

Ocelot



The ocelot is a small wild cat species, also called the dwarf leopard.

Ocelots can grow as long as 3-4.75 feet from tip of nose to tip of tail.

Ocelots can weigh anywhere from 20 - 40 pounds.

Ocelots are the cutest animal.

Ocelots rely on thick vegetation for shelter and hunting.

The species is native to large swaths of South America, Central America, and up into North America as far as southern Texas.

I would love to see an Ocelot.

Between habitat loss and being hunted for their fur, ocelot numbers plummeted and they were classified as vulnerable on the endangered species list until 1996.

There is only an isolated population of perhaps 50 cats still living in Texas.

Collared Peccary



This adorable mammal is not a feral pig, even though it looks like one.

They are more slender and smaller than pigs, and have several anatomical differences.

Peccaries are native to the Americas, and the collared peccary is found in South America, Central America and in North America.

Collared peccaries are omnivores and dine on everything from cactus to fruits, from roots and tubers to insects and even small vertebrates.

They look like they are clean animals.

They travel in small herds of around six to 10 individuals.

These animals are cuter than feral pigs.

Flying Squirrel



There are lots of species of flying squirrel!

There are 44 species of flying squirrel.

Two of those species, the northern flying squirrel and southern flying squirrel are found in the U.S.

They are the only two native flying squirrel species and they are equally adorable.

Flying squirrels are nocturnal, this means that they sleep during the day and are awake at night.

That's probably why so many people are surprised to learn that they are native to the States.

Flying squirrels don't actually fly but they spread the extra skin along the sides of their bodies as they leap from tree to tree to extend the length of their leap.

This strategy works wonderfully.

They can glide a distance of up to 150 feet.

Information sheet

Gulf Coast jaguarundi



The ocelot isn't the only surprising wild cat species found in the United States. Have you ever heard of the Gulf Coast jaguarundi? Not many people know that this species exists, let alone that it can be found in the U.S.

The Gulf Coast jaguarundi is one of four subspecies of jaguarundi, all of which are endangered. This is perhaps one of the more unusual-looking of the cat species, and it has been compared to an otter in its build because of its short legs, long body, and long flat tail, as well as its flat-ish head and small rounded ears. The coat colour ranges from a rusty brown color to a dark grey, and varies depending on its preferred habitat – those individuals that live in more densely forested areas tend to be darker in color than those living in more open areas. This species is found in southern Texas down through to eastern Mexico.

Though it is endangered due primarily to habitat loss, the Gulf Coast jaguarundi is rarely studied and is not well understood. It is known, however, to be a close relative of the cougar. It is one of the many species whose continued existence is threatened by the proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Coati



This unusual species looks like a member of the raccoon family along with the ringtail. Though you may think it is found only in Central or South America, it is also a resident of southwestern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico and parts of Texas.

The coati is about the size of a large house cat. They have a long ringed tail which helps keep the troop members together even in tall vegetation.

The coati's long nose ends with a bit of an up-turn, which is why it has the nickname of the hog-nosed raccoon. These animals are strong climbers, clever and inquisitive. Overall, the coati is such a fascinating species.

Luna moth



This lime-green moth grows up to 4.5 inches across. You might expect its home to be in the tropical rainforests of the Amazon, but it isn't. It is found east of the Great Plains from northern Mexico up to Nova Scotia. It is also one of the largest moths on the continent.

They only live for about seven days once reaching adulthood because they have no mouths and can't eat.

One fascinating fact about the luna moth is that their long, slightly curled tails help them throw off bats, reducing their risk of being caught by a bat for dinner. After experimenting with a couple hundred unlucky moths, researchers found that moths without tails were nearly nine times more likely to get snagged by a bat than one with the frills such as the luna moth displays. Luna moth's wings are so beautiful. Their wings are all about survival, and they are designed for sound rather than for looks.