

SHORT NOTE

NEOTROPICAL OTTER (*Lontra longicaudis*) RECORDS IN PUEBLA, CENTRAL MEXICO

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Abstract: This study, presents new historical and actual reports of neotropical otter (*Lontra longicaudis*) confirming its presence in the Sierra Norte, state of Puebla, Mexico.

Keywords: *Lontra longicaudis*, Mustelid, Puebla, Sierra Norte, Otter

The neotropical otter (*Lontra longicaudis*) is a neotropical mustelid that can be found along fresh water rivers from Northern Mexico to Uruguay however; there is little information on this species (Macías-Sánchez and Aranda, 1999). In Mexico it is considered as the most widespread and better known of the three otter species present (Gallo-Reynoso, 1997); as it has been recorded in 22 states from the 32 in Mexico (Gallo-Reynoso, 1997; López-Wilchis and López-Jardines, 1998; Ramírez-Pulido et al. 2005; Botello et al. 2006; Casariego-Mandorell et al. 2006; Gallo-Reynoso et al. 2008; Monroy-Vilchis and Mundo, 2009). The species is found in all the large and medium size rivers, as well as in coastal plain and mountain rivers (Gallo-Reynoso, 1997) from sea level to 2000 m (Botello et al. 2006). However, an increase in pollution has led to a decrease in populations along the country (Gallo-Reynoso, 1997). It is considered as a threatened species (Maldonado and Lopez Gonzalez, 2003) thus, it is important to determine its presence and distribution.

Otters presence in Puebla has been recorded previously through footprints and scats in the Mixteca area, in the south west and in the Sierra Norte in the northern part of the state (Gallo-Reynoso, 1997). The most recent record is an observation of a pup kept as a pet in the Sierra Norte in the northern part of the state however, its origin was not defined (Ramírez-Pulido et al., 2005). The aim of this note is to present three new records obtained opportunistically while conducting a field survey in August 2010, for the project “The Jaguar in Puebla: Presence and human relations” (Figure. 1). The study area is located in northern Puebla, encompassing an area of 5,709.82 km² which include 55 municipalities. The records were obtained through interviews with hunters and tanneries in the area.

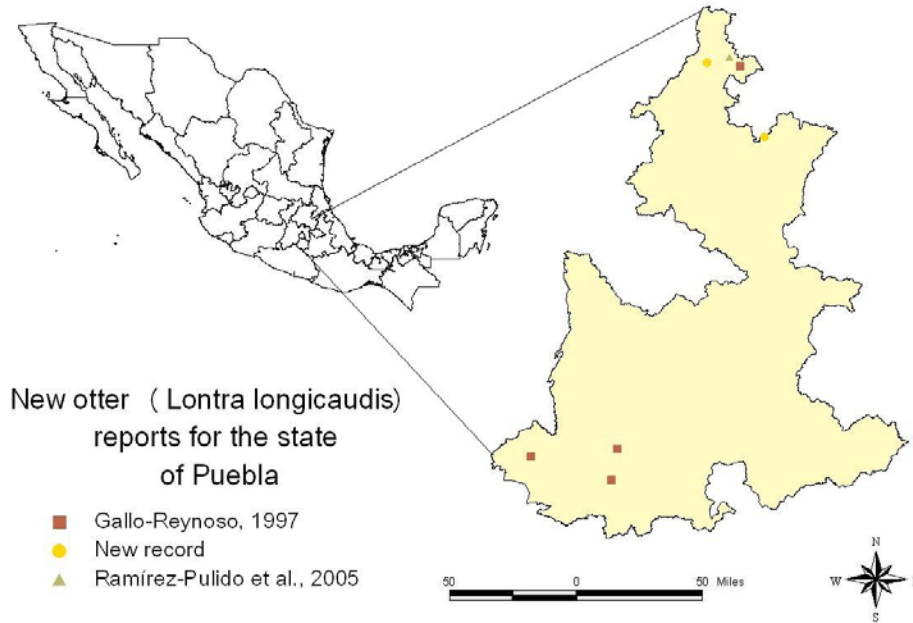


Figure 1. New records for neotropical otter (*Lontra longicaudis*) for the state of Puebla

We obtained two records, consisting in the skins of two otters found in the town of Mecapalapa ($20^{\circ} 31' 37''$ N/ $97^{\circ} 51' 20''$ W,) (Figure 2a), the individuals were hunted in the Pantepec River that ends in the Gulf of Mexico. One corresponds to an adult individual of undetermined sex and the other to a juvenile. The interviewed person mentioned that the adult individual was hunted more than 30 years ago and the juvenile 10 years ago but no exact dates were given. However, the same person states that the species can still be seen along the river. The other report corresponds to a stuffed individual that was photographed in the town of Tuzamapan ($20^{\circ} 03' 52''$ N/ $97^{\circ} 34' 28''$ W) (Figure 2b). The otter was hunted in the Tecolutla River near the town of Reyes de Vallarta ($20^{\circ} 07' 06''$ N/ $97^{\circ} 30' 03''$ W) in March 2010. The skin was bought and then stuffed by a hunter in Tuzamapan. The specimen corresponds to an adult individual of undetermined sex.



(a) (b)

Figure 2a. (left) Otter skin found in Mecapalapa, caught in the Pantepec River: 2b (right) stuffed otter hunted in the Tecolutla River

These reports are important because they fall in the tropical mountainous area, which is considered a priority for otter conservation in Mexico (Gallo-Reynoso, 1997). However, there is no information about connectivity with other populations such as the ones found in Veracruz (Macías-Sánchez and Aranda, 1999). On the other hand, they provide direct evidence about the historical and actual presence of neotropical otter in the state of Puebla. Further development of this study will help to determine the species distribution, status and connectivity in the state.

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RÉSUMÉ

DONNEES DE LOUTRES A LONGUE QUEUE (*Lontra longicaudis*) DANS L'ÉTAT DE PUEBLA, CENTRE MEXIQUE

Cette étude présente les données historiques récentes ainsi que les travaux actuels sur la Loutre à longue queue (*Lontra longicaudis*) confirmant ainsi sa présence en Sierra du Nord dans l'état de Puebla, Mexique.

RESUMEN

REPORTES DE NUTRIA (*Lontra longicaudis*) EN PUEBLA, MEXICO

En este estudio, se presentan nuevos reportes históricos y actuales de nutria neotropical (*Lontra longicaudis*) confirmando la presencia de la especie en la Sierra Norte de Puebla, México.