

Record of North American Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) from Tulsa Co.

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Abstract: Despite a well-documented eastward expansion of North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) along a broad front in Oklahoma, there previously have been no records from Tulsa Co. Here, we report details of a road-killed porcupine found near the Arkansas River in central Tulsa Co. ©2014 Oklahoma Academy of Science

On the morning of Sept. 9, 2014, a dead North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) was found along Avery Dr. in Tulsa Co., OK. It is likely that the animal was a road-kill from the previous night, as it was not present the previous afternoon. Photographs were taken and two quills were collected. Direct measurements were not possible at the time of the initial observation. However, the length of the animal could be estimated (55-60 cm) by normalizing the length of the animal to a 4 inch wide road edge line in photographs. This size range suggests that the animal was a young adult. Unfortunately the sex of the animal was not recorded. Returning for more detailed assessment of the animal was not possible because the carcass had been removed.

The portion of Avery Dr. where the animal was found is in the riparian zone along the Arkansas River with the average distance to the river in that area being approximately 50 m. Tyler and Joles (Tyler and Joles 1997) noted a preponderance of porcupine records from riparian areas and suggested that porcupines use riparian areas as dispersal routes. Thus, the location of the road-kill is consistent with known patterns of porcupine

dispersal. Moreover, the time of year is consistent with increased activity in the fall (especially in September) by porcupines reported in other areas (Barthelme and Brooks 2010), which likely reflects the onset of breeding or natal dispersal (Roze 2009).

The first Oklahoma record for porcupine, from Cimarron Co., was published in 1939 (Chase 1939). Over the next decade, porcupine numbers in that area increased rapidly. By 1949, they were considered to be a pest species: Glass and a party from Oklahoma A & M captured three in a two week period (Glass 1949). At that time, the porcupine was largely absent from the remainder of Oklahoma. In a 1997 review of porcupine reports from Oklahoma away from Cimarron Co., Tyler and Joles (1997) documented range expansion eastward as far as Pottawottamie Co, and a single record from Latimer Co. More recent reports have established the continued presence of porcupines in the western half of Oklahoma, and showed further eastward expansion: porcupine records now have been reported for several of the easternmost counties in Oklahoma (Tyler and Haynie 2001, Caire and Smith 2008). However, even the most recent

review (Caire and Smith 2008) did not include any records for Tulsa Co. This report fills that gap.

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