

THIS WEEK'S CREATION MOMENT

The Adder Actor



Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (Matthew 10:16)

Some animals use quite a bag of tricks to make their living or protect themselves. The puff adder (also known as the Eastern hognose snake) is one example of a "wise serpent."

The puff adder is harmless, and if you try to grab him, he will coil himself up so that you will have to reach past his head. Then he puffs his head up just like a cobra. No one wants to grab a cobra! If you try again, he will realize that this plan isn't working, so he'll go to plan "B" – he'll strike at your leg, pretending to bite but won't bite, but he hopes you'll run off. If you persist, the puff adder goes to plan "C" – writhing on the ground as if he is in terrible pain. Finally, he turns over on his back, tongue hanging out of his mouth as if he were dead. Even if you pick him up and handle him, he will continue to pretend he is "dead" unless you put him back onto the ground on his stomach. If you do that, he'll flip over and return to his original "dead" position.

Jesus warned Christians not to be foolish, but rather to be wise like the serpent, yet harmless as doves. He has given the puff adder wisdom, but just think how much more wisdom He wants to give us if only we will allow Him.

Ref: Joanne E. DeJonge, *Bats & Bugs & Snakes & Slugs* (Baker Book House), pp. 66-67. Photo: Courtesy of Dawson. North American eastern hognose snake is also known as a puff adder. This should not be confused with venomous African vipers which are also called puff adders. (CC BY-SA 2.5 Generic)

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