



**SNAKE SIGHTING.** A male Mississippi rattlesnake, very similar to the one pictured above, was found dead on James Street West near the rear entrance to Gravenhurst High School last Wednesday. MNR biologists estimated the snake to be six years old and approximately 60 centimetres long.

# Rattlesnake warning

by Allison Goodling  
The Town of Gravenhurst is warning the public to be on the lookout for rattlesnakes after three staff found a dead rattler on James Street West near the rear entrance to Gravenhurst High School last Wednesday.

Biologists with the Ministry of Natural Resources confirmed the snake is a male Mississippi rattlesnake.

By the office Jim Wothers said he wants the public to be aware that rattlesnakes is harmful to these snakes and children should be informed of their presence and taught to respect them.

According to Wothers, the snake was spotted

led its James Street between the cogwheel and the curb by by-laws officer Eric Johnston while driving to the Minshie Wharf last week.

**That area is not as friendly to rattlesnakes.**

— Glenda Clayton

"The old area if it was not was between the cogwheel of damage was caused to the land," said Wothers. "It was either that, or someone driving that kept the rest of the body intact."

Wothers said the snake was sent to the Perry Street branch of the MNR on Thursday.

MNR reports at risk biologist Jeremy Brown estimated the snake to be six years old and approximately 60 centimetres long.

He speculated that the snake fed from the (See 'Rattlesnake' on page A5)

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## Rattlesnake sighting causes some concern

Gravenhurst residents on the southwest side of Gravenhurst, where its habitat was likely disturbed by the new subdivisions and golf course development. The exact maintenance site is uncertainly on the name because of their nesting season.

Glenda Clayton, co-director of the Greater Gravenhurst Boy Scouts Association, said while the chance of finding a Mississippi rattlesnake in Muskoka was not out of the ordinary, finding one in urban Gravenhurst is less common.

"That area is not so friendly to rattlesnakes," she said.

However, Clayton said there have been numerous rattlesnake sightings

around the Madawaska Lake area, the Innessee, Murray, Oronoco and the north end of Lake Muskoka over many years.

In her hometown of Perry Sound, she said she rarely sees 35 or 40 Mississippi rattlesnakes have been reported.

The Mississippi rattlesnake, Ontario's only venomous snake, has several subspecies and has a long range of habitats including western Ontario, the Great Lakes and the north.

Known to be timid and non-aggressive, the rattlesnake is a threatened species protected by both provincial and federal legislation.

Adult rattlesnakes mature in one to two years and are generally grey or blue

with large dark blotches along its back. Some are more colorful, the snake will rattle its rattle, and may coil and strike, but can only strike one-half of its body length.

Even a bite from a Mississippi rattlesnake can be painful and even life threatening, victims are advised to seek immediate medical attention. The bite victim should remain calm and keep the victim to the possible damage.

A bite will often leave two distinct fang marks, but may also result in a single fang puncture. All victims involved to seek medical attention at the local hospital. There have been no fatalities in Ontario from a Mississippi rattlesnake bite in over 20 years.