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This site is supported by our readers. We may earn a commission, at no cost to you, if you purchase through links. You're trying to tell a rattlesnake from a gopher snake, and are venomous. Gopher snakes, on the other hand, are non-venomous, have narrower heads, and no
rattle. When you're out in the wild, knowing the difference between a rattlesnake vs gopher snake can be vital. You'll want to learn more about their habitats, behaviors, and how to identify them - and that's just the beginning of uncovering the unique characteristics of these two snakes. You'll be able to tell a rattlesnake from a gopher snake by
checking for a rattle, head shape, and pupils, as these are key differences between the two species. You can identify a gopher snake by its slender build, round pupils, and lack of a rattle, along with a more uniform color pattern and subtle markings, which are typically brown or yellowish orange. If you're trying to determine if a snake is a rattlesnake,
look for a triangular head, vertical pupils, and a distinctive rattle sound, as well as a heavy-set body and sharp diamond patterns, which are all characteristic of rattlesnakes are venomous and tend to avoid biting, rattlesnakes are venomous and will use their venom to subdue prey and defend
themselves, so it's crucial to exercise caution when encountering either species. Body Shape Differences In terms of body shape, rattlesnakes and gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake's triangle-shaped head, while gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake's triangle-shaped head, while gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake's triangle-shaped head, while gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake's triangle-shaped head, while gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake and gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake and gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head. A rattlesnake and gopher snakes are more slender with a narrower, streamlined head.
shaped head is one of its clearest identifiers in any snake comparison. The rattlesnake's triangle-shaped head is a striking hallmark, housing venom glands that define its deadly precision and survival mastery. This triangular advantage isn't just aesthetic—it supports its hunting power. The broader base houses large venom glands, critical for its
potent bite. Plus, the skull structure allows for hinged fangs to deliver precise strikes. This head shape also pairs with bite force correlation, remember: that pronounced head shape, combined with its venom gland size, makes it a standout in snake differences. Spotting the difference
between a gopher snake and a rattlesnake starts with their heads. While rattlesnakes flaunt triangular head shape evolution lets them burrow easily, aiding in hunting rodents underground. The burrowing head shape evolution lets them burrow easily, aiding in hunting rodents underground. The burrowing head shape evolution lets them burrow easily, aiding in hunting rodents underground. The burrowing head shape evolution lets them burrow easily, aiding in hunting rodents underground.
in tight spaces. If the neck and head shape seem smooth without bold edges, you're likely observing a gopher snake. Rattlesnake's muscular build stands out. With an average weight of 5 pounds, their body density supports quick strikes and venom delivery. Some can even tip the
scale at 15 pounds! Females are often bulkier, aiding in reproduction. This hunting advantage and strong frame also help with thermal regulation, ensuring survival in harsh environments where size truly matters. Rattlesnakes also possess heat-sensing pit organs, which aids their survival. Gopher Snake's Longer Tail A gopher snake's longer tail
stands out compared to a rattlesnake's shorter, stubbier one. This Tail Length Variation is key when spotting snake mimicry displays. Gopher snakes use their tail's muscle structure to mimic a rattlesnake's rattle. Unlike rattlesnake's rattle. Unlike rattlesnake's shorter, stubbier one. This Tail Length Variation is key when spotting snake mimicry displays.
Functionality. Here's how gopher snake tails differ: Longer, slender design No rattle structure Active Tail Mimicry Defense Enhanced Tail Regeneration ability Streamlined tail for speed Patterns and Coloration In terms of patterns and colors, rattlesnakes are easy to tell apart if you know what to look for. Rattlesnakes often have
sharp, diamond-shaped markings, while gopher snakes show softer, splotchy patterns in shades of brown or gray. Rattlesnake's Dorsal Pattern When you're trekking through nature, recognizing a rattlesnake's dorsal pattern isn't just interesting – it could be lifesaving. These snake patterns boast incredible pattern isn't just interesting – it could be lifesaving.
their surroundings thanks to intricate scale morphology. Here's what to look for: Diamond patterns with light edges stand out beautifully against their bodies, blending into desert terrain. Stripe variations and chevron markings near the tail create a striking dark-to-light gradient for added concealment. Rich, color intensity shines through with dark
brown or black blotches over gray or red backgrounds. Irregular crossbands, including V- or M-shapes, zigzag across their backs, scattering their outline. These patterns aren't just decor - they help rattlesnakes stay unnoticed while hunting or hiding. In a way, it's nature's own masterpiece, designed for survival. Gopher Snake's Similar Pattern
Gopher snakes show fascinating pattern imitation, fooling predators through mimicry evolution. Their splotchy markings can resemble a rattlesnake, aiding in predator avoidance. Light cream, yellow, or tan backdrops highlight the dark spots along their sides, creating effective camouflage. Regional variations in patterns make identification tricky
Gopher Snake Traits Characteristics Base Color Cream, light brown, yellow Markings Splotchy, uneven spots Belly Light with subtle spotting Pattern Confusion Mimics rattlesnakes remarkably Rattlesnak
show—they're a masterclass in camouflage effectiveness. Their colors vary depending on their habitat influence: Deep browns with bold diamond patterns in arid zones Ashy grays that blend into rocky landscapes Olive greens for forested areas Reddish-browns thriving in desert climates Young rattlesnakes often with brighter, more vibrant hues
These changes reflect pattern development and occasional color mutations, ensuring rattlesnakes adapt perfectly for survival. Some snake species, like the Brazilian Rainbow Boa, exhibit iridescent scale patterns. Always appreciate from a safe distance! Gopher Snake's Brown or Gray Color In terms of snake coloration, gopher snakes are masters of
blending in. Their bodies showcase brown hues and gray tones ranging from light tan to dark chocolate, sometimes even with a greenish tint. This impressive color camouflage helps them avoid predators across deserts, forests, and grasslands. Regional variations in their color development make their patterns unique, including dark blotches on their
backs and smaller side spots. Here's a quick breakdown: Feature Gopher Snake Rattlesnake Color Tones Browns, Grays, Greenish Tint Browns, Grays, Greenish Tint Browns, Grays, More Complex Side Markings Dark Blotches Sharp Diamond Patterns Camouflage High Moderate Belly Color Pale with Spots Uniform Pale Their color
genetics guarantee survival in varied terrains while aiding predator avoidance. Perfect natural design! Behavior, rattlesnakes mimic these movements to protect themselves. Their habitats also differ, with rattlesnakes preferring rocky or dry areas and gopher
snakes often sheltering underground or in open fields, which highlights the distinct habitats they occupy. Rattlesnake's Defensive Behavior Sometimes spotting a rattlesnake means you're already within their strike distance, but their defensive behavior isn't about immediate attack. Their go-to moves include: Freezing in place - staying perfectly still
helps them stay hidden. Coiling posture with a tail rattle - this warning tells predators what's coming if they don't back off. Venom usage - a bite is reserved for absolute last-ditch situations. Rattlesnakes are masters of snake warning signs, mixing patience and precision in how they handle danger, and these snakes prioritize threat assessment to
avoid wasting venom. Gopher Snake's Mimicry Behavior When faced with danger, gopher snakes put on a convincing performance that fools predators. Through snake mimicry, they flatten their heads, hiss loudly, and vibrate their tails against dry leaves to imitate a rattlesnake's rattle. Gopher snakes master the art of mimicry, hissing and tail-
shaking to imitate rattlesnakes and outsmart predators with bold deception. This clever defensive mechanism is a textbook example of behavioral ecology in action, leveraging mimicry accuracy to alter a predator's threat perception. Gopher snakes exhibit this rattlesnake imitation when they feel threatened. Feature Gopher Snake Behavior
Rattlesnake Behavior Tail Movement Vibrates against leaves Vibrates rattle segments Head Shape Flattened, triangular Novement Vibrates against leaves Vibrates Vibrates Against leaves Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrates Vibrat
rattlesnakes thrive in rocky terrain and desert ecosystems. These masters of survival use the rugged landscape to their advantage, hiding in crevices or under shrubs to ambush unsuspecting prey. Their desert adaptations include camouflage-like scales that blend seamlessly with the environment, making them nearly invisible until they strike.
Rattlesnakes are solitary by nature, often active during cooler twilight hours, a behavior known as nocturnal hunting. They rely on their potent venom delivery system to subdue prey quickly, ensuring survival in the harsh Southwestern ecosystems. California is home to seven rattlesnake species. Preferred habitats: Rocky outcrops, deserts, grassy
plains. Survival traits: Heat tolerance, excellent camouflage, and ambush tactics. Gopher Snake's Underground Habitat Gopher snakes are masters of the underground ecosystem, spending most of their time in burrow systems. Whether creating their own tunnels or taking over abandoned dens, they use these spaces for predator avoidance and
temperature regulation. Their underground habitat plays a pivotal role in their survival, especially during colder months when they hibernate. Many owners provide a pre-made burrow alternative for their ground-dwelling nature, these snakes are also agile climbers and swimmers, showcasing adaptability across their wide
range. Rattle and Sound Differences In terms of sound, rattlesnakes and gopher snakes couldn't be more different. Rattlesnakes produce a distinct buzzing sound with their tail, while gopher snakes remain silent, relying on tail vibrations against surfaces to mimic their venomous counterparts. Rattlesnake's Rattle Sound A rattlesnake's rattle
mechanics are a marvel of evolution. By vibrating its tail, it produces a sharp, buzzing snake sound that's impossible to ignore. The sound frequency can shift from 40 to 70 hertz, creating an illusion that the predator is closer than it is. Each hollow segment of the rattle clicks together, amplifying the effect. Warns predators to back off. Signals danger
with precision. Mimics urgency to confuse threats. Highlights nature's survival ingenuity. Gopher Snake's No Rattle Sound While rattlesnakes rely on their iconic rattle, they've developed unique defensive tactics to confuse predators and gain an
evolutionary advantage. By forcefully exhaling through their glottis, they create a loud, intimidating hiss—nature's built-in alarm system. Shaking their tail against dry leaves or debris, they imitate rattlesnake tail vibrations, fooling predators into second-guessing their approach. Some even emit a sharp "bark," a startling sound that signals danger.
This snake mimicry isn't just for show—it's a survival strategy. When you encounter any snake, it's smart to respect their space and avoid testing their defenses. Rattlesnake's Vibrating Tail When a rattlesnake shakes its tail, it triggers a unique warning mechanism. The sound comes from its rattle formation, made of keratin segments that interlock
and click together. These segments grow with each shed, showcasing the rattle evolution over time. Powered by strong tail muscles, the vibrations can vary in frequency depending on the snake's urgency. Think of it as nature's alarm bell, signaling danger. Feature Material Purpose Movement Type Sound Produced Rattle Formation Keratin Defense
Signal Vibrating Buzzing Noise Tail Muscles Strong Control Rapid Loud Warning Mechanism Audible Predator Alert Rhythmic Distinct Rattle Evolution Gradual Growth Continuous Increasing Frequency Variation Adjustable Urgency Signal Faster/Slower Changing Pitch Gopher Snake's Silent Tail Unlike the rattlesnake's buzzing tail, the gopher
snake relies on Silent Defense. Its tail movement mimics a rattlesnake's Vibration Imitation by shaking against the ground or dry leaves, creating Predator Confusion. This Tail Mimicry tricks threats into thinking it's venomous. However, with no rattle, it's a quiet act—more like Ground Shaking without the noise. If you spot a silent tail, you're likely
Rattlesnake's Western and Southern US Range The Western rattlesnake thrives in the western and southern U.S., adapting to deserts, mountains, and rocky terrains. Its geographic range spans states like California, Arizona, and Texas, influenced by prey availability and climate. These snakes are masters of desert adaptation, but human impact and
conservation efforts shape their habitats. You can find products for their range. Their presence highlights the delicate balance between nature and development. Gopher Snake's Wider US and Mexico Range The gopher snake thrives in diverse
habitats, including grasslands, prairies, and forests, showcasing its impressive habitat adaptability. Found even on the Channel Islands, its geographic range overlaps with rattlesnakes but spans farther. With a significant population density, gopher snakes play a pivotal role in pest control, highlighting their ecosystem impact and importance in
conservation efforts. They're non-venomous snakes known for defensive mimicry tactics. Rattlesnake showcases how rattlesna
aided by exploring specific habitat products. Gopher Snake's Varied Habitats Stretching from British Columbia to Mexico, gopher snakes are true masters of habitat adaptability guides them. Their habitat diversity includes marshlands, mountain slopes, and sandy
soils. The California gopher snake and Pacific gopher snake are often spotted in overlapping environments, showcasing how climate influence shapes their range. These burrowing experts even aid conservation efforts by controlling rodent populations in varied snake habitats. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) You'll encounter a million snakes, but the controlling rodent populations in varied snake are often spotted in overlapping environments, showcasing how climate influence shapes their range.
telling them apart is key: check for a rattle, head shape, and pupils to distinguish between venomous gopher snakes and non-venomous gopher snakes and non-venomous gopher snakes instantly. You'll identify a gopher snake by its slender build, round pupils, and lack of a rattle, with a more uniform color pattern and subtle markings, typically brown or yellowish orange. You can tell if a
snake is a rattlesnake by its triangular head, vertical pupils, and distinctive rattle sound, as well as its heavy-set body and sharp diamond patterns. You'll notice the Mojave rattlesnake resembles a gopher snake due to its similar color pattern and body shape, making it a common lookalike. Like a detective, you'll examine the snake's body, looking for a
rattle, heat-sensing pits, and distinct patterns to distinguish between a venomous rattlesnake and a harmless gopher snakes, and tend to retreat unless threatened or cornered, preferring to avoid potential dangers. A million venomous snakes can't
be wrong - you're safer with a gopher snake, but since it's not an option, rattlesnakes are more venomous than cottonmouths, hands down, every time. You won't typically get hurt by a gopher snake, as they're non-venomous and tend to avoid biting, but they may defend themselves if threatened or provoked, so handle with caution. You should know
that rattlesnakes are indeed venomous, using them a potentially dangerous species to encounter in the wild. You hunt by using venom to subdue prey, ambushing small mammals, birds, and reptiles, and then swallowing them whole, relying on stealth and precision to catch your next meal
quickly. You might think telling a rattlesnake vs gopher snake apart is tricky, but it's easier than you think. By knowing their key differences, you'll be better equipped to handle encounters. Remember, a rattlesnake vs gopher snake can be identified by their heads, patterns, and sounds, so stay alert and you'll be just fine when dealing with a
rattlesnake vs gopher snake. A Gopher snake mimics a rattling sound made by a rattlesnake, so how can you tell them apart? Because of its markings and protective behavior, the gopher snake is sometimes mistaken for a rattlesnake. Both look alike and are short-tempered, but only one delivers a nasty bite. Gopher snakes lack a rattle, are longer and
more slender than rattlesnakes, have narrow heads, round pupils, no pits, and are non-venomous. On the other hand, rattlesnakes have a rattle, spade-shaped heads, slit-like pupils, heat-sensing "pits" near their nostrils, and are venomous. If you've ever found yourself debating whether you're looking at a neighborhood-friendly gopher or a potentially
lethal rattlesnake, you know how crucial it is to distinguish between them. The harmless gopher or a potentially lethal rattlesnake? It turns out there are some pretty easy hacks to tell them apart. After extensive research, here are gopher snake vs
rattlesnake 15 Key Differences Answered! Gopher SnakeRattlesnakeScientific namePituophis cateniferVipers of the Crotalus familyOriginNorth AmericaSouthwest US, Argentina, MexicoLongevity10 to 25 years10 to 20 yearsSize6 to 9 ft.Body is relatively narrower.3 to 6 ft.Heavy-set body that appears almost 'fat'.Color and PatternUneven blotches of
orange, brown, and yellowA diamond pattern in shades of brownVenomous - lack fangsVenomous - 
these 15 key differences answered. The rattle located on the end of a rattlesnake generally have a good-sized rattle near the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes generally have a good-sized rattle near the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the true rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the blunt end of their tail.
a thin, pointed end, while in rattlesnakes, the scales modify into a cluster ending in a blunt, rounded shape. When an adult rattlesnake is placed next to a fully grown gopher snake, the latter wins the size contest. The average adult gopher snake is placed next to a fully grown gopher snake, the latter wins the size contest. The average adult gopher snake is placed next to a fully grown gopher snake, the latter wins the size contest.
species. However, while being almost twice the length of rattlers, gopher snakes are whip-like. The size of the head is another differentiating feature between the two snakes species. A rattlesnake's head is shaped more like an arrow or triangular shape, like a pit
viper. This makes the head notably more prominent than its slender neck. Herpetologists ascribe the difference in head size to the huge venom glands at the rear of their necks. The pupils of a rattlesnake are vertical, as they are in all viper
species. On the flip side, the pupils of a gopher snake are spherical. But to tell the difference, you'd have to get too close for your liking. This could be an issue. One of the primary distinctions between a gopher snake vs rattlesnake is
their venom. Gophers are non-venomous, and while they may bite you (usually in defense), it is completely harmless. Crossing to the other side, rattlesnakes have venom that's produced in glands located in the snake's upper jaw. Their venom is a complex mixture of chemicals, yet a bite is rarely lethal. Aside from the horrific bleeding from the bite site
the victim's blood pressure plummets dramatically. And if left untreated, it can kill a fully-grown adult. As a result, a rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency. Gopher snakes and rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency. Gopher snakes and rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency. Their primary food sources include rabbits, squirrels, ground-nesting birds, mice, and other rodents. The
key difference is in the hunting and feeding method. Rattlesnakes ambush their victim. They wait for the right moment and attack. They kill the prey with a lethal bite before devouring it whole. Gopher snakes hunt with their excellent sense of smell. When they strike, they coil around the animal, effectively constricting it to death. Rattlesnakes have
two enormous fangs on their upper jaw to inject venom. Gopher snake breeds, a gopher snake 
notice a difference in the color and pattern of the bodies of the snakes. Color is quite a variable in gopher snakes vs rattlesnakes, but there is a notable difference in the dorsal design. The Gopher has a dark checkered pattern. The ranges or rectangles. But most rattlesnake species have a distinct diamond dorsal pattern. The range in the color and pattern that looks like a chain of squares or rectangles. But most rattlesnake species have a distinct diamond dorsal pattern.
of the gopher snake is extensive. They inhabit coniferous forests, brushlands, woodlands, prairies, deserts, and cultivated fields. Geographically, this means they can be found in most states. They are one of the most widespread species in the US.According to the University of Michigan's Animal Diversity Web (ADW), you can spot gopher snakes from
north of Mexico to Western and South Central Canada. They can be found west to the Pacific coast, West Texas, Missouri, Illinois, north through Wisconsin, Saskatchewan to southern British Columbia. Rattlesnakes occupy deserts, marshes, plains, woodlands, and foothills. They are abundant in the deserts of the southwestern United States but range
from southern Canada to central Argentina. When it comes to the reproductive behavior of these snakes, one is oviviparous (gives birth). Gopher snakes mate during spring, right after hibernation. After about 8 weeks, pregnant females lay eggs that hatch after hibernation. After about 8 weeks, pregnant females lay eggs that hatch after hibernation.
snakes that give birth to live young. Although they don't hibernate through winter, rattlesnakes also breed in spring. This species lays eggs but keeps them incubated for about 7 months until they hatch and come out as snakelets. Now here is where all the intrigue lies. Indeed if a snake shakes its tail, it's got to be a rattlesnake. Not necessarily. The
gopher snake has mastered the art of mimicry. Gophers morph their heads to resemble that of a rattlesnake. They will also hiss and vibrate the tail when agitated, just like an original rattler. These two species of snakes can be distinguished by
their appearance, including their coloration. Gopher snakes are typically brown or tan in color, with dark blotches down their back. They can grow to be quite large, up to six feet in length. Rattlesnakes, on the other hand, are usually darker in color, with a pattern of diamonds or squares along their back. They also have a rattle at the end of their tail,
which is used to warn predators of their presence. One common difference between the diet of a gopher snake and a rattlesnake is the type of prey each snake typically eats. Gopher snake sare known to eat mostly small mammals, such as rodents and lizards as their main source of prey each snake typically eats.
food. This difference in diet can be attributed to the different habitats each snake species inhabits. Gopher snakes are typically found in rocky desert regions. Therefore, the type of prey available to each snake is different based on its habitat. Another difference between the
diet of these two snakes is the way they hunt for their food. Gopher snakes are known to be constrictors, meaning they kill their prey by wrapping their body around it and squeezing it until it suffocates. On the other hand, rattlesnakes are venomous, meaning they kill their prey by injecting them with a deadly toxin through their fangs. This difference
in hunting methods is also likely due to the different habitats these snakes live in. constrictor snakes are typically found in areas with lots of vegetation, where they can use their long bodies to coil around their prey and squeeze it to death. Venomous snakes, on the other hand, are typically found in open desert regions where there is not much
vegetation for them to hide. Therefore, they have adapted to hunting by injecting their prey with venom, which quickly kills it. One of the easiest ways to tell a gopher snake apart from a rattlesnake, on the other hand, have a much more
pointed and triangular-shaped snout. This difference is most noticeable when the snakes are viewed from above. Another way to tell these two types of snakes apart is by looking at their eyes. Rattlesnakes have elliptical pupils, while gopher snakes have elliptical pupils, while gopher snakes have round pupils. Finally, gopher snakes have elliptical pupils, while gopher snakes have elliptical pupils.
ever unsure which type of snake you're looking at, take a close look at the snout and eyes. Chances are, if it's a gopher snakes and rattlesnakes behave very differently, even though they are both reptiles. Gopher snakes are shy and will usually try to flee when they feel threatened. On the other hand
rattlesnakes are aggressive and will often attack when they feel threatened. This difference in behavior is likely due to the different environments that these two types of snakes live in more open areas such as deserts. This difference in habitat may cause the different
behaviors that we see in these two types of snakes. Choose the right type of cage. A rattlesnake needs a sturdy, escape-proof cage that is large enough for it to move around comfortably. The cage should also have a secure lid to prevent the snake from getting out. Provide plenty of hiding places. Rattlesnakes like to have somewhere to hide, so make
sure there are plenty of hiding places in the cage regularly and remove any waste immediately. Don't handle your snake too much.
Although it is okay to handle your rattlesnake occasionally, it is important not to do so too often. This can stress the snake out and make it more likely to bite. Be careful when feeding your rattlesnake, be sure to use tongs or gloves to avoid being bitten. It is also important to only feed the snake live prey that is small enough for it to eat
easily. By following these tips, you can help ensure that your pet rattlesnake stays healthy and happy. When it comes to gopher snakes, you need to provide them with large enclosures that have plenty of hiding places, branches, and rocks. Maintain a consistent temperature and humidity level in the enclosure. Feed your gopher snake live food such as
mice or rats and handle it regularly to help it get used to humans. You should also make sure to take your gopher snakes and rattlesnakes are members of the subfamily Crotalinae, which contains all pit vipers. Pit vipers get their name from the heat-sensing pits located on each side of their head
between the eye and nostril. These sensory organs allow them to "see" in infrared, allowing them to detect warm-blooded prey even in complete darkness. All pit vipers share a similar triangular-shaped head, which is wider than the neck. Gopher snakes and rattlesnakes both have long, hinged fangs that they use to inject venom into their prey. The
venom of both gopher snakes and rattlesnakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are ambush predators, meaning they wait for their prey to come to them rather
than chasing it down. When they strike, pit vipers can extend up to two-thirds of their body length. Pit vipers use their venom primarily to kill and subdue prey, not for self-defense. However, if they feel threatened, they will not hesitate to bite. The majority of bites occur when humans inadvertently step on or otherwise disturb a snake that is resting in
tall grass or underbrush. Both gopher snakes and rattlesnakes will give warning signs before biting, such as coiling their fangs. If these warnings are ignored, the snake will strike. Bites from either type of snake can be extremely painful and may result in serious injury or even death if not treated promptly. Yes, a Gopher snake
can eat a rattlesnake. Gopher snakes excel in climbing, swimming, and burrowing. This allows for a more diverse diet. The rattlesnake occasionally appears on the gopher's menu in addition to insects, lizards, small animals, birds, and their eggs. Because they compete for food and territory with rattlesnakes, you won't typically find both in the same
area. For this reason, gopher snakes will help keep rattlers away. But they will only go after a threatening rattler or if it is hungry. The hunting method varies when the rattlesnake is the prey. The gopher snake lays in wait and strikes when ready. But instead of the usual constriction method, the Gopher grabs the rattlesnake by the head and
suffocates it before swallowing it from head to tail. If the serpent you're looking at is a rattlesnake by some chance, you must exercise caution to avoid a trip to the ER. Here's what to do when you see a rattlesnake. Coiled, rattling, and ton't scream, and don't run away - remain calm. Ensure there are at least 5 ft between you and the snake. Coiled, rattling, and ton't scream, and don't run away - remain calm. Ensure there are at least 5 ft between you and the snake. Coiled, rattling, and ton't scream, and don't scream, and d
head raised? If possible, step back to increase the striking distance. It's best to stand at about 15 ft from the viper. Hold your ground and stand still for a few minutes. Rattlesnakes are not aggressive and will likely slither away once they establish you are not a threat. If a bite occurs, stay calm, call 911, and request medical assistance. A Gopher snake
mimics a rattling sound made by a rattlesnake, so how can you tell them apart? Because of its markings and protective behavior, the gopher snake is sometimes mistaken for a rattlesnake. Both look alike and are short-tempered, but only one delivers a nasty bite. Gopher snake lack a rattle, are longer and more slender than rattlesnakes, have narrow
heads, round pupils, no pits, and are non-venomous. On the other hand, rattlesnakes have a rattle, spade-shaped heads, slit-like pupils, heat-sensing "pits" near their nostrils, and are venomous. If you've ever found yourself debating whether you're looking at a neighborhood-friendly gopher or a potentially lethal rattlesnake, you know how crucial it is
to distinguish between them. The harmless gopher snake is often killed due to this confusion. So, how do you tell if you're looking at a harmful gopher or a potentially lethal rattlesnake? It turns out there are gopher snake vs rattlesnake? It turns out there are some pretty easy hacks to tell them apart. After extensive research, here are gopher snake is often killed due to this confusion. So, how do you tell if you're looking at a harmful gopher or a potentially lethal rattlesnake? It turns out there are gopher snake is often killed due to this confusion. So, how do you tell if you're looking at a harmful gopher or a potentially lethal rattlesnake? It turns out there are some pretty easy hacks to tell them apart. After extensive research, here are gopher snake is often killed due to this confusion. So, how do you tell if you're looking at a harmful gopher or a potentially lethal rattlesnake? It turns out there are some pretty easy hacks to tell them apart.
SnakeRattlesnakeScientific namePituophis cateniferVipers of the Crotalus familyOriginNorth AmericaSouthwest US, Argentina, MexicoLongevity10 to 25 years10 to 20 yearsSize6 to 9 ft.Body is relatively narrower.3 to 6 ft.Heavy-set body that appears almost 'fat'.Color and PatternUneven blotches of orange, brown, and yellowA diamond pattern in
shades of brownVenomNon-venomous - lack fangsVenomous - has fangs. Killing MethodConstrictionVenomous biteSpecial FeaturesLacks a rattle but is a great mimic. Has a rattle and pits for sensing. You should not take any chances when distinguishing between gopher snake and rattlesnake. Check out these 15 key differences answered. The rattle
located on the end of a rattlesnake's body is absent in gopher snakes. On the other hand, adult rattlesnakes generally have a good-sized rattle near the blunt end of their tail. While rattlesnakes are the true rattlers, a gopher snake mimics the rattling to scare off threats. This is accomplished by shaking its rear in the manner of a rattler. The sound is
produced when the tail rubs against the ground or dry vegetation. However, some rattlesnakes lose their rattles due to various environmental factors. Thus, don't assume that you're looking at a gopher snake because there is no rattlesnakes lose their rattlesnakes.
the scales modify into a cluster ending in a blunt, rounded shape. When an adult rattlesnake is placed next to a fully grown gopher snake, the latter wins the size contest. The average adult gopher snake is placed next to a fully grown gopher snake, the latter wins the size contest. The average adult gopher snake is placed next to a fully grown gopher snake size is 6 to 9 feet long; most reach 8 feet. Rattlesnakes range from 3 to 6 feet, depending on the species. However, while being almost twice the
length of rattlers, gopher snakes have a significantly narrower girth. Rattlesnakes are heavy-bodied, while gopher snakes are whip-like. The size of the head is another differentiating feature between the two snakes are whip-like an arrow or triangular shape, like a pit viper. This makes the head notably more
prominent than its slender neck. Herpetologists ascribe the difference in head size to the huge venom glands at the rear of their necks. The pupils of a rattlesnake are vertical, as they are in all viper species. On the flip side, the pupils of a
gopher snake are spherical. But to tell the difference, you'd have to get too close for your liking. This could be achievable if the serpent is kept in a cage. But if you've just discovered it in your yard, you can see why this would be an issue. One of the primary distinctions between a gopher snake vs rattlesnake is their venom. Gophers are non-venomous
and while they may bite you (usually in defense), it is completely harmless. Crossing to the other side, rattlesnakes have venom that's produced in glands located in the snake's upper jaw. Their venom is a complex mixture of chemicals, yet a bite is rarely lethal. Aside from the horrific bleeding from the bite site, the victim's blood pressure plummets
dramatically. And if left untreated, it can kill a fully-grown adult. As a result, a rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency. Gopher snakes and rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency. Gopher snakes are sult, a rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency. Gopher snakes are sult, a rattlesnake bite is considered a medical emergency.
feeding method. Rattlesnakes ambush their victim. They wait for the right moment and attack. They with a lethal bite before devouring it whole. Gopher snakes hunt with their excellent sense of smell. When they strike, they coil around the animal, effectively constricting it to death. Rattlesnakes have two enormous fangs on their upper jaw
to inject venom. Gopher snakes lack fangs because they are constrictors. Instead, they have numerous tiny, hooked teeth for gripping their prey while they squeeze it. To people unfamiliar with common snake breeds, a gopher snake with common sna
pattern of the bodies of the snakes. Color is quite a variable in gopher snakes vs rattlesnakes, but there is a notable difference in the dorsal design. The Gopher has a dark checkered pattern. The range of the gopher snake is extensive
They inhabit coniferous forests, brushlands, woodlands, prairies, deserts, and cultivated fields. Geographically, this means they can be found in most states. They are one of the most widespread species in the US.According to the University of Michigan's Animal Diversity Web (ADW), you can spot gopher snakes from north of Mexico to Western and
South Central Canada. They can be found west to the Pacific coast, West Texas, Missouri, Illinois, north through Wisconsin, Saskatchewan to southern British Columbia. Rattlesnakes occupy deserts of the southwestern United States but range from southern Canada to central
Argentina. When it comes to the reproductive behavior of these snakes, one is oviparous (lays eggs) while the latter is ovoviviparous (gives birth). Gopher snakes mate during spring, right after hibernation. After about 8 weeks, pregnant females lay eggs that hatch after another 8 weeks. Rattlesnakes are one of the few snakes that give birth to live
young. Although they don't hibernate through winter, rattlesnakes also breed in spring. This species lays eggs but keeps them incubated for about 7 months until they hatch and come out as snakelets. Now here is where all the intrigue lies. Indeed if a snake shakes its tail, it's got to be a rattlesnake. Not necessarily. The gopher snake has mastered the
coloration. Gopher snakes are typically brown or tan in color, with dark blotches down their back. They can grow to be quite large, up to six feet in length. Rattlesnakes, on the other hand, are usually darker in color, with a pattern of diamonds or squares along their back. They also have a rattle at the end of their tail, which is used to warm predators
of their presence. One common difference between the diet of a gopher snake and a rattlesnake is the type of prey each snake typically eats. Gopher snakes are known to eat mostly small mammals, such as rodents and rabbits. On the other hand, rattlesnakes tend to prefer birds and lizards as their main source of food. This difference in diet can be
attributed to the different habitats each snake species inhabits. Gopher snakes are typically found in open grasslands and prairies, while rattlesnakes are more commonly found in rocky desert regions. Therefore, the type of prey available to each snake is the way
they hunt for their food. Gopher snakes are known to be constrictors, meaning they kill their prey by injecting them with a deadly toxin through their fangs. This difference in hunting methods is also likely
due to the different habitats these snakes live in. constrictor snakes are typically found in areas with lots of vegetation, where they can use their long bodies to coll around their prey and squeeze it to death. Venomous snakes, on the other hand, are typically found in open desert regions where there is not much vegetation for them to hide. Therefore
they have adapted to hunting by injecting their prey with venom, which quickly kills it. One of the easiest ways to tell a gopher snake apart from a rattlesnakes, on the other hand, have a much more pointed and triangular-shaped snout. This
difference is most noticeable when the snakes are viewed from above. Another way to tell these two types of snakes apart is by looking at their eyes. Rattlesnakes have elliptical pupils, while gopher snakes have round pupils. Finally, gopher snakes tend to be overall larger in size than rattlesnakes. So if you're ever unsure which type of snake you're
looking at, take a close look at the snout and eyes. Chances are, if it's a gopher snakes are shy and will usually try to flee when they feel threatened. On the other hand, rattlesnakes are aggressive and will often
attack when they feel threatened. This difference in behavior is likely due to the different environments that these two types of snakes live in more open areas such as deserts. This difference in habitat may cause the different behaviors that we see in these two types of
snakes. Choose the right type of cage. A rattlesnake needs a sturdy, escape-proof cage that is large enough for it to move around comfortably. The cage should also have a secure lid to prevent the snake from getting out. Provide plenty of hiding places in the
cage. This can be achieved by using rocks, logs, or other objects that the snake can slither under or into. Keep the cage clean. Like all animals, rattlesnakes need a clean environment to stay healthy. Be sure to clean the cage regularly and remove any waste immediately. Don't handle your snake too much. Although it is okay to handle your rattlesnake
occasionally, it is important not to do so too often. This can stress the snake out and make it more likely to bite. Be careful when feeding, When feeding your rattlesnake, be sure to use tongs or gloves to avoid being bitten. It is also important to only feed the snake live prey that is small enough for it to eat easily. By following these tips, you can help
ensure that your pet rattlesnake stays healthy and happy. When it comes to gopher snakes, you need to provide them with large enclosures that have plenty of hiding places, branches, and rocks. Maintain a consistent temperature and humidity level in the enclosure. Feed your gopher snake live food such as mice or rats and handle it regularly to help
it get used to humans. You should also make sure to take your gopher snake to the vet for regular checkups. Both gopher snakes and rattlesnakes are members of the subfamily Crotalinae, which contains all pit vipers. Pit vipers get their name from the heat-sensing pits located on each side of their head between the eye and nostril. These sensory
organs allow them to "see" in infrared, allowing them to detect warm-blooded prey even in complete darkness. All pit vipers share a similar triangular-shaped head, which is wider than the neck. Gopher snakes and rattlesnakes
is primarily composed of enzymes that begin to break down tissue and cause swelling, pain, and necrosis. Gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and cause swelling, pain, and necrosis. Gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both found in North and Central America. Both gopher snakes are both gopher snak
can extend up to two-thirds of their body length. Pit vipers use their venom primarily to kill and subdue prey, not for self-defense. However, if they feel threatened, they will not hesitate to bite. The majority of bites occur when humans inadvertently step on or otherwise disturb a snake that is resting in tall grass or underbrush. Both gopher snakes and
rattlesnakes will give warning signs before biting, such as coiling their body and displaying their fangs. If these warnings are ignored, the snake will strike. Bites from either type of snake can be extremely painful and may result in serious injury or even death if not treated promptly. Yes, a Gopher snake can eat a rattlesnake. Gopher snakes excel in
climbing, swimming, and burrowing. This allows for a more diverse diet. The rattlesnake occasionally appears on the gopher's menu in addition to insects, lizards, small animals, birds, and their eggs. Because they compete for food and territory with rattlesnakes, you won't typically find both in the same area. For this reason, gopher snakes will help
keep rattlers away. But they will only go after a threatening rattler or if it is hungry. The hunting method, the Gopher snake lays in wait and strikes when ready. But instead of the usual constriction method, the Gopher grabs the rattlesnake by the head and suffocates it before swallowing it from head to tail. If the
serpent you're looking at is a rattlesnake by some chance, you must exercise caution to avoid a trip to the ER. Here's what to do when you see a rattlesnake. Coiled, rattling, and head raised? If possible, step back to increase the
striking distance. It's best to stand at about 15 ft from the viper. Hold your ground and stand at likely slither away once they establish you are not a ggressive and will likely slither away once they establish you are not a threat. If a bite occurs, stay calm, call 911, and request medical assistance. An adult rattlesnake will usually have a nice-sized rattle, so that's
easy, but a young rattlesnake may only have a single button. Look instead for rings at the base of a stubby tail (rattlesnake), or a long tapered tail which ends in a point (gopher snake). Even though their body types differ - the gopher snake is longer, its body is slender and whip-like compared to the rattlesnake's heavy-bodied, broad appearance - the
big give-a-way is the shape of the head and pupils. Rattlesnakes are easy to identify, they have a flat, triangular head in comparison to a gopher snake's narrow, rounded one. Adult rattlesnakes are easy to identify, they have a button on the tail. The narrow
neck/wide head is not really evident on a baby rattler. Baby gopher snakes look like rattlesnake has a matted look. The gopher snake is one of California's most widespread and common
snake. #1: A Baby Rattlesnake is Called a Snakelet Massasaugas have colors and markings that include tan, gray, or brown with dark brown or black splotches. Baby rattlesnake are called a snakelets! Unlike many baby animals, the baby rattlesnake doesn't have a specific name for its young. Dangerous Rattlesnake or Gopher Snake? How to tell the
difference, Rattlesnake or Gopher Snake? How can you tell a gopher snake? An adult rattlesnake may only have a nice-sized rattle, so that's easy, but a young rattlesnake may only have a single button. Look instead for rings at the base of a stubby tail (rattlesnake), or a long tapered tail which ends in a point (gopher snake). What
do gopher snakes look like? Gopher snakes are honvenomous and have splotchy dark markings on their backs and yellow or brownish coloration with large heads. These snakes are known to hiss loudly, vibrate their tails and flatten their backs and yellow or brownish coloration with large heads. These snakes are known to hiss loudly, vibrate their tails and flatten their backs and yellow or brownish coloration with large heads.
reaching up to 20 inches (50 cm), and adults ranging in size from 2.5-7 feet (76-213 cm). These spotted snakes are sometimes confused for rattlesnakes (Crotalis spp.), but they are non-venomous and are not pit vipers. Do gopher snakes are sometimes confused for rattlesnakes (Crotalis spp.), but they are non-venomous and are not pit vipers. Do gopher snakes are sometimes confused for rattlesnakes (Crotalis spp.), but they are non-venomous and are not pit vipers.
Be gentle, and pick up the snake from below rather than from above. Support as much of its body as possible, but don't try to restrain it; let it explore. Are baby gopher snakes poisonous? Gopher snakes are nonvenomous and can be found in a number of environments, including marshes, prairies, forest, and deserts. What time of year are baby
rattlesnakes born? But baby rattlesnakes are born in July and August, making these two months especially dangerous for hikers, gardeners, children and others at high risk of exposure to rattlesnake bites. How small are baby rattlesnakes? Rattlesnake bites. How small are baby rattlesnakes? Rattlesnakes? Rattlesnakes are born in July and August, making these two months especially dangerous for hikers, gardeners, children and others at high risk of exposure to rattlesnake bites.
once and are about 10 inches long. Babies are born venomous but cannot rattle and are often more aggressive than the adults. Can rattlesnakes breed with gopher snakes lay eggs and rattlers have live births. I suppose that science might be
able to create genetic offspring in a laboratory, but it's not going to happen in the wild. Do gopher snakes pretend to be rattlesnake! This type of behavior is called biomimicry - when one species
mimics, or pretends to be, a different species for protection. How do you know if it's a rattlesnake? All rattlesnakes in California have a blotched pattern on the back and a rattle on the end of the tail which is often used as a warning sound. What time of day are gopher snakes most active? Gopher Snakes (Pituophis catenifer), known as a constrictor
snake, are one of the most commonly seen snakes in California. Mainly active during the day, they are active after sundown on hot days. Is it safe to pick up a gopher snakes are non venomous, but they can still cause a minor wound. Like any animal bite, it can get infected, so you are best off leaving the snake alone. Take a photo, or
admire it from a distance, but don't pick up the snakes mate in the soil beneath large rocks or logs, or they may use small mammal burrows. Eggs are incubated around 65-75 days. Where do gopher snakes mate in the spring, laying groups of 3 -
24 cream colored to white eggs that are between 2 and 4 1/4 inches long. Their eggs can be found in the summer months in sandy soil or under rocks. What repels Gopher snakes? Effective: Vibration repellent products are effective against moles, gophers, and even other animal pests like snakes! They work 24 hours a day even when you're far from
home. What is the hot spot for a gopher snake? The hot side basking spot should be at 85-88 degrees. Put one hide there and another hide on the cooler side can be between 75-80 degrees. What snake looks like a rattlesnake but is not? Eastern Milk Snake Eastern milk snakes may be confused with rattlesnakes, but they're harmless! Of
all the snakes confused with rattlesnakes, the eastern milk snake may just be the most innocuous. Eastern milk snakes prey on small creatures like mice and shrews, and they like to stay hidden from humans. What looks like a rattlesnake but is not? Diamondback water snakes; gopher, bull and pine snakes (Pituophis spp.); prairie kingsnakes
(Lampropeltis calligaster); eastern milk snakes (Lampropeltis triangulum); corn snakes (Pantherophis obsoleta lindheimeri); and gray rat snakes (Pantherophis obsolet
will safeguard their young for a short while. While eastern rattlesnakes stay with their first shed, which may take up to two weeks following parturition, young western rattlesnakes scatter hours or days after parturition. Gopher snakes might not pack venom, but they've got some interesting tricks up their sleeve. One standout move
is what's called "masking." Picture this: these sneaky critters mimic rattlers by putting on a show, hissing loud enough to make your ears perk up and flapping their tail against something far more dangerous than a gopher snake (California
Herps). When in a tight spot, these snakes put on their best tough act by flattening their heads, lifting the front portion of their body, and hissing like they're in a snaky choir. Sure, it might seem alarming, but keep in mind, they're totally harmless to us humans. For more on their harmless act, check out are gopher snakes poisonous. Relationship with
Rattlesnakes Living alongside rattlesnakes, gopher snakes often join in the hunt for the same menu items—mostly rodents. This can crank up the competition level when they both call the same spot home. While gopher snakes won't go out of their way to gobble up rattlesnakes, their sheer numbers can play a role in keeping rattlesnake populations in
check, all thanks to food competition. Now, at a quick glance, you might think you just saw a rattlesnake. They do look pretty similar, with those distinctive patterns and chunky bodies. But there are some tell-tale signs: gopher snakes own an oval-shaped head, round eye pupils, and noticeably lack the famous rattle at the tail's end that rattlesnakes
boast. For a deeper dive into the distinctions between these two snake species, head over to our detailed comparison on gopher snakes apart from rattlesnakes might save you a bit of heartache, or maybe a fang in the boot! Let's chew the fat over how to spot the differences in
their build and looks. Body Shape and Coloring Let's start with what's easy to spot: the body. Gopher snakes are long and have a skinny build with a kind of boxy shape across their middle. Their color usually leans towards a tan or light orange with not-so-bold patterns. Think of them as the non-venomous calm cousin of the snake world (Bay Nature).
Characteristic Gopher Snake Rattlesnake Body Shape Long, skinny Short, stocky Cross-section Boxy Round Coloring Tan/light orange Rainbow of tones Rattlesnakes, on the other hand, are thicker, shorter, and well-fed looking, sporting lots of bold patterns and colors that jump out at you like a magician's handkerchief trick (A-Z Animals). Now let's
head to their noggin. You'd think only dangerous snakes have pointy heads, but gopher snakes can play dress-up by flattenin' their heads when bugged. It's like their way of saying, "Hey, I can be scary too!" (Bay Nature). Gopher snakes usually have a roundish noggin, circular pupils, and none of that rattly nonsense at the end of their tail. Their
scales aren't smooth either—they're keeled, adding some edge to their look. Plus, those big eyes and the brow lines make them look a touch fierce. Characteristic Gopher Snake Rattlesnake Head Shape Roundish (but can act tough) Arrowhead-looking Pupils Circular Cat-like slits Scales Keeled Rattle None Yep, it's there! If you're keen to
learn about gopher snake environments or thinkin' about keeping one at home, some digging into these quirky critters' lives can offer peace of mind. Knowing who's who in the snake lineup will keep you smartly snake-savvy, no matter where you encounter them, be it out in the sticks or in a cozy cage. Gopher Snake vs. Rattlesnake For those who
love snakes or spend a lot of time outside, knowing how gopher snakes and rattlesnakes differ can be a lifesaver—literally. Let's chat about their venom and Aggression So, here's the deal with rattlesnakes: they've got the kind of venom that leaves
prey shaking. Those snakey needles—er, hollow fangs—shoot venom fast as lightning. This makes their prey's day go south real quick, letting the snake chow down easy-peasy later on. Meanwhile, gopher snakes are more chill in the venom department, 'cause they don't have any! They're all about the squeeze and hug method to wrap up their meals.
Now, when it comes to getting cranky, gopher snakes aren't afraid to throw some attitude your way. They're not shy about giving chase if they feel threatened, even scaring off people here and there. In contrast, rattlesnakes prefer the old "shake, rattle, and roll" routine with their tails, trying to keep things cool unless they really have to get involved
(A-Z Animals). Tail Behavior and Mimicry Let's talk tails: rattlesnakes got the maracas nailed. Those rattles at the tip make a showy little buzz, giving any nearby creature a quick heads-up—like, back off, pal! On the flip side, gopher snakes don't have a noisy rattle. But don't count them out—they're clever little mimics. They'll shake their tails in the
dust or among crispy leaves, trying to sound like their rattling cousins. It's all part of their bluff game to trick predators into thinking they're dealing with a venomous snake (California Herps). Feature Gopher Snake Rattlesnake Venom None, gives big bear hugs Yep, injects through fierce fangs Aggression Comes at you, man! More laid-back, rattles
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the warning signal Tail Behavior Imitator: rocks the fake rattle Genuine rattle: loud and clear Being clued-up about these snake details makes it simpler to spot the differences between these slippery customers while trekking through the wild. Want more about knowing your gopher snakes? Check our page on how to identify a gopher snake. Curious about the different kinds of gopher snakes? Take a look at what we've written on the pacific gopher snake, Sonoran gopher snakes can be a bit tricky because they sometimes look like the much-feared rattlesnakes. Knowing what sets them apart can help keep you safe and sure around these non-venomous, slithery friends. What's Different About Them? Gopher snakes aren't your average snakes; they have a few standout features that make them easier to spot from a rattlesnake with their classic triangle heads, gopher snakes sport a more egg-shaped noggin. But don't be fooled when feeling spooked, gopher snakes can flatten their heads to mimic that triangle look. Pupils: Check their eyes! Gopher snakes might shake their tail in leaves to fake the rattlesnake sound when they're feeling jumpy. Body Color: They tend to have more chill colors—think creams, browns, and yellows, unlike the bold designs on a rattler (A-Z Animals). Scales: Feel those bumpy scales? Gopher snakes have rough, ridged ones (The Bio Dude). How to Tell Them Apart If you're stuck on whether it's a gopher or a rattler, try these handy tricks: Tail Watch: Both might shake their tails, but only the rattlesnake has that tell-tale rattle sound. Head and Eyes Check: Look close! An egg-shaped head and round eyes usually mean you're looking at a gopher snake. Color and Pattern: Gopher snakes come with soft hues and simple patterns, unlike the dazzling display of rattlesnakes (A-Z Animals). Sound Clue: No clickety-clack rattle? You might be dealing with a gopher snake. Want more insights on these fascinating critters? Check out these guides: Knowing your snakes makes hanging out with nature a whole lot safer and more fun. And next time, you'll be able to tell your pals, "Hey, that's just a gopher snake!" with confidence. Gopher Snake Habitat and Care Giving your gopher snake a comfy home is key to keeping it happy and healthy. Here's a lowdown on what you need to know about these slithery fellas—their size, how long they stick around, and what makes a perfect hangout spot for 'em. Size and Lifespan Gopher snakes, depending on which kind they are, can stretch anywhere from 3.5 feet up to a whopping 7 feet! They've got quite the lifespan too—most live around 15 years, but with some TLC, they can reach the grand old age of 33. Subspecies Average Size (feet) Lifespan (years) Pacific Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 4 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 - 30 Sonoran Gopher Snake 5 - 7 15 25 Housing and Enclosure Requirements Making a perfect home for your scaly buddy is all about getting the basics right. Here's what they need: These snakes love their space. A cozy spot about 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 2 feet tall lets them stretch and sneak around comfortably. Keep things warm and toasty on one side with a basking area around 85°F. The other side should be cooler, hanging around 70-72°F. Think of it like their personal sauna. A decent halogen spotlight, like the 75w Arcadia one, works wonders. And hey—maybe ditch your old thermometer for a digital one to get it just right. Being daytime roamers, gopher snakes get a kick out of UVB lighting for their general vibe. Try UVB options like the Arcadia Forest 6% or the Zoo Med Reptisun T5 HO 5.0 and set them up with the heat lamp to keep things warm and bright. Go for aspen bedding or cypress mulch underfoot, great for a bit of digging around. Toss in some hidey holes, branches, and rocks to make it feel just like home sweet home for them. A shallow water dish lets them sip and dip whenever they please. Keep humidity chillin' out at about 40-60% for that just-right feel. With the right spot to rest their scales, your gopher snake will be living its best life. For more tips on how to roll out the welcome mat for your snake, check out our gopher snake care guides. Gopher Snake Husbandry Looking after a gopher snake isn't too tricky, as long as you keep an eye on its lighting, temperature, and chow-down schedule. Nailing these basics helps your snake feel right at home, even when it's not. Lighting and Temperature Needs Gopher snakes keep busy during the daytime, needing solid light to keep their spirits up. Your scaly buddy needs UVB lighting in their crib (or terrarium, as the fancy folks call it). Trusty bulbs like Arcadia Forest 6% and Zoo Med Reptisun T5 HO 5.0 work great here. Make sure these bask in the glow of heat lamps on the warmer side of their enclosure. Temperature Spot You're Aiming For Sunbathing Zone ~85°F Nippy Side 70-72°F To keep those temps in check, grab halogen flood heat bulbs like the 75W Arcadia Halogen Basking Spot for some dome heat action. Slip in a digital probe thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in there to make sure you're not boiling or freezing your pet—just like you wouldn't want your thermometer in the your wouldn't want your thermometer in the you wouldn't want your the your wouldn't want your wouldn't snake in tip-top shape. Little ones eat more often than the big critters, so keep their groceries lined up. Age Category Chow Time Youngsters Every 5-7 days Big Kids Every 10-14 days Don't hand them anything bigger than their middle, and keep an eye out for red flags like flaky shedding or skipping meals. Want more deets? Check out our full guide on gopher snake care for the lowdown. Giving your gopher snake the right light, temperature, and snacks is key to a happy, healthy pet. Dig deeper into different gopher snake varieties like the Sonoran or the California gopher snake for some extra pointers.