

# THE ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY GAZETTE

VOL 2 ISSUE 3 | March 2018



THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## Venomous Neighbors:

### Identifying and Dealing with Potentially Dangerous Wildlife in Atascocita Forest

Spring is here, and our slithering friends will be emerging and becoming more active in the coming months. While all of these creatures play an important role in our ecosystem, they can pose significant risks to humans and pets. This guide will provide a brief summary of the venomous species of snakes that are common in our area, as well as tips on avoiding contact with them. At the end of the article is the contact information of an individual who has volunteered to respond to snake removal calls in our neighborhood.

There are three common venomous snake species in the northeast Houston area:

#### COPPERHEADS



Copperheads are the most prevalent venomous species in our area. They have chestnut or reddish-brown markings on a lighter brown / tan body. The darker markings often resemble

Hershey's kisses. These snakes are generally small, rarely growing longer than 30 inches, and hang out in shaded areas, in piles of leaves, and under logs or stones. Their camouflage markings are extremely effective, making them very hard to see. During the hot summer months, copperheads are active mostly at night; however, during the cooler months of spring they are more likely to be active during the day.

Copperheads are generally reclusive and not aggressive. They would prefer to avoid encounters with humans, but they are likely to strike if a human or curious pet gets too close to their hiding place. While copperheads are dangerous snakes that can inflict serious damage to bite victims, their venom is the least toxic of all the pit vipers.

You are most likely to encounter copperheads while working in your yard or around your home. Your best course of action to avoid an

encounter is to be very watchful and aware of where you are stepping and reaching with your hands. Do not reach or step into leafy areas or other areas where these snakes might be hiding. Use a rake or other long-handled tool to poke around and reveal any potential hiding places first to ensure no snakes are in the area. While working in the yard, long jeans / pants and boots are recommended, as most copperhead bites are to either the feet / ankles / calves or the hands.

Additionally, if you have children, be sure to talk to them about these snakes and the danger they pose. Teach them about not reaching into or running around in areas where these snakes may be hiding. My four-year-old son was bitten on the hand by a copperhead in September in our front yard. He saw a frog near a small pile of bricks next to our neighbor's house, but did not see the copperhead coiled on the tan bricks. When he reached out his finger to point at the frog, the snake struck, hitting him between his index and middle fingers. The bite was extremely painful and it was a very long night / morning in the emergency room, but he was very lucky and suffered no long-term damage, thankfully.

#### WATER MOCCASINS / COTTONMOUTHS



Water Moccasins are highly venomous and potentially aggressive pit vipers that are found near bodies of water, including drainage ditches. They are commonly

seen sunning themselves on the banks of watery areas during the heat of the day, but they hunt and are active mostly at night. These are larger snakes, averaging 36-48 inches in length with a thick, heavy body. They can be dark brown, olive green, olive brown, or almost solid black. Juveniles are more vibrantly colored with a yellow tail, and their colors darken with age. Some individuals are marked with

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY .....911  
Harris County Animal Control ..... 281-999-3191  
Poison Control ..... 800-222-1222

## NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Pct 4 Constable Non-Emergency Dispatch..... 281-376-3472  
Atascocita Volunteer Fire Dept. .... 281-852-2181  
Harris County Precinct 4 ..... 281-376-3472  
Texas No Call List Registration ..... 866-TXN-OCAL  
Emergency Roadside Assistance..... 800-525-5555

## SCHOOLS

Humble ISD ..... 281-540-1775  
Whispering Pines Elementary..... 281-641-2500  
Humble Middle School..... 281-641-2500  
Humble High School ..... 281-641-6300

## UTILITY NUMBERS

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Report Street Light Outage - Centerpoint ..... 713-207-2222  
Report Gas Leak - Centerpoint ..... 713-659-2111  
Centerpoint (Gas) ..... 713-659-2111  
Call Before You Dig ..... 811  
Water - SiEnvironmental..... 832-490-1600  
Emergency Number ..... 832-490-1601  
Electricity - Multiple Providers..... [www.powertochoose.org](http://www.powertochoose.org)  
Trash - RR&R of Texas..... 866-516-9805  
MUD District ..... [www.TrailoftheLakesMUD.com](http://www.TrailoftheLakesMUD.com)

## PUBLIC SERVICES

Humble Post Office..... 281-540-1775  
DPS Office..... 281-446-3391  
Harris County Clerk (Will Clayton Pkwy.) ..... 281-540-1173

## NEIGHBORHOOD MANAGEMENT

Community Asset Management .....  
[www.CommunityAssetManagement.com](http://www.CommunityAssetManagement.com)  
Pam Valentine..... [pvalentine@cam-texas.com](mailto:pvalentine@cam-texas.com)

## ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY ASSOC.

Email the Board ..... [board@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:board@atascocitaforest.org)  
Website Questions/Problems ..... [website@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:website@atascocitaforest.org)  
Newsletter questions..... [newsletter@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:newsletter@atascocitaforest.org)

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# NEWSLETTER INFO

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## PUBLISHER

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Advertising..... [advertising@PEELinc.com](mailto:advertising@PEELinc.com)

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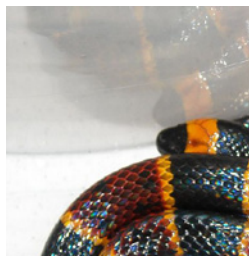
dark, wide bands, but these markings vary snake to snake. When threatened, a water moccasin will open its mouth widely, revealing the white tissue inside (thus its name) and very large fangs. Whereas more timid snakes are likely to retreat at the sight of a human, a water moccasin is prone to hold its ground, and have even been known to chase individuals (There is debate among herpetologists about the inherent aggression of water moccasins).

You are unlikely to encounter a water moccasin in your yard, unless you have a water feature that would attract them, or a large presence of prey in your yard. You are more likely to come across one of these snakes while walking along the drainage ditch areas around the neighborhood.

As mentioned, cottonmouths have highly toxic venom that interferes with blood clotting and causes bite victims to bleed out internally. If bitten, seek medical attention immediately.

Note that there are several species of non-venomous snakes that are commonly mistaken for water moccasins, including black racers and various benign water snakes.

## CORAL SNAKES



Coral snakes are the most venomous of the three common snakes in this area, but luckily, they are also the least common to be seen due to their reclusive behavior.

Coral snakes are members of the elapidae family (as opposed to pit vipers) and are related to cobras. There is one of the most potent of any North American snake, but because of their small mouths and small fangs, coral snakes do not “strike” like vipers (cotton mouths and copperheads) do. Rather, they bite a victim and then chew to slowly deliver the venom. In the rare case that humans are bit, it is generally when barefoot outside and the snake bites between toes or on the smallest toe. If bitten, the victim will only experience mild pain at the bite location, but respiratory failure can occur within hours. Seek IMMEDIATE emergency medical attention if bitten.

Additionally, coral snakes are very elusive and prefer to hide underground and avoid contact with humans. The National Institutes of Health report that only 15-25 coral snake bites take place in the

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US each ear.

## STAYING SAFE

With all of these snakes, the majority of bite incidents take place when people try to catch or interact with them. The best way to avoid being bitten is to leave the snakes alone. If you see a venomous snake on your property, please leave it alone and call a snake removal expert. Leonardo Villavicencio is a herpetology enthusiast who lives in Atascocita South and has volunteered to respond to snake removal calls in our neighborhood (free of charge). His phone number is (281) 799-5643.

Additionally, if you're on Facebook you might consider joining the "What Snake is this? Southeast Texas group, which has thousands of helpful and knowledgeable members. If you see a snake and you're not sure what kind it is, you can take a picture and post it to this group and within minutes, people will comment with information about the species and whether it is venomous or not. As a courtesy to these snake enthusiasts, please do not post pictures of dead snakes (they really don't like that...). Leonardo Villavicencio is a member of this snake group.



**Leonardo Villavicencio** Lauren Shwartz I live very close by and I will relocate any snake for free. 281-799-5643. Most common venomous snake you will encounter are copperheads followed by cottonmouths. We are not in timber rattlesnakes range and coral snakes are rarely seen. Let me know if I can help

Like · Reply · 2h



**Lauren Shwartz** Leonardo Villavicencio Oh great, thank you! May I publish your name & phone number in the newsletter so residents could call you if they need to have a snake removed? Or do you have an email address I could publish?

Like · Reply · 2h



**Leonardo Villavicencio** Yes! You can publish my name and number. I live in Atascocita south. Most people that are bitten by venomous snakes are trying to kill it. If a person can safely place a bucket over the snake with something heavy on top that would be great. If not possible, I'll get there as quickly as possible

Like · Reply · 1h · Edited



**Lauren Shwartz** Leonardo Villavicencio Wonderful, thank you so much!

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Monthly Contract Stats

### TRAIL OF THE LAKES MUD

For December 2017

#### Categories

Burglary Habitation: 1	Burglary Vehicle: 5	Theft Habitation: 0
Theft Vehicle: 5	Theft Other: 1	Robbery: 0
Assault: 1	Sexual Assault: 0	Criminal Mischief: 1
Disturbance Family: 6	Disturbance Juvenile: 2	Disturbance Other: 16
Alarms: 37	Suspicious Vehicles: 21	Suspicious Persons: 8
Runaways: 4	Phone Harrassment: 0	Other Calls: 859

#### Detailed Statistics By Deputy

Unit Number	Contract Calls	District Calls	Reports Taken	Felony Arrests	Misd Arrests	Tickets Issued	Recovered Property	Charges Filed	Mileage Driven	Days Worked
201	20	5	4	0	0	7	0	0	295	9
27	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	1
D27	7	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	254	4
E101	23	5	8	0	0	19	0	0	710	17
E102	75	9	28	0	1	64	3000	1	602	19
E103	39	18	15	0	6	48	20	4	1021	17
E104	84	16	12	2	0	63	0	3	1036	21
E105	130	29	10	0	0	44	0	0	1179	20
E106	54	25	13	2	2	24	0	8	844	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>3020</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6019</b>	<b>130</b>

#### Summary of Events

##### Family Disturbance:

11100 Will Clayton Pkwy – Deputies responded to a call regarding a Family Disturbance. Investigation revealed the complainant was assaulted by another family member who was arrested for unlawful restraint and booked into jail.

3900 Atascocita Road - Deputies responded to a call regarding a Family Disturbance. Investigation revealed family members engaged in a verbal confrontation that ended without injury or further incident.

4900 Dappled Grove Trail - Deputies responded to a call regarding a Family Disturbance.



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## HOA ELECTION RESULTS

The Board is pleased to announce and welcome the newly-elected members of the HOA Board: Tomasina Sampa and Keshia Stubblefield. Both members will serve a three-year term on the board. We would like to congratulate the winners and sincerely thank all of the dedicated residents who ran for the election!

The Board Members list on the AtascocitaForest.org website has been updated to show the current board members (located under the About Atascocita Forest navigation tab).

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## POOL RENOVATION UNDERWAY

The long-awaited and much needed neighborhood pool renovation project is underway! Residents can look forward to a fresh, updated swimming pool that will be replastered and will feature new coping and accent tile. The aging black deck is also being removed and new concrete will be poured in its place. The large green shade structure will remain in its current location.

The project is scheduled to be completed before the pool opens for the summer, but it is possible that the project could be delayed by weather complications. We will keep residents updated as the project progresses and will announce any delays or other important information as needed.

In addition to the pool refurbishing and deck replacement, we will also be installing a new closed-flume water slide and diving board at the pool. We hope that these requested additions will make the pool a more fun and enjoyable space for residents during pool season.

## YARD OF THE MONTH DELAYED

Due to the extreme winter weather we experienced and the damage caused to lawns and landscaping, the Yard of the Month program will be delayed to begin in April, rather than March.

Hector Reyes, owner of On Post Lawn Care in Atascocita Forest, offered these tips to help residents get their yards back in good shape for the spring:

- Carefully inspect your lawn for patches, hard surfaces, compacted areas, or indications of digging.
- Add more soil in areas where necessary and till the compacted areas to aerate the soil and provide a healthy root environment for your grass.
- After amending the soil and aerating (if necessary), apply a weed and feed fertilizer, per the manufacturer's instructions. This will supply needed nutrients to your lawn and help eliminate weeds accumulated over the winter.
- For freeze-damaged tropicals, provide water and trim the fronds or leaves from the bottom up. Sago palms can also be trimmed back and fertilized for improved growth and color. Note that you will not know if plants are completely dead until spring, so avoid pulling or removing plants until you know for sure!

We look forward to getting Yard of the Month started again in April!

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