



*Fangs*

# BLACK MAMBAS

**Sudden  
Death!**

by Nancy White

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by Nancy White

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**BEARPORT**  
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

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Publisher: Kenn Goin

Senior Editor: Lisa Wiseman

Creative Director: Spencer Brinker

Photo Researcher: Q2A Media: Poulomi Basu

Design: Dawn Beard Creative

## *Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

White, Nancy, 1942–

Black mambas : sudden death! / by Nancy White.

p. cm. (Fangs)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-766-6 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-59716-766-5 (library binding)

1. Black mamba—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

QL666.O64W445 2009

597.96'4—dc22

2008039892

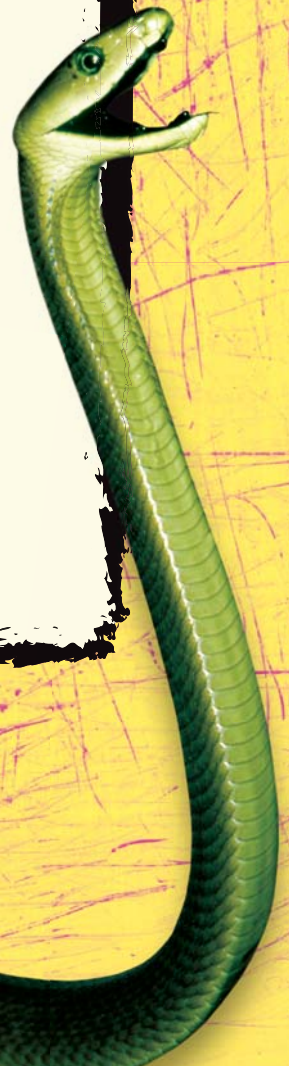
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For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 101 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6R, New York, New York 10003. Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# A Fast Killer

Through the hot African forest, a slender snake slithers along the ground. It holds its head high above the forest floor as it searches for something to eat. Suddenly, it spots some hikers and hides behind a rock. The hikers, unaware of the danger, walk too close to the rock. The scared snake hisses loudly, spreads its narrow **hood**, and flicks its forked tongue in and out. Then, with lightning speed, it **strikes** and bites one of them on the head.

A bite from this snake, a black mamba, is one of the deadliest in the world. Within minutes, the hiker's head swells and he's unable to see or talk. Without special medicine, he'll die within as little as 15 minutes.



Black mambas are the world's fastest snakes, slithering at speeds of up to 12.5 miles per hour (20 kph). They live in parts of central and southern Africa. They can usually be found moving over grassy or rocky ground and through low tree branches.





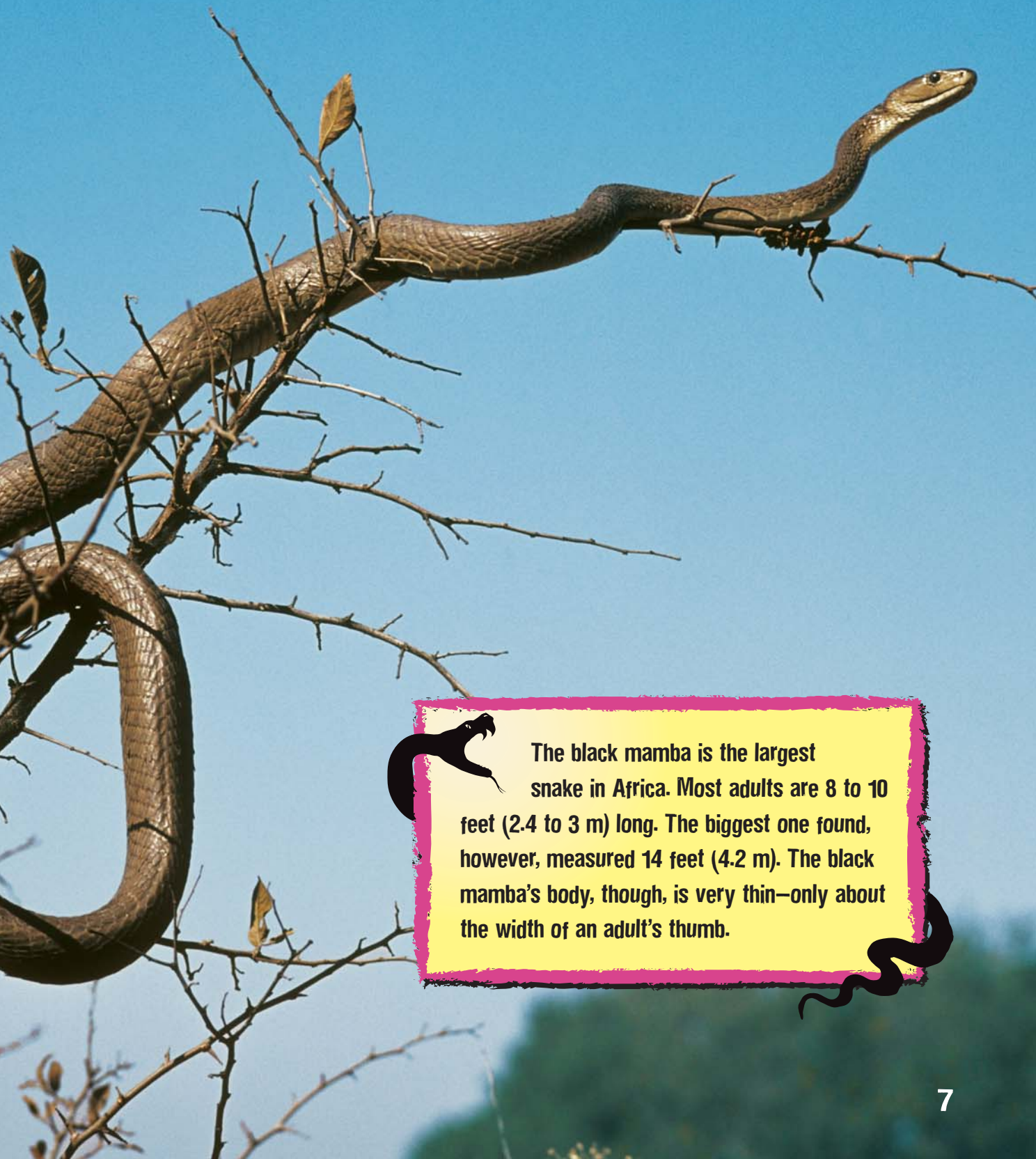
A black mamba

# The Killer's Colors

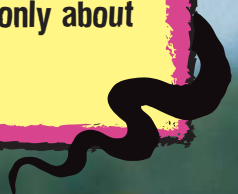
The black mamba is actually not black. Its body can be brown, gray, or dark green. The word *black* in the snake's name refers to the color inside its mouth. This purplish black can easily be seen when the snake opens its mouth to hiss.

The black mamba's body colors blend in with the surroundings when the snake is on the ground. When in a tree, its long, thin body looks like a branch. Blending in helps the black mamba stay hidden from its enemies and sneak up on its **prey**.





The black mamba is the largest snake in Africa. Most adults are 8 to 10 feet (2.4 to 3 m) long. The biggest one found, however, measured 14 feet (4.2 m). The black mamba's body, though, is very thin—only about the width of an adult's thumb.



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## Read More

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| <b>Fiedler, Julie.</b> <i>Mambas.</i> New York: The Rosen Publishing Group (2008). | <b>Klein, Adam G.</b> <i>Black Mambas.</i> Edina, MN: ABDO Publishing Company (2006). | <b>Richardson, Adele D.</b> <i>Mambas.</i> Mankato, MN: Capstone Press (2004). |
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## Learn More Online

To learn more about black mambas, visit  
[www.bearportpublishing.com/Fangs](http://www.bearportpublishing.com/Fangs)

## About the Author

Nancy White has written many science and nature books for children. She lives in a small town near New York City, in the Hudson River Valley.

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# **Fangs** **BLACK MAMBAS**

The black mamba is the world's fastest snake. It strikes with lightning speed—and rarely misses. Just two drops of venom from this lethal creature is enough to kill a human. Oddly enough, the black mamba isn't actually black, except for the inside of its mouth . . . a place that *no one* should ever want to see! If you dare, enter the dangerous world of these killer reptiles and learn all about their dark secrets.

**Black Mambas**  
Sudden Death!

**Coral Snakes**  
Beware the Colors!

**Death Adders**  
Super Deadly!

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