

## FIRST RECORDS OF THE NUTRIA, *MYOCASTOR COYPUS*, IN THE TRANS-PECOS REGION OF TEXAS

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The nutria, *Myocastor coypus*, is a native rodent of South America and occupies a variety of aquatic habitats in its native range. It was originally introduced into the southeastern United States in 1938 in the vicinity of Avery Island, Louisiana (Schmidly, 1983). Since the early 1940s, the nutria has spread throughout the southeastern United States and eastern Texas, often to the detriment of the native muskrat, *Ondatra zibethicus*, which occupies much the same habitat (Hall, 1981). Man has aided in the distribution of the nutria in Texas by introducing the species into weed-choked ponds and lakes in an effort to control vegetation (Davis, 1974; Schmidly, 1983). The nutria has continued to expand its range until it now occurs in every region of Texas except the High Plains and the Trans-Pecos areas (Davis, 1974; Schmidly, 1977, 1983). The westernmost published records of the nutria in the state are from Kinney, Edwards, and Schleicher counties (Davis, 1974).

On 28 October 1979, a party from Sul Ross State University (SRSU) obtained a female nutria (SRSU 2056) from Independence Creek, 16 mi. S and 6 mi. E Sheffield, Terrell Co. Texas. On 31 March 1990, we took a male (TTU 59415) from the west bank of the Pecos River at Pandale Crossing, 2 mi. S Pandale, Val Verde Co. Texas. These specimens are the first records of nutria from the Trans-Pecos region of the state. Because nutria require riparian habitats, it is likely that the species has migrated westward from the lower Rio Grande River. Fishermen from Lake Amistad have reported nutria as far west along the Rio Grande as Langtry (J. F. Scudday, personal communication).

### LITERATURE CITED

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