

Wild Snake FAQ

by qqwref

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1. Basics

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1A. Introduction

Wild Snake is a tetris-like game. In this game, many snakes fall downwards. The object is to clear as many snakes as possible, and by doing this get as many points as you can, before the snakes pile up to reach the top of the playing field. Even one snake that does not completely enter the board will ruin your game.

Whenever a snake touches another snake of the same color, the other snake disappears (or, as the game says, is 'eliminated'). Then, because gravity is always present, any snakes that have their heads pointing towards a blank space will slither forwards, which may set off more elimination.

This is a puzzle-action game, so there is no story except in the King Cobra challenge mode (see Section 3B). The only reason to play is to beat your or your friends' high scores or to try to complete the King Cobra challenges.

1B. Basic Moves

The controls in Wild Snake are very simple. The control pad is used for moving the falling snake. That's it. The first few times you play this game, the snakes may seem to move in ways beyond your control. However, it does not take long to get used to the controls.

In Wild Snake, the snakes are almost always falling. You can get them to move horizontally and not fall by holding left or right, but when the snake reaches a wall it will go downwards again. You can use this method to get extra time to make decisions - the snake will fall much slower this way.

2. Snakes

2A. Snake Types

When a game is started, there are just four types of snakes. These snakes act in the normal matching pattern. Whenever you increase your status (see Section 2B) you must deal with another type of snake, up to a maximum of 12 types. There are two types of special snakes: a red, flashing snake and a huge gray one.

The red, flashing snake appears more often the more points you have. When this snake's head touches another snake, all snakes of the type that this snake touched will disappear. The red snake will also disappear. This snake is great in any difficulty, on any board, and with any number of snakes, since it tends to start combos and get many snakes eliminated.

The large gray snake does not appear very often. This snake cannot be controlled; it will just fall downward. However, any snake that this snake touches will disappear. The large gray snake will only disappear when it touches the bottom. Having one of these snakes can save you from death, but it is very rare. Don't expect one to appear. Note that certain boards do not take well to this snake; in the X it is almost useless, in the OBSTACLE board it usually does almost nothing, and in the DIABOLO board it has a good chance of not reaching the bottom triangle.

2B. Status and Points

As you eliminate more snakes, your status (which is shown on the bottom left of the screen) changes. This information thanks to NonSubwayJared:

```
+-----+-----+
|Snakes|  Status  |
+-----+-----+
|   0  | Nestling |
|  15  | Garter Snake|
|  25  | Black Snake|
|  35  | Water Snake|
|  45  |   Boa    |
|  55  | Rattler  |
|  65  | Mamba   |
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| 85 | Python |
| 105 | Cobra |
+-----+
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The more types of snakes there are, the more points you will receive when you eliminate one. You will get much more points, however, with a special snake - a grey one can net 1000 points, and a red flashing snake can start a combo that gives you even more.

3. Settings

3A. Grid Shapes

There are 7 board types or "Grid Shapes". All of them are 26 units high.

1. STANDARD - The standard board is a rectangular board with a medium width. This board is of medium size. This rather boring board has no special twists and turns, and nothing unexpected, so it is a great board for practicing.
2. T SQUARE - This board is shaped like an upside down T, because it consists of two rectangles. This medium-sized board is thinner than STANDARD in the shaft of the T, but near the bottom it is more than twice as wide as that. This board is of medium size. When playing this board, there is a tendency to not use the sides of the bottom rectangle enough, and because of this tendency this board seems smaller (and thus harder) than it really is.
3. PLUS - A board shaped like a plus sign. This board actually has the same proportions and size as the T SQUARE, but the large rectangle is moved to the middle. Try to fill out the left, bottom, and right parts of the plus evenly to get the best scores.
4. FLASK - This board is shaped like a flask, with a rectangle at the top and a sort of triangle at the bottom. This is the smallest board available, but it doesn't seem that way because of the size of the triangle.
5. DIABOLO - This area is two triangles on top of each other. This looks like an hourglass. This is the largest board available, but it doesn't feel much bigger than the FLASK. When using this board, you will often find that there is a lot of space in the top triangle that you don't use; try to use as much as you can.
6. OBSTACLE - This area is just a rectangle, but it has 8 square obstacles. This board is of large size, but the obstacles tend to hinder movement and so they make the board seem more difficult.
7. X - This board is shaped like an X. There are two places that snakes can come in. This board is of small size, and the bottom limbs often get blocked off, making this one of the hardest boards.

3B. Difficulty

There are six difficulties available for one player. You can choose Easy, Normal, Hard, or King Cobra. On both Normal and Hard difficulties, you can choose if you want to have the next-snake box viewable or not. On Easy, the box is always visible. The speed of the falling snakes increases the harder the

level.

The King Cobra level is much different. In this level, different challenges are proposed, and the object is to complete as many challenges as possible. If you fail to complete a challenge, you must return to the beginning of the level, but at least you survive. If you fail to complete the 'eliminate 20 snakes of x types' part of a level, you will lose. Note that while red flashing snakes appear quite often in the King Cobra level, the grey ones that plow through all the snakes are extremely rare. Count it as very good luck if you are granted one of them.

After every challenge you play, whether you succeed or fail, you will see a small scene of a king cobra fighting some other kind of animal. It appears that if you lose the cobra wins and if you win the animal wins, but there may be exceptions. This is the only story in the entire game.

The challenges that I have reached are as follows:

LEVEL 1:

Eliminate 20 snakes of 4 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 1. Eliminate 50 snakes in 150 seconds.

This challenge is rather easy if you let the snakes fall mostly straight down. If you try to guide the snakes too much, you will run out of time. In fact, you can let the game run for a large portion of the time, doing nothing during that time, which will give you a greater chance of winning.

LEVEL 2

Eliminate 20 snakes of 5 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 2. Eliminate the eggs with snakes of the same color in 45 seconds.

This is an annoying challenge - it is not truly difficult, but you may have to repeat it a few times. A major factor in this challenge is luck: the sooner you get a snake that matches the eggs, the easier it will be to win. Try to bunch any snakes you get before that near the bottom, between the eggs, and remember to hold the left and right buttons a great deal when you get the correctly colored snake.

LEVEL 3

Eliminate 20 snakes of 6 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 3. Eliminate 9 snakes of each color in 175 seconds.

This doesn't seem overly complicated except that upon inspection of the board you will see that there are, just as in the level's opening puzzle, six types of snakes. Thus, there are 54 snakes that need to be eliminated. Proceed quickly, as in Challenge 1, but watch out for any flashing red snakes you see. Move these carefully to eliminate the right snakes and this challenge will almost resolve itself.

LEVEL 4

Eliminate 20 snakes of 7 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 4. Eliminate the eggs with snakes of the same color in 60 seconds.

There were 11 eggs in Challenge 2, but there are only nine now. This is because there are more kinds of snakes, and therefore the correctly colored ones will be given to you much more sparingly. Use the same strategies as in Level 2 and remember to keep the board clear for the right snakes.

LEVEL 5

Eliminate 20 snakes of 8 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 5. Have 20 or more snakes on the screen in 60 seconds.

The problem here is to not get the snakes to match each other and disappear. To do this, aim to get snakes either almost all horizontal or almost all vertical. If a snake is going to fall into a crack, make sure it won't match another snake. If you're careful about it, this challenge is a piece of cake.

LEVEL 6

Eliminate 20 snakes of 9 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 6. Eliminate 5 snakes of each color in 160 seconds.

Although that makes for only 45 snakes, since you have to contend with 9 different colors of snakes you will undoubtedly have to eliminate more than that. Because there are 9 types of snakes (and the pace of the challenge is noticeably fast) you'll likely have about half the screen piled up at any given time. Your only help is the flashing red snake, which appears at regular intervals to brighten your day. Use it carefully; if you're having trouble matching snakes of a certain color (especially if you have two or three in the pile) then that is where you should use the snake. If you find you just can't match 45 snakes of 9 colors, no matter how hard you try, you should quit the challenges and go play the 1-player game for a few thousand points.

LEVEL 7

Eliminate 20 snakes of 10 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 7. Eliminate the eggs with snakes of the same color in 50 seconds.

There are only 7 eggs this time, but there are many more colors of snake to deal with. Take it easy and try not to block your way to get all of the eggs: you may only receive one correctly colored snake in the 50 seconds.

LEVEL 8

Eliminate 20 snakes of 11 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 8. Have 20 or more snakes on the screen in 50 seconds.

As there are now 11 types of snakes, it is a bit easier not to match them. However, you still have to make an effort. Remember, try not to leave any open space near the bottom, as this will hamper your efforts and may make you lose.

LEVEL 9

Eliminate 20 snakes of 12 types to reach:

CHALLENGE 9. Eliminate 3 snakes of each color, eliminate the eggs with snakes of the same color, and have 20 snakes on the screen in 250 seconds.

This is a long and rather difficult challenge. The first step is to eliminate the eggs. This is a difficult step; concentrate on allowing yourself room to destroy all 5 eggs. When you've done that, then concentrate on destroying the snakes. When you can do that, all you need to do is survive, but not well enough that you have less than 20 snakes on the screen.

What will most likely happen to you is that you will eliminate the eggs and get rid of most of your snakes before finding out that you cannot survive for the rest of the time limit. In that case, practice is the only thing that can help. You must repeatedly try your hardest on the challenge, only to fail miserably and restart, until you are skilled enough to complete it. You don't need to worry about getting 20 snakes on the screen: that is only counted at the end, and anyway you'll probably have that many even trying not to.

In Wild Snake, there is quite often not enough room to ensure that whenever a snake falls down, no matter what its color is, it will be able to eliminate another snake. Thus, games of Wild Snake cannot reach thousands of points by being ordered but by being somewhat lucky and by being played correctly.

There are two basic strategies in Wild Snake: stay still or not. In the 'stay still' strategy, you stay still and, basically, let the game run its course. You can achieve surprisingly high scores this way (mostly due to those large gray snakes which appear at random); I have achieved over 4,000 points by this method. The second strategy is to move your snakes and to try to get them to settle in the best possible configuration. This strategy can also be potent, but it requires much experience.

Obviously, both of the basic strategies have problems associated with them. The 'stay still' strategy is based 100% on luck, and therefore to reach a new high score a great deal of waiting can be needed. The other strategy's problem is human error: any human playing Wild Snake will not be able to choose the right position for every snake every time, especially under time constraints.

The solution to both of these problems is to blend together the two strategies into a melange of ideas. At the beginning of the game, simply wait. After you achieve around a thousand points (yes, a thousand; a game which ends before that mark is met may not be worthy of extended play) then you should start to clear out the snakes. If things are going well, wait around until the screen fills up a bit again.

I would urge anyone playing Wild Snake to make snakes as vertical as possible, for the reason that there will be a greater chance of finding a match for a new snake.

There is only one thing that necessitates further clarification: what to do with the red flashing snakes. There is usually no time to determine what is the most common color of those that are present (but if there is, do that by all means) so quicker tricks are needed. I find the snake that is both on the surface and as close to the bottom as possible. The colors that are more deeply rooted in the grid may not be plentiful, but they usually have a tendency to start combinations of matchings, which can give you many points and also clear out the grid. With practice, using this method, you can get combos much more often.

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5. Other Stuff
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5A. Legal Notice

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5B. Version Info

- 1.0 - 12/28/02. FAQ created.
- 1.01 - 02/06/03. Added copyright notice.
- 1.1 - 06/22/04. Added two more challenges and strategies for challenges.
Added Section 4.
- 1.2 - 06/23/04. Added challenges 5 through 9.
Reformatted from 50 to 79 chars per line.
Changed format of menu titles.
Rewrote Sections 1A, 1B, 2A, 3A, and 5A.
Added the 'story' paragraph to Section 2B.
- 1.21 - 07/05/04. Thanks to NonSubwayJared, fixed the Status section.
Added the Section 5C (Thanks to...) and changed the name of
the old Section 5C to Section 5D.

5C. Thanks to...

Special thanks go to:

Bullet-Proof Software, for creating this game;
NonSubwayJared, for telling me that status changes are caused by the
number of snakes killed and not the amount of points;
me, for writing this guide.

5D. Contact

I can be contacted only through e-mail. If you have any questions, corrections, comments, or requests, mail to mzrg@verizon.net. You MUST use "Wild Snake FAQ" as the Subject, or I will delete your message.

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