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## Distribution of the Porcupine, *Erethizon dorsatum*, in Mexico

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE PORCUPINE, *Erethizon dorsatum*,  
IN MEXICO

The first Recent record of the porcupine, *Erethizon dorsatum*, from Mexico comprised fragmentary remains associated with human occupancy from a cave east of Cuatro Ciénegas, Coahuila (Gilmore, 1947 : 158-159). Later, Benson (1953 : 511-512) reported two specimens from western Sonora from « the lower flood plain of the Rio Sonora, close to the Gulf of California » (one from 6 mi. N Puerto Kino and the other from Rancho Santa Ana, about 45 mi. W Hermosillo), and Dickerman (1962 : 108) recorded the species from Hda. Las Margaritas in northern Coahuila. No additional

reports of Recent porcupines from Mexico have come to our attention, and four specimens of *Erethizon dorsatum couesi* Mearns, 1897, in the Museum of Natural History from three states are therefore of note.

SONORA. — On 5 September 1958, Pedro Arguiola killed a subadult porcupine of unknown sex at a place 13 mi. N Imuris in northern Sonora. J. R. Alcorn later acquired the skull (KU 80909) for the Museum of Natural History but his field notes do not reveal the circumstances under which the animal was killed.

CHIHUAHUA. — Two specimens from Chihuahua constitute the first report of the porcupine from that state. One, comprising the cranium, left lower jaw, and parts of the post-cranial skeleton (KU 73918) was found under a mesquite bush at Ojo Palomos Viejo, 4000 ft., just south of the New Mexican line, by Ronald H. Pine on 5 July 1957. The skeletal remains, of a subadult, were badly weathered.

On 5 September 1960, M. Raymond Lee found parts of a porcupine skin, of which one foot and the tail were preserved in alcohol (KU 84879), along a roadway 5 mi. SE Colonia Juárez. According to Lee's field notes, no part of the carcass was found : « Apparently [the] animal had been skinned and the skin either left or thrown out here on the highway. » The surrounding area was mostly « grassy rangeland » save for a cluster of small trees that grew near a stream bed approximately 100 yards from the place the skin was found.

SINALOA. — At a place 16 km. NNE Choix, 1700 ft., in the extreme northeastern part of Sinaloa, Percy L. Clifton purchased the skin of a porcupine (KU 90973) on 20 May 1962 that had been killed by dogs on a small ranch nearby some eight days previously. Natives reported to Clifton that *Erethizon* was rare in the area and were reluctant to hunt for porcupines even when a high price was offered for specimens. One man claimed to have seen an individual some years earlier in adjacent southwestern Chihuahua. Clifton recorded in his notes that no pine or oak grew in the area northeast of Choix, the local woody vegetation consisting rather of « strangler fig, thornbush, and other species » more or less typical of the foothills of northern Sinaloa.

All recent records of *Erethizon* thus far reported for Mexico are from relatively arid situations at low to moderate (up to 4000 feet) elevations. It is perplexing to us that no porcupines have yet been taken in the Sierra Madre Occidental because many areas there appear suitable, if not ideal, for the species. We cannot help but feel that porcupines will yet be found in the mountains of western Mexico, but the fact remains that no specimens have been obtained by field parties from the Museum of Natural History, or those from other institutions, that have visited this region in the past decade.

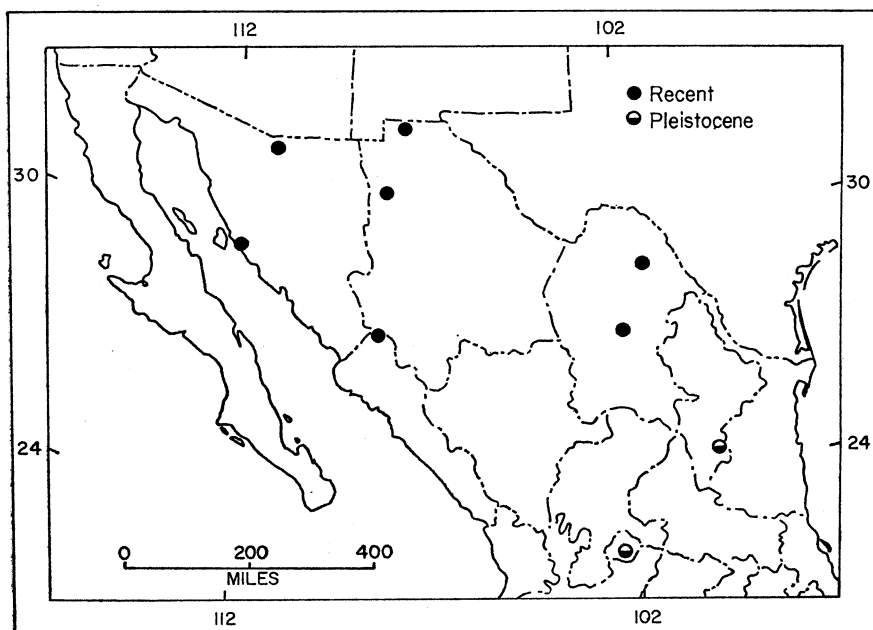


Fig. 1. — Map showing the Recent and Pleistocene localities from which *Erethizon dorsatum* has been recorded from Mexico (see text).

The presently known localities from which *Erethizon dorsatum* has been taken in Mexico are plotted on Figure 1. Pleistocene records of the species from San Josecito Cave, near Aramberri, Nuevo León (Jakway, 1958 : 322), and from a site at Arroyo del Cedazo, southeast of Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes (Hibbard and Mooser, 1963), also are shown on the map.

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