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REPTILES COLLECTED IN THE VICINITY OF  
LAS VEGAS, NEW MEXICO

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While engaged in a study of amphibia in the region of Las Vegas, San Miguel County, New Mexico in the summer of 1940 (Bragg, 1941), the senior author made collections of reptiles as opportunity afforded. The following annotated list summarizes the field notes of the senior author. The determinations, unless otherwise listed, have been made by the junior author. The specimens have been placed in the University of Oklahoma Museum, Division of Zoology, and the numbers quoted are from that collection (UOMZ).

*Terrapene ornata* (Agassiz). This animal occurs sparingly in the short-grass area about Las Vegas. Only two specimens were seen; but on a trip south in late August, they became quite abundant on the road (highway 85) just south of the Pecos River, not far from Dilia, and continued to be plentiful as far south and east as Tucumcari.

It is of interest that this species is the only turtle which could be found at Las Vegas and the local residents knew of no other.

UOMZ 25170 from Las Vegas has been retained.

*Thamnophis radix haydenii*. This garter snake is extremely abundant about all permanent water and the larger temporary pools and ditches in the vicinity of Las Vegas. In such situations it feeds upon frogs and metamorphosing tadpoles. None were seen in the higher reaches of the valley of Gallinas Creek, but from Montezuma southward through Las Vegas, several specimens could be secured within a half hour along the stream by day or by night. It was also common about seepage pools and irrigation ditches on the high short-grass mesas and it entered the Transition Zone in the pinyon-juniper association along the valleys of streams.

Specimens from Las Vegas are numbered 25224-7.

*Thamnophis elegans vagrans* (Baird and Girard). One specimen (25201) was brought in by a student who collected it at El Porvenir, a small settlement on a branch of Gallinas Creek at about 8,000 feet altitude, some 15 miles north of Las Vegas. Nos. 25206 and 25231 were taken at Las Vegas.

*Diadophis punctatus arnyi* (Kennicott). Two specimens (25203-4) of this ring-neck snake were presented by a local resident who had

collected them from under a rock in Box Canyon, seven miles south of Las Vegas. The species may be quite rare here since this record is apparently the first for the state and represents a substantial range extension from the nearest reported locality, Trinidad, Las Animas County, Colorado (Blanchard, 1942). The specimens are too badly shriveled to facilitate accurate scale counts.

*Crotalus v. viridis* Rafinesque. Rattlesnakes are rare in the vicinity of Las Vegas as well as in the mountains to the north. None were taken alive. A single mutilated specimen (24967) was secured atop the mesa at the Las Vegas airport in August. The attendant mentioned that he had seen four other rattlers which had been killed near this same location during the past year.

*Gambelia w. wislizenii* (Baird and Girard). As might be expected from its type locality at Santa Fe, New Mexico, the leopard lizard occurs about Las Vegas. It seems, here as elsewhere, limited to areas of large rocks. It is not so numerous at the other lizards found, only two individuals having been seen during the summer. One of these was handled and examined closely while alive, but no specimens were secured for preservation.

*Holbrookia m. maculata* X *approximans*. Intergrades are to be expected in this region and the two specimens taken (25248, 25251), both from Las Vegas, are inadequate to allow a thorough analysis of the population. Other specimens were noted but at first were confused with *Sceloporus* and, therefore, no exact data on the local distribution and abundance are available.

*Sceloporus g. graciosus* Baird and Girard. As suggested by Smith (1946, p. 251) the range of this species may be more extensive than is known. A single specimen (25656) from Las Vegas extends the range somewhat southeastward.

*Sceloporus undulatus tristichus* Cope. This subspecies was very abundant both at Las Vegas and at Montezuma, 7 miles northwest of Las Vegas. It inhabits the plains and mesas as well as the wooded hillsides. It seemed to be more abundant than the horned lizard in the Transition Zone but the latter far outnumbered it on the plains.

Nos. 25250, 25657-8 are retained.

*Phrynosoma cornutum* (Harlan). This horned lizard was not found at Las Vegas and it is very doubtful if it occurs there. Two specimens were brought, however, from Clayton, Union County, about 130 miles to the northeast, where it was declared by its collector to be quite common.

*Phrynosoma douglassii hernandesi* (Girard). This is the most

abundant reptile (or at least the most frequently encountered) in the immediate vicinity of Las Vegas and it is quite common in the mountains for at least 40 miles to the north and west. Hundreds of specimens could have been secured for they were seen practically every day throughout the summer. They were most abundant in weedy vegetation along the banks of streams but they were also collected or seen high on the hillside among the pines (*Pinus ponderosa*) and scrub oak (*Quercus undulata*) and on the short-grass mesas north and east of the city. Young ones become very abundant in late July and early August. This suggests that in this species hatching or birth occurs in mid-summer.

A constant variation in color was noted between specimens of the short-grass area and of the wooded hillsides. The former were consistently much lighter than the latter; and the darker individuals did not change noticeably when kept in captivity for several days. The color distinction may be indicative of the impending intergradation with *P. d. ornatissimum*.

Specimens retained are from Mora County, near Mora (25207); San Miguel County, Las Vegas (25205, 25208-14); and Taos County, near Taos (25215). The specimen from Taos is poorly preserved but it measures 108 mm. snout to vent and 145 mm. overall. These figures are in excess of the maximum size reported by Smith (1946, p. 304-5).

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