

1958

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### Recommended Citation

Polder, Emmett (1958) "Recent Locality Records for Some Iowa Mammals," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*: Vol. 65: No. 1 , Article 80.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol65/iss1/80>

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## Recent Locality Records for Some Iowa Mammals

By EMMETT POLDER

In 1953 the writer published a Checklist of Iowa Mammals with notes on new species and changes in distribution since 1937. At that time it was apparent that much information was lacking on distribution of some species. A few forms were small, retiring, and difficult to collect. A large number were conspicuous fur bearers and game species that had moved into new territory or had escaped notice of systematic mammalogists in the past.

Some larger mammals for which considerable distribution data were lacking included the otter, grey fox, wildcat, woodchuck, chipmunk, red squirrel, grey squirrel, and white-tailed jack rabbit. Most of the mammals in this list would obviously be known to hunters, trappers, and naturalists who were not aware of the dearth of distribution information.

The information used in this survey was obtained, in part, from published journal papers, local news stories, questionnaires relative to county bounty claims, and responses to statewide newspaper appeals for information regarding conspicuous fur bearers and game mammals. State biologists and conservation officers cooperated in providing information on skins, skulls, breeding records, local data on populations, bag checks, and purchases by fur buyers.

The writer is indebted to Ries Tuttle and John Carlton for their part in publishing newspaper appeals for information in their outdoor sports columns. Mr. Glen Sanderson, former state biologist, gave valuable assistance by providing data, obtained in his state game surveys, and records of skins, and skulls of mammals in his private collection. County auditors, trappers, and hunters contributed much in the form of bounty records, trapping records, game bag, photographs, and other data pertinent to this study.

### INSECTIVORA

*Sorex cinereus cinereus* (Kerr). Masked Shrew. This mammal was reported from Iowa and Johnson Counties in field sight records of Jack Musgrove of the Iowa Historical Museum in a letter to the writer in 1953. At that time the southernmost record of specimen skins was from Linn County. Miller (1954) verified extension of range to the latitude of southern Johnson and Iowa Counties when

he collected numerous specimens in the vicinity of Davenport, Scott County. A large portion of the Miller *Sorex* collection now resides in the Davenport public museum.

*Blarina brevicauda carolinensis* (Bachman). Southern Short-tailed Shrew. Nine specimens of this small southern race of short-tailed shrew were collected in the vicinity of Sidney, Fremont County, by Findley, Jones, and Vaughan (1954). It is probable that this shrew may range over all of the southernmost tier of counties since Hamilton (1943) places the zone of intergradation with *B. b. brevicauda* in Illinois at the latitude of Burlington, Iowa.

#### CARNIVORA

*Lutra canadensis canadensis* (Schreber). Canada Otter. The range of the otter appears to be extending to the southward along the Mississippi River border but very little migration into the interior of the state is evident. The present known range extends from New Albin, in the northeast corner of the state, south to the northern boundary of Clinton County. The westernmost record from the interior of the state is a sight record of tracks and fecal scats observed by the writer at Elk Creek near Colesburg, Delaware County. On March 24, 1954, a female otter was taken in a beaver trap at Bellevue, Iowa, by Sylvester Zimmer, and on April 7, 1954, a male otter was drowned in a fisherman's net at Green Island in southern Jackson County. The two Jackson County specimen skins and skulls are now in the private collection of Glen C. Sanderson. A Dubuque County specimen, killed at Spechts Ferry, was shown in a photograph in the April 7, 1954, edition of the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald. The sight record of otter sign at Elk Creek in Delaware County indicates that the inland range would also include the Turkey River valley as far west as Elkport and Garber in Clayton County where Elk Creek empties into the Turkey River.

*Urocyon cinereoargenteus ocythous* (Bangs). Wisconsin Gray Fox. Since 1955 the gray fox has been reported from all counties in western Iowa excepting Buena Vista County. Answers to questionnaires sent to trappers, fur buyers, county auditors, and conservation officers indicate that the gray fox has been a resident of southern and extreme southwestern counties for a number of years prior to 1940. In 1941 a gray fox was reported from Woodbury County. In the years between 1940 and 1950, this species was taken in increasing numbers from the wooded Missouri River bluffs between Council Bluffs and Sioux City. In the Des Moines River valley the gray fox was considered common from Marion County eastward prior to 1940; but in the counties west and north of Des Moines gray foxes were virtually unheard of prior to 1941. Between the years 1941 and 1945 reports of specimens were obtained in all counties between

Des Moines and Webster City. Since 1945 a gradual two directional migration, eastward along the tributaries of the Missouri River and westward along the tributaries of the Des Moines River, has resulted in a sparse dispersal over virtually all of the northwestern and western counties. In extreme northwestern Iowa the first reports of gray foxes presented for bounty claims in Plymouth, Sioux, and Lyon Counties occurred between 1947 and 1949. The migration into these three counties apparently was northward along the Big Sioux River. Auditors of Osceola, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien, Clay, Palo Alto, and Pocahontas Counties all indicated first bounty payments on gray fox in 1953 and all have paid bounty on from one to three gray foxes in 1954, 1955, and 1956. The Auditor of Cherokee County reported payment of bounty on two or more gray foxes each year since 1952. Howard Stevens of Sac City has a photograph of a gray fox trapped in Sac County in 1947. Buena Vista County is the only county not reporting a gray fox bounty record; however, it is probable that the gray fox enters the county along the southern border since a specimen has been trapped near Nemaha in Sac County close to the Buena Vista border.

The habitat occupied by the gray fox in the northwestern counties is reported by hunters and trappers to be weedy flood plains and brushy timber bordering streams. Dens used by the gray foxes in the northwestern counties were found to be old beaver burrows and badger dens. From Sac and Ida Counties southward, woodchuck burrows and beaver burrows were used as den sites.

An interesting theory that the gray fox is not entering new territory but simply reoccupying its former range is inferred from the fact that a gray fox had been killed at Pierce, Nebraska, in 1869 and no later records were known from northeast Nebraska until 1955 when another specimen was killed at Pierce. The absence of the woodchuck in this area and the historical record of the extermination of the beaver lends evidence for this theory. Early settlers and trappers who reduced the beaver population to near extinction removed the one animal that constructed suitable dens for the gray fox in the wooded flood plains of prairie streams. Historical records indicated that the woodchuck was not a common resident in central and western Iowa prior to 1900 when this species appeared to expand its range in response to the great increase in cultivated land. The combined effect of expanded woodchuck range coupled with the re-introduction of the beaver during the late 1930's would appear to be two factors that have contributed much to the expansion of the gray fox range into the flood plain groves of western Iowa and eastern Nebraska.

The gray fox population in the northwestern counties, although sparse, is apparently an established population and not just accidental

occurrence of transient individuals. One den of pups was reported from Lyon County in 1954. Another breeding record is from Settlers Township, Sioux County, where Mr. Walter Butcher removed four gray fox cubs from a den in the spring of 1952. The four cubs captured by Mr. Butcher were given to the Iowa Conservation Commission for the State Fair wildlife exhibit that year.

*Lynx rufus rufus* (Schreber). Wildcat. Recent records of the wildcat in Iowa are scarce and from widely scattered localities. In 1947 Iowa fur buyers reported the purchase of eight skins; however, it was not verified that all of these skins were from animals taken within the boundaries of the state.

Among the reports of specimens taken within the past 20 years is a 27 pound 38 inch specimen trapped at Sloan, Woodbury County, by W. W. Truesell during the winter of 1938. A southwest Iowa specimen was shot by Clyde Shackelford, February, 1955, near Patterson in Madison County. A southeast Iowa specimen was reported killed in the Batavia-Libertyville area in January, 1955, by conservation officers in that district but the name of the collector was not obtained. Another specimen, killed at Harpers Ferry, Allamakee County, in November, 1954, was shown in a photograph accompanying a news story in the Waukon weekly newspaper. A Jackson County specimen was killed near St. Donatus in October, 1952, by William Meyer. A Dubuque County specimen was killed at Swiss Valley in December, 1956, by a Mr. Quaid. Conservation officers reported sight records from Pine Hollow State Preserve, Dubuque County; Harrison and Green Bay Townships, Lee County; Fremont and Page Counties; and western Lyon County.

#### RODENTIA

*Marmota monax monax* (Linnaeus). Southern Woodchuck. Early Iowa mammalogists regarded the woodchuck as a migrant that entered the southwest, central, and western parts of the state following pioneer settlement. The western limits of woodchuck range reported by Scott were Cass, Dickinson, and Sac Counties. The presence of the woodchuck in parts of the state west of these points was indicated when woodchuck burrows were listed as gray fox den sites during the gray fox distribution study. Woodchucks and their dens were reported from all of the Missouri River border counties from Sioux City south to the Missouri state line. With the exception of two sight records in extreme southwestern Plymouth County, the woodchuck appears to be absent from Plymouth, Sioux, Lyon, Osceola, and O'Brien Counties. On the periphery of these counties the woodchuck is very rare. Cherokee County has paid bounty on only six woodchucks in the past eight years and Palo Alto County has had a bounty for 23 years but woodchuck claims are very rarely collected. Observers and county auditors in Buena Vista, Dickin-

son, Clay, and Emmet Counties report the woodchuck as present but very rare.

*Tamias striatus griseus* (Mearns). Gray Eastern Chipmunk. Two points of distribution reported by Polder (1953), for western Iowa were Pottawattamie and Webster Counties. Miller (1954) found chipmunks to be common residents in the wooded areas near Lakeside Laboratory in Dickinson County. Mr. Irvin Glau of Denison, Crawford County, reported in a letter, 1954, that he had observed two gray chipmunks in woods bordering the Boyer River near Denison. Howard Stevens, Sac City, Sac County, recalls seeing chipmunks in the vicinity of Sac City a number of years ago but does not recall seeing them within the past ten years. William Youngworth, a very observant field naturalist who spends much time in the field in the wooded areas of Monona, Woodbury, and Plymouth Counties, has never seen the chipmunk in those counties. The present range of the chipmunk in Iowa apparently includes all of the state east of a line running from Spirit Lake in the north to Missouri Valley in southwestern Harrison County.

*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus loquax* (Bangs). Southern Red Squirrel. Scott gave the probable range of the red squirrel as all of the southern half of the state. He notes that one specimen killed at Knoxville, Marion County, sometime prior to 1912 reposes at the Field Museum of Natural History. He comments further that this squirrel is locally common in southeastern Iowa. No records were given for the western half of southern Iowa in Scott's 1937 journal paper on Iowa mammals. A locality record reported in a letter, 1955, by Andrew Walker of Winterset, is a record of several red squirrels bagged by hunters in Madison County. He reports both gray and red squirrels are present in small numbers in the Pammel State Park locality on the Middle River.

*Sciurus carolinensis carolinensis* (Gmelin). Southern Gray Squirrel. The first report of this squirrel as a subspecies resident in the state was a sight record of several gray squirrels in Waubonsie State Park, Fremont County, reported by Findley, Jones, and Vaughan (1954). These writers base their identification on verified specimens that have been collected from Nebraska counties directly across the Missouri River from Fremont and Mills Counties. Gray squirrels killed by hunters at Winterset, Madison County, during the 1954 and 1955 hunting season probably are representatives of this southern race. In eastern Iowa the zone of intergradation between the northern race *S. c. leucotis* and the southern race *S. c. carolinensis* begins at the latitude of Davenport. Specimens of the more typical southern form may predominate in the southern border counties but show more intergradation with *S. c. leucotis* in the southeastern counties.

## LAGOMORPHA

*Lepus townsendi campanius* (Hollister). White-tailed Jack Rabbit. The white-tailed jack rabbit has gradually invaded all of northern, central, and southwest Iowa since the 1860's. The occurrence of this form in the southeastern corner of Iowa was doubtful until 1955 since no eastern Iowa reports had been obtained from the area lying south of Clinton County since Spurrell (1917) mentioned a 1905 specimen record for Clinton County. Glen Sanderson, in a 1953 questionnaire to conservation officers, found the jack rabbit not present in Henry, Des Moines, Louisa, Muscatine, and Scott Counties. Reports from Davis, Wapello, Jefferson, Van Buren, Lee and Washington Counties indicated the presence of this animal as questionable. The writer was informed by Eldon Stemple, State Biologist, in a letter (1955) that he had frequently observed jack rabbits at the Ottumwa airport in northern Wapello County in 1954 and 1955. Other field reports were for Packwood, Jefferson County, and Crawfordsville, Washington County. A report from southwest Van Buren County was checked by conservation officer William Fuches but could not be verified. The southernmost specimen record for southeast Iowa was a jack rabbit killed at Mediapolis, Des Moines County, during a circle fox hunt in the winter of 1955; this specimen was examined and reported by Kenneth Kakac of West Burlington. The data collected up to the present time indicate that the range of the jack rabbit includes all of the state north of Highway 34 and west of Highway 63. At this time there are no verified reports of this rabbit being observed or killed in Davis, Van Buren, Lee or Henry Counties.

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