

Rare Viper sighted in New Delhi, rescued by Wildlife SOS

In a daring operation, a Russell's viper was rescued by the Wildlife SOS Rapid Response Unit from a residential colony in Rohini, New Delhi. The snake is currently under the care of the wildlife conservation NGO.

New Delhi, Delhi, December 19, 2016 /[India PRwire](http://www.indiaprwire.com)/ -- An emergency call on the Wildlife SOS 24 hour helpline number (9871963535) alerted the Delhi-based Ngo to the presence of a snake in a residential colony in Rohini, New Delhi. The snake was first discovered by a group of young children who were playing in the neighbourhood park. Horrified by the sight of the rather unusual visitor a concerned passer-by immediately contacted Wildlife SOS for their assistance.

A Wildlife SOS rapid response team comprising of two trained snake rescuers promptly arrived at the location and identified the snake as a Russell's viper (*Daboia russelii*), one of the 'big four' venomous snakes to be found in the Indian subcontinent. They are protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

The team handled the reptile with caution as the fangs of a Russell's viper are the largest in length among Indian snakes and they react violently to being picked up and bites with a snap. After ensuring that the public maintained a safe distance from the venomous snake, they managed to successfully carry out the rescue operation, much to the relief of the residents.

Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder of Wildlife SOS said, "This is the first time we have rescued a viper in Delhi. The Russell's viper is shy and elusive by nature, and hence rarely sighted. Found in open grassy areas, scrub jungles and rocky hillocks, they feed mainly on rodents and small mammals, lizards, birds and frogs. They are a nocturnal species preferring to hunt at night but during winters they tend to be more active during the day. It is possible that increased urbanisation has left these reclusive reptiles with little space to hide which resulted in their being found in human settlements."

"This exquisite viper is not commonly found in the Delhi-NCR region. It was a dangerous operation as the Russell's viper is highly venomous, requiring our team to take precautionary measures to ensure the safety of bystanders as well as of the snake. Though slow moving, they are capable of fast strikes when provoked and will give out a warning hiss before striking" stated **Geeta Seshamani, Co-founder of Wildlife SOS.**

Chief Wildlife Warden A.K. Shukla, said, "In sensitive rescue operations such as this, public safety as well as the safety of the animal is of utmost concern and we are happy to see that the viper was safely rescued by Wildlife SOS."

Notes to Editor

About Wildlife SOS

A Non-Profit Organization, Wildlife SOS is one of the largest rescue & conservation charities in South Asia. They operate ten wildlife rehabilitation facilities across India, including the world's largest Sloth Bear Rescue Centre and two Elephant Care Centres, with 23 rescued elephants under their care. Wildlife SOS runs tribal rehabilitation projects that aim to create alternative livelihoods for poachers and other indigenous communities that used to exploit wildlife for livelihoods. Additionally, they run a leopard rescue centre, a Wildlife Hotline in New Delhi and 'Forest Watch' which is an anti-poaching wildlife crime enforcement unit.

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