

First record of Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) in the Curió Municipal Natural Park, municipality of Paracambi, RJ, Brazil

Primeira ocorrência de Jaguatirica (*Leopardus pardalis*) no Parque Natural Municipal do Curió, município de Paracambi, RJ, Brasil

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Abstract Herein, I record the first *Leopardus pardalis* occurrence in the Curió Municipal Natural Park, an Atlantic Forest remnant inside of the municipality of Paracambi, RJ, southeastern Brazil.

Keywords: Conservation Unit, Felidae, *Parque do Curió*.

Resumo Nesta nota, registro a primeira ocorrência de *Leopardus pardalis* no Parque Natural Municipal do Curió, um remanescente de Floresta Atlântica inserido no município de Paracambi, RJ, Brasil.

Palavras-chaves: Felidae, Parque do Curió, Unidade de Conservação.

Leopardus pardalis (Linnaeus, 1758) (Carnivora, Felidae), commonly known as ocelot, is a medium-sized mammal with

predominantly nocturnal habit (Goulart *et al.* 2009) and which feeds basically on small- and medium-sized vertebrates (Murray and Gardner 1997; Meza *et al.* 2002). Ocelot is a widespread species with occurrence from the extreme southern United States to Uruguay and northern Argentina, but no records in Chile or Caribbean islands (Murray and Gardner 1997; Cheida *et al.* 2011). In Brazil, despite existing *L. pardalis* records in all states (Cheida *et al.* 2011), there are some regions without any evidences of such mammal.

Through the development of my master's project (Gomes *et al.* 2014), I found ocelot traces within the Curió Municipal Natural Park (hereafter as Curió Park), placed in the municipality of Paracambi, state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Hence, the goal of this note was to report the *L. pardalis* occurrence in the park. Curió Park (22° 33' to 22° 36' S, 43° 40' to 43° 43' W) (Figure 1) is a Conservation Unit

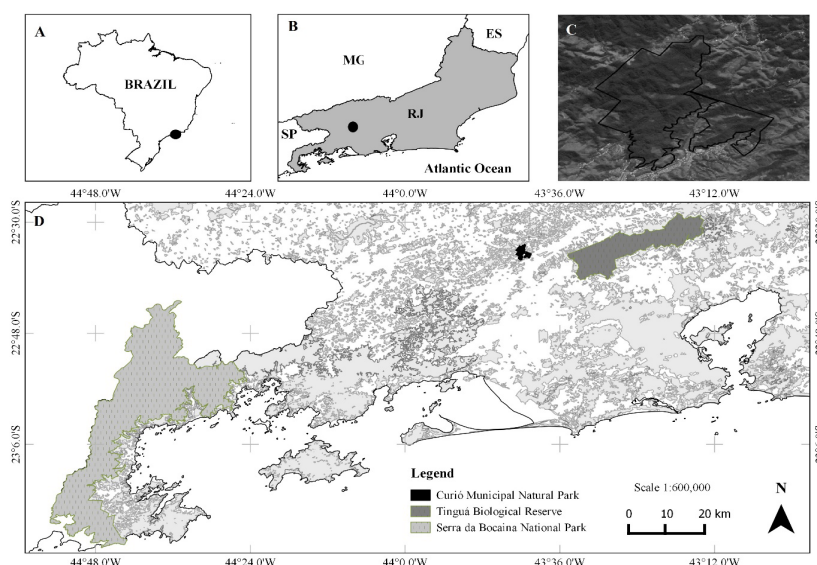


Figure 1 Figures A and B highlight the location of the study area in the Brazil and in the state of Rio de Janeiro, respectively, figure C shows the limits of the Curió Municipal Natural Park, and figure D shows the ecological corridor Tinguá-Bocaina where this park is included and the Atlantic Forest remnants from the state of Rio de Janeiro.



Figure 2 Ocelot track on bovine feces in a Curió Municipal Natural Park trail, municipality of Paracambi, RJ, Brazil. Pen size = 14.8 cm.

created in 2002 by the municipal decree number 1.001. The park vegetation is classified as dense rainforest within the Atlantic Forest biome and has about 914 ha divided into different regeneration stages, besides being the largest forest remnant of the municipality of Paracambi (SEMA and ITPA 2010). The altitude ranges from 53 to 632 m above sea level and the local climate is characterized by a dry season which comprises the months from May to September and a rainy season occurring from October to April (Gomes *et al.* 2014).

On August 10th, 2012, at 11h05min AM, I found six *Leopardus pardalis* tracks on the bovine feces (Figure 2) in the Jequitibá Trail (site: 22° 35' 51.60" S and 43° 42' 19.10" W) within the Curió Park. The species identification was given following Oliveira and Cassaro (2005) and Becker and Dalponte (2013), resulting in the first record of ocelot in the region.

This protected area has been suggested as an important forest remnant for sheltering both bat species with indicators of good-quality habitats (*Chrotopterus auritus* (Peters, 1856), *Miconycteris microtis* (Miller, 1898) and *Trachops cirrhosus* (Spix, 1823)) and bat species threatened with extinction (*Chiroderma doriae* (Thomas, 1891) and *Dermanura cinerea* (Gervais, 1856)) (Gomes *et al.* 2014). In the same sense, the finding in this note reinforce the importance of the Curió Park, once the ocelot is already considered as a vulnerable in the red list of threatened species of the Rio de Janeiro state (Bergallo *et al.* 2000).

Leopardus pardalis tends to select areas with large closed cover (Horne *et al.* 2009) generally occupying areas in advanced forest succession process (Kuhnén *et al.* 2011). The local where I registered the tracks is characterized by presenting secondary vegetation. Despite also existing areas in initial and intermediate stages of regenerations in the Curió Park, is possible that those altered areas are liable of ocelots occurrence (e.g. Kaminski *et al.* 2013), indicating that this study area, as a whole, might be used as habitat for the species. An instance clearer, it would be whether we considered the ocelot home range. Males and females of *L. pardalis*

may use 7.5 km² and 0.4 km² as home range area respectively (Goulart *et al.* 2009). Since the Curió Park has an area of 91.4 km², it might shelter 12 males or 229 females of ocelot which highlights an important role of the Conservation Unit for the ocelots' conservation.

Other medium- and large-sized mammals have been already observed in the park, such as the species *Pecari tajacu* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Tayassu pecari* (Link, 1795) and *Mazama* sp., all of them listed as threatened with extinction in the state of Rio de Janeiro (SEMA and ITPA 2010). It is also likely that the species *Leopardus tigrinus* (Schreber, 1775) and *Puma concolor* (Linnaeus, 1771) occur in study area, since they were previously found in the Serra da Bocaina National Park, as well as the *L. pardalis* (Delciellos *et al.* 2012). This is emphasized by the fact that Curió Park is located in the ecological corridor Tinguá-Bocaina, composed also by Tinguá Biological Reserve and Serra da Bocaina National Park (Figure 1D; SEMA and ITPA 2010). This ecological corridor is important for allowing the dispersal of local mammals, avoiding the restrict establishment of population caused by small forest remnant or insulation (Goulart *et al.* 2009).

I suggest that larger efforts in searching for traces and research which uses camera traps to identify ocelots, and even other medium- and large-sized mammals, are necessary to monitor and identify the species that occur in the Curió Park. That Unit Conservation is a forest remnant which suffers several pressures of illegal hunting and human invasion, with a poorly understood and studied fauna.

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