

## How can you help massasaugas?

You can help protect massasaugas and other native animals.

If you know someone with wetlands on their property, encourage them to protect this valuable habitat.

Support local organizations working to protect wetlands and endangered species.

Contact local officials to support laws that protect wetlands.

Look for the eagle on your Indiana income tax form to donate money to Indiana's nongame and endangered wildlife programs, or visit [www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/endangered](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/endangered)



## If you see a massasauga...

**Tell the zoo if you see a massasauga. The information can help us with future conservation projects. Some tips:**

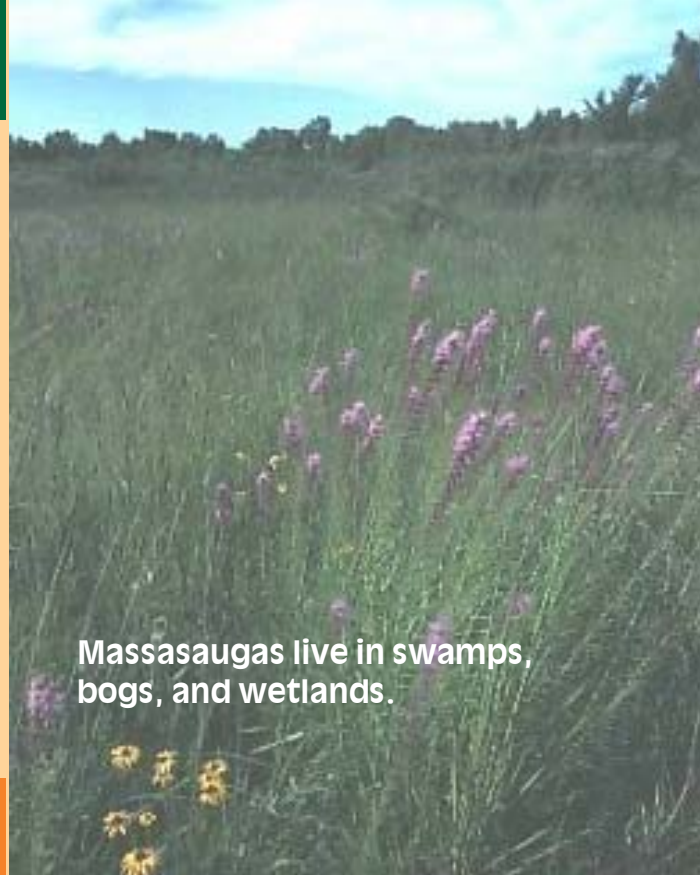
Remain calm.

The snake is more afraid of you than you are of it. More than likely, the snake will turn and flee into the shelter of a brushy area within a few minutes.

Do not try to capture or kill the massasauga. Simply make a note of the snake's location, along with the date and time of the sighting.

Contact the zoo with the information. Call us at 260-427-6800 or email [mark@kidszoo.org](mailto:mark@kidszoo.org).

**Remember! Massasaugas are protected by Indiana law. It is illegal to capture, harm, or kill them.**



Massasaugas live in swamps, bogs, and wetlands.

## People and massasaugas can live together!

**Understanding these snakes is the first step.**

Learn to identify massasaugas and other Indiana snakes. A field guide to native reptiles can help.

Wear proper footwear when hiking in areas where snakes might be found, especially at night.

Limit the use of pesticides and other chemicals on natural areas on your property. All wildlife will benefit.

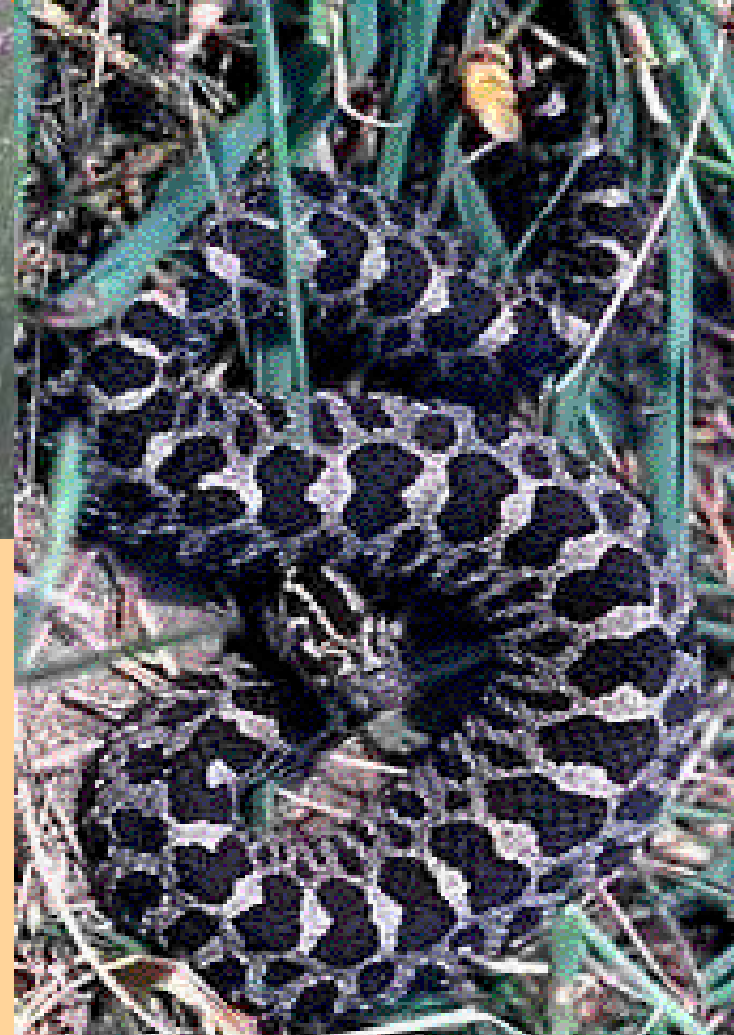
Teach your family and friends about snakes and what to do if they see a massasauga.

Realize that all creatures play an important role in nature.



[kidszoo.org](http://kidszoo.org)

## Indiana's Endangered Rattlesnake



## The Eastern Massasauga

## What's so special about the massasauga?

**The rare eastern massasauga is northern Indiana's only native rattlesnake.**

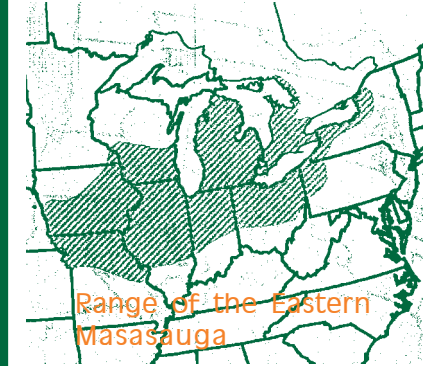
Because the massasauga is shy and secretive, most people will never see one in the wild. It prefers to hide under shrubs, rocks, or brush, and retreats to a sheltered area if spotted in the open.

Although massasaugas are venomous, there is little reason to fear them. The snake would rather flee than bite when encountering a human. Massasauga venom is toxic, but they inject only a tiny amount through short fangs. Human fatalities from massasauga bites are rare.

Massasaugas play an important role in the ecosystem by feeding on mice, voles, and shrews, thus keeping the rodent population under control.

## Why are they endangered?

**Massasaugas prefer moist lowlands, swamps, bogs, and other wetlands.**



Massasaugas are endangered over much of their range because their wetland habitats are increasingly drained and filled for development. People also kill massasaugas out of fear, not realizing how important the snakes are to the ecosystem.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Will I find a massasauga in my yard?

Probably not. Massasaugas prefer moist habitats, like wild wetlands, bogs, and swamps, away from people.

### How dangerous is the massasauga?

Massasaugas have toxic venom, but they inject only a small amount during a defensive bite.

### Do people always die from rattlesnake bites?

No. With prompt medical attention, almost all venomous snake bites are successfully treated.

### What should I do if I am bitten by a massasauga?

Don't panic! Try to move as little as possible to slow the spread of venom. Go to the nearest hospital immediately, or call for help to come to you.

Don't cut the wound and do not apply ice. never place a tight tourniquet on the affected limb. Remember that massasauga bites are rarely fatal.

### How did the massasauga get its name?

'Massasauga' is the Chippewa word for *great river-mouth*, which describes the location where the snake originally was found -- in marshes along the great rivers of the midwest.

