## OUTDOORS

## Watch out for these stinging monsters

When I hear the word "scorpion," I get visions of a mean and nasty biker gang. All dressed in leather jackets, carrying chains and switchblades,



the mean and nasty biker gang pillages the village and stampedes the cattle. In reality, I would rather face the biker gang than a member of the arachnid class.

Spiders and scorpions are both members of the arachnid family. It is difficult to imagine how something so small can elicit such a degree of fear in people. Scorpions are the older members of the family, dating back some 400 million years. The ancient members of this family often exceeded 2 feet in length. You are not going to squish one of them with a shoe.

Red has always been a color of warning and it is by no mistake that nature made the Indian scorpion red. This creature measures only 4 inches in length but carries very deadly venom.

The fatality rate for a bite from the Indian red scorpion is nearly 40 percent. Venom from this critter is similar to the poison strychnine. The victim does not experience a quick and painless demise either. Symptoms consist of



A close-up (closer than I ever want to get) of a striped bark scorpion. (Photo from Wikimedia Commons/Lupo)

vomiting, convulsions and extreme pain, until the heart and lungs fill with fluid. Death seems welcome after 24 hours of this trauma.

Fortunately for us here in Western Colorado, we are a long way from the Indian red scorpion. He lives in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. I have definitely removed those places from my bucket list of travel destinations.

A rough estimate places around 1,750 species of scorpions around the world and all of them have a venomous sting deliverable from the tips of their tails. Of these, only 20 of them have venom strong enough to kill a man.

The sting of a scorpion is designed for hunting and protection. Most scorpions

prefer not to use their venom when hunting, opting for brute force as they tackle their prey, saving the venom for self-defense. Scorpions will feed on other insects and even the occasional mouse.

The venom is a fast acting combination of toxins such as neurotoxins and enzyme inhibitors. Only around three scorpions deliver enough venom to kill a healthy adult. The others, while certainly not a pleasant experience, deliver something similar to a bee or wasp sting.

Worldwide there are about 1.2 million scorpions stings a year, with around 3,250 of them resulting in death to the victim. About 1,000 people die annually from scorpion stings in Mexico.

There are at least 80 species of scorpions found in the United States, and at least three are native to Colorado. Fortunately for us, none of the Colorado scorpions are deadly.

The southern part of Colorado is home to the striped bark scorpion, the most common species in the United States. He may reach 3 inches in length and has 2 broad stripes down the length of his back.

The striped bark scorpion lives under rocks, dead wood, in trees and in buildings. A sting from one of these will hurt and perhaps produce some local swelling in the area of the sting. The symptoms usually disappear quickly.

Another species you may encounter is the northern desert hairy scorpion. This is the largest scorpion in the United States, reaching up to 6 inches in length. Because of the size, he can feed on mice, lizards and the occasional snake.

These scorpions have broad black backs and yellow heads. They are burrowers and very common on the Western Slope. I have seen them on the Plateau, off Dave Wood Road. Their bite, while painful, is not toxic to humans.

The lesser striped tail scorpion is one you may run across. He is common everywhere from the desert flats and adobe, all the way to the mountain forests. Another burrowing species, he has a brownish/yellow color with red tips on his appendages, and reaches 2 inches in length.

All scorpions are nocturnal predators. Spiders, grasshoppers and stink bugs are the most common prey. The prey are grabbed with the large claw-like pedipalps and drawn to their mouth where they are ripped apart to fit in the very tiny mouth opening. Most species remain within 50 feet of their burrow.

Scorpion births usually occur in the warmer months of July through September. Young scorpions are born live by their mother and then carried on her back through the first molt.

Litter size varies, in part due to the nutrition of the mother. A range of 34 to 52 young is common for northern desert scorpion, and 13 to 45 for the striped bark scorpion.

The young usually leave the mother after about one week and then forage on their own. The scorpion will go through five or six molts before reaching the adult stage. The northern desert scorpion becomes mature in two years while the striped bark scorpion requires three or four years to mature. They will then live another three or four years as an adult.

I generally try and take my own pictures for articles but have a problem with scorpions. I can't understand why anyone would intentionally want to go look for them.

If you decide you want to go looking for them during the day, they are usually found under loose rocks, dead wood, dried cattle manure and other protective sites. Look around streambeds and you are likely to find them.

Those adventurous enough can hunt scorpions at night. The exoskeleton of scorpions has a chemical structure that causes it to fluoresce upon exposure to ultraviolet light. Take a black light outside with you and the scorpion will "glow in the dark" when you hit him with the light.

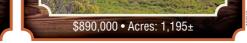
If you leave lumber and pieces of plywood on the ground for extended periods of time, you may find them there. I have a friend in Olathe who has hundreds of scorpions living in several wood piles near his home.

Personally, I would rather face the mean Scorpion biker gang than the arachnid that inhabits our State. I realize they are relatively harmless, except for the shot to my ticker whenever I see one. Like snakes, just look before you reach and you will probably never get bit.

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For outdoors or survival related questions or comments, feel free to contact him directly at his email elkhunter77@bresnan.net

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ß						Family Guy "Go Stewie Go" (cc)	EA Sports Madder look at Madden game	NFL 20 Classic A	Peaking (N) (cc)	Peaking (N) (cc)	Page Six TV (N) (cc)	Seinfeld "The Statue" (cc)	<b>black-ish</b> "Jack of All Trades"	black-ish "God" (cc) (DVS)	The Goldbergs (cc) (DVS)	The Goldbergs (cc)	
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61	30		252	LIFE	** Stepmom (1998, Drama) Julia Roberts, Susan Sarandon, Ed Harris. A woman tries hard to make						week experiment is ov	er. (cc)	(:01) ** Stepmom (1998, Drama) Julia Roberts, Susan Sarandon, Ed Harristries hard to make her lover's children accept her. (cc)				
63	14	241	241		(4:00) <b>*</b> * Bad Boy						boa mentors Apollo Cre			*** Creed (2015, [		, ,	
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æ	24)	105	242	USA	criminals. (cc) (DVS)		,	d, Gwyneth Paltrow. A l		-	(8:50) Modern Family		(9:50) Modern Family	(:20) Modern Family "Mother!"	Law & Order: Spe Tutuola's ex-brother-in	-law is arrested.	
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27		170				,	2009) Voices of Ray Ror		Friends (cc)	Friends (cc)	Friends "The One in		Friends (cc)	Friends (cc)	Mom (cc)	(:35) Mom (cc)	
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62	33	118	265		Live PD: Rewind "Live PD: Rewind No. (:04) Live PD "Live PD - 08.18.18" Riding along with law enforcement. (cc) (:04) Live PD "Live PD - 08.18.18" Riding along with law enforcement. (cc) (:04) Live PD "Live PD - 08.18.18" Riding along with law enforcement. (cc)											ment. (cc)	
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<b>4</b>		107	249			(:45) The Office	(:15) The Office "A	fter Hours" (cc)	(7:50) The Office		The Office (cc)	The Office (cc)	The Comedy Cent	al Roast "Bruce Willis		e Willis.	
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52	39	106	304	TVLAND		Love-Raymond	Love-Raymond		Two and Half Men			King of Queens	King of Queens			Two and Half Men	
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(21)	21)	351	528	STZP	(4:46) * Resident	(:24) <b>**</b> The Day	the Earth Stood Still athy Bates. 'PG-13' (cc)	(2008, Science Fic-	(:11) ** The Fast a		01, Action) Vin Diesel, N	Michelle Rodriguez. An				e Side Are You On?"	
445	15	341	535		(5:20) ** Sleeping (1991) Julia Roberts.	With the Enemy	1	lan (1987, Science Fict		(:43) <b>**</b> Bad Teac		ameron Diaz, Justin Tim bstitute, 'R' (cc)		(:17) *** Serenity caught in a deadly con	(2005) Nathan Fillion	A spaceship crew gets	