

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Sea Snakes

by Guy Belleranti

Did you know that some snakes live in the ocean? These snakes are called sea snakes.

There are approximately 60 species of sea snakes. Their muscular bodies have flattened, paddle-like tails that help them swim in the warm coastal waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans.

Like all snakes, sea snakes have forked tongues and scales. Also, like snakes that live on land, they shed their skin and breathe air. The way they breathe is different from snakes that



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venom. However, the two species of beaked sea snakes are aggressive. Fishermen have been bitten, and even killed, by beaked sea snakes tangled in their nets.

Sea snakes are carnivores. They hunt along sandy bottoms, under rocks, in coral reefs, and in brackish mangrove swamps for fish, fish eggs, mollusks, and crustaceans.

Most sea snakes give birth to live young who then swim away.

The majority of sea snakes stay in the sea and are very clumsy on land. However, there are venomous sea kraits that come on land. They leave the water to breed, shed, lay eggs, and drink fresh water. Their larger belly scales help them move both on the ground and in the low hanging branches of small trees.

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1. According to the information in the article, where would you be mostly likely to come across a sea snake in the wild?
- a. In the coastal waters of Florida
  - b. In the coral reefs of the Caribbean
  - c. Off the coast of Ghana, in Western Africa
  - d. In the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Australia



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b.

b.

c.

c.

3. You read in the article that sea snakes are very venomous, but most sea snakes have mild temperaments unless they feel threatened. Which of the following is most likely to attack?
- a. a male sea snake
  - b. a female sea snake
  - c. a sea snake that feels safe
  - d. a beaked sea snake
4. Sea kraits are a species of sea snake that come on land. Describe a feature that helps them move around on the land.

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

u t c a r e s a c s n

**hint:** a group of aquatic animals that includes crabs, shrimp, and lobster

2. \_\_\_\_\_

g s e a v g i r e s

**hint:** likely to attack

3. \_\_\_\_\_

n e m o g a r v

**hint:** type of tree that grows in tropical, coastal swamps



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7. \_\_\_\_\_

p e t n a m t e s e m r

**hint:** the behaviors of animals that make them act a certain way

8. \_\_\_\_\_

s u l c y m

**hint:** awkward in movement; uncoordinated

9. \_\_\_\_\_

r o p v k d e o

**hint:** instigated or prompted to act out in a certain way

10. \_\_\_\_\_

s a v e l v

**hint:** devices that prevent or allow the flow of water through them

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In the article, "Sea Snakes," you learned that sea snakes have special features that have allowed them to adapt to spending the majority of their lives underwater.



On the lines below, describe **three** traits of sea snakes that make them well-suited to living underwater.

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## ANSWER KEY

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1. According to the information in the article, where would you be mostly likely to come across a sea snake in the wild? **d.**
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# ANSWER KEY

## Sea Snakes

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. crustaceans u t c a r e s a c s n

**hint:** a group of aquatic animals that includes crabs,

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10. valves

s a v e l v

**hint:** devices that prevent or allow the flow of water through them