

As the weather warms, snakes start moving and calls start flooding the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission's Wildlife Helpline, where biologists answer questions and address concerns from people who have spotted something slithering in their backyard. Their first words of advice? If you see a snake, don't panic. Leave it alone and walk away.

"When people encounter a snake, particularly in their backyard, it can be startling for both the person and the snake," said Jeff Hall, a wildlife diversity biologist with the Commission. "We reassure people that, for the most part, snakes are completely harmless and, if given a wide berth, a snake will usually move out of the area on its own in time."

Most snakes, even venomous ones, are reluctant to bite because they use their energy or their venom to acquire food, and they don't view humans as a food source. Most snakebites occur when a person picks up a snake, steps on one accidentally or tries to kill one -- which can be illegal depending on the snake species.

In North Carolina, four of the six venomous snake species are protected. The pigmy and timber rattlesnakes are listed as species of special concern while the Eastern diamondback rattlesnake and Eastern coral snake are listed as endangered. None of these four species of snakes should be handled or disturbed without a permit issued by the Commission.

North Carolina is home to 37 native snake species. Of the six snake species that are venomous, only one, the copperhead, is common and can be found across the state. In many areas, including most of the larger urban regions, it is the only venomous snake. Because of their ability to live in a wide variety of habitats -- from wooded areas to mountain ridges to suburban backyards -- copperheads generate the most phone calls from people who think, often mistakenly, that they have one in their yard.

"While it's not uncommon for people to have a copperhead in their yard, usually what they have is a non-venomous and harmless species, such as rat snake or a garter snake, both of which are commonly found in backyard habitats," Hall said. "Unfortunately, many nonvenomous snakes are mistaken for copperheads and killed, although, copperheads are relatively easy to identify. Just look for the distinctive hourglass-shaped or Hershey-kiss-shaped crossbands on a light brown or gray body."

Regardless if a snake is venomous or non-venomous, snakes pose little threat to pets and children -- if left alone. When confronted or harassed, snakes are more likely to flee than they are to bite. However, if given no escape route or restrained, they will bite or lunge toward their perceived aggressor to defend themselves.

The Commission does not send people out to trap and remove snakes since removing one snake is not going to prevent another one from taking its place. However, Hall provides a few tips that people can follow to make their backyards less hospitable to snakes.

- Clean up the clutter by removing piles of rocks, wood and other debris that attract rodents and snakes.
- Mow the lawn to keep the grass cut short. Snakes prefer tall grasses to seek out their prey. They're also easier to spot in shorter grass.
- Discourage snakes from entering your home by closing gaps and holes, repairing damage to siding and foundation, sealing openings under doors, windows and around water pipes.

When it comes to snakes, Hall says the most important thing people can do is to educate themselves and others about these cold-blooded reptiles and learn to appreciate them as an important part of the ecosystem.

"Snakes are strictly carnivorous, preying on smaller animals, such as rodents, slugs and insects," Hall said. "Snakes also serve as an important food source for other animals, like foxes, raccoons, eagles, hawks, owls. Instead of being widely feared and unjustly persecuted, snakes should be appreciated for the awesome creatures they are and treated with respect."

To view a slideshow of some of the more common snakes found in North Carolina, including venomous and nonvenomous, visit the Commission's Flickr page at www.flickr.com. For information on all 37 snake species native to North Carolina, visit Herps of NC website herpsofnc.org/snakes.

For other questions regarding human-wildlife interactions, call the Commission's new N.C. Wildlife Helpline toll-free at 866-318-2401. The call center is open Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information on snakes, read the Commission's "Co-Exist with Snakes" handout available at www.ncwildlife.org. For more information about co-existing with other wildlife species, visit the Commission's Tips on Co-Existing with Wildlife page, also at www.ncwildlife.org.

Church News

JUNE 26 - 28

Vacation Bible School

At North Wadesboro Baptist Church. 5:30pm supper followed by VBS. For all ages, nursery-youth welcome

JUNE 26 - 30

Vacation Bible School

At New Beginning MBC, 6:30pm

JUNE 27-29 & JULY 1

Vacation Bible School

Theme 'Conquering the Jungle.' At Divine Unity Church, Tue-Thu at 6pm nightly. Sat-trip to Riverside Zoo. All are invited!

JUNE 29 & 30

Youth Revival

At Poplar Springs MBC in Burnsville, 7pm nightly 7 p.m. at Poplar Springs MB Church, Burnsville Community. Thu-Rev Comdell Campbell of Hope Christian Church in Cheraw & Fri-Min Barbara Thomas of Ebenezer MBC in Wadesboro

JULY 3 - 7

Vacation Bible School

At Johnson Chapel Holiness Church, 5:30-8pm nightly. All are invited

JULY 9

22nd Pastoral Anniversary

of Pastor Charles & Co-Pastor Mary Sturdivant at New Meltonville MBC. Worship service celebration at 11am & Rev David Dickey at 3pm

JULY 9 - 12

Homecoming & Revival

At Harris Chapel AME Zion. Homecoming Sun w/Sunday school & morning worship at 11am. Rev Johnny McLendon at 3pm. Revival w/Pastor Donnie Bennett Mon & Tue, Pastor Luther McLendon Wed, all at 7:30pm. All are invited

JULY 9 - 13

Homecoming & Revival

At Lindsey Chapel FCOG. Homecoming Sun w/Overseer Sylvia McLendon at 11:15am & Bishop A.E. Lindsey at 3pm. Revival Mon-Thu, 7:30pm w/Pastor Derrick Leak, Pastor Eddie Lee, Pastor Terry Little & Pastor Joletha Dockery

JULY 16

Pastoral Care Annual Program

at Poplar Springs MBC, 2pm w/Rev Idrise Strange of Olive Branch MBC in Marshville

JULY 18

The Gospel

At Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 3pm w/Rev Marcus Fairley, Rev Maurice Parker, Rev Lloyd Nivens & Rev Dayhige Wright. Come one, come all!

Annual Choir Day

At Fairview COG, 2:30pm. All choirs & praise teams are invited

Men's Day Program

At Johnson Chapel Holiness Church, 3pm w/Rev Gary Gaddy. All are invited

JULY 18

Hawaiian Luau

By Salt & Pepper for Ministry at Rock Hill MBC in Lilesville, 11am-1pm w/Sarah Dean. Everyone invited to dress Hawaiian & join in for food, fun & fellowship

JULY 18 - 21

Vacation Bible School

At Fairview COG, 6-7:30pm

JULY 23

3rd Appreciation Service

for Rev Gary Gaddy, 3:30pm w/Apostle Marvin Leak. All are invited

JULY 23 - 27

Homecoming & Revival

At Rock Hill MBC. Homecoming Sun w/Dr. T.J. Horne at 11am & Rev Tony Barr at 3pm. Revival Mon-Pastor Donnie Bennett, Tue-Pastor Joletha Dockery, Wed-Pastor John Kirkpatrick & Thu service, all at 7pm

AUGUST 13

Minister's Appreciation Service

at Fairview COG, 3pm

ONGOING

Thursday's Child

Children's choir, Gail Litaker director, an outreach ministry of First United Methodist Church, open to all children grades K-6, no pre-registration necessary, Thursdays, 4-5pm, cost is free, 704-694-5179

Exercise, Exercise & More!

Free at Henderson Grove MBC in Lilesville. Mon & Thur evenings 6-7:30pm. Exercise ball, rubber band, hula hoop, walking, jogging & fun. Physical & mental health info. 704-848-4225

Fun for Seniors

Every 3rd Tuesday at Rock Hill MBC, 11am-1pm for 55 & older (exceptional adults too) are welcome

Events

JUNE 15 - SEPT 28

Uptown Wadesboro Farmers Market

begins, 4pm. Open every Thursday through September. Info 704-695-1644

JUNE 17 - OCT 28

Anson County Farmers Market

opens for the season. Open Wednesdays & Saturdays, 7:30am-1pm at 1736 Hwy 52 South in Wadesboro near Wadesboro Primary School

JUNE 28

Board Meeting

Of Brown Creek Soil & Water Conservation District,

10am at BCSWCD office. 704-694-3516

JUNE 29

Board of Education Regular Meeting

In Administrative Office Board Room, 320 Camden Rd in Wadesboro. Closed Session 5:30pm, Open Session for public about 6:30pm

JUNE 30

July 4th Celebration

In uptown Wadesboro, 6pm at corner of Wade & Washington Streets w/music, fireworks, food & games

JULY 1

Free Groceries for Families in Need

at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center, 9am. Call 704-826-8182 for eligibility info & details

Bennett-Ingram-Smith Family Reunion

at Lockhart-Taylor Center, 12pm. Info Sandra Ingram 856-472-5827

JULY 5

Free Groceries

For families in need. Mobile Food Pantry at Wingate United Methodist Church, 10:30am-12 noon. Call for details 336-687-2162

JULY 10

Free Movie

The Shaggy Dog pre-

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Radio Ministry
On WKDX 1250 AM Sun 8:15am w/Elder Garcia Morman

how to keep you & your children safe. Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition 704-694-4499

Regular Monthly Meeting of Wadesboro Housing Authority 2nd Tuesday each month at 12noon at Papa Joes

After School Program Kid Cafe Mon-Fri from 2:30-5:30p.m. at the Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center, 704-826-8737

Lions Club Welcomes New Members The Wadesboro Lions Club meets at Papa Joes Restaurant each month at 6:30pm. For more info or to purchase a broom please call Jim Chandler 910-571-1448

Childcare Association Meets every 3rd Thursday of Month, 6:30pm. Info 704-695-1666

Ansonville Museum Ansonville Historical Society Museum open by appointment. Call 704-826-8129

Cruise-In Third Thursday each month, 5-8pm at The Old Store. Bring your cars, trucks & motorcycles & show them off! Food discounts, door prizes, 50/50 raffle to benefit Feed My Lambs & lots of fun! Info 704-851-3637

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