

Class Amphibia

Order Anura - Frogs and Toads

Family Pelobatidae - Spadefoot Toads

Hurter's Spadefoot, *Scaphiopus holbrooki hurteri*

The spadefoot is fairly common on the northern part of Padre Island and on all of Mustang Island. It is seldom seen except for brief periods following heavy rains in the late spring and early summer. Moore (1976) observed reproductive behavior in spadefoots on Mustang Island following 1.8 inches of rain in April. Spadefoots emerge from their burrows and breed in flooded fields which are densely vegetated, at which time the calling of males can be heard long distances. The toads call while floating in water or sitting on floating objects. During this time, a few may be seen crossing roadways, but spadefoots soon retreat underground for extended periods.

Couch's Spadefoot, *Scaphiopus couchi*

A single specimen has been collected from Padre Island. It was taken from a fresh water pond area along Park Road 22 north of the entrance to the National Seashore.

Family Bufonidae - Toads

Texas Toad, *Bufo speciosus*

This is an abundant toad on Mustang Island where it can be seen most warm evenings crossing roadways and foraging under street lights in and around Port Aransas. In Moore's (1976) study of breeding anurans, this was the most common. The Texas toad gathers in numbers to breed in open ponds without vegetation. This species occurred with *Bufo valliceps*, but *B. speciosus* was more common in drier areas than was *B. valliceps*. The Texas toad is abundant south to the area of Corpus Christi Pass but then becomes rare on north Padre Island. Some have been collected from a fresh water pond area

north of the National Seashore boundary on Park Road 22.

Gulf Coast Toad, *Bufo valliceps*

The Gulf coast toad is listed by Conant (1975) as a resident of coastal prairies and Gulf barrier island beaches. This toad has been observed around residential areas in Port Aransas on Mustang Island. Moore (1976) found *Bufo valliceps* more common in residential areas with well-watered lawns where they showed an affinity for concrete slabs under which they often burrowed. The calls of this species were infrequent when compared to those of *B. speciosus*. Moore (1976) stated that *B. valliceps* is less tolerant of arid conditions than *B. speciosus*. The Gulf coast toad has not been recorded from Padre Island.

Family Hylidae - Treefrogs

Green Treefrog, *Hyla cinerea*

Treefrogs are common on Mustang Island in Port Aransas in residential areas, especially around well-watered vegetation. Moore (1976) observed treefrogs following heavy rainfall. Specimens have been collected from other areas of Mustang Island, vegetated dunes of Padre Island near Bob Hall Pier, and from a fresh water pond area north of the National Seashore boundary on Park Road 22. Others were seen and heard near the Malaquite Beach area on the northern end of Padre Island.

Family Ranidae - True Frogs

Rio Grande Leopard Frog, *Rana berlandieri*

The leopard frog is uncommon on Padre and Mustang Islands. Leopard frogs have been reported seen and collected near Park Road 22 north of the National Seashore boundary on Padre Island. Only two specimens are known from Mustang Island.

Class Reptilia

Order Crocodylia - Alligators and Crocodiles

Family Alligatoridae - Alligators and Caimans

American Alligator, *Alligator mississippiensis*

An alligator was found in Port Aransas on Mustang Island crossing a road near the western edge of town in 1976. The alligator was taken to a game warden and removed to a wildlife refuge. Although alligators are found on the mainland, their occurrence is rare and accidental to the barrier island.

Order Testudines - Turtles

Family Chelydridae - Snapping Turtles

Common Snapping Turtle, *Chelydra serpentina serpentina*

The occurrence of the snapping turtle is accidental on Padre Island. Only one specimen has been found, this was a live one washed up on the beach near the Malaquite area. It probably had been carried with river runoff and flood debris into the Gulf of Mexico and then deposited by the currents on the beach.

Family Kinosternidae - Mud and Musk Turtles

Yellow Mud Turtle, *Kinosternon flavescens flavescens*

The mud turtle is uncommon on Mustang Island where it was found in small numbers in stock ponds just south of Port Aransas and from the southern end of Mustang Island. It is also uncommon on Padre Island. A few sightings have been recorded from the northern end of Padre Island National Seashore. It is possible that mud turtles may have been introduced on the islands.

Family Emydidae - Box and Water Turtles

Ornate Box Turtle, *Terrapene ornata ornata*

Only two specimens of the box turtle were seen during the Survey, and both were dead on the highway about three and four miles south of Port Aransas.

If the box turtle is a resident of the two islands, it is rare. The box turtles, along with the Texas tortoise, *Gopherus berlandieri*, are occasionally kept as pets. It is possible that the two box turtles, and one tortoise also found dead on the road, may have been escaped or released pets from Port Aransas.

Red-Eared Turtle, *Chrysemys scripta elegans*

The red-eared turtle was at one time uncommon on both islands, but is now commonly seen. During the early 1960's it was taken only by seining stock ponds. In wetter climatic cycles this is the most common turtle, often sighted crossing the roads in the National Seashore near the North District Ranger Station and Malaquite Beach, and on the streets of Port Aransas on Mustang Island. It is possible that these turtles were also introduced onto the islands, although they would be the most likely to occur naturally of all those that have been found.

Texas Diamondback Terrapin, *Malaclemys terrapin littoralis*

The known range of the diamondback terrapin is given by Conant (1975) from western Louisiana at least as far south on the Texas coast as Brownsville. The diamondback terrapin has been reported from Nueces Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, and Stedman Island in Redfish Bay near the northern end of Mustang Island. Although the terrapin has not been reported from Padre or Mustang Islands, it would be expected to occur in the brackish or salt water environments of the barrier islands.

Family Testudinidae - Gopher Tortoises

Texas Tortoise, *Gopherus berlandieri*

The tortoise is rare on Padre and Mustang Islands, and the specimens found there may have been purposefully introduced. A single tortoise was found dead

on the highway approximately three miles south of Port Aransas in 1965. The specimen had a large splotch of red paint on its carapace which suggests that it may have been a former pet. A dead Texas tortoise was found on the beach near the North District Ranger Station on the northern end of Padre Island. A more recent observation in 1972 was of a live tortoise seen on Padre Island on the north side of the Mansfield Ship Channel, an end-of-the-road spot for fishermen and campers.

Family Cheloniidae - Sea Turtles

Atlantic Green Turtle, *Chelonia mydas mydas*

The occurrence of the green turtle is uncommon along Padre and Mustang Islands. Live individuals are found more often in the bays, the Laguna Madre and Redfish Bay, than on Gulf barrier beaches. Numbers of this species have been greatly reduced by fishing pressures because of its succulent flesh. The green turtle is at present being considered for "threatened" designation under the Endangered Species Act.

Atlantic Hawksbill Turtle, *Eretmochelys imbricata imbricata*

The hawksbill turtle is an endangered species, which occurs uncommonly along Padre and Mustang Islands barrier beaches. Those live individuals found are usually juveniles. Numbers of hawksbills have been greatly reduced by fishing pressures. The scutes of the hawksbills are used in making tortoise shell objects and ornaments.

Atlantic Loggerhead Turtles, *Caretta caretta caretta*

This sea turtle is common along Gulf beaches of Padre and Mustang Islands and offshore areas. A survey of stranded individuals on Padre and Mustang Islands indicated the populations were subadult and composed almost entirely of females. The loggerhead is at present being considered for "threatened"

designation under the Endangered Species Act. A record of a loggerhead nesting on South Padre Island occurred in the spring of 1977.

Atlantic Ridley, *Lepidochelys kempi*

Dead stranded individuals occur uncommonly on Padre and Mustang Islands. The Ridley is an endangered species. Nesting sites are located along the Mexican Gulf coast 200 miles south of the Rio Grande River. A live Ridley hatchling washed ashore on Mustang Island at Port Aransas in the summer of 1977.

Family Dermochelidae - Leatherback Marine Turtles

Atlantic Leatherback, *Dermochelys coriacea coriacea*

Records of leatherback turtles on Mustang and Padre Islands are usually dead individuals stranded on Gulf beaches. Their occurrence is uncommon, and their status is endangered.

Order Squamata - Lizards and Snakes

Family Gekkonidae - Geckos

Mediterranean Gecko, *Hemidactylus turcicus turcicus*

This is an immigrant species established in south Texas seaports and now reported from many localities in the Gulf coastal states. Mediterranean geckos have been sighted in buildings in Port Aransas on Mustang Island. This gecko has also been recorded from Corpus Christi, on the mainland, but not yet from Padre Island.

Family Iguanidae - Iguanids

Green Anole, *Anolis carolinensis carolinensis*

The green anole is reported from Mustang Island in the town of Port Aransas. They are associated with residential buildings and well-watered gardens and vegetation.

Keeled Earless Lizard, *Holbrookia propinqua propinqua*

Conant (1975) reports this lizard as indigenous to loose, wind-blown sands and dunes and barrier beach islands of southern Texas and the Mexican coast. The earless lizard appears to be the most abundant reptile on the two islands. It is seen frequently on warmer days on the back beach, in the fore-dunes, and across the vegetated barrier flats in the more open areas where dense grasses do not impede its ability to run.

Southern Spot-Tailed Earless Lizard, *Holbrookia lacerata subcaudalis*

Only one specimen of this species has been collected from Padre Island. Its habitat is usually arid mesquite, prickly pear associations. The single lizard was caught in the vicinity of the Dunn Ranch on the western side of the island. It was in the grasslands near the edge of the mud flats.

Texas Horned Lizard, *Phrynosoma cornutum*

The horned lizard was fairly common at one time on the northern half of Padre Island and on all of Mustang Island where it could be found in areas around the foredunes and across the more open areas of the vegetated barrier flats. It is occasionally seen crossing roadways, and it was found in and around inhabited areas of Port Aransas.

Family Teiidae - Whiptails

Six-Lined Racerunner, Prairie Racerunner, *Cnemidophorus sexlineatus viridis*

This species seems partial to sandy soils throughout its distribution in Texas, and it is considered one of the more common lizards on both Padre and Mustang Islands. It is abundant in the foredunes and across the vegetated barrier flats. The racerunner is extremely wary, fast, and difficult to capture.

~~Spotted Whiptail~~, Texas Spotted Whiptail, *Cnemidophorus gularis gularis*

Spotted whiptails have been seen and collected on spoil islands in the ~~Upper Laguna Madre~~ which borders the northern end of Padre Island. Others have been sighted on Padre Island (pers. comm., B. Chapman, Corpus Christi State University).

~~Family~~ Scincidae - Skinks

Great Plains Skink, *Eumeces obsoletus*

This species is secretive in habits, and although seldom seen it is considered common to both islands. The Great Plains skink is most often found by turning over boards and other objects which are flat against the ground.

Ground Skink, *Leiolopisma laterale*

A single specimen has been recorded from a building in Port Aransas on Mustang Island. The occurrence of the ground skink is considered rare on the two islands. The ground skink was possibly at one time a common inhabitant in the oak mott areas that were once more abundant on Padre Island.

Family Anguidae - Glass Lizards and Alligator Lizards

Western Slender Glass Lizard, *Ophisaurus attenuatus attenuatus*

This is the second most common lizard on both Padre and Mustang Islands. They are very often seen during daylight hours in vegetated dunes and grasslands. This lizard is a legless species which readily "swims" or burrows through soft sand. The slender glass lizards can be found occasionally by turning over boards or other objects which are flat against the ground or by searching through leaf litter.

Family Colubridae - Colubrids

Diamondback Water Snake, *Natrix rhombifera rhombifera*

A specimen was found dead on Park Road 22 near fresh water ponds on the northern end of Padre Island. The diamondback water snake is probably more common during periods of high rainfall and less common in drought conditions. This snake may easily be mistaken for the cottonmouth, *Agkistrodon piscivorus*, when seen in the field and a specimen is not in hand for closer examination.

Gulf Coast Salt Marsh Snake, *Natrix fasciata clarki*

The Gulf salt marsh snake normally occurs in a salt or brackish water habitat. While none have actually been recorded from the barrier islands, they have been reported from Ransom and Stedman Islands in Redfish Bay near Mustang Island. It is very probably that these occur on the western edge of the islands.

Checkered Garter Snake, *Thamnophis marcianus marcianus*

The checkered garter snake is a common species found on both Padre and Mustang Islands in the vegetated barrier flats. It is more common in moist habitats. It and the glossy snake, *Arizona elegans arenicola*, can be found occasionally by turning over boards and other objects which are flat against the ground. The checkered garter snake and the coachwhip, *Masticophis flagellum testaceus*, may also be found moving around actively during daylight hours.

Gulf Coast Ribbon Snake, *Thamnophis proximus orarius*

The ribbon snake is common on both islands, but it has been reported more often from Mustang Island. It prefers moist habitats. The species has been recorded from the Dunn Ranch area and on the northern end of Padre Island as well as being a common inhabitant of Mustang Island.

~~Eastern Hognose~~ Snake, *Heterodon platyrhinos*

~~During~~ the early 1960's only a single specimen of the hognose snake was taken ~~on the~~ forebeach about 10 miles south of Bob Hall Pier. Brown (1950) reports records of *Heterodon platyrhinos* from St. Joseph's and Matagorda Islands ~~which~~ are north of Mustang Island. The hognose snake is now common on ~~Padre and~~ Mustang Islands. There have been several reports of "puff adders" by ~~National~~ Seashore visitors following heavy summer rains. When their burrows are ~~flooded~~, the hognoses have been reported on the beach area in front of the ~~foredunes~~. The hognose is one of the more common snakes on Mustang Island, ~~particullarly~~ around the town of Port Aransas which abounds with toads, the common food item of these snakes.

~~Western~~ Coachwhip, *Masticophis flagellum testaceus*

~~The~~ common coachwhip has been observed in vegetated areas the entire length of Padre and Mustang Islands. It is the most common snake seen active during the daytime and was on occasion seen climbing in low shrubbery and in trees. The coachwhip is extremely wary and fast. Specimens of the Mexican racer, *Coluber constrictor oaxaca*, sighted on Padre Island were probably juveniles of the coachwhip and may have been confused with them. Although it occurs on the mainland, the racer has not been substantiated as part of the vertebrate fauna of Mustang and Padre Islands.

Texas or Mexican Glossy Snake, *Arizona elegans arenicola*

~~This~~ species is found on both islands, although it is not as common now as it was during the dry conditions of the late 1950's and early 1960's. It is seldom seen during daylight hours except when found beneath boards and other hiding places. Dead ones are found on highways, and at nighttime the glossy snake is easily taken alive by watching for them crossing the roadway.

Sonora Kingsnake or Desert Kingsnake, *Lampropeltis getulus splendida*

The kingsnake is common on Mustang Island, particularly around the town of Port Aransas and the city dump, probably due to the abundant supply of rats and mice. They are seen during daylight hours but are much more active nocturnally.

Milk Snake, *Lampropeltis triangulum*

The milk snake was uncommon during the dry weather of the early 1960's, and the species was found during this time only in the oak motts of north Padre Island. Three specimens were observed crossing the roads of Nueces County Park #2 and adjacent residential areas at nighttime. The milk snake is currently very common on Padre Island. It has been seen in numbers on Park Road 22 in mid-spring at night. There have been frequent reports of this snake near the Malaquite Beach area and North District Ranger Station area. Only two specimens have been seen on Mustang Island, both on the southern end near Corpus Christi Pass in mid-spring. The species is closest to the Mexican milk snake, *Lampropeltis triangulum annulata*, but differences in coloration and scalation indicate that a deme may be present on the barrier

(A. H. Chaney, pers. comm.) islands. This problem requires more study. The red, black, and yellow rings of the milk snake probably cause the species to be mistaken for the similarly colored coral snake, *Micrurus fulvius tenere*. Sightings of the coral snake on Padre Island have not been verified. Although the coral snake is found in Flour Bluff on the mainland opposite north Padre Island, it occurs rarely, if at all, on the barrier island.

Family Viperidae - Pit Vipers

Western Massasauga, *Sistrurus catenatus tergeminus*

This species of rattlesnake is considered common on Padre Island but

uncommon on Mustang Island. The massasauga has been seen during daylight hours but is more common nocturnally. The massasauga was seen in numbers along Park Road 22 on the north end of Padre Island in mid-spring. It has not been reported from Mustang Island but is suspected to be present in less abundance.

Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, *Crotalus atrox*

The diamondback rattlesnake is very common on both islands from the foredunes through the vegetated barrier flats and around the oak motts of north Padre Island. A few were seen in and around the residential areas of Port Aransas and South Padre Island. The species is found frequently dead on roadways.

Class Mammalia

Order Marsupialia - Pouched Mammals

Family Didelphidae - New World Opossums

Virginia Opossum, *Didelphis virginiana texensis*

The opossum is common on Mustang Island near residential areas of Port Aransas. One opossum has been sighted on Padre Island on the north end near a residential development. Other than these sightings, the opossum should be considered uncommon in the natural vegetation of the barrier islands. As development and residential areas increase on the island, the opossum population will probably also increase.

Order Insectivora - Shrews and Moles

Family Talpidae - Moles

Eastern Mole, *Scalopus aquaticus alleni*

The eastern mole is fairly common on the northern part of Padre Island and uncommon on Mustang Island. It was not found during the Survey on the south end of Padre Island. Its presence is easy to determine by seeing the long serpentine ridges of sand left on the surface of the ground after moles have burrowed underneath. A single specimen was found by Baccus (1977).

Order Chiroptera - Bats

Family Molossidae - Free-tailed Bats

Mexican Freetail Bat, *Tadarida mexicana brasiliensis*

The freetail bat has been reported by residents of Padre and Mustang Islands to roost occasionally inside sheds and other buildings in small numbers. These bats are probably vagrants as no known permanent roosting places could be found during the Survey.

Order Edentata - Sloths and Armadillos

Family Dasypodidae - Armadillos

Nine-Banded Armadillo, *Dasypus novemcinctus mexicanus*

There is only one record of an armadillo on Padre Island and this was a dead individual found in the campground at Malaquite Beach. Their occurrence is considered rare on the barrier island, although they do occur commonly on the mainland.

Order Lagomorpha - Hares, Rabbits, and Pikas

Family Leporidae - Rabbits and Hares

Black-Tailed Jackrabbit, California Jackrabbit, *Lepus californicus merriami*

The jackrabbit is an abundant resident of the vegetated northern half of Padre Island and is common on Mustang Island. It is less common on South Padre Island where vegetation is much sparser. The jackrabbit is seen commonly through the foredunes and on the vegetated barrier flats. It occurs on occasion along back beach areas. The jackrabbit is most active at nighttime but it can be seen also during daylight hours when disturbed from its retreats.

Eastern Cottontail, *Sylvilagus floridanus chapmani*

The cottontail is much less abundant than its larger relative, the jackrabbit. It may be seen only on occasion in the vegetated barrier flats in and around the oak motts on north Padre Island and rarely in small areas of prickly pear and mesquite habitat on the northern bay side of Mustang Island. Another sighting has been recorded from a densely vegetated area south of Malaquite Beach near fresh water ponds.

Order Rodentia - Gnawing Mammals

Family Sciuridae - Squirrels

Spotted Ground Squirrel, *Spermophilus spilosoma arnectens*

The spotted ground squirrel is abundant in the dune areas and barrier flats of both islands. It is active during the day, and it is very wary. The ground squirrel can usually be seen only at a distance, and its whistle-like calls will reveal its nearby presence when not seen. Burrows of the spotted ground squirrel are found in foredunes and other vegetated areas. Baccus (1977) reported the spotted ground squirrel as one of the most common rodents on the northern part of Padre Island. He stated that the ground squirrel prefers sparse vegetation and its holes are commonly found along the back slopes of the dunes. Sightings of the Mexican ground squirrel, *Spermophilus mexicana*, have been reported from Mustang and Padre Islands; however, these reports have not been verified or substantiated with specimens, and the Mexican ground squirrel is not considered part of the fauna of the islands.

Family Geomyidae - Pocket Gophers

South Texas Pocket Gopher, *Geomys personatus personatus*

This subspecies of pocket gopher is restricted to Padre and Mustang Islands, although other races are common across parts of southeastern Texas. This gopher is usually reddish-brown in coloration but specimens on Mustang Island have been seen which are blotched with large patches of white. The pocket gopher is seldom seen on the surface of the ground but their abundant mounds across the barrier flats, on the foredunes, and along roadsides reveal their common occurrence underground. Burrows tunneled under paved roads from one side to the other cause cave-in damage which explains the linear patches in the paved roads on the islands.

Family Heteromyidae - Heteromyids

Merriam Pocket Mouse, *Perognathus flavus merriami*

Bailey (1905) reported Merriam's pocket mouse from Padre Island. Its present occurrence, if at all on southern Padre Island, is considered rare.

Padre Island Kangaroo Rat, *Dipodomys compactus compactus*

Schmidly and Hendricks (1976) elevated *Dipodomys ordii compactus* from a subspecific rank to a species rank. This rodent is common in the foredune areas of Padre and Mustang Islands and prefers areas of deep, sandy soil with sparse vegetation. Burrows may also be found on the back slopes of dunes, in blow-out areas, and actively moving interior dunes. The many entrances to its burrows, along with those of the spotted ground squirrel, are common features of the substrate. The kangaroo rat is largely nocturnal when it forages for seeds. It can commonly be seen crossing roadways at night. Baccus (1977) stated that although the kangaroo rat was the most numerous rodent during his study the exact status of the endemic species is unknown.

Family Cricetidae - New World Mice and Rats

Marsh Rice Rat, Eastern Rice Rat, *Oryzomys palustris texensis*

The rice rat is a semi-aquatic rodent common to parts of Padre and Mustang Islands. Its preference for marshy, lowlying habitats explains its abundance on numerous of the spoil bank islands along the Intracoastal Waterway. Some of these islands made of dredged materials from the Waterway are heavily populated with rice rats, to the exclusion of other rodents in many cases. Small populations of rice rats were found in swampy areas behind the foredunes on Padre Island and in barrier flat areas of Mustang Island.

Fulvous Harvest Mouse, *Reithrodontomys fulvescens intermedius*

The harvest mouse is somewhat uncommon on north Padre Island where it was taken only on occasion in the vegetated barrier flats adjacent to oak motts. A few others were collected by Baccus (1977) in vegetated dunes near the Malaquite Beach, North District Ranger Station, area. One was collected by Blair (1952) on Mustang Island five miles south of Port Aransas.

White-Footed Mouse, *Peromyscus leucopus texanus*

White-footed mice are uncommon on Padre Island and may be absent from Mustang Island. The mouse is a dweller of wooded or brushy habitats which are largely absent on the two islands. The only location where white-footed mice were taken during the Survey were in the oak motts of north Padre Island just east of the causeway.

Pygmy Mouse, *Blomys taylori taylori*

These are the smallest mice found on Padre and Mustang Islands. All of the ones taken during the Survey were found in grassy areas on the north tip of the island between the causeway and Packery Channel and the foredune areas just north of Bob Hall Pier. Others have been found since this time under boards on interior vegetated flats of Mustang Island.

Short-Tailed Grasshopper Mouse, *Onychomys leucogaster longipes*

The grasshopper mice, along with the kangaroo rats, were at one time the most abundant rodents on Padre and Mustang Islands. Blair (1952) found grasshopper mice to be common in his trap site five miles south of Port Aransas on Mustang Island. Numbers have declined in recent years. They are found in grassland areas from the back beaches and foredunes across the vegetated portions of the barrier flats to the Laguna Madre. These short-tailed

mice with very soft fur are largely insectivorous, but they are also scavengers and are predatory on other rodents.

Hispid Cotton Rat, *Sigmodon hispidus berlandieri*

The cotton rat, along with the kangaroo rat, is now one of the more common rodents of the barrier islands. Increased rainfall and vegetative cover may be possible reasons for the rise in their populations. The cotton rat is common in the grass flats of both islands. Numerous specimens were taken on north Padre Island between the highway and Packery Channel. Others were taken in the northern part of Padre Island National Seashore in the Malaquite Beach area, where Baccus (1977) found it to be the second most common mouse. Blair (1952) found the cotton rat common in his trap site five miles south of Port Aransas on Mustang Island. One specimen was collected on an Intracoastal Waterway spoil island in the Upper Laguna Madre, and others have been collected from Mustang Island near Corpus Christi Pass. Nests of these rodents and their trails between prickly pear clumps were observed on the bay side of northern Mustang Island. Their presence can be easily determined by well-defined trails--almost as tunnels--through dense stands of grasses.

Family Muridae - Old World Mice and Rats

Norway Rat, *Rattus norvegicus*

The Norway rat is commensal with man around the Port Aransas area of Mustang Island and the Port Isabel area of South Padre Island where it was found around piers, jetties, and other waterfront structures and buildings.

Roof Rat, Black Rat, *Rattus rattus*

The roof rat was collected around human habitats on north Padre Island from the causeway to Bob Hall Pier, at the North District Ranger Station area near Malaquite Beach, and in Port Aransas on Mustang Island. Residents of South Padre Island also reported these rodents in houses there. The roof rat is ubiquitous with man, but can also be found in the wild, although no roof rats were collected on Padre and Mustang Islands except around human habitations and trash dumps.

House Mouse, *Mus musculus*

The house mouse is common around human habitations in Port Aransas on north Mustang Island and in other areas of both islands where it is commensal with man. Blair (1952) found that the house mouse exceeded all other mice and rats in numbers in his trap site five miles south of Port Aransas. It is also found in wild habitats in the barrier flats. Specimens have been taken from unpopulated areas of Mustang Island and seen on Padre Island.

Family Capromyidae - Capromyids

Nutria, *Myocastor coypus*

The nutria is the largest rodent found on Padre Island, but its status as a resident is questionable. A dead nutria in fresh condition was found on the back beach on Padre Island about 12 miles south of Bob Hall Pier in February, 1965. The nutria may have arrived on the beach with drift materials swept down the coast from rivers to the north which had recently flooded and were littering the Gulf beaches with tree trunks and other debris. Sightings have been recorded from fresh water ponds near the Malaquite Beach, North District Ranger Station, area. The nutria does occur on tributaries to Baffin Bay, on the mainland in Kleberg County, and they may be becoming established on Padre Island.

Order Cetacea - Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises

Family Balaenopteridae - Rorquals

Blue Whale, Sulphur-Bottomed Whale, *Balaenoptera musculus*

There are reports of a blue whale being stranded on the Texas coast near Aransas Pass (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974), the northern boundary of Mustang Island.

Family Ziphiidae - Toothed Whales, Beaked Whales

Antillean Beaked Whale, Gulf Stream Beaked Whale, *Mesoplodon europaeus*

A single specimen has been reported from Padre Island, 45 miles south of Port Aransas, Texas in 1946 (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974).

Family Physeteridae - Sperm Whale

Sperm Whale, *Physeter catodon*

Of only two specimens known from Texas waters (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974), one was washed ashore on Padre Island seven miles north of Mansfield Pass near the wreck of the Nicaragua.

Family Kogiidae - Pygmy Sperm Whales

Pygmy Sperm Whale, *Kogia breviceps*

The three specimens from Texas waters were recorded from Mustang Island (one mile and 15.8 miles south of Port Aransas) and Padre Island (20 miles south of Corpus Christi). An unidentified *Kogia* beached north of Yarbrough Pass on Padre Island may have been an immature *K. breviceps*.

Dwarf Sperm Whale, *Kogia simus*

A single dead stranded dwarf sperm whale washed ashore on Padre Island in the Big Shell area, one mile north of U. S. Coast Guard marker #20 in 1977. The specimen was taken to the University of Texas Marine Science Laboratory

where the identification was verified by S. Shane (pers. comm.). Only one other dwarf sperm whale has been recorded from the Texas coast (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974).

Family Delphinidae - Delphinids

Pygmy Killer Whale, *Feresa attenuata*

A single pygmy killer whale washed ashore on South Padre Island near the north jetty of Brazos Santiago Pass in 1969 (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974).

Short-Finned Pilot Whale, *Globicephala macrorhyncha*

Sightings of the pilot whale have been made at Aransas Pass, the northern boundary of Mustang Island in 1938, and two specimens washed ashore on St. Joseph's Island directly north of Mustang Island in 1942 (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974).

Killer Whale, *Orcinus orca*

The observation record in the Padre Island National Seashore file for a killer whale that washed ashore near the jetties of South Padre Island is considered by Schmidly and Melcher (1974) to be unsubstantiated and the record doubtful. The known range of the killer whale does include the Gulf of Mexico, and its occurrence in Texas waters is possible.

Atlantic Bottlenosed Dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*

This is the most common dolphin in the coastal marine waters of Padre and Mustang Islands. The greatest abundance is near large passes that connect bays to the Gulf of Mexico (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974). These dolphins can often be seen "riding" waves and swimming along the offshore edge of the surf on the barrier island beaches.

Atlantic Spotted Dolphin, *Stenella plagiodon*

Schmidly and Melcher (1974) reported that the spotted dolphin is more common in the deeper waters (12 miles) offshore than the bottlenosed dolphin. Dead stranded spotted dolphins have been reported from Padre Island near Yarbrough Pass, 19 miles south of Corpus Christi in Kleberg County. Others have been seen offshore near Port Aransas and Port Isabel.

Bridled Dolphin (Cuvier's Dolphin), *Stenella frontalis*

Three specimens washed ashore on Padre Island near Yarbrough Pass after Hurricane Fern (1971) (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974). They normally range near the West Indies.

Long-Beaked Porpoise, Long-Snouted Porpoise, *Stenella longirostris*

Two long-snouted porpoises have been reported from Padre Island. A single specimen washed ashore in 1975 four miles south of Malaquite beach. Another beached near the south barricade of Malaquite Beach in 1977.

Other cetaceans substantiated by Schmidly and Melcher (1974) as occurring from the Texas coast are Goosebeaked Whale, *Ziphius cavirostris*; False Killer Whale, *Pseudorca crassidens*; Rough-Toothed Dolphin, *Steno bredanensis*; Fin Whale or Common Finback Whale, *Balaenoptera physalus*; and Right Whale or Black Right Whale, *Eubalaena glacialis*.

Order Carnivora - Flesh-Eaters

Family Canidae - Wolves, Coyote, Dogs, and Foxes

Coyote, *Canis latrans texensis*

The ubiquitous coyote is common on Padre and Mustang Islands where it can be seen from the beaches all the way across both islands to the edges of the

Laguna Madre and Corpus Christi Bay. Analyses of fecal materials indicate the coyote feeds on rodents and jackrabbits, as well as on crabs and fish taken from shorelines. Coyotes are sometimes seen scavenging along the beaches.

Gray Fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus scottii*

There is a single unverified sighting of a gray fox from the Permian Tank Road (Bird Island Basin Road) near South Bird Island. The gray fox is fairly common on the mainland in the oak motts and mesquite chaparral areas of Flour Bluff, around Oso Bay, and in Kleberg County. If the gray fox is a visitor to Padre Island, its status must be considered rare.

Procyonidae - Raccoons and Allies

Raccoon, *Procyon lotor fuscipes*

Observations of raccoons on Padre and Mustang Islands have more commonly been of tracks than actual sightings. Raccoon tracks have been reported from the bay side of Mustang Island south of the ferry landing at Port Aransas, in the East Flats area of Mustang Island along Corpus Christi Bay, and the Padre Island Laguna Madre shoreline near South Bird Island. B. T. Sullinger (pers. comm.) of Aransas Pass reported seeing a female raccoon with six young on Mustang Island in the 1950's. Dunn (pers. comm.) reported occasional raccoons around the oak motts of northern Padre Island. Several raccoons have been sighted near fresh water ponds close to Bob Hall Pier, the Malaquite Beach area, and the North District Ranger Station. Although uncommon during periods of drought, the occurrence of raccoons during wet climatic cycles must be considered fairly common.

Family Mustelidae - Mustelids

Badger, *Taxidea taxus berlandieri*

The badger and its burrows were observed on north central Padre Island, and burrows believed belonging to badgers were found on Mustang Island. Several sightings of badgers have been made from the southern end of the National Seashore near the Nicaragua wreck site. A complete badger skeleton with some remaining fur was found near this location. The skeleton was partially buried by sand in an abandoned burrow at the base of a primary foredune. It was speculated that the badger was trapped and drowned from high tides during passage of a hurricane near the area a few months earlier.

Striped Skunk, *Mephitis mephitis varians*

The only sightings of the striped skunk have been from Park Road 22 south of the northern boundary of the National Seashore. Two were road kills. One was a live individual seen by the side of the road at night. None have been reported from Mustang Island. The striped skunk is probably more common than the few records indicate. The Gulf Coast Hog-Nose Skunk, *Conepatus leuconotus texensis*, was reported by Bailey (1905) to occur on Padre Island. Since the hog-nosed skunk is now rare in the area, its occurrence on Padre Island is considered highly improbable.

Family Felidae - Cats

Cougar, *Felis concolor*

Cougars have been reported on rare occasions from both Padre and Mustang Islands, with the most recent report being in the winter of 1966, 18 miles south of Bob Hall Pier (B. T. Sullinger, pers. comm.). The cougar, however, should only be considered a rare visitor to the islands, probably swimming across the Intracoastal Waterway from mainland areas in Kleberg and Kenedy Counties. Reports of large cat tracks have been made from the area south of Big Shell near Coyote and Rattlesnake Passes. One park visitor reported seeing a jaguar, *Felis onca*, with two cubs in this area 25 miles north of Mansfield Pass but this sighting is unverified.

Bobcat, *Lynx rufus texensis*

Only one substantiated record of a bobcat has been made. " It was of an individual seen along Park Road 22 near Packery Channel, the oak mott area of North Padre Island, in 1965. Others may possibly migrate across to the more southerly areas of Padre Island in the vicinity of the Land Cut.

Order Pinnipedia - Seals

Family Phocidae - Hair Seals

West Indian Seal, *Monachus tropicalis*

Sight records of the West Indian seal in Texas waters were reported by Gunter (1947). Some of these were from South Padre Island on the jetties of Brazos Santiago Pass in 1932. They have not been reported from Texas since this time and are now believed to be extinct within this part of their former range (Schmidly and Melcher, 1974).

Order Sirenia - Manatees, Dugongs, and Sea Cow

Family Trichechidae - Manatees

Caribbean Manatee, Sea Cow, Siren, *Trichechus manatus manatus*

The manatee has been recorded from the Texas coast by Gunter (1941, 1954), in particular from several sightings from the Lower Laguna Madre which borders the western edge of South Padre Island. Until recently there had been no reports of manatees from Texas waters since the 1930's, and Schmidly and Melcher (1974) believed that manatees were extinct in this area. In 1976 and 1977 three manatee sightings have been recorded from Mustang and Padre Islands (R. G. Whistler, pers. comm.). Each time a single individual was seen at the surface on the outer edge of the surf zone with its head out of the water. Two sightings were from near Bob Hall Pier on Padre Island, the third at the Corpus Christi Water Exchange Pass (Fish Pass) on Mustang Island. Their occurrence in Texas waters is still considered rare.

Order Perissodactyla - Odd-Toed Hoofed Mammals

Family Equidae

Horse, *Equus caballus*

In the 1800's horses were reported as being wild on Padre and Mustang Islands, which probably explains the origin of the name "mustang" for Mustang Island. An 1828 survey party reported wild horses on north Padre Island¹ and Dunn (pers. comm.) reported that several wild horses lived on the two islands from 1885 to 1888.

Order Artiodactyla - Even-Toed Ungulates

Family Suidae

Pig, Wild Boar, *Sus scrofa*

Feral pigs were reported by Dunn (pers. comm.) on Padre Island as being occasional in the early part of the 1900's. Some of these animals probably escaped from domestication on mainland areas of Kleberg and Kenedy Counties and wandered across the mud flats that bridged the mainland to Padre Island before the Intracoastal Waterway was dredged. Dunn also believed that other feral pigs may have been purposefully released on the barrier islands for food and sport hunting purposes. One report of a spotted hog, approximately seven miles north of the Nicaragua wreck site, was made in 1972.

Family Tayassuidae - Peccaries

Collared Peccary, Javelina, *Tayassu tajacu*

The collared peccary, or javelina, is not common on either island but isolated reports of these animals indicate it is an occasional visitor, probably coming over from the mainland like other animals from areas of

¹"Testimony of the Expediente of Surveys and Demarcation of the Island on the Brazo de Santiago (known as Padre Balli)" 1828, "State of Texas vs. Balli."

Kleberg and Kenedy Counties. Javelinas were reported by Dunn (pers. comm.) to be occasional on Padre Island in the early 1900's. A sow with five young was seen one and a half miles south of Port Aransas in 1965 (W. R. McDaniels, pers. comm). Another was seen near Chappel's Cabin site near the southern end of Big Shell in Padre Island National Seashore.

Family Bovidae

Domestic Cow, *Bos domesticus*

Domestic cattle were common on both islands during the Survey. Both islands have had long histories of cattle ranching. The first cattle were introduced onto Padre Island about 1805, and by 1811 there were a reported 1,000 head (Sheire, 1971). Cattle were observed all the way from the fore beach wading in the surf to the Laguna Madre on Padre Island and Corpus Christi Bay on Mustang Island. Since the removal of cattle from Padre Island National Seashore in 1971, there have been four to five cows that have evaded efforts to capture and remove them.

Nilgai, *Boselaphus tragocamelus*

The nilgai is an exotic from stocks on mainland ranches, which occasionally crosses the Laguna Madre onto Padre Island. Sightings of nilgai have been made from the Pan Am Road area south of Malaquite Beach and north of Yarborough Pass, and from the Land Cut area near Chappel's Cabin site on the southern end of Big Shell.

Family Cervidae

White-Tailed Deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*

No deer were seen on Padre and Mustang Islands during the Survey but two white-tailed deer were observed in 1965 on Green Island in the Laguna Madre

north of Port Isabel and east of the Intracoastal Waterway. Deer have been sighted on Mustang Island and tracks have been seen on Padre Island.

Numerous reports in recent years indicate that the animals are occasional visitors from the mainland, probably swimming across the Intracoastal Waterway. There are reports that deer have swum across the ship channel at Port Aransas from St. Joseph's Island to the north. Dunn (pers. comm.), however, believed that deer were more abundant on Padre and Mustang Islands before the construction of the Waterway in 1941 and that they walked across the tidal flats from Kenedy County where white-tailed deer are common on the King Ranch.

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