

## **OAXACAN SWALLOWTAIL** *(Papilio esperanza)*

The Oaxacan swallowtail is one of Mexico's rarest butterflies. It is known only from one small area in the cloud forest of Oaxaca, Mexico, and is vulnerable to over collection.

### **Status**

This swallowtail is listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN because of its severely restricted range.

### **Description**

This medium sized, black, yellow and orange swallowtail was first described in 1975.

### **Natural history**

Little is known about the life history of this butterfly.

### **Distribution**

The Oaxacan swallowtail is only found in the montane cloud forests in northern Oaxaca, between 1400 and 2500 meters above sea level.

### **Threats**

This species is at risk because of its very limited geographic range and potential destruction of its limited cloud forest habitat. However, the biggest current threat is over collection. The best known site, which happens to be close to a road, has seen a decrease in population because of poaching (according to Tyler, et al., 1994 – see references below).

### **Conservation**

Inclusion of this species on the Federal Endangered Species List would regulate its transport into the U.S. and thus help reduce the market for pinned specimens.

### **References**

- Collins, N. Mark and Michael G. Morris (1985) *Threatened Swallowtail Butterflies of the World: The IUCN Red Data Book*. IUCN, Cambridge, U.K. 401 pp. (see pp. 299 to 300).
- Tyler, Hamilton, Keith S. Brown, Jr. and Kent Wilson (1994) *Swallowtail Butterflies of the Americas*. Scientific Publishers, Inc. Gainesville, Florida. 376 pp. (see pp. 184).

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