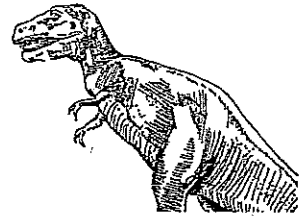


BITE ME!



A woman was driving on a Victorian road, singing along to her radio, when out from behind the sun visor crawled a thick and hairy 10 centimetre Huntsman spider. Shocked and terrified she lost control of her car, rolling it several times before crashing into a tree. She escaped with multiple broken limbs and head injuries.'

The Huntsman won't kill you, but your panic just might. So here's our 'don't panic' guide to Oz's weird and wonderful beasties, and a few horror stories for good measure.

SPIDERS Of Australian spiders, the Red-back, Fiddle-back and Funnel Web are the ones to be wary of. The Fiddle-back is found around Adelaide, particularly the outer suburbs. These spiders can kill, but if they don't you'll have some exciting visual reminders. Flesh wounds may take up to six weeks to heal. Some of the toxic effects include kidney and other vital organ poisoning.

The infamous Funnel-Web is known by many. Symptoms of poisoning will become obvious within 10 minutes of attack. The solid gnarly monsters will induce nausea and vomiting, pain, sweating, delirium, numbness around the mouth and eventual respiratory failure. With fangs 7mm long, they can pierce skulls — most active during the autumn and summer.

SNAKES Snakes are found all over the country and 60 per cent of all Australian snakes are poisonous. As many visitors are uneducated about snakes, if you're (un)lucky enough to come across one, it's wise to give it a wide berth. Do not attempt to kill it! The most dangerous snakes are the Fierce, Brown and Tiger snakes and the infamous Death Adders and Taipans. A full dose of the Fierce Snake's venom is enough to kill a quarter of a million mice — luckily, they're only found in a south-eastern pocket of Queensland. The Death Adder is the slyest of the lot. Night-active, it lives in bushland leaf piles. This beast is incredibly easy to step on so be very careful. It will lie still even when their environment is disturbed. Sea Snakes are common in most Australian waters. Two or three milligrams of sea snake venom may be enough to kill a person.



SHARKS Some years ago on Sydney's North Shore, people were going about their regular beach activities. Some sat around reading, trying to catch a tan, others walked, played cricket and frisbee. The guy with the frisbee was playing with his dog. After a great throw, the dog, excited and happy ran after the frisbee into the water. Only minutes later, there was bubbles and the dog was sinking. He had been caught in the marine jaws-of-death —SHARK.

Despite the yarn-spinning, attacks, especially fatal ones, are extremely rare. Sharks are Australia's best-known dangerous marine life. They are found in waters all around Australia. The Tiger shark is the killer of the Pacific.



THE BLUE RINGED OCTOPUS is found in rock pools on the seashore, and is very beautiful. You might be tempted to pick one up — but don't — the bite it self won't hurt, but within a few minutes you may become paralysed.

OCEAN STINGERS Some time ago, a German visitor picked up a Blue-Ringed Octopus on a beach in Victoria. Her trip ended up being really cheap — her embassy flew her back in a box.

BOX JELLYFISH are as dangerous.

They are the reason why you don't swim in the ocean in Far North Queensland and the Northern Territory from November to March, unless there are stinger nets in place. An adult jelly contains enough venom to kill three adult humans, and their tentacles can be up to 3 metres long and are covered with venom releasing pockets.

BLUE BOTTLES/ STINGERS look similar to the plastic bag-type box-jelly, but, as the name suggests, they are blue. Blue bottles use a similar attack method as the Box Jellyfish. Having long tentacles it uses them to poison, then trap victims. Many beaches in affected areas have bottles of vinegar chained up, as this is a treatment for stings.

A guy just outside of Mackay, northern Queensland, was walking through rock pools wearing his thongs when he slipped onto what he thought was rock. The "rock", suddenly disturbed, erected its thirteen venomous spines, pierced the man's shoe and injected him with lethal poison. The pain of the puncture became so extreme that one guy lost consciousness. By the time he regained consciousness he was paralysed and died six hours after the sting.

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