

MAMMALS OF EL MORRO NATIONAL MONUMENT

by Gary M. Stolz, 10/86

El Morro National Monument, on the edge of the Zuni Mountains in northwest New Mexico, was established in 1906, as our nation's second National Monument. Although relatively small (1,278 acres) it has within it's boundaries a variety of habitats, where numerous types of mammals can be found.

While sage and rabbitbrush dominate the flats, pinyon and juniper are scattered throughout the area. Oak thickets provide cover along 200 foot high sandstone cliffs, while stands of ponderosa pine can be found in more shaded areas. Many cracks and small cave grottos in the mesa provide good shelter. Water is available from the 200,000 gallon Inscription Pool, as well as numerous mesa top tinajas, nearby cattle tanks, and the monument's sewer lagoons.

This checklist includes 73 species of mammals. Of these, 38 have actually been recorded within the monument boundaries, as of this writing (10/86). The other 35 listed as "hypothetical", have been found in the vicinity of El Morro, and have the potential to occur within the monument.

Nomenclature used here follows Burt and Grossenheider, A Field Guide To The Mammals. Mammals, like all wildlife populations, fluctuate with changes in habitat, climate, and food supply. To help further our knowledge of El Morro's wildlife, we encourage you to report your observations at the monument's visitor center, or send them to: Superintendent, El Morro National Monument, Ramah, New Mexico, 87321.

OBSERVER(S) _____ DATE(S) _____

TIME(S) _____ WEATHER _____

LOCATION(S) _____ COMMENTS _____

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Monument

El Morro

MAMMALS OF EL MORRO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Order Insectivora (insect eaters)

Family Soricidae (shrews)

Wandering Shrew (*Sorex vagrans*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, unlikely,
needs permanent water, one record in Zuni Mountains.

Desert Shrew (*Notiosorex crawfordi*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded over 6,300
feet, found in sage and desert shrub country.

Merriam Shrew (*Sorex merriami*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, most likely
shrew at El Morro, coniferous forest within state, brush
habitat to north.

Order Chiroptera (bats)

Family Vespertilionidae (evening bats)

Yuma Myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, arid areas,
late fliers, close to ground, colonial, caves, tunnels.

Cave Myotis (*Myotis velifer*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, colonial,
crevices, vertical walls, caves.

Arizona Myotis (*Myotis occultus*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, colonial,
buildings, mines, caves.

Long-eared Myotis (*Myotis evotis*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, thin forests,
flies late and often at high altitudes.

Fringed Myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*) -

Regular visitor to monument, colonial, crevices, caves,
old buildings.

Long-legged Myotis (*Myotis volans*) -

Common Myotis of west, first recorded in monument 8/5/79,
colonial, crevices and pockets in rock ledges.

California Myotis (*Myotis californicus*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, small colonies
or single, flies low, crevices, hollow trees.

Small-footed Myotis (*Myotis subulatus*) -

Uncommon in monument, more often at lower altitudes, active in early evening, colonial or solitary, often hangs with wings partly open, caves, crevices, in forested areas.

Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) -

Uncommon, first recorded in monument 7/26/86 hanging on building, solitary, feeds among trees, flies high and fairly straight.

Western Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus hesperus*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, smallest bat in United States, cliffs and loose rocks near water.

Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) -

Common at El Morro, one of the most widely distributed bats in the United States, roosts single or in small clusters, crevices, caves, trees.

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinerius*) -

Uncommon in monument, first recorded 8/31/86 on back of Visitor Center, solitary, roosts in caves or trees, migrates

Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculatum*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded in monument, crevices on cliff and canyon walls near water, very rare species, please report if found.

Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Plecotus townsendi*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded in monument, very rare, unlikely, please report if found.

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, very likely, common in area, has been found as close as four miles at Los Gigantes, feeds on ground, eating crickets & scorpions.

Family Molossidae (freetail bats)

Mexican Freetail Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, migrant, large colonies, caves, bridges, the famous guano bat of Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Big Freetail Bat (*Tadarida molossa*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded, colonial, found in caves and cliff crevices.

Order Lagomorpha (rabbits and hares)

Family Leporidae (rabbits and hares)

Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus auduboni*) -

Abundant throughout monument, very tame and often seen, burrows, active anytime although more often in late afternoon and evening.

Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) -

Uncommon in more open areas of monument, seen most often near campground, active at dusk and after dark.

Order Rodentia (gnawing mammals)

Family Sciuridae (squirrels)

Cliff Chipmunk (*Eutamias dorsalis*) -

Very common and often seen at El Morro, found in pinyon/juniper habitat, the closely related Colorado Chipmunk (*E. quadrivittatus*) of ponderosa Forest is hypothetical here, being within range but not yet recorded in monument.

Spotted Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus spilosoma*) -

Fairly common in monument's shrubland, but hard to see, blends in well when "frozen" or quickly runs into burrow.

Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus lateralis*) -

Hypothetical, on edge of range, records in McKinley County, not yet recorded and unlikely in monument.

Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*) -

Hypothetical, on edge of range, not yet recorded, unlikely due to habitat, found most often in short-grass prairies, records just south of Cibola County line.

Rock Squirrel (*Spermophilus variegatus*) -

Abundant and often seen in monument, most common in rock or brush habitat.

Whitetail Antelope Squirrel (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*) -

Hypothetical, on edge of range, found in Cibola County but not yet within monument, unlikely due to habitat, more typical of low desert and foothills.

Gunnison's (White-tailed) Prairie Dog (*Cynomys gunnisoni*) -

Once common in monument, gone by 1940 due to plague, rare now in open areas, seen most often in northwest corner, also uncommon in vicinity of El Morro.

Abert's (Tassel-eared) Squirrel (*Sciurus aberti*) -

Rare and very sporadic in monument due to limited habitat, common in ponderosa pine forests of the Zuni Mountains from where it wanders into El Morro on occasion.

Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) -

Hypothetical, within range but very limited habitat, two unconfirmed reports in July 1893 and June 1986, requires thick conifer forest for stable population.

Family Geomyidae (pocket gophers)

Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) -

Abundant in monument, but rarely seen due to fossorial lifestyle, burrows and closed off mounds can be seen throughout soft soils in area.

Family Heteromyidae (pocket mice and kangaroo rats)

Silky Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus flavus*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded in monument, widespread in region, very likely to show up, short grass, sandy or rocky soils are preferred habitats.

Plains Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus flavescens*) -

Common in monument, sandy soils, first recorded June 1979.

Manertail Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys spectabilis*) -

Hypothetical, within range but unlikely as it requires well developed grasslands as preferred habitat.

Ord's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys ordi*) -

Very common in monument and vicinity, often seen crossing roads at night.

Family Cricetidae (new world mice and rats)

Western Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodon megalotis*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded in monument, common in vicinity, very likely occurs unnoticed.

Canyon Mouse (*Peromyscus crinitus*) -

Hypothetical, within range and habitat, found in vicinity but not yet recorded within monument.

Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) -

Common throughout monument, active all year in a wide range of habitats.

Brush Mouse (*Peromyscus boyleyi*) -

Common in oak thicket at base of mesa.

Pinyon Mouse (*Peromyscus truei*) -

Common in pinyon/juniper habitat within monument, very similar to Rock Mouse (*P. difficilis*).

Rock Mouse (*Peromyscus difficilis*) -

Common in monument vicinity, very similar to Pinyon Mouse (*P. truei*) with ear length equal or less than hind foot and tail longer than head and body, some overlap and confusion between these two species.

Northern Grasshopper Mouse (*Onychomys leucogaster*) -

Common in open areas and sandy grasslands of monument, high frequency squeak sometimes heard in campground area.

White-throated Woodrat (*Neotoma albigula*) -

Common in pinyon/juniper habitat of monument, nests and droppings often seen at bases of trees.

Southern Plains Woodrat (*Neotoma micropus*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded in monument, closest record is of juvenile in The Malpais.

Stephen's Woodrat (*Neotoma stephensi*) -

Hypothetical, within range, not yet recorded in monument, proper habitat in El Morro, common in vicinity, very likely.

San Juan Woodrat (*Neotoma mexicana*) -

Common in cliffs and rock piles along mesa, although more typical of pinyon/juniper and mixed conifers in vicinity.

Bushy-tailed Woodrat (*Neotoma cinerea*) -

Hypothetical, within range and habitat, not yet recorded within monument, closest record just north near Thoueau

Meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) -

El Morro is within the range of four vole species, yet they are all listed as hypothetical as none have yet been recorded in the monument, they are all unlikely as habitat preferred is dense grass cover, if ever found here the box canyon would be where to look.

Mountain Vole (*Microtus montanus*) -

Hypothetical, see above comments.

Mexican Vole (*Microtus mexicanus*) -

Hypothetical, see above comments.

Long-tailed vole (*Microtus longicaudus*) -

Hypothetical, see above comments.

Family Erethizontidae (porcupines)

Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) -

Fairly common in monument, hard to see, nocturnal, gnawed evidence seen on many trees, dens up in crevices along mesa, sometimes seen in trees along trail or in box canyon.

Order Carnivora (flesh eaters)

Family Canidae (dogs)

Coyote (*Canis latrans*) -

Common in monument, hard to see, often heard howling in twilight or after dark, scat and tracks can often be found along trails and near campground.

Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) -

Extirpated, once found throughout state, last area record in November 1936, between monument and Ramah.

Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis*) -

Uncommon at El Morro, hard to see due to nocturnal and secretive habits, deserts and grasslands, feeds frequently on Kangaroo Rats, first recorded 1/7/85 by north side of mesa.

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) -

Hypothetical, within range and habitat, very likely occurs undetected in monument, if found best areas are pinyon/juniper and oak thickets along mesa.

Family Ursidae (bears)

Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) -

Hypothetical, once common throughout Zuni Mountains, prefer thicker forests, seen on occasion in vicinity, but not yet recorded within monument.

Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) -

Extirpated, once common throughout vicinity, last area record was in 1853, near Zuni.

Family Procyonidae (raccoons and allies)

coon (*Procyon lotor*) -

Uncommon in monument, tracks sometimes found near pools, seen along roads in area at night.

Ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*) -

Hypothetical, within range and habitat, not yet found in monument, nocturnal and secretive habits sometimes make this often common species go undetected.

Family Mustelidae (weasels and allies)

Short-tailed weasel (*Mustela erminea*) -

Uncommon, chiefly nocturnal, first recorded in monument on 8/10/86 along north face of mesa.

Long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*) -

Hypothetical, within range and habitat, not yet found in monument, can be commonly found in vicinity, secretive and nocturnal, might occur undetected.

Black-footed Ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) -

Rarest mammal in North America, one monument record on 9/25/37 drowned in Inscription Pool, feeds on Prairie Dogs, a few unconfirmed recent reports in vicinity, please report any possible sightings to ranger.

Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) -

Uncommon, first monument record 7/8/78 of two individuals crossing road, strong digger, feeds on rodents.

Spotted Skunk (*Spilogale putorius*) -

Uncommon in monument, common in vicinity, nocturnal.

Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) -

Uncommon in monument, common in vicinity, nocturnal.

Hognose Skunk (*Conepatus leuconotus*) -

Hypothetical, just north of normal range, road kill found just outside monument on 8/25/86 along highway 53.

Family Felidae (cats)

Mountain Lion (*Felis concolor*) -

Rare and secretive in area, nocturnal, tracks found on occasion in monument, good habitat in El Morro and Zuni Mountains, often dens in rock shelters and small caves.

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) -

Fairly common in monument and vicinity, yet rarely seen due to secretive and nocturnal habits, tracks found on occasion by pools on mesa top.

Order Artiodactyla (even-toed hoofed mammals)

Family Cervidae (deer)

Elk (*Cervus canadensis*) -

Hypothetical, once common throughout the nation and probably occurred at El Morro, extirpated through most of state in the early 1900's, reintroduced to Zuni Mountains and may roam into monument, recorded 9/24/84 within one mile of El Morro.

Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) -

Uncommon in monument, widespread and common throughout the vicinity, tracks and scat often seen near trails.

Family Antilocapridae (pronghorn)

Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) -

Extirpated, once common throughout region, recorded in the monument in 1851 and 1853, still found in many open areas of New Mexico, increasing again in range and population.