

# Species Profile: Hognose Snakes

Summer outdoor adventures mean sunshine, fresh air and possible encounters with snakes. Two interesting species you should look for are the western and eastern hognose. Both species have up-turned, or hog-like, snouts used for unearthing their food. Primarily feeding on toads, hognose snakes are equipped with enlarged teeth on the upper back sides of their jaws, allowing them to deflate the toads before swallowing.

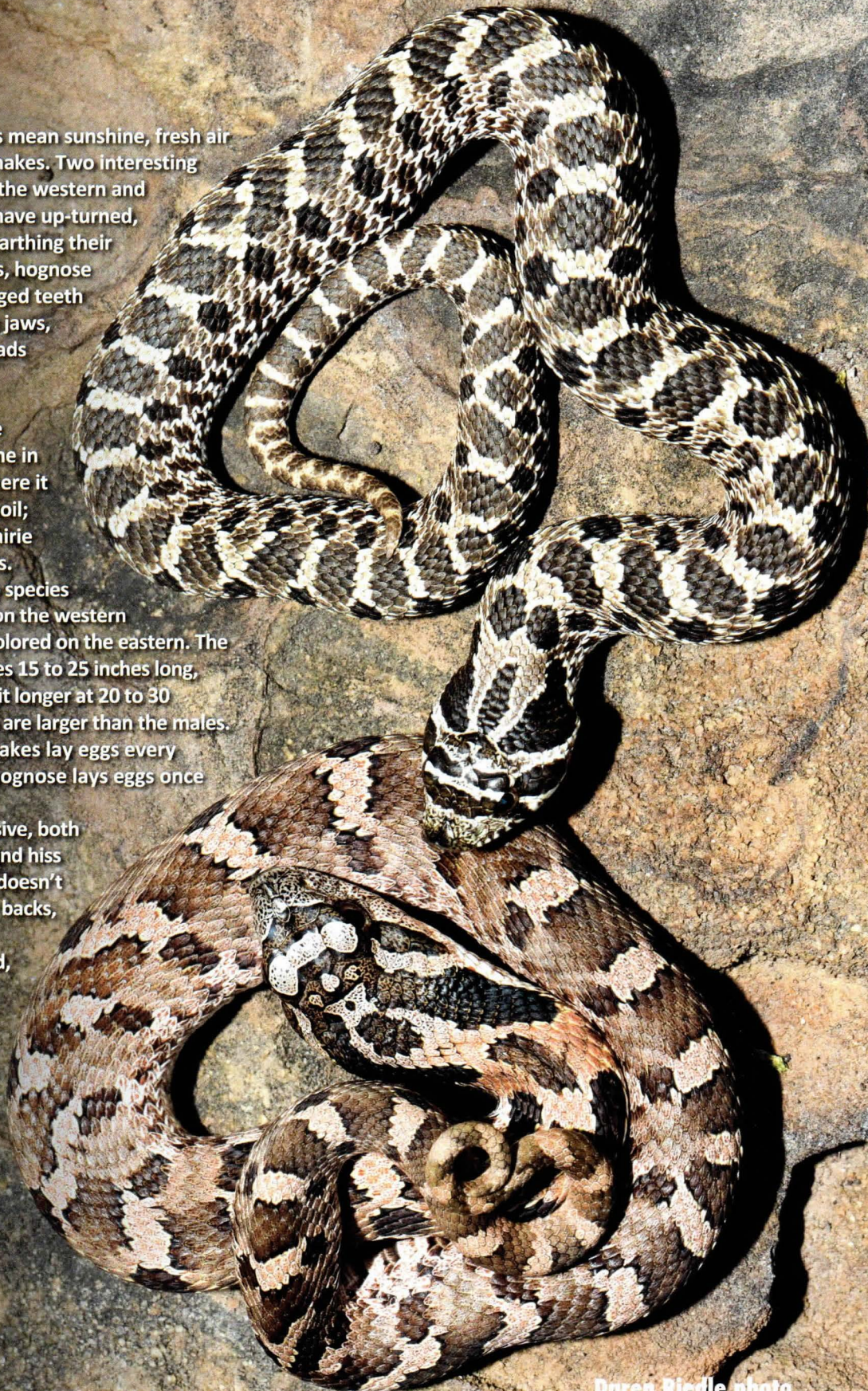
Both species can be found throughout most of Kansas. The western hognose makes its home in grasslands and sand prairies where it burrows beneath sandy, loose soil; the eastern hognose prefers prairie river streams and forested areas.

The color and size on the two species differ. The underside of the tail on the western is mostly black, while it is light colored on the eastern. The western hognose snake measures 15 to 25 inches long, while the eastern hognose is a bit longer at 20 to 30 inches. Females for both species are larger than the males.

Female western hognose snakes lay eggs every other year, while the eastern hognose lays eggs once per year.

While not considered aggressive, both species will spread their hoods and hiss loudly when threatened. If that doesn't work, they will flip over on their backs, writhe around and play dead. Predators include large birds and, of course, humans.

All snakes are beneficial to the environment for controlling rodent populations and providing food for other animals. The western and eastern hognose snakes are both Species in Need of Conservation (SINC) and protected by state law.





## More Tips & Tricks

For small game hunters, veteran outdoor folk and anyone just looking for outdoor opportunities, the pursuit of squirrels is just the ticket! In Kansas, squirrel season is open for nine months, offering plenty of freedom for hunters to seek out time in the hardwoods. According to Kent Fricke, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism small game biologist, "Squirrel hunting in Kansas is an underutilized bountiful resource." I couldn't agree more.

Hunting squirrels is a time-honored tradition providing incredibly tasty game meat for the table to share with your friends and family. Similar to most types of hunting pursuits, there are proven tactics and tested methods that will help you put a few squirrels in the bag.

**The less wind the better.** Generally speaking, squirrels move around more when winds are calm. Windy days not only slow squirrel movement in the woods but can make it harder to pick out bushy tails bouncing through the treetops as gusty winds will have the whole tree canopy moving. Some of the best times to be in the woods are before the wind picks up first thing in the morning, or the last few hours of daylight when the wind dies down.

**Woods Walk.** Creeping along on the shadowy side of a game trail in the hardwoods is a great way to both hone your hunting skills and to bag a few squirrels. Take your time with frequent stops, scan both the tree canopy and the ground for squirrel movement. Rimfire rifles, shotguns, air rifles, and archery equipment are all effective and challenging methods of take for a woods walk hunter.

**Sitting and Calling.** Squirrels are both social and territorial. Calling squirrels is a great way to coax squirrels into range. Sit near nut mast trees, mulberry trees, or blackberry bushes in their season. Imitating squirrel chatter and barking with a call is a great way to get an inquisitive squirrel's attention. An old woodsman trick for calling squirrels is to use coins. Grip a coin in



one hand by wrapping your index finger and thumb around it, cupping your other fingers below. Now, take a second coin in your other hand and tap the first coin to imitate the sound of a squirrel cracking a nut. Pure magic.

Squirrels can be hunted on private and public lands, including KDWP's wildlife areas. Several Walk-in Hunting Areas (WIHA) are open to squirrel hunting, as well; however, make sure to check the WIHA atlas to confirm an area's enrollment period – some areas do not open until September 1 for the fall hunting seasons.

Since the season opening is the first day of June, squirrel hunting is an ideal fit for hunters wanting to fill the off-season void between spring turkey season and the many hunting opportunities available in the fall. Legal methods of take include: rifles, shotguns, archery equipment, muzzleloaders, sling shots, air rifles, and even falconry! The daily bag limit is five squirrels per day with a possession limit of 20. Both red and gray squirrels can be found in Kansas, making squirrel hunting a fantastic opportunity to expand your time outdoors, explore new methods of hunting and provide delicious game meat for the table.

## Squirrel Egg Rolls

Prep: 30 min.

Cook: 4-8 hours

Yield: 12 servings

2 Squirrels, cleaned  
Salt & pepper  
1 Large yellow onion, halved  
2 Large carrots, quartered  
2 Large celery stalks, halved  
2 Cloves minced garlic  
1 Quart chicken broth  
¼ C chopped red cabbage  
¼ C chopped green onion  
¼ C chopped cilantro  
1 Package wonton wrappers  
Small dish of water

Lay cleaned, dressed squirrels in a large slow cooker. Pour in the chicken broth, add the carrots, yellow onion, garlic and celery to braise on high for four to six hours. Salt and pepper to taste. Pick the squirrel meat after braising, and cool. Discard the braised vegetables.



On a flat wonton wrapper, add about 2 teaspoons of picked squirrel meat, a large pinch of red cabbage, a large pinch of green onion, a pinch of cilantro, and a small pinch of minced garlic. Dip your finger into the water dish and dampen the edges of the wonton wrapper to soften and make it easier to fold. Fold the wrapper from corner to corner, then fold in the other two ends. Use a dampened finger to help seal down all the edges.

In a heavy Dutch oven, iron skillet, or deep fryer, heat vegetable or canola oil to 360 degrees. Add in a few egg rolls at a time, trying to avoid crowding the fryer. Fry 2-4 minutes per side, until golden brown, then turn with a fry spider, slotted metal spoon, or tongs. Remove to a wire tray or paper towel to drain, and cool. Serve with soy sauce, hoisin, sweet & sour, mustard or sriracha.