

Southwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Observations
Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge
June 4, 2017
Prepared by Susan Horton

Southwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (SW PARC) held their annual meeting in Denver, Colorado June 1-4, 2017. Representatives of SW PARC contacted staff from Colorado Front Range Refuges requesting access to Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (RFNWR, Refuge) for the purpose of conducting a field trip at the Refuge as part of SW PARC's meeting agenda. Colorado Front Range Refuges granted SW PARC permission and members from both organizations met prior to the field trip in order to determine sites where species of interest were most likely to be observed. The mid-section of Rock Creek in the north-central part of the Refuge as well as the area in and around the defunct Caprock Mine located in the southwest part of the Refuge were identified as good amphibian and reptile habitat and chosen as sites for the field trip. Five members of SW PARC met with two US Fish and Wildlife Service staff from 10 a.m. until noon on Sunday June 4th at RFNWR to look for amphibians and reptiles. The following species were observed and an informal list was compiled and submitted to US Fish and Wildlife Service on May 31, 2018 by Clint Henke of SW PARC.

Rock Creek was the first site visited during the fieldtrip and a lined snake and a western terrestrial garter snake were observed (see map). Amphibian and reptile activity in the Rock Creek drainage at that time was low so approximately 45 minutes into the field trip the decision was made to move to the Caprock Mine location. Here there was much more activity by species of interest. An American bullfrog, Woodhouse's toad, boreal chorus frogs, western painted turtle, eastern yellowbelly racer, plains garter snake, and a western terrestrial garter snake were observed (see map). Henke noted that prairie rattlesnake and bull snake are known to be present at the Refuge but not observed on June 4, 2017. He went on to say that tiger salamander, plains spadefoot toad, Great Plains toad, northern leopard frog, short-horned lizard, eastern fence lizard, six-lined racerunner, central plains milk snake, plains black-headed snake, and common garter snake are all species that are possibly present on the Refuge.

Rocky Flats SW RARC Observations

Amphibians and reptiles observed by
Southwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
(SW PARC) field trip June 4, 2017

Western Terrestrial Garter Snake

Lined Snake DOR

Woodhouse's Toad

American Bullfrog

Western Painted Turtles




Eastern Yellowbelly Racer

Boreal Chorus Frogs (heard)



1 mi

Legend

-  Polygon of Several Lined Snake Observations
-  Rocky Flats NWR Boundary
-  Various Amphibian and Reptile Observation Sites