these are fatal (more people die annually of bee stings, being struck by lightning or being struck by golf balls!), the rest suffer a painful, often dangerous and debilitating recovery time. Snakes do not bite people out of an aggressive desire to kill, but because they react to what their instincts interpret as an attack. Probably 90% of all snake bites could be prevented by following one simple rule:*

**"ALWAYS WATCH WHERE  
YOU PUT YOUR  
HANDS AND FEET."**

In essence, the practice of this rule is quite simple: You should be able to **SEE** your feet and hands at all times when in areas inhabited by venomous reptiles.

Watch where you put your feet: Watch the trail ahead of you. This will not only prevent your coming up unexpectedly on a resting rattler, but will help prevent falls over equally unexpected rocks and ticks! **DON'T** step over a log or rock if you can't see what might be below it on the other side. **DO** step up on top of such as object, then way out and over it. **DO** wear good, high boots with loose jeans outside them when hiking through brushy country that may be inhabited by rattlers.

Watch where you put your hands: **DON'T** climb a ledge or rocky hillside by reaching up beyond sight for your next handhold; who knows what may be sunning itself on that next ledge? **DON'T** reach under a rock or log that you don't know what's under. **DON'T** put your hands into a hole you can't see into.

Most importantly, **DON'T** play around with rattlesnakes! At least one third of all snake bites occur to people who for one reason or another, are trying to do something to the snake - kill it, tease it, catch it. An act of bravado can be expensive; a momentary lapse of attention can be dangerous.

If a rattlesnake is in an inhabited area, it should be captured and relocated by an experienced herpetologist if possible; it should be destroyed only as a last resort.

If the rattler is in the wild, let it go its own way. It will get away from you as fast as it can, and rattlesnakes are an important part of the natural work and the balance of nature.

## RATTLESNAKE FACTS

Rattlesnakes are the only dangerously venomous snakes in California. We have no Coral Snakes, Copperheads or Water Moccasons, which are the only other dangerous snakes in the United States.

A **DEAD** rattlesnake should be avoided. Many people have been bitten by the reflex action of dead snakes even badly mangled ones. Rattlesnakes killed in inhabited areas should have the head cut off and buried; otherwise, rattlers should not be killed at all.

You cannot tell a rattler's age by counting the rattles. A new segment is gained each time the snake sheds its skin, which may be two to five times a year. Additionally, the longer rattles of older snakes frequently break off.

Baby rattlesnakes are not more "deadly" than adults. However, they are poisonous and capable of biting from the moment of birth. The venom is in the head; the rattles are harmless. The rattlesnake does not always rattle before striking.

A rattler does not need to coil to strike, but can strike from any position. They cannot "jump."

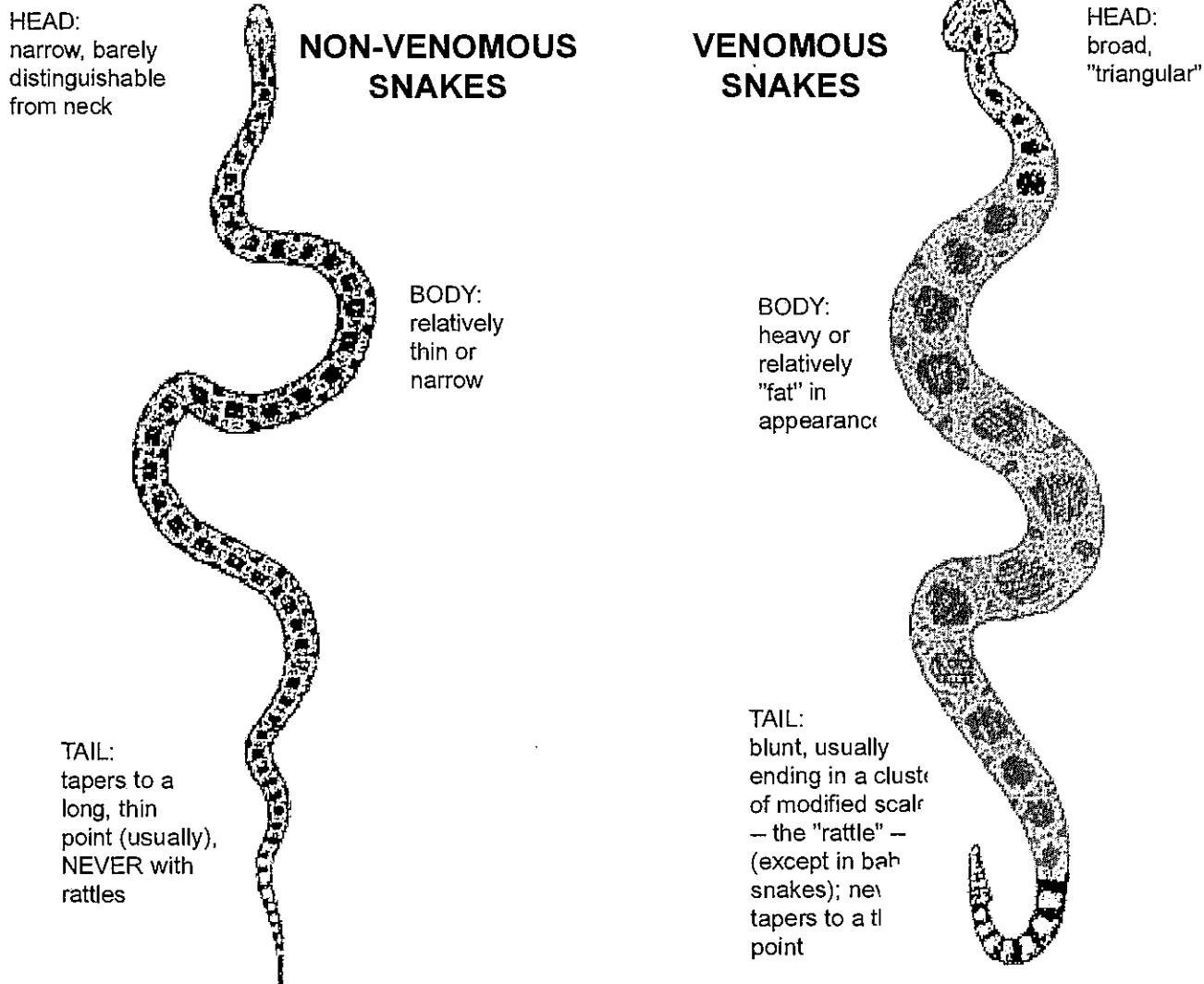
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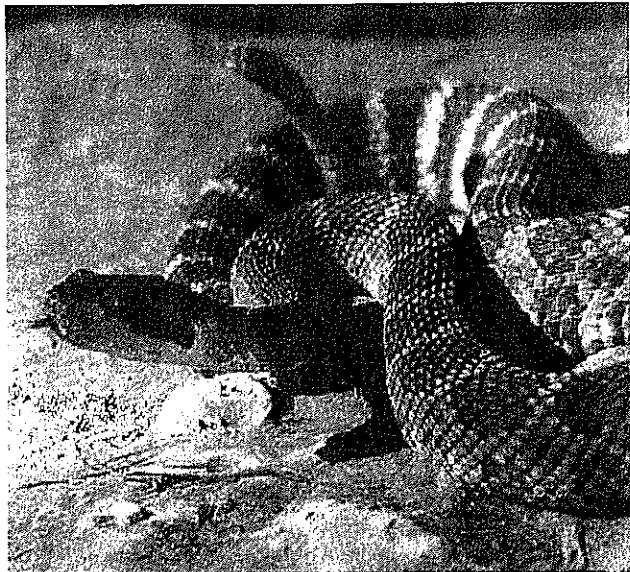
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A rattler will not "attack" you. It is more afraid of you than you are of it. If it has an escape route, it will take it. You can move much faster than the fastest rattler.

## IDENTIFICATION OF VENOMOUS SNAKES IN CALIFORNIA

As mentioned before, there is only one kind of venomous snake in California - the rattlesnake. There are six species of rattlesnakes in California, but all have the characteristics described below in the figure on the right. No other snakes in California are dangerously venomous (a few have very mild venoms that do not affect people). And most have characteristics like the figure below on the left. All snakes, venomous or not, are important members of the natural community and are vital to the balance of nature. No snake should be needlessly killed. (NOTE: These characteristics are not necessarily useful outside of California, and particularly not out of the country).





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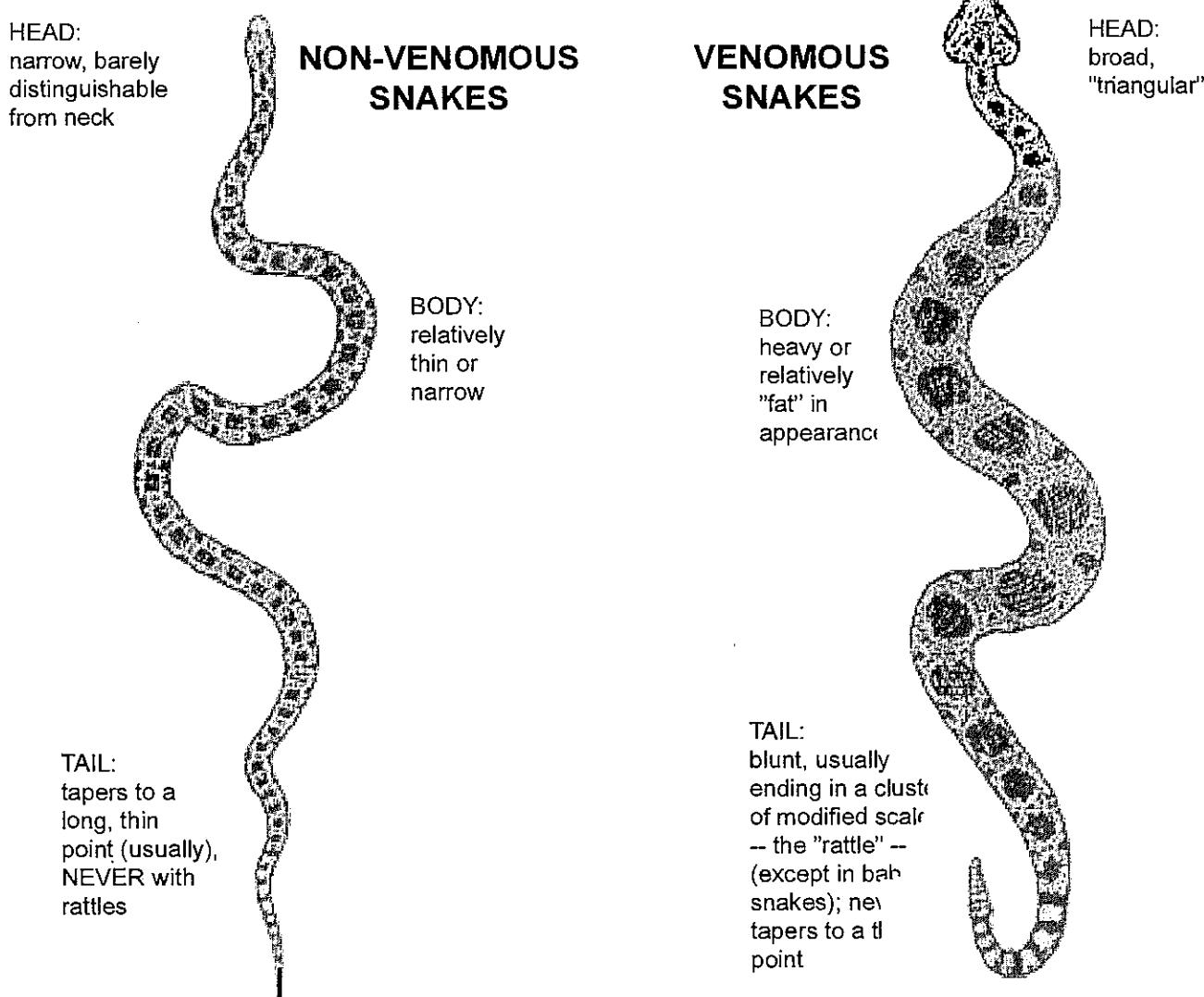
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Wendy Helton

From: Raahauge's [raahauges@private-elist.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2010 3:00 PM  
To: Wendy Helton  
Subject: Rattlesnake Alert!



## **SNAKE BREAK AT SPORTS FAIR**

### **RATTLESNAKE ALERT!**

Beware--this year there's been a horrifying increase in Rattlesnake populations--dangerous Human and Pet Encounters with these deadly vipers is set to Explode!

**A Snakebite to a Human or Dog is a Tragic and Costly Experience!**

**ARE YOUR DOGS SAFE?**

**RATTLESNAKE AVOIDANCE CLINICS NOW AVAILABLE!**

**Sign Up Now at Turner's Outdoorsman!**

### **TRAINING CLINICS FEATURE:**

*Five* Humane Scenario Stations Including: Sight-Smell-Sound.

*Revisit* The Scenario Stations With Your Dog To Reinforce The Lessons.

*Multiple* (Up To 9!) Snake Avoidance Training Experiences For Your Dog!

*World's Most Comprehensive Snake Awareness and Avoidance Course!*

**Sign Up Now at Turner's Outdoorsman, then go to  
RSADT.com or call 1-866-PET-OBEY for details.**

**Next available Clinic Dates are June 4, 5 and 6<sup>th</sup> and July  
25th**

**Morning and Afternoon Clinics available**

Clinics will be held at Mike Raahauge's Shooting Enterprises in Corona, CA  
Cost is \$95 -- a small price to pay for Peace of Mind and your Pet and Family's  
Safety.

**(June 4-6 Clinics will be held during the 2010 Shooting Sports Fair, additional**

# Spay and Neuter your Pets!

**Prevent a litter! It's good for you, your pet, and the community**

## **It's good for you!**

- Spayed and neutered pets are better, they are more affectionate companions.
- Neutered cats are less likely to spray and mark territory.
- Spaying a female dog or cat eliminates its heat cycle, which can last 21 days, twice a year, in dogs, and anywhere from three to fifteen days, three or more times a year, in cats. Females in heat often cry incessantly, show nervous behavior, and attract unwanted male animals.
- Spayed and neutered pets are less likely to bite. Unaltered animals often exhibit more behavior and temperament problems than those that have been spayed or neutered.

## **It's Good for your pet!**

- Spayed and neutered dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives.
- Spaying female dogs and cats eliminate the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduce the incidence of breast cancer.
- Neutering male dogs and cats reduces the incidence of prostate cancer.
- Neutered animals are less likely to roam and fight.

## **It's Good for the community!**

Communities spend millions of dollars to control and eliminate unwanted animals. Irresponsible breeding contributes to the problem of dog bites and attacks. Animal shelters are overcrowded with surplus animals all over the country.

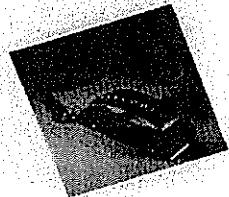


# Leash Law

## **Sec. 10.01.200 (MV) Sec. 10-1-45 (LN)- Restraint of dogs.**

a) No person owning or having charge, care, custody, or control of any dog shall cause or permit, either willfully or through failure to exercise due care or control, any such dog to be upon any private property unless such dog is restrained thereon by a fence, wall, substantial chain, leash not exceeding six feet in length, other appropriate physical restraint, or is under the charge of a person competent to exercise care, custody, and control over such dog.

b) No person owning or having charge, care, custody, or control of any dog shall cause or permit, either willfully or through failure to exercise due care or control, any such dog to be upon any public property unless such dog be restrained by a substantial chain, or leash not exceeding six feet in length, and is under the charge of a person competent to exercise care, custody, and control over such dog, unless the owner or operator of such public property grants written permission for such dog to be on such property without such chain or leash.



**This is a leash, Please use it!  
Be a good neighbor, Be a good friend!  
Keep your dog under control.**

- A leash is a great safety device, protecting your pet from traffic and unrestrained wild animals.
- It's a great "Good Neighbor Policy" that prevents your dog from trespassing on your neighbor's property during your walks. It also prevents your dog from jumping on children or adults you may encounter.
- It's a great identification tool, symbolizing that the dog has an owner, and enables someone who sees the leash and identification tag attached to the dog's collar to find you, should you and your pet become separated.
- It's a great relief to wildlife. It keeps your dog from harassing deer, squirrels, and other wildlife commonly found in our area. One of the most common causes for dog rattlesnake bites is dogs off leash on walks or trails.
- It's a great way to be your dog's best friend, rewarding your dog and you with fresh air, exercise and companionship.

**MV Animal  
Services**

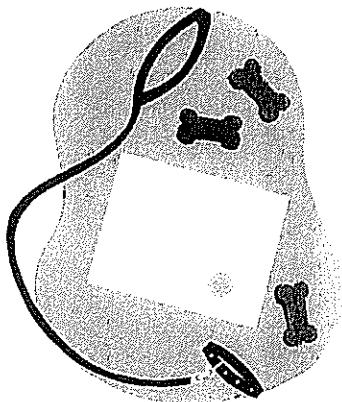




Photo of a red bat courtesy of © Bat World Sanctuary [www.batworld.org](http://www.batworld.org)

# Bats

**B**ats hold a unique place in the animal kingdom by being the only flying mammal. They are beneficial to the ecosystem as pollinators, seed dispersers, and insect predators. Of the 900 species found throughout the world, eight species can be found in Orange County: Big brown bat, California Myotis, Desert red bat, Hoary bat, Mexican free-tailed bat, Mexican long-tongued bat, Pallid bat, and Yuma Myotis.

Bats leave their roost at dusk and will hunt throughout the night until dawn. They can navigate and find food in the dark by sending out sound waves and listening for them to bounce back. They seek out areas that are dark, quiet, and well ventilated during the day. If you observe a bat acting abnormally during daylight hours contact your local animal control agency.

Bat-proofing your home is essential. Bats can fit into surprisingly small spaces and openings. Denying them access can be as simple as using caulk or sealant for smaller openings or it might require mesh or netting for larger spaces. Close up all outside openings in roofs, walls, and floors that are larger than  $\frac{1}{4}$ " of an inch. Put screens on all windows and doors. Contact a licensed pest control operator if you need help with bat-proofing. If you wake up and find a bat in your home, do not allow it to leave. Try to confine it to one unoccupied room of your home and notify animal control immediately. The bat will be captured and tested for rabies.

Rabies, a virus transmitted by bats, can affect people and animals. The virus typically enters the body through a bite or a scratch. Ensure that all domestic animals in your care have current rabies vaccinations. If you suspect a person or domestic animal has been exposed to a bat, notify your local animal control agency immediately. Never touch a bat with your bare hands!

In areas served by Orange County Animal Care Services, we will respond to and impound any bat that is:

- Injured, sick or dead
- Involved in a bite with a human or animal
- Trapped in a home and posing a potential danger to people or domestic animals

If any of these conditions exist, please call Orange County Animal Care Services at (714) 935-6848.

The following advice should be taken when bats are located on your property:

Never touch or pick up a bat with bare hands, even if it appears dead.

Have all domestic animals in your care currently vaccinated for rabies.

Immediately notify your local animal control agency if you suspect exposure to a human or domestic animal.

Bat-proof all dwellings to deny access.

For more information, contact:

County of Orange  
Health Care Agency  
Animal Care Services  
Phone: (714) 935-6848  
Website: [www.ocpetinfo.com](http://www.ocpetinfo.com)



# Mission Viejo Animal Services Center

Serving the cities of Mission Viejo, Laguna Niguel, and Aliso Viejo

## **Ways to deter bobcats**

**Don't feed wildlife-** Feeding wildlife attracts small animals and rodents to your property that bobcats feed on.

**Keep dogs and cats indoors-** When left outside at night, small dogs and cats become prey for bobcats. Bobcats have the ability to jump fences 6 feet or more in height.

**Don't put up bird feeders-** Bobcats are attracted to the many birds and rodents that come to feeders.

**Feed dogs and cats indoors, and clean up after them-** Pet food, water, and pet droppings attract small mammals that attract bobcats.

**Scare Devices such as motion detected lights, loud noises, and radios will deter bobcats until they realize that they are not life threatening.**

**No chemical fumigants, repellants, or toxicants are currently registered for bobcats.**

## **Trapping**

Although trapping and relocating bobcats miles away seems like an appropriate method of relieving your property of bobcats or other wildlife, the reality is that they typically try to return to their original territories. This often results in getting killed by a predator in the process or being hit by a car. If the stay in the same area, it often results in fights (sometimes to the death) with resident bobcats.

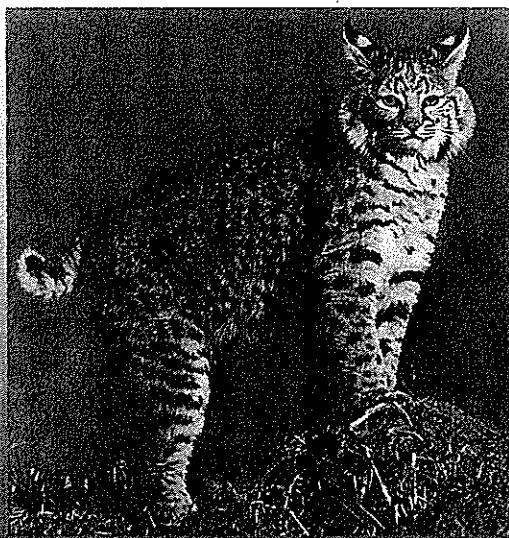
Relocating wildlife will not solve the original problem because other wildlife will replace them and cause similar conflicts. It is more effective to follow the above recommendations for making your property less attractive to bobcats and other wildlife in the area.

Trapping is not legal, and transporting animals without the proper permits is also unlawful.

## **Professional Assistance**

The Mission Viejo Animal Services Center is here for your needs. If wildlife should become an immediate threat or contact has been made such as a bite to a human or domestic animal, Animal Services should be notified immediately at (949) 470-3045.

You may also contact the California Department of Fish and Game at (858) 467-4201



# Living with Bobcats

Bobcats are found all throughout California and they are more common than most people realize. Sightings in urban and suburban settings are becoming more and more common.

Adult male bobcats on average can weigh 20 to 30 pounds and can average 3 feet in length. Females are much smaller and may weigh less than a typical large house cat.

They can be various shades of buff and brown, with dark brown or black stripes and spots on parts of their body. The backs of the ears and the tip of the tail are black. They have ruffs of hair on the side of the head, that look like side burns and short ear tufts.

## Bobcat Sightings

Due to their elusive nature and caution around humans, bobcats are rarely seen. In areas inhabited by humans, they usually limit their activity to night hours. However, it is not uncommon to see them during daylight hours and can be active during anytime of the day.

The bobcat track is very distinguished with a round shape, four toes and no evident claws. Generally, it is twice the size of a domestic cat's print and resembles the track of a coyote or dog but is more rounded.

Just like house cats that scratch furniture, bobcats tend to mark their territory boundaries by leaving claw marks on trees, stumps and sometimes on fence posts. Bobcats claw marks are typically 2 to 3 feet above the ground, whereas domestic cats scratching occurs at a height of 1- 1/2 to 2 ft.

Bobcats are rarely vocal, although they do yowl and hiss during mating season, especially when competing males have the same intentions with the same female. Wailing has been described as a child crying, a woman's scream or that of someone in terrible pain.

## Habitat

Finding bobcats in open fields and meadows is not uncommon, especially if brushy or timbered areas for cover and escape is nearby. Home range for bobcats is typically 2.5 to 6 square miles for adult males, and about half of that for females. Rock cliffs, ledges and brushy slopes are important for shelter, raising baby bobcats and resting sites.

## Family Structure

Bobcats are solitary animals. Males and females are only together for the short time required for mating. They typically have a litter of about 3 kittens between April and July. Young bobcats usually are on their own when they are about 8 months old.

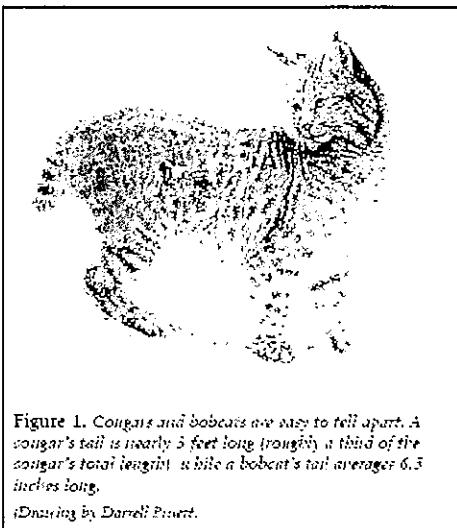


Figure 1. Cougars and bobcats are easy to tell apart. A cougar's tail is nearly 3 feet long (nearly a third of the cougar's total length), while a bobcat's tail averages 6.5 inches long.

Photograph by Darrell Piment

## Food & Feeding Habits

- Food sources include mice, rats, rabbits, gophers, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, quail, also insects, reptiles, and birds.
- Domestic animals can also fall prey to bobcats. To prevent see Ways to deter bobcats.
- Bobcats hunt by sight and sound, which means that they spend much of their time crouching or sitting, listening and watching. Once they have located their prey, they stalk and then pounce.
- Bobcats are known to cover the remains of large prey with leaves or grass and return to feed on it.

