

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Animal Abstract

Element Code: AMAJH06012

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Herpailurus yaguarondi tolteca*

COMMON NAME: Jaguarundi, Jaguarundi Cat

SYNONYMS: *Felis yaguarondi tolteca*, *Felis eyra*, *Felis cacomitli*, Onza, Leoncilo

FAMILY: Felidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Thomas, Ann. 1898. Mag. Nat. Hist. Ser. 7, 1:41.

TYPE LOCALITY: Tatemales, Sinaloa

TYPE SPECIMEN:

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: 1 of 8 known subspecies of Jaguarundi in North America and Central America. Formerly included in the genus *Felis*. Placed in the genus *Herpailurus* by Wozencraft (in Wilson and Reeder 1993) and Jones et al. (1997). Wozencraft noted that the correct spelling of the specific name is *yaguarondi*.

DESCRIPTION: A small, unspotted cat with three distinct coat colors: black, gray (entirely grayish), and reddish (white or pale below). Twice the size of an ordinary house cat with short, rounded, widely spaced ears (although one source cites the ears as short, triangular and pointed); a long neck; long body and tail; short legs with the hind legs being longer than the front legs; small flattened head with 30 teeth. Average weight 15-18 lb (6.7-8.1 kg); head and body 20-30 in (51-76 cm); tail 13-24 in (33-61 cm).

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Mountain Lion is larger; Ocelot and Margay Cat are spotted; Lynx and Bobcat have shorter tails.

ILLUSTRATIONS: Black and white picture (Burt plate 8, 1980)

Map (Burt, 1980)

Color picture (Whitaker, 1996)

Color photo (In <http://arizonaes.fws.gov>)

Color photo (Wilson, 1999)

TOTAL RANGE: Extreme south Texas through eastern Mexico and Central America, across the South American lowlands of Argentina. No documented record for Arizona, Sonora, of Chihuahua, although occasionally reported in Arizona.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Occasionally reported from the Chiricahua Mountains, and from the upper San Pedro River and Huachuca Mountains to the Santa Rita Mountains, and the eastern Tohono O'odham Reservation. *Reportedly seen in 1938 in the Canelo Hills.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: This elusive species is occasionally active during the day, especially in the morning, but chiefly nocturnal, although it is less nocturnal than other cats. It swims well and probably preys on fish and other aquatic species. The Jaguarundi is an excellent agile runner, sinuous in build, sprinting after its quarry. A solitary animal (pairs only for breeding) that will climb, it prefers ground dwellings of dense to impenetrable thickets.

REPRODUCTION: The Jaguarundi mates any time of the year, but most births occur in spring and late summer. They have 1 to 2 litters of 2-3 young per year, after a 63-70 day gestation period. It makes its den in thickets, dense brush, or fallen trees. Kittens are born with distinct light spots, which soon disappear. All three coat colors may be displayed within the same litter. Cubs are weaned at about 2 months, and gain full independence at about 10 months; sexual maturity is reached around 2-3 years of age.

FOOD HABITS: Preys on birds (including poultry in Latin America), reptiles and small to medium-size mammals. Their diet may also include a little fruit at times.

HABITAT: Semiarid mesquite and thornscrub thickets, with cactus, catclaw, and other spiny plants, especially along streams and in bottomlands.

ELEVATION: Unknown

PLANT COMMUNITY: Unknown

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown but apparently rare in all areas.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: LE (USDI, FWS 1976)

STATE STATUS:

OTHER STATUS:

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Factors that need to be considered for this animal are habitat destruction or modification and predator control operations.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: Unknown

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Surveys need to be performed to determine the population status of this animal. Also need to determine if this is a valid subspecies. Investigate the feasibility of reintroduction into unoccupied habitat.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: None

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Per Johnson "Until a specimen is confirmed, Arizona should be dropped from the jaguarundi's range and the listed status should be changed accordingly. Management attention (reintroduction) and survey efforts should be shifted to Texas - Tamaulipas and Sonora - Sinaloa."

The basis of including jaguarundi in fauna of Arizona is the chance observation of a "catlike mammal, which was later identified as an adult jaguarundi" by Elbert L. Little, Jr. and George S. Meagher (Little, 1938:500). "In my estimation the inclusion of the jaguarundi in fauna of Arizona is most questionable (Hoffmeister, 1986)."

* The report that caused the jaguarundi to be described as a component of Arizona's fauna (E.L. Little, Jr. 1938. J. Mamm. 19:500-501) was a sight record from "semidesert grassland (with scattered oaks)" in the Canelo Hills (Johnson 1995).

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