

but a large quantity will be secured for making special collections, several hundreds of which are distributed yearly to educational institutions, mining companies and prospectors.

E. POITEVIN will investigate mineralogical problems and collect specimens from the serpentine-asbestos belt of southern Quebec.

PALÆONTOLOGY

C. M. STERNBERG will collect fossil remains of dinosaurs and other extinct vertebrate animals from the Cypress hills, in the southeastern part of Alberta.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

THE WATER SHREW (*Sorex palustris*) IN ONTARIO.—This species has not been reported very often from Ontario, either because of its rarity, local distribution, or elusive habits. The species, under five subspecific varieties, ranges in Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Acadian water shrew, *Sorex palustris gloveralleni* (Jackson), inhabits Nova Scotia (including Cape Breton Island), New Brunswick, and the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec, and the Mountain Water Shrew, *Sorex palustris navigator* (Baird) is found from the Rocky Mountain region to the Pacific coast. Three other forms occupy the intermediate region, their extremes focussing and intergrading in central and western Ontario. Two other species of this group have been described from southern Alaska, but are not known to occur in Canada.

Dr. Hartley H. T. Jackson, in his recent classic work,¹ relegates the old name *Neosorex* to sub-generic rank, and on his map (fig. 21, p. 177) showing "Geographic range of species and subspecies of the *Sorex palustris* group" indicates a broad No-man's-land in western Ontario, north of Lake Huron and east of Lake Superior, where three subspecies, the white-chinned water shrew *Sorex palustris albibarbis* Cope, on the east; the Richardson water shrew, *Sorex palustris palustris* Richardson, on the west; and the Wisconsin water shrew, *Sorex palustris hydrobadistes* Jackson, on the southwest, presumably come together and intergrade. *Sorex palustris hydrobadistes* is not definitely recorded from Ontario, but Jackson states (1928, p. 180) that "It intergrades with *S. p. palustris* in northern Minnesota, and probably also with *albibarbis* in the Great Lakes region of southwestern Ontario, though material examined from that region has been insufficient to establish this point." Jackson has recently examined two of the three specimens taken by J. D. Soper at Ridout, Sudbury district, in 1918, and states (in letter, 14 Feb., 1929): "The two from Ridout are somewhat intermediate between *Sorex palustris palustris* and *Sorex p. hydrobadistes*, approaching *hydrobadistes* in the flatness of the crania and in

size. On the whole, however, the specimens are nearer *Sorex palustris palustris*."

One specimen found dead by J. F. Calvert on railway track through low land near Scotia Junction, Parry Sound County, between Georgian Bay and Algonquin Park in 1928, the most southern record of the species in Canada, and another taken by R. M. Anderson in 1926, in low, marshy spot at edge of Blue Sea Lake, Quebec, about 70 miles north of Ottawa, were at the same time definitely referred to *Sorex palustris albibarbis*. G. H. Miller² states that "The marsh shrew is rare at North Bay, but tolerably common at Pensinsula Harbor. I did not find it at Nipigon. This shrew is always found in or near thick woods and in the wettest situations, generally near the bank of a stream. At Peninsula Harbor I trapped several in vole runways at the edge of a wet caribou meadow." Jackson (1928, p. 185) refers the North Bay specimen to *albibarbis*, marking the most western definite record of this form; the Peninsula Harbor specimens are probably referable to *Sorex p. palustris*. Jackson (1928, p. 179) provisionally refers a skull from Michipicoten Island, Lake Superior, to *palustris*. W. E. Saunders also has taken a specimen at Rosport, on north shore of Lake Superior. The only other Ontario records, available are six taken by Morris M. Green in June, 1924, at Franz, the junction of Canadian Pacific with Algoma Central Railway northeast of Lake Superior, on bank of alder-lined brook; and one on brookside near culvert at Minaki on Canadian National Railway in extreme western Ontario. These later records are undoubtedly referable to *S. p. palustris*.

The water shrew is a very beautiful little mammal with its soft, dense, black or silvery fur, and if its size were commensurate with its texture and beauty the pelt would probably compete in value with the sea-otter. Its habits are secretive and during several season's field work where the animal is found, the writer has never caught a glimpse of a living specimen. The animal's progress in the water is said to resemble that of a

¹A Taxonomic Review of the American Long-tailed Shrews (Genera *Sorex* and *Microsorex*), North American Fauna, No. 51, Washington, 1928, pp. 1-228.

²"Notes on the Mammals of Ontario," Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., Vol. 28, 1899 p. 34.

silvery torpedo. The propulsive power in the water is greatly aided by a fringe of stiff silver hairs along the edge of toes of hind feet. While it is possible that the species may be fairly common in some favourable localities, it is probably very local. Miller did not find it at Nipigon, and the extensive work of expeditions from the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology in the Lake Nipigon and Lake Abitibi regions did not find a trace of water shrews. C. H. Young and the writer also trapped unsuccessfully for several weeks in north-eastern New Brunswick, making especial efforts to obtain the water shrew, although several were ultimately obtained in one small brook.

Most of the specimens (*Sorex palustris glover-alleni* Jackson)³ captured in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec, were taken in sets placed on small, nearly submerged rocks, or at the water's edge on partly submerged logs, in swift-running brooks in heavy forests. In such situations the small metal traps were most satisfactory as a light shower often raised the small brooks a few inches and swept away the traps. Wooden-base traps should be tied fast in any event. The most attractive bait was a bit of fresh fish. A few specimens have been taken in runways on edge of woodland swamps or lakesides, and the animals have not disdained a combination bait of strong cheese, bacon grease, peanut butter, and other combinations,* sometimes scented with tincture of valerian. Like most shrews, the water shrew is probably both insectivorous and carnivorous, and a fierce and active hunter although of diminutive size.

A careful study of the life history of any of the geographical races of the water shrew, or even brief contributions along this line, would be of great interest. From the standpoint of the systematist it would be very desirable if some Canadian field naturalist would obtain specimens from the region around Sault Ste. Marie, east of Lake Superior and adjacent to North Channel of Lake Huron. The Wisconsin water shrew (*Sorex palustris hydrobadistes*) is known to occupy the northern peninsula of Michigan, and it is desirable to establish the definite occurrence or non-occurrence of this form in Canadian territory.—R. M. ANDERSON, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa.

SOME LITTLE BROWN BATS FROM ONTARIO.—The following list of specimens of little brown bats in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology is published as a contribution to our knowledge of the occurrence and distribution of

³The original name *Neosorex palustris acadicus* G. M. Allen, 1915, being preoccupied by *Sorex acadicus* Gilpin, 1869, which is considered a synonym of *Sorex cinereus* Kerr, 1792.

the genus *Myotis* in Ontario. These specimens were recently identified for us by Dr. Glover M. Allen.

Myotis l. lucifugus (LeConte). Coldstream, Middlesex Co. 8 specimens (A. A. Wood); Vineland, Lincoln Co. (J. Feygt); Toronto (D. H. Hamly); De Grassi point, Simcoe Co., 2 specimens (Dr. E. M. Walker); Hawkestone, Simcoe Co. (D. H. Hamly); Wasaga beach, Simcoe Co., 2 specimens (Dr. P. Harrington); Londesborough, Huron Co. (K. L. Hamilton); McGregor bay, Manitoulin dist. (Prof. B. A. Bensley); Macdiarmid, Thunder bay dist. 3 specimens (J. R. Dymond, E. B. S. Logier, J. L. Baillie).

Myotis keenii septentrionalis (Trouessart). Wingham, Huron Co. (Miss F. Haines); Lake Kahsha, Muskoka dist. (Dr. E. H. Craigie); Bear island, Lake Timagami, Nipissing dist. (Prof. A. F. Coventry).—J. R. DYMOND.

WESTERN RAGWEED FARTHER EAST.—In *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* for December, 1927, page 202, I recorded Western Ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachya* DC.) from a number of Ontario localities, and from Chicoutimi, Que., apparently much the farthest east Canadian station known. Subsequently I learned from Mr. Harrison F. Lewis that he had collected it on September 1, 1927, on rubbish heaps at Harrington Harbour, Saguenay Co., Que., which may safely be regarded as the farthest east record for the continent. On June 20, 1928, I also found a small colony of this perennial rooted Ragweed growing near farm buildings at South Berwick, N.S., so far as I know, the only maritime province station.—HERBERT GROH.

BIRD BANDING RETURNS—TWO CORRECTIONS.—The birds, reported as European Widgeon No. 386421, on page 67 of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, for March, 1929, and European Widgeon No. 601079, on page 89 of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* for April, 1929, were Baldpates, and should have been so recorded. The error arose through the use by the bander of the local name "Widgeon" for the species Baldpate of the A.O.U. check list."

SOME AMPHIBIANS OF WESTERN NORTH AMERICA.—On November 23, 1922, the California Academy of Sciences issued two volumes under the title, "Occasional Papers of the California Academy of Sciences, X, The Reptiles of Western North America," by John Van Denburgh. On September 15, 1928, the Academy issued a volume entitled, "Occasional Papers of the California Academy of Sciences, XVI, The Amphibians of



Anderson, Rudolph Martin. 1929. "The Water Shrew (*Sorex palusiris*) in Ontario." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 43(6), 136–137.

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