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# Noteworthy Herpetological Records for Southwestern Oklahoma

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For the past three decades, I have maintained field notes on the occurrence of amphibians and reptiles in southwestern Oklahoma. The most noteworthy are reported herein.

In this paper, the following abbreviations are used: AMNH = American Museum of Natural History, NYC; CUMZ = Cameron University Museum of Zoology, Lawton, OK; DOKARRS = Distribution of Oklahoma Amphibians and Reptiles by Recorded Sightings, Oklahoma Biological Survey, Norman; ECU = East Central University, Ada, OK; OMNH = Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, Norman; OSU = Oklahoma State University, Stillwater; USNM = United States National Museum, Washington, DC; UTEP = University of Texas, El Paso; WAC = W.A. Carter; WMNH = Webster Museum of Natural History, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, OK; WMWR = Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Cache, OK.

**Smallmouth Salamander, *Ambystoma texanum*** (1). In 1949, Bragg (2) reported that although this species was found "over the whole eastern half" of Oklahoma, it was "not known west of Cleveland County" in central Oklahoma and was "not a member of the biota of the mixed grass prairies." In the 1960s, records of the smallmouth salamander began to appear sporadically at more westerly locations in the state. By 1991, its range was mapped by Conant and Collins (3) to be along the southern edge of Oklahoma westward as far as Cotton County, and there are numerous other unpublished records for southwest Oklahoma. The earliest of these was a specimen (OMNH 26039) collected 3.2 km west of Temple, Cotton County, by W.F. Hudson on 10 Mar 1951. Another (WAC 1536) was taken 20 Oct 1965 by S. Moore in Elgin, Comanche County (pers. comm., W.A.

Carter, 17 Mar 1991). On 23 Sep 1968, F. Williams caught 21 specimens (CUMZ 6) in a basement in Lawton, same county. Other museum records (first number in parens is number of specimens) from Comanche County include 11 Jun 1972, H.R. Hopkins, Lawton (1; CUMZ 7); 25 Apr 1973, J. Prince, Lawton (1; CUMZ 31); 6 Oct 1973, M. Adams, Fort Sill (1; CUMZ 36); 10 Oct 1973, G.C. Barfield, 5 km south of Elgin (4; CUMZ 32); 15 Oct 1973, L.E. McGee, Fort Sill (1; CUMZ 33); F.D. Bryce (4), 22 May 1976, WMWR, nine individuals collected, two preserved, of which CUMZ 47 is one; 2 May 1980, R. Wood, Lawton (1; CUMZ 44); 28 Oct 1981, L. Payne, Fort Sill (1; CUMZ 46); 10 Apr 1984, J.D. Tyler, Lawton (1; CUMZ 48); and 25 Mar 1986, L.E. Holmes, Lawton (1; CUMZ 49). During 1991, Caldwell, et al. (5) collected this species at Fort Sill during a herpetological survey. From 23 Mar 1972 to 13 Apr 1993, there were 22 additional sightings in Comanche County, totaling more than 50 individuals. In Cotton County, C.C. Carpenter reported this species from 14.5 km west of Walters on 7 Jul 1982 (DOKARRS 03317) and collected two specimens on 9 Jul 1980, 5.5 km north, 12 km east of Randlett (OMNH 32915–16); and on 11 Jul 1984, he observed one 4 km north, 12 km east of Randlett (DOKARRS 08264).

**Gray Treefrog, *Hyla versicolor*** or *H. chrysoscelis*. [See (6) for discussion of close taxonomic relationship of these species.] This eastern frog was apparently first collected in southwestern Oklahoma (USNM 11828) sometime between 19 Feb and 1 Jul 1868, in the vicinity of "Old Fort Cobb" (7) in modern-day Caddo County by Edward Palmer, an army surgeon-naturalist. The next area record published was apparently that of an adult, nonbreeding female (CUMZ 169) taken by D.C. Parmley 9 km south of Cache, Comanche County, on 22 Jul

1973 (8). Recent records include a juvenile caught on 12 Jul 1978 near East Cache Creek, 1.6 km north of Walters, Cotton County, by C.C. Carpenter (DOKARRS 01886); another juvenile taken by Carpenter 4 km north, 12 km east of Randlett, Cotton County, on 7 Jul 1982 (DOKARRS 03340); and another he captured near that location on 9 Jul 1986 (DOKARRS 10008); an adult (CUMZ 50) collected by D.L. Fitzgerald in Rush Springs, Grady County, on 10 Sep 1988; and another (CUMZ 51) taken on 13 Jul 1991 by G.A. Clyde, Jr, and J.D. Tyler 5 km north and 17.5 km west of Walters, Cotton County.

**False Map Turtle**, *Graptemys pseudogeographica*. The western extremity of this species' range lies in southwestern Oklahoma. Five specimens collected from Medicine Creek at Fort Sill, Comanche County, during Nov 1944 by H. Epstein (9, 10) measured 101-140 mm and are in the AMNH (Nos. 65522-24 and 65526 are adult males, No. 65525 is young female). Recent occurrences in this part of the state include a female and juvenile caught in a seine by M.A. Wassell 16 km east northeast of Terrall, Jefferson County, on 11 Jul 1978 (DOKARRS 01855); one taken by C. Clark near the Red River 6.5 km southwest of Waurika, Jefferson County, on 9 Jul 1980 (DOKARRS 01963); a juvenile caught on the same date by L. Shaffner (DOKARRS 01964) 16 km east southeast of Randlett, Cotton County; two specimens collected by J. Pigg and others in the Red River southwest of Waurika on 9 Jun 1980 (OMNH 35228,-29); four collected by Pigg (11) from the Red River about 3.2 km south of Terrall in 1981 (WMNH 278-86); another specimen Pigg captured in the Red River southwest of Waurika that same year (WMNH 279-86); Pigg captured an additional individual (OSU-R-4976) in the same general location on 1 Jun 1983; a juvenile examined during summer of 1984 by F.D. Bryce at Lake Ellsworth, Comanche County (pers. comm, 17 June 1985); one specimen was seen basking in East Cache Creek 1.6 km north of Walters, Cotton County, by L.L. Choate and J.D. Tyler on 25 Mar 1985; four adults collected from the same creek at Fort Sill by

Caldwell and others (5) during 1991; and I seined one from the Red River about 6.5 km southeast of Terrall on 5 Sep 1998. The westernmost occurrences known were in the Washita River near Clinton, Custer county on 4 Aug 2000. I caught an adult 1 km north, 6.5 km east of town. The next day, D.C. Tyler saw a half-grown juvenile 3 km west of Clinton.

**Three-toed Box Turtle**, *Terrapene carolina triunguis*. Carpenter (12) published the westernmost records for this species in the state from Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County on 5 Apr 1957 and near Cogar in Canadian County on 11 May 1957. In 1981, Tyler and Parmley (13) mentioned one sight record and three museum specimens for Comanche County, two specimens from Stephens County, and a sighting in Grady County. The earliest of these was 28 Apr 1969, when M.K. Wood collected an adult male (JDT 84) 6.5 km north, 6.5 km west of Duncan, Stephens County. An undated specimen at OSU (OSU-R-4603) was collected by B.J. Bollinger 8 km north and 11 km east of Bray, Grady County. The following records will help to clarify the distributional pattern of this species along the western fringe of its range. I collected a male (JDT 122) on 29 May 1977, 19 km southwest of Chickasha, Grady County, and a female (CUMZ 15) in Lawton, Comanche County, on 10 May 1981; S.M. Secor identified one (DOKARRS 03049) 1.6 km south of Sterling, Comanche County, on 15 May 1982; a photograph of an adult male in WMWR, Comanche County, was taken by F.D. Bryce on 7 Jul 1982 and reproduced on page 36 of the *Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge Annual Narrative Report for 1982* (14); I caught a juvenile female (CUMZ 18) in Lawton on 29 May 1985; L.L. Choate saw one in WMWR on 12 Jun 1985 (pers. comm, 16 Jun 1985); I caught one (CUMZ 20) in Lawton on 20 Jun 1997 and observed another 8 km southwest of Chickasha, Grady County, on 7 Oct 1997. The WMWR records are farther west than any others known to date.

**Cottonmouth**, *Agkistrodon piscivorus*. This

eastern snake was unknown in southwest Oklahoma until the 1960s. The earliest known specimens were collected on 4 Aug 1965, when W.A. Carter and others (15) retrieved several (UTEP 15181-86) from East Cache Creek 3.2 km east of Geronimo, Comanche County. In early June 1966, G. Flatt caught one (OMNH 34616) 5 km west of Temple, Cotton County, and on 27 Jun 1966, J.T. Self took a specimen (OMNH 34615) at that same location. C.C. Carpenter found a dead adult (OMNH 34659) along Beaver Creek near Sugden, Jefferson County, on 6 Jul 1968. W.A. Carter, K.L. Heacock, and I collected or saw this species in Cotton County on 18 and 19 Aug 1969 at the following locations: Deep Red Creek, 5 km north of Randlett, one large adult (UTEP 15212, incorrectly labeled "3 mi E, 5 mi N Randlett") of two observed; East Cache Creek, 5 km west of Temple, large adult; West Cache Creek, 13 km west of Temple, at least 10 specimens, most approximately 45 cm in length, but one large adult was in excess of 90 cm (UTEP 15204-09 are from this series, but the location was incorrectly labeled "3 mi W of Temple"), and four others seen at this site included two mature adults. Carter sent several of these live specimens to H.K. Gloyd at the University of Arizona for inclusion in his monograph on the genus (16). Most specimens from the latter site were returned to UTEP (see museum numbers above) except two that were catalogued into the USNM (Nos. 167522-23 are WAC 2580-81) devoid of collectors' names and with the same erroneous location of "3 mi W of Temple." F.D. Bryce and I captured four medium-sized specimens in East Cache Creek 3 km east of Geronimo, Comanche County, on 14 Jun 1974. J.M. Cooper saw five cottonmouths at a slough near West Cache Creek 13 km west of Cookietown, Cotton County, on 14 Sep 1977 (pers. comm., 15 Sep 1977). C.C. Carpenter collected a juvenile (DOKARRS 08260) on 11 Jul 1984 near West Cache Creek 4 km north, 12 km east of Randlett, Cotton County. A live juvenile cottonmouth was captured at Fort Sill, Comanche County, on 8 or 9 Oct 1985, and given to F.D. Bryce (pers. comm., 15 Feb

2000); as of April 2000, the specimen, approximately a meter long, was still alive in Las Cruces, NM, and a photograph (CUMZ 204) taken in the summer of 1999 is on file. On 24 Jun 1987, J.S. Shackford and I found a dead adult 3.2 km east of Geronimo, Comanche County. R.L. Hale collected an adult (CUMZ 194) in Aug 1991, 9 km south, 3.5 km east of Lawton, Comanche County. On 21 Sep 1997, L.M. Cofer saw an adult in East Cache Creek, Lawton (pers. com, 22 Sep 1997). P.A. Stewart, C.J. Cross, and I saw three medium-sized individuals in the Red River about 4 km south, 4 km east of Terral, Jefferson County, on 5 Sep 1998 and collected one (CUMZ 203).

**Prairie Rattlesnake**, *Crotalus viridis*. Webb's (17) easternmost records for this species in southwestern Oklahoma were from Lone Wolf in northwest Kiowa County, published in 1902 by VanVleet (18) and another in (approximately) southeast Beckham County collected by R.B. Marcy and G.B. McClellan on 5 Jun 1852 (19); the location was cited as the "Wichita [sic] Mountains," but according to their itinerary, this expedition on that date was along the North Fork of the Red River several km north of present-day Granite. Except for Harmon and Greer counties, Webb (17) mentioned no other locations for southwestern Oklahoma. Webb and Ortenburger (20) listed this species for the WMWR in Comanche County, but this was an error (see 17, p. 216). However, on 27 Aug 1985, herpetologist F.D. Bryce took a photograph of an adult female (CUMZ 205) in the WMWR that was reproduced on page 41 of the *Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge Annual Narrative Report* for 1985 (21). This report (21; p. 40-41) mentions a 150-cm specimen killed at nearby Fort Sill "one month" earlier, the skin of which was examined by Bryce (pers. comm., 15 Feb 2000). These are the easternmost records known in Oklahoma. Between 20 and 30 May 1973, W.S. Bartush collected one specimen in the vicinity of Eldorado, Jackson County (pers. comm., Jul 1973). D.C. Overdeer (pers. comm., 26 Jul 1977) collected a specimen 107 cm long 5 km north, 2.5 km east of Eldorado

and another (OSU-R-3846) 8 km north, 2.5 km east of Eldorado, both on 23 Apr 1977; in that same month, he captured two others in a field "N of Eldorado" (DOKARRS 09736). Overdeer (22) reported that this species was "common" in the mesquite grasslands of southwestern Oklahoma. On 23 May 1977, J.W. Ault, III, saw a large adult on a road 8 km north, 2.5 km east of Eldorado (pers. comm., Jun 1977).

These records augment our knowledge of the distribution of these herptiles in the southwestern Oklahoma counties. This information will be useful to wildlife managers and others in making decisions impacting the ecology of these species.

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