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# FIRST RECORD OF PYGMY RABBITS (*BRACHYLAGUS IDAHOENSIS*) IN WYOMING

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ABSTRACT.—Pygmy rabbits are reported for the first time in southwestern Wyoming. The range for this species is thus extended 240 km and 145 km from the nearest records in Idaho and Utah, respectively.

Although the pygmy rabbit occupies much of the sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) habitat of the Great Basin, it has not been previously reported from Wyoming other than a single, unconfirmed observation described by Green and Flinders (1980a).

Between 11–20 October 1981, 6 specimens were collected (2 males, 4 females), 17 individuals were observed, and 2 skulls and numerous pellets were found at two sites in southwestern Wyoming. The first site was in South Fork Muddy Creek drainage, 8 km north and 8 km east of Carter, Uinta County, Wyoming (T17N R115W S4,5,6,33; T17N R116W S1,23, 24). The second site was along North Fork Muddy Creek drainage in Cumberland Flats, Lincoln and Uinta counties, Wyoming (T16N R118W S34; T19N R115W S19; T19N R116W S2,14). The two sites were geographically separated by the Hogback and Oyster Ridge highlands.

The nearest previously reported records of pygmy rabbits are from the west near Pocatello, Bannock County, Idaho (Davis 1939), and near Clarkston, Cache County, Utah (Durrant 1952). These two new locales extend the known range of *B. idahoensis* approximately 240 km to the southeast and 145 km to the northeast, respectively. In view of the rough mountainous topography and the apparent lack of habitat between known range and this range extension, the pygmy rabbits in Wyoming may be a disjunct population.

Our observations at both sites showed *B. idahoensis* primarily confined to dense stands of big sagebrush growing in deep soils of drainages and hollows. This concurs with findings reported by Grinnell et al. (1930), Fisher (1979), and Green and Flinders (1980b). We also observed sign and collected

two animals in a mixed sagebrush-greasewood (*Sarcobatus* spp.) habitat similar to that described by Davis (1939).

Mean external measurements of collected specimens were as follows:

Females (n = 4), total length, 265 mm; tail length, 23 mm; hind foot length, 78 mm; ear length, 53 mm.

Males (n = 2), total length, 238 mm; tail length, 21 mm; hind foot length, 77 mm; ear length, 55 mm.

The authors are presently engaged in a detailed study of distribution, habitat relationships, and taxonomic status of pygmy rabbits in Wyoming.

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