

**Oral History Interview of
Clyde Jones**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
February 16, 2011
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Natural History Project***

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The Natural History oral history collection includes interviews with individuals involved in biological field research, especially in mammalogy and ornithology. Most of the interviewees are faculty members in biological sciences at research universities. The collection focuses on academic studies in botanical and zoological taxonomy, ecology, conservation, and animal behavior.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Clyde Jones, who discusses his methods and findings during his research projects in Big Bend State Park and the Chinati Mountains.

Length of Interview: 00:58:30

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Keywords

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David Marshall (DM):

The date is February 16, 2011, and this is David Marshall interviewing Clyde Jones at his home in Lubbock, Texas. We're just going to talk about the Chinati Project, and let's start out—I guess I ought to mention for researchers that might be listening to this, that we did an extensive interview eight or ten years ago—it's been quite some time. But I think it was three or four hours of interview for a lot of good background on your philosophy on fieldwork and education. And we went into lots of different facets of your life and career. But in more recent years you've worked with this Chinati Project, and I would like to find out how this came about, first of all how you envisioned this project.

Clyde Jones (CJ):

Well, the Chinati Project dates back to 1996 when Frank Yancey was here as a student with me, and we were finishing up the Big Bend Ranch Project, and you know, we could look right over there and see the Chinati [Mountains]. And we decided, "Hey, we should go work in the Chinatis." And we did some exploring over there, and it was all tied up in private land. And they were not—there was only one land owner that agreed that we could work there, and he didn't own the upper parts of the Chinatis. That was John Poindexter, and so we did a little work on his property under his watchful eye, of course. David Riskind had supported us on the Big Bend Ranch State Park, so we asked him, "Hey, can you help us get into Chinatis?" And he allowed us how they were in negotiation for a piece of property.

DM:

The state?

CJ:

Yeah, and boy oh boy, then that came to be, but the commission accepted the property with the caveat that no money could be spent on it. So it just sat there for four or five years, and then suddenly Riskind called and said he had badgered somebody into giving permission for a mammal survey, and was I still interested? And I said, "Hey, a formal proposal will be in the mail tomorrow." (laughs)

DM:

Of course! Now when it became state property, it was state natural area right? Chinati Mountain State Natural Area?

CJ:

Yes. It followed kind of the same path that Big Bend Ranch State Park followed when it was established. And so we did a survey, Frank and I did a survey, and we couldn't find out about anybody who'd ever worked there, who'd ever done anything there.

DM:

In mammals?

CJ:

Yeah, we couldn't find any mammal survey data anywhere.

DM:

Was there any kind of data, was there botanical or other?

CJ:

Well, there's a lot of conjecture in the literature about species that must surely occur in the Chinatis. For example, not to be competitive but Bob Dowler and Loren Ammerman still insist that *Sylvilagus robustus* occurs in the Davis Mountains. We never saw one, and we're very familiar with that species, both in the Davis Mountains and in the Carmens, and in fact we got a couple out of the Carmens; we shot them off of Bonnie McKinney's lawn. (laughs)

DM:

Well, there's the difference in speculation and an actual mammal survey. I guess.

CJ:

Yeah, they're in the Chisos, they're in the Davis, so they should be in the Chinatis. I agree they should be, but they aren't. We never—in all of our work there we never saw one, and we never thought we saw one. And the other thing was, there was an earlier report that *Peromyscus nasutus* occurred in the Chinatis; it occurs in the Chisos, and it occurs in the Davis Mountains. We never got them, and if they were there we would have got them. I think the crew I had working with me were good enough rat trappers that if they were, we would've got them, but—

DM:

Have you ever speculated on why these weren't there when maybe they should have been, according to just general logic?

CJ:

Before working there, if you'd have asked me if they were there I would have said, "Oh sure, they're—undoubtedly they're there." They're in the Chisos, they're in the Davis, they must be in the Chinatis, but they're not. I think there are slight differences in the habitat, and I think that's what's keeping *Sylvilagus robustus* down, or out. And *Peromyscus nasutus*, I have no idea why it's not there, but it's just—like I said, if it was there we would have got them.

DM:

What are those slight differences in habitat that you're talking about?

CJ:

Lots of deer, lots of deer, lots of trapping of underbrush, lots of the consumption of underbrush by both mule deer and Virginia whitetail deer. And I will talk later about that problem too; there is a problem there. There are lots of them there, and there has been no hunting there. The people that own the property forbid anybody from hunting, and they, in fact, they forbid anybody from access from it, which was good for us, and it's starting to recover pretty well. They had some livestock, of course, but the livestock was all removed. The interior fences were all removed, and the habitat is recovering. But the Chihuahuan Desert—slow recovery. It doesn't bounce back next year.

DM:

This is a problem in Chinati. Is it reflected in other areas like Big Bend Ranch State Park, or the Carmen mountains?

CJ:

Yeah.

DM:

The same problem? Just overpopulation?

CJ:

The Carmen Mountains are probably in the best shape of all three of them.

DM:

Generally speaking it's just overpopulation of mule and whitetail?

CJ:

Well, there's another problem: wild hogs. There's no evidence of wild hogs on this property in the Chinatis, but they are elsewhere in the Chinatis, and they're in the Chisos; they're at Big Bend Ranch State Park now, which they weren't when we were working there, and they're really thick in the Davis Mountains. They're just prowling the Davis Mountains all day. Well, there's a couple of reports that have come out on hog management. I think there's only one management thing for them, but there're so many of them that—well, there's estimated to be over four million of them in Texas. And so you shoot a sow, well you've killed a dozen if you shoot a sow, but there are others coming along that you don't shoot and—

DM:

Do you have any idea of a solution?

CJ:

Swine cholera (laughs). You can't do that, of course.

DM:

How does this abundance of mule deer, whitetail deer, and hogs effect the predatory population like mountain lions? Are they well fed and expanding also?

CJ:

There are lots of mountain lions in the Chisos and in the Chinatis. That road where we come down into San Antonio Cabin, that's a sand road and there are lots of tracks, lots of tracks in that road, and lots of trap running by mountain lions. You put out a string of traps and they're all tripped over and moved around.

DM:

Looking for a small snack?

CJ:

Yeah that's the fun part of it, but there are a lot of bobcats too, badgers, lots of skunks, and a lot of foxes. And foxes are real good mousers, even better than coyotes I think. Where there are lots of foxes there aren't many coyotes, but they're mostly foxes in that country, in the Davis Mountains, in the Chinatis, and in the Chisos. So, David Riskind agreed to support this project on a year-by-year basis, and I went over and talked to the then-provost: would he extend my allotment as a Paul Whitfield Horn professor to do this project? And he agreed to extend that for two years, which was a great help. So, I thought about what kind of a crew could I assemble. So I decided, "Well, I'll just make this an experienced kind of crew." So I contacted Bogan and Mollhagen and Yancey who was teaching in California, old retired people or mature people. I didn't—other than Joel Brant—I didn't use students down there at all. We just did it, and we did it with us old crippled people. (laughs)

DM:

Just keep talking. What year again? Let me make sure I have the chronology right.

CJ:

2003.

DM:

How many of these expeditions or trips did it involve over the years?

CJ:

Well, it was a one-year project, but it wound up being a three-year project, and we made close to a hundred visits, close to a hundred visits. The problem was that—well access as you recall, it was a difficult problem, and to get to San Antonio Cabin and work on that side was one thing, but to get to Boulder Canyon you had to go all the way around and end up in the northwest corner, and we had to cross a piece of private property. It was a ranch owned by a Mr. Ford who lives in Fort Davis, and everybody is jumping around, you know, afraid to talk to him. So I went and talked to him, and he said, “No problem.” In fact, he let us stay at his ranch house and collect some mammals on his ranch once.

DM:

This was the access from Pinto Canyon Road?

CJ:

Yes, because his property was only about two-hundred yards, but it's across Pinto Creek. But it was no problem. And Boulder Canyon was a wonderful place. It was a nice cabin. The cabin had a brand new roof on it, but it had a dirt floor and had no windows or doors. The people that had owned it previously just didn't get around to finishing it before they donated it to TPWD [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department].

DM:

Now, that habitat is fairly different, it seems like, from the San Antonio Cabin area.

CJ:

Yeah, That's different. And Mark [Lockwood] drove us on up to the top, the top of Boulder Canyon, and we just loved trapping up there, and yeah, it's different, some different species *Peromyscus pectoralis*, *Peromyscus boylii*, *Neotoma mexicana*, different species up there. Beautiful habitat up there. Junipers and oaks, just open oak meadows, and lots of grass, and just a beautiful spot.

DM:

And then there was a third place that seemed very different from San Antonio Cabin and Boulder Canyon, and that was the marsh lands—

CJ:

La Cienega.

DM:

La Cienega, quite a variety of habitats.

CJ:

That was a different and very special spot, well, the tank was always full to the brim. We did a lot of bat netting there, but trapping mammals in the marsh was a very interesting thing. One time we would trap and catch a whole bunch of, say, *Peromyscus maniculatus*. We'd go back two weeks later and put out some traps and we'd catch a whole bunch of *Reithrodontomys megalotis*. I mean it was one thing, and then another thing, and then another thing.

DM:

There was some migration in and out, or what was the explanation?

CJ:

We haven't figured that one out yet, but that was—so those were three major spots, that, the [San Antonio] cabin, and up in the upper reaches of Boulder Canyon. And Mark Lockwood and Frank Yancey hiked up into the high country there at one time, hiked up there and spent the night, and then David Riskind arranged for a helicopter to fly some people to the top of the Sierra Parda, and that was—we let Mark and Frank and Tony Mollhagen spend the night up there. And then they hiked down the next day.

DM:

Were they able to trap up there on top?

CJ:

Yeah, open oak meadows.

DM:

Could you see differences in species from that high elevation on down to the bottom?

CJ:

Yeah, well the *Sigmodon ochrognathus* was everywhere, I mean, up and down, everywhere. But the same thing up there, *Neotoma mexicana* and *Peromyscus boylii*, different than down below. Plus, there was another problem, and I'm debating whether to draft a paper on it or not. There's a—and it's not my specialty, that's one thing. I've been trying to learn more about it—about the deer. There's a real problem with the deer herd there. Mule deer are very common, they're everywhere, and they're all tame, which is fun. We can get from here to that door from a mule deer—

DM:

Just fifteen feet away?

CJ:

—Yeah, antlered one or a non-antlered one, and sitting on the porch there at San Antonio Cabin they would come drifting across there right by the cabin. But the mule deer are very carefully segregated to the Chihuahuan Desert-type habitat at low elevations. Up in the oak, there's Virginia whitetail deer, and it's a little-bitty thing; it's antlers are—like this would be like actual size of the antlers on a buck, and I think—

DM:

This is a span of what? What would be the span of their antlers?

CJ:

Oh, eight to ten inches.

DM:

Amazing.

CJ:

Yeah, this is just about equal size, and I think those are Carmen Mountain deer, but they're not supposed to be. And Carmen Mountain deer are in the Chinatis [correction: Clyde meant to say Chisos] and I'm familiar with them there, and they're in the Carmens and I'm familiar with them there. And if you put all three of these together they don't—you couldn't separate them—but they're not supposed to be Carmen Mountain deer, but I'm about to draft a paper proposing that they might be.

DM:

That's very interesting. I've heard that Carmen Mountain whitetail deer only occur in one—just in the Carmen Mountains?

CJ:

In the Carmens, but now they're in the Chisos, and this would extend them a small distance to the Chinatis, and—

DM:

The Chinatis are pretty far though from the Chisos.

CJ:

Yeah, but everything fits Carmen Mountain deer. These are upper elevations in the oak, and we never saw them at lower elevations. The mule deer are below and very common, and we never saw them in the upper elevations, never. And this is a separation in the Carmens and in the Chisos between the two species. It all fits—in my mind—it all fits together.

DM:

Do you think it's possible that there are also Virginia whitetail deer up there? Or is it just mule deer and maybe Carmen Mountain?

CJ:

We never saw any normal sized Virginia whitetail deer, and we looked, we looked all over. Well, there tame too. And when we had the helicopter--the last trip up I went up with him and he brought me back down to San Antonio Cabin. And he was a young man, a chopper pilot employed by Texas, recently employed by Texas Parks and Wildlife, and he said, "Hey," he said, "I've never been here before, this is really beautiful country, would you mind if we tour around a little bit?" And I said, "No, please have at it." So we flew all around the top, flew down along the river, came back to the San Antonio Cabin and Riskind said, "Where in the hell have you guys been?" (laughs) He was about to call in a crash report. (laughs) We never saw a normal size whitetail deer.

DM:

Oh, that's intriguing.

CJ:

I had a long talk with Riskind about this issue and his concern is, if I write this paper and it's published, then he's going to have a hundred hunters wanting to go get one. And he's going to then be hit with a whole bunch of preservationists who want them protected. And he just keeps saying, "Clyde, I don't need those things to happen." And I don't know if I will or not, but it's on my mind, and I'm doing some reading to catch up on the habitat preferences of both species, and it all fits, it all just fits. And the mule deer down below are huge; they're as big as horses, and we collected some antlers and they're like this, you know, and then there are these. (laugh) And that's the reason why they're separated, I guess. I know they're separated by habitat, mule deer in the typical Chihuahuan scrub, and these others are up in the oak meadows.

DM:

I'm going to pause this just a second.

(Break in recording)

DM:

Well, how do you determine whether this is a Carmen Mountain whitetail deer or a Virginia whitetail deer? I mean, is it just based on size or are there some specifics?

CJ:

Well, I could prove it conclusively if I could talk Riskind into letting me kill one. But he, thus far he is opposed to that; he's weakening, however. I've got Mark Lockwood on my side too, but yeah, until then I can't prove it.

DM:

So, what in the anatomy—?

CJ:

Well, the DNA would tell. Yeah, just throw that on the floor. Yeah, DNA would tell.

DM:

Can you get DNA any other way?

CJ:

Well, if I could find a freshly killed one, but we looked and looked and never could. Another way we could do it is the scraping of an antler, but it's sort of non-conclusive, really. So I'm just pausing on all of that.

DM:

But it's really kind of an important issue, the discovery—

CJ:

Well, the other thing, if we publish this paper the first thing Dr. Kaufmann at Arizona will do is jump up and down and say, "Who the hell are you, Jones? You're not a deer man. I have got to go down there and get one." (laughs) He knows that it's sort of out of my area—

DM:

Well, that's okay to expand a little bit.

CJ:

—But I'm still tempted. Well, you know, I've expanded before—

DM:

You're the one that discovered the idea—

CJ:

—without great bad effect. We were involved—can I digress a little bit? A friend of mine who was at the University of Arizona in Tucson, who used to be at the university in Albuquerque, we decided that after graduation, we'd make a trip to Mexico every year after graduation. While

everybody was getting their tassels moved, we'd go to Mexico. We went to Mexico, and we went a place in the mountains called Yécora. A little dumpy place, and it rained to beat Jesus, and we collected some salamanders, and we didn't really look at them, we just collected them and we returned to Tucson. And Professor Lowe was looking at our stuff and he got all excited. He came out and he said, "You're going back to Mexico." And it turned out they were Plethodontid salamanders—they had a groove there [between the nostril and upper lip]. And so he and John Wright and I, he hired a bush pilot and flew us to Yécora, and we collected salamanders and named it a new species.

DM:

Oh, golly, a new species? Oh, I thought you were just talking about newly discovered in that area?

CJ:

No.

DM:

Wow. And that's not a mammal. (laughs) Yeah, well that's really interesting about the possible Carmen Mountain whitetail deer.

CJ:

But doesn't it make sense? I mean, it makes sense.

DM:

And if there's that much of a visible difference, then maybe that's something worth investigating, for sure.

CJ:

Well, you know, I've sure seen them in the Chisos, and I've sure seen them in the Carmens. I don't think I would mistake one, you know, they look like lawn ornaments. (laughter)

DM:

Have there been any other surprises in the Chinatis?

CJ:

The fact that, yeah, the fact that we never saw *Sylvilagus robustus*, we never obtained *Peromyscus nasutus*, we were surprised that *Sigmodon ochrognathus* was everywhere, and I—that's it. Everybody knows that's an upland species from the Davis Mountains, but they were everywhere. They were at La Cienega. Every time we went there we got a whole bunch of them, more than we needed, we just quit after a while. The other surprising thing was there were very

few free-tailed bats. There should be, given all the cracks and crevices and stuff. There should have been millions of them, but there were just a few. But the other thing was that we got lots of ghost-faced bats.

DM:

Which are fairly rare?

CJ:

Everywhere, we got them everywhere.

DM:

And how did they occur in the Chinatis—I mean, in the Chisos?

CJ:

They're there. They are scarce in the Chisos, but they were quite common at Big Bend Ranch State Park, and they were common in the Chinatis.

DM:

Do you have any speculation on the abundance of ghost-faced bats in the Chinatis and the lack of free-tailed?

CJ:

No. We were all surprised at the lack of free-tailed. The other thing that was good and interesting was the colony of pallid bats at San Antonio Cabin. They had a huge colony there in the summertime.

DM:

Right at the cabin?

CJ:

Yeah roosting under the front, under the roof on the front porch. Right there, by the corner, the door went into that room and there was one that went into that room, and they were right there at that corner, a huge cluster of several hundred. We put a net there on the porch one time, and by ten o' clock we had caught over a hundred, had caught and released over a hundred bats and then we quit, and it was only pallid bats. On one occasion we got a *Myotis* mixed in there with them. What the hell it was doing in there we don't know, but that was interesting.

DM:

Had that ever happened before—that you had a colony of bats and there's another species mixed in with them?

CJ:

Not usually, not usually.

DM:

Could it have just been wandering by and happened into the group?

CJ:

Yeah, it stumbled in there. The other thing was—where we crossed Mr. Ford's property to get into the northwest corner—just below where we crossed there was a series of pools; there were some rock ledges that went like that, you've seen those, driving down Pinto Canyon, they go like that. And there's some pools there, and we netted there several times, and a very interesting thing was we caught everything, except not a single *Myotis*. I mean, we caught ghost-faced bats, hoary bats, silver-haired bats, we caught everything, but not a single *Myotis*, and we netted there several times. The first time we thought, Well, it was just a fluke, but after the fourth or fifth time netting there—I'm trying to get Bogan to write that up—that was most interesting. There were a lot of interesting things and if, you know, you're a mammal lover it's all fun.

DM:

When you first happened into that country, I know you had seen it at least at a distance and said, "I want to work that area." But had you actually been into the heart of that country before you started this survey?

CJ:

No.

DM:

So the first time you went and saw La Cienega and San Antonio Cabin and Boulder Canyon and the variation in habitats, was that pretty exciting? Was it more than what you expected or about what you expected?

CJ:

Holy cow! (laughs) Well, first of all, I had been warned a little bit about it by Wyman Meinzer, who had been in there taking photographs, about a couple of places, Pulidos del Rollo, and he said, "The San Antonio Cabin will make the cabin at Big Bend Ranch look like a dump," and boy, he was right about that. As you know, I was very impressed with San Antonio Cabin, and we were very impressed when we got to La Cienega. And you couldn't even get the net up before you started catching bats; that was constant all through the year. Like I said, in three years we made almost a hundred trips to the area and tore up a couple of vehicles. I'd like to have the spare tire concession—(laughs)—a little rough on tires—

DM:

If someone went up there in ten or twenty years and did a three-year survey like that again, without any major changes having occurred to that area, would there likely be big differences?

CJ:

Well, somebody thirty or forty years from now can find out, because the last thing we did was put in some permanent—marked some permanent transects. We put in T-posts, and put in four of them, two, one of them up Boulder Canyon, one, of course, at the Cabin, one at La Cienega, and one in the upper reaches of Boulder Canyon. And those are permanent, and I wrote a description as well as their GPS mark. I wrote a description of it and how to get there and some suggestions on how to net or trap and sent that to Riskind. And he's put that in the file if somebody wants to, ever wants to go there and sample they could start from these places. These were selected based on the abundance of mammals.

DM:

And these trap lines will be a pair of T-posts.

CJ:

Yeah.

DM:

Marked by GPS?

CJ:

Yeah.

DM:

And the area in between is the trap line?

CJ:

Yes. We did that at Big Bend Ranch State Park too, put in permanent marked spots, or permanent transects.

DM:

Is that common for field biologists to think ahead twenty years to the next group that's going to come by and make comparisons?

CJ:

No. And I think the reason that we came up with it was, especially Mike Bogan and I were, you know, sitting around skinning mice or doing something, we would say, "Gee whiz," you know,

we would discuss Vernon Bailey and C. Hart Merriam, and we'd say, "Hey, wish somebody would do that two-hundred years after we did that. Hey, we better put in some permanent sites." And Riskind was all for it, of course.

DM:

Yeah, that's a great idea.

CJ:

You know, we don't know if anybody will ever do it or not, but they're permanent markers, they're all marked with GPS localities. Somebody can anytime—they can do it tomorrow if they wanted to.

DM:

That's good. The fact that you came into this area and it had basically not been touched, especially by a mammalogist, how common is that in the United States—that you can go to an area that large that hadn't been touched by a mammalogist? Where would it rank among the, well, in the top five percent of land in the U. S. that would fit into that category? Or is it a larger category?

CJ:

No, I think it's relatively uncommon to find a place like that, that hasn't been surveyed, but that again is an important factor of the Trans-Pecos because nobody has happened to work there. And I'm amazed that the people at Sul Ross and San Angelo, places like that, that hadn't been in there. But for some reason—well, first of all, they were denied access for a while and we have to thank the landowners for that. The people that owned this piece of property were German Muslims—I didn't know there were German Muslims—but they were German Muslims, and they built those kiosks and built these cabins, and they prohibited access for everybody, and they prohibited access, hunting, everything, and that was still written into the gift when they gave it, well, when they sold it to Texas Parks and Wildlife, was that there would be no hunting. And the way in, where the road makes a sharp turn, there is a ranch house right around the corner. And he's very picky about who goes in there. He wanted to know how many vehicles, how many people and so on for when we went in, and that's good, that's really good. So we owe the ranch owners a lot of thanks.

DM:

And for the sake of the people listening to this interview, can you define those kiosks? You mentioned the kiosks. The prayer sites, is that what you—?

CJ:

There are, well they're what, ten or twelve feet square? With four posts, a post on each, a pillar on each corner and a nice roof, and a cement floor, and they were, obviously they were prayer kiosks, and they were—each one was near a tank that interestingly enough had steps up on both sides, inside and outside, yeah, outside and inside, and they obviously bathed and did something religious around the water and then went to the kiosk. And each of these places, each of the kiosks and the tanks were within one day's walk of each other. That was a pattern that was explained. They were one day's walk from each other, and they were all near a cabin. There was a cabin up there on the hill just before we go to La Cienega. They were all similarly constructed but they were all wonderful. They'd had, in the past they'd had power generators, they'd had lots of equipment, a road grader to keep the roads smooth. And each of the kiosks had bats roosting up underneath the roof.

DM:

Well, that was a good thing, then. Were they oriented toward Mecca by any chance? Did you notice the orientation of them?

CJ:

We couldn't find that pattern, but they were all set on a north-south axis. That was interesting. They were nice; I thought they were real nice. Well, Frank Yancey and Steve Casper spent the night down there at La Cienega, slept under the kiosk several times, took their clothes off and took a dip in the tank, the next morning—

DM:

A field biologist's paradise. (laughs)

CJ:

Yeah, it's one of the more wonderful places that I've worked in my life, one of the more wonderful ones—great facilities, great mammals, just a wonderful place. Probably the other wonderful place was the Sierra del Carmens where Bonnie McKinney has control.

DM:

Apparently, the Big Bend Ranch State Park project and the Chinati overlapped, because you were doing some work at both at the same time. And can you just make some general comparisons between those two projects, the habitat differences, the permission differences, whatever comes to mind?

CJ:

Yeah, the whole idea was to compare the mammals in the Chinatis to the mammals at Big Bend Ranch State Park. That's what Yancey and I started badgering Riskind about early on, when we

would sit there at the La Cienega camp at Big Bend Ranch State Park and sit there and look right over there and there's the Chinatis and we would say, "Hey, you know, we could get some answers over there." For example, we wrote a paper on the presence of *Chaetodipus* at Big Bend Ranch State Park: *Chaetodipus eremicus* and *Chaetodipus nelsoni*. *Chaetodipus eremicus* overwhelmingly was more common. *Chaetodipus nelsoni* was overwhelmingly more common in the Chinatis. I was visiting New Mexico and a guy named Keith Geluso was there. He wrote *The Bats of Carlsbad National Park*. He asked me, and Bogan was standing there—we've known Keith for years, of course—he came up and he said, "I have to ask you a question. How many *Chaetodipus nelsoni* did you catch in the Chinatis?" He said, "We trapped the hell out of Carlsbad National Park and we got like six." And I said, "Well, would you believe something like three hundred?" (laughs) And he thought I was kidding at first, yeah, things like that, turned over. *Sigmodon ochrognathus* common in the Chinatis; one specimen from Big Bend Ranch State Park, which, after we caught that one, there must be ten thousand trap nights at that spot and we never got another one. But there was another one around because the one we got was a pregnant female. So there's another one—(laugh)—something tells me.

DM:

You can count that as two. (laughs)

CJ:

There are some exotics at Big Bend Ranch State Park: aoudads, hogs, we never saw either—well, we saw aoudads on Mr. Ford's property at the north end. Other than that, we never saw them in the Chinatis. There was no evidence of hogs, and interestingly enough at both Big Bend Ranch and in the Chinatis, we never caught a *rattus* or a [unintelligible], neither place, which was a real surprise, because I thought they were everywhere.

DM:

At Big Bend Ranch State Park are they trying to get rid of the aoudads?

CJ:

No, I don't think so.

DM:

Okay, they just let them be.

CJ:

And I heard recently that they had introduced bighorn sheep to Big Bend Ranch State Park, and I don't know how they and the aoudads will get along.

DM:

They've introduced them recently to Elephant Mountain, south of Alpine, and the aoudad was the concern down there.

CJ:

Yeah. Well, you know, the hunting faction has one set of guidelines and people like me have another set of guidelines, and we don't always see eye-to-eye.

DM:

Well, does the aoudad population at Big Bend Ranch State Park affect the small mammals?

CJ:

No I don't think so. Well I guess my problem is, David, just a little personal thing, my father was a great hunter. As a kid I spent time in Jackson Hole, and people like that with him, he was hunting elk and deer and bear and everything. He was a great hunter. I've never shot or shot at a deer or anything like that for some reason. I'm not opposed to it; I just am not interested in it. Now if you give me a bunch of grass with some shrews in it—(laughs)

DM:

Can you just mention your paper here and when you expect this publication about your Chinati Project to come out?

CJ:

Well, it's being revised by Dr. [Michael] Bogan. As of our last telephone conversation I would expect him to send it to me in the next two or three weeks, and then we'll re-submit it and it will go. I'm sure it will go this time, because of the past history on it. It will go and be published as an occasional paper.

DM:

Okay, and who is the publisher?

CJ:

The museum publication.

DM:

At Texas Tech? I'm saying all of this for the sake of the recording.

CJ:

Yeah, it's appropriate that it be published in the museum publications at Texas Tech, I mean, after all it was our project. The money came from Riskind to Tech, and then I managed it, paid travel for various and sundry derelicts that came to help me.

DM:

What publication number is this for you? You've lost count? Three hundred and—?

CJ:

Oh, no, I'll take a guess. One hundred and ninety-seven, something like that, one-hundred and ninety-six, one-hundred and ninety-seven, something like that.

DM:

Anything else you would like to say about the Chinati Project for the record?

CJ:

The piece of property is—well, the only people that have been allowed there were us—it was known in the superintendent's office as Clyde Jones' Personal Research Ranch; that's what Luis Armendariz called it. There were a couple of young ladies from Austin who did some botanical work, and there's a guy from one of the Louisiana schools who came out and did some lizard work, and he claimed that all the lizards were parthenogenetic. That's why he was out there, and that's all that's been allowed on the property. They were going to open the property to the public; they came out and started to put in some barbecue pits and things like that. And then the budget changed, priorities changed, they got a new director at Texas Parks and Wildlife. All of that stuff is just piled up in a place and there's no access. The only people that go out there—once in a while somebody from the regional office talks to Mark Lockwood and goes out there and takes a look, but there's nobody there. And Big Bend Ranch is almost, that's almost the way it is at Big Bend Ranch. Well, and the economy has slowed everything down, and there's a shortage of personnel at Big Bend Ranch, and there's never been any—well, there was one guy hired to work on the Chinatis, and he left. Money ran out and he left, and there's nobody strictly assigned to the Chinati Project. The last time Mary Ann and I were down there and drove the river road, we stopped at a place west of Lajitas called Grassy Banks. I have a permanent study plot right there, and I stop and check on that periodically. But there were still picnic tables up in the trees from the flood. There were still picnic tables up in the trees, and I guess lack of personnel or something, lack of interest, or something, I would think somebody would yank those down out of there. Mary Ann and I we were laughing—yeah, if we had Yancey, we'd yank it down and cut it up and build a fire. But the flood—I wish I'd been there when the flood hit. You know where the railroad bends, the flood didn't bend, it just went straight down. And at Lajitas, it just took out their golf course—just—the golf course was just gone.

DM:

Well, that's okay. (laughs)

CJ:

Well, they're rebuilding it.

DM:

Are they? It took out Cottonwood Campground down at Castolon.

CJ:

That was fine with me. (laughter)

DM:

And that river road was closed for quite some time.

CJ:

Yes.

DM:

What a flood!

CJ:

The real river road, the dirt road that goes down along the river, goes past the Mariscal Mine, and comes out at, comes out on the west end—

DM:

Rio Grande Village?

CJ:

Yeah, that's closed off, the border patrol has shut that part. But the current news is: they're going to reopen the Boquillas crossing.

DM:

I heard that. They're going to make it into an official crossing, apparently.

CJ:

Well, the Parks service has been at the border patrol to do this because all their firefighters live in Boquillas. All the firefighters for Big Bend State Park, they all live in Boquillas.

DM:

Would people start coming back over to shop, you think? Do you think it will build up Boquillas?

CJ:

I think—well, Boquillas is essentially a dead town right now, but I think it'll return and they'll come shop at the stores there [at] Rio Grande Village. And I hope they reopen the little restaurant up there at Boquillas.

DM:

Yes, I hope so too. I've heard that the inventory at the shop at Rio Grande Village really declined after the border crossing.

CJ:

When Mary Ann and I were down there—I have forgotten when we were down there—we drove down to Rio Grande Village. There was nobody camped there, which was very strange, and I stopped to buy some gas, and she went in and talked to the guy there at the store, and she said, "Gee, there's nobody around." And he said, "You're the first people I've had to talk to in several days." He said, "We aren't selling anything off the shelves." He said, "There's nobody around." And the Mexicans are not allowed—well, except illegally they can cross. But he said, "Yeah, there's nobody around."

DM:

Is this because of the fear of the drug traffic down there or—that's keeping tourism away?

CJ:

Yeah, but they're going to open it to be a controlled crossing so the firefighters can come across and people will come across and shop at the stores because, well, it's the closest place to shop. Other places are Ojinaga or Del Rio. Those still in Boquillas will come over and shop, and maybe it will get going again. I sure hope they open that little restaurant up there.

DM:

I hope they do too. Wrap the little donkey up and—(laughs)

CJ:

Have some little tacos, a cold beer, watch the people wander around.

DM:

It's really picturesque. And how often do you get to ride up on a donkey and tie him to that hitching post—tie up and go eat and shop around?

CJ:

Yeah, that's sort of an interesting experience and—

DM:

Well, I'm going to go ahead and shut this off.

CJ:

Sure.

End of interview.



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