

Make Your Own Snake and Den

Learn About Snakes and their habitats with
Shenandoah National Park



Shenandoah National Park's unique range of elevation, slopes, rocks, and precipitation creates a wide variety of habitats for the plants and animals that call the park home. This includes over 190 bird species, 50 mammal species, 20 reptile and amphibian species, 40 fish species, and countless insects, spiders, and other invertebrates.

Background:

Shenandoah National Park is home to 18 snake species. From the small and harmless Eastern Wormsnake to the venomous Timber Rattlesnake, you can find a wide variety of these reptiles inside the park. Most snakes seek cover in rocks, leaf litter, soil, and logs. Snakes need cover for several reasons:

- Protection from predators like hawks, owls, other snakes, and feral cats.
- Provides shade to protect from excessive heat exposure.
- It can serve as hunting grounds, as some prey species, such as mice, will also use this cover.

Some snake species, such as the Eastern Wormsnake, are fossorial. This means that they live underground and have consistent cover from the soil.

In this activity, you will make your own snake of Shenandoah National Park and choose which type of cover or den you would like to make for them. See the snake species options below and choose your favorite!



Snakes of Shenandoah National Park



Ringneck Snake

Likes cover under logs, small rocks, and leaf litter.



Common Garter Snake

Likes cover in plants and vegetation or under rocks.



Copperhead

Likes cover in shrubs and leaf litter.



Eastern Milksnake

Likes cover under rocks and logs or in rodent burrows.

Choose your favorite snake and recreate their scale pattern...or research other snakes of Shenandoah National Park for more options!

Materials:

- 1 Popsicle Stick
- 1 Paper Cup
- 2 Googly Eyes
- 1 one-inch piece of red string
- Glue
- Markers
- Scissors



Procedure:

- Choose a snake from the options above and use your markers to recreate the scale patterns on your popsicle stick snake.
- Next, glue the googly eyes to one end of the popsicle stick.
- Attach the red string to the same end of the popsicle stick as the googly eyes using tape or glue.
 - You will want to attach the end of the string to the bottom of the popsicle stick and let most of the string hang off the end. This is your snake's tongue!
- Next, grab your paper cup and scissors and cut a small half oval out from the top of your cup. This will be the opening to your snake's den.
- Flip your cup upside down and use markers to make it look like your snake's favorite cover, whether it be rocks, leaf litter, logs, or even living underground!
- Lastly, place your snake inside their den! The snake's head will poke out of the opening so they can keep an eye on their surroundings.

