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### (Neb.)-Numbers Of In-Town Rattlesnakes No More Than Usual



**Bull Snake**

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 07/16/2013 10:40 AM



**Rattle Snake**

(Chadron)-Some recent comments in the Chadron area indicate finding rattlesnakes inside the city limits. While some may think this is unusual, Dawes County Extension Agent Scott Cotton said he has not received any above-normal reports for rattlesnakes in town, and there are always snakes around.

Cotton said all snakes, not just rattlers, will go in search of food, and in the case of the rattlesnake, they look for mice. After a drought year when vegetation begins to come back, the mice will follow the vegetation, and in turn the snakes will follow the mice. He compared it to cougars hunting deer. Cotton believes the snakes may also be seeking to get out of the heat as well.

According to Cotton, if someone happens to come across a rattlesnake, he advises them to give the snake plenty of room, and it will more than likely leave on its own. He does NOT encourage people to try to move the snakes, as that can be very dangerous. However, if people are a safe distance away, they can squirt the snake with a hose which will cause it to leave. He also urges people with pets or horses to keep the animals away from the snakes.

Cotton said there are also a lot of bullsnakes in the area, and they are very territorial. Bullsnakes will generally scare off rattlesnakes because they don't like the competition for food. Another snake commonly seen is the

gardener snake. Those snakes prefer areas that are more moist than rattlesnakes or bullsnakes.

Cotton suggests controlling the mice population to help keep rattlesnakes away. He also encourages people to use a rake or stick to reach under a hedge or bush before putting your hand or arm under the branches to be safe. He offers that people to learn to identify snakes, as the bullsnake has similar markings as the rattlesnakes. And if anyone has any questions or concerns, they can call him at 432-3373.

(Questions? Comments? Email [news@chadrad.com](mailto:news@chadrad.com))

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