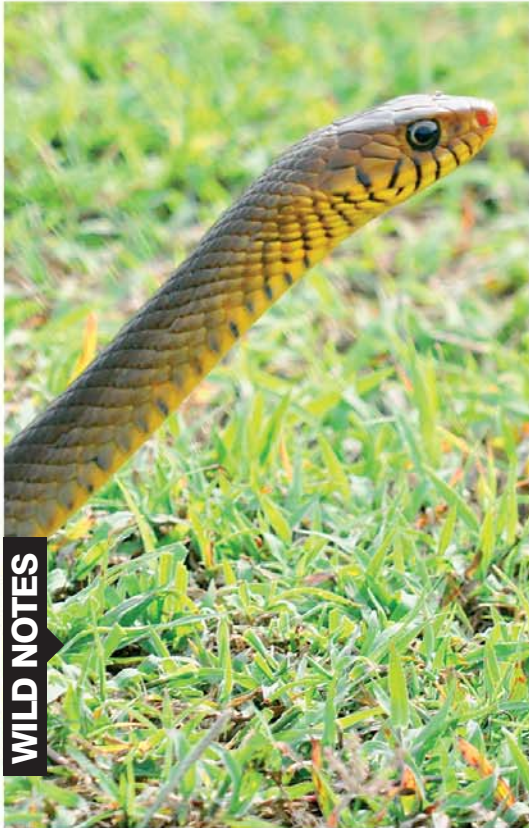


# Did You Hear A Hiss?

-SHRILEKHA V



WILD NOTES

## NAME

Rat Snake

## DESCRIPTION

Often mistaken for the cobras, Rat Snakes (Local Name in Tamizh – Saarai Paambu) are ranked along some of the largest snakes, reaching a length of over 2.5 meters. They are fast-moving, aggressive by nature and are always quick to defend themselves. Their defense mechanism includes coiling up, raising their head, striking continuously at anything that they can get their fangs into. The color varies from yellowish or brown to black in certain cases. Their lifespan in the wild is up to 15 years, males living a little longer than females. In captivity they can live up to 25 years. They are harmless and non-poisonous; but when bitten it can be very painful and lead to bacterial infection.

## HABITAT

As the name implies, these snakes have a marked preference for rodents and frogs. This is the reason they are commonly seen in paddy fields and rural homes.

## DIET

Rats and rodents. When the rodent population is scarce, then the rat snakes are known to eat small birds, squirrels and lizards.

## INTERESTING FACT

The rat snakes reach maturity after 18-24 months. During the breeding season, male rat snakes perform a combat dance. This is actually their way of protecting the area they live in and preventing the other male snakes from coming into their territory.

## BLOG WATCH



# Hum Hum Hum

**THIS** live streaming music website founded by sound designers and musicians is among the top for 'legal' music streaming of Indian music. With a large stock of audio tracks, anyone with a decent bandwidth at home can enjoy the tracks, arrange them onto your own play lists, share them to friends through a few clicks and participate in forums or chats to discuss on music. The site allows you to download your favourite tracks at appropriate costs for listening offline. The categories are pleasingly arranged to enable a hassle free experience. For net savvy people out there, the site has a widget to show and share tracks on social networking sites. Check it out!

<http://www.hummaa.com>



# Following The Saffron Trail

**VERY** up-to-date on the genre of cooking blogging, Nandita's blog 'Saffron Trail' has a wonderful array of South Indian vegetarian recipes with very nice photographs. She calls her husband, the CTO of her blog - Chief Tasting Officer! The blog deserves kudos for the innumerable comment streams (which are itself a treat to read) and a list of blogs neatly arranged to the left pane. Growing strong since 2006, there are more than a few hundred recipes and links, enough to make you feel hungry as you read through!

<http://www.saffrontrail.blogspot.com>