

A Check List of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Ellis County, Kansas

L. A. BRENNAN, St. Joseph's College, Hays, Kan.

During the years 1931-1934 the writer has made a study of the amphibian and reptilian fauna of Ellis county, Kansas. The specimens collected have been placed in the Department of Zoölogy of the Fort Hays Kansas State College, Hays, Kan.

Ellis county is only a short distance west and north of the center of Kansas. The surface of the county is of the same character as that of most of western Kansas, one vast stretch of prairie, almost destitute of trees, except for a few here and there surrounding farm houses and a narrow strip along the principal streams.

The principal streams are the Saline river on the northern boundary, the Smoky Hill river on the southern boundary and Big creek, midway between the northern and southern boundaries.

The writer is indebted to L. D. Wooster, Department of Zoölogy, Fort Hays Kansas State College, for the use of his unpublished records and also to Leo Brown, a graduate student at the State College in Hays.

The following list is a record of the species taken:

SALAMANDER

Ambystoma tigrinum (Green). Tiger salamander. Twenty larvæ and two adults were taken in a pasture pond on the A. Kinderknecht farm, seven miles southwest of Hays, during the summer of 1933. An adult was also taken on the same farm in a culvert on May 16, 1934.

FROGS

Rana pipiens (Schreber). Leopard frog. Very common in pasture ponds and streams.

Acris gryllus (LeConte). Cricket frog. Very numerous in pasture ponds and streams.

Pseudacris nigrita triseriata (Wied). Swamp cricket frog. Some 30 specimens were taken on the Steve Sack and A. Truan farms from pasture ponds in the summer of 1931. None were collected in 1933, possibly due to the extreme dryness of the season.

Scaphiopus hammondi bombifrons Baird. Spadefoot toad. A very small specimen was brought into the laboratory on May 9, 1931, and given to Mr. L. D. Wooster, who made the proper identification. A specimen was taken from a house cat by the writer on May 7, 1934.

Gastrophryne olivacea Hallowell. Narrow-mouthed toad. One of these toads was found at night on the top of Yocemento hill, seven miles west of Hays, and one under a flat rock on a hillside on the Steve Sack farm, five miles west of Hays. These are the first specimens of this species that have been found in this region.

Bufo cognatus Say. Western toad. Not common in this territory; two specimens were taken on the campus at St. Joseph's College, Hays, during the summer of 1933.

Bufo woodhousii woodhousii (Girard). Woodhouse's toad. The most common toad in the county, found in gardens, in fields and under street lamps at night.

Rana catesbeiana (Shaw). Bullfrog. Common in permanent ponds.

TURTLES

Chelydra serpentina (Linnæus). Snapping turtle. Common. A nest of 24 eggs was found in a bank of Big creek on August 9, 1933, and about three weeks later 23 of the eggs hatched.

Amyda spinifera (LeSueur). Soft-shelled turtle. Five small specimens were taken below a dam on Big creek on June 10, 1933. Two large specimens were taken from Big creek on November 26, 1933.

Kinosternon flavescens (Agassiz). Yellow-necked mud turtle. Rather common in muddy ponds and in the Smoky Hill river in the southern part of the county. One is reported from the Saline river in the northern part of the county by Mr. L. D. Wooster.

Terrapene ornata (Agassiz). Box tortoise. Common, especially in the sandy areas along the rivers. Farmers report that considerable destruction of cantaloupes is caused by this species. They bite holes in the ends of the melons. On June 27, 1933, three observers counted thirty in less than one-half hour in an area near a melon patch near the Smoky Hill river. On June 24, 1911, 26 individuals, 14 of which were females, were observed along the sandy shores of the Saline river.

Chrysemys bellii bellii (Gray). Painted terrapin. Extremely common in permanent ponds and streams. On one field trip to the Truan farm, eight miles north of Hays, 54 individuals were counted in the pasture ponds.

LIZARDS

Crotaphytus collaris (Say). Collared lizard. Common under flat rocks on prairie hillsides. On April 18, 1934, six specimens were found, of which four were very stiff and inactive, probably still hibernating.

Phrynosoma cornutum (Harlan). "Common horned toad." On and near rocky hills.

Phrynosoma douglassii hernandesi (Girard). Short-horned lizard. A single specimen is in the museum of the Fort Hays Kansas State College. On this basis Burt has recorded this form from Ellis county in his "Lizards of Kansas." (Trans. St. Louis Acad. Sci., 26:1-81. 1928.)

Sceloporus undulatus consobrinus (Baird and Girard). Spiny swift. Common.

Holbrookia maculata maculata (Girard). Spotted sand swift. Common.

Ophisaurus ventralis (Linnæus). "Glass snake." Two specimens are in the museum at the Fort Hays Kansas State College. Occasionally they are reported as being seen locally.

Cnemidophorus sexlineatus sexlineatus (Linné). Six-lined race-runner. Common along the railroads and in sanded areas. Three specimens were found hibernating under a flat rock on April 16, 1934.

Eumeces obsoletus (Baird and Girard). Sonoran skink. Found in flat rock areas. Rather easy to collect in the spring, but hard to secure later.

SNAKES

Tantilla gracilis nigriceps (Kennicott). Mitre snake. Common. Eight were taken under one flat rock.

Thamnophis sauritus proximus (Say). Western ribbon snake. Two specimens are in the Museum of the Fort Hays Kansas State College. They were taken from Big creek in the summer of 1933.

Thamnophis radix radix (Baird and Girard). Plains garter snake. Common, mostly about pasture ponds rather than streams.

Thamnophis lineatus (Hallowell). Lined snake. This small snake seems to be rare, or at least it is difficult to find. One specimen was taken under a rocky ledge, near the bottom of a rocky hill near Schoenchen. Other specimens have been found just beyond the county line in Russell county.

Sonora semiannulata (Baird and Girard). This species was found over the county line in Russell county by Leo Brown, on April 22, 1932. This is the first record of this species within this area.

Lampropeltis triangulum gentilis (Baird and Girard). Banded king snake. Common.

Lampropeltis getulus holbrooki (Stejneger). Say's king snake. The salt and pepper snake is common.

Lampropeltis calligaster (Harlan). Prairie king snake. Not common.

Pituophis sayi sayi (Schlegel). Bull snake. Specimens were taken during each summer, this being our most common and best-known land snake.

Elaphe læta (Baird and Girard). Rat snake. Found frequently in early spring under flat rocks. On April 30, 1932, 30 specimens were taken just across Russell county line, in flat-rock area.

Masticophis flagellum flagellum (Shaw). Western coachwhip. Usually found in open prairie country. A specimen laid eggs while in captivity at Fort Hays Kansas State College, on July 4, 1932.

Colester constrictor flaviventris (Say). Blue racer. Common.

Heterodon nasicus (Baird and Girard). Hog-nosed snake. Common in sandy areas.

Heterodon contortrix (Linné). Hog-nosed snake. Common.

Diadophis punctatus arnyi (Kennicott). Ring-necked snake. On April 13, 1932, 14 were taken under a flat rock near Schoenchen.

Natrix sipedon sipedon (Linné). Brown water snake. A common snake found in streams and under flat rocks near and in the water.

Crotalus confluentus confluentus (Say). Prairie rattler. In the summer of 1933 eleven specimens were taken in the prairies of this area. Reported to be more numerous in 1933 than in 1932.