
A Cave Obligate Harvestman

Speleomaster pecki

Arachnida — Opiliones — Cladonychiidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Critically imperiled/Imperiled (G1G2)
Statewide: Critically imperiled (S1)
ESA: No status
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status
BLM: No status
IDFG: Not classified

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Idaho endemic; restricted distribution.

TAXONOMY

The holotype female specimen was collected in 1969, and the new species was described in 1974. Additional (juvenile) specimens were collected in 1972 (Briggs 1974).

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Speleomaster pecki is an Idaho endemic species known only from a single cave in Craters of the Moon National Monument, Butte County (Briggs 1974).

POPULATION TREND

No data are available to suggest population trend.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

This harvestman is restricted to habitat found only in a cave. The occupied cave is a lava-tube that is only 20 m in length and formed in post-glacial lava flows. Ice formations occur in the cave, and specimens were collected adjacent to a permanent ice flow. The walls and floor of the cave are largely free of fungus and organic soil. Elevated moisture level found within the cave may be an important habitat component (Briggs 1974). The juvenile specimens collected in 1972 were found “under breakdown near ice, 4 °C” (Briggs 1974).

ISSUES

Threats are unknown, but any activity that might negatively disrupt the cave environment would be considered a threat.

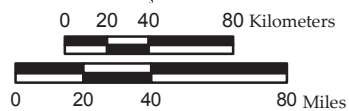
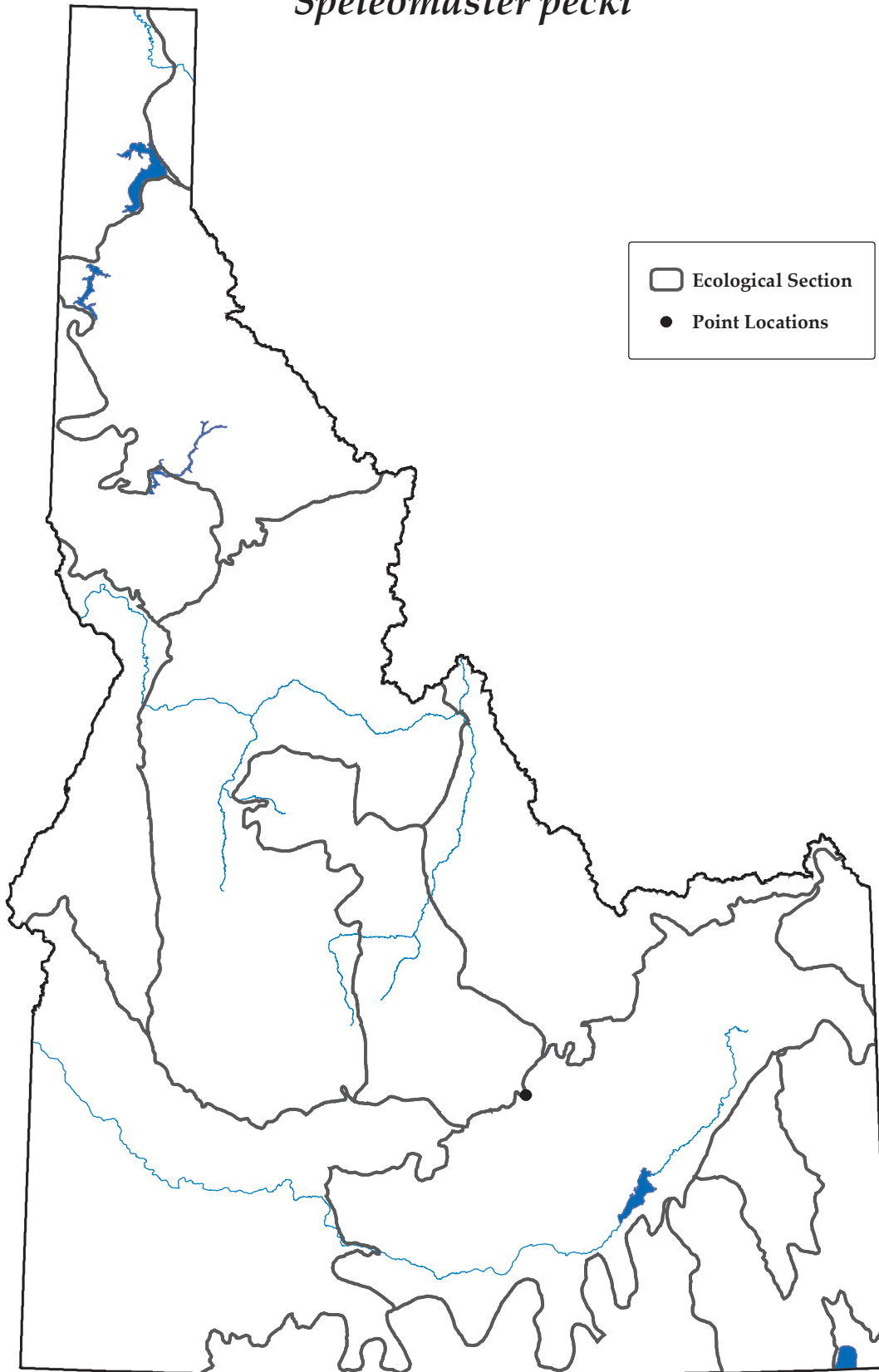
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Additional surveys in other lava tube caves on the Snake River Plain should be conducted to better define the distributional extent of this species.

Although experienced spelunkers are generally aware of the fragility of cave environments, lava-tube caves are popular with inexperienced spelunkers and are susceptible to both unintentional damage and vandalism. Particular efforts are needed to protect the cave occupied by this species.

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2 August 2005
Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

