



Mammals

Jeff Kelly, Joel Strong, Jesse Bahm, & Adrienne Lee
Cooper, Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory

RESOURCE BRIEF

Importance

The American Southwest may have the greatest diversity of mammal species in the country. Information, however, is lacking on most mammal species. Many of the mammals in the southwest, such as shrews, pocket gophers, and pikas, are vulnerable to local extirpation due to their having geographic ranges that may be restricted to a single mountain top or other isolated island of habitat. Concern is also increasing for several species of mammals adaptive to arid habitats, such as kangaroo rats and pocket mice, and for several species of bats, many of which are now considered sensitive species.

Status and Trends

The Chickasaw National Recreation Area (CHICK), nearly 10,000 acres in size, is dominated by forest, herbaceous, and woodland vegetation types, and about 16% of the area is covered by the Lake of the Arbuckles. Prior to 2003, no formal or comprehensive inventory had been conducted for mammals at CHICK. However, the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory (ONHI) conducted such an inventory in 2003. This work will provide baseline information for future monitoring.



PHOTO: KELLY ET AL. 2004

Marsh rice rat



PHOTO: R. ROBINSON

Gray fox

The inventory documented 23 species, about 64% of those on a pre-inventory list of mammals for the county/vicinity (as well as six species not on the list). Most of the species encountered were common within CHICK. The most noteworthy of the documented species was the marsh rice rat (*Oryzomys palustris*), which had not been recorded previously in Murray County. The southeastern part of the state is at the western edge of its range, and it is fairly uncommon in Oklahoma. This species was also the only mammal encountered that is tracked by the ONHI. Mammal species caught in the highest numbers included: the Texas mouse (*Peromyscus attwateri*), Hispid cotton rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*), and Eastern woodrat (*Neotoma floridana*). Other species that occur at CHICK include: the Eastern pipistrel (*Pipistrellus subflavus*), evening bat (*Nycticeus humeralis*), fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), and gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*).

Discussion

Three species of bats have been recorded at CHICK, and it is recommended that any additional surveys should include those for bats. Of the 23 species of mammals detected during the 2003 inventory, six had not been on the county list; this includes the raccoon, domestic or feral cat, and bobcat. Recommendations are also for a feral cat control program, or research on the impacts of feral cats, to benefit native species (e.g., foxes, bobcats, skunks) with which cats compete for prey.

