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First records of the Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico

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Abstract

We report the first records of ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) in Hidalgo, Mexico. The first record refers to the skin examination of a specimen which was captured in the municipality of Metztitlan and the second relates to a photographic record from a camera trap in the municipality of Tianguistengo.

Key words: Hidalgo, ocelot, records.

Resumen

Se registran los dos primeros ejemplares confirmados del ocelote (*Leopardus pardalis*) para el estado de Hidalgo, México. El primero se basa en una piel de un ejemplar cazado en el municipio de Metztitlán y el segundo por medio de una fotografía de una trampa-cámara del municipio de Tianguistengo.

Palabras clave: Hidalgo, ocelote, registros.

Introducción

The ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) is a species considered by Mexican legislation to be in danger of extinction as stated in the NOM-ECOL-059 (SEMARNAT 2010) as well as in Appendix I of the convention concerning International trade in endangered species of fauna and flora (CITES 2012). It is considered by the IUCN Red List to be of the "Least Concern" status, perhaps due to its abundance in South America's Amazon basin (Case *et al*. 2008). Nonetheless, the Red List lists its population trend as "decreasing" (Case *et al*. 2008). The destruction of their habitat and heavy pressure from hunting, to which this species is commonly subjected, are considered the main causes of the decline (Aranda 2005; Sunquist and Sunquist 2009).

The presence of this cat in Hidalgo is to be expected, because it has been reported in the nearby States of Mexico, Puebla, Veracruz and San Luis Potosi. However no precise record for Hidalgo appears in the literature (Hall 1981; Murray and Gardner 1997; Mejenes *et al*. 2010), in scientific collections, or in online electronic databases (GBIF:

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Global Biodiversity Information Facility. MANIS: The Mammal Networked Information System or UNIBIO: Computer Unit for biodiversity).

As a result of fieldwork in the municipalities of Metztitlan and Tianguistego in 2011, we confirmed two instances of ocelot (*L. pardalis*) in the state of Hidalgo (Fig. 1). The first instance was an examination of the skin of an animal caught in the municipality of Metztitlan. Local residents of the Zoquizoquipan community (Fig. 2) caught the animal in a pine-oak forest (*Pinus-Quercus*) in 2005. The location of the capture site was determined based on comments of local residents who had been previously interviewed, (-98.6913599º W, 20.6402825º N). Subsequently, on 16 June 2011 this species was also recorded by a camera trap operated by the authors (Wildview Extreme Series 2.0 Megapixel Camera X2IR) in the Oxpantla community, municipality of Tianguistengo, approximately 7.8 km from the first recorded instance, in an area domintated by cloud forest (-98.6402595º W, 20.6905798º N; Fig. 3).

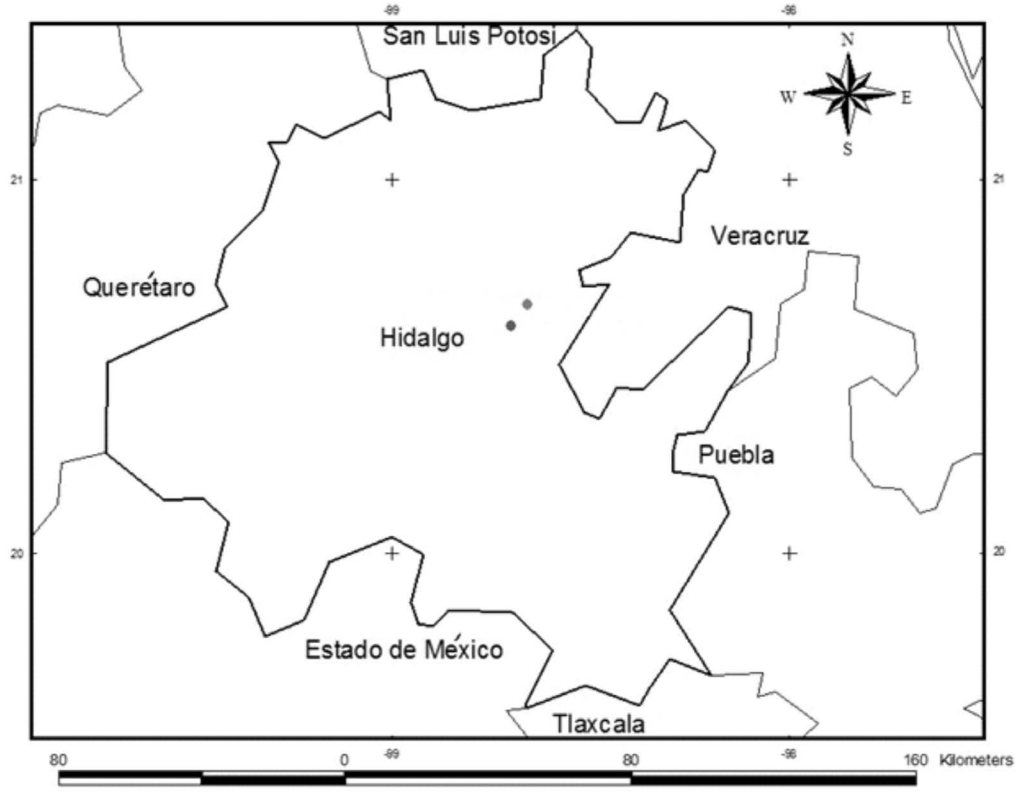

Figure 1. Location of ocelot records *(Leopardus pardalis)* reported in this study. Metztitlan (red circle) and Tianguistengo (blue circle).

The importance of these records are that they confirm the presence of ocelot in the state of Hidalgo, which could be a starting point for studies aimed at the conservation of this species. This species is considered among the 10 carnivores most at risk of extinction in Mexico, after *Nasua nelsoni, Procyon pygmaeus, Procyon insularis, Spilogale pygmaea, Panthera onca* and *Canis lupus baileyi* (Valenzuela and Vazquez 2007). Likewise, it is also vulnerable because it has a lower reproductive potential than other medium-sized cats such as the *Lynx* (Sunquist and Sunquist 2009). Finally, today it is increasingly important to attain and report precise data concerning the geographical location of species, as this contributes to larger studies with the goal of mapping biodiversity (Levergne *et al*. 2010).

Figure 2. Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) hunted by local residents in 2005 in a pine-oak forest (*Pinus-Quercus*) in the community of Zoquizoquipan, in the Municipality of Metztitlan.

Figure 3. Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) photographed at a camera station on 16 June 2011 (Wildview Extreme Series 2.0 Megapixel Camera X2IR) in an area of montane cloud forest in the municipality of Tianguistengo (see Figure 1, to situate localization).

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