Ecology of the Uinta Ground Squirrel in Jackson Hole

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Uinta ground squirrels (*Spermophilus armatus*) occupy several different kinds of habitat in Jackson Hole. This study is comparing squirrel populations in two conspicuously different habitat types in order to determine the nature of consequent differences within the squirrel populations themselves.

The summers of 1969-1971 (April-August) have been spent comparing squirrel populations in the two areas with regard to: (1) population density and structure, (2) food habits in relation to available vegetation, (3) energy dynamics, (4) the nature of predation and interspecific competition, (5) general behavior, (6) timing of activity (daily and seasonal), (7) burrow structure and distribution and (8) distribution, home range and dispersal movements of individuals.

The study is essentially a live-trapping operation in which captured squirrels are classified as to sex and age-class, weighed, examined as to condition (of pregnancy, etc.), toe-clipped for individual identification, and followed to a burrow upon release. Burrows are marked and mapped. Reproductive tracts are collected and analyzed. Stomach contents are examined and compared with canopy coverage analyses of available vegetation. Observations are made concerning the timing of activity, general behavior and the nature of predation. Caloric values are being worked out for plant species and stomach contents. In 1972 assimilation efficiencies will be determined for different plant species.

One more year of study (April-August 1972) is planned.

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