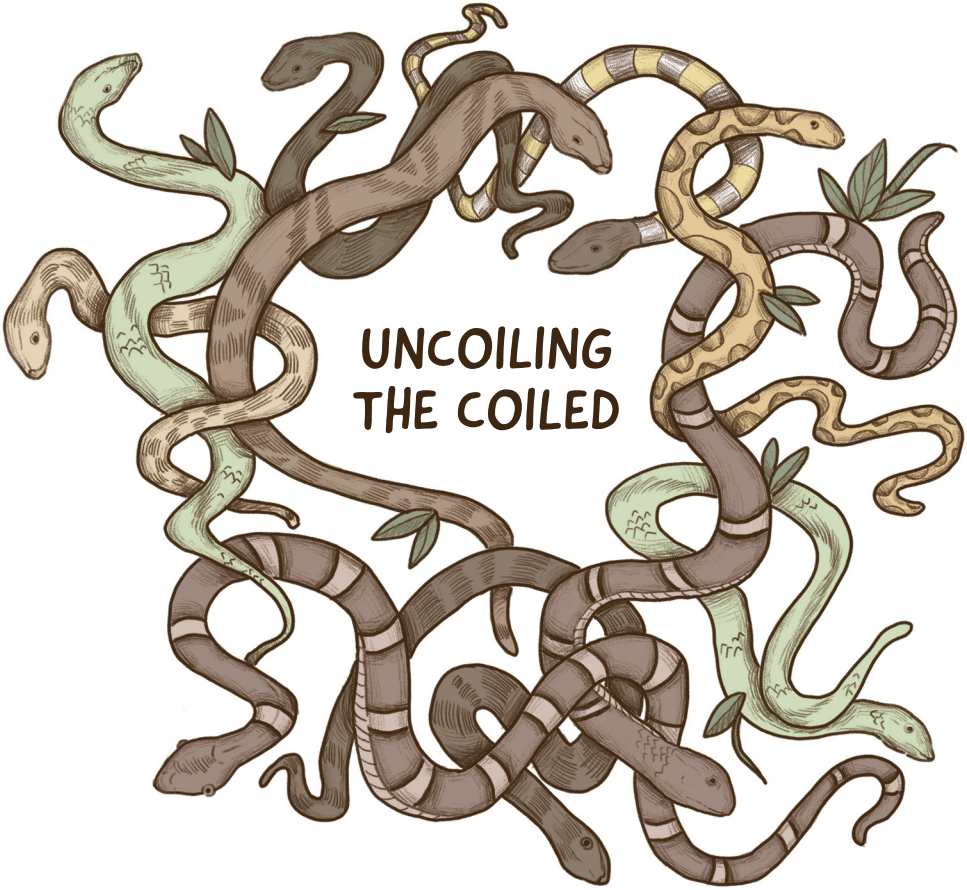
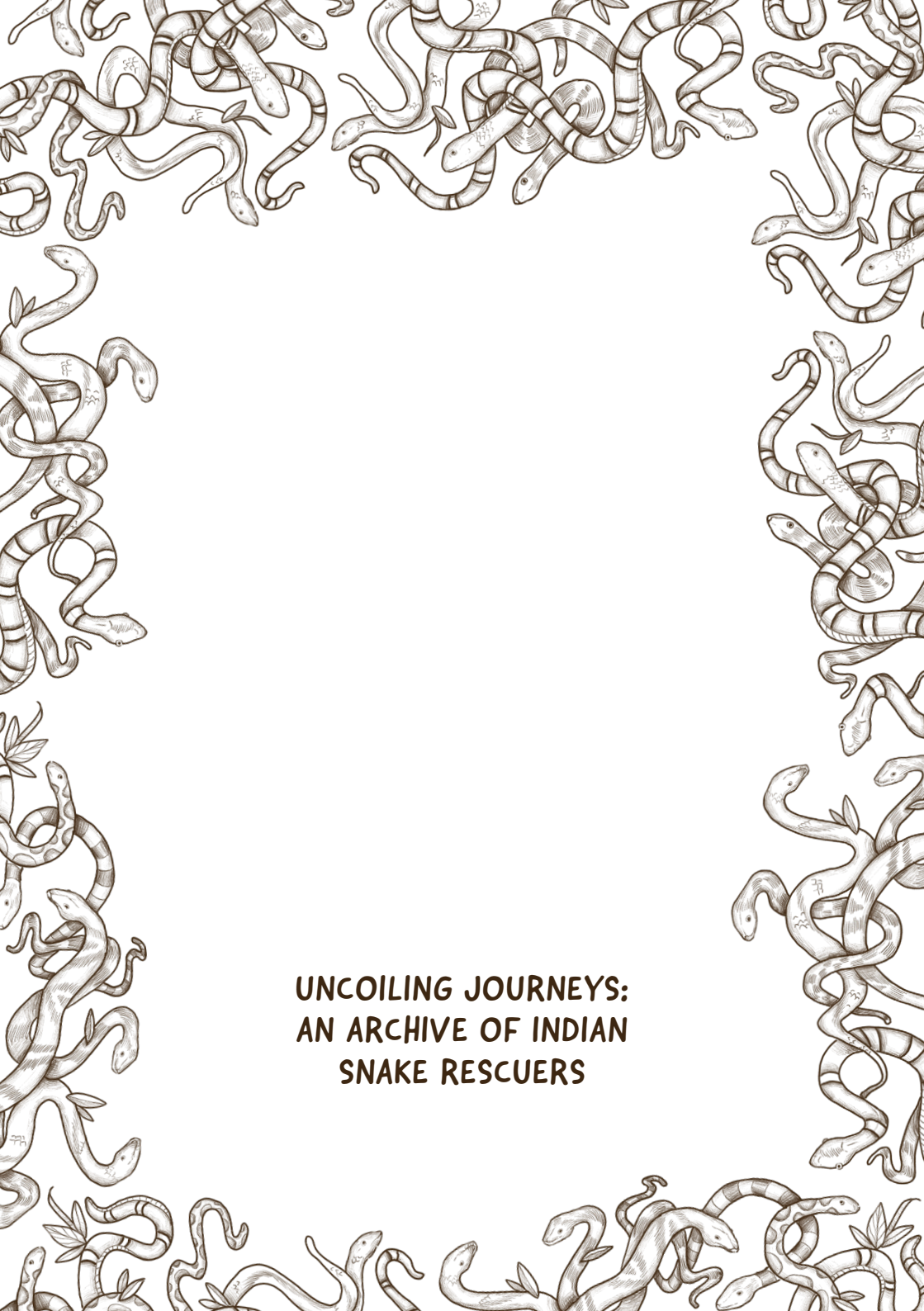


The landscape of Indian snake rescuers

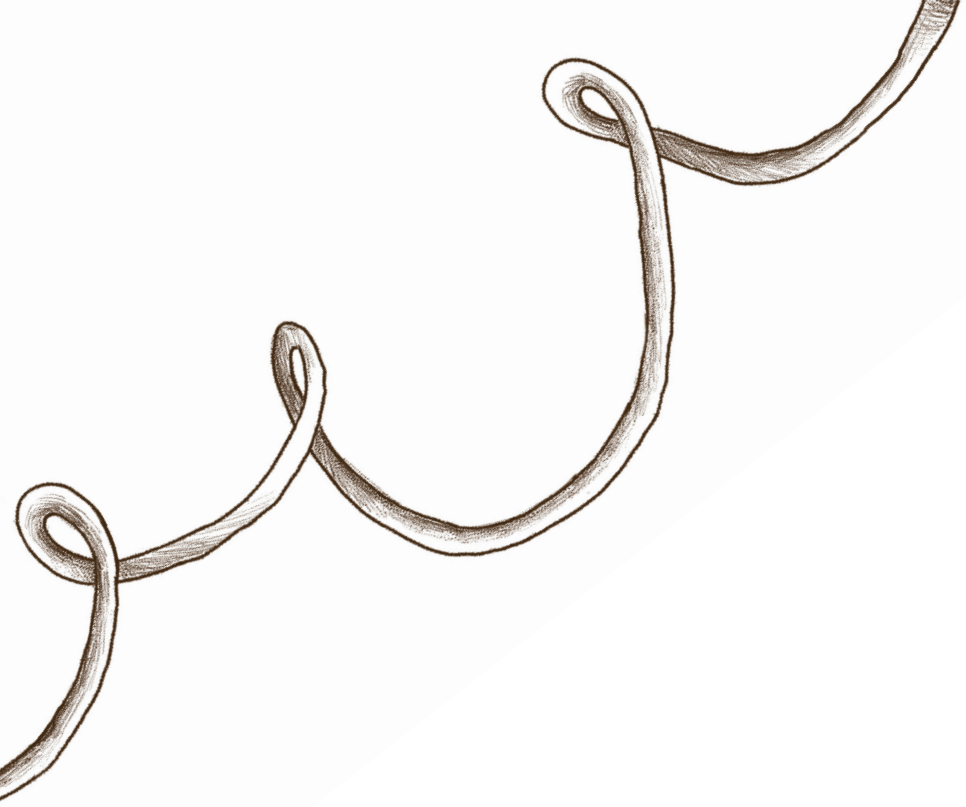


UNCOILING JOURNEYS: AN ARCHIVE OF INDIAN SNAKE RESCUERS

Collaborators
Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Canopy Collective

Special thanks to the snake rescuers: Niranjan Boro, Sherry Fernandes, Benhail Antao, Rajesh Bhavsar, and Avinash Visvanathan

TO NIRANJAN, SHERRY, BENHAIL, RAJESH, AND AVINASH—WHOSE SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTIONS BROUGHT THIS PROJECT TO LIFE.



CONTENT

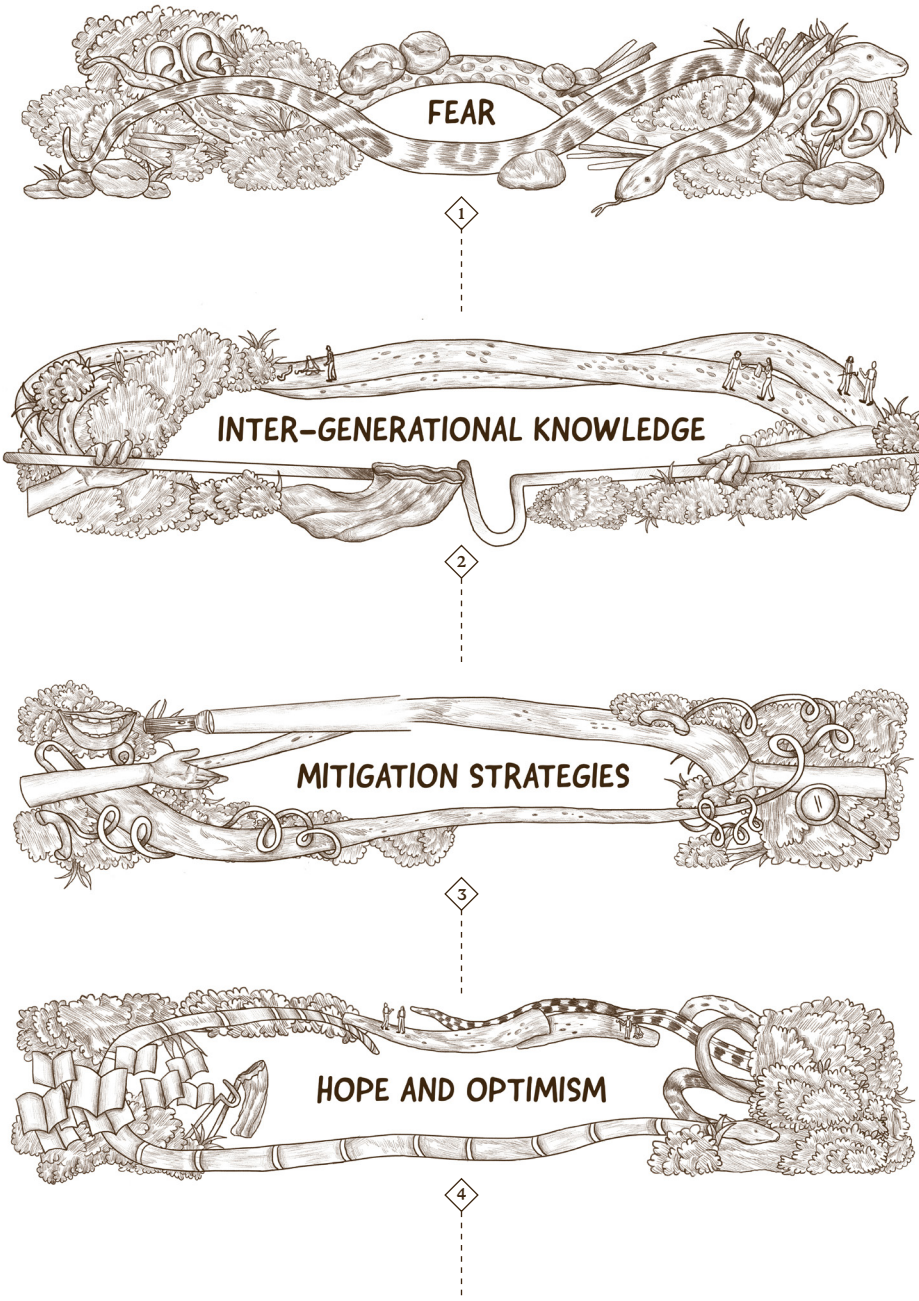
ABOUT THE PROJECT

Uncoiling the Coiled

Snakes have often been feared and deeply misunderstood, leading to their unfortunate killings at first sight. This fear stems from various misconceptions, resulting in unnecessary conflicts between humans and these essential creatures. However, across India, a dedicated group of individuals and NGOs are working tirelessly to change that—by spreading awareness, rescue efforts, habitat conservation efforts and promoting co-existence.

This project documents the efforts of such five snake rescuers who constantly try to bridge the gap between fear and understanding with the vision to change people's perceptions of snakes. Their work extends beyond mere rescues; it is about education, awareness, and unlearning long-held biases. Their impact is evident in the small victories—convincing someone to let a snake remain in its habitat, preventing unnecessary killings, and inspiring the next generation to approach these beings with curiosity while respecting their space rather than just fear. True rescue isn't just about relocating a snake; it's about shifting towards a positive mindset through patient conversations, uncoiling generations of fear, and cultivating a world wherein humans and snakes coexist.

This project takes the form of a four-part installation series, made using a layered paper-cut method. Each installation is built around a central theme, constructing a narrative arc that transitions from fear to hope. The publication booklet is an extension for the installation in order to provide more factual information and give context to the viewers who are might be new to the subject matter.



What power do conversations hold in shifting the narrative from fear to hope and understanding?

WHERE DOES THIS FEAR STEM FROM?

Fear has long been a powerful force, and when it comes to snakes; it often turns into instinctive violence. Why does this 'it's either you or me' thought appear in the first place?

There isn't one singular reason behind this. It isn't just about personal experiences—there are layers of biases, myths, and media influences at play but most importantly our own brains and how it's ability to perceive danger has evolved over time. A scientific report written by Jeremie Souchet & Fabien Aubrest about aposematic signalling in young children reveals such factors at play and its connection to the fear of snakes; which suggests that our aversion may stem from certain visual cues that snakes commonly display—features like triangular-shaped heads and zig-zag patterns on their bodies. In the report, a study was conducted with children aged between 3 to 7, researchers found that snakes were not automatically labelled as "mean" unless they possessed certain aposematic signals. When shown images of snakes without such features, the children were more likely to describe them as "nice." This suggests that our fear may not be entirely innate but how our minds automatically perceive certain visuals to be dangerous and also is shaped by certain learned associations over time. The same aversion to sharp, angular shapes is heavily used in media, wherein villains are often depicted with pointy teeth and angular features to appear more menacing to the viewers.

Evolution has shaped mammals—including humans—to be naturally cautious of sharp features like claws and fangs as a survival instinct. Snakes, on the other hand, may have adapted to take advantage of this fear. When threatened, some flatten their heads to appear more dangerous, mimicking venomous species. Others develop coloration similar to highly venomous snakes, using their appearance as a defence to deter predators like the Indian Wolf snakes (Non Venomous snake) and the Common Krait (Venomous snake).

The study also found that older children were more afraid of snakes than younger ones. This could be because of what they've learned from parents, personal experiences, or seeing snakes portrayed as dangerous in the media. Younger children, however, might not yet

fully recognize these signals as threats due to their young age and comparatively lesser brain maturity. The impulse to react to snakes may be deeply rooted—likely an evolved defense mechanism. In a study measuring brain activity in 7 to 10-month old infants shown flickering images of animals, researchers found significantly stronger neural responses to snakes, suggesting that the ability to detect them may be innate, even before any learning or exposure.

This heightened visual response supports the snake detection theory, which suggests that primates, including humans, evolved to recognize snakes as threats due to early predator-prey relationships. While infants showed greater attention to snake images, they didn't display fear or distress—indicating that detection may be innate, but fear develops later through culture and environment. Fear, then, isn't shaped by instinct alone, but by a mix of neurobiology, stories, cultural beliefs, and how we're taught to perceive the world.

In conversations with rescuers, a common thread which emerged is that fear often stems from a lack of knowledge. When people don't understand something, the uncertainty and unpredictability, combined with stories of snakebite incidents, make all snakes seem dangerous. That fear feels real to them—whether for their own safety or their loved ones'. In such moments, logic often takes a backseat, sometimes even leading to a lack of empathy. As Benhail and Sherry pointed out, fear is something we learn as we grow. Unlike dogs, birds or cats, snakes don't express pain in a way we easily recognize. Their defensive behaviours—hissing, swaying, or coiling—are mistaken for aggression when in reality, they are scared, perhaps even more scared than we are. Our reactions to nature also shape these perceptions. We scream at the sight of snakes or worms but admire birds and flowers. A child watching others react with fear will likely adopt the same response. Similarly, witnessing violence against certain animals normalizes it. In our instinct to protect ourselves, combined with a limited ability to empathize with creatures we don't relate to, we often end up harming them instead.

LEGAL PROVISIONS & PROTOCOLS

The act

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, (WLPA) enacted by the Parliament in the fifty-seventh year of the republic of India serves to "provide for the protection of wild animals, birds and plants and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto with a view to ensuring the ecological and environmental security of the country".

In India, snakes are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 through various schedules stated within the act, which aims to conserve their ecological role and prevent their exploitation in illegal wildlife trade, including the sale of live snakes, venom, and skins.

Certification process

To legally become a snake rescuer in India, one must complete a certification and assessment program conducted by the respective state's forest department. As outlined by the Karnataka Forest Department, this training covers crucial topics such as crowd management, understanding human-snake conflict, ethical handling practices, snakebite management, snake biology and ecology, and the necessity of rescues. Upon successful completion, the Chief Wildlife Warden evaluates whether the individual is fit to follow best practices. If deemed suitable, the rescuer is granted a license, which is both time-bound and specific to a designated jurisdiction. Any involvement in unethical practices results in immediate revocation of the license.

Rescue protocols

Certified rescuers must document all rescue operations and submit regular reports to the jurisdictional Deputy Conservator of Forests, with the jurisdiction being determined by the rescuer's registered address. In most cases, it is best to leave the snake in its natural surroundings. However, if the snake is venomous and poses a risk—especially in crowded areas or places with children—it may be relocated to a nearby safe environment. Suitable release sites include sewers, vacant plots, canals, or lakesides, depending on the

species' habitat needs. The release location should closely match the snake's natural habitat and behavior to ensure its survival and minimal ecological disruption. Overcrowding an area by releasing too many snakes can lead to stress, competition, and habitat imbalance. Rescuers must avoid moving snakes across administrative boundaries without getting a written permission from the jurisdictional Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF). In the case of injured snakes, they should only be released once fully recovered and cleared by the Forest Department. Non-native species should never be released into the wild, as they may threaten native wildlife and ecosystems—in such cases, the snakes must be handed over to the Forest Department.

Communication and crowd control

Upon receiving distress calls and during and after the rescue process, it is extremely important for rescuers to ask the right questions over the phone—this helps them assess the situation more clearly, provide immediate guidance, and prevent unnecessary panic or accidents before they even arrive. Once on site, managing the crowd is equally crucial; people are often scared or anxious, and the rescuers must speak to them gently, calmly, and with patience. Using logic, simple reasoning, and science-based facts can help break down fear and lead to understanding. After the snake is safely rescued, it's important to inform the crowd about the species, its role in the ecosystem, and share easy, practical steps they can follow to prevent future encounters. It's also essential to explain why relocating or killing snakes can disrupt ecological balance and cause more harm in the long run. These conversations, though small, can shift perspectives and build empathy for these often misunderstood creatures.

**These provisions and the guide for the rescuers are part of an operational manual made by the Karnatka Forest Department*

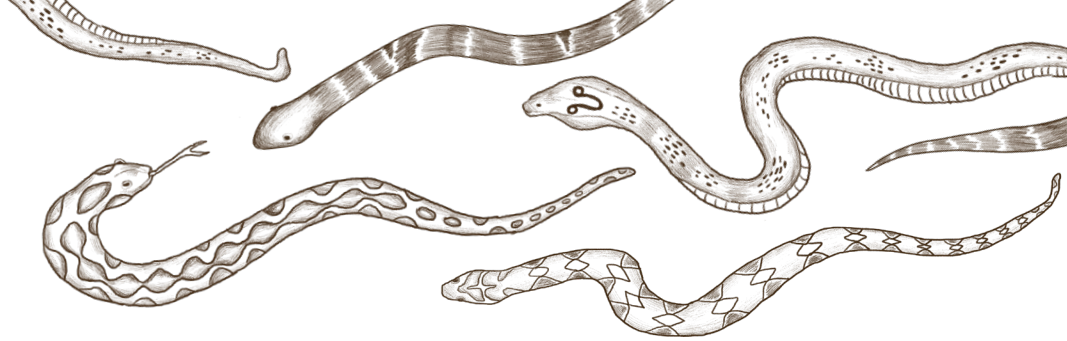
SNAKE BITES, ANTI-VENOM & THE IRULARS

Snakebites are a significant public health concern in India, causing thousands of deaths every year. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 45,900 people die annually from snakebites, primarily due to the 'Big Four'—the Indian Cobra, Common Krait, Russell's Viper, and Saw-scaled Viper.

While regulations exist to control the use of snakes for anti-venom production and prevent their exploitation, they have also affected the availability of anti-venom in certain areas. Rescuers who were interviewed for the project note that while government and district hospitals provide free snakebite treatment, private hospital bills can be exorbitant, sometimes reaching ₹4-5 lakhs. For families without medical insurance, this financial burden can be overwhelming. Timely treatment is critical, yet many deaths and complications occur due to delays; often because victims first seek ineffective remedies like snake stones or faith healers, further allowing the venom to spread. While most rescuers haven't personally encountered major supply shortages, some remote regions still struggle with access. In places like Tippi, Arunachal Pradesh, where Niranjan resides, district hospitals lack the necessary infrastructure to store anti-venom, which is highly temperature-sensitive. As a result, victims must travel long distances for proper medical care; a challenge that likely exists in other isolated areas across the country.

Around seven Indian pharmaceutical companies produce about 8 million vials of anti-venom each year, with most of the venom sourced from the Irula Snake Catchers' Industrial Co-operative Society. The Irulas, one of India's oldest indigenous communities, are renowned for their deep knowledge of snakes—so much so that they have been called the world's last tribal forest scientists.

Roughly 200,000 Irulas live across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. Historically, they were hunters and gatherers, deeply involved in the snake skin trade. However, the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 banned this practice, severely affecting their livelihood. To support their community, Romulus Whitaker helped establish the co-operative society in 1978, allowing them to legally catch snakes for venom



extraction. The facility can house up to 800 snakes at a time, using traditional tools and methods. Given the hot climate, the snakes are kept in earthen pots covered with cotton cloth. They remain in captivity for about 21 days, during which venom is extracted four times by carefully holding the snake's head and allowing it to bite the rim of a collection jar. The efficacy of anti-venom in India remains a challenge, primarily because it is designed to treat snake bites from the Big Four. However, many people are bitten by other venomous species, including region-specific endemic snakes, for which no targeted anti-venom exists. Producing region-specific anti-venom is a complex and costly process that has largely been overlooked.

While major hospitals in cities have adequate anti-venom stocks, distribution to rural areas and smaller public health centres is often insufficient. Another issue is that venom composition varies significantly—even within the same species—due to geographical differences and seasonal changes. This means that anti-venom produced from snakes in one region may not work effectively for a patient bitten in another part of the country. Infrastructure and handling practices further impact venom potency and serum quality. According to WHO, maintaining the highest-quality venom requires a controlled diet and stress-free environment for the snakes, but this conflicts with India's Wildlife Protection Act (1972), which limits captivity to 21 days. Additionally, venom should be stored at -20°C immediately after extraction to prevent degradation. However, due to time constraints, hundreds of snakes are milked at once at the Irula cooperative before the venom can be frozen, potentially affecting its quality. To address these issues, the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust Centre for Herpetology is currently working with the Tamil Nadu government to establish a new facility that will expand venom extraction beyond the Big Four. This initiative aims to develop region-specific anti-venoms, offering more effective treatment for snakebite victims across India.

As of 2022, the Irula Snake Catchers' Industrial Co-operative Society has been struggling financially, largely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of strong government support.

Every year in August, the Irula Snake Catchers' Cooperative Society applies for licenses from the Tamil Nadu Forest Department to capture snakes for venom extraction. However, the number of licenses granted has steadily declined over the years. Back in 1994, the society was allowed to catch up to 13,000 snakes—a number that reflected both the demand for venom and the state's confidence in the society's sustainable practices. But over time, the permissions have sharply reduced. In 2018, only 8,300 snakes were allowed to be captured, and by 2020-21, the number dropped further to just 5,000—granted merely three days before the end of the licensing year. This delay made it almost impossible for the society to function within that narrow window, resulting in a drastic shortfall in venom collection.

These reductions have had serious consequences. The society has faced mounting financial losses, making it difficult to sustain operations and forcing many of its members to take up daily wage labor to support themselves. Currently, they are only able to supply venom from two species— the Spectacled Cobra and the Russell's Viper—while demand continues to grow for venom from the Common Krait and Saw-scaled Viper. This gap in supply is especially concerning, given the role venom plays in producing life-saving anti-venoms.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, recently announced key reforms. Approvals will now be fast-tracked, eliminating unnecessary delays caused by waiting for clearances from the Finance Department. Moreover, new population studies will be conducted to assess wild snake numbers more accurately. Based on these findings, the number of capture licenses may be increased in the future—potentially helping to bridge the gap between supply and demand and ensuring that both the needs of the society and the healthcare system can be met more effectively.

This moment marks a critical turning point—where timely support, scientific research, and community-led conservation must come together to sustain both human lives and the legacy of those who've lived in harmony with snakes for generations.

Snake species	Income from each snake
Spectacled cobra	Rs 2300
Russell's Viper	Rs 2300
Saw-scaled Viper	Rs 300
Common Krait	Rs 850

EQUIPMENTS & THE RESCUE PROCESS

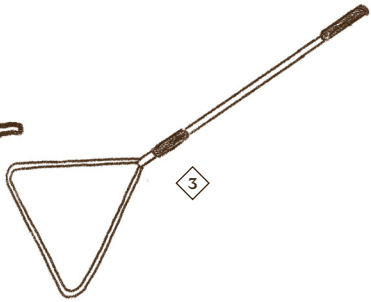
1. *Snake hook*
2. *Snake bag*
3. *Baggar stick*
4. *Head torch/ flashlight*
5. *PVC pipes (to guide the snake and for difficult situations wherein they are stuck in unreachable places)*
6. *Appropriate clothing and shoes; providing sufficient coverage*
7. *Scissors or wire cutter: if the snake is stuck; unable to escape*

The rescue process begins with a call. Rescuers first assess the situation over the phone, gathering details about the snake's location. If the snake is outside the house, callers are often advised to leave it undisturbed, as it will most likely move away on its own. Rescuers try to use this opportunity to reassure people and discourage any unnecessary relocation.

If the snake is inside the home, callers are instructed to keep a safe distance, avoid sudden movements, and keep an eye on its whereabouts. They are also asked to send a photo of the snake, helping rescuers identify whether it's venomous or non-venomous before they arrive. This prior knowledge allows them to plan a safe and ethical rescue. Once the snake is safely rescued, rescuers take the time to educate the callers—explaining the importance of snakes in the ecosystem, sharing information about local species, and offering guidance on how to prevent future encounters and coexist peacefully.

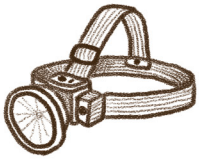
In India, most snake rescuers work as volunteers and do not charge for their services. Helpline numbers vary by region, with forest departments, individual rescuers, and NGOs all maintaining their own networks. These numbers are often shared through word of mouth, during rescue missions, or on social media, ensuring help is always within reach.

In regions where the forest department is more active—such as Pakke in Arunachal Pradesh—rescue operations are all handled by the department itself. Niranjan, a rescuer working under the department, was trained by his mentors within the same system. Since snake

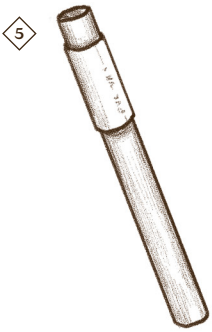


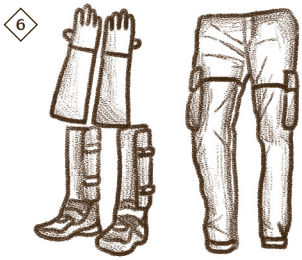
encounters are frequent due to the surrounding rainforests and rivers, the department's helpline is well-circulated among the locals. Over time, the community has become more aware of the necessary steps to take, and most immediately call for a rescue when they spot a snake inside their house.

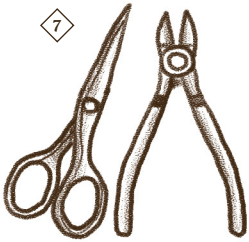
In Goa, individual rescuers like Sherry and Benhail operate in different ways—sometimes independently, sometimes alongside the forest department, or with fellow rescuers across the state. To streamline rescues, they have formed a WhatsApp network where calls for help are shared. Based on the location and details provided, the group coordinates to send the nearest available rescuer to handle the situation. Additionally, they have created the Goa Snake Identification Group, where expert admins assist locals in identifying snakes.



Organizations like Wildlife SOS and Friends of Snakes, where Rajesh and Avinash are from respectively, have established structured rescue networks to ensure quick response times. Since snakes move rapidly and require immediate attention, they dispatch rescuers closest to the reported location. Friends of Snakes has further streamlined this process by implementing an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system. This allows them to handle up to eight calls simultaneously, ensuring no caller faces unnecessary delays. Through this automated system, callers can input their location, and the call is directly routed to the nearest available rescuer. The system operates on a round-robin basis, ensuring an even distribution of calls across rescuers state-wide, preventing excessive workload on any single individual.





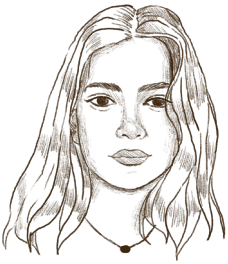


STORIES OF THE SNAKE RESCUERS

Niranjan Boro

The oldest staff member in Pakke's Forest Department, has been around since 2004. He spent his early years in Assam before moving to Arunachal Pradesh as a teenager, looking for work. After doing odd jobs around Pakke, he eventually joined the forest department, starting at the anti-poaching camp in Bhalukpong. Growing up, he was always afraid of snakes. In his hometown, people would often kill them out of fear, believing that their population would increase and they would come back to bite the humans. That fear stayed with him until about two years ago when a rescue call came in, and there weren't enough people at the center to respond, but he was willing to help even though he was hesitant. Though he was nervous handling a snake for the first time, learning directly from them helped him overcome his fear.

Now, he confidently handles snakes and understands their importance in the ecosystem. He encourages others to see them the same way, calling them beautiful and reminding people that their lives matter, too. Over time, things have improved in Tippi—more people now call for rescues instead of killing snakes, though some still argue that they are dangerous. Niranjan is hopeful. With continued awareness and rescues, he believes people's fear will slowly fade, and one day, killing snakes out of fear will become a thing of the past.



Sherry Fernandes

A journalist from Goa, first became curious about snakes at 13 when she saw a watchman try to kill a Vine snake out of fear. That moment made her pause—why do we fear something that has never harmed us? Where do these misconceptions come from? Determined to find answers, she began reading, learning from various rescuers and exceptionally experienced wildlife conservationists–Benhail Antao and Alex Carpenter. Over the years, as she trained in snake rescue, she also made it her mission to challenge the misconceptions that fuel the fears and cause hostility toward these misunderstood beings. She encourages people to see

snakes differently through conversations with the callers, blogs, and social media. She believes fear is not always a choice—it is something we grow up with—but with patience and the right approach, people can learn to understand and respect these beings. What makes her work worth it is witnessing people grow curious about snakes and, even more so when she convinces them to let a snake remain in its habitat instead of relocating it. Though she no longer actively rescues snakes, she still plays a role in helping people identify them through social media and whatsapp groups, sharing knowledge through her writing, and occasionally assisting friends who might find snakes around their house.

Benhail Antao

An event planner specializing in wedding planning, but his heart has always been in wildlife conservation and rescue missions. His journey began at just 11–12 years old in Moira, Goa, when he saw people killing snakes out of fear. Wanting to protect them, he rescued snakes independently, carefully handing them to the forest department. Over time, he realized how little he knew—especially after unknowingly rescuing a venomous snake. That moment pushed him to learn more, and he began working alongside the forest department, gaining hands-on experience in snake rescues. Through these experiences, he saw how fear often turns into a lack of empathy—how people dismiss the suffering of creatures they do not understand, unlike familiar animals like dogs and cats.

For Benhail, rescues are more than just removing a snake from a place—it is about the conversations which he has with the people at that moment. That is when he has their full attention, the perfect chance to challenge misconceptions, shift perspectives, and also to encourage coexistence rather than unnecessary relocations. Today, he continues to be a passionate advocate for wildlife and serves as an honorary wildlife warden for the Goa Forest Department. He also hosted the show Snake SOS on National Geographic, where he educated viewers about snakes, snake rescues, debunked myths and misconceptions, and helped eliminate the innate fear.

The best part? The letters he receives from children who, inspired by his work, dream of studying conservation science one day —something he couldn't pursue himself due to the lack of such courses when he was younger.

Rajesh Bhavsar

The project coordinator for Wildlife SOS in Vadodara and the president of GSPCA (Gujarat Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). His journey into wildlife rescue began in college when he met his late wife, Snehal Bhavsar. One day, they witnessed a group of people harming a snake on campus. When they returned the next day, the snake was still alive but covered in insects and suffering. At that time, they were only involved in rescuing domestic animals like dogs and cats, but that moment changed everything. Seeing how snakes were routinely killed and hearing people say, "If you do not want us to kill them, then you rescue them," they decided to take on the responsibility.

Without internet access in 1994, they turned to books—reading National Geographic, Indian and foreign authors, and anything they could find about snakes. They also trained under herpetologist Dr. Raju Vyas, attending his workshops and learning to identify venomous and non-venomous snakes and proper rescue and handling techniques. Their work did not stop at rescues. They focused heavily on awareness, taking their programs beyond Vadodara to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and other parts of Gujarat, even helping start NGOs in those regions. At these sessions, they emphasized breaking fear, advising people on responding to snake bites, and teaching precautions to prevent encounters—because prevention is always the best remedy. Beyond rescues and awareness, Rajesh and his team also fight against illegal wildlife trade, working to expose traffickers involved in reptile and skin trading, filing cases against them with the police and in court. He has a lot of hope and faith in the younger generation as he is witnessing many young people standing up for wildlife, becoming passionate animal lovers, and taking action.

Avinash Visvanathan

General Secretary of Friends of Snakes Society, Telangana, has led the organization since 2010. Though fascinated by snakes as a child, he was also afraid of them. Growing up in an area with frequent snake encounters, he often saw rescuers in action, which inspired him to learn more. Over time, he realized that education and awareness were as important as the rescue. Avinash believes that clear communication is key in addressing people's fears, but he has also seen how fear can override reason. In one case, despite assuring residents that a snake outside their house posed no threat, panic took over, leading them to call multiple authorities and threaten its life. He understands that fear, even if misplaced, feels very real to people.

His learning journey began with online resources and Romulus Whitaker and Ashok Captain field guides. Over time, he combined book knowledge with hands-on experience, developing training modules for the NGO to improve rescue techniques. Beyond rescues, he teaches herpetology at the Forest College and Research Institute and researches lesser-known species and habitat conservation in Telangana. With rapid urbanization impacting certain snake species, he emphasizes the need for conservation efforts and ethical rescue practices. Avinash hopes people recognize snake rescuers as responders and educators, bridging the gap between science and society. He also stresses the importance of standardized training to ensure safe and ethical handling, reducing unnecessary relocations and snakebites.

FIRST-AID AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Steps to take during snake bites:

1. Stay Calm and Avoid Panic – Keeping your composure is crucial. Staying calm helps regulate your heart rate and allows you to think clearly and make rational decisions.

2. Do Not Tie the Limb – Avoid using a tourniquet or tying anything around the bitten limb to slow blood flow. In India, this can do more harm than good. It increases pressure in the circulatory system, putting extra strain on the heart. When the restriction is released, the sudden rush of blood can lead to faster and more severe venom spread. Additionally, since many Indian venomous snakes cause significant swelling, tying a limb can worsen tissue damage and may even be fatal, leading to death.

3. Do Not Wash, Cut, or Burn the Bite – Venom often remains trapped in the outer layers of skin, fat, or connective tissue, moving slowly through the body. Washing, cutting, or attempting to suck out the venom can force it into the bloodstream more rapidly. Moreover, it is impossible to remove venom by sucking it out. Burning the wound only increases long-term complications. Any interference with the wound makes medical treatment more challenging and worsens the damage.

4. Seek Medical Help, Not Traditional Remedies – Folk treatments, like those from traditional healers, are ineffective. Many people who claim to have been cured by such methods were either bitten by non-venomous snakes or received dry or mild envenomation (sub-lethal venom doses). Remedies such as “snake stones” and herbal applications lack scientific backing. Antivenom is the only proven treatment for venomous snakebites, and ongoing research continues to confirm its effectiveness.

5. Avoid Killing or Capturing the Snake – Trying to kill or catch the snake increases the risk of additional bites and does not assist in medical treatment. India uses polyvalent antivenom, which is effective against the venom of the country’s ‘Big Four’ venomous

snakes. Identifying the snake is unnecessary for treatment. However, if it is safe to do so, taking a picture from a distance may help determine whether the snake is nonvenomous or not part of the 'Big Four.'

Precautions:

1. Maintain Clean Surroundings – Proper waste management is key. Keep your home and surroundings clean, as garbage and food waste attract rats, which in turn can draw snakes.

2. Carry a Flashlight at Night – It helps you see your surroundings clearly, especially in areas with tall grass or dense greenery where snakes might be present, use a stick to check bushes before entering.

3. Check before you reach in – When retrieving items from deep corners or storage, use a flashlight, inspect the area, and remove objects carefully instead of reaching in blindly.

4. Check your footwear before wearing them – Snakes and other small creatures sometimes take shelter in shoes—flip them over and check before wearing.

5. Cover Up, Stay Safe – Long pants and sturdy boots provide extra protection in regions where snakes are common.

6. Secure Your Sleeping Area – Check around and under your mattress to ensure there are no snakes. A properly tucked mosquito net can provide extra security while you sleep.

7. If you encounter a snake – Do not try to handle them on your own, always call for professional help. Step back calmly and slowly, avoid sudden movements, and let it move away on its own.

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TO UNDERSTAND SNAKES IS TO LISTEN WITH CARE, NOT JUST CAUTION. THIS LANDSCAPE IS SHAPED BY THOSE WHO CHOOSE EMPATHY OVER FEAR—RESCUERS WHO TELL STORIES OF COEXISTENCE. LIKE A SNAKE'S PATH, HOPE MAY NOT MOVE STRAIGHT, BUT IT ALWAYS MOVES FORWARD.