

WHAT TO DO IF YOU NEED TO MOVE A TIMBER RATTLESNAKE

Occasionally a person may find it necessary to move a timber rattlesnake to ensure the safety of people or domestic animals or simply for the snake's protection. If you need to move a rattlesnake, the following steps should help:

- Remember rattlesnakes do not attack. The snake may move toward you if you are between it and where it wants to go. Second, rattlesnakes can only strike an estimated $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of their own body length. Be safe and stay back a distance equal to the snake's estimated length.

- Place a large garbage can (30 gallon size or larger) on its side with the open end toward the snake.

- Gently push the garbage can toward the snake. Using a broom, guide or lightly brush the snake into the garbage can.

- Using the broom, tip the garbage can upright. Carefully place the lid on the can.

- Secure the lid with a weight and place the can in the shade.

- Immediately contact the wildlife officer assigned to your county or another local law enforcement person.

REPORTING TIMBER RATTLESNAKE SIGHTINGS

Persons who encounter a rattlesnake while hiking in Adams, Athens, Hocking, Jackson, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton counties should not disturb it. Also, outdoor enthusiasts can help our biologists determine the snakes' current status by filling out this form and mailing it to the Division of Wildlife.

TIMBER RATTLESNAKE SIGHTING

If you see a timber rattlesnake, please fill out this form and mail it to: Division of Wildlife, 360 E. State Street, Athens, Ohio 45701.

County of Sighting: _____

Date Sighted: _____

Direction and Distance from Nearest Road Junction: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No. : (____) _____

This information will help determine the status and distribution of the timber rattlesnake in Ohio.

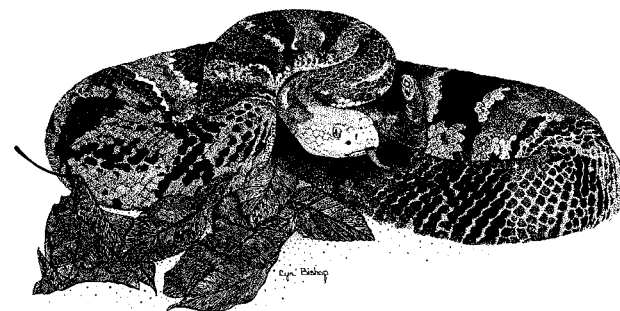
THANK YOU!

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
1-800-WILDLIFE

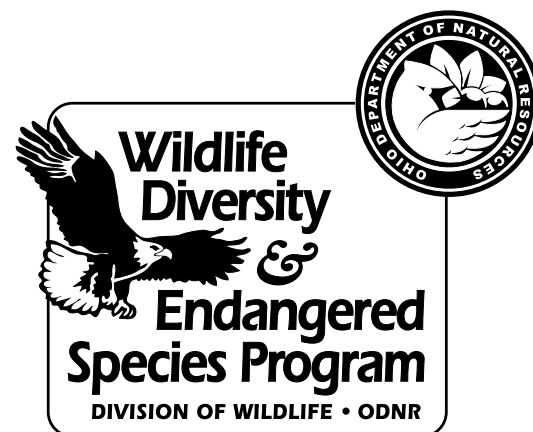
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PRESERVING THE *Timber* *Rattlesnake*



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PRESERVING THE RARE TIMBER RATTLESNAKE

For the past several years, there has been a rumor that the Division of Wildlife has been releasing timber rattlesnakes into the wild in Ohio. This is **ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE!** What is true is that the timber rattlesnake is on the Ohio list of endangered species (listed in 1992) as designated in Ohio Administrative Rule 1501:31-23-01 and protected under the authority of Ohio Revised Code 1531.25. The timber rattlesnake is also designated as endangered or threatened in 17 other states, and is being considered for special status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The timber rattlesnake is one of Ohio's last remaining mature forest species. The Division of Wildlife's management plan for this species is to protect existing populations as opposed to increasing their occupied range. While not as charismatic as the bald eagle or the river otter, the timber rattlesnake is part of our heritage and needs Ohioans' help to preserve it.

In the early 1800s, timber rattlesnakes were found in at least 24 Ohio counties. As a result of habitat destruction, human persecution, and unregulated collection, today they reside only in limited numbers in Adams, Athens, Hocking, Jackson, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton counties. Few people have seen this reclusive animal in its natural habitat.



Figure 1. Current range of the timber rattlesnake in Ohio.

While current efforts to protect the timber rattlesnake are helping, their population is slow to rebound because

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of their low reproductive rate. Although timber rattlesnakes can live more than 20 years, females do not breed until they are six years old, and then not again for four years. Typically 10 young are born in each litter and only two or three survive their first year.

The timber rattlesnake has two basic color phases. The light phase is typically gray, light brown, or yellow with a series

of black chevron-shaped crossbands. The dark phase has the crossbands over a blackish-brown background coloration. In Ohio, an adult timber rattlesnake is about 40 inches in length and eight inches around.

Despite its large size, the timber rattlesnake is not aggressive and many people have probably walked by one without seeing it. Rather than strike when threatened, the timber rattlesnake prefers to slip away or rely on its protective coloration to avoid detection.

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The timber rattlesnake is one of three native venomous snakes. While a bite by a venomous snake is painful, today a physician can effectively administer antivenin. In the 1940s, Ohio recorded its last human fatality resulting from a rattlesnake bite.

The rattler is intricately woven into the history and culture that is southeastern Ohio. For centuries it's added intrigue, mystery and an element of danger to the backcountry. To lose the rattler is to lose a little part of our history, our culture, and the mystery that is southeastern Ohio.