

Finding Sasquatch: CA Edition

GSP 270

By: Alan Eberman, Alyssa Suarez, Dustin Mazone

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Abstract

Bigfoot sightings is a common theme that has been seen throughout American folklore. The purpose of this project was to identify the species' habitat preferences in the state of California, while also focusing on local information in Humboldt County. Our goal was to provide a reference for those who wish to search for Bigfoot and where they will most likely be able to find him in California. Using ArcMap 10.2.2, we used, collected and analyzed data from the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (BFRO) website, United States Geological Survey, and forest land data provided by Professor Madurapperuma, and created maps based on the data that we gathered. Through our analysis, we found that Bigfoot is commonly seen in heavily forested areas and within the county of Humboldt, we are likely to find him/her nearby the Eel River and Klamath River.

Introduction

Sasquatch, a legendary creature known to roam the forests of North America, has many names, but is commonly referred to as Bigfoot (Lozier et al., 2009). It is said to have descended from line of extinct primates, *Gigantopithecus blacki*, and has been spotted numerous times throughout the state of California. Sasquatch is an iconic creature that is commonly seen in indigenous culture and folklore throughout the Pacific Northwest. (Lozier et al., 2009). According to the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (BFRO), approximately 430 sightings have been reported in the state alone, dating back to 1959. The state of California is second in overall sightings in the United States.

Information relating to Bigfoot's habitat preference is only known to be near dense forests in North America (Lozier et al., 2009). In order to gain a better understanding of Bigfoot's habitat preferences on the Pacific Northwest, we hypothesized that reported Sasquatch sightings in the state of California will be correlated to the amount of dense forested areas. To understand the species' habitat on a local scale, we also hypothesized that Sasquatch will prefer habitats in Humboldt County that are near waterways, such as those near state parks throughout the county. We will be creating maps and analyzing the data to have a better understanding as to where we will be able to find this majestic creature.



Figure 1. Locator map of Humboldt County in relation to the State of California.

Methods

We began this project by acquiring the number of reported Bigfoot sightings for the State of California, by county, from the BFRO website. We also acquired data from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) website, which included the following shapefiles: the California boundary and California counties boundary. In order to acquire data for Humboldt County, we accessed the Humboldt County Government website, where we acquired the following shapefiles: a Humboldt County boundary and Rivers in Humboldt County. All data was then transferred onto ArcMap.

Using the reported number of sightings per county in California, we transferred this data onto an

Excel table, then exported this information into our Attribute Table for our County boundary shapefile. This allowed us to include the number of sightings in California by county, allowing us to generate a heat map with this information (Figure 3).

With our Humboldt County Boundary and Humboldt Rivers shapefiles, we used the Select by Attributes tool in the Attribute Table to create a new layer of the two rivers that were associated with the most reported sightings, which allowed us to create our map with the Klamath and Eel Rivers in relation to Humboldt County (Figure 3).

Bigfoot sightings are broken up into 3 different classes, Class A through Class C. Our data that indicates the sightings of Sasquatch near the rivers in Humboldt County are drawn from Class A sightings from the BFRO website. Class A being the most plausible type of sighting and Class C being the least likely to be true.

Results

Our findings show three counties with the most Sasquatch sightings in California, which include: Humboldt, Tuolumne, and Siskiyou. These are also the counties with the greatest density of forested areas. Our results also show that the most sightings in Humboldt County are located among two main rivers: Klamath and Eel. Out of the 19 Class A reported sightings, a total of seven were reported near the Eel River, and five near the Klamath River. These results show Sasquatch's preferred habitat is in areas with dense forests, near main watersheds.

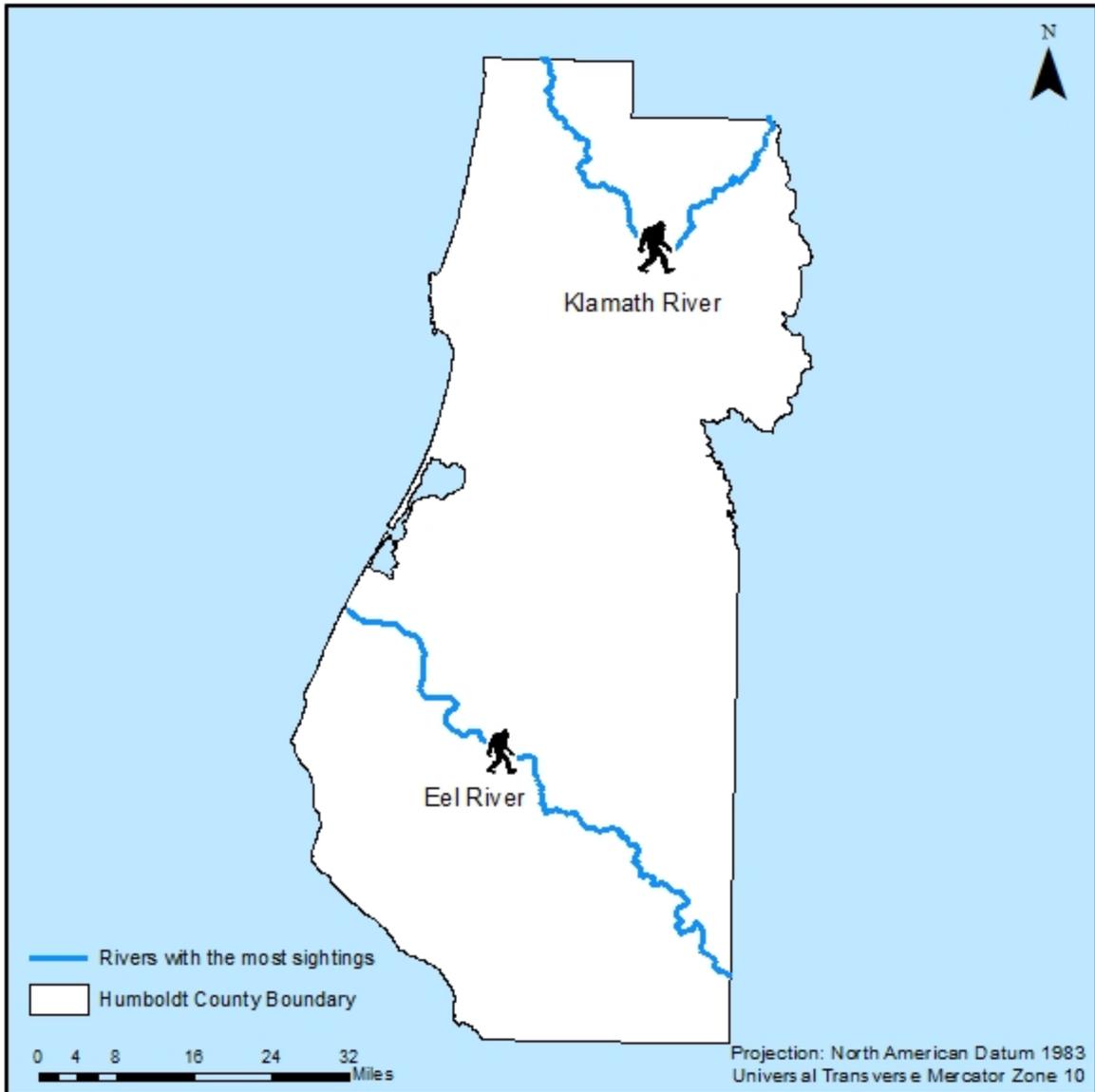


Figure 2. Rivers in Humboldt County with the highest density of Sasquatch sightings.

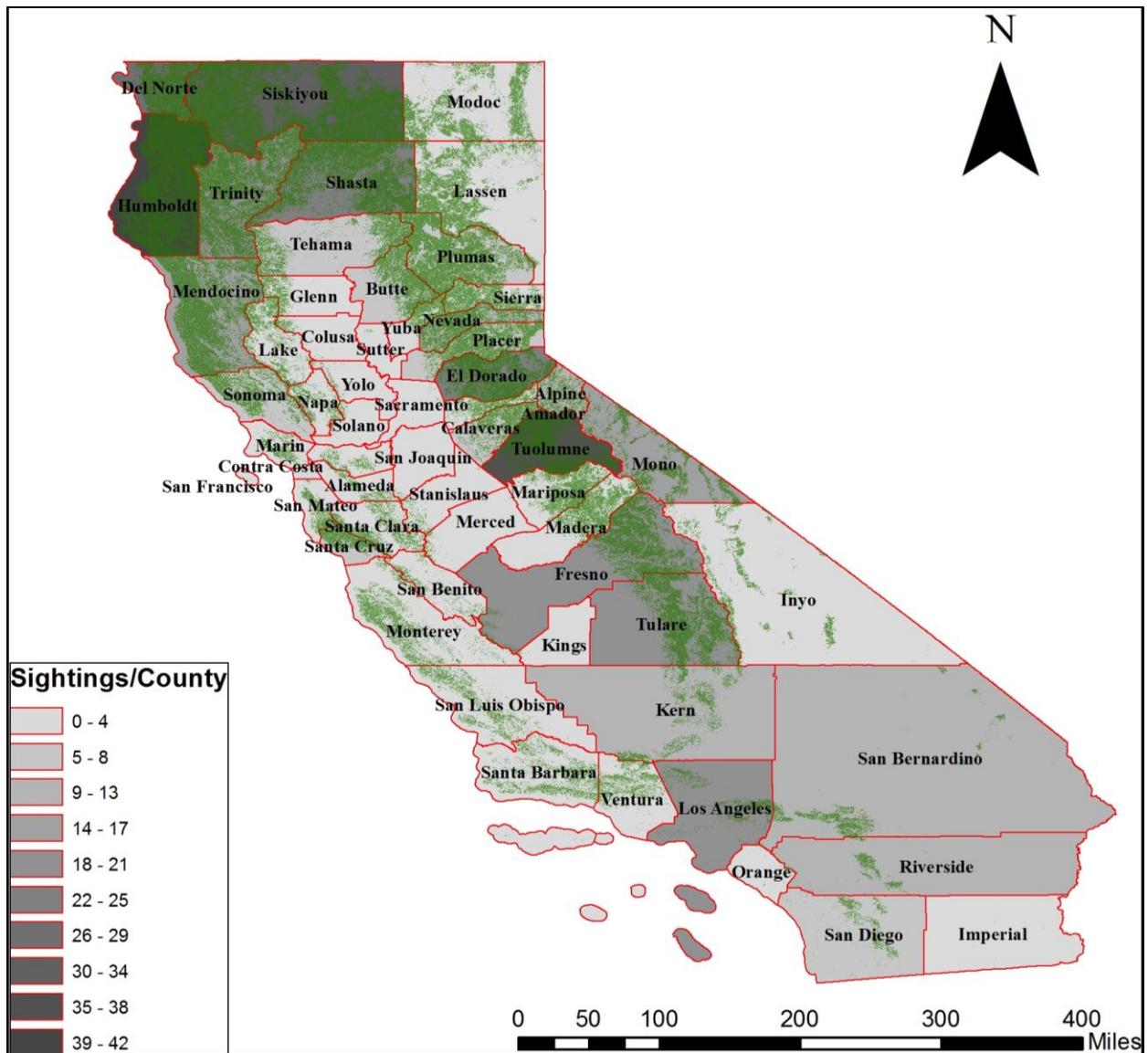


Figure 3. Heat map of California in relation to the number of Sasquatch sightings per county and forested areas.

Conclusions & Discussion

From the data collected we are able to conclude that Bigfoot indeed calls the forests home, and is more than likely to be spotted near rivers/waterways. We also can conclude that wherever Bigfoot may be hanging around in California, he/she surely likes to hang out in Humboldt County around the Eel River or Klamath River. If you keep your eyes peeled, you might just spot Sasquatch lurking behind a tree or fishing for Salmon.

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