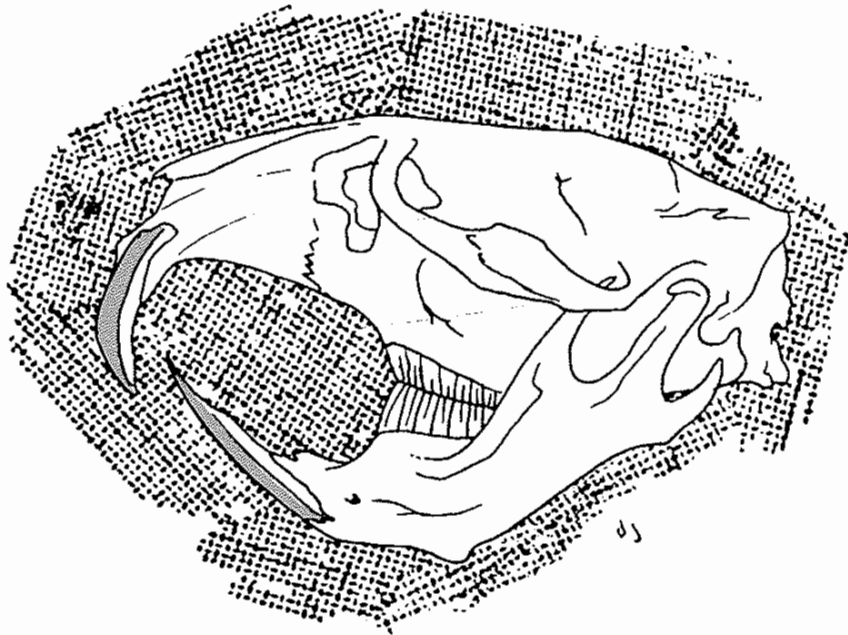


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**ONDATRA FROM THE PLEISTOCENE
OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

by J. C. Harksen, 1969



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ONDATRA FROM THE PLEISTOCENE OF SOUTH DAKOTA ¹

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The genus *Ondatra* has not been previously reported from the Pleistocene of South Dakota. Within the past two years, five specimens referable to this genus have been collected from three sites within the State. These specimens have been donated to the Museum of Geology of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology for cataloging and curation. It seems advisable at this time to make known this new record and the availability of these specimens to interested workers. To discourage amateur collectors from destroying the collecting sites, as has been reported by Macdonald (1964), specific locations are omitted but are recorded at the South Dakota Geological Survey and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and will be supplied to recognized institutions or individuals on request. Below is a listing, by county, of the five specimens of *Ondatra* mentioned above.

Bennett County: *Ondatra zibethicus* (Linnaeus, 1758), isolated RM² (SDSM 6732) and fragmentary right mandible with M₂ and partial M₁ (SDSM 6733). These two specimens were collected from a low terrace (?Wisconsin) along the south fork of the White River.

Walworth County: *Ondatra* cf. *idahoensis* Wilson (1938), isolated LM₁ (SDSM 6735) and fragmentary left mandible with I, M₂, M₃ (SDSM 6736). These two specimens were collected from a channel deposit which overlies the Cretaceous Pierre Shale and is overlain by Late Wisconsin till. This deposit has tentatively been dated as Yarmouthian by fossil content as well as its relationship to the present Missouri River and the pre-Wisconsin drainages of Campbell County.

Lincoln County: *Ondatra* sp., isolated RM² (SDSM 6734) found in a channel deposit of western (?Black Hills) derived sand which overlies the Cretaceous Carlile Shale and is overlain by ?Illinoian till.

The present geographic range of the muskrat, *Ondatra zibethicus*, is presented in figure 1. The muskrat ranges across North America from the Gulfs of California and Mexico north to the Arctic Ocean. The muskrat has such a wide geographic distribution that therefore any occurrence in the fossil record means little in reconstructing the past climates of any given area. The maximum limit of interconnected Pleistocene glaciation is also presented in figure 1.

¹ Publication authorized by the State Geologist.

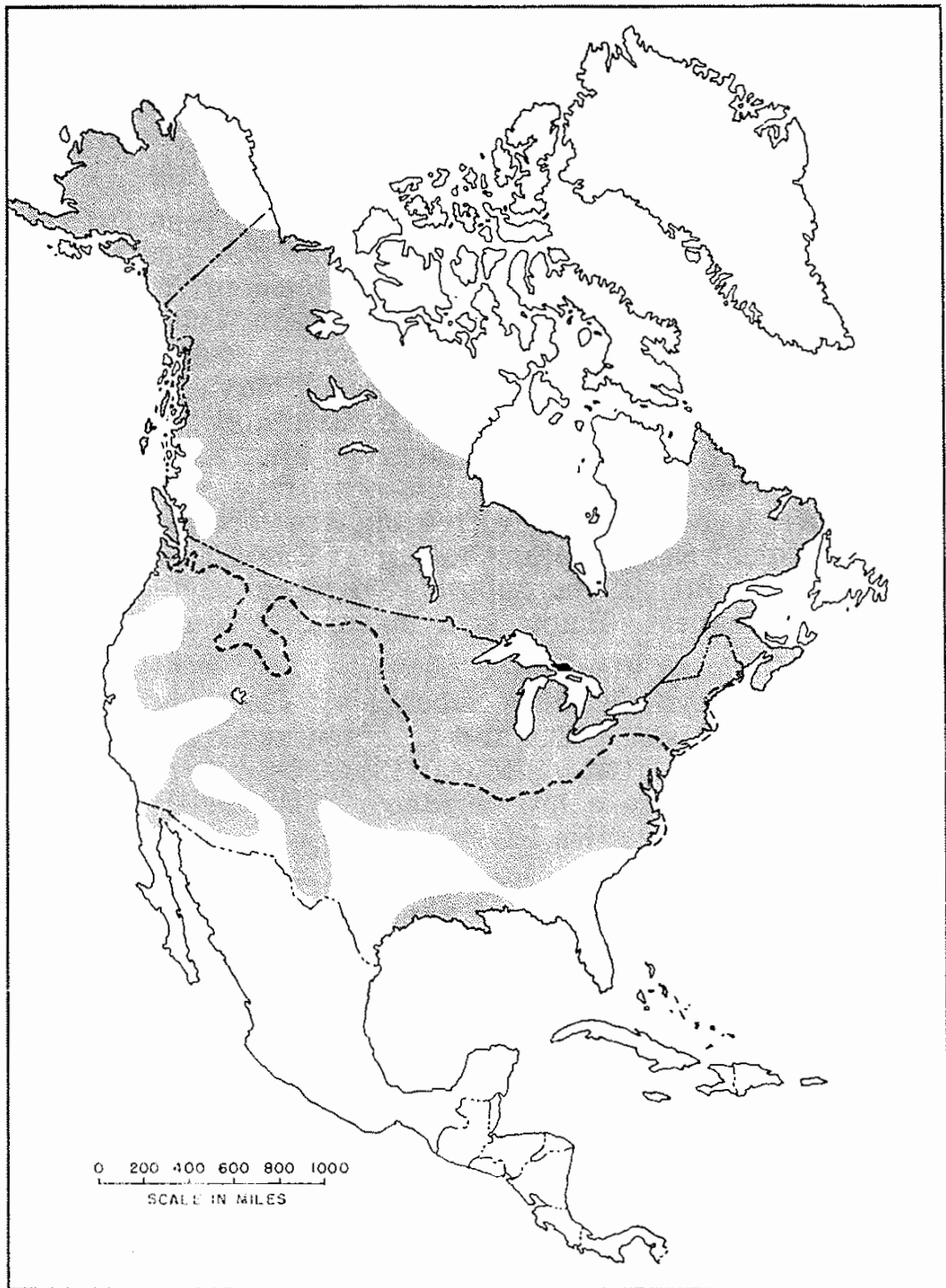


Figure 1. Outline map of North America. The stippled area indicates the present geographic range of *Ondatra zibethicus* as presented by Hall and Kelson (1959). The dashed line indicates the approximate maximum extent of the interconnected Pleistocene glaciation in the United States (Hibbard and others, 1965).

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