

## REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF IDAHO, NO. 2

Wilmer W. Tanner<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT.—For about 20 years Richard P. Erwin collected amphibians and reptiles in southwestern Idaho. This report is an attempt to indicate some of his herpetological activities, and to list the numerous individuals, universities, and museums that were recipients of his collections.

In 1941 *The Reptiles and Amphibians of Idaho No. 1* was published (Tanner, 1941, Great Basin Nat. 2:87) as a checklist with a list of the locality records known at that time for each species. Since then, other authors (Brodie 1968, 1970, Teberg 1963) have contributed to the herpetological fauna of the state so that the present report is not presented to add to the known fauna, or to serve in any way as a checklist, but to add additional historical information concerning the state of Idaho.

In 1956, while investigating the distribution and systematics of the Western Skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*), I had the opportunity to visit with Mr. Harold M. Tucker and Professor O. H. Smith at the College of Idaho in Caldwell. My concern was to discover, if possible, any additional material that might be helpful to a better understanding of these lizards in the western United States. During this visit, I was fortunate in receiving from Mr. Tucker the field books of Mr. Richard P. Erwin, who was perhaps the first authentic collector of herpetological specimens for the state of Idaho; at least his field books, as will be shown, indicate the large number of specimens that were collected and distributed to the museums and researchers throughout the United States.

Although most of his field activities centered around the Boise area, they did include most of the adjoining counties and were particularly associated with the areas near the Snake River to the south and west of Boise. Although Mr. Erwin was a herpetological collector, this was a hobby. Mr. Erwin was an accomplished musician and music teacher, and had his private studio at 19–20 Gem

Building, 20th and Main Streets, Boise, Idaho. The correspondence included in the field notes indicates that his home was at 2320 Woodlawn Avenue.

He was born on 28 March 1875 in Indianola, Iowa, and passed away on 4 May 1932 in Boise, Idaho. Although he was a professional musician, much of his free time (according to his field books) was spent investigating the natural history of southwestern Idaho. He was not only concerned with herpetology and entomology, but was also interested in archaeology, with a special interest in Indian rock writing in southwestern Idaho.

The significance of the field notes was that Mr. Erwin provided considerable material that was undoubtedly used not only to augment the collections of many museums and universities, but also for a better understanding of the distribution of western amphibian and reptile species. To indicate the extent of his activities, it is necessary to list the individuals and/or institutions who, according to his field notes, received collections. It appears from his records that one of his most important museums was the Idaho State Historical Museum, in which he established a collection of the amphibians and reptiles of Idaho as he understood them. To accomplish this, he corresponded with professional herpetologists at the various museums where he secured identifications, and also received, on exchange, specimens from other areas in the United States.

Two of his publications appeared in the *Bulletin of the Idaho State Historical Society*, the first coauthored with Mr. Reginald Barker (an entomologist) and the second written

<sup>1</sup>Life Science Museum, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.



by himself. The latter was a descriptive distribution checklist published in 1928. His handwritten manuscript of it is included in one of the field books.

The following list of individuals and museums indicates the extent of his effort in securing and exchanging specimens:

Number sent	Date sent	To whom or where sent
17	11 August 1917	Slevin (California Academy)
468	30 September 1917	California Academy of Sciences
15	31 August 1919	Slevin
31	December 1919	Helen T. Gaige, University of Michigan
262	21 November 1921	Slevin at California Academy of Sciences
14	21 November 1921	Slevin
19	11 September 1922	Stejneger, U.S. National Museum
39	11 September 1922	Slevin at California Academy of Sciences
44	11 January 1923	Helen T. Gaige
100	16 September 1923	American Museum in New York
10	25 October 1923	G. K. Noble at American Museum
5	29 October 1923	G. K. Noble at American Museum
29	4 February 1924	Slevin
31	4 February 1924	Henshaw at Museum of Comparative Zoology
57	28 June 1924	Helen T. Gaige
18	13 October 1924	G. K. Noble
13	17 October 1924	Slevin
46	21 October 1924	Karl P. Schmidt at Field Museum in Chicago
60	22 October 1924	Museum of Comparative Zoology in Boston
35	16 December 1924	Field Museum
4	20 June 1925	R. V. Chamberlain, Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge, Massachusetts
150	15 February to 22 May 1926	Idaho State Historical Museum
6	8 March 1926	Slevin
7	19 April 1926	Ortenberger
33	19 April 1926	Fowler

7	15 August to 17 October 1926	G. K. Noble
47	4 October 1926	Slevin
1	27 October 1926	G. K. Noble
33	22 November 1926	Grinnell at the University of California—Berkeley
36	22 November 1926	Brimley
77	9 December 1926	Grinnell
8	9 May 1927	A. I. Ortenberger
21	28 November 1927	Netting at Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
85	5 March 1928	Netting at Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
135	11 April 1928	V. M. Tanner in Provo, Utah
1	17 April 1928	Helen T. Gaige
9	23 April 1928	L. M. Klauber in San Diego, California
4	12 June 1928	L. M. Klauber
50	5 July 1928	L. M. Klauber
22	25 February 1929	Field Museum
16	28 April 1929	E. H. Taylor in Lawrence, Kansas
218	16 December 1929	Helen T. Gaige, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
108	1 December 1931	Ralph D. Chamberlain in Salt Lake City, Utah
7	18 December 1931	Dr. Thomas Barbour at the Museum of Comparative Zoology
6	28 June 1932	U.S. National Museum in Washington, D.C.

Of those collections noted in his field books (and there may have been others not recorded), a total of 2,404 specimens were sent to other institutions. The California Academy of Science (J. R. Slevin, recipient) received nearly 40 percent of the material.

I am indebted to the late Mr. Tucker at the College of Idaho in Caldwell, Idaho, and to the Idaho State Historical Society for their generous help in providing some of the information included in this report.

The Erwin field journals are deposited in the Idaho State Historical Society Museum.



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