

# New Distributional Records for Rice Rats (*Oryzomys palustris*) in Oklahoma

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The rice rat (*Oryzomys palustris*) has been observed in marshy habitats of extreme southern and eastern Oklahoma (1-4; Fig. 1, open circles). This paper reports extensions of the range of this species to the west and north (Fig. 1, filled circles).

In June and July 1989, I surveyed small mammals in several wetland habitats of Carter, Johnston, and Coal counties in southcentral Oklahoma. On 28 June, two adult male rice rats were captured and released in cattails (*Typha* sp.) adjacent to Lake Murray in southern Carter County (Fig. 1, No. 6). On 29 June, near Bromide in southern Coal County (Fig. 1, No. 7), an adult male was collected from a spring-fed marsh and deposited in the mammal collection at the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History (OMNH-19355). Rice rats were not captured in Johnston County. These observations extend the known limits for this species in southern Oklahoma.

In eastern Oklahoma, McCarley (4) reported rice rats from wetland habitats in Pushmataha and Pittsburg counties (Fig. 1, No. 4). The northernmost record (5) is of two males and one female collected by Robert D. Owen on 27-28 May 1980 near Stigler in Haskell County (Fig. 1, No. 5). These rice rats were captured in wet habitats adjacent to old mining pits (personal observation, R. D. Owen). The specimens are in the mammal collection at OMNH (specimens 13968, 13969, and 13971).

On 25 October 1988, Stephen L. Dunham recovered a subadult male rice rat that had been captured by a domestic cat near Cedar Crest Lake in Mayes County (Fig. 1, No. 8). This observation extends the known northern distributional limit for rice rats in Oklahoma. The specimen is in the vertebrate collection at Northeastern Oklahoma State University (Stephen Dunham, specimen #7) in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

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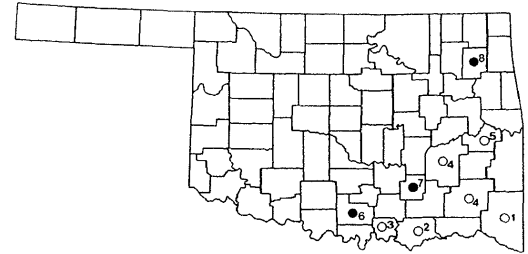


Figure 1. Distribution of *Oryzomys palustris* in Oklahoma. ○ = previous records: (1→4) match reference numbers; (5) R. D. Owen (see text). ● = new observations in Carter(6), Coal(7), and Mayes(8) Counties.