



9-15-1966

Mammals of the Paunsagunt Plateau Region, Utah

Stephen N. Stephenson

Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Michigan State University, East Lansing

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn>

Recommended Citation

Stephenson, Stephen N. (1966) "Mammals of the Paunsagunt Plateau Region, Utah," *Great Basin Naturalist*: Vol. 26 : No. 1 , Article 7.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn/vol26/iss1/7>

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Western North American Naturalist Publications at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Basin Naturalist by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

NOTE

MAMMALS OF THE PAUNSAGUNT PLATEAU REGION, UTAH

Collecting and observation in the Paunsagunt Plateau, upper Sevier River valley of southern Utah, has disclosed some interesting and noteworthy mammal records. The data herein reported were obtained from October 1960 to July 1961 while the writer was park naturalist at Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah.

The Paunsagunt Plateau, located in south-central Utah in Garfield and Kane Counties, is oriented generally in a north-south direction and forms part of the divide between the Great Basin and Colorado River watersheds. Elevations range from approximately 7,500 to 9,200 feet. The upper Sevier River valley borders the Paunsagunt Plateau on the west and is bordered on the west by the Markagunt Plateau-Tushar Mountains uplands. The Sevier River flows northward for approximately 180 miles, thence west into the Great Basin.

In the vicinity of the Paunsagunt Plateau, the lower elevations support a mixed grass and sagebrush association which grades into piñon-juniper and/or ponderosa pine woodland in broken topography and at higher elevations. Ponderosa pine woodland is the dominant type over much of the Paunsagunt Plateau below elevations of 8,500 feet, above which it is replaced by white and douglas firs and spruce.

In the following species accounts, nomenclature follows that of Hall and Kelson (*Mammals of North America*, 2 vol. Ronald Press, New York, 1959). All measurements are given in millimeters.

Perognathus parvus. One specimen was collected April, 1961, 0.5 mile south of Highway 12, 4 miles west of Bryce Canyon National Park. Although it is within the range of the species, this is the first record of its occurrence on the Paunsagunt Plateau.

The specimen was taken in a snap trap in open, rolling rangeland supporting a low growth of black-sagebrush (*Artemisia nova*) and herbs. Elevation is ca. 7,800 feet. Pertinent data are: adult male; total length, 190; tail, 99; hind foot, 25. Specimen is in the Idaho State University collection. *Microtus montanus*. Durrant (*Mammals of Utah*, University of Kansas Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist., 6:1-549; 1952) includes this region within the range of *M. m. amosus* (Hall and Hayward). Specimens are recorded from the Boulder Mt., Aquarius Plateau area, Garfield County. Records for Kane County from "Steep Creek, Aquarius Plateau" are questionable, as the Aquarius Plateau does not extend into Kane County.

Two specimens of *M. montanus* were taken in a sedge swale, 0.25 mile south of Highway 12 near the Wilson Peak road. This is the first record for the species on the Paunsagunt Plateau. Vegetation of the collection site consists of a heavy growth of sedges and grass surrounded by open rangeland. Elevation is ca. 7,800 feet.

Our specimens are considerably smaller than measurements given by Durrant (*ibid.*) for *M. m. amosus* and are near the minima for *M. m. nexus*, the latter subspecies occurring to the west of the Paunsagunt Plateau on the Markagunt Plateau. Pertinent data are as follows: male, with caudus epididimus distended, 155-34-20; female, non-gravid, 150-33-20 (no ear measurements). Specimens are in the Idaho State University collection.

Sylvilagus idahoensis (Merriam). Previous records for this species in southern Utah have all been from west of the highlands formed by the Markagunt Plateau-Tushar Mountains complex. Two specimens were taken and a number of individuals observed near Panguitch, Utah, in the upper Sevier River valley, June 1961. The collection site is situated on the alluvial fan between the western margin of the Sevier Plateau and the Sevier River valley, 3 miles northeast of Panguitch. Elevation is ca. 6,800 feet.

The animals were first observed along Limekiln Creek, an ephemeral stream which drains from the Sevier Plateau. The banks of this stream and many small tributary gullies are lined with big-sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) with the

intervening areas being covered with a low growth of black-sagebrush. Burrowing seemed to be restricted to the former sites, although well-worn trails were conspicuous through the short black-sagebrush.

Investigation of several other localities south and west of Panguitch with similar vegetation failed to disclose additional colonies. Occurrence of the species in this area extends the range 30-40 air-line miles east across a highland area previously thought to be a barrier to them. However, this population may be disjunct as the species has not been reported elsewhere in the Sevier River valley, nor is there any indication that it occurs in the aforementioned highlands.

The specimens cited are in the Idaho State University museum. Pertinent data are as follows: adult male, total length, 265; ear, 52; foot, 65; adult female, 276-50-72; gravid with 5 10-mm. embryos (Stephen N. Stephenson, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan).