



Meet the Snake Detectives

SNAP! The rattlesnake's warning makes the scientist move carefully. This is just another day at work for an ophiologist—a snake scientist. The word comes from the Greek *ophis* (snake) and *-logia* (the study of).

Not all snakes these scientists study are dangerous. Take the common garter snake, which helps by eating pesky slugs and mice. Ophiologists can handle these mild-mannered snakes without special gear since they rarely bite and their bite isn't harmful to humans.

But rattlesnakes? That's different. Scientists wear thick boots and snake-proof guards when they study these dangerous snakes.

Another name for ophiologists might be snake detectives. Their work helps us understand snakes from the dangerous ones that help make medicine to the helpful ones protecting our gardens!