

Cardwell, Michael D. 2006. Rainharvesting in a wild population of *Crotalus s. scutulatus* (Serpentes: Viperidae). *Herpetological Review*. 37(2):142-144.

ABSTRACT

Mohave rattlesnakes (*Crotalus scutulatus scutulatus*) inhabit desert environments with little rainfall and virtually no available surface water. Data recorded over thirty-two months from observations of twenty radio-telemetered *C. s. scutulatus* and chance encounters with forty non-telemetered *C. s. scutulatus* yielded 1,633 observations of visible free-ranging animals. On eighteen occasions during or just after rainfall, *C. s. scutulatus* were observed to compress their abdomens dorso-ventrally and posture themselves in flat spiral coils that accumulated rainwater on the skin and in the troughs between touching adjacent coils. The snakes then ingested the accumulated water, apparently by mouth suction. This posture was unique, distinct from their hunting posture, and was not observed in conditions other than rain. Movements noted in two cases suggest the snakes anticipate rainfall and position themselves at the edge of, or outside of, shrub canopies.