

DISTRIBUTIONAL STATUS OF THE EASTERN SPOTTED SKUNK, *SPILOGALE PUTORIUS INTERRUPTA*, IN OKLAHOMA

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Historical and present-day distribution of the eastern spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius interrupta*) in Oklahoma are discussed and a summarization of known records is presented.

INTRODUCTION

Long-term fluctuations in population density of the eastern spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius interrupta*) have been demonstrated in the Great Plains (1, 2). The cause, although unknown, may be due to the activities of man or to climatic changes. The increase and spread of this species is probably attributable to the clearing of land and to the building of many small farm units which provide shelter and food. Declines coincide with the depression years following 1929 and the drought years from 1933 to 1940. During this time there was a decrease in the number of farms and a lessening of habitat available to the skunks (2).

Trapping records often provide valuable historical information on furbearers. For instance, on the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County, southwestern Oklahoma, 507 *Spilogale* were trapped between 1923 and 1934 (1). The greatest number taken in one year was 75 in 1925. None was taken in 1933, 27 in 1934, one in 1938, three in 1939 and only two from 26 July 1956 to 10 February 1957. From 1973 to 1977, six specimens have been collected or photographed within a few miles of the refuge. Little change in statewide distribution can be discerned from the records between 1906 and 1977 as shown in Fig. 1 and listed below.

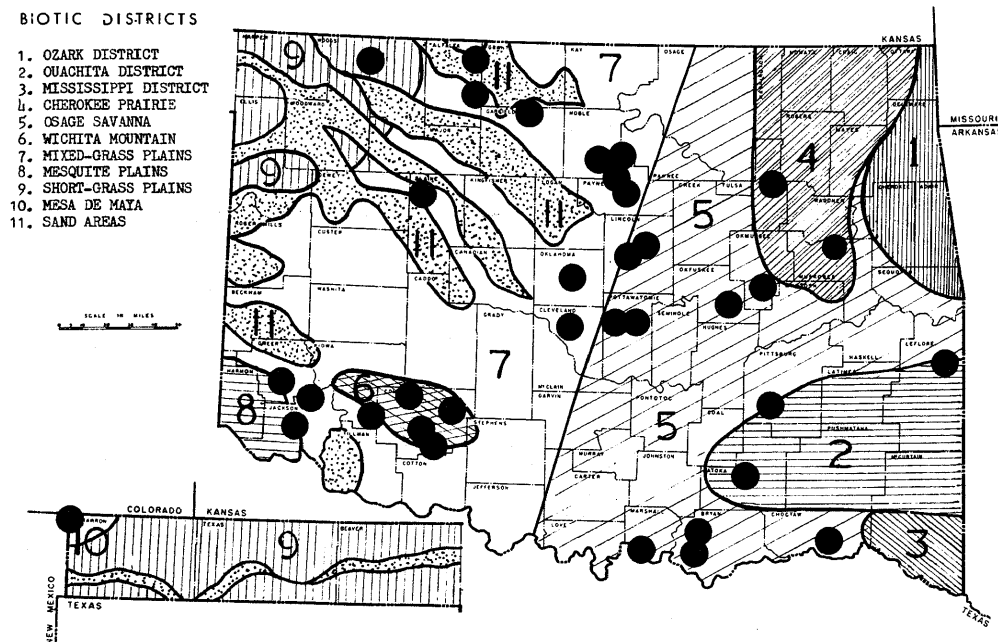


FIGURE 1. Distribution of *Spilogale putorius interrupta* in Oklahoma (map adapted from Blair and Hubbell [7]). Some dots represent more than one record.

OKLAHOMA SPECIMENS

ABBREVIATIONS USED: Central Oklahoma State University (COSU); Cameron University Museum of Zoology (CUMZ); East Central Oklahoma State University (ECOSU); Florida State University (FSU); Kansas University (KU); Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU); Oklahoma State University (OSU); Oklahoma University (OU); Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SEOSU); Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU); University of Oklahoma Biological Station (UOBS).

Alfalfa County: 9 mi. E., 3 mi. N. of Cherokee, 1933 (3); 3 mi. E. of Jet, 22 April, 1949 (OSU 928). *Atoka County*: 5 mi. E. of Atoka, 29 April, 1979 (CUMZ 673). *Blaine County*: 2 mi. W. of Longdale, 2 April, 1949 (OSU 951); 1.5 mi. W. of Longdale, 28 October, 1961 (OSU 5104). *Bryan County*: Durant, 17 September, 1962 (SEOSU, J. Taylor 58); 1 mi. N. of Colbert, 16 April, 1949 (4). *Caddo County*: Near Anadarko, 16 October, 1973 (COSU 155). *Choctaw County*: Near Hugo, 1975 (OSU 10029). *Cimarron County*: 3.5 mi. N., 1.2 mi. W. of Kenton, 29 March, 1969 (9) (OU 6643)*. *Cleveland County*: Norman (3) (KU); Norman, 5 February, 1969 (OU 6893). *Comanche County*: Wichita Mtns. Wildl. Refuge (5, 1); Wichita Mtns. Wildl. Refuge, 6 December, 1952 (OSU 3314); 2 mi. N. of Key Gate, Fort Sill, 25 February 1973 (CUMZ 333); 1.3 mi. N. of Indianola, 12 March, 1973 (CUMZ photo); 2 mi. E. of Cache, 19 April, 1973 (CUMZ photo); 2 mi. S. of Lawton, 15 April, 1974 (CUMZ photo); Lawton, 23 October, 1975 (CUMZ 485); Fort Sill, 17 March, 1977 (CUMZ 454); 1.5 mi. W., 1 mi. S. of Geronimo, 22 August, 1977 (CUMZ photo); Lawton, 16 October, 1977 (CUMZ photo); Lawton, 3 February, 1979 (CUMZ 573). *Garfield County*: 4 mi. W., 3 mi. N. of Hunter, 5 March, 1955 (OSU 2673). *Greer County*: 5 mi. S. of Mangum, 4 April, 1958 (SWOSU 474). *Jackson County*: 1 mi. S. of Blair, 10 April, 1955 (8) (OSU 2674); 7 mi. W. of Altus, 5 March, 1977 (CUMZ 446); 3.5 mi. N. of Olustee, 16 April, 1977 (CUMZ 456). *Kiowa County*: 6 mi. E. of Snyder, 11 February, 1964 (CUMZ photo). *LeFlore County*: 7.5 mi. E. of Poteau, 12 December, 1959 (SEOSU 775). *Lincoln County*: 10 mi. E. of Stroud, 2 April, 1967 (OU 4334); 7 mi. E. of Chandler, 2 April, 1967 (OU 4335). *Marshall County*: 2 mi. W. of UOBS, 14 July, 1961 (UOBS 4); 1.5 mi. W. of UOBS, 31 July, 1950 (UOBS). *Muskogee County*: Muskogee, 20 September, 1967 (OSU 9100); Muskogee, 19 September, 1967 (OSU 6881). *Noble County*: 14 mi. N. of Stillwater (3) (OSU); 7 mi. E. of Perry, 29 September, 1957 (OSU 3952). *Okfuskee County*: 5 mi. N. of Henryetta, 10 April, 1966 (ECOSU M-163). *Oklahoma County*: Oklahoma City, 10 October, 1973 (COSU 775); Oklahoma City, 23 January, 1974 (COSU 776); Edmond, 12 June, 1974 (COSU 777). *Okmulgee County*: Schuller, 1 December, 1966 (ECOSU M-218). *Payne County*: 1 mi. N. of Stillwater, 16 November, 1949 (OSU 1475); Stillwater, 1 March, 1950 (OSU 1478); Stillwater, 6 April, 1950 (OSU 1499); Stillwater, 20 February, 1950 (FSU); 5 mi. E. of Stillwater, 12 January, 1950 (OSU 1476); 2 mi. N., 1 mi. W. of Stillwater, 20 March, 1953 (OSU 3950); Stillwater, 18 February, 1955 (OSU 2675); 2 mi. E., 3 mi. S. of Stillwater, 5 November, 1956 (OSU 3337); 1.5 mi. E. of Stillwater, 10 January, 1957 (OSU 3338). *Pittsburg County*: Kiowa, 15 December, 1966 (ECOSU M-169). *Pottawatomie County*: northwest of Tecumseh (3) (KU); 10.2 mi. E. of Shawnee, 19 December, 1969 (OU 9435); 1 mi. N., 3 mi. W. of Shawnee, 17 April, 1977 (CUMZ photo). *Tulsa County*: Tulsa (6). *Woods County*: Alva (5); 16 mi. S., 3 mi. E. of Alva, 8 October, 1976 (NWOSU).

CONCLUSIONS

The eastern spotted skunk can be found within or near all of Blair and Hubbell's biotic districts (7). Although its populations apparently fluctuate greatly and it is seldom encountered in Oklahoma, it should not be considered rare.

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*Specimen identified as *S. p. gracilis* by R. G. Van Gelder (8).

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