

## Snakebite Awareness Training

### Part 2: Lesson 4 - Identifying Snakes From Photos

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This lesson will require the use of photo identification slides that are available separately on the Upendo Conservation Area website (<https://www.upendoconservationarea.org>). These should be printed in color and laminated to make them more durable for multiple uses.

**Note to trainer** - *you do not have to introduce every snake that you want your participants to identify all in one session. Scatter them throughout the training so there is always an active component of identification throughout the training.*

Let's begin. Now that you know the kinds of characteristics that we can use to identify snakes, it is time to put those characteristics to good use. We are going to use them to identify the snakes from our community and nearby. We will focus on the venomous snakes, but will also identify a few of the more common snakes that are not harmful to humans, even though some may have a mild venom.

Here is what we are going to do. I am going to hold up a photo of a snake that we are going to learn to recognize. I will point out the important characteristics of the snake, and tell you why it is dangerous. Then I will pass the photo around for everyone to look at.

We are going to start with some of the most dangerous snakes from our region in western Kenya - the mambas and cobras. The first snakes we are going to learn about are these:

1. Black mamba
2. Jameson's mamba
3. Brown forest cobra
4. Egyptian cobra
5. Black-necked spitting cobra
6. East African garter snakes

**Note to trainer:** *hold up each photo to group, show them the important characteristics for identification, and why it is dangerous (type of venom). Pass the photos around until everyone has had time to look at the photos and see the identifying characteristics. When you are satisfied they can identify the characteristics of the first five snakes, test their knowledge by showing them unmarked photos of each type of snake and see if they can identify the snake based on the characteristics they just learned.*

Now we are going to test your knowledge - we want to see if you can identify these first five snakes from other photos. I will hold up an unmarked photo and I want you to put up 1 finger if you are unsure of the type of snake on up to 5 fingers if you are very certain you can identify the snake and share what characteristics you based your identification on.

**Note to trainer:** *once you have tested their knowledge, move on to the next five snakes or do this at another point in the training. Keep repeating these steps until all snakes are covered.*

***Now let's take a break from identification and learn a little bit about threat displays (go to that lesson).***

Now we are going to introduce you to another important group of dangerous snakes from our area - the vipers and night adders. We are going to include one non-venomous snake in this group because it looks like one of the venomous snakes.

1. Puff adder
2. Gaboon viper
3. Rhinoceros viper
4. Rhombic night adder
5. Rhombic egg eater (non-venomous look-alike)

***Again, let's take a break from identification, and learn a little bit about why we need to be alert when we are outside - because many snakes can hide in their environment because of their coloration and patterns - called camouflage (go to that lesson)..***

To wrap up identification, let's do two things:

1. I want to show you some vipers and adders that are mostly found near us in the Kakamega and Nandi forests - we won't learn how to identify these because they seem to be isolated to those areas.
2. Let's learn about some of the non-venomous snakes that are found in our area, and these we will want to identify.

1. Vipers and adders (show photos and point out key characteristics only)
  - a. Green (variable) bush viper
  - b. Rough-scaled bush viper
  - c. Forest night adder
  - d. Velvety green night adder
  
2. Non-venomous snakes (show photos, point out characteristics, and then test their knowledge with new photos).
  - a. Brown house snake
  - b. White-lipped snake
  - c. Cape wolf snake
  - d. Battersby's green snake
  - e. Northern stripe-bellied sand snake
  - f. Lineolate blind snake

***The key to the participants learning these is to bring them out in every training session and see if they can remember the key characteristics and identify the snakes correctly.***

Also, ***reinforce that identification is important because it can help give clues to hospital workers*** if you are bitten and they need to know what kind of snake it was to treat you properly.