

Saw Scaled Viper

The Saw-scaled Viper (*Echis carinatus*) is a highly venomous snake found in India and throughout much of Africa and the Middle East. It is a small snake, but highly venomous, and is responsible for many human deaths in India. In this article, we will discuss the features, venom, habitat, distribution, importance to the ecosystem and IUCN status of Saw-scaled Viper.

Characteristics	Description
Name	Saw-scaled viper
Scientific Name	<i>Echis carinatus</i>
Colour	Grey or brown with dark brown patterns
Length	Up to 2 feet (60 cm)
Habitat	Dry and arid regions, rocky terrain
Toxicity Level	Highly venomous, medically significant
Indian states	Found throughout India except for the Himalayan region
IUCN status	Least Concern

Features

Saw-scaled vipers are small, slender snakes, typically measuring between 30 and 60 cm in length. They have a triangular-shaped head, which is slightly broader than the neck. They have rough, keeled scales on their body, which give them their name. The color of their body can vary from gray-brown to yellow-brown or reddish-brown. They have a distinctive pattern of dark, zigzag stripes along their back.

Type of venom

The venom of the Saw-scaled Viper is highly toxic, and it is estimated that it is responsible for more human deaths in India than any other species of snake. The venom is primarily hemotoxic, which means that it attacks the blood and causes damage to the circulatory system. Symptoms of envenomation can include pain, swelling, bleeding, and organ failure.

Habitat and food

Saw-scaled vipers are found in a wide range of habitats, including deserts, scrublands, and rocky areas. They are nocturnal and are primarily active at night, although they can occasionally be seen during the day. They are carnivorous and feed primarily on rodents, but they will also eat other small mammals, birds, and reptiles.

Where is it found in India

The Saw-scaled Viper is found throughout India, except for the northeastern states. They are commonly found in dry areas, including the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

Importance to ecosystem

Saw-scaled vipers play an important role in the ecosystem as predators, helping to control populations of small mammals and reptiles. They are also an important food source for larger predators, such as birds of prey and larger snakes.

IUCN status

The Saw-scaled Viper is classified as “Least Concern” on the IUCN Red List. Although it is widespread and relatively common

in many areas, it is still threatened by habitat loss and persecution by humans, who often kill them on sight due to their venomous nature.

Conclusion

Saw-scaled vipers are fascinating and important members of India's ecosystem. While they are highly venomous and can be dangerous to humans, they play an important role in controlling populations of small mammals and reptiles. It is important to respect these snakes and take precautions when living or working in areas where they are known to live.