RATTLESNAKE ROUNDUP SUMMARY

In February 1992, a request on behalf of the City of Sharon Springs to establish a rattlesnake roundup was received by KDWP Secretary Jack Lacy. There were obvious legal issues since the roundup proposal would involve the sale of rattlesnake meat, skins, heads and rattles for which there was no legal means by which the Department could authorize such commercial transactions. Regulations in effect in 1992 would have allowed an individual to take into possession no more than 5 rattlesnakes, but neither live snakes nor parts of the snake could not be sold. The Department did not have authority to allow the roundup as proposed, but organizers conducted a modified event on September 4-6, 1992. Individuals interested in catching snakes during the event registered on Friday evening. Hunting licenses were required for non-residents and residents 16 or older. Individuals were limited to a daily bag of 5 prairie rattlesnakes (p. rattlesnakes). Snakes caught were held and later processed for human consumption; however, the snake meat could not be sold.

There were 78 hunters registered for the event and 75 p. rattlesnakes (including litter of 18 born after capture). Dr. Henry Fitch (KU, Dept. of Systematics and Ecology) collected biological information at this first event.

The 1993 Legislature passed a state statute to address legal issues surrounding the roundup. K.S.A. 32-941, pertaining to commercial harvest permits, Section (f) established the authority necessary for the Secretary to implement, administer and enforce provisions for taking wildlife on a commercial basis, including p. rattlesnakes. This statute further provided the provisions that would govern the commercial taking, selling, buying, trading and possession of p. rattlesnakes for the calendar year 1993. It established:

1) the dates for the taking of p. rattlesnakes to be between the date of passage of the statute and June 30, 1993;
2) a possession limit of 30 p. rattlesnakes;
3) method of take by hand, snake hook or catcher;
4) that snakes taken by a legal permit holder could be sold to a commercial rattlesnake dealer, persons legally authorized by another state to purchase p. rattlesnakes, or any other person if the p. rattlesnakes are not purchased for resale or sold;
5) persons desiring to purchase for resale or export from the state shall obtain a commercial p. rattlesnake dealer permit;
6) commercial p. rattlesnake dealers may possess and sell legally acquired p. rattlesnakes without regard for time or numbers;
7) cost of a commercial p. rattlesnake harvest permit for person in possession of a valid hunting license or any person not required to have a hunting license shall be $5.00;
8) cost of a commercial p. rattlesnake harvest permit for any person without a valid hunting license shall be $20.00;
9) cost of commercial p. rattlesnake dealer permit shall be $50.00;
10) commercial p. rattlesnake harvest permittees and dealers shall report permit activities if requested.
Attachments include the current statute and regulations governing prairie rattlesnake commercial harvest and events. Also attached is a map depicting the open area for the commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes.

The attached table summarizes season and event dates, hunting and dealer permits sold, and reported harvest for 1992 – 2003. Hunter participation has declined since 1992, and harvest has varied from a reported high of 310 snakes in 1994 to a low of 75 snakes in during the 1992 event.

The event has not been without controversy. Since 1992, there has been opposition by the Kansas Herpetological Society, zoological parks, as well as other professional and general publics.

The Sharon Springs Rattlesnake Roundup organizers have been very cooperative in making sure rules and regulations are followed. Department law enforcement personnel visit the event annually. Compliance with current regulation has been very good.

Biological data were collected by Dr. Henry Fitch (Kansas University, 1992 – 1995), and Fort Hays State University (Curtis Schmidt and Dr. William Stark, 2000 – 2001). Reports were submitted summarizing data collection, event assessment and recommendations. These reports have been made available to the Commission and are available to the public upon request.

Recommendations generally conveyed include:
Identification of and protection for areas of intense harvest of rattlesnakes. With accurate location information, areas of intense removal could be closed periodically to allow population recovery. Reduction in the intensity of harvest in local areas seemed more practical then expecting the identification and release of gravid females either in the field or after delivery to the event location.

Increasing the minimum length limit to 30 inches to protect reproductively active females.

Monitoring the demographics of populations requires the gathering of location information, and the sex, snout-vent length, rattle segment count and the width of each intact rattle segment from a minimum of 150 snakes brought to each roundup.

Enhance opportunities to educate the public during the roundup event. Many attend the event to learn more about rattlesnakes, and unless well-devised educational opportunities are presented, they leave with little new information.
Prairie Rattlesnake Commercial Harvest Map

Highway 283

Open to commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes

Closed

Morton County Closed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SEASON DATES</th>
<th>ROUNDUP EVENT DATE</th>
<th>HUNTING PERMITS</th>
<th>DEALERS PERMITS</th>
<th>HARVEST LIMIT</th>
<th>DAILY BAG LIMIT</th>
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Source or prior law: 32-99a, 32-178, 32-179.

32-938. Same; refund of fees to certain military personnel. Upon request, the department of wildlife and parks shall refund the amount of fees paid for a big game permit and carcass tags for the 1990 big game season, the January and February 1991 special deer season or the 1991 spring turkey season by any member of the armed forces of the United States who, pursuant to orders, was preparing to deploy or was deployed in the Persian gulf area of military operations on or before the commencement of such season.


32-939. Migratory waterfowl habitat stamp. (a) As used in this section, "migratory waterfowl" means any wild goose, duck or mergander.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by law or rules and regulations of the secretary and in addition to any other license, permit or stamp required by law or rules and regulations of the secretary, each person requiring a migratory waterfowl habitat stamp is required to hunt any migratory waterfowl in this state.

(c) The provisions of subsection (b) do not apply to hunting, by legal means, by a person not required by K.S.A. 32-919 to hold a hunting license.

(d) The stamp required by this section is valid throughout the state.

(e) The stamp required by this section is valid from the date of issuance and expires at 12 midnight on June 30 following its issuance.

(f) Each migratory waterfowl habitat stamp shall be validated by the signature of the stamp holder written across the face of such stamp.


Source or prior law: 32-110a, 32-110, 32-111

32-940. Reserved.

32-941. Commercial harvest permits. (a) Except as otherwise authorized by law or rules and regulations of the secretary, a commercial harvest permit is required, in addition to any other license, permit or stamp required by law or rules and regulations of the secretary, to take any wildlife in this state on a commercial basis.

(b) Subsection (a) does not apply to:

(1) A person acting within the scope of a valid furharvester or valid fur dealer license issued to such person; or

(2) a private water fishing impoundment.

(c) Subject to the requirements of law and rules and regulations of the secretary, a person may obtain a commercial harvest permit from the secretary or the secretary's designee by making application and paying the fee prescribed pursuant to K.S.A. 1993 Supp. 32-988, and amendments thereto.
115-17-16. Commercial use of prairie rattlesnakes. (a) The commercial harvest, possession or sale of prairie rattlesnakes (Crotalus viridis viridis) or their parts shall be authorized only in conjunction with a commercial event authorized by the department under a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event permit or as otherwise authorized by rules and regulations. Finished products of prairie rattlesnakes taken in conjunction with a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event may be possessed at any time and may be sold at any time.

(b) Any person may apply to the department for a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event permit. Each application shall be on forms provided by the department and shall provide the following information:

(1) the name and address of the applicant;
(2) the telephone number of the applicant;
(3) a description of the event including proposed dates;
and
(4) other information as required by the secretary.

(c) Each permittee shall maintain a record of event activity and shall submit a final report to the department within 30 days following the expiration of the special event permit. The record and report shall include the following information:

(1) the name and address of the permittee;
(2) the permit number of the permittee;
(3) the number of commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittees registered for the event;
(4) the number of commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer
(7) Each permittee shall comply with permit conditions as specified in the commercial prairie rattlesnake special event permit.

(e) In addition to other penalties prescribed by law, a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event application or permit may be denied or may be revoked by the secretary if:

(1) the application is incomplete or contains false information;

(2) the permittee fails to meet permit requirements or violates permit conditions; or

115-17-17. Commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permit; permit application and requirements, authority, reports, general provisions and permit revocation. (a) A commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permit shall be required to take prairie rattlesnakes (Crotalus viridis viridis) on a commercial basis.

(b) Any individual may apply to the secretary for a commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permit. Each application shall be on forms provided by the department and shall provide the following information:

(I) the name of the applicant;
(2) the address of the applicant; and
(3) the hunting license number of the applicant unless exempt pursuant to K.S.A. 1992 Supp. 32-919 and amendments thereto or applying for a commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permit as an individual without a hunting license; and

(4) other information as required by the secretary.

(c) Each permittee shall maintain a current record of activity and shall submit a final report to the department on forms provided by the department. The report shall be submitted not later than 14 days following the end of the time period established for the taking of prairie rattlesnakes on a commercial basis.

(d) The records and reports shall include the following information:

(I) the name of the permittee;
(2) the address of the permittee; and
(3) the permit number;
(i) Each commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee shall only sell prairie rattlesnakes or their parts during a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event as authorized under a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event permit. Each commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee shall register with a commercial prairie rattlesnake special event prior to selling any prairie rattlesnake or the parts of any prairie rattlesnake.

(j) Any commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee may possess or possess and sell prairie rattlesnake finished products without limit in time.

(k) Each commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee shall only sell prairie rattlesnakes or their parts to a person legally authorized to purchase prairie rattlesnakes. A bill of sale shall accompany each sale of prairie rattlesnakes or their parts.

(l) Any person may purchase or receive prairie rattlesnakes, their parts or finished products from a commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee. However, the prairie rattlesnakes or their parts shall not be purchased or received for resale or sold. Finished products may be purchased or received for any purpose.

(m) Any commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer permittee may purchase or receive prairie rattlesnakes, their parts or finished products from a commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee.
115-17-18. Commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes; open area, daily bag and possession limit. (a) The open area for the taking of prairie rattlesnakes (Crotalus viridis viridis) on a commercial basis shall be that portion of Kansas west of U.S. highway 281, except Morton county shall not be open for the taking of prairie rattlesnakes on a commercial basis.

(b) A commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee shall not harvest more than 10 prairie rattlesnakes per day or possess more than 10 prairie rattlesnakes per day in the field during the period of time and under the conditions established for the commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes.

115-17-19. Commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes; legal equipment, taking methods and general provisions. (a) Legal equipment and taking methods permitted for commercial harvest of prairie rattlesnakes (Crotalus viridis viridis) shall be:
   (1) by hand;
   (2) by noose;
   (3) by snake hook, tong or fork; and
   (4) by other methods as approved by the department.
115-17-20. Commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer permit; permit application and requirements, authority, reports, general provisions and permit revocation. (a) Any person desiring to purchase prairie rattlesnakes (Crotalus viridis viridis) or their parts for resale or for export from the state or both shall make application to the secretary for a commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer permit.

(b) Each application shall be on forms provided by the department and shall provide the following information:

(1) the name of the applicant;
(2) the address and telephone number of the applicant;
(3) the business location or locations of the applicant and the telephone number or numbers at the location or locations;
(4) the location for holding prairie rattlesnakes if different from the business location or locations; and
(5) other information as required by the secretary.

(c) Each commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer desiring to renew a commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer permit shall make application as described in subsection (b) and shall provide a description of prairie rattlesnakes or their parts on inventory at the time of renewal application.

(d) Each commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer shall only purchase or receive prairie rattlesnakes or their parts from:

(1) a commercial prairie rattlesnake harvest permittee;
(2) a commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer; or
(3) a person authorized by another state to sell prairie rattlesnakes.

(e) Any commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer may sell prairie rattlesnakes, their parts or finished products to any
commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer may continue to possess and sell legally acquired prairie rattlesnakes or their parts if the commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer permit has been renewed.

(j) Each prairie rattlesnake that is less than 18 inches in length shall not be purchased, offered for sale or sold.

(k) In addition to other penalties prescribed by law, a commercial prairie rattlesnake dealer permit may be denied or may be revoked by the secretary if:

(1) the application is incomplete or contains false information;

(2) the permittee fails to meet reporting requirements or violates permit conditions; or
