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Tapirus pinchaque, Mountain Tapir

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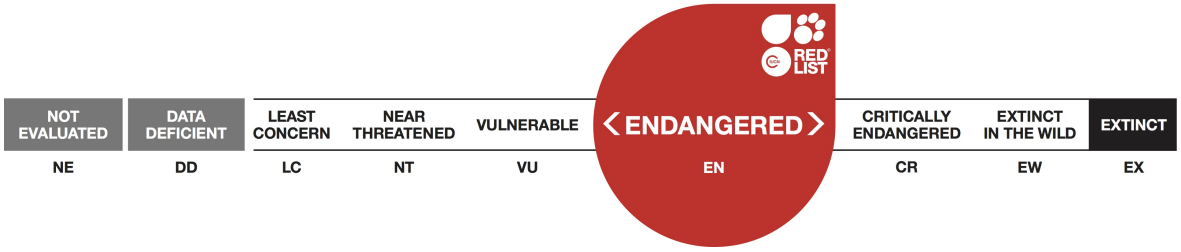

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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Perissodactyla	Tapiridae

Taxon Name: *Tapirus pinchaque* (Roulin, 1829)

Common Name(s):

- English: Mountain Tapir, Andean Tapir, Woolly Tapir
- French: Tapir des Andes, Tapir pinchaque
- Spanish: Danta Cordillerana, Danta de Montaña, Danta de Páramo, Danta Lanuda, Danta Negra, Gran Bestia, Pinchaque, Tapir Andino

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Endangered A2cd+3cd; C1 ver 3.1

Year Published: 2016

Date Assessed: November 17, 2014

Justification:

This species is listed as Endangered due to an ongoing and suspected future decline inferred from habitat loss, fragmentation and hunting pressure. Population declines are estimated to be greater than 50% in the past 3 generations (33 years). Furthermore the causes of population decline have not ceased and are inferred to be greater than 50% decline in the next 3 generations (33 years). This is inferred from current trends of continued habitat loss, hunting estimates as well impacts of climate change, which will shift the suitable climatic conditions up the mountain. In addition there are estimated to be less than 2,500 mature individuals remaining, with an estimated continuing decline of at least 20% in the next 2 generations (22 years). There has been and remains significant hunting pressure in Ecuador, however in Colombia and Peru the hunting pressure on this species still continues. It is extremely rare to encounter an area with Mountain Tapirs where they are not being over-hunted. Overall the mountain tapir population is fragmented as a result of human activities. There has also been widespread cattle introduction into the last remaining mountain tapir refuges. For example, cattle have been observed to be forming reproducing families in western Sangay National Park. Illegal mining is an important threat that is increasing population fragmentation, increasing contamination of watersheds and increasing illegal hunting. Mining projects in northern Peru and central Andes of Colombia threatens to destroy the headwater cloud forests and paramos of the scant population of mountain tapirs there.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Endangered (EN) – http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T21473A9285481.en

2002 – Endangered (EN)

2000 – Endangered (EN)

1996 – Endangered (EN)

http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T21473A45173922.en

1994 – Endangered (E)

1990 – Vulnerable (V)

1988 – Vulnerable (V)

1986 – Vulnerable (V)

1982 – Vulnerable (V)

1965 – Status inadequately known-survey required or data sought

Geographic Range

Range Description:

Mountain Tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque)* is known from the Andean area of Columbia, Ecuador, and northernmost Peru were new records have been acquired from the southern Huancabanba depresure. In Ecuador new records have shown Mountain Tapirs occurring in areas previously thought unconnected such as in the southern part of Sangay National Park towards Podocarpus National Park. There are also new records in the Ecuadorian western Andes. *T. pinchaque* occurs in the Central Andes south of Nevados National Park (05º00'N) and in the Eastern Andes, south of Paramo de Sumapaz (04º30'N) in Bogotá. In Colombia, there are no tapirs in the Western Cordillera, northern part of the Central- and Eastern-Cordilleras, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Serrania de la Macarena and Cerro Tacarcuna. Historically the species has also been recorded in Venezuela, however, currently there is no evidence of its occurrence in this country. The southern limit now includes regions of Cajamarca and Lambayeque, specifically in Cañaris in Ferrañafe province and Querocoto in Chota province. The most threatened populations are those of the Central Cordillera between National Park Las Hermosas and National Park Nevado del Huila where large tracks of mature montane forests are being converted to opium fields. *T. pinchaque* is now extinct in much of its former range.

Country Occurrence:

Native: Colombia; Ecuador; Peru

Regionally extinct: Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of

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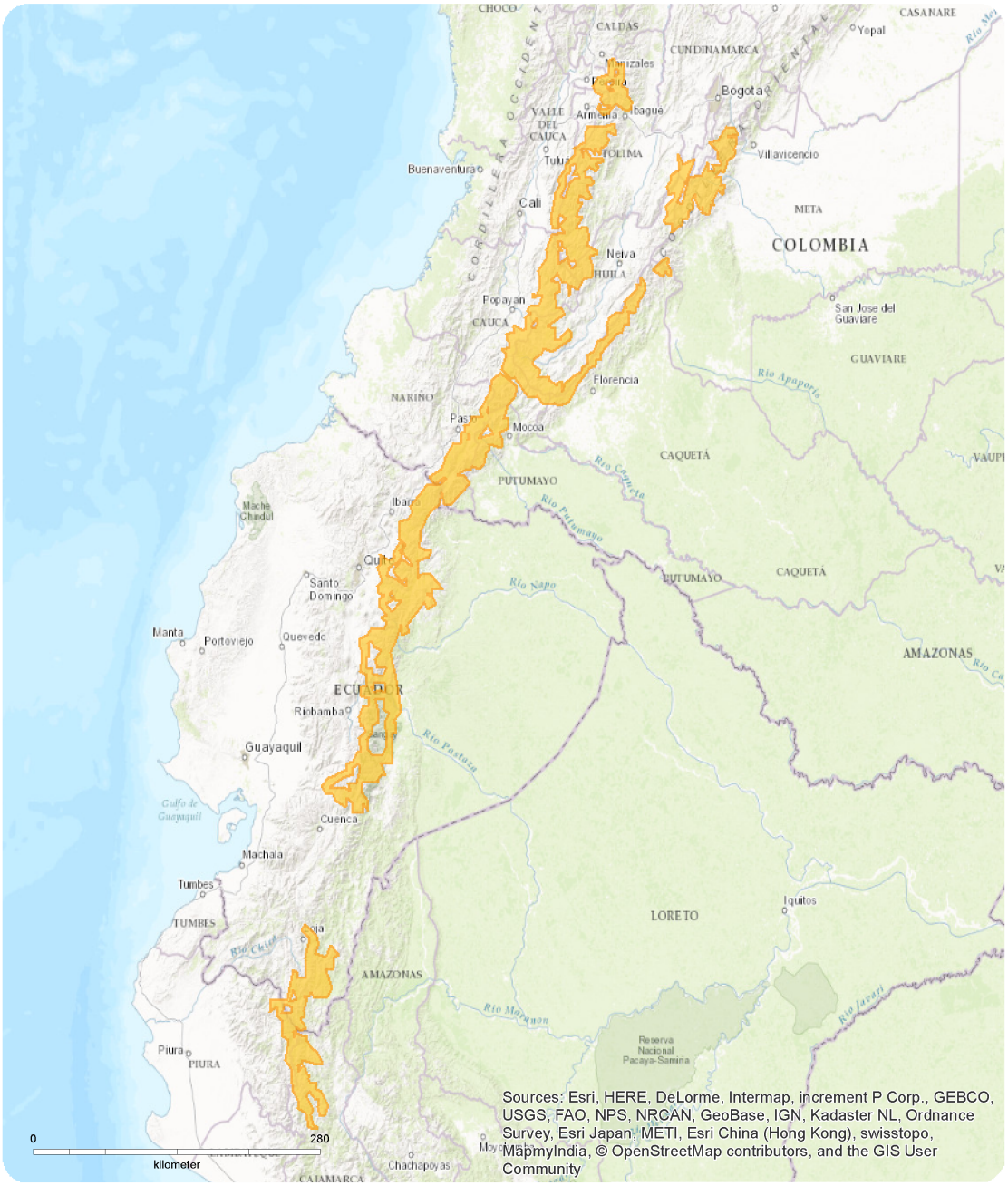
Distribution Map

Tapirus pinchaque

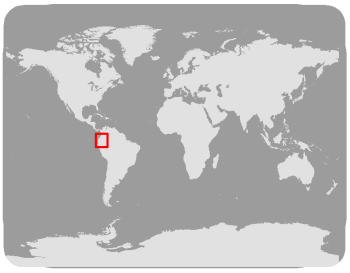


NE DD LC NT VU **EN** ENDANGERED CR EW EX

Range

Extant (resident)

Compiled by:
IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.

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Population

The Mountain Tapir population is fragmented as a result of human activities and the total population is estimated to be less than 2,500 mature individuals with an estimated continuing decline of at least 20% in the next 2 generation (22 years).

Current Population Trend: Decreasing

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

The four major habitat types for *Tapirus pinchaque* are: Paramo, Jalca and Tropical montane forest. Elevations range from 1,400 m to the snowline (Downer 1997).

Systems: Terrestrial, Freshwater

Use and Trade

This species is hunted for food, use of hides and medicinal uses.

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

Formerly hunting pressure was the primary threat through most areas of the Mountain Tapir's distribution (C. Downer pers. comm.) but today, poppy growing and its eradication, warfare and habitat fragmentation are currently the main threats on this species (E. Constantino pers. comm.). In some areas, hunting is decreasing due to local regulations and people's increased awareness of this species' rarity and conservation status. While a few Mountain Tapir populations may benefit because guerrilla presence which may relieve colonization pressure in Colombia by promoting the abandonment of conflict areas (C. Downer pers. comm.), most local biologists feel the presence of the guerrilla is having an overall negative impact on the species' conservation. Additionally, the "actors" of the armed conflicts in Colombia (army, guerrilla, and paramilitaries) see the presence of field biologists and researchers in the areas that they control as a threat for their safety (Dávalos 2001, Semple 2000). The slow reproduction rate, large home range, and generally solitary nature of Mountain Tapirs make them particularly vulnerable to destruction of habitat and fragmentation by encroaching agriculture (Downer 1997). Habitat fragmentation is caused by conversion of forests and páramos to cattle ranching and agricultural lands. Another major threat to mountain tapirs in Colombia and Peru is the development of new mining projects and illegal mining contaminating water sources.

The major threat to mountain tapirs in Colombia is human population growth in the Andean region. People settling in the region need land, consumables and services, and their activities lead to habitat destruction.

Additional threats include the development of hydroelectric dams, highways crossing protected areas, petroleum exploration, and electrical networks etc. There are numerous reports of tapir being hit by cars so infrastructure development through habitat is a potential major threat. There are numerous proposed highway and other projects in the Andes which would greatly increase vehicular mortalities. Once the construction of these highways is finalized, the vehicles will be able to drive at high speed and the animals crossing the roads will become even more vulnerable. Additionally, these roads will provide easier access to poachers, given the fact that the park lacks enough park rangers to patrol and protect

the area.
Tapir skin was used in the past for manufacture working tools (backpacks, ropes to ride horses, baskets etc.) and other things such as carpets and covers for beds. Traditional medicine makes use of tapir parts for medicinal purposes being commercialized in local markets. Also tapir parts are prescribed for medicinal purposes by shamans.

Widespread cattle introduction into the last remaining Mountain Tapir refuges is a serious problem which will likely escalate in the near future. Cattle is a serious risk of transmission of infectious diseases and other etiological agents that they may carry. Disease transmission from cattle has been documented for Mountain, Baird's and lowland tapirs in other locations. Another problem in Colombia are the fumigations being conducted in National Parks and all zones where cultivation of drugs can be found, including Andean forests in the Central and Oriental Cordilleras. These fumigations are authorized and promoted by the Colombian government, and are a major threat for the mountain tapir populations. The habitat is seriously affected and the animals can possibly be poisoned when in contact with the poison used for the fumigations (Round-Up), which is selective but can affect the availability of food resources.
In Peru, there is a lack of protected areas big enough to maintain viable populations. Also the enforcement of environmental policies is weak.
Global warming has the potential to decrease the suitable habitat available for mountain tapirs in the near future. If the temperature increases, the climatic conditions suitable for mountain tapir to occur will be shifting to higher altitudes, decreasing the capacity of the current protected areas to conserve mountain tapir habitat.

Conservation Actions **(see Appendix for additional information)**

Included on CITES Appendix I. Legal protection of the species is in place in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru (Downer 1997). In the Andes of Colombia there are 23 National Parks, of which tapirs are found in only seven (Cordillera los Picachos, Cueva de los Guacharos, Las Hermosas, Los Nevados, Nevado del Huila, Purace, and Sumapaz).

In Colombia, Complejo Volcanico Doña Juana Cascabel National Park is a new protected area in the Mountain Tapir range. *T. pinchaque* is the focal species for conservation in Los Nevados National Park, Las Hermosas National Park, Nevado del Huila National Park and Purace. The National Plan for the tapirs conservation is published by the Ministry of Environment and has become the guide for tapir conservation actions in the country.
Since 2007 The Conservation Project of the Andean Tapir in the central Andes of Ecuador PCTA and PCTACC has been conducting scientific research, environmental education, and community awareness in the buffer zone of the Llanganates and Sangay Ecological corridor and Antisana Ecological Reserve and Cayambe -Coca National Park, respectively. In southern Ecuador the seasonal variation in habitat use and diet has been evaluated primarily in the Podocarpus National Park. However, in 2014 the sampling will take place outside the protected area and will extend to areas with different levels of human disturbance. The rescue, release and subsequent monitoring of an Andean Tapir was a valuable experience that will assist the management of this species in captivity as well as future rescue operations. The action plan for the genus Tapirus in Ecuador includes goals and actions focused on mountain tapir conservation.
Peru has been creating a National plan for the conservation of tapirs. Some ecological studies are being

done in the Piura and Cajamarca regions. One Private Conservation Area, Bosques de Neblina y Páramos de Samanga, owned by Samanga community was established in the Mountain Tapir distribution. There is at least one more proposal of protected area (private and regional) that is beeing reviewed by the government.

Local NGOs and communities are working in the northern range of *T. pinchaque* distribution to conserve the ecosystem services provided by the forest and paramo. The government has categorized the Mountain Tapir as a critically endangered species.

Credits

Assessor(s): Lizcano, D.J., Amanzo, J., Castellanos, A., Tapia, A. & Lopez-Malaga, C.M.

Reviewer(s): Desbiez, A.

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External Resources

For Images and External Links to Additional Information, please see the Red List website.

Appendix

Habitats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
1. Forest -> 1.9. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Moist Montane	-	Suitable	Yes
3. Shrubland -> 3.7. Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical High Altitude	-	Suitable	Yes
4. Grassland -> 4.7. Grassland - Subtropical/Tropical High Altitude	-	Suitable	Yes
5. Wetlands (inland) -> 5.3. Wetlands (inland) - Shrub Dominated Wetlands	-	Suitable	Yes
5. Wetlands (inland) -> 5.4. Wetlands (inland) - Bogs, Marshes, Swamps, Fens, Peatlands	-	Suitable	Yes

Threats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.1. Annual & perennial non-timber crops -> 2.1.4. Scale Unknown/Unrecorded	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.2. Wood & pulp plantations -> 2.2.3. Scale Unknown/Unrecorded	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.3. Livestock farming & ranching -> 2.3.2. Small-holder grazing, ranching or farming	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
3. Energy production & mining -> 3.2. Mining & quarrying	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.3. Logging & wood harvesting -> 5.3.5. Motivation Unknown/Unrecorded	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		

Conservation Actions in Place
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management
Occur in at least one PA: Yes
In-Place Education
Included in international legislation: Yes
Subject to any international management/trade controls: Yes

Conservation Actions Needed
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Actions Needed
1. Land/water protection -> 1.1. Site/area protection
2. Land/water management -> 2.1. Site/area management
3. Species management -> 3.1. Species management -> 3.1.1. Harvest management
5. Law & policy -> 5.1. Legislation -> 5.1.4. Scale unspecified

Research Needed
(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
1. Research -> 1.3. Life history & ecology
1. Research -> 1.5. Threats
2. Conservation Planning -> 2.1. Species Action/Recovery Plan
3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Lower elevation limit (m): 1400
Population
Number of mature individuals: 2500
Continuing decline of mature individuals: Yes

Population
Population severely fragmented: No
Habitats and Ecology
Generation Length (years): 11

The IUCN Red List Partnership

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