

as a point five miles west of Willow Creek Provincial Park. Near this point, a skull was found buried four feet down in a cutbank. The cranium was badly damaged, but the associated mandibles were well preserved (University of Calgary, Archaeology Colls., No. OS-567).

Three fresh burrows were observed at the Oldman River Recreation Area, on the Coleman-Kananaskis Highway, west of the Livingstone Gap. Evidently they exist farther up the Oldman River valley than was previously supposed. Unlike the other observations, which occurred in Transition Zone forests to Prairies, this observation was made in a Canadian Zone coniferous forest, confirming Soper's suggestion that "fringes of the Canadian Zone" are occupied.

Abundant burrows were observed from five to 10 miles north of the border station at Carway, Alberta, along Highway 2. As this area falls into the void in Soper's map between the ranges of *T. t. talpoides* and *T. t. andersoni*, no subspecific assignment

can be suggested. It would be interesting to determine whether or not the two ranges touch, or whether Soper's mapped void remains valid.

Pocket Gophers in western Alberta, presumably referable to the subspecies *T. t. talpoides*, evidently occupy a more complicated and extensive range than has been credited to them by Hall and Kelson (*The mammals of North America*, 1959. Ronald Press, N.Y.) or Soper (*op. cit.*). Areas along the Kananaskis Highway, including areas behind the Rocky Mountain Front Range, may harbour small, marginal populations of this rodent.

The questionable validity of sight records, burrows, and excavated skulls is acknowledged. However, this data may be of value to field zoologists presently working with this species. Soper and others have commented on the range dynamism and spotty distribution of Pocket Gophers. The present note serves to reinforce the statement.

## A FREAK MORTALITY OF MEADOW VOLES DUE TO HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

by **Gordon Koshinsky** and **Margaret Koshinsky**, Saskatoon

On April 19, 1969 an unusual mortality of Meadow Voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) was encountered along Highway No. 11, three to four miles northwest of Kenaston. The animals had perished in an oil strip on the south shoulder of the highway. Consultation with Highways Department crew members doing repairs in the area revealed that the south lane had been oiled at about 7:00 p.m. the previous evening. Gravel had been applied immediately but a narrow oil strip, averaging 20 - 24 inches wide and one-eighth inch or less deep, was left uncovered on the shoulder. The crews had observed the animals dead in this strip upon returning to work 12 hours later.

A count was made of dead animals along a measured mile which comprised most of the mortality area. One hundred and sixty-five individuals were encountered, or an average of one per 32 feet of roadway. Identity was established from a random sample of 10 animals pried from the oil and cleaned in gasoline. Four of the individuals so examined were males; six were females.

The uncultivated right-of-way at this point is approximately 55 feet wide on the north and about 240 feet wide on the south where the C.N. railway parallels the highway. Concentrations of dead voles varied considerably but showed no correlation with cover in this right-of-way. This cover

appeared, in any event, to be rather homogeneous, comprising mainly low brome grass and weeds. It is of interest, however, that there was three times the concentration of dead voles where the field north of the right-of-way was summerfallow than where wheat stubble occurred on both sides.

Since repairs were confined to one side of the highway it was impossible to establish if there was any differential in direction of attempted crossings. Apparently all the voles which encountered the oil died. Two had got free within the measured mile but these were dead in the grass within a foot of the oil strip. Their paths were very easy to follow.

While similar road maintenance

work had been conducted elsewhere in the immediate area, no evidence of small mammal mortality was found. In some cases gravelling operations covered the oil completely, leaving no oil strip. Probably most significant was the timing of the operation which resulted in the mortality described. Applied at 7:00 p.m., the oil was probably at its stickiest at the peak of vole evening activity. At the time of examination 17 hours later the oil had "set" sufficiently that it would easily have supported animals of this size.

Thanks are extended to Dr. R. D. Morris who confirmed the identification and sexed the individuals in the sample.

## RECENT ALBERTA POCKET MOUSE RECORDS

by **Hugh C. Smith**, Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, Edmonton

In the list of Alberta mammals several are classified as belonging to the Upper Sonoran Life Zone. Included among these are the Olive-backed Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus fasciatus*) (Soper, 1964:39).

The first Alberta records of the Pocket Mouse were obtained in 1951 from extreme southeastern Alberta (Moore, 1952:143). Soper (*op. cit.*:

175) outlined the northern limit of their range as lying between the Red Deer River and the South Saskatchewan River from Empress on the east to Brooks on the west. Since the earlier work done by Moore there have been no published records for this province. This note is written in order to provide a record of recent specimens collected by museum staff (see Table 1).

Table 1. Recent Alberta Pocket Mouse specimens

Locality	Date	Number	Collector
Manyberries	20 June 1967	4	R. D. Carson & J. Keizer
Hilda	11 June 1969	1	M. J. Hampson & H. C. Smith
Empress	24 June 1969	2	M. J. Hampson & H. C. Smith
Empress	25 June 1969	2	M. J. Hampson & H. C. Smith
Hilda	26 June 1969	3	M. J. Hampson & H. C. Smith

Nero (1958), who has done considerable work on these rodents in Saskatchewan, found them in a large number of localities in that province, extending their range as far north as Saskatoon. A similar intensive study in Alberta might yield interesting results.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Moore, J. G. 1952. Notes on three additions to the rodent fauna of Alberta. *Can. Field-Nat.*, 66:142-143.
- Nero, R. W. 1958. Additional Pocket Mouse records. *Blue Jay*, 16:176-179.
- Soper, J. D. 1964. *The mammals of Alberta*. The Queen's Printer, Edmonton.