

## GENERAL NOTES

## SOME RANDOM NOTES ON MAMMALS OF MINNESOTA

*Lutreola vison*. Mink.—In the fall of 1920, a farmer living on the Jefferson Highway between Elk River and Big Lake, Sherburne County, found a mink on this road that had evidently been killed by an auto. This was on a cement paved road.

*Mephitis sp.* Skunk.—There seems to be more or less disagreement as to the skunk's ability to discharge its scent under difficulty. I have taken and helped to take about fifty skunks from their dens in the last seven years. All were taken out alive and about one-half without their discharging any scent. There seems to be one, and only one, way to handle them safely; that is, grasp both hind feet and the tail firmly in one hand and pull them from the hole until the head appears, then grasp them around the neck. As long as they are held in this manner they cannot discharge scent, if the hind legs and tail are held straight out behind and a steady pull is maintained to prevent the back from "humping." They may then be placed in a sack and carried in the hand with the sack hanging free. Do not let them touch the ground or bump them. I have never had one try to bite, but would not take any chance, as I have known of their biting, and the bite is no joke.

*Marmota monax rufescens*. Woodchuck.—It seems to be not generally known that woodchucks climb trees. This was quite a surprise to me as I never considered this worthy of making notes on. The only time that I can give any definite information on is as follows: In the summer of 1917, while building fence, I saw a woodchuck fifty feet up in a basswood tree. I remember this because I threw my hammer at it and the hammer lodged in a crotch of a limb on which the "chuck" was sitting and I had to climb the tree to get it.—BERNARD BAILEY, *Elk River, Minnesota*.

## TREE-CLIMBING WOODCHUCKS

Mr. Harold St. John's article in the *Journal of Mammalogy* for November, on the tree-climbing woodchuck, came to me very much in the nature of a surprise. Years ago, as a boy, in Ontario County, New York, I repeatedly saw woodchucks "treed" by dogs, not infrequently to a height of at least ten feet, usually on the trunk of a tree of small diameter. Others with whom I used to discuss such experiences spoke of them as more or less commonplace. I had, therefore, assumed that while woodchucks were not arboreal by preference, they readily took refuge in small trees, when surprised at some distance from burrow or rock pile.—B. S. BOWDISH, *Demarest, N. J.*

## THE SUBSPECIES OF WOODCHUCK IN VERMONT

In connection with an article by Harold St. John in the November, 1921, issue of the *Journal of Mammalogy*, there is pictured a woodchuck, photographed as it was climbing a tree, and under it is the name *Marmota monax preblorum*. The photograph was taken at Hartland, Vermont. Possibly this name was used because the subspecies of woodchuck mentioned is assigned to central Vermont

by A. H. Howell in his monograph, "Review of American Marmots," North American Fauna, No. 37, 1915.

A short time after the marmot "Fauna" appeared, I collected a number of woodchucks in Vermont and sent skins and skulls to Mr. Howell, who kindly examined them. He pronounced them all (seven, if I remember rightly) *Marmota monax rufescens* and remarked that some further revision of New England woodchucks would be necessary. In his review he writes that material from northern New England is lacking. The specimens sent Mr. Howell were from Rutland, from Ferrisburg, in the Champlain Valley, and two from Lunenburg on the east side of the state near the Canada line. There were none from Hartland and immediate vicinity but it is reasonable to suppose that the woodchucks there are the same as in Rutland, 35 miles away.—GEORGE L. KIRK, *Rutland, Vt.*

#### ANOTHER TREE-CLIMBING WOODCHUCK

The recent article by Mr. Harold St. John in the Journal of Mammalogy (II, No. 4, 1921, 207), concerning "A Tree-climbing Woodchuck" prompts me to relate my own experience with another tree-climbing individual in Iowa.

On July 2, 1914, while doing some field work to which I was assigned by the director of the Iowa Geological Survey three miles northwest of Waukon, Iowa, I disturbed an adult woodchuck (*Marmota monax monax*) which was feeding in an open pasture. Immediately the animal gave a sort of grunt and galloped toward a small white oak a short distance away. On arriving at the tree which was between eight and ten inches in diameter, it did not hesitate at all but climbed, without apparent difficulty, to the first limb which was at least eight feet above the ground. So great was my surprise that I stopped and stared at the woodchuck for a moment, then slowly walked toward the tree. The rodent partly lay across the lowermost limb eyeing me and breathing heavily after its exertion. After watching it for a few minutes, during which time it remained in the same position, I secured a heavy club and dispatched it by breaking its back so that the skull was left intact. The latter is preserved in the University Museum as accession no. 25697.

An examination of the greatly distended stomach revealed only clover, grass, and other vegetation. Unfortunately I did not secure a photograph of the animal. This species is very common in the driftless, hilly area of northeastern Iowa where it does considerable damage and as a consequence of which a vain effort is being made to control it through the bounty system.—DAYTON STONER, *University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.*

#### WOODCHUCKS CLIMB TREES

Mr. Harold St. John, in the November, 1921, issue of the Journal of Mammalogy relates the case of the woodchuck, *Marmota monax preblorum*, climbing a tree and shows a photograph as evidence. He seems to think that such an occasion is unique and farther states that he had difficulty in convincing people of the fact.

I can assure Mr. St. John that I have frequently seen woodchucks climb trees. Two or three incidents stand out vividly. When a boy on the farm at home I on two occasions stoned woodchucks out of trees where some farm dogs had chased them. As I recall, both of these chucks were small and immature, but a few years