

Snakes In a House

In 2010, a home near Rexburg, Idaho was foreclosed on for the second time in less than ten years. The first family turned to a TV station in 2006 to complain of what they claimed was a garter snake infestation in the home. The family that purchased the home from the bank in 2010 appeared on Animal Planet in early 2011 saying the bank told them the snake infestation was simply a story created by the previous owners when they stopped paying their mortgage. The story, however, proved to be no hoax at all but a startling reality for any human inhabitants.

The house was built in 1920 and was remodeled in 2006 but somewhere along the line it became what experts call a hibernacula, a place where snakes gather en masse for winter. Before Chase Bank pulled it off the market in early 2011, the house was listed for \$109,200 which is almost \$66,00 below its market value.

The news of the house has spread like wildfire over the Internet, including a YouTube video that documents the infestation. The snakes slide through the yard, the crawl space, the walls, the ceilings and even slither across the floor. The video shows buckets full of snakes that the family has caught and even documents snakes crawling through the yard and peering out between sheets of siding on the house. The bank has removed the house from the market.

Plans capture the snakes are currently underway as the bank is going to pay for the humane capture and release of the animals. They are also going to seal the foundation and install a barrier to help prevent future access. Whatever precautions are taken, however, chances are the bank will be stuck with the snake-infested house for a long time, until time proves that the animals have moved on for good.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Are you afraid of snakes? If not snakes, what are you afraid of?**
- 2. Would you be able to live in a home that is seemingly overrun by snakes? How long would the home have to be snake-free before you would be willing to buy the house?**
- 3. Why do you think people are so afraid of snakes? What gives them such a bad reputation?**