NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORDS FOR FIVE MAMMALS OF THE COASTAL PLAIN OF NORTH CAROLINA

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ABSTRACT. — New locality records are presented for five species of rodents from eastern North Carolina.

Few published distribution records exist for mammals in the coastal plain of North Carolina. Brimley (1944 to 1946) and Smith, Funderburg and Quay (1960) summarized the statewide distributions for all species of mammals but did not elaborate on those from the coastal plain region. Recently Paul (1965) reported the first record of *Blarina telmalestes* from North Carolina (Hyde County), a lower coastal plain site. Paradiso (1960) described a new subspecies of *Peromyscus leucopus* from the Cape Henry, Virginia, area and commented on its probable distribution on the outer banks of North Carolina. Funderburg (1961) recorded the presence of the muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) from New Hanover County. Aside from these scattered reports, little published knowledge exists relative to the mammalian fauna of this region.

It seemed worthwhile to present new information obtained from recent collections which modify currently understood distribution patterns. Hall and Kelson (1959) have summarized the distribution of North American mammals and it is relative to their distribution maps that these changes are suggested. These new records probably do not reflect changes in the established range but rather reveal the results of an increase in trapping effort and visual observations. The specimens referred to are deposited in the North Carolina State Museum (NCSM), Zoology Department Collections, North Carolina State University (NCS) or in various personal collections.

Marmota monax, woodchuck. Currently the nearest woodchucks are known only from the Coastal Plain of Virginia, immediately north of the North Carolina boundary. Sight records of woodchucks were reported to the author in 1961, 1962, and 1963 by W. L. Trent and Walter Gray, fisheries biologists working on the Roanoke River, Halifax and Hertford counties, North Carolina. Both individuals reported many sightings of this species in the spring of the year on both the north and south banks of the river and occasionally observed woodchucks swimming in the river. Two additional specimens are as follows: NCSM 256, Clayton, Johnston County; NCSM 257, Tillery, Halifax County. The Johnston County record (upper Coastal Plain) extends the known range of this species approximately 100 miles to the south.

Peromyscus leucopus, white-footed mouse. Rhoads and Young (1897) captured 12 specimens of *Peromyscus leucopus* from Chapanoke, Perquimanns County, and 10 specimens from Currituck, Currituck County. They noted that it was "the commonest species met with, being taken in all kinds of situations." Hall and Kelson (1959) list the Currituck records and Raleigh, Wake County, as peripheral. Although no other published records exist, the comment of Rhoads and Young (1897) on their abundance applies at least as far south as Hyde and Pitt counties, 50 to 75 miles south and east of the currently recorded range. This species is also common on the outer banks of North Carolina in Dare County (62 CLC, NCS uncatalogued). In this latter area and in the swampy regions of Hyde County, *Peromyscus leucopus* and *Peromyscus gossypinus* are commonly found together, while in drier sites only *Peromyscus leucopus* occurs. Additional records include: NCSM 127, 128, 129, and 343, Bertie County; NCSM 460, 461, 462, Greenville, Pitt County. Atkinson, Pender County, represents the southernmost record for *leucopus.* This specimen, NCS 1175, taken 4 December 1954, by James Burns.

Sigmodon hispidus, cotton rat. Hall and Kelson (1959) did not list the cotton rat from the coastal plain of North Carolina. Although its occurrence in Brunswick County, southeastern Virginia, Raleigh, North Carolina and the coastal regions of South Carolina was recorded. Brimley (1944-46) recorded the species from Beaufort, Brunswick and Craven counties, North Carolina and current records indicate the species to be common throughout the coastal plain area on the drier sites. Additional records include NCS 718, NCS 719, Camp Lejeune, Onslow County; NCSM 463, Greenville, Pitt County; NCSM 195 and 457, Wilmington, New Hanover County. The species is abundant in old fields throughout the upper coastal plain area.

Microtus pinetorum, pine vole. Hall and Kelson (1959) recorded no specimens of the pine vole from the coastal region of North Carolina with the exception of several voles taken in the northeasternmost county (Currituck. Hall and Kelson (1959) indicate a gap in the distribution of *M. pinetorum* in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina; the species occurring north, south and west of this region. The pine vole is generally uncommon in the coastal region, possibly because of the high water table and resulting wet habitat (Paul, manuscript in preparation) although it is locally numerous in some of the drier upper coastal plain sites. New records for this species include: NCSM 381, 3.8 mi. NNE South Mills, Camden County; NCS 306, Core Point, Currituck County; 1955-87 JBF (NCS uncatalogued), Carolina Beach, New Hanover County. This latter record was from a long leaf pine stand on a dry, sandy site. The maximum elevation in the Carolina Beach area is just a few feet above sea level. J. G. Boyette (pers. comm.) has taken large numbers of pine voles from the area around Falkland, Pitt County, an upland site.

Zapus hudsonius, meadow jumping mouse. The jumping mouse has

been collected in the Raleigh area by Brimley (1919) and more recently by Hester (Pers. comm.) near Wendell, Wake County, about 20 miles east of Raleigh. Hall and Kelson (1959), in following the monograph by Krutzsch (1959), have indicated that the probable range of *Zapus* includes most of the coastal plain region. Specimens were not examined by these authors except those taken from southeastern Virginia and the Raleigh area. Although it is possible that the jumping mouse does occur in this area, no record exists and its presence is somewhat doubtful. *Zapus* is apparently rare, even in the Raleigh area, and has seldom been taken in other regions of the Piedmont in North Carolina. Recent records (all Piedmont sites) include NCS 545, Raleigh, Wake County, and a captive specimen, not preserved, from Rougemont, Durham Co., was held by several students at North Carolina State University, July, 1946.

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