
The Badger (*Taxidea Taxus*) from Johnston County, Oklahoma

R. JOHN TAYLOR, Southeastern State College, Durant

The badger (*Taxidea taxus*) is mentioned only infrequently in accounts of Oklahoma mammals. Blair (1939) cites records of this species from Texas and Woods Counties. Glass (1949) cites additional panhandle locations from Cimarron Co. in the Black Mesa area. Halloran and Glass (1959) cite records of this species from the Wichita Mountains, from in and near the Wichita Wildlife Refuge. Blair (1939) stated that no records of badger were available from the Osage Savannah and Cherokee Prairie biotic districts, (Blair and Hubbell, 1938), which include the ecotone of forest and grassland across the central part of the state. Most recent maps of the North American distribution of the badger indicate that the eastern boundary of the distribution of this species in Oklahoma falls across the central part of the state. The range map of Hall and Kelson (1959) indicates that the eastern boundary in Oklahoma extends to the NE corner, but apparently no specimens have been reported along the Oklahoma portion of this boundary.

During the last five years, I have observed four badgers that have been killed on highways in the central part of the state. In the fall of 1959, a subadult was observed in southeastern Oklahoma City on Eastern Street near the south end of the North Canadian bridge. No permanent record was made for this location, and no attempt was made to save the specimen for at the time it seemed questionable as to how the badger came to be at that location. On Aug. 2, 1960, a badger was observed dead on

U.S. 77, 1.5 miles N of Lexington. This animal also appeared to be a young of the year, but was badly smashed. On July 9, 1962, a third badger was observed dead on SH 39, 11 miles east of Lexington, just inside the Cleveland Co. line. The skull of this specimen, a subadult female, is now a part of the study collection at the Univ. of Okla. Biological Station near Willis. A fourth roadkill was observed July 11, 1962, on U.S. 70, 5 miles E of Ringling just inside Carter County.

Recently (Oct. 31, 1964) I obtained the carcass of an adult male badger from 4 miles NE of the town of Mill Creek in Johnston County. The animal had been stoned to death on the Earl Gray Ranch. Mr. Tom Parker, the foreman, stated that this was the second of two of these animals killed in the last eight months. He also stated that they were quite plentiful, that they were often seen during the day, and that they were making a nuisance of themselves by digging holes in the pastures. This area is underlain by folded and broken strata of limestone (upper Arbuckle group of Ordovician age) covered by only a few inches of soil and exposed in many places. The floodplains of Pennington Creek and its tributaries, however, offer soil and alluvial material as much as ten feet deep in some places. Otherwise, this area does not seem to be a very favorable habitat for badger. Many of the food items used by this species further west do not occur in this area. There is no way of knowing how the badger came to be in this location, or how long the species has been here. Some of the older residents of Johnston and Bryan Counties have remarked on numerous occasions that they remember when badger occurred in grassland areas of these counties, but none of them would ever say that he had actually seen these animals. It may be that the badger in the past (or even to the present time) penetrated considerably eastward into the forested areas of the eastern part of the state along unforested floodplains of streams and fingers of grassland.

Some of the data on the Johnston Co. specimen are listed below. All measurements are in millimeters. This animal was an adult nonbreeding male with external measurements as follows: Total, 684; tail, 101; hind foot, 98; ear, 52. No skin was made as the specimen had already begun to decay. The skull, however, was saved. It had been badly crushed, but all of the bones, teeth, and pieces of bone were saved and the skull carefully reconstructed. Some of its measurements are as follows: Greatest length, 113.5; zygomatic breadth, 70.8; length of maxillary tooth row, 33.2. This skull is presently in my private collection.

LITERATURE CITED

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