

FIRST AID TREATMENT FOR POISONOUS SNAKEBITE

by Robert Lee Guillaudeu, M.D.  
McLean, Fairfax County, Va.

1. The victim should avoid panic. He should not run or get excited. His field companions may help him by reminding him that fatalities from snakebite are extremely rare in the United States.
2. A snug tourniquet above the bite, or towards the body from the bite is advisable. If swelling has begun, the tourniquet should be at the upper limit of the swelling. It should not be so tight that a finger cannot be pushed under it. It is meant to impede lymphatic spread of venom -- not halt the flow of blood in arteries or veins. As swelling moves on up the limb the tourniquet can be moved up above it.
3. Cutting into the fang marks is probably best avoided by the non-professional. If the victim is alone, or a long way (hours) from medical care, the fang wounds can be cut to a depth of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$ ths inches. Suction should be applied using the best available method. Cuts should not be made on the fingers or toes and extreme care should be taken to avoid cutting veins, nerves, or tendons.
4. The affected part should be kept in a supported position as much as possible.
4. Movement of the part is to be discouraged.
5. If available, ice packs may help to delay venom absorption and relieve pain in the extremity.
6. Field companions should secure the snake that delivered the bite. It would be helpful to know whether the victim was bitten by a rattlesnake, copperhead, cottonmouth, or as sometimes happens, a non-poisonous snake. If the snake cannot be secured then try to determine the species and length. A poisonous snake, whether alive or dead, is still dangerous. Do not handle it without tools. Use stout sticks, a hoe or rake. Employ extreme caution. Remember that the head of a snake when it is severed from the body can still inflict a bite, if handled.
7. Anti-venom is available at hospitals and some physician's homes. It is not recommended for other than a physician's use.
8. Do not use potassium permanganate crystals or solution. Do not give whiskey. Do not cauterize or burn the wound. Do not waste time -- get to a physician or to the nearest hospital.  
(Comments invited.) RLG

SYMPTOMS OF POISONOUS SNAKEBITE

SWELLING, PAIN, AND DISCOLORATION OF THE BITTEN AREA,  
COLD SWEAT ON FACE AND PALMS, WEAKNESS, GIDDINESS, SHOCK.

- 1 -

The VHS BULLETIN is a newsletter appearing at least six times a year. Circulation is about 300. Special issues are addressed to an additional 200 individuals -- science and biology instructors in Virginia secondary schools and colleges.

VHS is a non-profit, voluntary association of persons who are more than casually interested in the reptiles and amphibians of Virginia and adjacent states. The Society's aims are both scientific and educational -- the collection and communication of accurate data on Virginian herpetofauna. Dues are \$1 a year.

The VHS Bulletin is published to help readers keep abreast of the latest information concerning Virginian herpetology. The editors invite comments and contributions to the end that the newsletter will continue to be effective and informative. FT

COPPERHEADS IN SUBURBIA (I)

by Stanton G. Ernst  
Chief Park Naturalist  
Brookside Nature Center

In '62 we received and checked-out twelve copperhead alarms. Surprisingly, most identifications were valid. Eight snakes were destroyed in the vicinity of homes in a newly-developed area. In spite of our efforts to hold down public apprehension there was considerable sentiment for reducing the snake population. There was one serious bite in this area involving a 42-inch copperhead that is now preserved in a collection in a nearby college. Teenager "B" had been handling the copperhead for a lengthy period. It did not bite him until he dropped it onto his foot! He was hospitalized.

Most of the snakes we looked at last season averaged 24 to 30" in length. One was captured near a baby's play pen, another in a window well where it had captured a toad. Needless to say, there was considerable alarm in the neighborhood -- and beneficial species may suffer the consequences.

In June we began receiving telephone calls on copperheads sighted in residential area yards in the B \_\_\_\_\_ Reservoir area, and more specifically, in yards backing up to the N \_\_\_\_\_ Branch and fronting on M \_\_\_\_\_ Road. I managed to observe three specimens which residents had killed: (1) along a house foundation; (2) beneath an auto parked in a driveway; and, (3) with a hoe while crawling over a freshly clipped lawn.

Subsequently, eight additional specimens have been taken in the general area -- including one

I identified for a swimming club on F \_\_\_\_\_ Street in S \_\_\_\_\_ . This snake was lying on the edge of the pool, and I captured and killed this specimen in the view of some 100 persons who were waiting to swim on a Saturday morning. Though approached by lifeguards, and even poked with a long stick, this snake was disinclined to glide away. It was still lying coiled on the cement apron of the poolside when I arrived on the scene some one and a half hours after being called.

The M \_\_\_\_\_ Road area, new and still almost totally surrounded by woodlands, currently carries a rather substantial population of toads -- in every size class. Many of the people have outdoor lights on during the evening hours. This attracts insects and, in turn, the toads. It is my feeling that this cycle -- lights, insects, toads, -- is at least partly responsible for the presence of the copperheads. Most of the eleven snakes I have recorded data on were located in the early evening or early morning hours. Two specimens were taken between 9 and 10 A.M. -- these were the only exceptions.

One copperhead two feet long was reported in a dry-wall behind the "R" residence on M \_\_\_\_\_ Road -- the same family reporting the first copperhead back in June. During an outside evening party on their back terrace a snake crawled out of the wall part way and lay there for a while. Mr. "R" struck the snake with a hoe, injuring it. It pulled back into the fieldstone wall.

.....

Copperheads in Suburbia, continued

The following morning it was seen again partially out of the wall. It retreated before it could be captured. Apparently, it had been wounded only superficially. I placed a smooth sand track on the ground around the wall. For some time after I found no marks where a snake had crawled either into or out of the wall.

Since the neighborhood has a number of small children who play regularly on their back lawns at the wood edge, the presence of

these snakes is a matter of some concern to the residents.

A man living across M Road -- Mr. "B" -- has reported a snake lying along a path leading down to the reservoir dam. This path runs almost straight up and down a very rocky, wooded hillside. I suspect that this is another authentic report since Mr. "B" killed one of the earlier snakes in his yard and can properly identify the species, as can ALL of the neighbors by now!

SGE

- - - - -

COPPERHEADS IN SUBURBIA (II)

by Franklin J. Tobey, Jr.  
Secretary, VHS

The "K" residence is in an isolated rural-suburban setting in an area known as "Wildcat Valley". The ground falls away from the "K's" hillside home toward the stream a quarter of a mile below. At one end of the home -- a contemporary rambler - - there is a steeply terraced lawn. It is terraced with logs of fair diameter, staked at intervals, to keep the sod on the slope.

An elevated bird feeding station was placed fifty feet from the kitchen door. During the fall and winter months bird feed was scattered about the base of the feeder. Mice took up residence in the logs on the terrace a short distance from a bountiful food supply. Into this Eden a copperhead pair moved in the spring of the year.

The copperheads dispossessed, or engulfed, the mice living in or under the logs on the terrace. The snakes were first seen on the lawn in early evenings and two were killed and identified. The bird feeding station was moved further away from the house and the birds' rations were halved. This seems to have had a dampening effect on the copperheads. One was found a considerable distance from the house while raking brush along the hillside. It was taken to the National Zoological Park. This specimen, a Northern Copperhead (Agkistrodon c. mokeson), was most manageable. He was picked up by garden tools and dropped into a tall trash can which, fortunately, was standing nearby and empty. He was easily transferred into a big snake bag which was suspended by tapes within another trash can. displayed great docility at NZP.

.....

Copperheads in Suburbia II, continued

The "W" home is on an elevation above the Potomac River in Fairfax County. The land slopes at nearly 45 degrees into the river. A raised patio is at the northeastern end of the house. The patio is surfaced with flagstone and the edges were trimmed with a fieldstone wall about one foot high. It is a charming setting overlooking the river.

My attention was engaged by the resident Mr. "D." who located me through the local veterinary doctor. A pet hound had been a copperhead bite victim. The area was searched during daylight and evening hours for several weeks without encountering a venomous snake. Finally, one immature copperhead was killed during a brush-clearing foray into the woods closest to the residence.

Checking old stumps and logs revealed neither snakes nor any evidence of their habitation.

It seemed quite likely, however, that there was a den somewhere in the neighborhood. Another copperhead turned up on the lawn after dark and was killed and identified later. Examination of the raised patio disclosed at least one opening through the fieldstone coping at its edge. A telltale shedded skin was found near the entrance.

A check was made by the resident at dawn each morning. An individual copperhead was observed entering the crevice under the dining terrace; shot and later on identified. Over the succeeding days and weeks a total of eight of these snakes was killed at this spot. The hole in the fieldstone wall was sealed with cement and no more specimens have been reported.

The resident was, in turn, dismayed and delighted. Previous residents had never seen anything but blacksnakes in the area.

FT

-----  
EASTERN COTTONMOUTH TAKEN IN SURRY COUNTY, VA.

The writer was asked to identify a Cottonmouth Moccasin (Agkistrodon p. piscivorus) killed in Surry County on July 31, 1963. The specimen measured 44 inches in length. It was killed by three farm boys in the old Spratley Mill Pond area which is now a swamp. (The dam went out years ago.) This is at the junction of Johnchecohunk Swamp and Cypress Swamp about two miles north of Dendron.

August 1, 1963  
Waverly, Va.

C.C. Steirly  
District Forester  
Virginia Division of Forestry

IF YOU ARE CARELESS --- DON'T FOLLOW HERPETOLOGY. ---  
FIND AN AVOCATION WHERE THE PENALTY FOR CARELESSNESS IS NOT SEVERE.

.....  
(detach)

(detach)

COLLECTION DATA SLIP

(type or hand-letter) (spell out month)  
Collector's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_  
County Where found \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of nearest P.O. \_\_\_\_\_ Nearest road junction on next  
line: U.S. Rt No. Va. Rt. No. County # U.S. Va. Co.  
Direction from road junction to capture site: \_\_\_\_\_ Distance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time of day and weather \_\_\_\_\_ A.M., P.M. \_\_\_\_\_  
Description of collection site: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity of specimen at time of capture:  
Specimen attached: \_\_\_\_\_ Fluid preservative used: \_\_\_\_\_  
Identification: \_\_\_\_\_

RATTLESNAKES, PIT VIPERS CONTROL AMOUNT OF VENOM THEY RELEASE ---

LEADING FEATURE ON SNAKEBITE

All pit vipers have such complex biting mechanisms that they are able to control the amount of venom they release when striking a victim.

Our page one article emphasizes the importance of not being alone in the field. Always have friends within sight or easy call. When in any kind of trouble it is most comforting to have help close by.

The control exercised is so very great that different doses of venom can be consistently given to different sized animals. Thus, while the venom of these crotalid snakes is less toxic than that of cobras or kraits, the comparative disadvantage is compensated for by variations in the amount of venom injected, and their bites create a "formidable emergency with which to cope."

Snakebite is a rare, but extra-unpleasant experience. Care must be taken to avoid bites from any poisonous snakes (see VHS BULLETIN No. 29, pages 3 and 4.)

The author of the leading article, Dr. Guillaudeu, is known to those who attended the last NZP meeting and the earlier statewide meeting in the Richmond, Va. area.

On the basis of tracer studies with radio-iodine, scientists have evaluated current therapy in North America and suggested that in the most severe cases fear of side-effects should not deter the administration of anti-venom.

Dr. Guillaudeu has followed the course of snakebite cases treated at Northern Virginia hospitals -- Arlington Hospital and Fairfax Co. Hospital. His opinions are based on observations to date. He is prepared to modify his advice for good scientific and medical reason and is interested in discussing these with any of our members or readers.

Dr. Joseph F. Gennaro, Jr., and Dr. Newton C. McCullough, of the University of Florida College of Medicine are co-authors of the study. (from Medical Tribune)

FJT

Robert Lee Guillaudeu, M.D.

He entered medical school at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, graduating in June, 1949. In service from April, 1943 to March, 1946, and again from June, 1949 to July, 1953; he interned in Columbus, Ohio, and then spent 17 months in Korea. He started private practice of Internal Medicine in Falls Church, Va., in March 1956. As a Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve, Commanding Officer of the 354th General Hospital, he was called back to active duty from October '61 to August '62. Dr. "Bob" is married and has four children - 13, 11, 8, and 5 years of age. He has been interested in snakes since grade school (in Chicago) and spent one summer doing volunteer work at the Field Museum of Natural History's herpetology division. He worked as a scientific aide in the U.S. Nat'l Museum's Division of Fishes between his first and second years at med school. His special interests are the Rat Snakes (Genus Elaphe); life histories of snakes; and poisonous snakebite. He has a broad interest in natural history which includes the carotid circulation in the possum (Didelphys virginiana).

BIOLOGY INSTRUCTORS  
SCIENCE INSTRUCTORS

MEMBERS OF YOUR CLASSES MAY WISH TO JOIN WITH YOU IN PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM OF THE VA. HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY. WE INVITE YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND THEIRS.

VHS

COLLECTION TURNED IN TO U.S. NATIONAL MUSEUM

Mr. Richard Hoffman, Radford College, Radford, Virginia, has turned in a collection of preserved specimens to the U.S. National Museum. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) are records for the county named.

Spotted Salamander Albemarle County	<u>Ambystoma maculatum</u>
Alleghany Mountain Salamander *Russell County	<u>Desmognathus o. ochrophaeus</u>
Blue Ridge Mountain Salamander Patrick County	<u>Desmognathus o. carolinensis</u>
Northern Two-lined Salamander Alleghany County	<u>Eurycea b. bislineata</u>
Southern Two-lined Salamander Nansemond County	<u>Eurycea b. cirrigera</u>
Three-lined Salamander Louisa County	<u>Eurycea longicauda guttolineata</u>
Red-backed Salamander Washington County *Floyd County	<u>Plethodon c. cinereus</u>
Slimy Salamander Russell County Washington County Floyd County	<u>Plethodon g. glutinosus</u>
Peaks of Otter Salamander Bedford County	<u>Plethodon richmondi hubrichti</u>
Jordan's Salamander *Russell County Washington County	<u>Plethodon jordani</u>
Northern Red Salamander Alleghany County	<u>Pseudotriton r. ruber</u>
Red Salamander (intergrade) Floyd County	<u>P. r. ruber</u> X <u>nitidus</u>
Southern Cricket Frog Nansemond County	<u>Acris g. gryllus</u>
Mountain Chorus Frog *Dickenson County	<u>Pseudacris brachyphona</u>
Snapping Turtle--Orange County----	<u>Chelydra serpentina</u>
Five-lined Skink--Franklin County--	<u>Eumeces fasciatus</u>
Broad-headed Skink *Albemarle County *Bedford County	<u>Eumeces laticeps</u>
Eastern Worm Snake Albemarle County Alleghany County	<u>Carphophis a. amoenus</u>
Northern Ring-necked Snake Albemarle County Fairfax County	<u>Diadophis punctatus edwardsi</u>

(continued  
on page eight)

LAWS FOR LOG-ROLLERS

- I. Study the local varieties first; then LOOK before you touch!
- II. Do NOT handle poisonous snakes without tools or training.
- III. Though trained, do not take risks with venomous snakes.
- IV. Have using the buddy system - it may save your life or his.
- V. Do NOT enter any property without the owner's permission.
- VI. Check your insurance policy and status of your hospitalization.
- VII. Students (under 21) obtain your parents' permission and carry a written waiver of responsibility for injury to self which can be presented to property owner where you have permission to collect.
- VIII. Close all gates, replace logs, rocks, slabs, affecting landscape.
- IX. Do NOT collect more specimens than you need for study or record.
- X. Do NOT litter an area with old glass jars, food wrappers, etc.

CHARLES CITY COUNTY COLLECTING

Belatedly, we report a spring collecting trip into eastern Charles City County by Wayne Willis, VHS member of Annandale, Fairfax County, and Co-chairman William L. Witt of Arlington, Va.

They report that it rained a day or so before the trip which aided their collecting efforts. Fifteen species and thirty individual specimens were noted.

Collected and released were: Eastern mud turtle (Kinosternon s. subrubrum), Musk turtle (two) (Sternotherus odoratus), Eastern Box turtle (Terrapene c. carolina) Southeastern Five-lined Skink (Eumeces inexpectatus), Fence Lizard (Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus), Eastern worm snake (Carphophis a. amoenus), Northern Ringnecked Snake (Diadophis punctatus edwardsi), Rough Ground Snake (Haldea striatula), American toad (two) (Bufo terrestris americanus), Northern Brown Snake (Storeria d. dekayi), Black Rat Snake (Elaphe o. obsoleta).

County records collected and preserved:

Eastern Mud Salamander (Pseudotriton m. montanus)

Eastern Narrow-mouth Toad (Microhyla carolinensis)

Eastern King Snake (Lampropeltis g. getulus)

Coastal Plain Milk Snake (Lampropeltis d. doliata  
X L. d. temporalis)

Most were found under wood or pine slabs.

WLW

BLUE RIDGE COLLECTING NOTES\*

On a vacation trip along Virginia's Blue Ridge and nearby areas, five interesting records were taken:

Eastern Ribbon Snake (Thamnophis s. sauritus)

This is a Page County record. It was found dead on the road (DOR) two miles east of Stanley.

Corn Snake (Elaphe g. guttata)

This is a Bedford County record. It was D.O.R. about one mile S. of Peaks of Otter.

Red Spotted Newt (Diemictylus v. viridescens)

An eft taken high up on a hillside where only Plethodon salamanders have been observed. This was along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Roanoke County. Newts have been taken in Roanoke (City) but not on the mountain. Nearest water about 100 feet straight down!

Undetermined Dusky Salamander (Desmognathus sp. ?)

Some sort of puzzling Dusky Salamanders at Rocky Knob campground. There are at least five species likely to occur there!

Ground Skink (Lygosoma laterale)

A very interesting record for Patrick County. The specimen was found under a pine log along the side of Route 58 in the eastern part of the county. This is one of the closest records to the Blue Ridge known to me at this writing.

WLWitt

\* Note: Collecting on Federal Park lands is forbidden. Mr. W. L. Witt has held a permit from Shenandoah Nat'l Park (NPS).



RAGEOT, PRESIDENT; DR. CHAMBERLAIN, PRESIDENT-ELECT :

Members of the Virginia Herpetological Society have selected, as their president in 1963-1964, Roger Henry Rageot, the Curator of Natural History at the Norfolk Museum, Norfolk, Va.

Membership in the Society is open to all who have a more-than-casual interest in the zoology of the lower vertebrates -- reptiles and amphibians of Virginia and adjacent states.

Mr. Rageot is a co-founder of VHS which was organized in 1958. The Society nominates and elects its officers at its biennial meetings which, to date, have been held in the Richmond, Va., area.

The first president of VHS (1958-'59) was John Thornton Wood M.D., then in private practice in Burkeville, Va. Drs. Wood and R. L. Guillaudeu of McLean, Fairfax County, Va., are medical advisers to the Society.

The President-elect for 1965-1966 is Dr. James L. Chamberlain, biology instructor at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Va. Other VHS elected officers are: Chairman, O. King Goodwin of Newport News, Va.; Co-chairman, William L. Witt (in service) of Arlington, Va.; Treasurer, Mrs. Phoebe H. Knipling, Arlington, Va. and Secretary, Franklin Tobey, Jr. of Rockville, Maryland.

The second president of VHS (1960-1962) was W. Leslie Burger biology instructor, then at the College of William and Mary in historic Williamsburg, Virginia.

Ballots were cast by over a half of the Society's membership. The Society's next biennial statewide meeting will be held in late summer or early fall of 1964.

Naturalist Leslie E. Southall of Petersburg, Va., who is active in Scouting, has been asked by the Society to serve as its link with the Boy Scouts of America in Virginia. One of the objectives of VHS is to provide information and counselors on Reptile Study, a merit badge award sought by many scouts.

The Society plans to hold its '63 annual meeting at the National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C., Saturday afternoon, December 28. Also attending the meeting in the Washington Zoo's reptile house will be members of the Maryland Section of the VHS.

The Society's VHS BULLETIN, mailed to members, is sent without fee to the zoology departments of all colleges and universities in the state and to biology instructors at Virginia's secondary schools.

Prospective members need only send one dollar dues to Treasurer, VHS, 2623 Military Rd. Arlington, Va.

DON'T MISS OUR ANNUAL MEETING

DECEMBER 28, 1963

AT THE REPTILE HOUSE, NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK,  
WASHINGTON, D.C. AT 3:00 P.M. E.S.T.

- 9 -

(detach)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

(name) (check one)  
(address) ( ) introductory  
(city, or P.O.) ( ) renewal  
(county, if Va.) (State) \_\_\_\_\_  
(occupation)

PLEASE TYPE or HAND-LETTER

Dues: \$1.00 a year -- covers membership card, bulletins, postage. Send money order or check to: Dr. Phoebe H. Knipling (Treasurer). Note on check "for VHS dues" and mail with this detachable stub to: Mrs. P.H. Knipling, 2623 Military Road, Arlington, Virginia. Your membership card will be mailed with the next issue of the Bulletin.

- 9 -

**"THE REPTILES OF MARYLAND AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA"**

By Robert H. McCauley, Jr.

Published by the author, the entire stock is now handled by the Natural History Society of Maryland. With 48 photographs, 46 maps showing detailed distribution data, 194 pages, 1945. This was a Ph.D. thesis and is now considered one of the most remarkable and authoritative herpetological works on the Atlantic Coast. (Orig. \$2.50)

Now - - - - - \$ 1.25

For these two fine reptile books at Bargain Prices -----

**"SNAKES OF MARYLAND"**

By Howard A. Kelly, H.C. Robertson and A.W. Davis. Natural History Society of Maryland. 12 colored plates by Richard Deckert, 15 other plates, 33 figures. 103 pages, map. 1936. This is a collector's item primarily because of the unique colored paintings, and the inclusion of 5 species definitely not part of the Maryland Herpetofauna (see McCauley, 1945: 8-9, 24 for a critical evaluation). (Orig. \$1.50)

Now - - - - - \$0.85

Send check or money order to the

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF MARYLAND  
2643 North Charles Street, Baltimore 18, Md.  
-----

VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY Bulletin No. 34  
Treasurer: 2623 Military Road, Arlington, Va.  
Secretary: 4706 Tallahassee Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland  
(Return Postage Guaranteed)

to: Bio-Science Dep't Head