

Here are more letters received. For easier viewing, our comments are written in Times New Roman and in block, while the letters are in plain Arial.

We've had replies sent to us received by other members and some of those have been included here.

To further the information we had with the Animal Care division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), who are responsible for the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, that provides minimum standards for the humane care and use of animals at licensed or registered facilities. We have more letters confirming that they have 'no authority to regulate or otherwise interfere with rattlesnake roundups in the various states.' I still think this is an appalling state of affairs and will have to rely on the various parks authorities to bring in any changes in the laws and I still think this is something that does need to be challenged.

From: acwest@aphis.usda.gov
To: h.pagan.pla2@aim.com
Sent: Mon, 17 Mar 2014 14:11
Subject: RE: 'Rattlesnake Roundup.' cont'd.

Mr. Pagan,

We appreciate your concern for these animals, however, as stated in our last correspondence, USDA APHIS Animal Care has no jurisdiction in this matter. Please contact the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture to assist you.

Animal Care is responsible for ensuring the federally established standards of care and treatment are followed for certain warm-blooded animals bred for commercial sales, some internet sales, that are used in research, transported commercially or exhibited to the public. You can find more information about this program at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalwelfare>

Sincerely,

Western Region Animal Care

From: Borges-Silva.Quentin@epa.gov
To: h.pagan.pla3@aol.co.uk
Sent: Wed, 19 Mar 2014 12:45
Subject: RE: 'Rattlesnake Roundup.' cont'd.

Dear Mr. Pagan:

As with all U.S. federal agencies, the Environmental Protection Agency derives specific regulatory authority from a number of federal laws that are enacted by the U.S. Congress and the President. None of those laws, however, give the agency the authority to regulate or otherwise interfere with rattlesnake roundups in the various states. With no regulatory authority over the matter, the EPA has no comment on any of the information you forwarded to us.

Please write me again if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Quentin Borges-Silva
703-308-0395

USEPA, Office of Pesticide Programs
"Protecting Human Health & the Environment"
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides>

From: Hallie.Zimmers@aphis.usda.gov>
To: h.pagan.pla2@aim.com>
Sent: Wed, 19 Mar 2014 12:54
Subject: RE: 'Rattlesnake Roundup.' cont'd.

Mr. Pagan:

Thank you for your email, but as our Animal Care program stated previously, our Agency does not have regulatory authority over reptiles. You may want to check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, they may only have oversight if the reptile species is endangered.

Hallie Zimmers – APHIS, Adviser for State and Stakeholder Relations, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

hallie.zimmers@aphis.usda.gov

202-799-7029

From: acwest@aphis.usda.gov
To: cates.1980@aol.co.uk
Sent: Wed, 19 Mar 2014 15:07
Subject: RE: 'Rattlesnakes and Roundups.'

Mr. Piller,

The last paragraph including the highlighted sentence describes what Animal Care does. As explained to Mr. Pagan, Animal Care is responsible for ensuring the federally established standards of care and treatment are followed for certain warm-blooded animals bred for commercial sales, some internet sales, that are used in research, transported commercially or exhibited to the public. You can find more information about this program at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalwelfare>

Sincerely,

Western Region Animal Care

To: trajan11@hotmail.co.uk
From: ianbatesphoto@gmail.com
Date: Mon, 24 Feb 2014 10:30:53 -0500
Subject: Re: Rattlesnakes.

Chris,

As a journalist it is my job to document and share with the world both good and bad things that go on within our world. The rattlesnake roundup in Sweetwater, Texas is not my event, I merely photographed it to share with others, objectively.

I find it disappointing that you attack someone before doing research into what they actually do. My job is to enlighten people through imagery about what happens throughout the world and though I am personally against the roundup, I documented it for others, like yourself, to educate them.

So please, next time you want to send an angry email to someone, take the time to figure out what their involvement in something is rather than telling them to get a life.

Best regards,
Ian Bates

It is our 'job' to also enlighten people through imagery about what happens throughout the world and we have therefore nothing at all against reporting or filming. What we do oppose however is the glorification and promotion. When asked if he would send footage over to ourselves, so that we might better use it to actually help the snakes, this was his less than enthusiastic reply.

To: trajan11@hotmail.co.uk
From: ianbatesphoto@gmail.com
Date: Mon, 24 Feb 2014 13:57:42 -0500
Subject: Re: Rattlesnakes.

Chris,

I cannot send you images because that would be advocating in one direction instead of **documenting the event objectively** which is my job as a journalist.

Thank you.

Ian

Please note 'documenting the event objectively.' This is a letter from someone who normally provides film footage to those who glorify these advents but feels anyone who might feel compassion for the snakes, using it for their benefit, would not be using it 'objectively.'

From: danny.thomas@taylortx.gov
To: trajan11@hotmail.co.uk
Subject: RE: Rattlesnakes.
Date: Mon, 24 Feb 2014 15:09:34 +0000

Good Morning, (Evening where you are)

Thank you very much for your comments and concerns regarding the "Rattlesnake Roundup"..... The Local "Jaycee's Organization" have held, what is referred to as "The Annual Rattlesnake Round Up" in the area, but to my knowledge, there is no extermination or death of the species displayed.... I have never attended this event, therefore my knowledge is only what has been published in the local newspaper, of which I believe there would have been mention of your claims had there been mistreatment of the animal(s).

Rattlesnake Round-Ups, also known as Rattlesnake Rodeos, are events common in the rural Midwest and Southern United States, where the primary attractions are the capture of wild rattlesnakes. Typically a round-up will also include trade stalls and other features associated with fairs.

The largest rattlesnake round-up in the United States is held in Sweetwater, Texas. Held every year since 1958, the event currently attracts approximately 30,000 visitors per year and in 2006 each annual Round-Up was said to result in the capture of 1% of the state's rattlesnake population.

Cash prizes and trophies are often given out to participants. The events often attract thousands of tourists, which can bring hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue into small towns, the Sweetwater Round-Up's economic impact was estimated to exceed US\$5 million in 2006. Snake collectors often make large profits selling snakes at the events.

Rattlesnake round-ups became a concern by animal welfare groups and conservationists due to claims of animal cruelty and excessive threat of future endangerment. Some Round-Ups responded by imposing catch size restrictions or releasing captured snakes back into the wild.

Obviously you have concerns by the display of your wording and therefore, I recommend you forward your verbiage to the organization(s) directly involved,.....which may allow you to voice your opinion to the correct party(s) involvement and those organizations that participate throughout the United States of America.

Here are some references you may find useful in your endeavors to persevere: Position of The American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists Concerning Rattlesnake Conservation and Roundups. ASIH (American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists). Retrieved 2008-10-07. And Rubio, Manny (1998). "Rattlesnake roundups". Rattlesnake: Portrait of a Predator. Smithsonian Books. ISBN 1-56098-808-8.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me anytime....Again I want to thank you for your concerns and comments in this matter.

Sincerely,

D. Thomas, Director of Public Works, City of Taylor, 1424 N. Main Street, Taylor, Texas 76574

Office: 512/365-7669 Ex. 12, Fax : 512/352-3062

Anyway, it's good to know it's all just good clean fun. What we have next are two contrasting letters concerning our campaigning methods. Please read these and I'll explain a bit more about what it is we're trying to achieve.

From: contact details withheld
To: cates.1980@aol.co.uk
Sent: Tue, 25 Mar 2014 10:23
Subject: RE: 'Rattlesnake Roundup.'

Hello, I'm sure you are taking on a worthy cause but how do you expect to get support when you send hundreds of addresses to your recipients with no indication of who/what is important and who isn't and expect them to spend all day dealing with this request?

Why don't you send a petition and let people sign it and you take on the job of making the opposition known?

Best wishes,

From: domfleas@yahoo.co.uk
To: cates.1980@aol.co.uk
Sent: Fri, 28 Nov 2013 14:34
Subject: Campaigning Tactics.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to let you know what interesting and unusual campaign tactics I think you have. I don't believe I've ever seen it used before but it's certainly a great way of getting your message across and a really good ploy. Keep up the good work and give them as much grief as you can.

Thank you.

We're just trying to get the messages out there and whilst I agree petitions can sometimes work governments can and quite often do ignore them too. I don't think I'd even be capable of organising petitions, at least not successful ones crossing international borders. Bombarding with emails I believe does many things, a petition containing a hundred signatures (a nice round figure) will be laughed out of government, a hundred emails coming into a particular government department will certainly carry a good deal of weight. More than anything it gets everyone thinking about what's happening and it's human nature itself we're tapping into. Those receiving emails cannot help but talk about them, some will inevitably be joking about them down the pub, others it will effect more deeply, perhaps getting them involved with campaigns they may otherwise never had thought about. But it will get these matters out there and spoken about in a much wider domain than would otherwise had been if no emails had been sent at all.

Where there are pagefuls of contacts, these are the mailing lists we ourselves use, then fair enough, but anyone's welcome to join in which is why it is we send those out as well. But where are only a handful of a select few we hope a good deal more actually get involved. For those of you who are still not familiar, it's easy, just highlight and copy them in a block and paste them into the BCC. line, write your message, press send and the job's done. With some services it's easier than with others, some will only take half that amount, but that is the basic idea. Any replies you get, write back where appropriate and challenge what they tell you, send copies over to us if you like. This is what real campaigning is about and it's always interesting to see what others may be getting.

From: president@taylorchamber.org
To: pendine68@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Tuesday, 25 February 2014, 16:38
Subject: RE: rattlesnake roundup

Dear Madam,

While that event was held in our community in the past, the organization that hosted that event (Taylor Jaycees) are no longer in Taylor and that event has not taken place in Taylor since 2012.

To my knowledge, there are no plans to restart that event in our community. We kindly ask that you please update your information as such for future reference.

Wishing you all the best.

Regards,

Thomas Martinez, President

As far as I can see this particular event has now drawn to a close and we have now updated our Snake Killers' list accordingly.

Concluding: We print any letters here from all sides of both arguments. So long as it's relevant to subject matters, and provided it's not obscene, we will print it. If you disagree with anything that's said, please write in. This is a public arena so please feel free to have your say.