

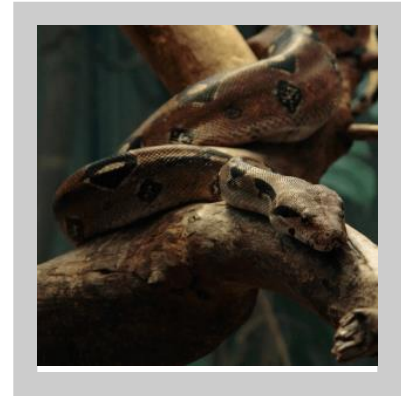
Name _____

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Amazon Snakes!

The Amazon rainforest is home to a wide variety of notorious, yet fascinating, snakes. Some of the most deadly (and well-known) snakes in the world—the green anaconda, the boa constrictor, the lancehead—live in the Amazon.

Agile on water but awkward on land, the green anaconda is one of the largest snakes in the world. At 29 feet long and 550 pounds, these snakes are huge! Most people assume that anacondas are very poisonous, but they are actually non-venomous. Instead, they are constrictors, meaning they squeeze their prey to death before swallowing it whole. The green anaconda loves to lie in wait in shallow, slow moving waters like marshes, swamps, and creeks.



The tree dwelling cousin to the green anaconda is the boa constrictor. Like the green anaconda, the boa constrictor can also grow to be larger than most snakes. These snakes prefer to wrap their six-foot-long bodies around tree limbs, rather than slither through swamps. Because boas are so muscular, they have no problem hanging in the trees until it is time for a snack. The boa has the capability to squeeze its prey to death and swallow an entire animal in one bite. Eating such large meals allows this snake to go weeks before eating again.

By contrast, the lancehead is a much smaller snake. It typically grows to be about a foot long. Like the boa, the lancehead loves to curl itself around tree limbs, but it is not strong enough or large enough to be a constrictor. Despite its size, the lancehead is one of the most deadly snakes in South America because it is extremely sneaky and venomous. It stealthily hunts for its prey by using heat sensors in pits on the side of its face. Once it detects a warm body, it strikes, releasing paralyzing venom into its victim.

Long and strong green anacondas, constricting boas, and life-threatening lanceheads are just a few of the deadly variety of snakes that dwell in the Amazon rainforest.