



3-31-1990

Noteworthy mammal distribution records for the Nevada Test Site

Philip A. Medica

Reynolds Electrical & Engineering Co., Inc., BECAMP, Box 495, Mercury, Nevada

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

Recommended Citation

Medica, Philip A. (1990) "Noteworthy mammal distribution records for the Nevada Test Site," *Great Basin Naturalist*. Vol. 50 : No. 1 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn/vol50/iss1/11>

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.

NOTEWORTHY MAMMAL DISTRIBUTION RECORDS FOR THE NEVADA TEST SITE

Philip A. Medica¹

Previous reports on the mammals of the Nevada Test Site, Nye County, Nevada (Jorgensen and Hayward 1965, O'Farrell and Emery 1976), indicate the presence of 46 species (42 terrestrial mammals and 4 bats).

Under a new project entitled Basic Environmental Compliance and Monitoring Program at the Nevada Test Site, two previously uncollected species of mammals were obtained, and a range extension for a third species was documented during the 1988 sampling season. Voucher specimens have been deposited at the Nevada State Museum in Las Vegas, Nevada.

***Mustela frenata nevadensis* Hall.**— Small-animal trapping was conducted on three consecutive nights in Rock Valley, Nye County, Nevada, elevation 1,035 m. (14–16 June 1988). On 15 June 1988 two *M. f. nevadensis* (an adult female and a juvenile female) were captured in Sherman traps. This record extends the known range on the Nevada Test Site approximately 58 km south of the previous known locality. Prior records reported *M. f. nevadensis* from the vicinity just south of Whiterock Spring in northwestern Yucca Flat in the Grayia-Lycium community (Jorgensen and Hayward 1965). The male *M. f. nevadensis* (4298 BYU) cited by Jorgensen and Hayward (1965) was collected on 15 May 1961, dead on the road, and measured 386-130-41-no ear measurement, no skull (Jorgensen, personal communication). I observed an additional juvenile live specimen in early April 1987 approximately 4 km southeast of Whiterock Spring; it was later released. Additional published records for *M. f. nevadensis* exist for the Spring Mountains, Clark County, Nevada, ~50 km southeast of Rock Valley, where weasels were observed but not collected (Burt

1934), and Arlemont, Esmeralda County, Nevada, 1,478 m, Fish Lake Valley (Hall 1951:290), which is ~210 km northwest of Rock Valley.

The juvenile female specimen collected in Rock Valley, 36°41'N, 116°11'W, (NSMLV-M-9202) measured 319-110-32-17 and weighed 91 g. It is important to note that Rock Valley lies at the northern edge of the Specter Range along the southern boundary of the Nevada Test Site. The vegetation consists primarily of *Larrea tridentata*, *Lycium andersonii*, *Lycium pallidum*, and *Ambrosia dumosa* (Romney et al. 1973). This region is located in an area that contains no above-ground permanent water source. The nearest source is a "tinaja," a small rock crevice with an opening approximately 20 cm that stores water collected from runoff; it is approximately 5 km west of the locality in which the *M. f. nevadensis* were collected.

***Urocyon cinereoargenteus scottii* Mearns.**— One specimen was collected dead on Holmes Road, 1.3 km northwest of the junction of Holmes Road and Stockade Wash Road, Nevada Test Site, Nye County, Nevada (37°10'N, 116°13'W), at 0700 hr on 2 August 1988. This immature female specimen (NSMLV-M-9203) measured 727-310-120-70 and weighed 1733 g. This location is at the southern end of Rainier Mesa at an elevation of 1,993 m and at the lower edge of pinyon-juniper habitat. Hall (1946:241) cited a trapper capturing gray fox at 2,194 m, 8.9 km northwest of Whiterock Spring during the winter of 1930–31 in pinyon timber. This locality was most likely on the top of Rainier Mesa or Aqueduct Mesa in the Belted Range on the Nevada Test Site. An additional sighting was recorded on Pahute Mesa by

¹Reynolds Electrical & Engineering Co., Inc., BECAMP, Box 495, Mercury, Nevada 89023.

D. Badger on 29 September 1986, 3.4 km north of Silent Canyon (37°19'N, 116°19'W) along Dead Horse Flats Road, Nevada Test Site, at an elevation of 2,102 m.

This specimen (NSMLV-M-9203) verifies the Hall (1946) record and substantiates Jorgensen and Hayward's (1965) contention that this species would eventually be collected on the Nevada Test Site, which falls within the distribution illustrated by Hall (1981).

Microdipodops megacephalus sabulonis Hall.— Three specimens were captured on Pahute Mesa, 0.3 km north of the junction of Pahute Mesa Road and Buckboard Mesa Road (37° 15' N, 116° 28' W) at an elevation of 1,919 m, one on 29 June 1988 and two on 19 August 1988. The two August specimens were preserved and provide the first voucher specimens for the Nevada Test Site, Nye County, Nevada. These specimens measured (NSMLV-M-9200) male, 147-75-25-10, 12 g; (NSMLV-M-9201) female, 150-75-24-10, 13 g. Jorgensen and Hayward (1965) reported collecting three specimens north of the Nevada Test Site in Kawich Valley (BYU 4485, 4486, 4487). Two additional records of *M. m. sabulonis* exist from the Nellis Bombing and Gunnery Range northeast of the Nevada Test Site. One specimen (BYU 4097) was collected 7 km north of the northeast boundary of the Nevada Test Site, and the second record was reported by Bradley and Moor (1975) from 8 km north of the northeast boundary of the Nevada Test Site. The two specimens of *M. m. sabulonis* reported here (NSMLV-M-9200, NSMLV-M-9201) extend the known distribution approximately 32.2 km southwest of Kawich Valley and on to Pahute Mesa on the Nevada Test Site.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was facilitated by funding from the U.S. Department of Energy through the

Basic Environmental Compliance and Monitoring Program. I thank D. Badger, L. Badger, P. Hopkin, D. Lopez, and M. Saethre for assistance in the field; C. Jorgensen and C. Pritchett for data pertaining to the specimens at Brigham Young University; R. B. Hunter and B. Maza for reviewing this manuscript; and M. J. O'Farrell for confirming the identification of all specimens reported. I also thank the Nevada Department of Wildlife for the necessary scientific collecting permit.

LITERATURE CITED

- BRADLEY, W. G., AND K. S. MOOR. 1975. Ecological studies of small vertebrates in Pu-contaminated study areas of NTS and TTR. Pages 151-185 in M. G. White and P. B. Dunaway, eds., The radioecology of plutonium and other transuranics in desert environments. Nevada Applied Ecology Group/Energy Research & Development Administration. Report NVO-153.
- BURT, W. H. 1934. The mammals of southern Nevada. Transactions of the San Diego Society of Natural History 7: 375-428.
- HALL, E. R. 1946. Mammals of Nevada. University of California Press, Berkeley. 710 pp.
- . 1951. American weasels. University of Kansas Publications, Museum of Natural History 4: 1-466.
- . 1981. The mammals of North America. John Wiley & Sons, New York. 2 vols. 1, 181 pp.
- JORGENSEN, C. D., AND C. L. HAYWARD. 1965. Mammals of the Nevada Test Site. Brigham Young University Science Bulletin 6: 1-81.
- O'FARRELL, T. P., AND L. A. EMERY. 1976. Ecology of the Nevada Test Site: a narrative summary and annotated bibliography. U.S. Energy Research Development Administration Report. NVO-167. 249 pp.
- ROMNEY, E. M., V. Q. HALE, A. WALLACE, O. R. LUNT, J. D. CHILDRESS, H. KAAZ, G. V. ALEXANDER, J. E. KINNEAR, AND T. L. ACKERMAN. 1973. Some characteristics of soil and perennial vegetation in northern Mojave desert areas of the Nevada Test Site. University of California, Los Angeles. Report 12-916. 340 pp.

Received 10 August 1989
Accepted 2 November 1989