

New Record for the American Burying Beetle (*Necrophorus americanus*) in Bryan County, OK

Sydney C. Quisenberry and Brad Purcell

Department of Biological Sciences, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, OK 74701

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In July of 1989 the American burying beetle, *N. americanus* (Olivier 1790), was listed as endangered because of the drastic decline and extirpation of the species over nearly its entire historical range. This species once occupied most of the eastern half of North America from southern Ontario and the northern peninsula of Michigan to the southern Atlantic coastal plain. Currently only two or three populations exist, a stable population on Block Island off the coast of Rhode Island and a less dense but more widely distributed population spread over seven eastern Oklahoma counties: Cherokee, Haskell, Latimer, Leflore, Muskogee, Sequoyah, and Tulsa. (1)

In April 1992, *N. americanus* was collected in Bryan County, Oklahoma. The site of collection is 2.8 miles due east of the town of Bennington, (NE¼, NE¼, S36, T6S, R12E IM). The area is mostly grazed pastures with deciduous hardwood in patches and along fencerows. The beetle was collected at night under a porch light. Shortly after collection, we identified it as the *N. americanus*, an endangered species. We sent the beetle to Dr. Mark Lomolino, Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory, Biological Survey, Norman, Oklahoma, who verified our identification and saved the specimen.

The seven counties previously having populations of this beetle are generally in east-central Oklahoma. Bryan County is a southern county, and Bennington is approximately 12 miles north of the Texas border. We believe that the American burying beetle is more widely distributed than previously thought and might be found in Texas.

Since our discovery of *N. americanus* in Bryan County, OK, the beetle has also been collected in Pittsburg County, OK, Sebastian, Franklin, Scott and Logan Counties of Arkansas, and Cherry County in Nebraska.

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REFERENCES

1. Raithel, C., American Burying Beetle, *Necrophorus americanus*, Recovery Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1991).