

Montivipera xanthina



Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Anamalia
Phylum:	Cordata
Class:	Reptilia
Order:	Squamata
Suborder:	Serpentes
Family:	viperdae
Geunus	Montivipera
Species:	<i>M. xanthina</i>

Binomial Name

Montivipera xanthina
([Gray](#), 1849)



Synonyms

- *Daboia Xanthina* Gray, 1849
- *Vipera xanthina* — [Strauch](#), 1869
- *Vipera lebetina* var. *xanthina* — [F. Werner](#), 1902
- *Vipera xanthina xanthina* — [Mertens](#), 1952
- *Daboia (Daboia) xanthina* — [Obst](#), 1983
- *Daboia (Vipera) xanthina* — Radspieler & Schweiger, 1990
- *Vipera xanthina* — [Nilson](#), [Andrén](#) & [Flårdh](#), 1990
- *V[ipera]. xanthina xanthina* — [González](#), 1991^[2]
- *Montivipera xanthina* — [Nilson et al.](#), 1999^[3]

Common names: *rock viper, coastal viper, Ottoman viper,*^[4] [more](#)

Montivipera

xanthina is a [venomous viper species](#) found in northeastern [Greece](#) and [Turkey](#), as well as certain islands in the [Aegean Sea](#). No [subspecies](#) are currently recognized.^[5]

Description

[Dorsally](#), it is grey or white with a black [zig-zag](#) stripe. [Melanistic](#) individuals exist. It has [keeled dorsal scales](#).^[6]

It usually grows to a total length (body + tail) of 70–95 cm (27.6-37.4 in), but reaches a maximum total length of 130 cm (51.2 in) on certain [Greek](#) islands in the [Aegean Sea](#).^[4]

Behavior

Very aggressive, will strike without provoking, and most bites will inject venom^[citation needed]

Habitat

Montivipera xanthina can be found living in humid areas.^[7] It favors rocky and "well-vegetated" areas for its habitats.^[7]

Prey

The diet of *Montivipera xanthina* is thought to consist of [rodents](#) and other small [mammals](#) and native [birds](#).^[7] It has also been speculated that they [prey](#) on [lizards](#) as well.^[7]

Common names

Rock viper, coastal viper, Ottoman viper, Turkish viper, Near East viper,^[4] mountain viper.^[8]

Geographic range

Extreme northeastern [Greece](#), the Greek islands of [Simi](#), [Skiathos](#), [Kos](#), [Kalimnos](#), Samothraki, [Leros](#), [Lipsos](#), [Patmos](#), [Samos](#), [Chios](#) and [Lesbos](#), [European Turkey](#), the western half of [Anatolia](#) (inland eastward to [Kayseri](#)), and islands (e.g. [Chalki](#), Kastellórizon [[Meis Adasi](#)]) of the Turkish mainland shelf.

The [type locality](#) given is "Xanthus" [southwestern Turkey (Kınık)], and "[Asia Minor](#)." Listed as "Xanthos" by Schwarz (1936). Nilson and Andrén (1986) restricted the species to "[Xanthos](#)" [= Xanthus] (Kınık) [province Mugla](#), S. W. Turkish Anatolia" through [lectotype](#) designation.^[2]

Conservation status

This species is classified as Least Concern (LC) according to the [IUCN](#) Red List of Threatened Species.^[1] It is listed as such due to its wide distribution, presumed large population, and because it is unlikely to be declining fast enough to qualify for listing in a more threatened category.

It is, however, listed as strictly protected (Appendix II) under the [Berne Convention](#).^[9]

Taxonomy

According to Nilson, Andrén and Flärdh (1990), [M. bornmuelleri](#), [M. bulgardaghica](#), [M. wagneri](#) and [M. xanthina](#) are all closely related and together form the *Montivipera xanthina* group or complex.^[2]