



How to Go Herping

Are you ready to take your herpetology know-how on the road? Outdoor observation is a great way to learn about snakes and their habitats. These tips will help you learn about snakes safely, and be a good neighbor to them out in the field!

What to bring:

Water

Comfortable clothing

Sun protection, like a hat and sunscreen

Closed-toe shoes

Field notebook (page 3 and 4) or paper

Your favorite snake field guide

Camera (optional)

What is “herping” and why do it?

- » Herpetology is the study of reptiles and amphibians. Animals that are classified as reptiles or amphibians are sometimes referred to as “herps.” Looking for these animals outdoors in their habitats is called “herping” or “field herping.”
- » Herping allows you to see snakes and other reptiles and amphibians in their native ranges and habitats. This can teach you a lot about their behavior, range and distribution, and interactions with other living things!

Tips for safe herping

- » **Know before you go:**
 - Where will you go to look for snakes or other herps?
 - What kinds of snakes live in the area? Are there any venomous snakes to be aware of?
 - What are other signs a snake has been around? (sheds, tracks, scat, etc.)
 - Explore iNaturalist’s [San Francisco Reptiles page](#) to get an idea of reptiles you might encounter in San Francisco County.



» **How to stay safe:**

- Bring a buddy with you.
- Keep your distance: Don't approach or handle wildlife, whether they are venomous or not.
- Let snakes be snakes:
 - » Don't feed or bait wildlife.
 - » Avoid loud noises or sudden movements that might startle the snake.
 - » Allow the snake to do whatever it is doing without distraction (whether it is sunning, traveling from one place to another, or engaging in any other behaviors).

» **How to protect snake habitat:**

- Stay on designated trails.
- Leave the habitat the way you found it.
- Pack out everything you brought in, including all waste items like snack wrappers.

» **Record what you find:**

- Take a photo of the snake or the evidence of a snake.
- Use your field journal, or the worksheet below, to draw what you find. You can also include notes, thoughts, or questions.
- Use a snake or reptile field guide to help you identify the snakes you see.

» **Practice community science!**

Upload photos to iNaturalist, and contribute to data used by scientists.

- [Learn more about iNaturalist and download the app.](#)
- Read about [iNaturalist's snake-related projects.](#)

Herping Field Notebook

Name:

Date:

Location:

Sketch <i>Sketch what you see: a snake, evidence of a snake (shed, scat, tracks, etc.), or even a potential snake habitat.</i>	Notes <i>What do you notice about the snake?</i>	Species Identification <i>Use a field guide to identify your snake!</i>



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