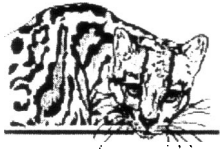


ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION FEDERATION, INC.



**The Amur Leopard is one of three
endangered leopard subspecies housed at
Sierra Endangered Cat Haven.
(See story, page 10)**



LIOC

Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc.

This Newsletter is published bimonthly by the LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc. We are a nonprofit (Federal I.D. 59-2048618) noncommercial organization with international membership, devoted to the welfare of exotic felines. The purpose of this newsletter is to present information about exotic feline conservation, management and ownership to our members. The material printed in this newsletter is contributed by our members and reflects the point of view of the author but does not necessarily represent the point of view of the organization. LIOC ESCF, Inc.'s Statement of Intent is contained in our bylaws, a copy of which can be requested from the Secretary. Reproduction of the material in this newsletter may not be made without

the written permission of the original copyright owners and/or copyright owner LIOC. Since the Newsletter consists primarily of articles, studies, photographs and artwork contributed by our members, we encourage all members to submit material whenever possible. Articles concerning exotic felines are preferred and gladly accepted. Articles involving other related subjects will also be considered. Letters and responses to articles may be included in the Readers Write column. Deadline for the next issue is the first of even numbered months. Please submit all material to the Editor. Persons interested in joining LIOC should contact the Term Director in charge of Member Services.

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There are two means of refuge from
 the miseries of life: music and cats.
 -Albert Schweitzer



A Special Thank You to

- Christine Bongiorno**
- Kelly Jean Buckley**
- John Lussmyer**
- Herald Maxwell**
- Becky McCane**
- Alan Shoemaker**
- Dawn Simas**
- Shirley Wagner**

for contributions to this newsletter. This is YOUR newsletter. ALL contributions—new or old, long or short, technical or humorous, personal story, article, or advertisement—are welcome and needed. I'll be happy to assist with writing and/or editing. Calls, emails, or faxes are welcome.

Marge Maxwell, Editor

All ads in this publication are void where prohibited by law. All transactions are between buyer and seller. All buyers and sellers must have proper licenses and permits for all animals offered for sale or sold. LIOC-ESCF, Inc. does not necessarily endorse or guarantee the honesty of any advertiser. LIOC-ESCF, Inc. reserves the right to edit or reject any subscription or ad. No blind animal ads will be accepted. Only LIOC members may place ads listing cats for sale. Adoption ads are free of charge for cats that need good homes and no money is involved in the transaction. All ads must contain the name of business or individual. Ads must state whether the individual is a private owner or broker. Full current address with a phone number must be stated in the ad.

Ad rates for submitted photo ready ads:

1 column inch	\$10.00
1/4 page	\$25.00
1/2 page	\$50.00
Full page	\$100.00
Back page	\$125.00

Visit Our Website!
<http://www.lioc.org>

Informational contributions may be sent to George Stowers, Vice President. Email: gstowers@twcny.rr.com . Please send computer readable text files. (Email is great, will accept ASCII text files on disk. See page 2 for address.)

LIOC Convention

Raleigh, North Carolina

August 9-13, 2000

Register for the 2000 LIOC Convention
by June 1, 2000.

Please send \$85.00 registration to:

LIOC-ESCF, Inc.,
PO Box 22085,
Phoenix, AZ 85028

(Please send your choice of chicken or beef
for the Saturday night banquet.)

We are in the process of selecting a hotel for the LIOC convention. The location will be announced in an upcoming newsletter. There are a number of wonderful guest speakers scheduled. We will take a full day trip to visit Carnivore Preservation Trust and the Museum of Life and Science. Carnivore Preservation Trust (CPT) holds approximately 260 rare and endangered animals at a 60-acre facility located in North Carolina. The felines include 37 ocelots, 50 caracals, 52 servals, 24 tigers, 3 clouded leopards, 2 snow leopards, and 2 jaguars. CPT's aim is to achieve the preservation of viable populations of mammalian species that are essential to the survival of threatened rain forest ecosystems. Following lunch at CPT, we will travel to the Museum of Life and Science. The Museum is located on 70 acres with an interactive science-technology center, including aerospace artifacts, native live wildlife exhibits, a 17,000 square foot three-story Butterfly House/Insectarium featuring more than 1,000 butterflies in free flight, and the park offers train rides through the park.

Wild Feline Husbandry Course

On August 9, 2000, an eight-hour Wild Feline Husbandry Training Course will be held to provide students with the knowledge required to practice responsible captive husbandry of wild felines. This course is suitable for both novices and "Old Hands" who want to improve their level of knowledge. Topics to be covered include the following:

- Natural History of Wild Felines
- Health Care
- Conservation & Regulatory Agencies
- Disposition & Handling
- Permits
- Behavior Conditioning
- Facility Design
- Handling Equipment
- Contingency Planning
- Nutrition

Register for the Wild Feline Husbandry Course by June 1, 2000.

Please send \$50.00 tuition to:

LIOC-ESCF, Inc.,
PO Box 22085,
Phoenix, AZ 85028

For information, contact George Stowers
at gstowers@twcnny.rr.com or
315-342-4997

**The cat has too much spirit
to have no heart.**

**Dogs believe they are human.
Cats believe they are god.**

LIOC Has Its Own List

LIOC now has it's own internet community list. This service is available to all current LIOC members at no charge and will enable those with internet access to communicate with other LIOC members on relavent (cat related) topics. If you are looking for a cat or need to place yours, this is the way to go. Have a problem or question? Post it to the list and plug into LIOC members' years of experience.

To register, go to: <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/LIOC>. Enter your full name as it appears on LIOC's roster and membership number. IF you have lost your membership card, your number appears on the mailing label of your newsletter.

Our thanks to Linda Covell for being the workhorse on this project. Though many board members are on the oversite committee, Linda is tending to the day-to-day chores of maintaining this list.

Hope to see you soon on the list.

LIOC Legend Passes On

On January 25th, LIOC Life Director JB Anderson bid farewell to his friend of 16 years, Pepe' LePhew. Pepe' was a black jaguar of gigantic proportions - close to 300 lbs. He was the model for many famed artists rendering of this magificent species and we all marvelled at the photos that JB & Reva shared with us each year at convention. It was amazing to see a gigantic black jaguar cavorting in a lake, revelling in play with his humans. Pepe' had been being treated for arthritis which was presumed due to his age and size when his health began failing. A necropsy will be performed and the results shared with us at a later date.

Adopt a Cat

Hi All,

As a few of you may know, I teach Ecology for the University of Kentucky's Lexington Community College (Go Cats!!!!) Every semester I give my students many opportunities to accumulate a certain amount of points by doing various environmental activities. On my list is "Adopt an Endangered Species." I usually give them a few forms from different organizations that I KNOW are good places to send their money. Being college students, they will usually opt for the cheapest animal to adopt. Since I have a passion for cats, especially tigers, I thought I would let 2 or 3 of them pool their money to adopt a big cat if they wanted to go that route. What I need from you is web addresses to your facilities to have on hand for them in case they want to adopt one of your cats. Incidentally, last semester the Florida Panther Society was totally bombarded by adoption money from my students. ;-) I just thought I would also let them know about you. You can email me privately with your web addresses if you would like.

Thanks,

Becky McCane

Email: rmcca2@pop.ky.uky.edu

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to LIOC's Vice President, George Stowers, on the loss of his mother. Moms contriute so much to the people we become. George's must have been a very special lady. Our condolences to George and his family during this sad time.

Finding a Veterinarian for You and Your Exotic Cat

by Christine Bongiorno, DVM

Choosing a veterinarian for your animal - be it a domesticated creature, such as a horse or a dog, or an exotic critter, like a lizard or a cougar - is an important process. You must keep in mind that is a choice that you have control over making. As with any relationship between two people, there can be personality issues. You need to trust this person with the life of your animal, who is often like a member of the family. At the same time, your veterinarian needs to know that he/she will be able to get accurate information from you and that you will follow their instructions. It is a two-way street and will only work when both people are working together. There are a number of key points to consider when choosing a veterinarian. These will be discussed but in no particular order. The order of importance will vary with each person and situation. You need to ask yourself and your potential veterinarian a series of questions. In many ways, it is like an interview. As stated earlier, it is a relationship between two or more people. Because of this, you need to feel comfortable with this person. You need to know that you can bring up any issues or questions you have to this person and that they will answer them honestly - this includes an "I don't know but will research that for you" from the veterinarian. Their job is to be open and honest with you, but it is also your job.

There are varying levels of experience out there. New graduates may not have hands on experience but do have a lot of the newest information and

techniques. In the world of exotic felids, some experience would be preferable, but this may be hard to find. Consider that everyone has to start somewhere. There are some very passionate people out there who truly love and want to help exotic felids but have not done much with them - they, too, have to start somewhere. The best situation for these people would be to work with someone with more experience. You could gain the best of both worlds if you could find people like this. You may also find that they know more about one particular species of felid. They should be willing to research for you and also to learn from you. A good veterinarian realizes that they can also learn from their clients, especially those with years of hands-on experience.

What are the normal business hours of the practice where the veterinarian works (if he/she is not a primarily exotic animal doctor)? This can be important both from the standpoint of you bringing your animal in, as well as their availability to come out to your residence. You also need to find out if they are willing to make house calls. Of course, in large and exotic animal medicine, this is usually a necessity. The other thing to find out is what will happen should they get called out of town or go on vacation. Is there a back-up person or relief veterinarian that you would or could feel comfortable with? If so, it would be best to meet this person before you NEED to.

Problems have a way of arising at the most inopportune time for animal owners. This includes all hours of pre-dawn and the weekends. What is your veterinarian's availability during these

times? Is he/she on call? If not, what options do you have? You need to sit down and discuss this with them BEFORE an emergency arises.

Animals have a wide variety of temperaments, so it may be difficult, even impossible, in some situations to examine, medicate or treat an animal safely. You should ask your veterinarian if they have remote injection equipment (blow darts, compressed air guns, etc.) and have experience using it. Remember that the safety of the patient, you and the doctor must be taken into account.

If the veterinarian practices out of an office as well, what diagnostic and treatment capabilities do they have on site? Many practices now have in house laboratories, where blood work can be done within the hour. This allows for much quicker diagnosing and thus, more timely treatment for the animal. If they do not have this, most laboratories can get the blood work and tissue sample results back in a number of days. They usually have radiography (x-ray) equipment and processing and many times, ultrasonography is also available. Most large animal veterinarians have portable x-ray machines and some have portable ultrasound units. Find out so that you know whether or not a major problem would involve a trip for you and the cat into the clinic or if it can be handled at home.

The location of the hospital (and thus distance from your home) may not seem like much of an issue if you are seeing your veterinarian primarily via house calls. However, keep in mind that there may come a time when your cat needs surgery or a procedure performed that cannot or should not be done in the field.

There is a never-ending explosion of new information in the veterinary field.

There are new drugs, diagnostics and treatments made available or discovered all the time. In the world of exotic animals, there is increasingly more information known about basic husbandry, behavior and physiology as well. The important question here is whether or not your veterinarian avails him/herself to continuing education opportunities and if so, what focus do they have? Any good veterinarian, no matter what their specialty is, realizes that to offer their patients the best care, they have to read journals and attend seminars to keep current with discoveries or trends.

As you can see, there are a lot of points to bring up when you call or visit someone you are considering hiring to be your cat's doctor. Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you feel uncomfortable with an answer or with the person, then they are not the right one for you or your cat. Two-way communication lines must be open at all times. You want someone who is not only well versed in felid care, but also willing and enthusiastic about going the extra mile for the special cats in your life.



Four year old Puma boating in San Juan Islands with LIOC member, Evan McCallister. At home Puma has an 800 sq.ft. indoor/outdoor enclosure. Evan makes his cougar harnesses.

LIOC ADOPTS BIG CAT GUIDELINES

With the abundance of big cats represented in LIOC's membership and the easy availability of these large predators, it was asked that the Board of Directors draft a statement explaining our organization's position on ownership of these magnificent felines. A draft of this statement was presented to the membership at the 1999 convention. The board particularly wanted the input of those caring for the large cats, many of whom acquired them as their first exotic. The vast majority of those present were in favor of the sentiment contained in the

draft but felt some fine-tuning in wording was needed. A committee was formed to accomplish this. It must be recognized that while LIOC promotes responsible captive husbandry of wild/exotic felines, we also believe that just as captive husbandry of a wild/exotic feline is not for everyone, not every specie is appropriate for every potential owner. We all know that caring for an exotic requires more dedication and effort if it is done properly than one expects of a typical "pet." To clarify this the board has adopted the following Big Cat Guidelines.

LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc. Big Cat Guidelines

LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc. (LIOC) supports responsible ownership of all 38 currently recognized species of non-domestic feline, in keeping with sound animal husbandry practices and federal, state and local government regulations. Successful management of these wild animals and its inherent risk to the public, owners, handlers and cats, necessitates strong motivation and plentiful resources, both financial and emotional. These requirements increase proportionately to the size of the cat. Accordingly, LIOC neither recommends nor encourages inexperienced individuals' acquisition of species which can achieve or exceed an adult weight of 100 lbs. Felines in this category include lions, tigers, jaguars, all species of leopard, cougars and resultant offspring from the inter-breeding between any of these species (hybrids). LIOC

further encourages all breeders and sellers of such felidae to assure themselves prior to transfer of ownership, that a potential owner has the experience, training and facilities needed to provide proper housing and care in legal, stable and secure circumstances. Acceptance of the responsibility for potential consequences of non-domestic feline husbandry should be undertaken only by informed individuals. Further, the dedication and discipline needed to acquire as much pertinent information as possible, before acquiring a big cat, is even more imperative. LIOC is aware that some inexperienced owners are currently in possession of cats who are or will be 100 lbs. and urges anyone in this position to take advantage of the assistance, advice and moral encouragement this organization can provide.

ACEF Branch Minutes

This meeting was held at the Germaines down in Toledo. We had a fair turnout of people, and quite a few cats of course! There wasn't any old business to handle so we immediately started in on the new stuff. There have been some changes to the newsletter, we now have a classified ad section, and will be doing member profiles as well. The classifieds are free for any member to place an ad - on a space available basis. We NEED people to submit pictures, articles, and other relevant information to the newsletter! (Any legislation on exotics being worked on in your area? Tell us!) The Secretary/Treasurer (Me) reminded everybody that this year's dues are due. If your newsletter label has a red "Renew!" on it, you need to pay your year 2000 dues. They are \$10 for an individual, and \$15 for a family. We attempted to watch a short video of some TV news coverage of one cat owner from Oregon, but the video had been damaged, sigh. Supposedly it was a reasonably accurate report - which is pretty rare for any news media. Again we are looking for places to have meetings. If you would like to volunteer your house, please contact us via email or phone. Do you have any ideas for fields trips or other special events? If so, please send them in!

John Lussmyer, Secretary/Treasurer
Email: Treasurer@ACEF.org
Alliance for the Conservation of Exotic Felines, Cascade branch of the LIOC.
See <http://www.ACEF.org/>

**Cats are smarter than dogs.
You can't get eight cats to
pull a sled through snow.**

Board Appoints Bob Turner

Citing personal conflicts and an overload of obligations, Sherry Blanchette, Term Director of Education & Conservation has resigned from LIOC's Board of Directors. After much thought, the Board has appointed Robert Turner to complete the unexpired portion of this term. Bob is past MEFES president and one of the founders of the Midwest Branch. We welcome Bob to the board, knowing he will make valuable contribution to this position.

**In a cat's eye, all things
belong to cats.**

**As every cat owner knows,
nobody owns a cat.**

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Sierra Endangered Cat Haven

by Herald Maxwell

Superbowl weekend was more than just the football game and great ads. As Steve Pierce's guest in San Jose, CA, we visited Wild About Cats (see Do the Dew article) and learned of Cat Haven from Laura Morin. Steve and I took the trip south to see it for ourselves.

Dale Anderson, the director of Sierra Endangered Cat Haven, met with Steve and me and gave us a tour of the facility. His passion and commitment for education and conservation is evident. His affection for his cats is reciprocated by chuffs and greetings from the jaguars, cinnamon tigers, snow, clouded, and amur leopards. I was significantly impressed with his educational program in conjunction with his world-wide conservation involvement in South Africa, Paraguay, Brazil, and Mongolia.

Founded in 1993 with the purchase of 100 scenic acres just west of King's Canyon National Park, an area internationally famous for its giant sequoia trees, The Sierra Endangered Cat Haven is at an elevation of 2400' - 3000'. The nearest major city is Fresno, California, forty-five miles to the west.

The facility commands panoramic views across the foothills of the Shannon Valley. It benefits from cool evening breezes, low humidity and equitable temperatures. Old growth manzanita, live oak and buckeye trees, interspersed with small to massive granite boulders, make the terrain highly attractive. The exhibits are spaced at intervals along a pathway which winds beneath oaks and manzanita, giving visitors a sense of discovery as they walk up to each exhibit.



Tizana
snow leopard

A 3000 sq. ft. pine log building (ski lodge style) houses the education center, gift shop, and offices. Cat Haven also has a private area for off-view cages and dietary preparation. Plans for future growth include a clinic, library, wild cat museum and further exhibits.

Education is central to the mission of Cat Haven and to its non-profit sister organization, Project Survival,



The jaguarundis arrived on Dec. 17, 1999 at the Los Angeles Airport. Both the male and female are doing well adjusting to their new environment. It is quite a change from Brazil to the Sierra foothills of California.

Cat Conservation Group. Cat Haven exhibits a variety of rare and unusual wild cats while Project Survival offers slide shows, programs of specialized study and hand-on educational games and crafts for young people. The partnership empowers students to explore nature, interactively and visually, through the compelling world of wild cats.

Cat Haven offers the following educational resources:

- informative guided tours for scheduled field trips and casual visitors,
- an educational room for scheduled programs and private bookings,
- off-site presentations using bio-facts and possible cat ambassadors,
- a volunteer teacher/docent training program (16 years old minimum), and
- assistance with individual courses of study.

Courses, crafts, slide shows and scheduled workshops include the following:

- **Introduction to Osteology:** Students compare and contrast skeletal structure of various animals.
- **Tracks and Trails (Introduction to Animal Tracking):** Students learn how to interpret animal tracks. What is a gait? How can you identify a specific animal track?
- **Conservation and Ethics:** How do people view cats? Why is wildlife important to people?
- **Careers Working with Animals:** Slide presentation about various animal related careers.

- **Ecosystem Adventure:** Learn about some of the different cats from various ecosystems.
- **Cat and Cultures:** Discover the many cultural myths and traditions surrounding members of the cat family.
- **The Day They Parachuted Cats on Borneo:** Discover the problems associated with toxins and poisons, e.g., DDT, being introduced into the food chain and what problems people can cause just by trying to 'make things better.'
- **Classification and Taxonomy:** Vertebrates are just a small part of the animal kingdom. Learn how people classify living things and do a phylum-clue hunt.
- **Cats - So Many Cats!** Discover the 37 different species of cats. Look at slides, pictures and biofacts from some of the many cats that live on earth. What makes them so special?
- **Prehistoric Cats:** Did you know there were American lions? Or that cheetahs lived in North America? What happened to the saber-toothed cats?

Cat Haven participates in the International Species Inventory System (ISIS) and works with studbook keepers. The staff are individual members of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) as well as the American Association of Zookeepers (AAZK). They attend annual meetings of the AZA, the Paraguayan Conservation Action Partnership (formerly the Fauna Interest Group) and the Felid Taxon Advisory Group.

Project Survival recently launched two major programs designed to fund cat conservation into the next millennium. The first, called 'Protect the Jaguar,' is creating an endowment specifically for jaguar conservation. The second is the establishment of endowments to fund education and research projects involving a variety of wild cat species in four geographical areas: Central and South America, Africa, Asia and North America.



Students in the Osteology class.

Steve and I were so impressed with the scenic beauty, the clean and well-kept enclosures, and the happy and healthy cats, we instantly became members. If I could duplicate the facility (with ample funding), plagiarize his material, and legally get away with it (not to mention the poor ethics involved), I would be proud to do so. The design of the cages and safety factors were well thought out and some will be implemented here at Project Noah. Project Noah and Project Survival's visions for education and world-wide conservation are on the same page. His emphasis on the jaguar and mine on the Amur leopard are virtually the only difference. I highly recommend anyone in the area make time to visit Sierra Endangered Cat Haven. You will be glad you did. Remember to dress comfortably and wear your hiking shoes.

Visit their website at www.cathaven.com. They can be contacted at the following:
Sierra Endangered Cat Haven
PO Box 611
Squaw Valley, CA 93675
Phone: 559-338-3216
Fax: 559-338-0608

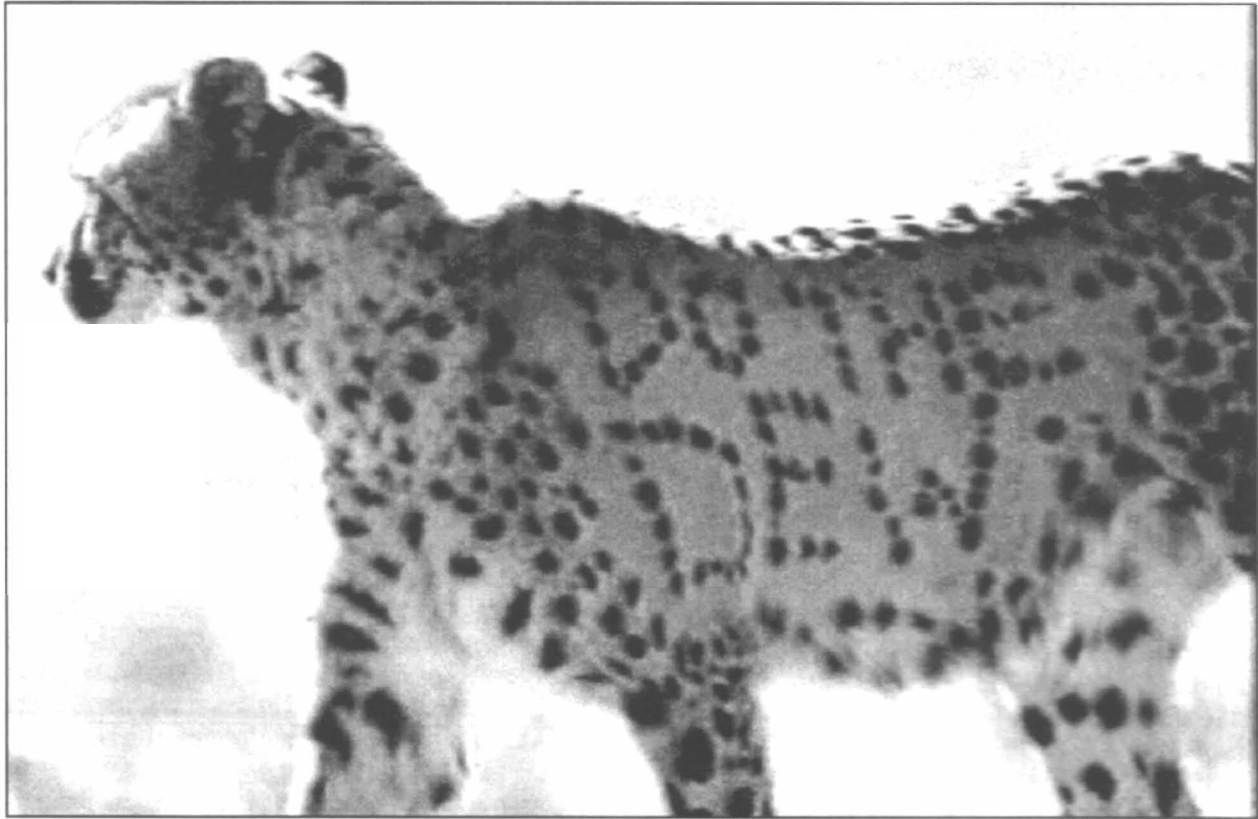
LIOC Caging and Handling Guidelines

This booklet includes 34 pages of practical tips and guidelines for proper caging and handling of exotic cats. It also includes diagrams on construction of proper equipment for any size feline, including squeeze cages, collars, leashes, and much, much more.

Send \$5.00 (US) plus \$1.25 postage to:

LIOC
3730 Belle Isle Lane
Mobile, AL 36619

Shaka & Zulu Do the Dew!



Those of you who watched SuperBowl XXXIV undoubtedly saw the Mountain Dew commercial. The Cheetahs used in the filming of this commercial were no other than the cheetahs Shaka & Zulu from the Wild About Cats compound operated by Dawn Simas. Should you have missed it (or just tune out commercials on principal) the commercial begins with the "Dudes" on a ridge on mountain bikes. One spots a cheetah (our own Shaka) running across the savanna. The Dude takes off after it on his bike. Peddling hard - you bet he was - he catches up, tackles the cheetah and pulls a Mountain Dew from it's mouth. "Bad cheetah" he admonishes. << The camera pulls back to an wide, aerial shot and the acacia trees spell out "Do the Dew". At least that's how the storyboard read before the shoot. >> You could probably

just take this part out, they changed the "Do The Dew" to computer generated spots that spell it out on the cat's side.

To accomplish this shoot, a combination of live and computer generated action was used. As we witnessed in Dawn's presentation at the convention last year, Shaka and Zulu are trained to chase a lure for fun and exercise, doing what cheetahs do naturally. The cameras and crew didn't phase him - natural ham that he is, with of course the natural cheetah's focus on whatever they're chasing. Originally, the production company wanted to drive a camera alongside the cat to shoot. This was unacceptable and Dawn put a 100 yard limit on just how close a moving vehicle could come. As the film we saw at convention illustrated, a cheetah moving at 60-70 MPH cannot

always be counted on to control their movements precisely (even with that tail they use as a rudder) to run a perfect course. A mistake or misstep could lead to disaster next to a vehicle whose driver has reflexes somewhat slower than a cheetah. To overcome this, a state-of-the-art cable-cam was devised that would whiz along and over him at top speeds. This cost the production company in the neighborhood of \$70,000. For the tackle and wrestle sequence, they had to use special effects as this obviously might endanger the cat. At another \$75,000+ they measured Zulu (who was used for the close-ups) for the robotic cheetah. These stuffed cheetahs were used in both the tackle scene and the "arm in the mouth" scene.

Since a 30 second spot on SuperBowl XXXIV costs a whopping \$3 million, this is really a drop in the proverbial bucket. Zulu was a total lady as we took measurements of every single part of her with a tape measure and repeated each one some 40 times! She was measured hip bone to hip bone, waist diameter, width of nose, tear-line to tear-line, circumference of her ears at the base and much, much more! She was then photographed in front of a gridboard for future reference. The Wild About Cat's trainer was used as a "double" for touching, maybe say "contact" instead of touching? Sounds like you are saying touching as in an emotional sense, sequences and, of course, she sat perfectly while the "Dude" chastised her with "Bad cheetah." The money Wild About Cats received for Shaka & Zulu's participation will purchase a used van and equip it to safely transport the cheetahs and other rescue cats. A new shift chute that is used to move unhandleable rescued cats safely will also be purchased. The remainder will go to

various conservation projects Wild About Cats supports. Many of these projects are located in countries of origin and receive little publicity but are valuable in our quest for knowledge about the felines. You can see photos, sounds, and video of Shaka and Zulu on their website at www.wildaboutcats.org as well as learn more about the projects they support in the wild.

1999 Convention Tapes Available

TAPE 1

General Membership Meeting
Reception Dinner
Tour of Mt. Rushmore
Wildcat Valley Resort
Touring at Keystone, South Dakota Bear Country
Wildlife Park
Visit with the baby bears
Banquet Dinner
Fundraising Auction

TAPE 2 Speakers

Kelly Jean Buckley
Director, Member Services
George Stowers
Vice President LIOC-ESCF
Dawn Simas
Founder/Director, Wild About Cats
Mark Griffin, Ph.D
Purina Mills/Mazuri
Alan H. Shoemaker
Collection Manager Riverbanks Zoological
Park & Garden

Each tape costs **\$10.00** for one, or **\$20.00** for the set of two.
Add \$4.00 for shipping & handling on each order.

Send payment and order information to:

Debbie Walding
PO Box 1781
Beaverton, OR 97075

Raising the Bar: The Evolution of Felid Management in Zoos Part II

Alan H. Shoemaker
International Leopard Studbook Keeper
Deputy chair, IUCN Cat Specialist Group
Riverbanks Zoological Park, P.O. Box 1060, Columbia, SC 29202

This is the second part of the presentation made at LIOC's 1999 Convention. It comes in hopes that private individuals will understand the unique challenges faced by zoos in maintaining collections that must take into consideration all species of animals. It will hopefully explain the various zoo programs that have been developed over the years to allocate their resources so as to take an informed approach to this management. Ed.

AZA Conservation Programs

Studbook: The basis for all AZA and other zoo-based conservation programs is the studbook. By definition, studbooks are a compilation of data collected from the current and historical records of individual zoos and other types of owners. The studbook provides a pedigree (species or subspecies or other Ecologically Specific Unit (ESU)) which links living animals through previous generations back to wild-born ancestors. These wild-born ancestors are called founders. All individuals (wild-caught, captive-born, stillbirths and aborted fetuses) are included within a studbook in order to identify the potential effects from inbreeding. These effects involve reduced viability and fecundity in both domestic and wild animals, including felids, and better techniques for analyzing captive populations are continually being developed to expand our ability to determine the effects of inbreeding on diverse groups of wildlife.

Initially many studbooks were directed at a **single species or subspecies**. Today, most studbook keepers include all related species, subspecies or genera within a studbook, i.e. rare leopards, tigers or jaguars. This ensures data is assembled on all forms, especially those with similar husbandry needs or those likely to compete for similar "cage space." Studbook keepers play a neutral role in acquiring data and are charged

only with providing a comprehensive database. They also develop complete familiarity with the species, its relevant literature, individual specimens listed within the studbook and their owners. While tempting, studbook keepers do not manipulate data or make assumptions. That is the role of a Species Coordinator or Population Manager, and the making of breeding recommendations requires additional training and specialized software (which is also produced by ISIS).

By definition studbooks identify all individuals separately. In contrast, a registry is a compilation of an existing inventory of an institution, owner or specific geographical location. Registries identify a group of animals: they do not identify individuals and, thus do not provide an adequate means of tracking the ancestry of living individuals back to the founders. The data provided by ISIS in a Species Distribution Report (SDR) is similar to a registry. Registries are not usually an acceptable means of studbook data compilation. At best they are only be used to keep data on populations held in foreign collections, ranches, research facilities, private collections lacking detailed information or other minimally managed situations.

Studbook-keeping has a long history. The practice of improving or modifying domestic animals created a need for pedigree data, and the

information recorded became the first studbook. In the case of the domestic horse, efforts to develop pedigrees have been recorded as far back as 2900-2500 B.C. The first "modern" studbook was the General Studbook 1793, a pedigree established for pure-bred livestock. In Germany, the Northdeutsche Gestutbuch was published in 1842. Subsequently, a number of breeding societies were formed to strictly regulate the propagation of livestock and poultry. Zoological parks and private breeders are both just finding out what the rest of the world has known for hundreds of years!

Until recently, pedigree preparation only involved domestic breeds. The declining population of the European bison or wisent, Bison bonasus, redefined the need for pedigree analysis. This need also helped establish the first studbook for a wild species. Representatives from institutions housing this species met to review known pedigrees and address issues concerning increased mortality in individuals possessing a common ancestor. This ancestor was identified as the sole remaining male founder of the by then extinct Caucasian subspecies, a situation magnified through management practices that supported parent/offspring matings. The problem was resolved by removing individuals closely related to this founder. Similar successes in captive management through the use of studbooks may be observed over the 60-year (1898-1959) effort to domesticate eland antelope, Taurotragus oryx, in Askaniya-Nova, Russia. Offspring produced over six decades traced their ancestry back to only two original pairs of founders. As a result of this small sample size and poor management protocol, offspring with rickets-like conditions and skeletal deformities began appearing by 1930. Only through increased record keeping and the introduction of unrelated males were these problems able to be reduced. Since then, similar scenarios have been replayed for Przewalski or Asian wild horses, Equus caballus Mzewalksi, Dorcas gazelles, Gazella dorcas, and Chinese, Persian and Amur leopards. In all instances, highly inbred specimens, as identified through studbook records, were found to have shorter lives, a greater incidence of disease, and produce less viable offspring than individuals with little or no inbreeding. Such problems are not restricted to mammals. High levels of male infertility associated with damaged or immobile sperm have also been observed in highly inbred Hawaiian geese, Nesochen sandvicensis.

Geographically, studbooks are either regional or international in scope. Regional studbooks encompass only animals maintained in North America. This region extends beyond the United States, however, and includes captive collections in Canada, as well as Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Santa Domingo, Cuba, Trinidad, Belize, Panama and other countries. Most North American regional studbook keepers have a very diverse collection of participants. In addition to AZA-member institutions (zoos, research facilities, ranches and other kinds of collections), other participants may include non-member zoos and aquariums, animal dealers, university and research collections, governmental agencies, private breeders, and organizations monitoring wild populations. Regional studbooks are published annually, usually during the summer months or after an otherwise appropriate time period as dictated by husbandry practices. International studbooks are not limited to a geographic region and usually encompass the total captive population. Officially, international studbooks only have to be published once every three years, but in order to provide better management, most appear annually. Like regional studbooks, most international studbooks also appear during the summer or at some other appropriate time period as dictated by husbandry practices.

Today most zoo-based studbooks are maintained through the use of the computerized studbook-keeping program developed by ISIS called SPARKS. Using it, studbook keepers are able to quickly enter, store and analyze data, and have annual questionnaires and mailing labels generated. Typically, new studbook keepers send potential holders (owners or locations holding animals via other terms) a questionnaire asking for basic inventory information. Most zoo holders typically respond by submitting an ISIS Taxon Report covering the date span requested by the questionnaire although information can be written as well. Critical information that all owners of felids or other taxa should maintain include the following:

- date of birth or acquisition,
- date of death or transfer,
- cause of death,
- place of birth, if wild, or name of previous owner,
- sex,
- parents (and their ID), if captive born. House name,

- name of dealer or other intermediary source used (if any),
- ascension number ("ISIS" number, house name or other unique identifier) of animal for each owner possessing the animal previously,
- where applicable, identification of all possible sires and dams, and
- transponder/microchip number.

Owners of breeding are encouraged to record all stillbirths and aborted fetuses because of the long-term implications inbreeding on captive propagation. Studbook keepers register such specimens just as they would live births.

Once an animal enters a captive population, it may remain at a single location for its entire lifetime. Other species, particularly long-lived ones involved in breeding programs may be transferred to a number of collections during their life. ALL owners possessing an animal are listed, regardless of the length of stay at individual locations. This is important because some individuals may be constantly moved due to behavioral, medical or physical problems that negate their value for exhibit, breeding or other purposes.

The ultimate purpose of a studbook is to provide interested parties with vital statistics and pedigree information of individuals within a captive population as well their present and past location. As such, studbooks present the physical location of an animal, as opposed to the identity of its owner. Traditionally zoos have been identified by the names of the cities in which they are located: Columbia, London, Leipzig, Philadelphia, etc. In the case of private owners and other types of non-zoo facilities, SPARKS allows the studbook keeper to customize the location by individual name, organization or location. In this way, users not familiar with institutional terminology can locate the facility. With the use of SPARKS, the ISIS acronym is the location reference.

SSP: SSP is an acronym of the AZA that stands for Species Survival Plan and is the AZA's primary conservation effort. SSPs are management plans directed at over 100 species as they inter-relate to themselves, other species with similar management and space requirements, and wild populations. SSPs may also seek to identify species not presently in captivity that could benefit from captive management.

SSPs are an outgrowth of studbook-keeping programs, a less intensive management effort initiated in earnest in 1965. Studbooks develop and store pedigree data on rare and endangered species and too often studbook keepers were not contacted for advice by owners or potential owners seeking new specimens, pairings, etc. As a result, many closely related animals were bred, producing offspring with increasingly high levels of inbreeding. Not all studbooks have an SSP. On the other hand, all SSP's must have a studbook to accurately plot the pedigree of specimens prior to the making of management decisions. With few exceptions, SSPs only manage specimens residing within North America, including Canada, although several SSPs such as those for Amur tigers and ruffed lemurs are now expanding toward a global approach.

SSP programs are a function of the AZA and at first involved animals maintained only by its member institutions. Today participants also include a growing numbers of non-member zoos, ranches, private breeders, or other types of owners functioning in various capacities, including breeding, research and acting as a long-term repository of individuals who are genetically, demographically, or behaviorally surplus to the SSP. At the time of their development, SSPs were regulated on behalf of the AZA by its Wildlife Conservation & Management Committee (WCMC), the primary conservation arm of the AZA. In order to reduce the workload on that committee, the responsibility of soliciting new species coordinators as well as overseeing their transfer has been turned over to the appropriate AZA Taxon Advisory Group (TAG). The studbook keeper and species coordinator may or may not be the same person, and may even be located at an institution that does not possess the species.

Once approved, all zoos and other known holders are invited to participate in the SSP by signing a Memorandum of Participation, understanding that recommendations made by the SSP are just that - recommendations - not mandated requirements. Individual participants retain ownership and have the last say. It should be noted however that governmental agencies such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recognize the value of studbooks, SSPs and cooperative breeding programs, and encourage all owners, both public and private, to participate. To strengthen this issue of compliance for its members, the AZA Board of Directors approved a resolution in the

spring of 1999 making participation by its members mandatory by March 2000.

SSPs have several tasks. Objectives may include solving basic problems such as diets, recurring medical problems and spatial needs. Techniques of hand-rearing may also need refining; the circumstances of their use may even be mandated. Other SSPs are still finding ways to increase or regulate reproduction on a consistent basis. As such, SSPs may seek to determine optimal social groupings for breeding, define best times or ages to begin breeding, cease breeding or examine various ways to regulate reproductive cycles.

The SSP coordinates development of a studbook for all animals involved in its program and on the basis of this information, develops breeding recommendations based on the Mean Kinship (MK) of the living population. MK compares the percentage of founder representation within all living individuals with the each other, and on the basis of this analysis, provides data for use in making breeding recommendations. Although owners do not always follow the coordinator's recommendations, young produced by non-recommended breedings usually become the owner's problem, not the species coordinator's problem. Typical recommendations decide which animals are to be bred and when, to whom - at what ages, and where young or SSP-surplus specimens should be placed.

SSPs often aggressively seek out additional zoos and other facilities to hold or breed animals, and develop new places or techniques to house large numbers of specimens not currently needed for reproduction. They strive to identify those common species that are taking up valuable spaces needed for SSP species, and promote the exhibit/maintenance of species not being maintained by zoos and other owners in sufficient numbers.

The ultimate goal of all SSPs is to provide insurance for the potential return of animals to the wild. Conservation of wild populations is foremost! Such programs include the selection of individuals for release, developing fund raising techniques to ensure completion of such programs, and procedures for training specimens for survival in the wild, establishing conservation and enforcement programs in the country of origin and to assist in the monitoring of released animals. In the simplest scenarios, release candidates such as golden-lion tamarins may be born in regions

other than their own. Other species such as the Bali mynah or Przewalski horse have been found more likely to succeed if they involve individuals born in zoos within their native range.

PMP: A less intense form of management is the Population Management Plan (PMP). The PMP is directed by a Population Manager who in many cases is also the Studbook Keeper. The Population Manager is responsible for monitoring the captive population, drawing attention to management options that will increase the genetic and demographic health of the population. Population Managers use the same genetic and demographic protocols used for a SSP. Although Population Managers also use the same protocols as SSP Coordinators, PMP protocols will likely be supplemented with "rules of thumb" not appropriate for a more intensively managed SSP. The management approach taken by each Population Manager may differ. Some will simply assist interested institutions in finding appropriate mates, i.e., based on Mean Kinship, when requested, and warning against marked fluctuations in population numbers. At the other end of the continuum, some Population Managers make proactive demographic and genetic recommendations leading to a more stable, self-sustaining population. Assistance is provided to Population Managers by the AZA Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG), especially if the Species Manager does not have basic training in population management. For Population Managers that proactively distribute Population Management Plans to AZA institutions, the WCMC has determined that such plans must first be reviewed by a member of the SPMAG. AZA institutions can cooperate at their discretion and within their means without signing Memorandum of Participation. The institution must realize that compliance with recommendations made by the Population Manager is not required. Recommendations are made only in an effort to create a self-sustaining captive population. Therefore, cooperation is in the institutions' best long-term interest as it will better ensure the survival of a healthy captive population. In any case, final decisions regarding animal management are made by the institution, and the Population Manager should not expect as much full cooperation as with the AZA Species Survival Plan.

More than two-thirds of all regional studbooks are or will be managed by a PMP. In the case of large felids, all but two species (puma and leopard) have SSPs. Of the nine small cats targeted by the Felid

TAG, five are recommended for SSP management; the rest are only targeted for PMP management. One reason for the evolution of the PMP is the time commitment required for the intensive operation of an SSP. It simply can not be duplicated by a volunteer-driven organization in order to ensure the persistence of every taxon in captivity. Therefore, the most endangered taxa may have the best chance of intensive management in captivity, while captive populations of more common taxa that do not receive intensive attention tend to fluctuate greatly and may go extinct in captivity. Felids are no exception. The boom-bust cycle begins with imports, followed by extensive breeding, an inability of managers to place the surplus offspring, the cessation of breeding and a gradual decline in the population until too few remain to start another population. In order to avert these cycles, many members of the AZA have discussed, and occasionally even initiated, various population management schemes for taxa that do not receive the intensive attention typical of the SSP. This is especially true for taxa recommended for inclusion in AZA Regional Collection Plans by Taxon Advisory Groups.

Animals with unknown ancestries may have to be incorporated more often in the breeding population of species in Population Management Plans to maintain the desired population size. The decision on use of animals with unknown ancestry is made on a population-by-population basis with assistance from the Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG) advisor. The management plan provides a standard protocol for providing assistance to the North American zoo and aquarium community and provides greater assurance that breeding suggestions are made correctly and in a consistent manner. The management plan process provides guidance in which animals have priority for breeding and in which animals should be paired with one another for reproduction. Population Managers should follow the same rules used for an SSP, the only difference is that compliance will be lower and can not be expected.

TAG: To better coordinate management programs of related groups of animals, the Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) was established. The AZA Felid TAG, like other TAGS, facilitates communication on conservation issues, promotes cooperation among individuals engaged in conservation and research on related taxa, sets priorities for utilization of available captive space, and helps expand the AZA conservation program

by recommending new studbooks, PNPs and SSPs, and oversees the transfer of their leadership when circumstances arise. The co-chairs of the AZA Felid TAG are Dr. Dave deWildt, Conservation and Research Center, National Zoological Park, Front Royal, VA, and Dr. Jill Mellen, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Lake Buena Vista, FL.

RCP: The primary responsibility of a TAG is to develop and implement a North American Regional Collection Plan (RCP). The plan should include a systematic assessment of the available captive space and selection of priority species for regional cooperative breeding programs.

The goal of a RCP is to allocate the available space among species so that the maximum effect in terms of conservation can be obtained. Each species allocated space in the plan should have an explicit stated purpose (e.g., exhibit and education, long term maintenance for eventual reintroduction, short-term maintenance for limited research goals, etc.). Of course not all space will be used as per the collection plan. The RCP states the ideal and participants then attain the highest level of compliance possible given their individual constraints and needs. It is not the responsibility of the TAG to alter its RCP to accommodate institutional considerations but rather, institutions should make every effort to comply with the TAG's RCP recommendations.

In order to determine which species are the highest priority for captive space, TAGs review the species' status in the wild, their ability to be propagated in captivity, and how a captive population can best be used to affect conservation of the species in nature. Some of this information is readily available. At the international level, a number of organizations publish global lists of threatened and endangered species. Ultimately the primary goal of the TAG is to assess global priorities within a regional context and develop its plan.

The next installment will discuss the private owners' role in felid management.

Writing Your Will?



**Remember the Ken Hatfield
Memorial Scholarship Fund!**

Nomitating Time is Upon Us

by Shirley Wagner

It is once again time to nominate officers and directors for the 2001-02 term of office. Members may nominate any member for office by having two members sign the nomination and send it in by March 20th. Nominees willing to serve must accept nominations in writing. Nominees for President must have served at least one term on the board in another position or must have held LIOC membership for 10 consecutive years to include the nomination's term year. Members currently on the board are automatically renominated unless they decline the nomination in writing. Board members may be reimbursed for the expenses incurred by the position, but not for the expense of attending the convention and the annual meeting. This, however, is a deductible expense on your taxes. In order to be effective, it is important that any organization have an active board. These are the folks that implement policy, and do the work to carry selected projects forward. If you are interested in running for an office, but do not know other LIOC members, contact any member of the board. The current board acts as the nominating committee and can nominate you. Should you have any questions about LIOC's board or the individual position's duties, contact a director, post your questions to the LIOC list, or refer to the descriptions listed in by-laws (contained in your Membership Handbook). Nominations should be postmarked no later than March 20th and mailed to:

LIOC/Nominations
3730 Belle Isle Ln
Mobile, AL 36619

LIOC Membership Directory Printing in January, 2000

We are selling BUSINESS CARD ads for \$12.00 to be placed in the LIOC Membership Directory.

Give your fellow LIOC members an opportunity to patronize your goods and services. Both animal related and non-animal related ads will be accepted.

Send a business card or camera ready line art. Please send check payable to:

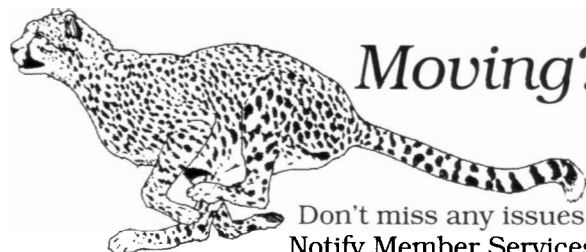
LIOC
720 Meadow Lane
Hickson, ND 58047

Large ad space available:
1/4 page: \$25
1/2 page: \$50
Full page: \$100



Mainely Felids Wild Feline Husbandry Manual

Comprehensive introduction to responsible captive husbandry of wild felines for the novice. Information on: permits, caging, nutrition, handling and much more! 42 pages. Send \$15 to: Mainely Felids, Dept. D, P.O. Box 80, Lycoming, NY 13093-0080



Moving?

Don't miss any issues!
Notify Member Services.
See page 2 for address,
phone, or email.

USDA Publishes Clarifications of Rules for Exhibitors - COMMENTS REQUESTED

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published their Draft Policy Statement and Request for Comments in the Federal Register on February 18, 2000. (volume 65 number 34) The purpose of this draft policy statement is to provide guidance to exhibitors and other regulated entities on how to comply with the regulations regarding training and handling of potentially dangerous animals.

This policy statement can be accessed on the internet at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>. For further information contact Dr. Barbara Kohn, Senior staff Veterinarian, AC, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 84, Riverdale, MD 20737-1234 Phone (301)734-7833

We encourage LIOC members to review this carefully and voice their comments or concerns. Exhibitors and other interested parties should send written comments in triplicate on this draft proposal to:

Docket No. 97-001-4 Regulatory Analysis and Development PPD
APHIS Suite 3C03
4700 River Road, Unit 118
Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 97-001-4.

The final version of this new policy will be based upon any and all comments received before April 18, 2000.

USDA published it's intent to clarify policies concerning trainer experience and safe handling of potentially dangerous animals and asked for public comment in the July 24, 1997, Federal Register. Over 400 comments were received, some included copies of training manuals used by various facilities. Based on the public comments and the experience of the Animal Care inspectors who enforce the Animal Welfare Act, this draft policy was formulated to clarify existing regulations to help ensure safe and humane handling of animals in exhibits.

The draft policy statement addresses three issues: Personnel, Handling Techniques and Procedures, and Contingency Plans. Highlights of this draft policy are:

Personnel Training

The handler should have demonstrable knowledge and skill in the currently accepted professional

standards and techniques in animal training and handling and in the husbandry and care requirements of the species being exhibited. USDA requires primary handlers to possess a minimum of 2 years handling experience in the species being exhibited, with at least one year experience in public contact situations.

Handling Techniques and Procedures

USDA clarifies what constitutes physical harm or behavioral stress in animals. Several examples are:

- * *Excessive* environmental noise
- * *Excessive* crowding around the animal
- * *Inappropriate* age of the animal (too young or too old)
- * Failure to maintain flight (escape) distance
- Lifting animals by their limbs
- * *Too many or too long* interactive sessions
- * *Threatening or aggressive* postures or movements by other animals or persons

Contingency Plans

Contingency Plans which address emergency situations should be designed to minimize risk to the animals and the public. They should cover, but not be limited to:

- * Procedures for handling and recapturing escaped animals, equipment to be used, people to be contacted, and the chain of command.
- * Criteria for deciding when to use various restraint methods and identification of the person who is responsible for making such a decision.
- * The level of force used, up to and including lethal force, should it be consistent with the situation.
- * Provisions for when to contact local law enforcement.

Further the availability and appropriate use of any or all of the following emergency equipment should be considered in a contingency plan.

CO2 fire extinguishers	Crowd Control Fencing
Cell Phones	Radios
High Pressure fire hoses	Capture nets
Pepper spray	Darting equipment

LIOC members are asked to obtain their own copy of this proposed Draft Policy statement from the

USDA website above, or from the Federal Register available at most public libraries. Copies may also be requested from the USDA. Please send a copy of your comments to the legal Affairs director of LIOC, (address on page 2) so that we may formulate our comments based on the needs and interests of our members.

LIOC Comment & Concerns

This is a policy to help clarify the rules which govern exhibiting potentially dangerous animals. But USDA only loosely defines this category of animals as elephants, bears, big cats, wolves and nonhuman primates. LIOC feels that this a major oversight, and the USDA needs to specify precisely which species are included in this designation, especially what they mean by the term "big cats". Is any cat bigger than a housecat, or is it just the panthera species?

The USDA again doesn't define the term "Potentially dangerous" . Is a 2-year old, 35 pound serval potentially dangerous? If so, licensed Class C exhibitors with less than 2 years handling experience with their feline species, and less than 1 year experience with exhibiting this species could be found non-compliant, and subject to penalties should they exhibit or be unable to obtain a permit until the animal is 2 years old.

Further, since safe handling has more to do with the size of the animal being handled and the equipment needed for that size animal, than with the specific species some one qualified to handle a lion should also be qualified to handle a tiger, To require 2 years experience in each separate species is unreasonable.

Other terms need defining as well, *inappropriate age, excessive noise, excessive crowding, too many and too long* are subjective terms and need definition if they are subject to non-compliance penalties.

LIOC members are asked to obtain their own copy of this proposed Draft Policy statement, make their comments to the USDA by April 18th and send a duplicate copy of their comments to the legal Affairs director of LIOC, 141 Polk 664, Mena, AR 71953 so that we may formulate comments based on the needs and interests of our members.

Contact Information:

USDA, APHIS, AC
4700 River Road, Unit 84
Riverdale, MD 20737-1234
Phone: (301) 734-4980
Email: ace@usda.gov
Web Site: www.aphis.usda.gov/ac <<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac>>

Regulatory Alert Response Needed

On February 19 the USDA-APHIS released Miscellaneous Publication No. 1560 titled, Large Wild and Exotic Cats Make Dangerous Pets. The basic position stated in this publication is: "Large wild and exotic cats such as lions, tigers, cougars, and leopards are dangerous animals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) believes that only qualified, trained professionals should keep these animals, even if they are only to be pets."

Concerns:

The basic message contained in this publication is consistent with the policy regarding private ownership of large cats adopted by the LIOC last August. Unfortunately the publication contains language that implies that most private owners of large cats do not practice responsible husbandry, and that only trained professionals should be allowed to own large cats.

It is grossly unfair to imply that most private owners are incompetent based on the actions of a few irresponsible individuals. Regarding the use of the term "qualified, trained professionals", use of this term suggest that only individuals with collage degrees in animal husbandry or a related science who are full time paid employees engaged in commercial activity related to wild felines should be allowed to own big cats. Such a suggestion is both capricious and unnecessarily restrictive and in no way ensures that responsible husbandry will be practiced.

Suggested Response:

Members are strongly urged to contact the USDA immediately. State you understand the need for cautioning people about the inherent risks of big cat ownership in Miscellaneous Publication No. 1560, but voice a strong objection to the implication that most private owners are incompetent based on the actions of a few irresponsible individuals. Objection should also be voiced to the USDA's statement that **only** "qualified, trained professionals" should be allowed to own large cats as being both capricious and unnecessarily restrictive. It should be replaced with wording such as, "only individuals who can demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to practice responsible husbandry should keep these animals, even if they are only to be pets."

One Tiger a Day Killed by Poachers

(Article summarized from "Trade Route to Extinction, Poachers reap bounty in India sanctuaries," by Marion Lloyd, Boston Globe Correspondent, 1/25/2000)

"We are in the worst-ever crisis as far as poaching is concerned," said Valmik Thapar, a tiger specialist who advises the Indian government on conservation strategies. The local office of the World Wide Fund for Nature warned of a recent spurt in the illegal wildlife trade seriously jeopardizing many endangered species.

In two separate raids in northern Uttar Pradesh state Indian officials have uncovered the skins and claws of 25 tigers, along with the pelts of 130 leopards and 220 endangered black antelope bucks. All were believed to have been newly killed. Police also seized 22,000 pounds of deer antlers and 18,000 leopard claws, enough to have been harvested from about one-tenth of the population believed to be living in India.

Even Sita, the tigress, was shot dead in the heart of a Project Tiger reserve, the one area where they are supposed to be assured of protection. Sita had starred in numerous documentaries with successive litters of cubs, featured on the cover of the December 1997 National Geographic, and had become the poster "child" of the Save the Tiger campaign.

Though the Uttar Pradesh seizures were the largest in Indian history, they represent a tiny fraction of the endangered animals slaughtered each year to feed

growing markets, particularly in China and Japan. The demand for tiger parts for use in traditional Chinese medicines has soared since the early 1990s with the growth in the Chinese economy, while clothing trimmed with tiger fur and leopard fur coats are popular among the region's nouveau riche. Japan outlawed products containing tiger parts only last month, despite international bans in place since the early 1970s, according to Thapar.

Conservationists disagree on the plight of the tiger. Several months ago, when a global conference concluded that the tiger was no longer on the road to extinction, almost every Indian conservationist disagreed. P.K. Sen, the director of the government-run Project Tiger feels he is fighting a losing battle. In saying, "It (the seizures in India and the death of Sita) is shocking, and I feel that all our efforts have proved to be futile." His program oversees 25 sanctuaries for several thousand tigers, whose exact population is the subject of heated debate. Sen said the program was ill-equipped to cope with the increasing threat from poachers, who take advantage of the country's lax enforcement of wildlife laws and the growing sense of alienation among villagers living around national parks. He said shrinking habitat and declines in the tigers' natural prey also are helping to push the tigers toward extinction while endangering dozens of other species. "If I look into my three years as director of Project Tiger, I have no hesitation in saying that the tiger is dying," he said.

Such statements differed sharply from the mood at a global tiger conference held in New York in September, where delegates expressed a burst of optimism about the animals' chances of survival. They cited evidence that the tiger was making a comeback in eastern Siberia, Nepal, and some parts of India, and gave credit to local conservation efforts and a global ban on trade in tiger parts. They released figures showing the tigers' global population had increased from approximately 5,000 in 1994 to 7,000 in 1999.

But Indian conservationists questioned the data, arguing that forestry officials often inflated the number of tigers living under their jurisdiction rather than risk losing their jobs. "It's absolutely not true. The tiger population is not increasing," said Belinda Wright, director of Delhi-based Wildlife Protection Society of India. Thapar, who has spent the past 25 years around tiger reserves, said "the current tiger population was probably closer to 2,000," adding that at least one tiger is killed every day by poachers. Taking into consideration the tigers' birthrate, that would mean roughly 200 fewer tigers each year predicting a 10-year countdown to extinction.

But there were new threats. The same year, China wiped out the last of its native tigers and began looking elsewhere to feed its growing market for tiger parts used in medicines.


Meanwhile, India's mushrooming population was putting ever-greater pressure on the wildlife sanctuaries, as villagers began stripping away the buffer zones for agriculture and cattle grazing. The result has been increasing human-animal conflicts and a growing willingness among villagers to collaborate with

poachers. The government is trying to reverse that trend by involving villagers in the conservation work and reestablishing a buffer between them and the animals. Eco-development projects are slated to begin at seven test sites later this year, when the government is expected to bring three national parks under the control of Project Tiger.

Other proposals have fallen by the wayside, including one for a separate court to try wildlife offenders. While hunting endangered animals has been banned since 1972, only three people have been punished under the law, said Sudil Misra, an environmental lawyer in New Delhi. None has been given the maximum seven-year sentence. More than 200 cases are pending in Delhi alone, he said, adding that many of the cases were decades old.

Of the 25 Project Tiger reserves, only a handful is equipped with well-armed forest rangers that actively patrol against poaching. And half lie within areas wracked with insurrection or where the government is too weak or cash-strapped to assure adequate protection. The other parks are even less prepared, and a recent freeze on funding has left 40 percent of forest ranger positions unfilled.

"Whatever new initiative passed at the center is not applied in the states," Sen said. Unless the government starts making conservation a priority, "the country will be a silent spectator to the disappearance of tigers and its ultimate impact on humanity."



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