

A NEW DISTRIBUTION SUGGESTED FOR THE RICE RAT (*Oryzomys palustris*) IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

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ABSTRACT

Predator food habit investigations occasionally reveal new distributions for small mammals. This is logical as predators are more adept at capturing their prey than are man's trapping techniques. Sealander (1943) reported an extension to the distribution of the snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*) in Michigan as a result of a food habit study on mink.

During a study of mink diet in southern Illinois (Casson and Klimstra 1983), a new distribution record for the rice rat was suggested. Previous reported distribution in Illinois was restricted to regions of Jackson and Williamson counties and southward (Klimstra and Roseberry 1969). Samples of mink stomachs yielded two rice rats; one intestinal tract was from Washington County, substantially north of the reported distribution of this uncommon rat. Because rice rats have been collected from the southern drainage areas of the Big Muddy River, it is possible that they also occur in more northern portions, parts of which are located in Washington County. Small mammal trapping in this watershed might result in confirmation of the new distribution.

LITERATURE CITED

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