



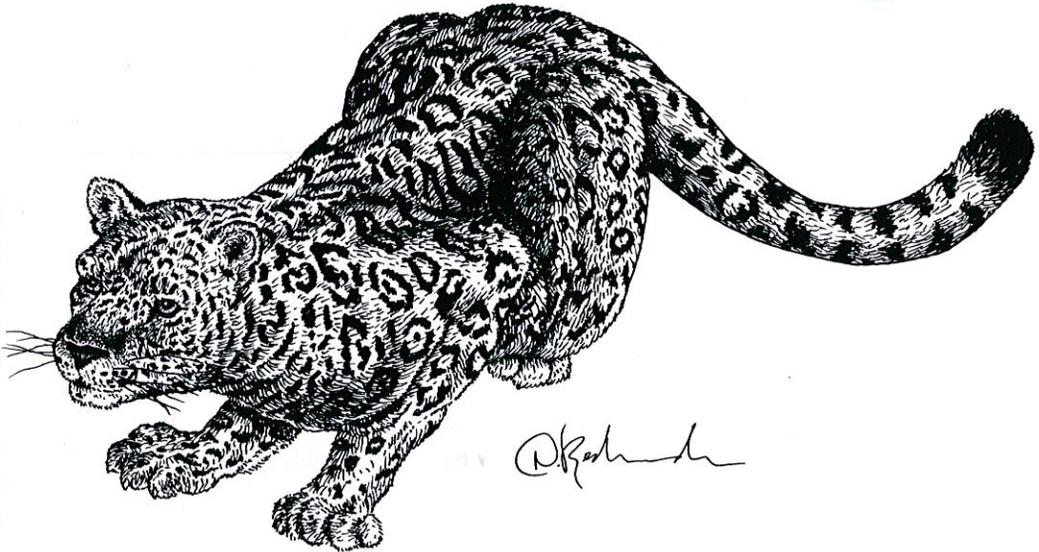
JAGUAR

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Panthera onca*. *Panthera* from the Greek for all and hunter, a reference to this animal's position at the top of the food chain; *onca* from the Greek for hook or barb, a reference to the jaguar's formidable set of claws.

DESCRIPTION: Member of cat family; allied with "roaring" cats (African lion, tiger, leopards). Largest cat native to Western Hemisphere. Adult males average 200 pounds; may exceed 300 pounds. Adult females average 150 pounds. Juveniles average 80 to 100 pounds. Muscular, with relatively short, massive limbs and deep-chested body. Adult lengths range from about 6 to 8 feet (body and tail). Cinnamon-buff in color, with many black spots. A black or melanistic color phase occurs primarily in southern parts of range.

DISTRIBUTION: Historically, as far north as Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Perhaps Louisiana, too. Historical California reports disputed. In Arizona, records extend from the Baboquivaris north to the Grand Canyon, and east to the White Mountains. Post 1950s records all from Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise counties. Present range extends from Arizona-New Mexico-Mexico borderlands through Central America to northern Argentina.

HABITAT: Known from a variety of habitats. Toward center of range, shows high affinity for lowland wet habitats, typically swampy savannas or tropical rain forests. In the northern and southern periphery, may occur in warmer, more arid habitat types, including oak-pine woodland.



BIOLOGY: Jaguars breed year-round rangewide, but at the southern and northern ends of the range there is evidence of a spring breeding season. Gestation is about 100 days; litters range from one to four cubs (usually two). The cubs remain with the mother for nearly two years. Females mature at 3 years of age, males at 4. Studies have documented few wild jaguars more than 11 years old.

The list of prey taken by jaguars rangewide includes more than 85 species, such as peccaries (javelina), armadillos, caimans, turtles, birds, fish, and various species of livestock. In the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, javelina and deer are presumably dietary mainstays, as they are in Jalisco, Mexico, the nearest area in which jaguars are being studied. Dietary overlap of jaguars and mountain lions in Jalisco is about 70 percent, with jaguars tending to prefer slightly larger prey.

Jaguars are known to be far ranging. Movements of 500 miles have been recorded. However, if food is abundant, they may become sedentary and range over only a few square miles. Like most cats, jaguars are territorial and mark their territories with scents. They roar to announce their presence to other jaguars.

STATUS: The jaguar is federally listed as endangered throughout its historic range. Until recently, Arizona had considered the jaguar extirpated from within its borders. Recent records (1996 and 1997) now indicate that it is at least occasionally present. Whether these animals are resident or transient, and whether they have been absent from the state or just overlooked for the past decade or more, is unknown. The jaguar is on the Department's draft list of *Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona* (AGFD in prep.), and was included on its previous list of *Threatened Native Wildlife in Arizona* as endangered.

MANAGEMENT NEEDS: For jaguars to persist in Arizona, they must be protected from being killed and they must have an adequate prey base and movement corridors from source populations in Mexico. Abundance of prey and suitable resting sites are probably more important than a particular vegetation type. The core population in western Mexico must also be sufficient to provide for dispersal into the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Field research, especially on habitat use and movement patterns, in Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico is needed to provide a sound basis for management decisions. 🐾