

NOTEWORTHY RECORD OF THE TAYRA (CARNIVORA:
MUSTELIDAE: *EIRA BARBARA*) IN THE SIERRA GORDA
BIOSPHERE RESERVE, QUERÉTARO, MÉXICO

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The tayra (*Eira barbara*), a neotropical mustelid belonging to a monotypic genus, is one of the least studied carnivores in North and Central America. Its distribution includes South America and Central America. It has been recorded in southern México in the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca, and in the north along the eastern coast in the Mexican states of Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, and Tamaulipas. It has also been recorded in the state of Sinaloa on the western coast (Hall 1981, Presley 2000). Herein we report the 1st record of a tayra in the state of Querétaro.

On 10 November 2004, while conducting a camera-trap survey for jaguars (*Panthera onca*) in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (SGBR), we obtained a photographic record of an adult tayra (Fig. 1) at the following UTM coordinates: zone 14Q, 472086 N, 2379964 E. We used Camtrakker “original” camera traps (<http://www.camtrakker.com>) attached to a tree with small elastic cords at approximately 50 cm above the ground. The locality was approximately 7.5 km northeast (45°N) of San Antonio Tancoyol in the Municipality of Jalpan de Serra. The photograph was taken at 1328 hours in a humid oak forest at 996 m elevation. Annual precipitation in the area was 1800 mm. Dalquest (1953) describes the habitat where the tayra specimen was reported for San Luis Potosí as a tropical forest, whereas Hall and Dalquest (1963) report the species’ presence in Veracruz as restricted to forested habitats. Tayras inhabit tropical and subtropical forests including secondary rain forests, gallery forests, gardens, plantations, cloud forests, and dry scrub forests (Emmons

and Freer 1990). Tayras are reported as rare above 1200 m.

Mesocarnivore species detected in the locality are jaguarondi (*Puma yagouarondi*), ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereogargenteus*), and white-nosed coati (*Nasua narica*; Lopez Gonzalez unpublished data). Tayras in México can be distinguished easily from other mesocarnivore species by a pale yellow head (Fig. 1), an elongated weasel-like black body, short legs, and a black bushy tail. In Central America, tayras’ heads are usually dark brown with a white throat patch (Reid 1997).

Our photograph (Fig. 1) is the 1st evidence of the species in Querétaro; it is also the most continental record for tayra in México. This inland record occurs within the limited distribution of subtropical forests in Querétaro, where habitat conditions may be marginal for the survival of this species.

Known populations of the species are located approximately 130 km north in the state of San Luis Potosí (Dalquest 1953) and 180 km northeast in the State of Tamaulipas (Hall 1981). As with many other carnivores (Waser et al. 2001), dispersal information for this species, including minimum distance traveled, are lacking, but would be useful in assessing the nearest source of individuals for the Querétaro population and whether the population remains connected to other populations either south or north of our record. Information from the Mexican National Forestry Inventory shows several potential corridors through habitat patches of tropical and subtropical forests between the locality described for Querétaro

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Fig. 1. Photograph of a tayra in an oak forest, San Antonio Tancoyol region in Querétaro, México. Arrow points at distinct head coloration.

and locations in San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas (Palacio-Prieto et al. 2000). There is no information on possible linkages to the south into the state of Hidalgo.

The dearth of formal research and the small number of existing studies on this carnivore species make it a priority for conservation. Consequently, identification of these unknown distribution localities remains an important conservation goal.

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