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New Species Of Conoryctella (Mammalia: Taeniodonta From The Paleocene Of The San Juan Basin, New Mexico, And A Revision Of The Genus)

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A New Species of Conoryctella (Mammalia: Taeniodonta) from the Paleocene of the San Juan Basin, New Mexico, and a Revision of the Genus

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Abstract

Specimens from Paleocene strata of the Nacimiento Formation in Kutz Canyon, San Juan Basin, New Mexico, add to our knowledge of the poorly known taeniodont genus *Conoryctella* Gazin, 1939 and provide evidence for its taxonomic revision. *C. dragonensis* Gazin, 1939 is only known with certainty from its type specimen from the Dragon local fauna, North Horn Formation in east-central Utah, although a poorly preserved maxillary fragment, and canine of uncertain provenance from the San Juan Basin, New Mexico, may pertain to this taxon. *C. pattersoni*, new species, differs from *C. dragonensis* in its smaller size, less molariform P^3 and relatively narrow upper molars. It is known from dental remains from the Dragon local fauna previously referred to *C. dragonensis* by Gazin (1939, 1941), dental remains from Torrejanian strata in Kutz Canyon referred by Wilson (1956, p. 62) to "conoryctine, n. gen. and sp.", and newly discovered dental and postcranial remains from a horizon in Kutz Canyon that, based on magnetostratigraphy (Tomida and Butler, 1980), is temporally equivalent to the Dragon local fauna. The occurrences of *Conoryctella* in the San Juan Basin extend the geographic range of the genus and also extend its time-stratigraphic range into a typical Torrejanian horizon. These extensions further reduce the distinctiveness of the Dragon local fauna, supporting recent arguments that the Dragon local fauna should be considered early Torrejanian in age.

Key Words

Conoryctella, *Taeniodonta*, *Dragonian*, *Torrejanian*, fossil mammal, San Juan Basin.

Introduction

In 1977 one of us (SGL) collected a taeniodont palate, right dentary and parts of two ulnae from Paleocene strata of the Nacimiento Formation in Kutz Canyon, San Juan Basin, New Mexico. This specimen, and three fragmentary University of Kansas specimens from Kutz Canyon reported by Wilson (1956) as "conoryctine, n. gen. and sp." represent a new species of *Conoryctella* Gazin, 1939 described here. Not only do these new specimens help to better define the poorly known genus *Conoryctella*, but they also are the first occurrence of the genus outside of its type locality in the Dragon local fauna of the North Horn Formation in east-central Utah. This occurrence thus aids in the correlation of the Dragon local fauna with the Paleocene

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