

How to Skin a Snake

By

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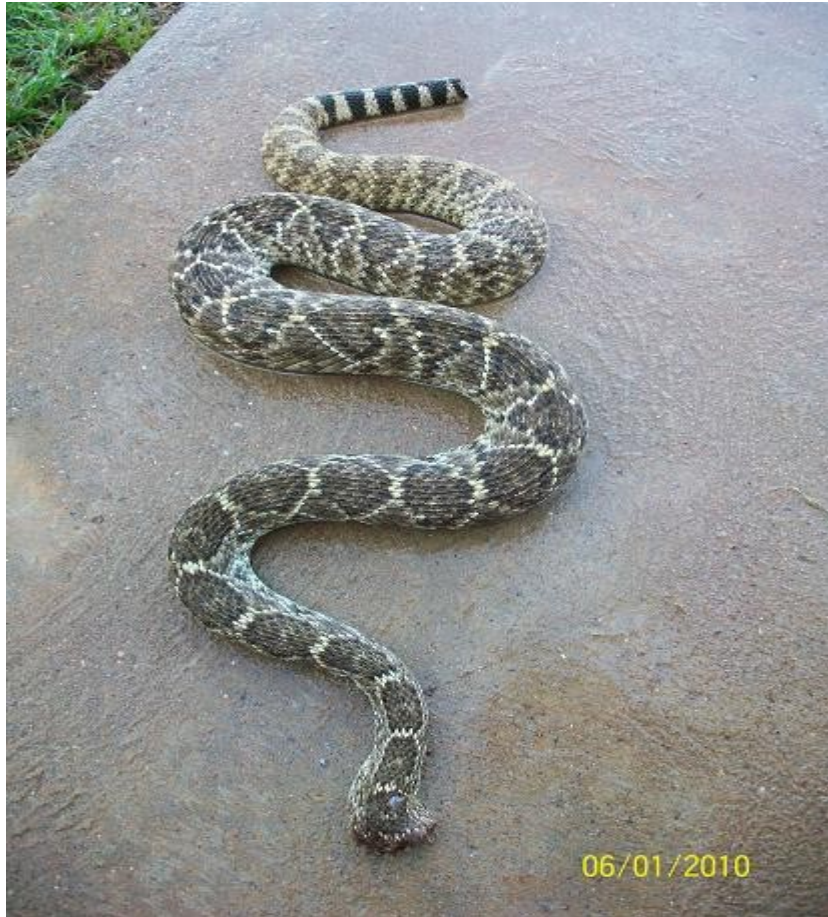
This tutorial was downloaded from

<http://www.penturners.org>

The International Association of Penturners



HOW TO SKIN A SNAKE



This snake happens to be a Western Diamondback that was caught locally. Notice the head has been removed for safety (tail too, my snake catcher keeps the rattler).

Supplies needed:

- Latex gloves or equivalent
- Sharp scissors!
- Dust mask (in case of smell)
- Knife scraper, & X-acto knife

– Water hose



Again this is the way I do this and maybe not others. I will lay out the skin and rinse off any blood, and also measure it.



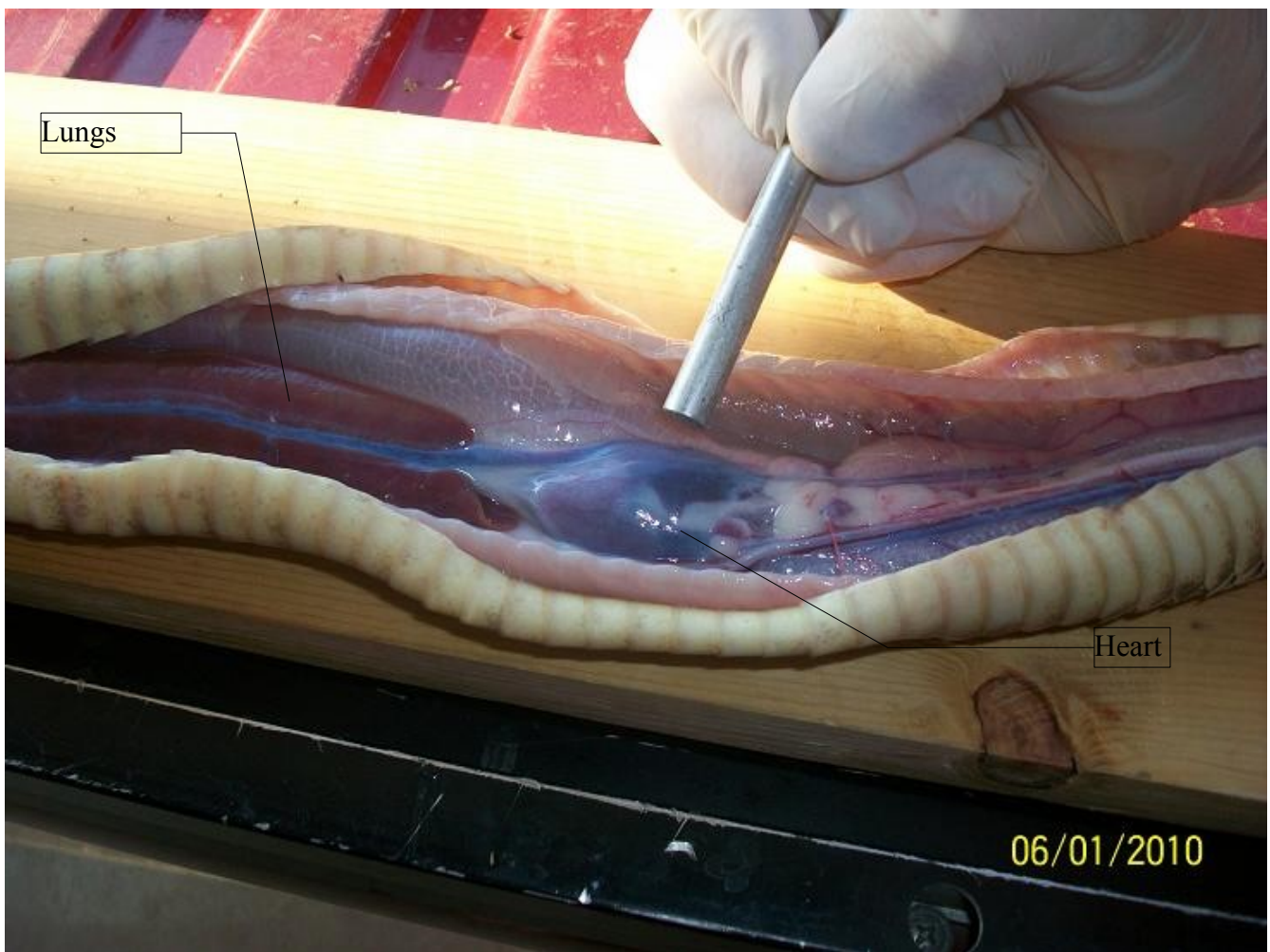
Notice the length of the "Coon Tail",
perfect for a Sierra pen!



Next, I will lay out the snake on a board, starting from the head end. Insert the scissors just under the belly scales keeping it raised while cutting, this is to prevent from cutting into the body cavity and expelling any gases that may be trapped. Wewww they stink! So be careful not to do that.



Notice the body cavity appears to be closed.



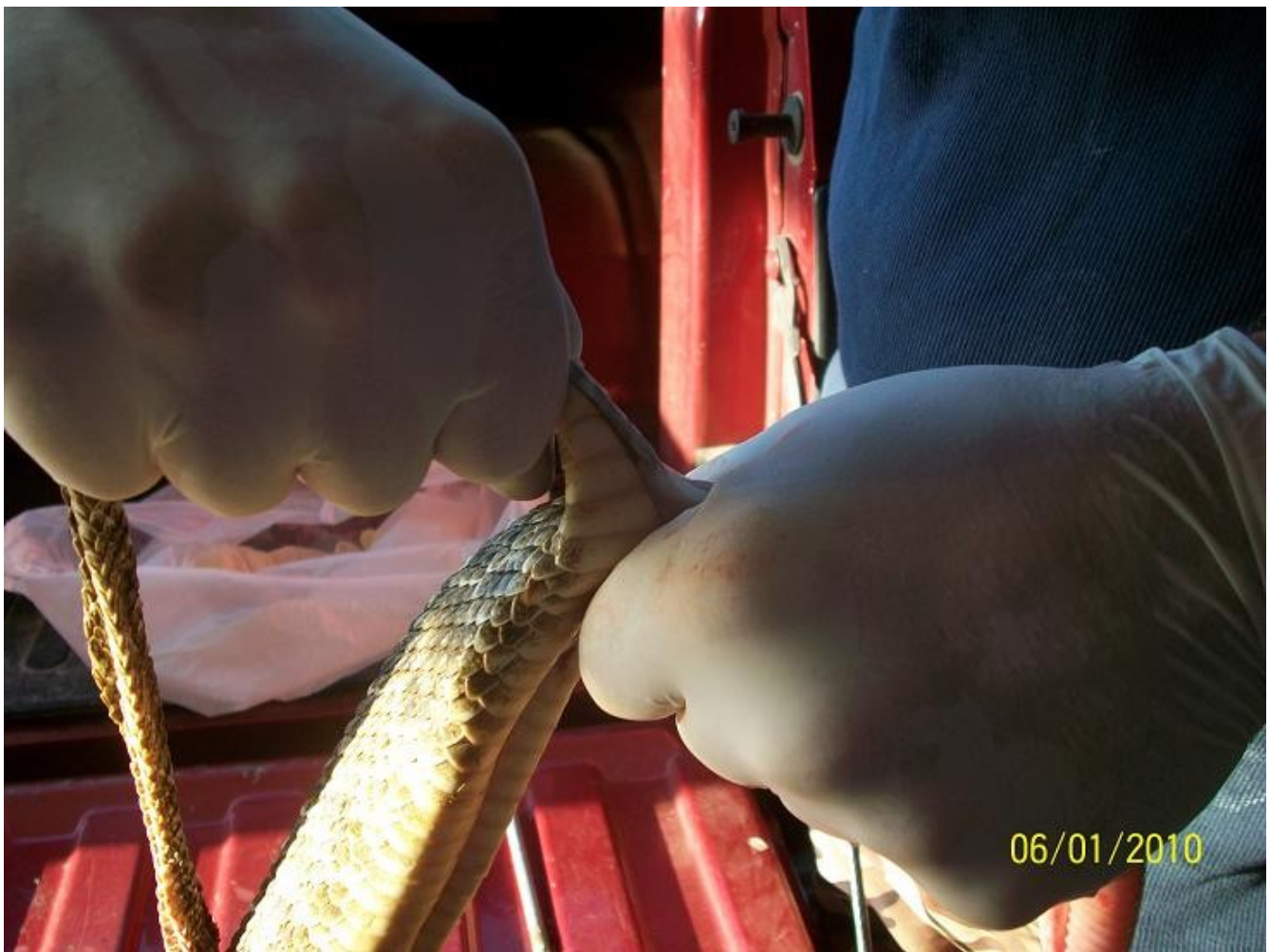
In this photo(has nothing to do with skinning a snake, just an observation), I am pointing to the heart and I believe the lungs on the left. Even after being dead for over 8 hours, there was still a beat every 5 seconds. Creapy



The next step after cutting down the center of the belly is to separate the skin from the meat. This will allow you to be able to separate the two in the next step without harm to the skin.



Grab skin in one hand and meat in the other and peel apart slowly.



Generally I will pull apart about every 6 inches before re-positioning my hands closer, like the photo, to prevent any damage to the skin or over stretching. The only reason I suggest this is because when I first started skinning snakes, I wasn't patient and tore the skin in this process, and also stretched the scales apart.



I have been poked a few times by the ribs when trying to peel the skin and it freaks me out. So to prevent that, I keep the ribs pointed down, the spine in the pocket between my thumb and index finger, and less worries. I may be overreacting, but the last thing I need is some infection caused by a rib from a snake stabbing me in the finger.



And this photo is a follow up from the last one.



Now, this is what sometimes will happen as you get closer to the anus while peeling the skin off. This is why it is good practice to have a water hose handy or other device to wash that off with. It stinks too!



Once all of the skin is separated from the meat, lay it out on a flat surface and carefully scrape the fat off. I will work from one end to the other.