

PERFORMANCE REPORT

As Required by

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, SECTION 6

TEXAS
Grant No: E-1-6

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES CONSERVATION

Project No. 46

Identification of New Populations of Ocelots and Their Conservation Genetics

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ABSTRACT

Although no funds were used during this period, trapping surveys were conducted in five different areas. Of these, four had not been surveyed before. Trapping was conducted in Cameron, Willacy, Nueces, Jim Wells and Atascosa Counties. No ocelots were trapped at new sites. However, nine ocelots were trapped at a previously trapped site in Willacy County. In addition, there were four re-captures at the Willacy County survey site. The effort among the five locations constituted 1228 trap-nights.

PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Texas **PROJECT NO.:** E-1-6

PROJECT TITLE: Endangered and Threatened Species Conservation.

PERIOD COVERED: September 1, 1993 -August 31, 1994

JOB NUMBER: 46

JOB TITLE: Identification of New Populations of Ocelots and Their Conservation Genetics

JOB OBJECTIVE: To conduct a trapping survey for ocelots (Felis pardalis) in previously unsampled potential habitat in south Texas and to ascertain the genetic relationships among populations located.

SEGMENT OBJECTIVES:

1. To survey six sites for new ocelot populations.
2. To obtain tissue/blood samples from captured ocelots for genetics analysis.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Aerial surveys were conducted to identify areas which may serve as potential habitat for ocelots in south Texas. Potential areas were classified as either Class A (optimal, >95% canopy brush cover) or Class B (suboptimal, 75 - 95% canopy brush cover).

No funding from this grant was used for this years' trapping effort, however, some trapping was accomplished. Trapping for ocelots was conducted at five localities in south Texas. Areas identified as exhibiting Class A or Class B characteristics and/or sites with very recent or credible reports of ocelots were surveyed. Trapping results can be found in Table 1. One of the sites (in Willacy County) had been trapped previously.

The survey was conducted as part of a graduate research project (executed by Mr. David B. Shindle) at Texas A&M - Kingsville under the supervision of Dr. Michael Tewes. As of August 1994, five sites have been surveyed (Figure 1) for a total of 1,228 trap nights (Table 1). Nine ocelots were captured in at the survey site located in Willacy County. No ocelots were captured at the other four localities shown in Figure 1.

Site S-7 was surveyed two days after a Class II sighting was reported. The sighting and trap placement took place at mile 85 of Interstate 37 north. The three remaining sites were surveyed based on the habitat criteria described above. Site S-10 was surveyed for the purpose of monitoring the site's existing population of ocelots.

As expected, gaining access to private lands has been

difficult in some instances. Some landowners have found it in their best interests to refuse requests for participation in this survey. Recent press reports concerning the Endangered Species Act have caused landowners to become wary of such research. Many of their fears are unfounded; however, many are not. One landowner in this region will not cooperate until assurances are made that their property rights will not be infringed upon in the instance an ocelot is captured. Currently, these assurances cannot be made. It may be possible to take steps to improve the landowners' perception of the research motives concerning the ocelot.

It is difficult to interpret the results of a trapping effort in which no ocelots were captured. An unsuccessful trapping effort is not conclusive evidence that an ocelot was not present during the survey. The elusive behavior of the cat, intensity of trapping effort, time of year, and trapping techniques are important factors which may affect the success of a trapping effort.

Table 1. South Texas ocelot trapping survey results (September 1, 1993 - August 31, 1994).

Site	Felids Captured		No. of Trap Nights
	Bobcat	Ocelot	
S-6	2	0	179
S-7	1	0	100
S-8	2	0	315
S-9	4	0	349
S-10 ^a	3	9 ^b	285
Total	12	9	1228

^a This site was a previously samples site, surveyed for the purpose of monitoring the existing population of oceltos.

^b Thirteen ocelot captures were made (9 first captures, 4 re-captures).

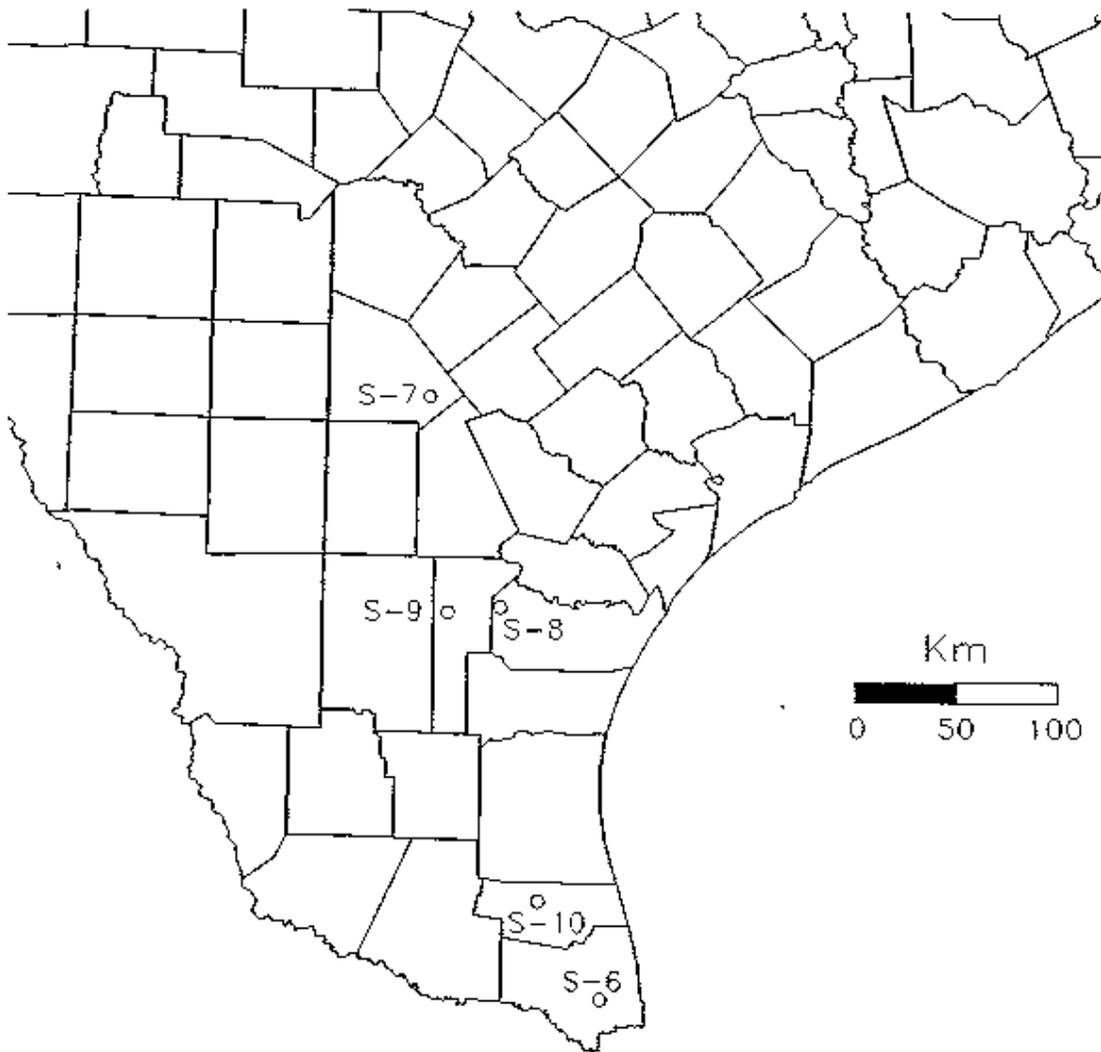


Figure 1. Locations of five sites where trapping surveys were performed in an attempt to document populations of ocelots in south Texas.

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS

No funding from this grant was used to accomplish this years trapping effort. The only successful ocelot captures occurred at previously trapped location. No ocelots were captured in the newly surveyed sites. For the newly surveyed sites, no biopsy material is available for genetic study.

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