

## Flooding Dangers

Floods bring many dangers. One can be other living things.

Just like people, animals will seek a dry haven. They'll climb a tree, if it's handy. If a house is nearby, they might crawl up under its eaves. Some of those animals are pets. Others can be deadly.

Around the swollen Mississippi River, snakes displaced during the May flood of 2011 appeared everywhere along the river's burst banks, with many clinging to trees. Some were harmless; others were venomous cottonmouths.

While some dangerous animals fled the flood, others used it to move around. In some spots, alligators and aquatic snakes roamed the floodwaters. Yet the greater danger can come after floodwater recedes. Snakes, spiders, and rats may hide under bookcases, in closets, or near piles of debris. Insects such as flies and mosquitoes can multiply in the standing water left behind.

Beyond animals, floodwaters can carry other nasty surprises. A normally slow-moving river can speed up so much that a human can't outrun it. People trapped in its path can be swept away and drown. In just a few inches of water, cars can be swept away. Large or hidden debris in floodwaters can be deadly. Floodwaters polluted with chemicals or bacteria can make people sick.

So many dangers from something we can't live without: water.

## WOWSER!

Balls of fire ants float through floodwaters. The loyal ants will form a ball around their queen to protect her. That massive ant ball will float until it finds a dry place. That place is usually ground, but the ball can travel inside homes as well.

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Floating fire ant colony

### Discussion questions.

1. Which flooding danger mentioned here scares you most? Why?
2. What are some ways to keep safe before, during, and after a flood?
3. Take a minute to write how you'd handle dangerous animals.



**Arkansas:** A snake swims as floodwaters rise.



**China:** Barrels filled with explosive chemicals from a nearby chemical factory float on a river.



**New York:** Floods can move little things and big ones, like this house.  
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