

ADDER

Vipera berus

DISTINGUISHING MARKS:

Adder is recognized best from the zigzag-pattern on its back.

Adder can be coloured grey, bluish grey, brown or reddish brown. Also individuals with coal black colour are met.

Adder's head is flat, triangular and differs clearly from the thin neck. .

PREVALENCE:

Adders' biotope reaches as a wide belt from Atlantic Ocean to Pacific. Northernmost discoveries in Finland are positioned to Ounastunturi and to the level of Saariselkä. Adder population has declined a little, but species is still quite common in the whole country.

HABITAT:

Adder favours places like sides of fields and marshes, rocky regions, coppices and renewal areas risen after clear felling or forest fire, abandoned patches and shores of the watercourses.

Common to all these scenes are sunshine, possibility to protect against attackers and cold nights and sufficient food supply.

NOURISHMENT:

Adder is a predator, to which is good enough only animal nourishment. Its poison kills the victim not later than after couple minutes, and then adder can get started swallowing the hunt in the all peace, always head first. Though, it may swallow frogs and lizards alive. Young adders eat almost exclusively lizards in the beginning, a little later also blindworms. Later to the priority comes voles, mice and shrews. Adder eats also young birds and bird's eggs. Adder in the tree is not even rarity.

THE BITE OF THE ADDER:

Adders escape men almost without exception , but been surprised or harassed they defend and bite strongly. When snake bites, it squeezes its chin muscles and poison gushes to the flesh of the victim from its poison glands through the hollow poison fangs. Adder's bite requires always medical care.

DOZE:

Already for long adders are known to come together to the certain dozing places in autumns ("dozing nests"). These kind of places often has names referring to snakes: Snake rock, Worm hill, Snake nest hill, etc. Typical dozing sites are boulder soil, stubs and hummocks, but especially stony soils at water banks. Doze starts in September-October and ends in the April-May.

BREEDING:

Adder comes family mature in the age of three or four. The female will breed only every 2. or 3. year. Mating takes place in May and eggs (3-20 pieces) incubate in the tract of the female to the end of August. When youngs are born they are about 17 cm in length. As the two next years they grow 10 cm per year, but the growth slows down by age. Adders can reach the age of 25 years.

