Identification of venomous snakes of Sri Lanka

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Round tail (venomous or non-venomous)

Paddle shaped tail, bite at sea or estuary
Sea snake (highly venomous)

Ventral scales do not extend full body width (non-venomous)

Ventral scales extend full body width (venomous or non-venomous)

Triangular shaped head, well defined neck (venomous or mildly / feebly)

Oval shaped head, neck not well defined (venomous or non-venomous)

Loreal pit present (venomous) Pit vipers

Loreal pit absent (highly venomous or feebly venomous)
Large scales on head
Cat snakes
(feebly venomous)

Numerous small scales
on head
True vipers
(highly venomous)

Expandable hood, no enlarged
hexagonal vertebral scales,
subcaudals divided
Cobra
(highly venomous)

No hood, enlarged hexagonal
vertebral scales
Kraits
(highly venomous)

Black dorsum, wide,
single white bands
Ceylon Krait
(highly venomous)

Black dorsum, narrow,
paired white bands
Common Krait
(highly venomous)

3 longitudinal rows of dark brown oval patches
along the body, white "V" on head
Russell's viper
(highly venomous)

Black dorsal, narrow,
paired white bands

'Horsefoot' mark on head
Saw-scaled viper
(highly venomous)

Green color, head covered
with small scales
Green pit-vipers
(mildly venomous)

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