NOTAS

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Distribution extension

Ocelot *Leopardus pardalis* (Linnaeus, 1758) in Santa Rosa de Cabal, Risaralda, Colombia

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Abstract

This note presents the first record of Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) in a rural area in the municipality of Santa Rosa de Cabal. This finding was obtained by a camera trap. In addition, there were two records by habitants of the sector. These records are of great importance since they are the first in the department of Risaralda outside of protected areas, so arises the idea of implementing monitoring and conservation plans.

Key words: trap camera, new record, wild cat, coffee cultural landscape, natural history.

Resumen

Esta nota presenta el primer registro de Ocelote (*Leopardus pardalis*) en un área rural en el municipio de Santa Rosa de Cabal. Este hallazgo se obtuvo mediante cámara trampa. Además se tiene registro de otras dos observaciones de Ocelote por habitantes del sector. Estos registros son de gran importancia ya que son los primeros en del departamento de Risaralda fuera de zonas protegidas, por lo que surge la idea de implementar planes de monitoreo, conservación y concientización.

Palabras clave: cámara trampa, nuevo registro, gato salvaje, paisaje cultural cafetero, historia natural.

The Ocelot, *Leopardus pardalis* (Linnaeus, 1758), is distributed from the United States, through Central America, to Argentina, and is the most common feline species in neotropical lands (Cruz-Rodríquez et al. 2007). This species inhabits various ecosystems, such as dry and rain lowland forests, premontane and montane forests, swampy savannas, dense forests, secondary forests, gallery forests (Sánchez et al. 2008; Bárcenas and Medellín 2010), the Ocelot lives in ecosystems below 2000 masl., although there are some records in the paramo at 4300 masl. (Payán G. and Soto V. 2012; Payán Garrido et al. 2015), and is strongly associated with dense habitat cover as either closed canopy or dense understory, however, they have also been recorded from heavily exploited and fragmented forests, scrublands, to early succession forests on the outskirts of cities and towns (de Olivera et al. 2010).

The Ocelot is solitary with a range of maximum distances of movement between 4,75 to 7,54 km for males and 1,12 to 1,69 km for females (Wang et al. 2019), they are twilight and nocturnal,its diet is based mainly on small nocturnal mammals, but it is not uncommon for it to hunt diurnal mammals, birds and reptiles during the day (Sánchez et al. 2008; Ahumada-Carrillo et al. 2013).

The department of Risaralda in Colombia has a variety of ecosystems distributed in an altitudinal gradient that ranges from 300 to 5300 masl., there are 28 protected areas representing 22% of the territory (902.2522 km^2) distributed in 14 departments; it is home to at least 135 species of mammals (Castaño et al. 2018). However, the Ocelot has been reported only in the Choco rainforest in the Mistrató and Pueblo Rico municipalities and in the premontane forest in the reserve Ucumarí in protected areas of Pereira. In this paper, we present the first record of Ocelot, *L. pardalis*, in a rural area of the Santa Rosa de Cabal municipality.

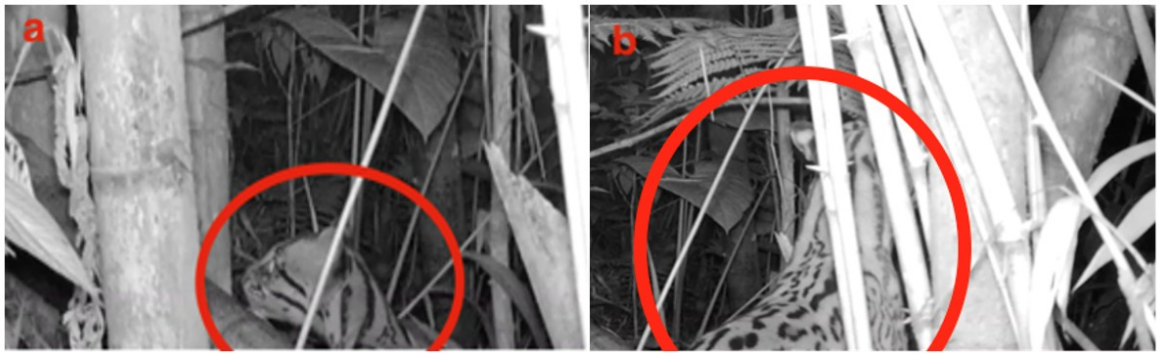

FIGURE 1. Record of Ocelot (*L. pardalis*) in the campus UNISARC, Santa Rosa de Cabal, Risaralda, Colombia. **a.** Record on April 26. **b.** Record on April 27.

Sampling was realized on the campus of Corporación Universitaria Santa Rosa de Cabal, El Jazmín, with coordinates 4°54'37.36 "N, 75°37'32.05 "W, WGS84, at an elevation of 1635 masl., an average temperature of 20,1°C and annual rainfall of 2716 mm (Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia 2019). This location presents different vegetation types, including two small watercourses with their banks covered by dense thickets between 10 and 20 m high and different agro-ecosystems around the sector, which vary in crops, found mainly coffee, banana or pastures (Henao et al. 2014). The sampling was carried out between April 19 and May 3 of 2021 employing one camera trapping, it was active for 24 h, thus fulfilling 15 trap-night. we obtained two records of Ocelots, on April 26 at 4h59 and April 27 at 4h45 (Figure 1). Additionally, there were two records, one of them was an observation of predation from a “big spotted wild cat” to a laying hen at 16:00 hrs., on April 2021 (O. Cordero 2021, personal communication). Another record was a nocturnal observation of three Ocelots crossing a rural way at 1:00 hrs, on 6 August 2021 (L. Sierra 2021, personal communication) the observer recognizes an animal bigger than the other two which suggest that it was a mother and her young.

These are the first records of Ocelot for Santa Rosa de Cabal municipality, being the first records for the department of Risaralda outside of forest cover or a protected area (Castaño et al. 2018). These findings support the idea of Ocelot are opportunistic animals with a high capacity to adapt to fragmented environments (Michalski et al. 2010; Galindo-Aguilar et al. 2016; Wang et al. 2019), and their diet changes depending on the habitat and

availability of prey (Payán Garrido et al. 2015). The agro-ecosystems of the area is used by various synanthropic prey such as *Dasyprocta punctata, Dasypus novemcinctus, Didelphis marsupialis and Syntheosciurus granatensis,* which may be key to contributing to the movement of Ocelots through patches of cover and eventually access agro-ecosystems to move to search of prey.

The Ocelot was filmed in a dense cover thicket surrounding the banks of a small watercourse, in a rural landscape 200 m close to a national highway "Autopista del café". For this reason, its existence in a rural area close to farms may favor the attack from Ocelot to poultry, and domestic animals (Castagnino Vera 2015) which can bring conflicts, exposing itself to the commercialization of its skin (Diaz-Pulido and Payán Garrido 2011) or the possibility to acquire diseases of domestic animals (Muñoz-Rodriguez and Gutiérrez 2021).

In addition, the Ocelots need to move great distances to expand their habitat (Álivia Coria et al. 2016), it is very plausible that in this area the Ocelot must crossroads, which will be a risk factor (Meraz et al. 2010) even more so considering that in this rural area there are large national highways (Figure 2).

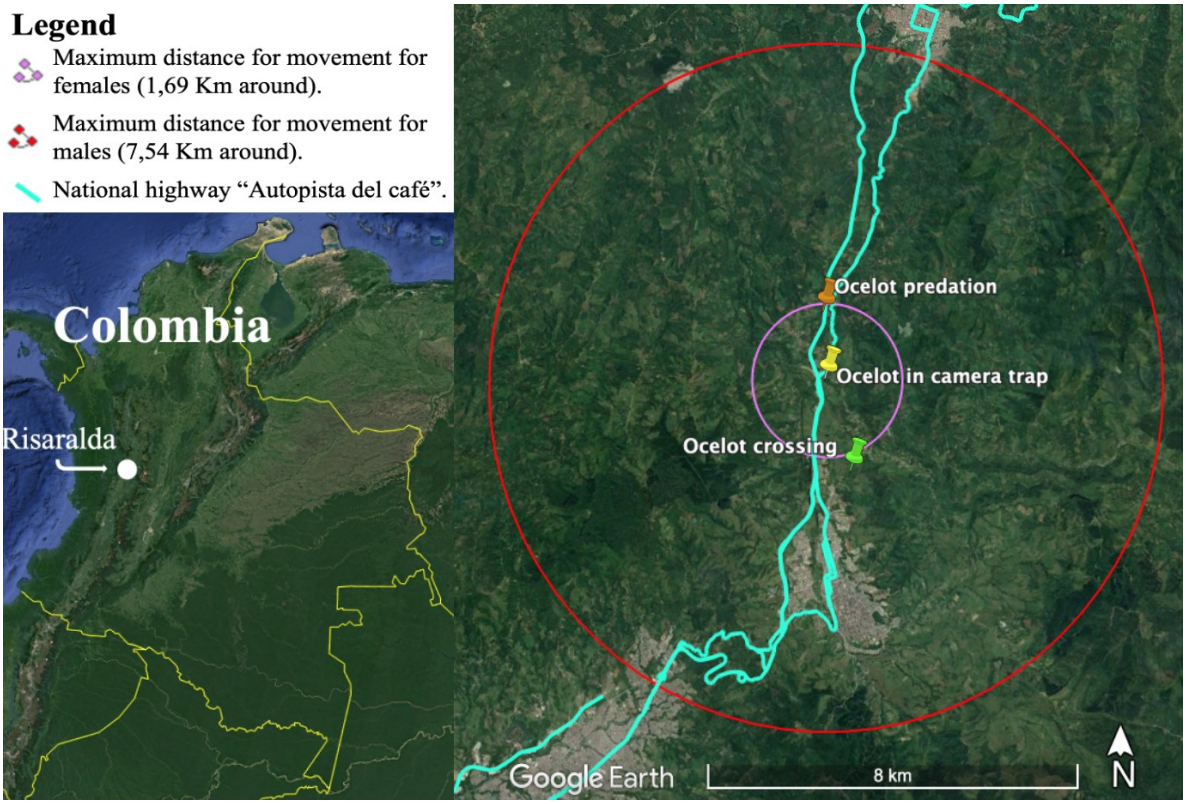

FIGURE 2. Geographical distribution of records.

Although the Ocelot is considered to be an at least concern increasing to near threatened (Paviolo et al. 2015), it is recommended to carry out research to define the population density in the municipality of Santa Rosa de Cabal, in such a way that strategies are promoted for its conservation and generate an awareness of the rural population.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that have shown that the heterogeneity of the "Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia" can maintain high levels of biodiversity (Castaño et al. 2020). And the presence of forest patches in the agricultural landscape has proven to be key to maintaining the population of carnivores (Cruz-Rodríquez et al. 2007).

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