**Cottonmouth**

**Native to:** Native to the South Eastern United States

**Predators:**  Wadding Birds, Alligators, Racoons, Other Snakes

**Food:**  small mammals, birds, fish, frogs

**Facts:**.

* They can grow between 2 to 4 feet in length and weigh in around 3 to 5 lbs.
* They live most of their lives in and or around wetlands, swamps, and marshes. They are excellent swimmer and hunt much of their prey while in the water.
* They get their name of cotton mouth because as warning to other predators they will open their mouths wide and the inside of their mouth is solid white.
* They are active both during the day time and at night time. They are usually seen during cool summer days basking on the rocks or land warming their bodies.
* They have a strong cytotoxic venom this venom destroys tissue in the body. Rarely do their bites lead to death but many times amputation around the area of the bite are required.
* The males during matting season have a courtship dance fight that they perform with other males to show dominance for mating purposes.
* They are considered of Least Concern in the wild. But a major concern for the species is drainage and loss of the wetland habitats in which they reside.

**Defense Mechanism**

Camo, Venom

**Reproduction:** Females give birth to live young each year around August they can carry up to 16 young inside of them.

**Lifespan:** Can live for about 20 to 30 yrs

**Handling Tips:**

Cletus should never be handled by anyone who does not have the training and experience to do so. He will be packed in a glass viewing tank for the sake of educational programs.