

Warning from dog owner – rattlesnakes near Caples Lake



Bohdi

To the community,

I was hiking Aug. 19 with five women and four dogs to Margaret Lake. (Margaret Lake is the first trailhead on the right after passing Caples Lake. It's about 1.5 miles in. Nothing too strenuous – a beautiful hike.)

Halfway back we encountered the largest rattlesnake I have ever seen right off the trail. The consensus is the snake was about 3 inches in diameter. Huge. And about 1 foot off of the trail.

The hike leader ran the dogs past it and yelled back to us about it. We tried to hurry around it, but my dog Bohdi and Judy's dog Darlin came back to it. They started to fight it and it was striking at the dogs. We were yelling our heads off and they kept fighting it and everything happened so fast.

Then Judy stepped in and grabbed the dogs and pulled them away – stepped right over the snake. We ran up the trail.

Bohdi looked OK, so we went about 60 yards or so up the trail and stopped to try to get our hearts back to normal. While we were discussing the event, Bohdi went back down the trail to fight the snake again.

Of course I was screaming at him at the top of my lungs, but to no avail. He finally came back and sure enough he had been bit right below his nose. He was bleeding. We started back ASAP and he started swelling up.

We were 45 minutes from the trailhead and another 45 minutes from home.

He's OK now. He did not need the anti-venom, which as of then was not carried by any of the vets in this area. Closest one I was told is Placerville, though I think a place in Carson City carries it at \$700 a pop.

Bohdi got antihistamine, pain meds, antibiotics and steroids. We have to keep the bite mark really clean because apparently the skin can die in that area and may have to be cut out.

Judy's dog immediately had an eye that was closed shut. Darlin' eventually lost her eye.

Had the snake put venom in them, they probably would not have made it all the way back. A doctor happened to be at the trailhead with Benadryl, which helped both dogs quite a bit.

So, if you are hiking, apparently we have rattlers in the area that we did not know about. This was the first time these ladies had heard about rattlesnakes here and they hike like 50,000 miles a year.

Lori Tupaj, South Lake Tahoe