

# The Broadheads

The Broad-headed Snakes of the genus *Hoplocephalus*.

The genus comes from two Greek words: hoplo meaning weapon and cephalo means head.

There are three snakes belonging to this genus:

The Broad-headed Snake (*Hoplocephalus bungaroides*)

The Pale-headed Snake (*H bitorquatus*)

Stephens Banded Snake (*H stephensi*)

Venom from the Broadheads is neurotoxic and if needed you can use Tiger Snake antivenom. The recommended initial dose of antivenom is 3000units.

The typical reported symptoms of bites from these snakes, ranges from: severe headache, sweating, partial blindness, blurred to double vision, breathing difficulty, vomiting and muscle weakness.

Bites should not be fatal but because the symptoms can be quite severe it would be advisable to go to hospital for observation; especially if a child has been bitten.

If you are not experienced with bites from venomous snakes it is always wise to treat all venomous bites as serious. If a bite does end up being serious, the best place to be is in hospital.

## Broad-headed Snake (*Hoplocephalus bungaroides*)

The Broad-headed Snake is found only in a restricted area both north and south of Sydney for about 250km not extending far inland. The main population of this snake is said to be around sandstone country of the Hawkesbury catchments.

Live-bearing, producing at least 8 young though there are claims of up to 20.

Those that keep this snake say that it is never an easy snake to handle. It is extremely nervous and will readily bite the handler; so don't handle it. All the Broadheads feed on lizards and frogs though in captivity they will usually take mice.

## Pale-headed Snake (*Hoplocephalus bitorquatus*)

The Pale-headed Snake is found from just north of Sydney up the east coast to north of Cairns. There is an area along the coast of Central Queensland where it has not been found. Live-bearing and is recorded producing from 2-11 young.

## Stephens Banded Snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensi*)

Stephens banded Snake is found in coastal areas from just north of Sydney to Southern Queensland to perhaps as far north as around the latitude of Fraser Island.

Live-bearing, perhaps producing the same number of young as the pale-headed snake; Graeme Gow recorded 5 young.

Although i know people who have kept the three species of these snakes there have never been many of them kept in collections. Having never kept them myself my information on their personalities has to come from others.

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