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Notes on Vertebrates of Iowa Prairies

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narrow zone immediately surrounding the nucleus. It then spreads peripherally until the entire cytoplasm stains deeply with basic stains. When yolk formation begins the cytoplasm changes back to the acidophilic condition again.

During the earlier stages of sex differentiation the ventral border of the lamella-shaped gonad becomes attached to the lateral body wall, forming a parovarial sac. This union begins near the anterior end of the gonad and proceeds caudally the entire length of the ovigerous portion. The postgonal ridge extends posteriorly for some distance, gradually diminishing in size until it can no longer be distinguished. Later, it widens and also unites with the body wall to form a tube in the same manner as the parovarial sac with which it is continuous. Caudally the oviducts of both sides converge toward the midline and become wedged in between the common mesonephric duct and the lower intestine. For some time the oviducts end blindly anterior to the anus, but eventually connect with the exterior probably through the so-called peritoneal pores.

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NOTES ON VERTEBRATES OF IOWA PRAIRIES

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During the past five years while the author was engaged primarily in a survey of insects his attention has been drawn occasionally to the vertebrate inhabitants of prairies of Iowa. One of the most frequently visited tracts is four acres of upland two miles north of Ames. There in the spring of 1926 three blue racers, *Coluber constrictor flaviventris* (Say), a bull snake, *Pituophis sayi* (Schlegel), and several red-barred garter snakes, *Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis* (Say), were observed. March 21, 1926, a nest of the prairie horned lark, *Otocoris alpestris praticola* Henshaw, was found, but a week later the eggs had disappeared. Several burrows of skunks, *Mephitis mesomelas avia* Bangs, and of woodchucks, *Marmota monax monax* (Linn.), occur on the hillsides. Many striped ground squirrels, *Citellus tridecemlineatus tridecemlineatus* (Mitchell), and a few gray ground squirrels, *C. franklini* (Sabine), range over this small tract. Fresh mounds of the pocket gopher, *Geomys bursarius bursarius* (Shaw), appeared as early as March 20 in 1926. A jackrabbit, *Lepus townsendi*

campanius Hollister, was observed to leave the field several times. The cottontail, *Sylvilagus floridanus mearnsi* (Allen), was scared up at nearly every visit. The close pasturage of the field in winter left little cover for smaller rodents.

Five miles south of Stanhope a high gravel hill covered with many large stones and several years of unharmed plant growth furnishes shelter for many mice. There, April 28, 1930, a jumping mouse, *Zapus hudsonius* subsp., was observed, and a prairie deer mouse *Peromyscus maniculatus bairdi* (H. and K.) was taken. On the same day two specimens of the skink, *Plestiodon septentrionalis* Baird, were taken at this hill.

At a forty acre tract of low prairie five miles east of Renwick, May 9, 1928, a flock of seventeen prairie chickens, *Tympanuchus americanus americanus* (Reich.), were observed in their drumming and courting antics.

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BIOLOGY IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF IOWA

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Within recent years Zoology and Botany as separate subjects have nearly disappeared from the curricula of the public High Schools of Iowa. A course known as Biology has taken their places. In an attempt to learn the nature of High School Biology the author secured sample textbooks, laboratory manuals and figures concerning adoptions from the leading publishers of school books. The figures show that approximately 70 per cent of the High Schools of our State offer Biology and that five textbooks, which are termed in this article as the leading texts, serve in nearly 95 per cent of the Biology courses. A study of these five leading textbooks showed that about 12 per cent of the contents, by chapters and pages, are devoted to general principles such as are common to both plant and animal life, 16 per cent to plant study, 21 per cent to animal study, 30 per cent to human anatomy, physiology, hygiene and eugenics, and 20 per cent to applications of biological principles in such fields as forestry, plant and animal breeding, and conservation. The numerous illustrations average one to each one and seven-tenths pages of text material. A glossary, or diacritical markings of words in the index, chapter summaries and questions, and references for further reading are