

Post-Visit Report for SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT Mammal Inventory Small Terrestrial Mammals and Bats Inventory – June 2003

Scotts Bluff National Monument was surveyed for small, terrestrial mammals and bats 9-13 June, 2003. Live traps (large, wire box traps) were set in the irrigation canal paralleling the north side of Gering Canal Road, and in drainages in the badlands area south of the same road. Mist nets were set across Gering Canal and over ephemeral pools on the Saddle Rock Trail. Acoustic surveys were conducted along Gering Canal Road and along the Saddle Rock Trail and at the Visitor Center.

Live Trap Effort

Six live traps were set, three in and along Gering Canal, and three in the badlands topography south of the Gering Canal Road. These traps were set and baited on 10 June, and checked daily and rebaited as needed until they were pulled on 13 June. The three traps along Gering Canal all captured magpies. The traps in the badlands produced no captures.

Mist Net Effort

The bat survey work in general was hampered by weather and the water stage in the Gering Canal. Upon arrival, the canal was running strong, with no quiet, isolated pools over which to net. This timing was unfortunate, but we had no way of knowing that water was being released through the canal until we arrived on site. Mist nets, in order to be effective at capturing bats, need to be set over isolated sources of water. Setting nets along a full-running body of water such as the canal or a river, is generally not very productive. The water level issue was compounded by stormy weather with strong winds being a nightly factor. As such, mist nets were set only over isolated, ephemeral pools of water along the lower portion of Saddle Rock Trail. No bats were captured in mist nets.

Acoustic Surveys

Acoustic surveys along Gering Canal did indicate that bats were active in the area. Most calls were travel or search calls; few feeding buzzes were heard. Acoustic surveys along Saddle Rock Trail, in combination with visual observations, indicated high, but ephemeral, foraging activity of bats along the north face of Saddle Rock. Spotlight-assisted observations of the foraging bats suggest that they were probably *Myotis evotis* (Western Long-eared Myotis). The topography of the area in which the bats were observed to forage does not lend itself to setting up nets. A bat detector was also set up to monitor activity in the area of the theatre at the Visitor Center. The acoustic files recorded during the various surveys await further funding for analysis and assignment to species where possible.

Other Observations / Collections

As mentioned above, bats (probably Western long-eared myotis) were visually observed around the top of Saddle Rock. Other mammals observed during this visit were:

Mule deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	In spring area along lower reaches of Saddle Rock Trail
Bushy-tailed woodrat	<i>Neotoma cinerea</i>	In tunnel along Summit Road

Future Work

Another attempt to survey for bats will be needed during the 2004 field season. This attempt is tentatively scheduled for mid- to late-June 2004, depending on weather and night-time temperatures.