

Hognose Snake

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The Eastern Hognose snake was once one of the most numerous snakes in the coastal United States. Named for its upturned nose, it is about 24" in length with colored blotches. The Hognose is often mistaken for a poisonous snake like the copperhead.

Being slow, the hognose snakes are unable to outrun their predators, which include raccoons and opossums. For protection they mimic other snakes, spreading their head like a cobra, hissing loudly, wagging their tail like a rattlesnake and lunging at their enemies. If none of these tactics work, they will 'roll over and play dead,' including opening their mouth and letting their tongue hang out. If they are picked up while 'playing dead' they will remain limp, and if they're rolled over onto their belly, they will roll back over onto their back.

The hognose's favorite prey is toads, but they also eat frogs, salamanders, and other amphibians. Besides being killed because people mistake them for poisonous varieties, human encroachment has destroyed the habitat of the hognose snake (and the habitats of their prey) with housing developments, swamp drainage and roads. Hognose snakes have unique eyes; they have no eyelids and their eyes are always open. For eye protection a transparent lens called a spectacle covers their eyes. Because hognose snakes never bite, they make good pets for snake lovers.



The Hognose demonstrates his ability to look like a cobra by spreading his head and hissing loudly, but actually makes a good pet because they don't bite.