

CHAPTER 10. FAUNAL REMAINS

The faunal assemblage recovered from 31SK15 consisted of 856 fragments, the majority of which were poorly preserved. Nearly 60 percent of the fragments were completely unidentifiable, and almost 24 percent were unidentifiable mammal (Table 6). The only mammal identified was white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), which made up 11 percent of the fragments. The remains of at least one bird, a snake, a box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*), a frog or toad, one or more fish, and numerous freshwater mussels were also identified. Although this sample is not very informative, it is roughly consistent with the assemblages from other sites in the region (Barber and Williams 1978; Coleman et al. 1982; Egloff et al. 1980; Holm 1993, 1994; Waselkov 1977).

Previous analysis indicates that Native American groups living in the Piedmont prior to the arrival of Europeans relied on a wide variety of plant and animal resources. The faunal portion of their subsistence system was characterized by a heavy reliance on deer. Other staples of the diet included turkeys, box turtles, squirrels, raccoons, and mud turtles. In addition to a reliance on a few high yield and/or readily available species, the inhabitants of the Piedmont maintained a high level of variety in the diet through the use of fish, small mammals, and birds. Although corn was the staple of the botanical portion of the diet, a wide variety of plant foods, such as nuts, small grains, and fleshy fruits, were also valued (Gremillion 1989). Studies have shown that the reliance on a wide variety of resources is a risk-avoidance strategy that helps to buffer the effects of periodic variations in the food supply (Jochim 1976; Colson 1979; Halstead and O'Shea 1989).

Table 6. Faunal Count.

Taxa	Count	Percent
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> , white-tailed deer	93	10.9
Unid. small mammal	2	0.2
Unid. large mammal	192	22.4
Unid. mammal	8	0.9
Unid. bird	6	0.7
Unid. snake	1	0.1
<i>Terrapene carolina</i> , box turtle	4	0.5
<i>Rana/Bufo</i> sp., frog/toad	1	0.1
Unid. fish	2	0.2
Freshwater mussel shell	44	5.1
Unid.	503	58.8
Total	856	100.0