

The Deadly Cobra

The cobra is one of the most deadly snakes in the world. Many wildlife experts consider it **the** deadliest animal. Its venom, its mobility, and its behavior are legendary.

The cobra's venom is more powerful than even that of the rattlesnake. Its large fangs do not inject the venom as do the fangs of other poisonous snakes; instead, the fangs are used to pierce deep wounds in the victim's flesh, and the cobra releases venom from sacs in its mouth into these punctures. The deadly venom is carried by the bloodstream and attacks the victim's central nervous system. One African variety spits its venom at its victim's eyes; it can spit up to eight feet with almost pinpoint accuracy, and the highly corrosive venom blinds the victim unless it is immediately washed away.

The cobra's mobility is chilling. In spite of its size it can move with great speed almost soundlessly. It creeps up on its intended victim undetected and can move on or above the ground with equal efficiency. It glides silently along the branches of trees or building rafters as well as along the ground. Its mottled skin provides a good camouflage since it blends almost perfectly with dead leaves, tree bark, grasses, and dusty earth.

The cobra may be the only snake that seeks out humans. Most snakes and other animals avoid contact with humans at all costs and attack them only when escape is blocked or in defense of their young, but cobras seem to have no such avoidance instinct. Instead, they have been known to seek out and follow humans before attacking them without provocation. Their actions are those of a predator hunting, and their prey is man.

