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# Dog owners on high alert after spike in fatal snake bites

Pooches are unwittingly walking into death traps as an alarming number of snakes hide in kennels to escape the heat. And as the canine death toll hits 20, a veteran reptile catcher has warned dog owners the worst is yet to come.

Anthony Piovesan, Diamond Valley

Subscriber only | January 14, 2020 5:00pm



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Mark Pelley catches a tiger snake from Liz Sadowy and Nathan Brett's property in Plenty. Picture: Ian Currie

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### Dog deaths are emerging as a “disturbing” new trend across Melbourne northeastern suburbs this snake season, according to a veteran reptile catcher.

[Mark Pelley](#) said he had already responded to 20 cases of fatal snake bites in the past three months and warned the “worst is yet to come”.


“We’re only at the start of January — I’ve never seen anything like it,” he said.

Mr Pelley said he was not only discovering more snakes this summer than the previous dry season, but was also finding more younger snakes.

“They’re smaller and hence easier to hide,” he said.


“Unfortunately a common place where they’re hiding is dog kennels and this is where disaster occurs.

“Dogs are more likely to be bitten by a snake than a person is — dogs are curious of snakes and will often go up to them and sniff them, play with them and attack them and naturally a snake will defend itself.”



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Pervert dad's lewd child sex crimes exposed



An eastern tiger snake hiding in a shoe rack at an Eltham home.

Mr Pelley said dogs would experience vomiting, diarrhoea, dilated pupils, stiff joints, excessive drooling, convulsions and bloody urine — all within an hour — after being bitten by a venomous snake.

He said he was required by law to release a snake into the wild within a 5km radius of where the serpent was caught.

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But the Diamond Creek local said this was becoming “harder and harder” as [snake numbers continued to rise](#).

“I’m having to go further out because I’m catching snakes closer and closer into the

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But the Diamond Creek local said this was becoming “harder and harder” as [snake numbers continued to rise](#).

“I’m having to go further out because I’m catching snakes closer and closer into the city,” he said.

“For example if I catch a snake in Eltham — 5km away is still in suburbia.


“Snakes are actually thriving more among homes because there are more rats and mice and water sources are aplenty.”

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Guns found in living room of family home


Mr Pelley said he had noticed more brown snakes than tiger this year.

They would frequently be found hiding inside pool cleaning equipment, outdoor shoe racks and beneath garbage bins, he also said.

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