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OCCURRENCE OF THE COTTONMOUTH (*AGKISTRODON PISCIVORUS*) IN COFFEE COUNTY, TENNESSEE

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ABSTRACT

On 12 and 15 May 1984, cottonmouths (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*) were collected in backwater sloughs of Morton's Lake in Manchester, Coffee County, Tennessee. Both snakes were females (975mm and 690mm SVL). Specimens were deposited in the Central High School Science Department Vertebrate Collection (CHS-RO15 and CHS-RO16). Identification followed Conant (1975) and Barbour (1971).

This find constitutes the first record of cottonmouths in Coffee County. This is approximately 165 km southeast of the Montgomery County record of Scott and Snyder (1968) and 265 km to the east of *A. piscivorus* found in Hardeman County by Norton and Harvey (1975). There is an additional previously unreported specimen in the Herpetological Collection at Tennessee Technological University which was also collected at Morton's Lake on 16 August 1981 (O. Ray Jordan, unpublished data). In Tennessee, the range of *A. piscivorus* has been limited to the western half of the state (Conant, 1975). Gentry (1956) indicated the same general distribution with the exception of two isolated reports in Anderson County and Campbell County in eastern Tennessee. The range reported by Conant (1975) indicates a possible existence of the species in this area.

It is widely believed cottonmouths of Morton's Lake were purposely introduced early this century to discourage poaching. This could not be confirmed. Local residents report cottonmouths to occur commonly in this part of the state and county. After examination of numerous specimens and talking with knowledgeable people, it is believed most reports are false. Most cottonmouths are usually found to be water snakes (*Nerodia* sp.)

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SIXTH CENTRAL HARDWOOD CONFERENCE SCHEDULED AT UT

The sixth hardwood forest conference will be held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee on February 24-26, 1987. The Conference will be sponsored by the UT Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, Society of American Foresters, UT Department of Botany, and the Southern Forest Experiment Station. Papers pertaining to hardwood forests and forestry are invited. Abstracts should be submitted by March 1, 1986. All correspondence and inquiries should be addressed to:

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