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## **Interest in Poisonous Snakes is Growing**

### *DWR proposes new safety rules*

Did you know that the number of Utahns who want to catch and keep a poisonous snake in their home is growing?

To make sure this activity is done safely, the Division of Wildlife Resources is proposing several changes to the state law that governs it.

Utah's five public Regional Advisory Councils want your thoughts about the DWR's ideas. You can read the agency's ideas at [wildlife.utah.gov/public\\_meetings/info/2010-02-03.pdf](http://wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings/info/2010-02-03.pdf) on the Web.

"The desire to catch venomous snakes in the wild and then breed them in captivity is growing among herpetologists in Utah," says Krissy Wilson, native aquatic species coordinator for the DWR.

(Herpetologists are people who enjoy catching and raising snakes.)

Wilson says six rattlesnake species live in Utah. The DWR is proposing that enthusiasts be allowed to catch and keep only the two most common rattlesnakes in the state—the midget faded rattlesnake and the Great Basin rattlesnake.

To keep those snakes, snake enthusiasts would have to follow a number of safety rules. "Public safety is our main concern," Wilson says. "We don't want a snake to escape from someone's home."

The requirements the DWR is proposing would also limit the number of snakes people could catch in the wild and the number of young the snakes could produce each year.

"Snake enthusiasts would also be required to follow all city or county laws related to keeping and raising poisonous snakes," Wilson says.

### **Two ways to share your ideas**

After reading the DWR's ideas at [www.wildlife.utah.gov/public\\_meetings/info/2010-02-03.pdf](http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings/info/2010-02-03.pdf), you can share your thoughts with your RAC chairman one of two ways.

(Your chairman will take the input he receives to the Utah Wildlife Board when it meets March 3 and 4 in Salt Lake City. Board members will use the input to help them set snake collection and possession rules in Utah.)

(more)

## E-mail

You can provide your comments to your RAC via e-mail. E-mail addresses for your RAC members are available at [www.wildlife.utah.gov/public\\_meetings](http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings).

## RAC meetings

Five Regional Advisory Council meetings will be held across Utah. You can participate and provide your input at any of the following meetings:

### Southern Region

Feb. 9  
7 p.m.  
Hurricane High School  
345 W. 100 S.  
Hurricane

### Central Region

Feb. 16  
6:30 p.m.  
Central Region Conference Center  
1115 N. Main St.  
Springville

### Southeastern Region

Feb. 10  
6:30 p.m.  
John Wesley Powell Museum  
1765 E. Main St.  
Green River

### Northern Region

Feb. 17  
6 p.m.  
Student Union Building, Room 404A  
Weber State University  
3848 Harrison Blvd.  
Ogden

### Northeastern Region

Feb. 11  
6:30 p.m.  
Uintah Basin Applied Technology College  
450 N. 2000 W.  
Vernal

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

## Watch the Sky Turn White

*See as many as 10,000 snow geese*

Delta -- It's a sight you have to see to believe: thousands of pure white snow and Ross' geese lifting off Gunnison Bend Reservoir amid honks and the beating of wings.

You can see this spectacle yourself on Feb. 19, 20 and 21 at the annual Utah Snow Goose Festival. The festival will be held at and near Gunnison Bend Reservoir, just west of Delta. Admission is free.

As many as 10,000 snow geese have been at the reservoir during past festivals. Except for the black tips on their wings, snow geese are pure white.

"We'll provide spotting scopes so you can get a close look at the geese," says Bob Walters, Watchable Wildlife coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "We'll also be available to answer any questions you have."

In addition to seeing the geese, you can learn more about wildlife at free seminars offered by the DWR. The seminars will be held on Saturday, Feb. 20.

### **The best times to see the geese**

The areas where you'll see the geese vary according to the time of the day.

"If you arrive early in the morning, you can watch the geese feeding in fields that surround the reservoir. Then, at about 10:30 a.m., the geese take off and fly back to the reservoir. That's an exciting time to see and hear the geese," Walters says.

After landing on the reservoir, the geese usually spend the next few hours there. "Then, anywhere from 4 to 6 p.m., they take off again and fly back to the fields," he says. "It's thrilling to be there when the geese do this."

DWR biologists will watch which fields the geese fly to. If you arrive after the geese have left the reservoir, the biologists will direct you to the fields where the geese are feeding.

### **Viewing tips**

- Use binoculars or a spotting scope to view the geese. If you get too close to the geese, you could scare them away.
- If you pull off the road to view the geese, pull as far off the road as you can. And watch for cars.
- The weather could be cold and wet. Bring the proper clothes so you can stay warm and dry.

For more information about the 2010 Snow Goose Festival, call the Delta Area Chamber of Commerce at (435) 864-4316.

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## Get a Turkey Hunting Permit

### *General season permits on sale starting Feb. 16*

If you didn't obtain a limited entry permit to hunt wild turkeys in Utah this spring, don't put your shotgun away. Permits for Utah's first general statewide turkey hunt go on sale starting Feb. 16.

"We're excited," says Judi Tutorow, wildlife licensing coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "For the first time, every hunter who wants to hunt wild turkeys in Utah can hunt."

Because the general hunt is brand new, Tutorow says the DWR has received lots of questions from hunters. She provides the following information:

- You don't have to get a permit on Feb. 16. General turkey permits are not limited in number, so they won't run out. Permits will be available until the season ends on May 31.
- You can buy a general turkey permit and still keep all of your limited entry turkey bonus points. You won't lose any of your bonus points if you buy a general turkey permit.
- If you buy a general turkey permit, you can hunt anywhere in Utah that's open to turkey hunting.
- If you obtained a limited entry turkey permit, you can't obtain a general turkey permit. (You can have only one turkey permit each year.)
- You can buy a permit at [www.wildlife.utah.gov](http://www.wildlife.utah.gov) starting Feb. 16. Permits will also be available at DWR offices and from more than 300 hunting license agents across Utah.
- Two general hunts will be held:
  - \* The first hunt is a special youth hunt. This hunt is for hunters who are 15 years of age or younger. It runs April 30 – May 2.
    - To participate, young hunters must buy a general statewide hunting permit. Young hunters who drew a limited entry permit can't participate in the youth hunt.
    - Youngsters who buy a permit for the youth hunt can also use the permit to hunt during Utah's general statewide hunt. That hunt opens May 3.
  - \* The second hunt is open to anyone who buys a statewide general turkey permit. The hunt runs May 3 – 31.

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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