

Noteworthy Mammal Records for Western Oklahoma

Jack D. Tyler and Sarah L. Donelson

Department of Biology, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma 73505

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Although Bailey (1) included comments on the distributions of Oklahoma mammals in 1905, a report by Blair in 1939 (2) constitutes the earliest compilation of validated records for the state. Half a century later, Caire et al. (3) published comprehensive life history accounts with detailed range maps for the 106 species known in the state at that time. In 1992, Stangl et al. (4) delineated the ranges of several southwestern Oklahoma species. The present note furthers our knowledge of the current and historic biography of several mammals, primarily in southwestern counties. Taxonomy follows Jones et al. (5). Specimens are housed at the Cameron University Museum of Zoology (CUMZ) in Lawton, Oklahoma. Previously documented county records and species accounts are from Caire et al. (3), except where noted.

Dasypus novemcinctus. Caire et al. (3) summarized the history of this species recent northward advance in Oklahoma. The earliest documentation for Oklahoma was of one seen 20 miles east of Tulsa, in Rogers County, in 1932 and another in the Arkansas River Valley in Creek County in 1935 (6). The earliest published record of an armadillo in the southwestern counties reported one in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Comanche County in 1939 (7); however, Elmer W. Tyler caught one a few miles northeast of Mountain Park in Kiowa County in 1936 (pers. comm.), and during the winter of 1945-46, Earl E. Shaw and Roy Woodward caught one 3 miles south and 2 miles west of Snyder in the same county (pers. comm., E.E. Shaw). Stangl et al. (4) reported new county records for Greer, Jackson, Jefferson and Roger Mills counties.

For northwestern Oklahoma, the first record in print is a specimen collected by Louis Smith 8 miles NW of Freedom in Woods County on November 29, 1941 (8). During the fall of 1985, L.E. Dunn saw a road-killed armadillo near Forgan in Beaver County; his son Eddie saw another in 1990 in Forgan (per. comm., L.E. Dunn). On January 23, 1991, Wayne Lewis saw an armadillo near the North Canadian River bridge just north of Beaver, in the same county; his wife Mary saw a live animal 4 miles east of Buffalo, Harper County, on October 13, 1993 (per. comm., W. Lewis). Near the end of September 1993, Robert Dunn, L.E.'s other son, saw an armadillo in his yard 8 miles NE of Gate, Harper County (per. comm., L.E. Dunn). On September 29, 1991, the senior author collected a road-kill near May in Harper County (CUMZ 1126). These records represent a northwestward range extension for *D. novemcinctus* in Oklahoma. *County records*: Beaver (sight), Harper (specimen).

Sylvilagus aquaticus: *Sylvilagus aquaticus* occurs in lowland swamps and along water courses in eastern Oklahoma (3). Although rare, a few specimens have been collected as far west as Love and Comanche counties and one sight record is known from Cotton County. Stangl et al. (4) suggested that this rabbit's presence in Comanche County is the result of dispersion along riparian corridors. In Comanche County, most swamp rabbits were taken by hunters in riparian woodlands bordering East Cache Creek and feeder streams. The first specimen recorded for southwest Oklahoma was taken in Comanche County on November 7, 1979 at Fort Sill (CUMZ 677). Two more were obtained there by hunters, one in October 1983, the other on November 30, 1984 (CUMZ 892, 962). Gene Stout, former Fort Sill biologist, estimated that of 8,413 leporids taken during the 1982-83 hunting season on Fort Sill, at least 300 were *S. aquaticus*, indicating a healthy population there, at least for that season. On October 21, 1978, Tyler and Michael Smith saw one on East Cache Creek 2.25 miles south and 2.5 east of Geronimo in Cotton County.

Glaucomys volans: Caire et al. (3) suggested that riparian corridors have allowed movement of this squirrel from the forests of eastern Oklahoma into grassland habitats of central Oklahoma. Stangl et al. (4) reported specimens from Comanche, Jefferson

and Murray counties and sightings for Cotton County. The Cotton County sighting tends to substantiate a riparian corridor along East Cache Creek between the Red River and Comanche County (see also *Sylvilagus aquaticus* account above). Most sight records for Comanche County are from Fort Sill: Mount Hinds, during (March 8, 1983) and after (March 10, 1983) a range fire in that area; near Geronimo Hill Cemetery, June 7, 1984; Rabbit Hill near McCracken Pond, July 2, 1984; and Geronimo Hill Cemetery, August 10, 1984. In northeast Lawton, near East Cache Creek, a house cat caught a flying squirrel on February 15, 1991 (CUMZ 1120, skull), and another on March 3, 1991 (partial skin and skull, CUMZ 1139). These recent records provide evidence that a small population of *G. volans*: still survives along the westernmost limits of range.

***Vulpes vulpes*:** Historically, *Vulpes vulpes* has been reported principally from the eastern half of Oklahoma in oak-hickory forests and along the Red River (3). Hatcher (10) reported this species in all ecoregions except the mesquite-buffalo grass ecoregion in southwestern Oklahoma. Tyler (9) provided evidence of occurrence and reproduction in Custer, Jackson, Kiowa and Tillman counties. Recently, red foxes have been observed several times in Lawton; on June 5, 1995 three kits were seen. Stangl et al. (4) cited Jackson, Kiowa and Tillman county records. A sighting near Arnett School in Harmon County on January 21, 1984, and one in Jefferson County near Corum in 1984-85, confirm the presence of this species there (fide, Glen Hastings). A road-kill was collected 4 miles SE of Chickasha in Grady County on December 3, 1995 (CUMZ 1216). The only counties lacking verified records in southwestern Oklahoma are Caddo, Greer and Washita. *County records*: Grady (specimen); Harmon and Jefferson (sight).

***Odocoileus hemionus*:** The mule deer has been reported only from the Oklahoma panhandle and northwestern Oklahoma (3). Both Stangl et al. (4) and Caire et al. (3) indicated that *O. hemionus* may be found in southwestern Oklahoma and suggested that these occasional strays may be from the Texas panhandle. There is one known sight record for Harmon County: during the fall or winter of 1980, a road-kill was seen about 22 miles north of Hollis near the Elm Fork River bridge, on State Highway 30 (pers. comm., Loyd Payne). There are several reports for Comanche County. On August 24, 1981, Bryan Pilcher saw one clearly in a spotlight beam about 5.25 miles west of Cache during a Fort Sill deer census. Ken Cook shot a six-point buck on Fort Sill's East Range on October 24, 1982 (fide, Jay Banta). In November 1983, a mule deer was killed 6 miles south and 1.3 miles east of Cache near West Cache Creek by Wilber Muller (per. comm., James Calaway). A buck estimated to be 1.5 years old was shot by J. L. Bias about 2 miles northeast of Indianola on Fort Sill on November 26, 1988.

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