

## Feral February Episode 2 – The Venomous Gaboon Viper

### Description

*Throughout the month of February, which I am calling –œFeral February,–œ I am going to do something a little bit different –œ I–™m going to create a series of theme posts every week day about my favourite things in the world: Animals.*

*Today–™s animal is: The Gaboon Viper!*

The Gaboon viper is the heaviest venomous snake in Africa, weighing up to eight kilograms, as well as one of the biggest (the largest on record was two metres long, or six-and-a-half feet!). It also has the highest venom yield of any snake, but luckily, it is normally docile and easily identified thanks its triangular head with two horn-like projections on its snout.

The animal is commonly an ambush predator, relying on its excellent camouflage to sit and wait for prey to come to it (usually rodents, birds and small mammals), before striking quickly. Unlike most vipers, the Gaboon viper does not bite and release, allowing the prey to run away and die before the snake finds its way to the dead animal and eats its meal. This snake bites and hangs on to the prey item, waiting for it to die.



Gaboon viper. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. [Source](#).

This animal is usually found on the rainforest floor in Africa, and if disturbed, may hiss in a deep and steady rhythm, slightly flattening the head to do so.

While a bite from the Gaboon viper can kill a human, the venom is not as potent as those from other snakes. Its venom is a combination of hemotoxic, which destroys red blood cells and prevents clotting, and cardiotoxic, which causes muscle damage to the heart. While bites are rare because of its docile nature, any bite is an emergency because so much venom comes with each bite that one from an average sized individual can kill.

And lastly, a bit of trivia:

The Gaboon viper has the largest fangs of any snake on the planet – up to 4 cm (almost two inches). Their fangs are also hinged, which fold into the roof of the mouth when closed. When the mouth opens, the fangs unfold outwards, ready to bite.

### **Category**

1. Feral February

### **Tags**

1. animals
2. Feral February
3. Snakes
4. venom

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