Distibutional Notes on *Nerodia harteri harteri* in Parker and Palo Pinto Counties, Texas

Michael E. Dorcas and Joseph R. Mendelson, III

Department of Biology
The University of Texas at Arlington
Arlington, Texas 76019

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DISTRIBUTIONAL NOTES ON *Nerodia harteri harteri* IN PARKER AND PALO PINTO COUNTIES, TEXAS

The Brazos water snake, *Nerodia harteri harteri*, has a limited distribution, and knowledge of its ecology and occurrence within its range has accumulated slowly since its description (Trapido 1941). Literature specific to *N. h. harteri* is limited to several brief distributional reports (Mecham 1983; Smith 1983; Wade 1968). Scott et al. (1989) recently reviewed the status of *N. harteri* populations. Because of its limited distribution and specific habitat requirements, *N. harteri* has been the focal issue in controversial river development projects. *Nerodia h. harteri* is currently listed as Threatened by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Scott et al. (1989) reported a 100 km hiatus in the present distribution of *N. h. harteri* along the Brazos River. This hiatus encompasses a river section from Hittson Bend (Palo Pinto Co.) downstream to Lake Granbury (Hood Co.). Littlefield Bend lies primarily in the southwestern corner of Parker County, just east of the Palo Pinto/Parker County line and approximately in the center of the hiatus (Fig. 1). Scott et al. (1989) report six areas of suitable habitat within the hiatus where *N. h. harteri* were not found, including two in the Littlefield Bend area. They also report two historical records from Palo Pinto County within the hiatus. Here we document the continued occurrence of *N. h. harteri* within the hiatus and report new records from the Littlefield Bend area of Parker County. This constitutes a new county record for Parker County, Texas (Dixon 1987; Scott et al. 1989). All specimens were deposited in the University of Texas at Arlington Collection of Vertebrates (UTACV). The following represents the new distributional information for *N. harteri harteri* in Palo Pinto and Parker Counties, Texas (Fig.1).

A. Texas: Palo Pinto Co.: 9.6 km northeast of Palo Pinto on the Brazos River (Moffitt Bend). 28 July 1961. UTACV R-597. Previously unreported historical record.

B. Texas: Palo Pinto Co.: 100 m SE of U.S. Highway 281 bridge over Brazos River at mouth of Coffee Creek. 30 April 1988. Three juveniles observed by MED under flat rocks on south bank; cloudy; temperature ca. 19°C. Rediscovery of species at an historical locality (Scott et al. 1989).

C. Texas: Parker Co.: 3.8 air km NW of Interstate Highway 20 bridge over Brazos River. 1 June 1986. Adult observed by MED on rocky, east bank next to deep, slowly moving water. New locality record.

D. Texas: Parker Co.: 4.6 air km NNW of Interstate Highway 20 bridge over Brazos River. 1 April 1989. Three juveniles collected (UTACV R-27183-27185) under flat rocks on north gravel bank. One adult female collected (UTACV R-27186) ca. 100 m downstream on south bank at the edge of water ca. 1 meter deep, while trying to eat a juvenile channel catfish, *Ictalurus punctatus* (130 mm TL). New locality record.

E. Texas: Parker Co.: ca. 2.4 km N of Interstate Highway 20 bridge over Brazos River. 16 September 1989. UTACV R-27187. One adult female collected while basking on a limb overhanging swiftly moving water ca. 1.5 m deep. The river bank consisted of large boulders and trees; no riffles within 3 km up or downstream. New locality record.

The following areas of suitable "juvenile *N. harteri* habitat" (Scott et al. 1989) were also located in the Littlefield Bend region. Although no *N. harteri* were found at these sites, juvenile *N. erythrogaster* and *N. rhombifera* were found here under flat rocks.

F. Texas: Palo Pinto Co.: 3.2 air km NE of U.S. Highway 281 bridge over Brazos River.

G. Texas: Parker Co.: 5.3 air km NNW of Interstate Highway 20 bridge over Brazos River. The discovery of these *N. h. harteri* from Littlefield Bend indicates that present day populations are not as widely separated along the Brazos River as previously thought (Scott et al. 1989).

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MICHAEL E. DORCAS[1]
JOSEPH R. MENDELSON III[2]
Department of Biology
UTA Box 19498
University of Texas at Arlington
Arlington, Texas 76019, USA.

[1]Current Address:
Department of Biological Sciences
Campus Box 8007
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho 83209-0009, USA
[2]Current Address:
Museum of Natural History
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045-2454, USA.

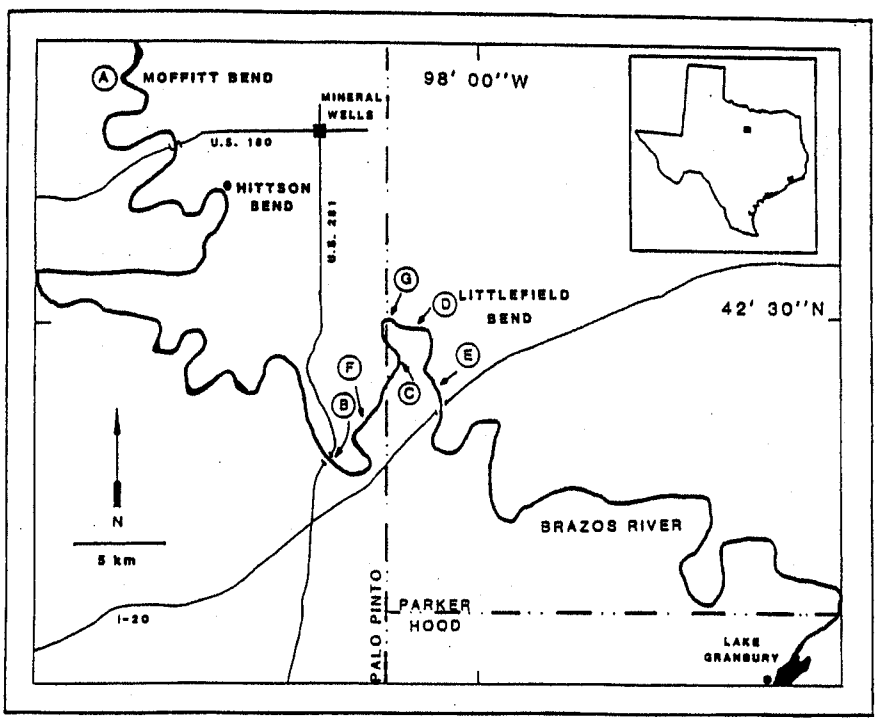

Figure 1. The 100 km hiatus in the distribution of *Nerodia h. harteri* along the Brazos River reported by Scott et al. (1989). Closed circles represent localities where snakes were found by Scott et al. (1989). Lettered localities are referred to in text.