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Dr. Ronaldo Gonçalves Morato

CENAP /ICMBio Coordinator

Our purpose in this document is to inform the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) our support for the new taxonomic classification for the Pampas cat complex *L. colocola*, proposed by Nascimento et al. (2020). The study titled “Taxonomic revision of the pampas cat *Leopardus colocola* complex (Carnivora: Felidae): an integrative approach” (<https://doi.org/10.1093/zoolinnean/zlaa043>), and published on the *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*, suggests splitting the complex into five species, two of which are found in Brazil: *L. braccatus* in the Central and Northeast regions, on the Pantanal and Cerrado biomes, and *L. munoai* on Southern Brazil, in the Pampa.

The evolutionary history of the *L. colocola* complex has been acknowledged to be highly complex, which explains why there have been several taxonomic proposals. Genetic research has already shown differentiation between populations across the geographic range of the complex, with the recognition of Evolutionarily Significant Units (Johnson et al. 1999, Santos et al. 2018). Nevertheless, the recognition of these units as valid species was still under discussion among researchers. Nascimento et al. (2020) study included integrative analyses with morphology, genetics, and natural history of these units, and such analyses provide general support to the existence of different groups.

Despite the fact that some issues regarding the Pampas cat complex’ evolutionary history are still under debate, we believe the evidence presented by the authors supports the recognition of *L. colocola* units as separate species, under the currently accepted species concepts. We believe that it is extremely important that the recognition of these units as different species happens as quickly as possible, considering the urgent need for specific conservation actions for each unit. This is especially true for the population of Southern Brazil (now treated as *L. munoai*), which is highly threatened. Researchers in that part of the country believe the species is under high threat of extinction and agree that formal species status will be important for the establishment of effective conservation measures.

Lastly, due to the fact that the last threat assessment of Brazilian carnivores, in October 2018, assessed the complex as a single species, we urgently call for a new threat assessment for each population as separate species, *Leopardus braccatus* and *Leopardus munoai*. Ecological data is

already available for both species, so it is possible to conduct separate assessments for each. We highlight the new taxonomy proposed for the complex is already in use by other institutions such as the “Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation” and the *Sociedade Brasileira de Mastozoologia* (Brazilian Mammalogy Society), with the updated checklist of Brazilian mammals including both proposed species (<https://www.sbmz.org/mamiferos-do-brasil/>).

We conclude this letter by an urgent call for an assessment of the extinction risk of both species, seeking adequate conservation measures. We suggest that, in light of the new taxonomy, the species *L. colocola* be classified as Not Applicable (NA), since it no longer occurs in Brazil.

This is what us, cat-specialists recommend.

Eduardo Eizirik

Flávia P. Tirelli

Tadeu G. de Oliveira

Tatiane C. Trigo



Flávia P. Tirelli

