

Distribution, deforestation threat and conservation on *Pudu mephistophiles* in Peru

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The Northern Pudu (*Pudu mephistophiles* De Winton 1896) occurs along the northern Andes, from the Central Cordillera of the Colombian Andes to the central eastern Andes of Peru. The overall distribution is split with two populations separated geographically. One population distributes throughout the southern portion of the central Andes of Colombia to the south of the Ecuadorian Andes. The second population is cut off from the first one, and occurs along the central part of the eastern side of the Peruvian Andes, Unpublished records from Peru in the last 25 years show that the northern population distributes farther to the south and the southern population farther to the north. The current known gap between populations is located at the East side of the North Peru Low or Huancabamba Depression, a barrier of low altitude and drier environments along the Huancabamba and Marañón Rivers.

The distribution of the species in Peru overlaps with the area with the largest deforestation of montane and cloud forests in this country. The small area occupied by the northern population in Peru is heavily degraded and deforested, and it is shared with the Ecuadorian dwarf brocket *Mazama rufina*. This northern population endures the largest threat from deforestation, as very few continuous cloud forest and paramo persist in that area.

The southern population of the northern pudu occurs along the northern and central part of the eastern face of the Peruvian Andes. This Peruvian population is protected in some conservation areas, and new ones are being created over its range. However, deforestation has not stopped, and the threat is continuous throughout the Peruvian population distribution. Moreover, the southern or Peruvian population of the species might correspond to a different taxon, at least at subspecies level, increasing the conservation concerns on it.

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