Drawn from Nature by J.W. Audubon.

On Stone by W.E. Hitchcock

The Jaguar.

Lith'd Printed & Col'd by J.T. Bowen, Philad'a

QUADRUPEDS OF NORTH AMERICA.

FELIS ONCA.—LINN.

JAGUAR.

PLATE CL.—FEMALE.

F. Supra fulva, subtus albus; corpore ocellis annularibus nigris ornato, in series subparallelis per longitudinem dispositis; ocellis, punctis nigris subcentralibus, in signitis.

CHARACTERS.

Yellow, with a white belly; body marked with open black circle-like figures, each containing one or more nearly central black dots; these black, circle-like markings disposed in nearly longitudinal parallel lines.

SYNONYMES.

- FELIS ONCA. Linn. Syst. Natur. vol. xii. p. 61; Gmel. vol. i. p. 77, pl. 4 (4 ed.).
" " Schreber, Säugth. p. 388, pl. 6.
" " Erxleben Syst. p. 513, pl. 9.
" " Zimm. Geogr. Gesch. ii. pp. 162, 268.
" " Cuv. Ann. du Mus. xiv. p. 144. 4 T. 16.
" " " Regne Animale, vol. i. p. 260. Ossements Fossiles, vol. iv. p. 417.
" " F. Cuv. Dict. Sci. Nat., vol. viii. p. 223.
" " Desm. in Nouv. Dict., vol. vi. p. 97, pl. 4.
" " " Mammal., pp. 219, 338.
" " Desmoulins, Dict. Class 3d, p. 498.
" " Temm. Monog., p. 136.
" PANTHERA. Schreber, t. 99.
" CAUDA ELONGATA. Brown's Jamaica.
TIGRIS REGIA. Briss. Regne Animale, p. 269, fig. 7.

TLATLAUHQUI OCELOTL. TIGRIS MEXICANA. Hernandez, Mex., p. 498, fig. c.

JAGUARA. Marcgr. Brazil, p. 235, fig. c.

JAGUAR. Buff. Nat. Hist., tom. ix. p. 201.

YAGOUARÉTÉ. D'Azara, vol. i. p. 114.

BRAZILIAN PANTHER. Pennant's Synopsis, pp. 127, 176.

" TIGER. Pennant's Quadrapeds, p. 286.

ONZA PINTADO. *Lusitanis*, in Bresil. Cumang *Maconis*.

FELIS JAGUAR. Hamilton Smith. Griffith's An. Kingdom, vol. v. p. 164.

" ONCA. Harlan, Fauna, p. 95.

DESCRIPTION.

The Jaguar compares with the Asiatic tiger in size and in shape; its legs, however, are shorter than those of the royal tiger, although its body is perhaps as heavy.

Head, large; jaws, capable of great expansion; incisors, large, and slightly curved inwards; ears, rather small, rounded, clothed with short hairs on the inside. Body, rather inclining to be stout, and shorter and less elegant than the cougar: at the shoulders the Jaguar is not much more raised from the earth, but it stands higher from the ground near the rump.

Feet, clothed with hair covering the retractile nails; the pads of the feet, naked; a few hairs between the toes; tail, long, and generally half elevated when walking; whiskers, few, strong, and bristly.

Hair of two kinds; the longest (which is only from four to five eighths of an inch in length) is the coarser; the shortest is a softer and finer fur, and is not very thickly distributed.

COLOUR.

Where the black markings do not prevail, the hairs are light greyish-brown at the roots and on the surface rich straw-yellow, deepest near the shoulders and back, and paler on the sides and legs; nose to near the eye nearly a uniform lightish-brown; forehead spotted with black in somewhat curved lines, the spots becoming larger towards the back of the head; whiskers black at the roots, then white for two thirds of their length to the points; lips and chin, white; a black line on the sides of the mouth; around the eye, whitish-yellow; iris, light-yellow; a black stripe between the ears on the back part of the head. There is no white patch behind the ear, as in the cougar and the wild cat.

All the black spots on the body are composed of hairs which are black from their roots; outer edge of the ear, black for half an inch in width;

a row of black spots running along the back to and beyond the root of the tail for about a foot along its upper surface; the sides of the body are marked with black rings of irregular and somewhat oval shapes, with yellow-brown centres having dots of pure black in them. These black rings are, on the edge of the back somewhat diamond shaped, with from one to three little black spots inside. Many of these circles or squares are not perfect: some are formed by several dots and curved black patches which turn inwards.

On the shoulders and the outer surfaces of the legs, these rings or squares are succeeded by black spots or patches lessening in size as they approach the claws. The hair on the under surface is dull-white from the roots, with large patches of black; belly, inner sides of legs, and throat, white, blotched or spotted with black. These patches are irregular in size, being from one eighth of an inch to two inches in extent. Tail, general colour spotted black on a yellow ground, like the outsides of the legs.

A living Jaguar from Mexico which we examined in its cage at Charleston, became very beautiful after shedding its hair in spring: the general colour of its body was bright-yellow, and the rings and spots were brilliant black.

There was another living specimen in the same collection, from Brazil, which resembled the one from Mexico in its general markings, but was larger, more clumsy, and had shorter and thicker legs. There were, however, no characters by which the species could be separated.

DIMENSIONS.

								Feet.	Inches.
From point of nose to root of tail,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1
Length of tail,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1 (?)
Height of ear,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		2 $\frac{3}{4}$
Shoulder to end of claw,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Length of largest claw,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		2
Around the wrist,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		7 $\frac{1}{2}$
“ “ chest,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
“ “ head,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Breadth between the eyes,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		3

HABITS.

Alike beautiful and ferocious, the Jaguar is of all American animals unquestionably the most to be dreaded, on account of its combined

strength, activity, and courage, which not only give it a vast physical power over other wild creatures, but enable it frequently to destroy man.

Compared with this formidable beast, the cougar need hardly be dreaded more than the wild cat; and the grizzly bear, although often quite as ready to attack man, is inferior in swiftness and stealthy cunning. To the so much feared tiger of the East he is equal in fierceness; and it is owing, perhaps, to his being nocturnal in his habits to a great extent, that he seldom issues from the deep swamps or the almost impenetrable thickets or jungles of thorny shrubs, vines, and tangled vegetation which compose the chaparals of Texas and Mexico, or the dense and untracked forests of Central and Southern America, to attack man. From his haunts in such nearly unapproachable localities, the Jaguar roams forth towards the close of the day, and during the hours of darkness seizes on his prey. During the whole night he is abroad, but is most frequently met with in moonlight and fine nights, disliking dark and rainy weather, although at the promptings of hunger he will draw near the camp of the traveller, or seek the almost wild horses or cattle of the ranchero even during daylight, with the coolest audacity.

The Jaguar has the cunning to resort to salt-licks, or the watering-places of the mustangs and other wild animals, where, concealing himself behind a bush, or mounting on to a low or sloping tree, he lies in wait until a favorable opportunity presents itself for springing on his prey. Like the cougar and the wild cat, he seeks for the peccary, the skunk, opossum, and the smaller rodentia; but is fond of attacking the larger quadrupeds, giving the preference to mustangs or horses, mules, or cattle. The colts and calves especially afford him an easy prey, and form a most important item in the grand result of his predatory expeditions.

Like the lion and tiger, he accomplishes by stealth or stratagem what could not be effected by his swiftness of foot, and does not, like the untiring wolf, pursue his prey with indomitable perseverance at top speed for hours together, although he will sneak after a man or any other prey for half a day at a time, or hang on the skirts of a party for a considerable period, watching for an opportunity of springing upon some person or animal in the train.

Col. HAYS and several other officers of the Rangers, at the time J. W. AUDUBON was at San Antonio de Bexar, in 1845, informed him that the Jaguar was most frequently found about the watering-places of the mustangs, or wild horses, and deer. It has been seen to spring upon the former, and from time to time kills one; but it is much more in the habit of attacking colts about six months old, which it masters with

great ease. Col. HAYS had killed four Jaguars during his stay in Texas. These animals are known in that country by the Americans as the "Leopard," and by the Mexicans as the "Mexican tiger." When lying in wait at or near the watering-places of deer or horses, this savage beast exhibits great patience and perseverance, remaining for hours crouched down, with head depressed, and still as death. But when some luckless animal approaches, its eyes seem to dilate, its hair bristles up, its tail is gently waved backwards and forwards, and all its powerful limbs appear to quiver with excitement. The unsuspecting creature draws near the dangerous spot; suddenly, with a tremendous leap, the Jaguar pounces on him, and with the fury of an incarnate fiend fastens upon his neck with his terrible teeth, whilst his formidable claws are struck deep into his back and flanks. The poor victim writhes and plunges with fright and pain, and makes violent efforts to shake off the foe, but in a few moments is unable longer to struggle, and yields with a last despairing cry to his fate. The Jaguar begins to devour him while yet alive, and growls and roars over his prey until his hunger is appeased. When he has finished his meal, he sometimes covers the remains of the carcass with sticks, grass, weeds, or earth, if not disturbed, so as to conceal it from other predacious animals and vultures, until he is ready for another banquet. The Jaguar often lies down to guard his prey, after devouring as much as he can. On one occasion a small party of Rangers came across one while feeding upon a mustang. The animal was surrounded by eight or ten hungry wolves, which dared not interfere or approach too near "the presence." The Rangers gave chase to the Jaguar, on which the wolves set up a howl or cry like a pack of hounds, and joined in the hunt, which ended before they had gone many yards, the Jaguar being shot down as he ran, upon which the wolves went back to the carcass of the horse and finished him.

The Jaguar has been known to follow a man for a long time. Colonel HAYS, whilst alone on a scouting expedition, was followed by one of these animals for a considerable distance. The colonel, who was aware that his footsteps were scented by the animal, having observed him on his trail a little in his rear, had proceeded a good way, and thought that the Jaguar had left, when, having entered a thicker part of the wood, he heard a stick crack, and being in an Indian country, "whirled round," expecting to face a Wakoe; but instead of a red-skin, he saw the Jaguar, about half-crouched, looking "right in his eye," and gently waving his tail. The colonel, although he wished not to discharge his gun, being in the neighborhood of Indians who might hear the report, now thought it high time to shoot, so he fired, and killed him in his tracks. "The skin," as he informed us, "was so beautiful, it was a pleasure to look at it."

These skins are very highly prized by the Mexicans, and also by the Rangers; they are used for holster coverings and as saddle cloths, and form a superb addition to the caparison of a beautiful horse, the most important animal to the occupants of the prairies of Texas, and upon which they always show to the best advantage.

In a conversation with General HOUSTON at Washington city, he informed us that he had found the Jaguar east of the San Jacinto river, and abundantly on the head waters of some of the eastern tributaries of the Rio Grande, the Guadalupe, &c.

These animals, said the general, are sometimes found associated to the number of two or more together, when they easily destroy horses and other large quadrupeds. On the head waters of the San Marco, one night, the general's people were aroused by the snorting of their horses, but on advancing into the space around could see nothing, owing to the great darkness. The horses having become quiet, the men returned to camp and lay down to rest as usual, but in the morning one of the horses was found to have been killed and eaten up entirely, except the skeleton. The horses on this occasion were hobbled and picketed; but the general thinks the Jaguar frequently catches and destroys wild ones, as well as cattle. The celebrated BOWIE caught a splendid mustang horse, on the rump of which were two extensive scars made by the claws of a Jaguar or cougar. Such instances, indeed, are not very rare.

Capt. J. P. McCOWN, U. S. A., related the following anecdote to us:—At a camp near the Rio Grande, one night, in the thick, low, level musquit country, when on an expedition after Indians, the captain had killed a beef which was brought into camp from some distance. A fire was made, part of the beef hanging on a tree near it. The horses were picketed around, the men outside forming a circular guard. After some hours of the night had passed, the captain was aroused by the soldier next him saying, "Captain, may I shoot?" and raising himself on his arm, saw a Jaguar close to the fire, between him and the beef, and near it, with one fore-foot raised, as if disturbed; it turned its head towards the captain as he ordered the soldier not to fire, lest he should hurt some one on the other side of the camp, and then, seeming to know it was discovered, but without exhibiting any sign of fear, slowly, and with the stealthy, noiseless pace and attitude of a common cat, sneaked off.

The Jaguar, in its South American range, was long since noticed for its ferocity by HUMBOLDT and others. In some remarks on the American animals of the genus *felis*, which we find in the *Memoirs of the Wernerian Nat. Hist. Society of Edinburgh*, vol. iv., part 2, p. 470, it is stated that the Jaguar, like the royal tiger of Asia, does not fly from man when it is

dared to close combat, when it is not alarmed by the great number of its assailants. The writer quotes an instance in which one of these animals had seized a horse belonging to a farm in the province of Cumana, and dragged it to a considerable distance. "The groans of the dying horse," says HUMBOLDT, "awoke the slaves of the farm, who went out armed with lances and cutlasses. The animal continued on its prey, awaited their approach with firmness, and fell only after a long and obstinate resistance." In the same article, the writer states that the Jaguar leaps into the water to attack the Indians in their canoes on the Oronoko. This animal called the Yagouarété in Paraguay if we are not mistaken, the foregoing article goes on to say, is described by gentlemen who have hunted it in that country, as a very courageous and powerful animal, of great activity, and highly dangerous when at bay. He also says: "Both this species and the puma are rendered more formidable by the facility with which they can ascend trees.

"A very beautiful Jaguar from Paraguay was some time ago carried alive to Liverpool. When the animal arrived, it was in full health, and though not fully grown was of a very formidable size and strength. The captain who brought it could venture to play with it, as it lay on one of the boats on deck, to which it was chained; but it had been familiarized to him from the time it was the size of a small dog."

In Griffith's Cuvier, vol. ii. p. 457, it is stated in a quotation from D'Azara, that the Jaguar is reported to "stand in the water out of the stream, and drop its saliva, which, floating on the surface, draws the fish after it within reach, when it seizes them with the paw, and throws them ashore for food." At the same page, it is said, "The Jaguar is hunted with a number of dogs, which, although they have no chance of destroying it themselves, drive the animal into a tree, provided it can find one a little inclining, or else into some hole. In the first case the hunters kill it with fire-arms or lances; and in the second, some of the natives are occasionally found hardy enough to approach it with the left arm covered with a sheep-skin, and to spear it with the other—a temerity which is frequently followed with fatal consequences to the hunter."

The Jaguars we examined in a menagerie at Charleston had periodical fits of bad temper: one of them severely bit his keeper, and was ready to give battle either to the Asiatic tiger or the lion, which were kept in separate cages.

We add some extracts, with which we hope our readers will be interested:

"In the province of Tucuman, the common mode of killing the Jaguar is to trace him to his lair by the wool left on the bushes, if he has carried

off a sheep, or by means of a dog trained for the purpose. On finding the enemy, the gaucho puts himself into a position for receiving him on the point of a bayonet or spear at the first spring which he makes, and thus waits until the dogs drive him out—an exploit which he performs with such coolness and dexterity that there is scarcely an instance of failure. In a recent instance related by our capitaz, the business was not so quickly completed. The animal lay stretched at full length on the ground, like a gorged cat. Instead of showing anger and attacking his enemies with fury, he was playful, and disposed rather to parley with the dogs with good humour than to take their attack in sober earnestness. He was now fired upon, and a ball lodged in his shoulders, on which he sprang so quickly on his watching assailant that he not only buried the bayonet in his body, but tumbled over the capitaz who held it, and they floundered on the ground together, the man being completely in his clutches. ‘I thought,’ said the brave fellow, ‘I was no longer a capitaz, while I held my arm up to protect my throat, which the animal seemed in the act of seizing; but when I expected to feel his fangs in my flesh, the green fire of his eyes which blazed upon me flashed out in a moment. He fell on me, and expired at the very instant I thought myself lost for ever.’”—*Captain Andrews’s Travels in South America*, vol. i. p. 219.

“Two Indian children, a boy and girl eight or nine years of age, were sitting among the grass near the village of Atures, in the midst of a savannah. It was two in the afternoon when a Jaguar issued from the forest and approached the children, gambolling around them, sometimes concealing himself among the long grass, and again springing forward, with his back curved and his head lowered, as is usual with our cats. The little boy was unaware of the danger in which he was placed, and became sensible of it only when the Jaguar struck him on the head with one of his paws. The blows thus inflicted were at first slight, but gradually became ruder. The claws of the Jaguar wounded the child, and blood flowed with violence. The little girl then took up a branch of a tree, and struck the animal, which fled before her. The Indians, hearing the cries of the children, ran up and saw the Jaguar, which bounded off without showing any disposition to defend itself.”—*Humboldt’s Travels and Researches, &c.*, Edinburgh, 1833, p. 245.

HUMBOLDT speculates on this cat-like treatment of the children, and we think it very likely that occasionally the Jaguar plays in a similar manner with its prey, although we have not witnessed it, nor heard of any authentic case of the kind.

D’AZARA says (vol. i. p. 116) that the black Jaguar is so rare that in forty years only two had been killed on the head waters of the river

Parana. The man who killed one of these assured him that it did not differ from the Jaguar (Yagouarété), except that it was black, marked with still blacker spots, like those of the common Jaguar.

The Jaguar generally goes singly, but is sometimes accompanied by his favourite female. The latter brings forth two young at a time, the hair of which is rougher and not so beautiful as in the adult. She guides them as soon as they are able to follow, and supplies and protects them, not hesitating to encounter any danger in their defence.

The Jaguar, according to D'AZARA, can easily drag away a horse or an ox; and should another be fastened or yoked to the one he kills, the powerful beast drags both off together, notwithstanding the resistance of the terrified living one. He does not conceal the residue of his prey after feeding: this may be because of the abundance of animals in his South American haunts. He hunts in the stealthy manner of a cat after a rat, and his leap upon his prey is a very sudden, quick spring: he does not move rapidly when retreating or running. It is said that if he finds a party of sleeping travellers at night, he advances into their midst, and first kills the dog, if there is one, next the negro, and then the Indian, only attacking the Spaniard after he has made this selection; but generally he seizes the dog and the meat, even when the latter is broiling on the fire, without injuring the men, unless he is attacked or is remarkably hungry, or unless he has been accustomed to eat human flesh, in which case he prefers it to every other kind. D'AZARA says very coolly, "Since I have been here the Yagouarétés (Jaguars) have eaten six men, two of whom were seized by them whilst warming themselves by a fire." If a small party of men or a herd of animals pass within gunshot of a Jaguar, the beast attacks the last one of them with a loud roar.

During the night, and especially in the love season, he frequently roars, uttering in a continued manner, *pou, pou, pou*.

It is said that when the Spaniards settled the country from Montevideo to Santa-Fé de Vera Cruz, so many Jaguars were found that two thousand were killed annually, but their numbers have been greatly diminished (D'AZARA, vol. i. p. 124). We have no positive information as to the present average annually killed, but presume it not to exceed one tenth the above number.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

This species is known to exist in Texas, and in a few localities is not very rare, although it is far from being abundant throughout the state. It is found on the head waters of the Rio Grande, and also on the Nueces.

Towards the west and southwest it extends to the mountainous country beyond El Paso. HARLAN speaks of its being occasionally seen east of the Mississippi. This we think somewhat doubtful. It inhabits Mexico and is frequently met with in almost every part of Central America. HUMBOLDT mentions having heard its constant nightly screams on the banks of the Orinoco. It is known to inhabit Paraguay and the Brazils, and may be regarded as the tiger of all the warmer parts of America, producing nearly as much terror in the minds of the feeble natives as does its congener, the royal tiger, in the East. It is not found in Oregon, and we have not met with any account of it as existing in California.

GENERAL REMARKS.

BUFFON, in describing the habits of the Jaguar, appears to have received his accounts of the timidity of this species from those who referred to the Ocelot, which is generally admitted to be a timid animal. He erroneously supposed that when full grown it did not exceed the size of an ordinary dog, in which he egregiously underrated its dimensions. It is certainly a third heavier than the Cougar, and is not only a more powerful, but a far more ferocious animal. This species exhibits some varieties, one of which, the black Jaguar, is so peculiar that it has been conjectured that it might be entitled to a distinct specific name. The exceeding rarity, however, of the animal, and the variations to which nearly all the species of this genus are subject, induce us to set it down as merely a variety. It must be observed that it is rare to find two specimens of uniform colour; indeed the markings on each side of the same animal are seldom alike. BUFFON (vol. v. p. 196, pl. 117-119) has given three figures of the Jaguar, the first and third of which we consider as the Ocelot, and the second as probably the Panther (*F. Pardus*) of the eastern continent. HAMILTON SMITH, in GRIFFITH'S CUVIER (vol. ii. pp. 455, 456), has given us two figures of this species, differing considerably in colour and markings: the former is very characteristic. He has named this species *Felis Jaguar*, which is inadmissible. There is some resemblance in this species to the panther (*F. Pardus*), as also to the leopard (*F. Leopardus*) of Africa, but they are now so well described as distinct species that it is scarcely necessary to point out the distinctive marks of each. BUFFON'S panthère femelle, pl. 12, and SHAW'S, Gen. Zool., Part I., pl. 84, evidently are figures of our Jaguar.

Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1854. "Felis onca, Jaguar [Pl. CI, female]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 3, 1–10.

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