

NOTEWORTHY RECORD OF THE KIT FOX (MAMMALIA: CANIDAE:
VULPES VELOX MACROTIS) IN VIZCAINO DESERT,
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR, MÉXICO

Sergio Ticul Alvarez-Castañeda¹

Key words: kit fox, *Vulpes velox*, Baja California Sur.

Kit foxes, identified as *Vulpes velox devia* and *V. v. tenuirostris*, have been recorded for the peninsula of Baja California (Nelson and Goldman 1909, 1931). Both subspecies are known only by the type specimens (Alvarez-Castañeda 2000). The type localities are Llano de Yrais, opposite Magdalena Island, Baja California Sur, and Trinidad Valley, northwest base of San Pedro Martir Mountains, state of Baja California, for the 2 races, respectively. Dragoo et al. (1990) and Waithman and Roest (1977) determined that these subspecies are junior synonyms of *V. m. mutica*. Herein, I report the finding of 2 additional specimens from Baja California.

On 16 February 2000, I was given 1 adult female kit fox by a local resident. He obtained it at 15 km S, 55 km W of Vizcaino, in the Biosphere Reserve of Vizcaino Desert, Baja California Sur, México (27°23'43"N, 114°03'25"W). A 2nd individual was observed 17 February 2000 near a pond at 0700 hours at 8 km S, 30 km W of Vizcaino, Baja California Sur (27°27'02"N, 113°54'14"W). These locations are 385 km northwest of Llano de Yrais in Baja California Sur and 525 km southeast of Trinidad Valley in the state of Baja California. The habitat of this area is dominated by scrub vegetation: saladilla (*Frankenia palmeri*), palo adan (*Fouquieria diguetii*), incienso (*Encelia* sp.), copalquin (*Pachycormus discolor*), and sangregado (*Euphorbia misera*). The climate is warm and dry in summer with rainfall occurring in winter; mean annual temperature is 20°C.

The skin, skull, and skeleton of the female are on deposit in the Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste (CIB 5000). Dimensions recorded (in mm) are: total length,

720; tail length, 270; hind foot length, 117; ear length, 82; total length of the skull, 111.2; basal length, 108.1; interorbital breadth, 23.2; postorbital breadth, 21.0; nasal length, 34.8; nasal breadth, 8.9; maxillary tooththrow length, 51.2; mandibular tooththrow length, 56.8. Examination of the specimen showed neither pigmented sites of implantation nor development of the nipples.

Although no formal studies of *Vulpes velox* were conducted on the peninsula of Baja California, and habitats and fauna on most of the peninsula are protected within a Biosphere Reserve, the Mexican government listed the species as threatened (Norma Oficial Mexicana 1994). I believe more research should be conducted on kit foxes to determine their status in Baja California.

I thank Leslie N. Carraway and B.J. Verts for comments on the manuscript; Victor Sánchez Sotomayor, director of the Biosphere Reserve of the Vizcaino Desert; E. Glazier for editing the English-language text; and the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (J28319-N) for financial support.

LITERATURE CITED

- ALVAREZ-CASTAÑEDA, S.T. 2000. Family Canidae. Pages 689–705 in S.T. Alvarez-Castañeda and J.L. Patton, editors, Mamíferos del Noroeste de México II. Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste.
- DRAGOO, J.W., J.R. CHOATE, T.L. YATES, AND T.P. O'FARRELL. 1990. Evolutionary and taxonomic relationships among North American arid-land foxes. *Journal of Mammalogy* 71:318–332.
- MERCURE, A., K. RALLS, K.P. KOEPLI, AND R.K. WAYNE. 1991. Genetic subdivisions among small canids: mitochondrial DNA differentiation of swift, kit and arctic foxes. *Evolution* 47:1313–1328.

¹Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste, S.C., 195 Mar Bermejo, Playa Palo Santa Rita, La Paz, Baja California Sur, 23090 México.

- NELSON, E.W., AND E.A. GOLDMAN. 1909. Eleven new mammals from Lower California. *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 23:23–28.
- _____. 1931. New carnivores and rodents from Mexico. *Journal of Mammalogy* 12:302–306.
- NORMA OFICIAL MEXICANA. 1994. Que determina las especies y subespecies de flora y fauna silvestres terrestres y acuáticas en peligro de extinción, amenazadas, raras y las sujetas a protección especial, y que establece especificaciones para su protección. NOM-059-ECOL-1994.
- WAITHMAN, J.D., AND A. ROEST. 1977. A taxonomic study of the kit fox, *Vulpes macrotis*. *Journal of Mammalogy* 58:157–164.

Received 12 May 2000
Accepted 8 November 2000