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O. Eric Ramírez-Bravo

Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, México, ermex02@yahoo.com

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NEW RECORDS OF THE MEXICAN HAIRY PORCUPINE
(*COENDOU MEXICANUS*) AND TAMANDUA (*TAMANDUA*
MEXICANA) IN PUEBLA, CENTRAL MEXICO

O. Eric Ramírez-Bravo^{1,2,3}

ABSTRACT.—I report one new record for the threatened Mexican hairy porcupine (*Coendou mexicanus*) and 5 new records for the threatened tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*) in northern Puebla, Mexico. Although additional distributional data is needed, the existence of populations in this area could be important for the conservation and management of these species in the region.

RESUMEN.—Se reportan dos nuevos reportes para dos especies amenazadas: uno de puerco espín (*Coendou mexicanus*) y 5 nuevos reportes para el oso hormiguero (*Tamandua mexicana*) en el norte de Puebla. A pesar de que se necesita información adicional sobre la distribución, poblaciones de las dos especies son importantes para la conservación y manejo de las mismas en la región.

The Mexican hairy porcupine (*Coendou mexicanus*) and the tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*) are 2 arboreal species with overlapping distributions extending from Mexico to Panama (Aranda 2000). In Mexico, both species are found in tropical areas (Sánchez et al. 1992, Estrada et al. 1994, Cervantes and Yépez Mulia 1995, López-Wilchis and López Jardines 1998, Morales Mávila and Villa Cañedo 1998, Sánchez-Hernández et al. 2001, Faller-Menéndez et al. 2005, Alcántara-Salinas and Rivera Hernández 2008, Mejenes-López and Hernández-Bautista 2009, Tlapaya and Gallina 2010). Despite Mexican hairy porcupine being listed as threatened and tamandua being listed as endangered under Mexican law (SEMARNAT), there is a lack of information about the presence, status, and ecology of both species throughout their distributions. Although the state of Puebla in central Mexico has patches of suitable tropical forest, neither species has been reported there until now. In this article, I present the first direct reports of tamandua and Mexican hairy porcupine for the state of Puebla.

The records were obtained opportunistically while I conducted field surveys in September 2010 for a project entitled “The Jaguar in Puebla: Presence and Human Relations.” The study area was located in northern Puebla and encompassed 5,709.82 km² across 55 municipalities.

The records were obtained through interviews with hunters, taxidermists, tanners, and local people.

Mexican Hairy Porcupine

I observed one Mexican hairy porcupine, kept as a pet, in the area of Tuzamapan de Galeana (20°03'52"N, 97°34'28"W). It was a young male captured in late 2009 in the Tecolutla River canyon. The hunter declared that the species is common and that he had kept other individuals, both males and females. (Fig. 1)

People from several areas in Puebla declared that the species was common, however further verifiable records were not obtained. Porcupine spines are sought by local people because the spines are believed to be medicinal, a belief which could pose a threat to the potential population in the area. Furthermore, the connections with other populations are not clear, as the closest known populations are located 62 km to the north in the state of Hidalgo and 93 km to the south in Veracruz (Tlapaya and Gallina 2010).

Tamandua

I found 5 mounted specimens and one skin of tamandua in the Sierra Norte. The first record was from the town of Mecapalapa (20°31'37"N, 97°51'20"W). It corresponds to a young individual that was run over by a car on

¹Durrell Institute for Conservation Ecology, Marlowe Building, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NR, England

²Departamento de Ciencias Químico-Biológicas, Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, Santa Catarina Mártir, Sin Número, Cholula, Puebla, Mexico.

³E-mail: ermex02@yahoo.com

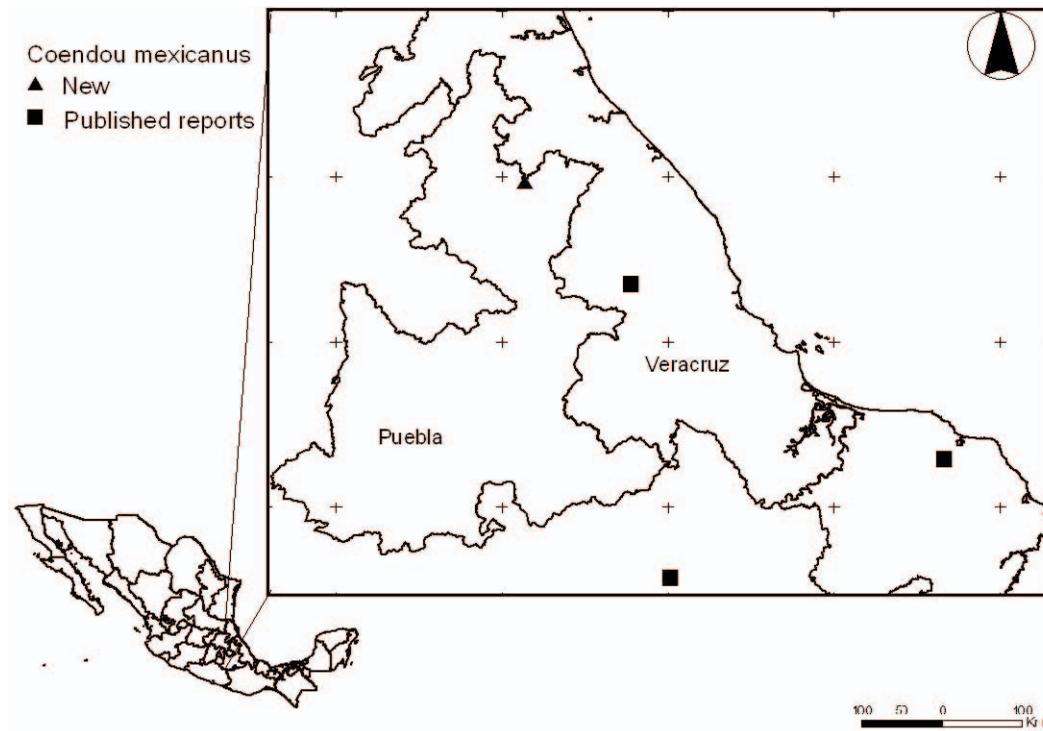


Fig. 1. New records of Mexican hairy porcupine (*Coendou mexicanus*) in Puebla, central Mexico.

the road between La Uno and Mecapalapa in February 2010. The animal was taken to the local taxidermist where it was photographed. The second specimen was observed in the town of Tlacuilotepec ($20^{\circ}19'37''\text{N}$, $98^{\circ}04'13''\text{W}$) and had been hunted in the nearby canyons. The third specimen was located in Zapotitlan de Méndez ($20^{\circ}00'17''\text{N}$, $97^{\circ}42'44''\text{W}$). The individual was captured 4 years ago (ca. 2006), and the owner declared that the species is common in the area and that he has mounted other individuals, supporting the existence of a population. The fourth specimen was observed in the town of Tuzamapan de Galeana ($20^{\circ}03'52''\text{N}$, $97^{\circ}34'28''\text{W}$). A hunter declared that the animal was taken in the Tecolutla River canyon 5 years ago (ca. 2005). The final record was a skin seen in a tannery in the town of San Carlos. It was from an individual hunted in the locality of Jonotla ($20^{\circ}02'07''\text{N}$, $97^{\circ}34'03''\text{W}$). The owner of the tannery said he has mounted several individuals from different communities in northern Puebla. Connections with other known populations are uncertain. To the south, the nearest known population is 94 km away in Veracruz (Tlapaya and Gallina 2010), and to

the north, the closest population is 4 km away in the state of Hidalgo (Mejenes-López and Hernández-Bautista 2009; Fig. 2).

Reports of Mexican hairy porcupine and tamandua are important in Puebla because the records support the existence of populations in the area. Furthermore, these individuals were found in areas shared by other endangered species such as otter (*Lontra longicaudis*; Ramírez-Bravo 2010) and grison (*Galictis vittata*; Ramírez-Bravo and Hernandez-Santin in review), confirming the importance of northern Puebla for the conservation of rare tropical species.

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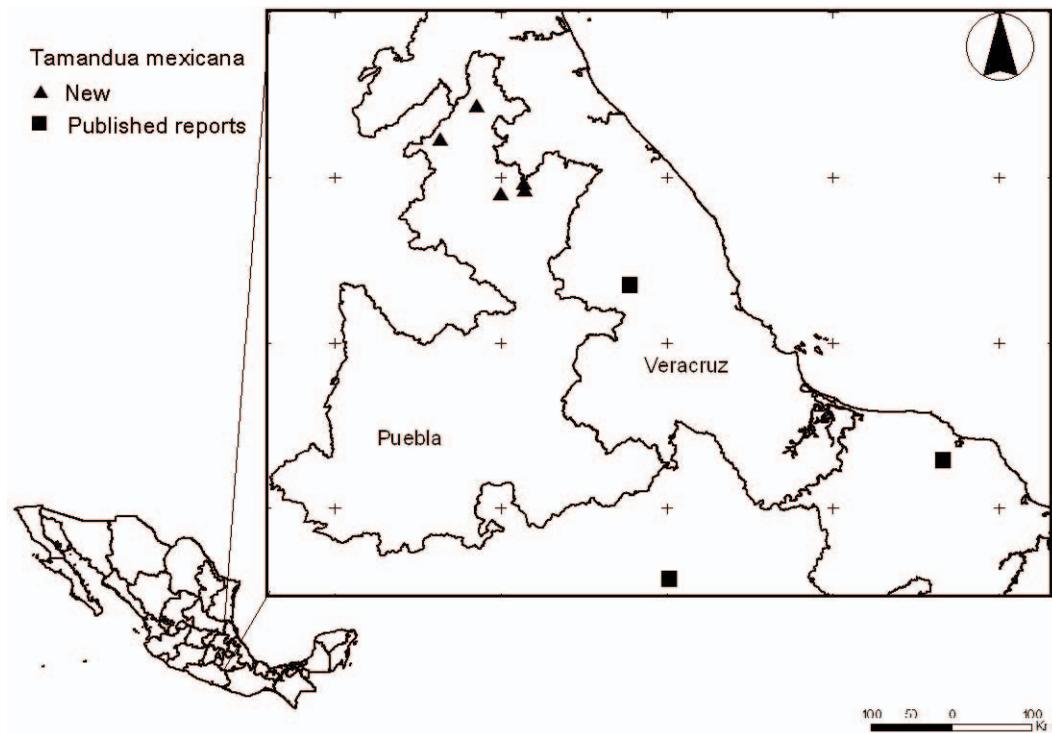


Fig. 2. New records of tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*) in Puebla, central Mexico.

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