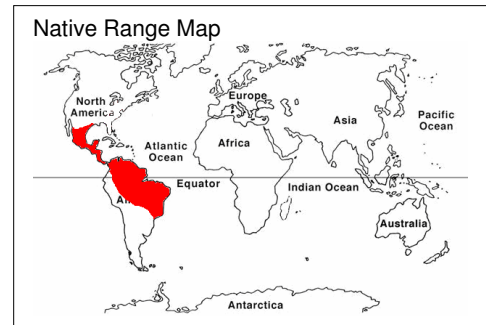


Collared Peccary



Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Tayassuidae
Genus: *Tayassu*
Species: *T. tajacu*



Status

- The collared peccary has extended its range since the time of the early European explorers. It is currently classified as a game animal in southwestern US where it is subject to regulated sport hunting. In Central and South America the clearing of forests for crops and pasture has reduced its habitat.

Natural Habitat

- Collared peccaries live in a wide variety of habitats, including the tropical rain forest, dry scrub areas, oak forests and saguaro deserts. In the dryer areas, they frequent water holes. In the tropics they stay near running streams.

Features

- Although they are not closely related to pigs a peccary's body is somewhat pig-like, with a large head and snout and a bristled coat, usually dark gray, with a whitish collar on the neck. They have poor vision, fair hearing, but a keen sense of smell. Peccaries reach a length of 20-24 inches and can weigh 40-50 lbs.

Behaviors

- Peccaries are gregarious, living in groups of 2 to 50 individuals of all ages and sexes. A musk gland located above its tail is used to mark territory and a gland below the eyes to identify group members. Boisterous play and mutual grooming and scratching with snouts often occurs at the start of a day. Collared peccaries have a number of vocalizations to maintain contact between group members, signal aggression, and indicate alarm. Jaguars and puma are the main predators of adults, while bobcat and coyotes hunt young animals.

Diet

- Mainly vegetarian, feeding on cactus fruit, berries, roots, bulbs, nuts and grass.

Reproduction and Development...

- Young are born after a gestation period of about 145 days and can be born at any time of the year (in southwestern US usually in the summer). The female leaves the group to give birth to her litter of 1 to 4 (usually 2) young. If the litter is lost, the female may quickly mate again and bear a second litter. The young, who are reddish-brown with a blackish stripe on the back, can run about within a few hours of birth, and, with their mother, rejoin the herd when they are about one day old. They will nurse for from 6-8 weeks and may stay with their mother for another month. Sexual maturity occurs at 11 months for males and 8 to 9 months for females. Most males in the wild are no longer fertile by age 7.

Sources:

- MacDonald, D., PhD. Encyclopedia of Mammals. Facts on File Publishers. 1984.

- Walker, E.P. Walker's Mammals of the World. 4th Ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.