



Learning on the Edge

Spotlight on a Species

Fact sheets discussing species found on the Nueces Delta Preserve

Collared Peccary



Fast Facts:

Scientific name:

Tayassu tajacu

Common names: *javelina, collared peccary, musk hog*

Habitat: *large variety, from Texas to Argentina*

Fun fact: *Mainly eat cactus*

The collared peccary, more commonly known as the javelina, is a mammal that lives in arid habitats in South Texas and throughout Mexico and South America. It is often believed that javelinas are a type of pig or hog, but they are in different taxonomic families. They are in the peccary family and there are 3 species of peccary in the Americas.

Javelina

- Three toes on the hind foot
- Bones are fused in the foot
- Ulna and radius are fused
- 38 teeth
- Canine teeth are straight
- Have scent glands
- Have complex stomach
- Lack a gall bladder
- Have a short tail
- Lack sweat glands

Pigs

- Four toes on the hind foot
- Bones in the foot are not fused
- Ulna and radius are not fused
- 34 or 44 teeth
- Canine teeth are curved
- Lack scent glands
- Have simple stomach
- Have a gall bladder
- Have a long tail
- Have sweat glands

Javelinas travel in herds of 5-30 animals. They are omnivores and over half their diet consists of prickly pear cactus. Javelinas are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk. Although they have a reputation of being aggressive they rarely attack humans. They are known for attacking dogs, which resemble their natural prey-coyotes. Since they have poor eyesight humans are sometimes able to get close to a herd which become alarmed but are more likely to scatter than attack.

Sources for Further Reading:

<http://www.nps.gov/bibe/naturescience/javelina.htm>

<http://bss.sfsu.edu/holzman/courses/Fall99Projects/peccary.htm>

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_w7000_1669.pdf

<http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/5803/etd-tamu-2006A-WISC-Porter.pdf?sequence=1>