

Uterine Prolapse in an Adult Richardson's Ground Squirrel, *Spermophilus richardsonii*

GILBERT PROULX, KEITH MACKENZIE, NEIL MACKENZIE, and BENJAMIN P. PROULX

Alpha Wildlife Research & Management Ltd., 229 Lilac Terrace, Sherwood Park, Alberta T8H 1W3 Canada

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During a study of Richardson's Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus richardsonii*) populations in southern Saskatchewan, we captured one adult female with a partially prolapsed uterus. This is the first known case of uterine prolapse in a Richardson's Ground Squirrel.

Key Words: Richardson's Ground Squirrel, *Spermophilus richardsonii*, uterine prolapse, Saskatchewan.

Uterine prolapse is a condition where the uterus falls down or slips out of place, invariably after or within several hours of parturition, when the cervix is open and the uterus lacks tone (Kahn 2009). Uterine prolapse is known to occur in farm and captive ungulates (Woodward and Quesenberry 1956; Hooper et al. 1993; Ramadan and Hafez 1993), pets (Laber-Laird et al. 1996), and laboratory rodents (Foltz and Ullman-Cullere 1999), but is poorly documented in wild animals.

During a study of Richardson's Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus richardsonii*) populations in Ponteix (49°44'50"N, 107°29'16"W) in southern Saskatchewan, we live-captured an adult female with a partially (one uterine horn was not inverted) prolapsed uterus in May 2009. The uterus hung down between the hind legs (Figure 1). The female had well-developed nip-

ples and appeared to have lactated. We recaptured the animal four times over a 10-day period (i.e., every 2–3 days). During the first three recaptures, the animal showed no sign of illness. However, 10 days after the original capture, the uterus was bright pink and clean ventrally, but black and foul-smelling dorsally. Thereafter, we never recaptured this particular Richardson's Ground Squirrel. Because she inhabited a field that was treated with an anticoagulant toxicant, she may have died from poisoning. On the other hand, because of necrosis and infection, uterine prolapse generally has a poor prognosis (Foltz and Ullman-Cullere 1999; Kahn 2009), and the Richardson's Ground Squirrel may have died from her injuries.

There are no records of uterine prolapse in wild ground squirrel populations. Although we captured 629 female adults from 2007 to 2009, this was the only

case (0.2% rate of occurrence) observed. We do not believe that uterine prolapse is a common occurrence in Richardson's Ground Squirrel populations.

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FIGURE 1. Live-captured Richardson's Ground Squirrel with partially prolapsed uterus, southern Saskatchewan, May 2009.