

Australia is home to a stunning variety of snakes. The presence of snakes in the alps is testament to their amazing distribution across the continent. The two species of snakes found on Mt Buller and Mt Stirling are the Alpine Copperhead *Austrelaps ramsayi*, and the White-lipped Snake *Drysdalia coronoides*. As with other Australian snakes, they are shy creatures that will prefer to stay out of your way, if you let them.

Snakes on Mt Buller and Mt Stirling

Alpine snakes are protected, and represent a healthy environment and balanced ecosystem. It is illegal to kill or harm them. When you're out walking or riding in the Resorts, keep your eyes out for snakes sun-bathing in rocky areas, gravel pathways, or open tracks and trails, especially near water or wet areas. Don't be alarmed, leave the snake alone and move past it (or return the way you have come).



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Alpine Snakes



What to do if you spot a snake

Do not interfere with the snake, most people admitted to hospital for a snake bite, have tried to kill or interfere with the reptile in some way.

If the snake is aware of your presence, it will move away from you. Allow enough time for the snake to retreat some distance before continuing on your way.

If the snake is unaware of your presence and you wish to continue, leave the trail to walk around the snake and return to the trail at a safe distance away.

If you are concerned, return the way you came.

What to do if you are bitten by a snake

If bitten on a limb, apply a pressure bandage, immobilise the limb and seek medical advice immediately. If bitten elsewhere, apply continuous direct pressure to the bite site. Do not wash the wound, as the venom on the skin can be used to identify the appropriate anti-venom.

CONTACT DETAILS

- Resort Management: 03 5777 6077
- Mansfield Hospital: 03 5775 2111
- Ambulance: 000

ADVICE FOR LODGES

Take care around firewood stacks. Keep the exterior of your lodge site tidy, and remove any hard waste or rubbish that could harbour snakes.

Take care!
Although uncommon,
alpine snakes inhabit this area.



White-lipped Snake

Drysdalia coronoides

The White-lipped snake is the most common alpine snake, also the shortest at 40cm. This snake can be identified by its conspicuous white stripe along the upper lip. The back varies from brick-red, to olive-green or dark grey, while the belly is usually salmon pink colour. Its diet consists of small lizards and the occasional frog. Females produce 3-10 live young in March in the lead up to winter, and three years pass before they are ready to go solo. The White-lipped Snake's bite is painful but not deadly.



Highlands Copperhead

Austrelaps ramsayi

The Alpine Copperhead varies in colour and pattern, ranging from pale brown to black, always with prominent white edging on the scales of the upper lip. Adults may grow up to about 1 metre long. The Alpine Copperhead prefers reasonably damp habitats, near streams or swampy areas. This snake is active both day and night and feeds on small vertebrates, including frogs, lizards and small mammals. Females give birth to up to 30 live young in mid to late summer. The Alpine Copperhead is capable of inflicting fatal bites, but is not usually aggressive unless cornered or frightened.