

Historic Extensions of Rattlesnake Ranges (Timber Rattlesnake, *Crotalus Horridus* and Massasauga, *Sistrurus Catenatus*) from Five Counties in South-eastern and South-central Minnesota.

Historic evidence suggests the range of Minnesota rattlesnakes was originally more extensive than it is today. While their current (or recent historic) range is limited to eight counties along the Mississippi River, in the 1800's it likely extended from those counties all the way to Mankato in south-central Minnesota. Strong historic evidence from the late 1800's was found for rattlesnake populations in Dodge, Waseca, and Blue Earth Counties of Minnesota. Newspapers and an early history (Smith 1884) record several bites in Dodge County and also give descriptions of rattlesnakes (including the number of rattles) and their habitat. In many cases, these Dodge County snakes are clearly timber rattlesnakes. Waseca's early history (Child 1905) and newspapers record several bites and one rattlesnake death. Also, two reports of fatal bites and descriptions of dense rattlesnake populations on the prairie were found in early newspapers from Blue Earth County. The rattlesnake populations in Mower County extended into eastern Freeborn County since newspapers record rattlesnake bites from London, Moscow, and Riceland Townships. In Dodge and Rice Counties, evidence suggests that some of the rattlesnakes were massasauga. Smith's 1884 history indicates that massasauga were found in Dodge County, and the Mantorville Express of 1858 records a "massasauger bite" near Wasioja in Dodge County. Evidence for massasauga also comes from Rice County, where the description of an 1870 fatal rattlesnake bite in a marshy area is most consistent with a massasauga bite.