

Rare or Endangered Plants & Animals that could exist on Fort Riley



Eastern Spotted Skunk

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Spilogale putorius

The Eastern Spotted Skunk has decreased in numbers throughout the state of Kansas. It is smaller than the Striped Skunk and has a weasel-like appearance. The black fur has four to six broken white lines or spots, but is quite variable among individuals. They are most likely to be found in and around riparian (river woodland) areas.



Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

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Platanthera praeclara

This beautiful plant is a member of the orchid family. It grows in open areas of native tallgrass prairie. It can grow to a height of 3 feet. This plant flowers in mid-June, with up to two-dozen white and pale-green flowers. This plant would most likely be found in eastern and southern areas of the fort.



Timber Rattlesnake Photo courtesy of John White

Timber Rattlesnake

Crotalus horridus

The timber rattlesnake is known to occur in Riley and Geary Counties, but has not yet been documented on Fort Riley. This **venomous** snake is shy and well camouflaged, with a pattern and colors that match the forest floor. It is most likely to be found in rugged terrain in heavily vegetated rocky outcrops. Timber rattlesnakes are active from April through October.

American Burying Beetle

Nicrophorus americanus

The American burying beetle is a large carrion beetle 1 to 1.5 inches in length. It is distinguished from other burying beetles by the orange pronotum (circular plate behind the head). They seem to prefer loose, sandy soils in grasslands and open woodlands. The last observance in this area was in Riley County in 1940. They have been found recently in Chautauqua and Montgomery Counties in Kansas.



American Burying Beetle



Southern Flying Squirrel Photo courtesy of New York Zoological Park

Southern Flying Squirrel

Glaucomys volans

The Southern Flying Squirrel is the smallest squirrel in Kansas. It has a broad flap of skin from the wrist of the forefeet to the ankles of the hind feet. It is grayish brown in color with white under parts. The eyes of this squirrel are extraordinarily large and black. Southern Flying Squirrels do not actually fly, but rather are capable of gliding from tree to tree. The most recent sighting in this area came from the western side of Tuttle Creek Lake north of Manhattan. Southern Flying Squirrels would most likely be found along the Kansas River and possibly along Wildcat Creek.



Franklin's Ground Squirrel Photo courtesy of Robert M. Timm. Copyright 1999. All rights reserved.

Franklin's Ground Squirrel

Spermophilus franklinii

The Franklin's Ground Squirrel is the largest of the three ground squirrels found in Kansas, but smaller than the tree dwelling members of its family. Unlike the thirteen lined ground squirrel and the Spotted Ground squirrel, the Franklin's ground squirrel does not have a conspicuous pattern of lines or spots. This squirrel prefers the shelter of dense grasses near the forest edge and could be found anywhere on Fort Riley where those conditions are present.



White-tailed Jack Rabbit

White-tailed Jack Rabbit

Lepus townsendii campanius

The White-tailed Jack Rabbit was once common throughout the western two-thirds of Kansas. Its status however is currently unknown. They can be distinguished from other Kansas rabbits and hares by their large size and all white tail. In the winter, these hares become lighter in color but not completely white. The White-tailed Jack Rabbit would most likely be found in the northern and western parts of Fort Riley.



Mountain Lion

Mountain Lion

Felis concolor

The status of Mountain Lions in Kansas has been verified recently by Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks officials. Originally, this large predator existed throughout Kansas. The second apparently wild mountain lion was verified by evidence around WaKeeney, Kansas in October 2009. In November, 2007, a young male mountain lion was shot by a landowner in Barber County. Prior to that, the last documented occurrence was in 1904. It is possible that an individual mountain lion could exist or pass through Fort Riley.



Eastern Hognose



Western Hognose

Eastern and Western Hognose Snake

Heterodon spp.

Eastern and Western Hognose Snakes are similar in appearance and equally rare on Fort Riley. Both can be distinguished from other snakes by the sharply upturned snout. They would most likely be found in dry sandy prairies.

These snakes have an interesting defense mechanism. When threatened, they will first hiss loudly and flatten their hood similar to a cobra. If that doesn't work, they will then regurgitate food, roll over and play dead.

Massasauga

Sistrurus catenatus

This **venomous** snake is the smallest member of the rattlesnake family in Kansas. It has yet to be found on Fort Riley, but is known to occur in Geary and Riley County. Massasaugas can attain 18-30 inches in length. They are light brown or gray with dark gray or brown blotches. This species can be found in a wide variety of habitat, ranging from grasslands to open prairies.



Massasauga Rattlesnake