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A Study of the Southern Woodchuck, *Marmota monax monax*

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The investigations reported here were started in the summer of 1947 and carried through the summer of 1949. Intensive studies were made on specific areas of the Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland. Incidental observations were made on other parts of the Refuge, at several locations in Maryland, and near Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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Naturalists have known of the woodchuck since at least the early 1700's, but except for a few life history notes and accounts of the animal in travel journals very little was written about the animal until 1884 when Merriam published his account of the mammals of the Adirondack region in New York. Seton (1929) and Howell (1915) have furnished information about the groundhog. Hamilton (1934) in his study of the life history of the rufescent woodchuck in New York has made an important contribution to our knowledge of the animal. Other authors, too many to mention here, have added greatly to an understanding of this important animal by reporting their observations of life history, methods of control, and hibernation.

STUDY AREA

The Patuxent Research Refuge of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is located between Laurel and Bowie, Maryland, about 20 miles northeast of Washington, D.C. The Patuxent River flows through the area northwest to southeast and drains the Refuge and surrounding territories. The Agricultural Research Center of the Department of Agriculture is located to the west and Fort George G. Meade adjoins the area along the northeast boundary. Private holdings border the northwestern and eastern boundaries.

Most of the intensive work during the investigation was carried out at two different areas of the Refuge, these having been designated as Conservation Farm A and Check Farm B.