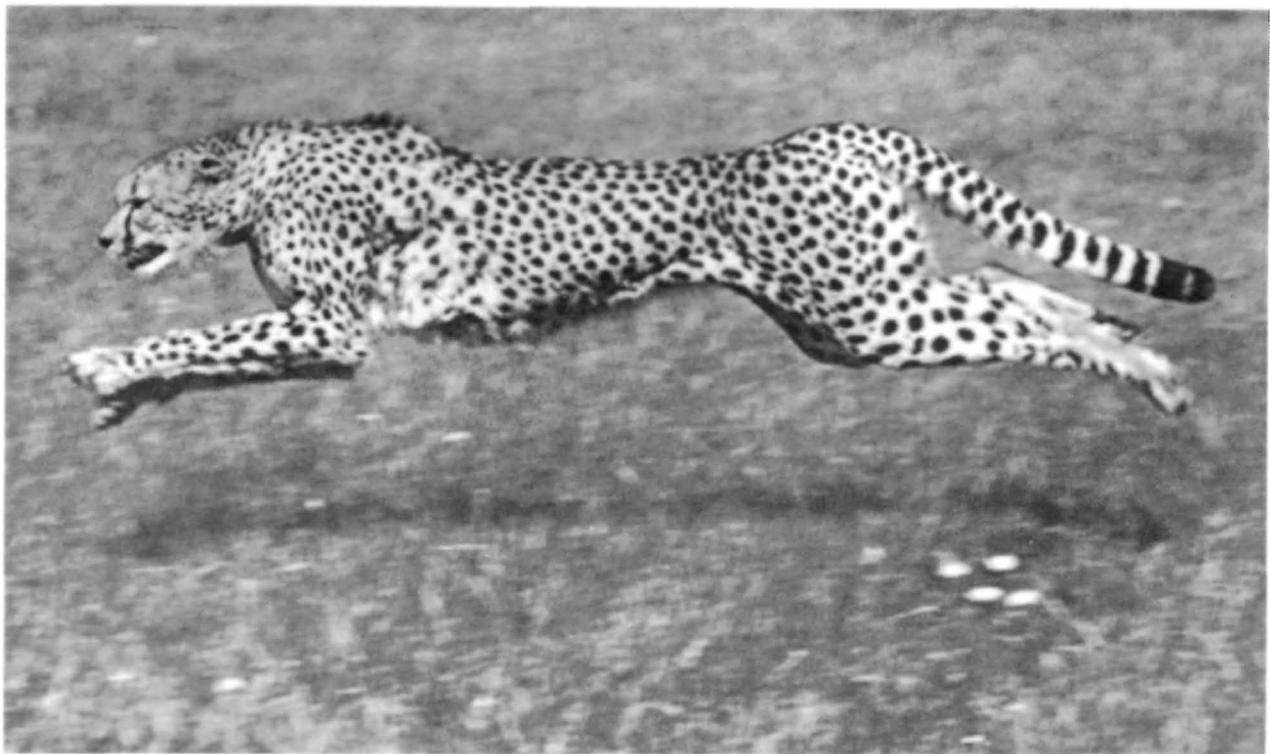


Volume 47, Issue 3

May/June 2003



**Feline Conservation Federation**



Cincinnati Zoo ambassador Sahara can run like the wind. She and her fellow ambassador Moya will demonstrate their speed for the FCF Convention attendees when we visit them at Narnia, the private farm of Carl and Cathryn Wilker.

Read more about this year's convention events on page 20.



## Feline Conservation Federation

This newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Feline Conservation Federation, Inc. We are a non-profit (Federal ID# 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. FCF, 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 FCF. 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 FCF should contact the Term Director in Charge of Member Services.

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Laurie Marker, cheetah  
conservationist, walks with  
one of her charges



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*We cannot guarantee the printed quality of digital photographs. Please submit actual photographs or check with the editor regarding standards for electronic submissions whenever possible.*



*Editor's note: This issue of the newsletter focuses on the cheetah. Future issues will also have a specific focus on one species or group of wild cats.*

# ***RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES***

## Cheetahs need friends worldwide ...

By Laurie Marker

Images of the cheetah racing across the African savannah in an awe inspiring display of speed and agility are so familiar to us from wildlife documentaries on television that it can be difficult to believe that this beautiful animal is literally running for its life. The world's fastest land animal is endangered: in 1900 there were 100,000 cheetahs living across Asia and Africa. Now, only a century later, less than 15,000 cheetahs remain in 26 African countries and less than 100 in Iran, the last of the Asian cheetahs. Today, cheetah populations in over half of the countries where cheetahs are found may be too small to be viable. It is listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) list as a species threatened by trade and in danger of extinction. It is, therefore, illegal to trade in wild cheetahs or cheetah parts.

It took 4,000,000 years for the cheetah to evolve into the unique and beautiful animal it is today. It has taken less than a hundred years for man to place it on the endangered species list. Cheetah numbers got to this precarious state by a combination of factors; competition from humans is just one. As a species, the cheetah is genetically impoverished. A genetic bottleneck occurred 12000 years ago as a result of a climatic change during the Great Ice Age, and once the population declined the cheetah became inbred. This, plus the rapid decline in cheetah numbers during the last hundred years, has resulted in a smaller and less diverse gene pool.

As human populations grew, the amount of land devoted to livestock farming steadily increased. Livestock filled the land where cheetahs roamed, and natural prey became scarce. Although game reserves protected them, cheetahs could not compete against the large predators that live in the reserves.

A major threat to cheetah's survival is its tendency to fare less well in protected areas and nature reserves than other predators. The reason for this is physique. Sprinting up to 70mph / 110km per hour may make cheetahs skilled hunters, but the price they pay for such high speed is a lithe, slight body that puts them at a disadvantage with other large predators. The sheer effort of the chase can exhaust them; they often need to rest for up to 20 minutes after a kill, and in this time they risk having their prey stolen. With their lighter frame, designed for speed, they cannot defend their kill from lions, leopards and hyena.

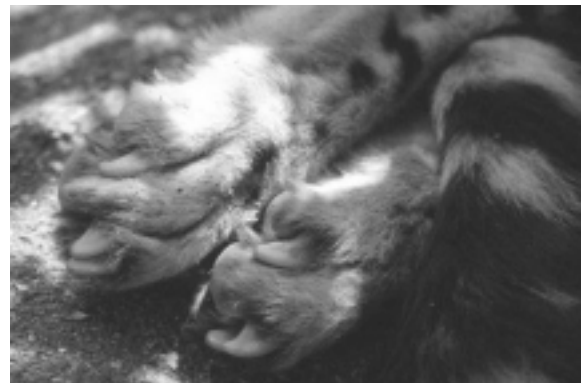
Cheetah cubs also often get killed, being vulnerable to lions, hyena and other predators when the mother leaves them to go hunting - and she may be away for up to 48 hours. Although the smoky-gray cubs have long hair, called a mantle, running along their backs to serve as camouflage in the dried grass, many still get killed. In Tanzania's Serengeti National Park, 90% of all cubs do not reach three months of age.

## **Namibia - the 'Cheetah Capital of the World'**

Namibia has the world's largest number of cheetahs: 3,000 animals, or one fifth of the world's remaining population. Most of these cheetahs (95%) live on commercial farmlands in the central areas of Namibia, where they are vulnerable as threats to livestock. Although the Namibian cheetah is a protected species, farmers can legally kill predators that pose a threat to livestock or humans. If they consider a cheetah a 'problem animal' they can trap and kill it - and there may be little real proof that it was a cheetah that actually harmed the livestock in the first place. Cheetahs, which will take young calves and small stock, much prefer wild game. Today, conflict with farming interests is one of the biggest threats to cheetah survival.

## **The Cheetah Conservation Fund - doing something positive about the plight of the cheetah**

In 1990, I founded the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), and based the organization in central Namibia in 1991, in the heart of cheetah country, to stop the decline of cheetah and actively work with farmers to develop livestock and game management practices that are 'predator-friendly'. CCF started with a dream. Today our mission is "to be an internation-



*Non-retractible cheetah claws, a specialized feature.  
Photo: Dawn Simas*



ally recognized centre of excellence in research and education on cheetahs and their ecosystems, working with all stakeholders to achieve best practice in the conservation and management of the world's cheetahs."

The concept behind the fund developed from my long history of working with cheetahs. In 1974 I began working as a Veterinary Technician at the Wildlife Safari in Oregon. It was there that I got my first glimpse of a cheetah running at full speed. They were extraordinary – speed and elegance mixed together. I was captivated by these graceful animals, which can purr loudly like a pet cat, growl and spit when angry, or chirp like a bird to communicate with each other, and I wanted to learn all I could about them. I was given this opportunity as the Cheetah Curator and developed one of the most successful breeding programs in the world. I developed links throughout the world and in the early 1980's developed the Cheetah Studbook, a registry of cheetah in captivity, and was one of the founders of the Cheetah SSP.

But, it was in 1977 when I first learned about the problems facing wild Namibian cheetahs. I came to Namibia with Khayam, a cheetah cub I had hand raised. It was a first-of-its-kind research project to see if Khayam, a captive-bred cheetah, could be taught to hunt in the wild. The experiment was a great success. After weeks sitting with her at waterholes and coaching her through the stages of hunting, Khayam learned to catch and kill antelope on her own. However, the experiment taught me that learning how to hunt was not the only critical part of living in the wild for a cheetah, but that learning how to live in the wild was, skills that were taught to the cubs during their first 18 to 20 months by their dam. But, more importantly, I discovered that Namibian farmers were killing hundreds of wild cheetahs each year – cheetahs that already knew how to hunt and live in the wild. This proved crucial to my future work in cheetah conservation - I realized that what needed to happen most was to stop wild cheetahs being killed. I thought that some one (like one of the large conservation organizations) would do something to stop the killing of cheetahs, if I just let the world know what was happening. Khayam and I became national travelers after our successful research in Namibia. Khayam was an ambassador for her wild cousins and together we often appeared on television and in fundraising events throughout the USA telling the cheetah story from 1978 until Khayam's death in 1986.

In the early 1980's I developed research collaborations at the Smithsonian's National Zoo and I became the Executive Director of the Center for New Opportunities in Animal Health Science (NOAHS Center) from 1988 to 1990. However, throughout this time I kept coming back to Namibia working with the Problem Animal Researcher and local farmers. They wanted help; the Namibian people, including some farmers, kept asking me not to leave. During the 1980's up to 800 cheetahs were being killed each year by farmers who saw them as threats to their livestock, and cheetah numbers declined by half. Meantime, I was laying the groundwork for CCF, keeping abreast politically in both Namibia and Washington DC and developing the research questions that CCF continues to study today.

Namibia gained its Independence from South Africa in 1990. It was then that I set up CCF and spent several years living in borrowed houses whilst meeting Namibian farmers to understand the problems and assess the conflicts they face. Four years later, in 1994, with the help of Cathryn Hilker's Cincinnati Zoo Angel Fund, and other international supporters who shared my vision of saving the wild cheetah, CCF's permanent base was established on a former cattle farm, Elandsvregde, in Namibia's north central farmlands. I knew that the cheetah's survival depended on looking at the whole picture: the habitat, its ecology and prey species, as well as farmland management.

My starting point working with Namibian farmers was to learn about their problems with cheetahs and other predators. Gradually, piecing together a picture of the problem and finding creative ways to reduce the conflicts so that cheetahs could continue to live on the farmlands and the farmers would lose less livestock. In Namibia, cheetah survival was in the hands of the farmers and developing non-lethal predator control methods so that cheetah and people can co-exist.

Cheetahs are, undeniably, not popular with farmers - livestock loss to cheetahs is an economic and emotional issue. It was clear, therefore, that we had to be learning from and working with farmers to help protect their livelihoods. During the years of my being here in Namibia, friendships with farmers and others in the community have developed and attitudes have changed, many more farmers now tolerating cheetahs on their land.

CCF is now a large organization. Originally housed in a three-room building, consisting of research laboratory, animal clinic, dormitory and office, with a leaky roof and no electricity, CCF grew within twelve years into a world-renowned research and education centre. Today, the CCF complex has the Haas Family Research Centre with veterinary clinic, laboratories and main offices, and the Hilker Education Centre/Museum that contains interactive displays and graphics which provide visitors and students the opportunity to learn more about the history of the cheetah from pre-history to modern times, its behaviour and biology, adaptations for a high speed sprint and specialized hunting, and the Namibian ecosystem that supports Africa's most endangered cat species. There are displays explaining conservation and CCF's work: for example, how farmers can live with cheetahs on their land by using non-lethal predator control methods such as the use of Anatolian Livestock Guarding Dogs, which CCF has been promoting since 1994, breeding and donating the dogs to Namibian farmers to guard their flocks.

In addition, CCF is a part of the Waterberg Conservancy, an area of 440,000 acres of private farmland, which allows wildlife, including cheetahs, to move freely across the land. In Namibia, the conservancy movement is one where groups of neighboring farmers jointly manage their natural resources and game to ensure long-term conservation of the land.

*Author Laurie Marker  
with one of her program cats*

Conservancies are one of the important solutions for cheetah's survival in Namibia, by allowing them and other wildlife to roam freely over a conservancy's land. Conservation is actively practiced ensuring the sustainable use of wildlife.

Farmers have contributed enormously to conservation, especially by helping develop different techniques for farming in a predator-friendly (non-lethal) way. We don't credit ourselves for ideas - we get them from others - the farmers and the people who work with us. Through CCF, we just make the ideas work.

Making ideas work is exactly what CCF has done over the years. Coming from Oregon, I had first hand experience living with sheep farmers who were in regular conflict with coyotes. In the late 1970's Livestock Guarding Dogs were being introduced to the farming community to mitigate lethal predator control and I learned all I could from this novel approach to reduce predator conflict. In 1994, with the help from the Livestock Guarding Dog Association, I brought this concept to Namibia and imported 10 Anatolian Shepherds, a breed of Livestock Guarding Dog. CCF breeds, trains and monitors the Anatolian Shepherds, a Turkish breed that are famous for their independent thinking and loud bark. The dogs bond with the flock, staying with them from an early age, and protect them by placing themselves between the herd and intruder and barking fiercely. Cheetahs, by nature timid

animals, are easily deterred. Today we have over 160 of these livestock guardians working to help save both farmer's livestock and thus cheetahs. CCF's Livestock Guarding Dog Program has been a success: our research has shown that seven out of ten farmers who keep a guarding dog with their flocks have fewer losses from predators, and none at all in some cases. CCF's methods of reducing predator conflict are also applicable to other animals such as mountain lions, jaguars and wolves (although the problems faced vary), and have been used as models elsewhere in the world.

The scope of CCF is vast. The welfare of the animals, whether cats, dogs, goats or sheep, is a major part of any working day. The number of cheetahs held varies from week to week as new cats are caught by farmers who call CCF to take them off their land, and are



held at CCF until suitable homes can be found for them, or they can be re-released into the wild (over 250 cheetahs were successfully released back into the wild over the past five years). Some cheetahs, however, have to remain permanently captive having been brought in as orphaned cubs too young to have learned how to hunt by their mothers.

Several ongoing scientific research programmes run alongside the day-to-day work of caring for cheetahs. A weekly radio-tracking project has followed over 55 radio-collared cheetahs (sometimes the collared cat is part of a group, or coalition, of single males, or a mother with cubs) by light aircraft fitted out with radio antennae in order to gain understanding of the movements of cheetahs and their home range sizes. Our research in Namibia has shown that cheetahs roam over huge tracts of land in a normal range - between 800-1500 km<sup>2</sup> for males and 1500-3000 km<sup>2</sup> for females. They can cover up to 40km in a week, and one single male cheetah crossed over 30 farms (each farm being 10,000 acres in size) in a two-year period. This means that for the cheetah to survive in the wild it has to have the freedom to move across large areas, and most protected areas and nature reserves are simply not large enough to accommodate it.

Most days the clinic is busy. Every cheetah brought into CCF is given a full medical examination, and body measurements and tissue samples taken to build up a database on the wild population - we have worked on over 550 cheetahs. Even dead cheetahs donated by farmers prove useful, as much can be learned from them.

Cheetah health and reproduction research is important for conservation. A Genome Resource Bank (GRB), where sperm from over 90 cheetahs is stored and studied, has been started. In addition, there is research into population changes (cheetahs and prey) within Namibia, and how humans impact upon the cheetah and its ecology. Regular game counts supply information on the amount of prey and help wildlife management.

Environmental Education complements the research and conservation work. CCF staff tour schools and hold environmental education weekends for young people. Over 100,000 Namibian students have been involved with CCF's education programs. In addition, each day tourists and the general public visit and learn about the cheetah.

Dedication and creativity of CCF staff ensure there are always new avenues to explore in the search for ways to help cheetahs survive. "We Can Live Together" is CCF's motto. Much of our work has been in persuading farmers exactly this: that they can live together with cheetahs on their land. Using scientifically-based research programs, we have had a lot of success: nowadays, most farmers allow cheetahs to be re-released on the farms where they were caught, if they had not been causing livestock losses. Today, our research shows farmers are increasingly tolerant towards cheetahs on their lands.

Model programs developed by CCF help all cheetahs as CCF is helping develop similar programs in Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe and even Iran. This and the co-operation and the ongoing support of so many in the Namibian community bears testimony to CCF's motto.

Heading up a complex organization like CCF has been more than I could have imagined years ago. As CCF continues to grow there continues to be no rest on a daily basis. Animals that are rare and endangered need us as people to take action. I feel privileged, to be able to dedicate my life to this goal. And I am not alone in this. Internationally, people have supported CCF. From the many volunteers, such as Earthwatch volunteers who spend two weeks of their holiday time helping at CCF, to working with Namibian farmers and livestock raising communities in order to develop ways to reduce conflict with predators, now people have committed themselves to help save the cheetah. The future of the cheetah lies in the hands of people and our supporters worldwide, our dedicated staff and volunteers, the Namibian farmers, many of whom are natural conservationists - they are the life-blood of CCF. It extends to the world we live in.

In 1995, I was given a great gift, Chewbaaka, a 3 week-old orphaned cheetah who daily commiserates me to working for his species' survival. He was named after the Star Wars character, Chewbaaka, who, to me represents the real battle we face today - that of saving our earth. Through Chewbaaka more people see why we should be fighting now on Earth to save the environment.

It is easy to understand this passion when you see these beautiful cats in the environment that is theirs. Cheetahs deserve a place on this earth; with its special adaptation to speed there is no animal to compare. Humans have revered the cheetah for almost 5,000 years, for good reason. If it were allowed to become extinct it would not only leave a huge hole in nature, but also in our psyche, the human mind which so naturally feels and knows the uniqueness of this creature.

### **CCF Vision Statement 2000**

**"We see a world in which cheetahs live and flourish in co-existence with people and the environment"**

**The Cheetah Conservation Fund** is a US 501-c-3 non-profit foundation, Namibian non-profit trust dedicated to the long-term survival of the cheetah and its ecosystem. The Fund's activities include research on cheetah demographics, ecology, biology, human impacts affecting its survival, non-lethal predator control methods and education. CCF actively works with farmers, schools, communities and the Namibian government as well as international researchers and students.

For details of The Cheetah Conservation Fund please contact CCF at: PO Box 1380, Ojai, CA 93024 Tel: (805) 640-0390; Fax: (805) 640-0230. e-mail: [cheeta@iafrica.com.na](mailto:cheeta@iafrica.com.na) Website: <http://www.cheetah.org>

## Latest news from Playa de Oro

We have 4 photo traps operating since early February at the Playa de Oro reserve, and received our first batches of film to develop in April. There was slow activity on the cameras for our first 2 months, which we expected because March and April are the heaviest rainy months of the year in this area. The cameras each have scent bait placed on the ground in front of the cameras, to attract animals and hopefully entice them to stop and sniff for a moment. We used a “wildcat scent lure” made from cat glands and other smelly ingredients. It smelt most foul and stinky, and will entice just about any creature to stop and take a whiff. But we expect with the heavy drenching rains in March and April that our scent bait would be washed away quickly and diminish our chances of attracting wildlife directly in front of our cameras. Here’s the latest on each camera:

Camera 1 at Site 1 suffered some water leakage from severe heavy rains in early March. The camera had registered 14 photos by then. Of these we know that 4 or 5 photos were of us, because this was the first camera we installed and we were demonstrating how the camera would be tripped to take a photo. The camera had to be taken back to the lodge where the camera and film were allowed to dry out. Once the film was developed, there were no viewable photos.

Camera 2 at Site 2 had registered only one photo between Feb and March. This photo captured a young capybara. Since no other activity had occurred for the remainder of the month, the camera was moved to Site 6 in March. Between March and April, the camera captured another photo. This photo is of a bird in the Tinamou family. The exact variety of Tinamou has not been determined yet, but we are working on it. One bird expert we contacted thought that it appeared to be a “Grand Tinamou” and is rare in this area. We have not determined this statement for certain just yet though. After this photo, it appears that the batteries ran low. When the batteries get low, the camera shoots off the remaining roll of film. So the rest of the roll feature some lovely pictures of nearby jungle foliage.

Camera 3 at Site 3 did not register any photos from February to mid March. Malfunction was suspected. In mid March it was moved to Site 12. No pictures were taken at this site over the next month either. It has since been determined that this camera is in fact malfunctioning and I will have to attempt repairs on it when I return in July. In the meantime, we communicate once a month by email, so we are trying to troubleshoot the camera by email until I get there.

Camera 4 in Site 4 registered no photos by early April, so it was moved to Site 8. Shortly after it was moved to the new site, it appears that the batteries ran low and the remaining film was shot off.

So, after our first two months, we have captured 2 actual photos of wildlife. It doesn’t seem like much, but Conservation International biologist Jim Sanderson tells me that it takes infinite patience for this type of project. Jim says to me, “Time and patience, young grasshopper”. We are not discouraged however, as the reserve staff is still learning how to properly operate the cameras and when to change out batteries and film. And, as I stated before, we also expected that we would not capture a lot of animal photos during the heaviest rainy season in March and April. We have plenty of time to be patient and see what the cameras might capture over the next year. I will be returning in July and can make repairs to the cameras, and make any changes that might help improve the cameras performances.

Animal Updates: There have been several visitors to the reserve since I left in February, and they have reported back information about Missy the Ocelot and the little tamarin that we left in their care. Missy the Ocelot has continued to improve since I left and appears to be in excellent health. She is continuing to gain weight and has become more active. The staff has continued the monthly worming program that I suggested, and this seems to help her a lot. The staff has been trying to invent games for her to help her learn how to “capture” her meals. Amy and myself had expressed some concern during our visit in February that they might not be feeding her quite enough. The visitors reported that they seemed to be giving her plenty of food daily now. If the staff did not capture enough rats daily when the rains were too heavy, they would buy a chicken from the village and make sure she did get enough to eat each day.

As for the little black mantle tamarin that we named Lucette, it turns out that “she” is a “he” and has been renamed “Pico”. For a while Pico lived in the screened-in dining room, hanging about on the window screens, and stealing food from people’s plates as they ate. Pico at first was very afraid of people, but it was not long that he was climbing about on guests and having many conversations with anyone who would listen. The staff built an enclosure on the lodge porch, which has nice views of the jungle for him. They have put plants and other enrichments in the cage for him to climb on, and the visitors say that they would go inside his cage and spend time with him, allowing him to climb about on themselves. The reserve staff member who was in charge of taking care of Pico even started spending time with Pico and is handling him quite a bit. That is encouraging, as she was a little frightened of Pico in February when we left.

That’s the latest news so far. We have a group of FCF members ready to go to the reserve in July, where we will continue to help teach the staff husbandry skills for their resident cats, and hopefully we will be able to build a larger cage for their current feline resident. We are depending on donations from other FCF members to help purchase the cage building supplies. If you would like to help out this project, you can send your donations to the following address with a notation that it is for the Ecuador project.

### Mail donations to:

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Indianapolis, IN 46227-8126

specify in memo area: Playa de Oro Fund

Tracy Wilson, FCF Dir. of Education and Conservation

## Experience the rainforest in person!

We have just a few more available spots for anyone who wishes to join our tour of the rain forest and the Playa de Oro Margay Reserve in July. Experience virgin rainforest and help the jungle cat reserve at the same time! Trip dates are July 11th through the 20th. This is a once in a lifetime experience that you will never forget. Please contact Tracy Wilson for more info about the trip and how to sign up.





## Fundraising RAFFLE

*'Sunny Spot,'* one of the finest images created by Charles Frace, America's most acclaimed wildlife artist, is to be raffled off to those interested in helping the FCF's support of the conservation project in Ecuador. This open edition signed print (of 2500) has been donated by Craig and Carol Bohning of Butternut Farm Wildcat Sanctuary. The signed 23" x 18" print is matted and framed and ready to hang on your wall. Labor costs have been donated by Hunter's Art and Frame in Johnstown, Ohio. The current retail value of this print and framing is over \$100.

The photo in this feature shows a margay at rest on a tree limb, but only a viewing in person shows the intense, rich gold, deep reds, greens and blacks of the image. It is truly a stunning print. A gold suede matting around is covered with a charcoal black frame.

Chances to win this print are \$5 each. All proceeds from this raffle benefit projects for the Playa de Oro Margay Reserve in Ecuador, which include camera trapping supplies, cage building supplies, tools, and animal care supplies. Five raffle tickets have been enclosed in this edition of the newsletter, attached to your convention registration form. If you would like to purchase chances to win this print, simply mark how many raffle tickets you would like to purchase on the registration form. Write your name and phone number on the ticket stubs, and tear off one half of the ticket stub for you to keep, mail in the other half to FCF for the drawing. Enclose your check or money order for the total amount of your tickets, and mail to the address on the form. If you would like more than 5 tickets notate how many total tickets you wish to purchase and enclose payment for your total. We will mail back your voucher half of your tickets. The winning raffle ticket will be drawn during convention at our Saturday evening banquet. You do not need to be present to win.

### About the Artist

Frace's life began in 1926 tucked away in the hills of eastern Pennsylvania, rolling sanctuaries of wilderness rich in animal life and ancient Indian lore. Frace began drawing at five, recalling his discoveries on nearby Bear Mountain in his sketch book. Even at that early age, Frace remembers wanting to be an artist. He taught himself to paint when he was fifteen, and his self-instructed talent earned him a scholarship to Philadelphia's Museum School of Art (now the Philadelphia College of Art), where he graduated with honors.

In 1962, Frace spent three months at the wildlife facility of the late John Hamlet, one of the world's most respected naturalists. As an assistant to a photographer working on a book about birds of prey, Frace helped capture and train the large birds and other animals, soaking up Hamlet's wisdom and nature's wonders. The experience left him with an insatiable appetite for more. In 1973, with the issue of Frace's first limited edition print, he finally made the permanent change to fine art from illustrator of other's works. All 3,000 prints of his "African Lion" were sold out upon release, as was his second edition, "Tiger."

Frace's field research has taken him on lengthy expeditions to Africa, the Glacial heights of Alaska, on the ice floes in Canada's Gulf of St. Lawrence, and on the California coast. Frace has also broken paths through the rain forests of Central America and walked across the Continental Divide in Glacier National Park, Montana. Charles Frace was honored in 1992 with a one-man exhibit of thirty-six of his paintings at the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Entitled "The American Wildlife Image and Charles Frace," the exhibit was seen by millions of visitors to the nation's capital within its seven month duration.

Frace has always been an active supporter of conservationist causes. In 1987, to commemorate his 25th anniversary as a wildlife artist, he established the Frace Fund for Wildlife Preservation. Each year the Frace Fund awards major grants to conservation organizations, large and small, including wildlife parks, zoos, breeding facilities and museums. The Fund provides many meaningful benefits to animals as well as educational efforts to increase public awareness of environments concerns. Frace has also sought to have his art draw attention to the struggles of individual species that are particularly threatened. Limited editions have been dedicated to the harp seal, sea otter, koala and other animals. These Frace editions not only raise needed funds to further the animals' survival, but also serve to create public awareness and concern, motivating people to act.

### Special Thanks for Your Support

FCF would like to thank the following members for their recent donations and support of the Playa de Oro Margay reserve in Ecuador:

Robert and Jessica Bean for their generous donation of \$50.

Bob and Patti Turner for the donation of the print "38 wildcats of the world", which was auctioned off at the April MEFES meeting for the reserve. Special thanks to MEFES members for participating and bidding in the silent auction. Craig and Carol Bohning for their donation of a Frace margay print.

Hunter's Art and Frame in Johnstown, Ohio, for matting and framing the Frace print.

MEFES for their generous club donation of \$100.

Lisa Padula for gathering and donating veterinary medical supplies and helpful veterinary medical information for the reserve staff.



## Importing the Cheetah Ambassadors of Wild About Cats

By Dawn Simas

It took a full two years for the paperwork involved in importing these very special cats. The main challenge WAC was up against was the fact that no private facility in the U.S. had ever imported cheetahs. I not only wanted to import them so that we could have the cats for the many reasons we outlined (fundraising ambassadors and subjects for ex-situ husbandry study), but also to show that non-AZA organizations can also be worthwhile. However, if granted, our case would then set a precedent that others could use as argument for approval, so it was a huge responsibility. We decided that we needed to verify and guarantee that our reasons, goals, and care of these cats were set so high, that if indeed someone wanted to use it as an example, they'd have to meet the same lofty purposes and requirements. This is what was stressed by the USF&WS also, rightfully so.

First, when working with countries (import and export, in this case S. Africa and the U.S.) that are signed up with the CITES treaty, you must obtain permits from each country. In the U.S. the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is the appointed Office of Management Authority that CITES requires. So, that is where the application is filed. The department within S. Africa wasn't so difficult because De Wildt Cheetah Centre had a good relationship with them and had exported cats many times. The fact that they agreed to send them to WAC, was argument enough for that country basically. But the U.S. F&WS uses the AZA SSP's as experts for advice on whether to approve or disapprove requests. First, the request must be posted in the Federal Register for comment. We made it through that. Then, AZA told USF&WS that they did NOT consider it a good idea for WAC to be approved for CITES import of cheetahs because they did not want to see cheetahs go the way of tigers and cougars in this country. In essence, cheetahs were too fragile to be widely distributed in private hands (no guarantees that I wouldn't start breeding and selling cubs). I agreed wholeheartedly with this. We got our denial letter based on this recommendation by AZA. WAC appealed.



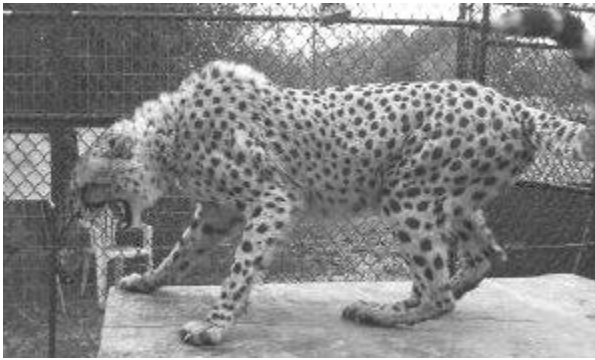
Our appeal stated that we would agree to never sell the cats to another facility, that they were not going to be bred unless requested by the Cheetah SSP for their genetic value (which would be considered), and that their purpose was exclusively as ambassadors for their wild cousins. The import will not be considered unless it can be shown that, if granted, the import will directly \*benefit\* the species in the wild. There is no stipulation against animals being used for commercial purposes, we simply must agree that any funds raised as a result of exhibiting these animals must go to the animals. Zoos, for instance, get all their animals primarily for "commercial purposes" (to exhibit them and diversify their collection and encourage more guest attendance). But the admission money raised as a result goes to the care of their collection, and some to conservation efforts. And it also must be shown that the collection of those two animals in no way was \*detrimental\* to the species in the wild. We had to verify the lineage of the proposed cats. The father was wild caught, so that was an issue. But DeWildt had to go to bat for us to show the value (he was a king) of that cat in captivity. The mother had been born in captivity and was F4 from a nuisance cat in the wild. We had two female cubs that were being hand raised with us in mind. We also had to prove that, since we didn't have specific cheetah experience documented, that we had others that were extensive in their cheetah experience that were available to us for advice and willing to participate with us. We had to collect several letters from cheetah experts with original signatures stating this fact. I agree that this is necessary, because if we hadn't had these individuals to rely on while raising these cats through various phases, physically and behaviorally, the cats would have paid the price of our nativity. All the cat experience in the world does not prepare you for cheetahs. They are unique. This is why they had a genus of their own, they are nothing like other cats. For instance, their defense is \*flight\*, as opposed to all other cats with claws and teeth and muscle strength. Their psychology is more closely related to a prey animal than a predator. A combination of the two actually, in different circumstances, which must be well understood by the caregivers to prevent them, and the people, from getting hurt.

So, in our appeal, with letters from cheetah experts, proof of lineage, promising to never sell them (since \*WAC\* is the one getting the permit, this stipulation assures that WAC won't simply pass them on to someone who does not meet the criteria), and promising that their use will always be used in ways that benefit the species as a whole, we then were approved a CITES import permit in the appeal.

However, this process took so long, that the two proposed female cubs had grown and were offered to another facility before they got too old. So we now had to file an amendment to our permit to change the individual cubs identities, which turned out to be a male and female to the same parents in a later litter.

Then we needed to make arrangements with the state of CA, which prohibits cheetahs without F&G Commission approval, regardless of whether you already hold F&G permits. Cheetahs were special and prohibited from import to the state, unless given special circumstances. This was due to years earlier some cheetahs had been brought to CA with a foreign parasite. So, upon guaranteeing that the cubs would be dipped and systemically treated for parasites prior to shipping and that hay or straw would not be used (to prevent the

*A scared Shaka  
hisses and  
bristles*



possible import of bugs that would impact our agriculture state) in the crates, we then had this brought before the Commission in Monterey, CA, and were approved.

We then had to arrange for an inspector at the airport and pick an airport for their arrival that was a Port Of Import Authority, in our case it was San Francisco. The flights had to be arranged with an extra permit required for England, because they were to change planes in London.

What a joyful night it was at midnight when those two chirping crates arrived and the sleepy inspector approved them for release! Two long years of bureaucracy paid off. And from that night on, the work and learning only had just begun...

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## *Cheetah Exercise Enhancer*

By Robert Turner, FCF Vice President

With this newsletter featuring the cheetah, I wanted to give an update on the cheetah exercise enhancer that I designed and am presently building. It is being built at "Cheetah Preservation and Research Center-USA" (CPRC-USA). My wife Pat and myself own and operate CPRC-USA, which is a 501c3 facility located in central Indiana.

Three years ago, I was at work and looking at several cat pictures that I had hung on the wall. One of those items on the wall was a Wildlife Conservation article about the Cheetah Conservation Fund's (CCF) 18,000-acre farm in Namibia Africa with a picture of Angel. This 18,000-acre farm was the results of Cathryn Hilker's Angel Fund set up in 1992 to honor Angel, a very special cheetah and the Cincinnati Zoo's first "cat ambassador." A catalyst in the search for suitable land for CCF was Cathryn Hilker, director of the zoo's Cat Ambassador Program. She and Angel traveled nationally and internationally to educate people on the plight of cheetahs in the wild. Funding for the farm purchase came mainly from a grant by Carl Hilker, Cathryn's husband. Cathryn's love for her departed Angel inspired her to form the Angel Fund (*see page 8 and back cover*).

When I would look at the picture of Angel in the Wildlife Conservation article, I would almost come to tears due to Angel not being among us anymore. I had never got to meet Angel, but like how Cathryn was inspired by Angel to start the Angel Fund, I also was inspired by Angel to try to do something to improve the health of the captive cheetah.

Captive cheetahs have medical problems that the free roaming cheetahs seem to have little problems with. I spent some time reading everything I could find about the medical problem of captive cheetahs. Gastritis of the intestine is one of seven or so medical problems of cheetahs over two years of age. Gastritis is one of the main causes of early death of the captive cheetah. Gastritis is not common in the wild cheetahs, but common in the captive cheetah. My research has lead me to believe that constant long term stress may be more of a problem then random short term stress. I feel the captive cheetah have constant long term stress due to confinement without proper stress reliever's verses the random short-term stress of the free roaming wild cheetah.

My theory to help the captive cheetah: duplicate the unique fast running of the wild cheetahs. I feel that the cheetah is the only animal on earth that has to run fast to properly survive. Their enlarged lungs and hearts are specifically designed for 65 to 70 mpr. running. Being a research engineer has taught me you have to properly identify the problem before you can solve a problem. In my opinion, the problem was lack of fast running of the captive cheetah. There are sub-factors that need to be solved, but lack of high-speed running is in my opinion the main cause of the medical problems.

My focus was how to duplicate the high-speed running of the wild cheetah. It took me 18 months to come up with a design that I feel will accomplish this high-speed running of the captive cheetah and for the past 12 months I have been building the cheetah exercise enhancer. The enhancer is approximately 80% complete.

The exercise enhancer will be a simple one-person operation, cost effective, and modular in construction. The modular construction allows for ease of assembly in the US and Africa. The exercise enhancer is unique and when finished, it will duplicate a gazelle running from a cheetah with all the speed and sharp turns. It will also allow for the cheetah food to be hung from the unit for the cheetah to run after and catch which duplicates the cheetah "chase and kill." This "chase and kill" is important to the rehab cheetahs at the centers like Cheetah Conservation Fund that Laurie Marker operates in Namibia, Africa.

I have taken on many difficult projects during my career in machine development and have seven US/International patents in machine design. This cheetah exercise project has by far been my most difficult project. There have been times when I felt it was a losing battle. At times I would make one step forward and then two steps backwards. Monte Francis, who is a FCF and MEFES member and also a research electrical engineer, has been helping me on the electronics. Just the other day after doing a test run with a new larger gearbox, we discovered the main drive motor was underpowered and we could get only 75% of the speed we wanted. We both felt very disappointed. Afterwards, Monte sat on the tail gate of his truck feeling very disappointed and I know what was on his mind. I know he felt, that maybe we need to give up on this system. That is not going to happen. It can't, as the cheetahs urgently need help. For the past three years, every moment I am awake, I am thinking about the cheetah exercise enhancer and how to solve some of the development problems. I have been consumed by this project. Believe me, if it was not for the cheetah, I would not be putting myself through all of this.

I am hoping by the time the FCF convention comes around; CPRC-USA will have an operating cheetah high-speed exercise enhancer. See you all at the FCF convention in Cincinnati.





# Angel - A Cheetah

By Cathryn Hilker

When I brought a young cheetah cub home from the Columbus Zoo in 1980, I had no idea how much my life would change. I had worked at the Cincinnati Zoo for many years, started an outreach program using native Ohio animals to reach out to area students and even raised a young lion and tiger cub for several months. But this was a new experience and as our, then Director, Edward Maruska said, to me "This cat could be long term". I don't think either one of us had any idea how "long term" it would turn out to be.

Angel lived for nearly 12 years and together we visited 15 major zoos as wildlife ambassadors, many local and national TV shows, including "Good Morning America", "Today", "Regis and Cathy Lee" and the "Tonight Show". We visited hundreds of local schools and thousands of students heard her purr and more importantly, heard the cheetah's story of survival.

I read once "you are forever responsible for what you have tamed". Angel made this very personal for me as her eyes, full of recognition, would meet mine as she rose to greet me each day when I arrived at our zoo. Her constant willingness to do as she was asked and the strong partner bond we developed made me realize early on, that the only way I could re-pay her life was to give back to her own kind, in the wild.



Don't miss Cathryn Hilker's presentation  
at the FCF Convention in Cincinnati.

My meeting and friendship with Dr. Laurie Marker, founder and director of the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia, Africa, allowed me to honor Laurie's efforts to save the wild cheetah. In remembrance of Angel, my husband and I were able to help purchase the first farm that became home to Laurie's Conservation efforts.

This vital connection continues today. The Zoo's Cat Ambassador Program continues to support Laurie's work in Africa. The Circle is complete; Angel has been honored in the most productive manner possible - a chance for all cheetahs.

The Zoo's current cheetah, Moya and Sahara, came up to our farm. Today, April 25, it was cool with a slight drizzle. Released into a large open field, these cats trained to chase a lure, were able to do as they were born to do. Hit speeds that, I guess, reach 50 miles per hour. What a joy to see those ears pinned flat, head lower, bright eyes focused intently, then the sliding abrupt stop, the quick whirl to snag the lure, the bite, sides heaving from the effort, feet planted firmly. That wonderful joy of doing what they do best - run!

I thank Angel every time I am privileged to witness this, every time I feel a rough, wet tongue on my arm, every time I can touch that spotted fur, every time I am honored by a friendly glance, every time I am allowed to touch a piece of the wild.

## From Angel

December 1992

By Cathryn Hilker, Angel's Trainer

*You gave me the green fields of Ohio,  
I always felt the soft browns of Africa  
I obeyed your words,  
I heard the sounds of the wild.  
Your hands touched my face,  
I felt the winds of my native land.  
I walked quietly by your side,  
I ran swiftly in my dreams,  
You looked into my eyes,  
I saw beyond your thoughts,  
I allowed you a glimpse into the wild,  
You must share what I so freely gave.*



## What to do when faced with a ban law and you own animals you love and don't want to give up

First, if you have a friendly ear of a sympathetic judge and/or commissioner, it helps. Much of a written law is open to interpretation. And while authorities have a duty to uphold and enforce any law, if you can speak with them about your animals and your desire to keep them and reach an understanding with them, then you have accomplished the first step in this process. Do this before laws take effect.

The case history below is a true story. This state's legislature passed a very sweeping legislative package, which required all counties to enforce. The specifics apply to this case only, however this information may be helpful in many other states and counties because there is a common thread in the list of exemptions that are almost universally included in ban laws, since they are all written by these same people who want to be exempted.

A useful ingredient to the success of this plan is to have the desire of county judge and his commissioners to help find a way out of an oppressive law, which they essentially don't agree with and don't want to enforce. In the case in question, the law left this county only two choices: Ban or regulate "Dangerous Wild Animals".

The Attorney General of the state in question published a statement in which he was asked to interpret the application of the law and the legality of "grand fathering" existing situations. Not surprisingly, his finding was that the commissioners court of every county that had not entirely prohibited the "ownership, possession, confinement, or care" of dangerous wild animals within its jurisdiction is required to have adopted regulations necessary to implement and administer the certificate of registration program. A commissioner's court may not exempt from the requirements of these regulations any person or organization not specifically exempted under this law. Further any resident of the county may bring an action in mandamus in a district court of the county to compel the commissioner's court to adopt the certificate of registration program.

As you can plainly read above, the State Attorney General's office vehemently opposed any and all alternatives except banning. Not surprising, their ruling was that there was no leeway allowed. Counties should ban. Counties were stuck between a rock and a hard place regardless of their good intentions.

This approach was a little different. One must read the law carefully and look for interpretations and things that even an attorney might miss. These are called loopholes. Most every law has them. This law allowed exemptions. This case centered their efforts on two that were included and obtainable for them and their animal.

The exemption allowed by law was for "an injured, infirm, orphaned, or abandoned dangerous wild animal while being rehabilitated, treated or cared for by a licensed veterinarian, an incorporated human society or animal shelter, or a person who holds a rehab permit under....."

Rehab wouldn't work in this state, because it requires the animal (pet) eventually be released or euthanized. The animal in question was a full-grown large exotic feline - declawed, raised from a kitten. Rehab permits were useless.

### The Solution...

The key was the interpretation of the clause that allowed an exemption for an animal that was "being treated, in the care of a licensed veterinarian." This person obtained the services of three attorneys to give a legal opinion on this exemption; only one was on the feline list. They all agreed the language was vague, and subject to specific interpretation by a court of law. The first point of importance is that the state recognized that vets are professionals, like doctors. If a vet decrees that something is.... then what politician is entitled to challenge that professional opinion?

The second point is the definition of "being in the care of" a licensed veterinarian. This does not mean the animal is at the vet office, or in his cage, or on his operating table, or even under his control or direct supervision. With that definition, this person proceeded to create a letter and again the attorneys reviewed it. The letter was addressed to the County Judge, the County Commissioners and the Sheriff, who in that county is the animal control officer. They had already coordinated with their veterinarian who is sympathetic, and he gladly signed it. It says:

*Gentlemen:*

*This letter is written to bring your attention to the veterinary care which I am providing as a licensed practicing state accredited Veterinarian for a specific animal, and the legal exemption provided for by a recent State Law, and the subsequent County ordinance which followed.*

*Specifically, in accordance with Sec. 822.102 paragraph (5), I am caring for an injured, infirm, orphaned or abandoned "dangerous wild animal" and will be indefinitely. A copy of that specific exemption is included with this letter. The animal,....(animal's name) is a .....(species), the owner is .....(your name), and I am licensed by the state to practice veterinary medicine and in good standing with current state laws and statutes.*

*This animal has been and will be continuously treated and monitored for various possible maladies to include complications from onychectomy, (declawing), vitamin and diet consultation, possible arthritis and stress. This animal has been a patient of mine since*

*its arrival in .....(your state) over.....years ago. In my professional opinion, this animal's medical needs are best met with periodic office and home visits, much like many of the animals I treat including horses, cows, etc.*

*The animal is doing well, and needs to remain in my professional care for the foreseeable future. As such, this feline is exempt from the recent regulations. Please notify me of any intended changes in exotic animal regulations, or exemptions to them.*

*Sincerely yours,*

This letter was written, signed and presented on the veterinarian's letterhead stationary to the county attorney, and anyone else with any authority. His opinion stands today. Essentially, this animal is exempt, until and unless if overturned by a suit, and a ruling in a court of law.

This method has so far resulted in a score of several "dangerous wild animals" saved in this state and the numbers are increasing.

#### **Another approach to this problem.....**

A second exemption, which will provide further legal protection for yourself and your animal in the same situation, is provided herein. In the same paragraph of the same state law, contains the statement that an animal in an "....incorporated Animal Shelter or Humane Society" is exempt. Research showed that the term "animal shelter" in this state holds specific definitions. Certain requirements must be met, certain conditions attended to, etc., etc. Although it is possible to be an animal shelter, it has requirements, which the county or local judicial and law enforcement branches have the power to regulate.

A humane society, however, is not strictly defined. Neither type of organization is required to be chartered as non-profit, and in fact non-profit status is seen as difficult to obtain, maintain, keep and prove. An "S" type corporation was less complicated to the author of this article, and they were thoroughly familiar with the advantages, disadvantages, etc. With the help of an attorney, they formed another "S" type corporation. This one is a legal Corporation in their state, duly registered and recognized by the State, and carries Federal ID#, etc. It was named .....(Fill in the blank).....Humane Society ( in honor of the cat being protected.) The charter is framed on the wall, and of course it carries an official seal. The address is the same address as their home, which happens to be the home of the protected animal. You too can own a corporation.

No county or local government official knows about the corporation, and they have no need to. The State knows about it however, since they chartered it before the deadline of the enforcement of the dangerous wild animal ban laws. The animal resides within the corporation, and is therefore exempt and protected. Being exempt from the law, this animal is therefore exempt from other items within the law such as insurance, minimum caging requirements, and registration.

The author is President of the Corporation, and the only stockholder. Nomination of a President of the Board of Directors was no problem, as was writing bylaws. The vote was overwhelming in favor of the author. The Corporation is legal, correct, and immune to most. Furthermore, it provides certain rights and a shield of protection available only to Corporations, which individuals do not possess. Property of the corporation, i.e. the animal, enjoys this protection as well.

The Corporation saves exotic animals, but not just by traditional rescue methods. Rather, this Corporation provides advice, consulting and coordination services to those owners and animals in this state and elsewhere that benefit from those services. Additionally, the Corporation can donate goods and services to those in need. To date the corporation claims 12 saved cat victories.



Cathryn Hilker and Laurie Marker bring cheetah (and furry friend) to the country's attention. Read articles written by both of these dedicated conservationists in this issue of the FCF newsletter.

Cats are like greatness—  
some people are born  
into cat-loving families,  
some achieve cats, and  
some have cats thrust  
upon them.

*William H. A. Carr*

# **WILD FELINE TRAINING SERIES**

**By Jessi Clark-White**

This is the first in a series of articles on exotic cat training. Since the needs of feline owners and the temperaments of the animals vary so widely, I will be placing a lot of emphasis on how animals learn. Rather than setting down instructions on how to teach specific exercises, my initial goal will be to arm you with the knowledge you need to design your own unique training programs.

The first two articles will deal with terminology and “learning theory,” the basic principles that govern how all animals (and humans) learn. While these may seem overly technical at first, please bear with me because this information will be useful down the road. After that we’ll move on to other topics.

I would like to hear from the readers of this newsletter what training topics you would like to see covered. Teaching your cat to enter a travel crate was one suggestion; what would you like to see? How to modify unwanted behaviors, clicker training, training equipment, specific training topics, and training book reviews are all subjects I’ve considered.

## ***AN INTRODUCTION TO OPERANT CONDITIONING***

Much of the active training you do is based on operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is what happens when an animal learns that certain behavior influences what happens to him. Through operant conditioning, the cat learns that by obeying your request to go into his travel crate he can make something good happen to him, like dinner. Likewise, he can avoid something unpleasant if he refrains from pouncing on his sleeping human’s face in the dead of night!

We go to work because we have learned that it results in a paycheck. We avoid touching hot burners because we have learned that doing so is a painful experience. The dog learns that by barking at the scary intruder on his property, he can cause that person to run away. The cat learns that if he meows, he may be fed or let outside. These are all the results of operant conditioning.

In operant conditioning, there are four things that affect the animal’s behavior: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment. These terms are often misunderstood and misused.

## **REINFORCEMENT**

Reinforcement is defined as anything that makes a behavior MORE likely to happen again.

### **POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

Makes a behavior more likely to happen again by providing something good or pleasant when the behavior occurs. This is often referred to as a reward. Some typical examples would be the feline who pounces on its prey and gets dinner, the dog sits on command and gets a treat, or the person who checks the mailbox and finds a card from an old friend.

### **NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT**

Makes a behavior more likely to happen again by removing or stopping something unpleasant when the behavior occurs. This is not the same as punishment! The animal learns that by performing a certain behavior, it can make something nasty go away. Typical examples would be a person shutting a window to stop the cold wind from blowing in, a cat scratching you to foil your attempts to give it a pill, or the horse who bucks off an annoying rider. All of these behaviors are likely to be repeated, because they succeeded in getting rid of something bad.

## **PUNISHMENT**

Makes a behavior LESS likely to happen again by providing negative consequences for the behavior.

### **POSITIVE PUNISHMENT**

This sounds like a contradiction in terms, but is simply the scientific term for something bad happening to the animal when a behavior is performed. Examples would be a cat getting sprayed with water when it jumps on the counter, or the driver speeding down the road who hits a telephone pole. These behaviors create bad results and are therefore less likely to be repeated.



## NEGATIVE PUNISHMENT

Negative punishment involves taking away something good when a behavior is performed, i.e., a piece of food being withdrawn if the cat tries to swipe it from you with his claws, the drunk driver who loses his license, or the tiger who misjudges his leap and fails to catch dinner. The behaviors that result in the loss of good things are less likely to be repeated.

**These definitions can be somewhat difficult to remember, but the following pointers may be helpful:**

**Reinforcement**, whether positive or negative, perpetuates a behavior and makes it more likely to happen again.

**Punishment**, whether positive or negative, decreases a behavior and makes it less likely to happen again.

**Positive (+)** does not mean good. The word refers to actively doing something or adding something to the situation.

**Negative (-)** does not mean bad. The word refers to removing something from the situation. Think of these two terms in the light of addition or subtraction, rather than good or bad.

## NEXT ISSUE: AN INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

*Jessi Clark-White is a professional dog behaviorist, emergency dispatcher, and first-time exotic cat owner. She specializes in working with dogs who have severe behavior problems such as fear and aggression. Her previous articles have appeared in DogSports Magazine, the AKC Gazette, Off Lead, Forward!, NADOI News, and The Siuslaw News. The lack of detailed information on servals and the success of her training web site [www.K-911dogtraining.com](http://www.K-911dogtraining.com) led her to establish <http://www.africanserval.com/>. Article copyright 2003 by Jessi Clark-White.*



## My FCF Husbandry Course Experience

By: Sara Schimke

May 6, 2003

Aside from the fact that it was the first time for me to get away from home and family in years (phew), I was so excited and nervous about attending the FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course. I arrived in Terre Haute, IN quite late the night before and only managed a few hours sleep before the next day's event.

Lack of sleep didn't affect me at all though, because my emotions and adrenaline were high enough to compensate. I couldn't wait to meet the "web-friends" in person that I have been in contact with via the internet e-lists for quite some time. It was great to finally put faces with names during breaks. So I put on my happy face and thinking cap preparing for the 8 hour class.

I learned so much from the various topics covering everything from the different species of wild felines, to safety and training techniques, and everything in-between. A couple of times during the course I silently groaned when controversial topics came up in regards to de-clawing and nutrition; expecting conflict. But to my surprise the information presented was in a very professional and non-biased manner and gave little room for conflicting personal opinions. I was very impressed! The presentation included a lot of fantastic photos shown on a big screen in front of the class. I especially liked all the cage design pictures. Even though the course book didn't offer much as a future reference manual initially, it had plenty of spaces in it for notes and extra info to be jotted down during the course for later use. I definitely took advantage of it, and the book now sits among others on my feline book shelf section at home. I was amazed at how the class is able to cram all the various topics and important information into a mere 8 hours. Towards the end of class I started to worry about the final exam and how I would do as the time got near. But due to their course format with reviews, I found it much easier to retain all the information and passed the exam with a decent grade (an A!). I take great pride in the certificate I received!

Overall, it was a fantastic course, the instructors did a wonderful job, I learned much, made some nice friends, and when it was all over with my brain was SO full of feline information I thought it would explode (hehe)! I would definitely do it again in the future if I'm able. I suggest to anyone that hasn't had the opportunity to attend an FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course to please do so. Whether you are simply interested in wild felines or a seasoned wild feline keeper/owner/whatever you are sure to learn some valuable and beneficial information from the course.

~Sara Schimke, Manistee, MI USA  
[sschimke@chartermi.net](mailto:sschimke@chartermi.net)

## **Status Report on Several Federal and State Bills Affecting Private Ownership of Wild Felines**

Lynn Culver, FCF Legal Affairs Director

Congress has before it two bills designed to stop the interstate pet trade in large felines. This is the first year of a two-year session. The session will not be over until 2004. There is little need for these bills, as 5 of the 7 species listed are already protected by the ESA from interstate pet trade. And if this bill passes, there is an exemption for USDA dealers who could engage in interstate commerce of non-endangered lions and cougars and then resell them to customers in their home states who want them for pets. It is a total waste of the taxpayer's time and money and another example of the mentality that wants to fix every problem by passing another law. A much better approach is to enforce the existing laws we already have, including the ESA that already has a provision to prohibit any endangered animal from being used in the interstate pet trade.

ACTIVE: Federal Bill HR1006 Title: Captive Wildlife Safety Act, A bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to further the conservation of certain wildlife species. It would prohibit interstate commerce of 7 big cat species for pet purposes. Last Action: 3/6/2003: Referred to the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans. 3/6/2003: Executive Comment Requested from Interior. Weekly postings on committee agenda, usually Fridays at:  
<http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/108cong/fish/fwomtg.htm>

ACTIVE Federal Bill S.269 Summary: Identical bill as above Last Action: 1/30/2003: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works. [http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/one\\_item\\_and\\_teasers/committee\\_hearings.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/one_item_and_teasers/committee_hearings.htm)

### **STATE BILL UPDATES:**

DEAD: Washington HB1151 Summary: Originally this bill was "Regulating the keeping of dangerous wild animals". Then it was modified into a study proposal and sent to the Committee on Health and Long Term care. "A study shall be conducted concerning the safety of the private ownership of exotic wild animals. The study shall be conducted by two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House and two members of the Senate, who are appointed by the president of the Senate. The four appointed members shall involve interested parties as appropriate. The study shall include identifying animals which may be considered dangerous as pets, the potential harm these animals may cause if privately owned, and ways in which local jurisdictions and public agencies may act to protect the public against possible health and safety threats of owning wild animals."

Last Action: In the Senate -Apr 27 by resolution, returned to House Rules Committee for third reading. Currently the Washington Legislators are in recess until May 12th when they will reconvene for a special 30-day session. Special session is for covering budget items or bills that were part of the cut-off resolution, where topics are listed to be eligible for discussion during the upcoming special session on May 12th. HB1151 was not part of that list. This bill received a massive amount of attention from the exotic feline community, including Washington residents, FCF chapter members, FCF national and the Phoenix group. Jeanne Hall spearheaded a internet Alert list to keep everyone informed and she and others attended several public hearings on this bill.

STAGNANT: Oregon HB 3065 Summary: Relating to exotic animals; appropriating money; declaring an emergency. Last Action: 03/17 (H) Referred to Judiciary with subsequent referral to Ways and Means. It's still sitting in Judiciary committee at this time and hasn't made it to the Ways and Means committee. Since the bill hasn't had a public hearing yet it would be extremely rare for it to continue forward. No deadline for session is set, but they are hoping to wrap things up no later than June 6th of this year. See below link for weekly Judiciary Committee agenda.  
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/03reg/agenda/webagendas.htm>

WITHDRAWN: Minnesota Bill: SF0769 Short Description: Dangerous animals possession and ownership restrictions Last Action: 04/28/2003 Withdrawn from Agriculture, General Legislation and Veterans Affairs 04/28/2003 Returned to author

ENTERED: Minnesota House Bill HF1593 was introduced on April 30, 2003 and after the first reading was introduced to Health and Human Services Policy. Short description of HF 1593 is Dangerous animal ownership limitations provided, registration required, and criminal penalties imposed.

ENTERED: Minnesota Senate Bill SF 1530 was introduced into the 83rd Legislative Session (2003-2004) May 2, 2003 and assigned to Agriculture, General Legislation and Veterans Affairs Committee. This is nearly the text as SF0769 that went nowhere in the last session. (and also virtually the same bill text introduced to Arkansas, Washington and Oregon) To read

the text and track their progress, plug in HF 1593 in the House search engine and SF 1530 in the Senate Search engine at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.asp> These two bills are not going to be addressed in this current session, but look for them in early January 2004, when it will be necessary to mount a serious opposition, or better yet, find a sponsor to back an FCF model for state regulations bill of our own.

DEAD Arkansas Bill Status: HB2857 Sponsor: Jackson To regulate the ownership and possession of certain large carnivores and to prohibit the ownership and possession of certain large carnivores. Apr 17 2003, regular session adjourned, and all bills not approved, died at that time. The Arkansas legislature reconvenes in May for a special session to approve budget items and it is possible, however very unlikely, that this bill could be entered into the agenda, same as could happen in the Washington HB 1150 bill, but with the vocal opposition received last month, I doubt it. Residents are urged to keep watch.

Interesting back round on this bill from FCF member Julie Roper, University of Arkansas student: Julie writes: I am the first to graduate from the UALR mediation program. I will list as a mediator. My name should appear on the Arkansas Supreme Court ADR Commission roster of mediators beginning sometime in June. You should be able to go to the court web and see me listed then.

Concerning Jackson's bill HB 2857, I spoke to the attorney who claimed to have written this bill, though I called him on that lie and pointed out that same bill exists in Minnesota, Oregon and Washington where it is also being aggressively opposed. He backed down then. Apparently Senators and Representatives have a pool of attorneys they can ask to write up bills on any subject - these people might craft something from scratch, or they just do a legislative search and find a bill from another state and copy it.

This attorney was in my class racking up continuing education credits. He quickly admitted he did not "write" the bill as he originally claimed. He went on to explain that when Rep Jackson called he asked for a bill he could sponsor to regulate the "big cats people like the nut in Elkins." Nelson, this attorney, just put it in the search program they use and took the first hit he linked and tailored it to be mostly a cat prohibition since the Elkins trauma was specific to lions.

I was amazed he offered for class consumption when asked why not prohibit pythons, or boa constrictors, or wolves .... He said, "I originally had wolves in the copy that went to Jackson first but he has a brother or uncle or someone that has wolves to he sent it back to me to take wolves off the list."

At another point in the class he told everyone that he tried to get Arkansas Game and Fish to endorse the bill and they told him they didn't want their name associated with it but he had to write an exclusion for them or they would end up having to force the rewrite. He said, "So I put in their exemption on the last round before we sent it up."

He admitted knowing nothing about the issue other than the Elkin incident (four lions roamed loose for 48 hours before being shot -local large cat facility owner and former USDA licensed educational exhibitor and Safari Park operator, claimed they were dumped out on him by someone wishing to be rid of them) and that Jackson wanted a bill. I asked him if he knew there were groups like FCF that taught and advocated responsible ownership and captive husbandry. He shrugged and said, "That's irrelevant." I countered with, "I always thought it was better to be informed before you request legislation on a subject...". He had no response.

In my case analysis presentation I had already run down the list of positions of the owners and had provided everyone a copy of the FCF mission statement and owner pledge, on the tri-fold FCF brochure. He seemed stuck in defending the permit fees, and liability insurance so I gave them an earful about the lack of available or affordable liability coverage and pointed out permitting every year- each cat, \$250 was excessive and detracted from the quality of life I can provide my cats. The rest of the class looked at him like he was the bad guy while I told him about the size of my cats' containment area and the cave we had excavated for them...

I asked him why restrict animal placement to sanctuaries designated for the sheriff as resources. Why not allow for a bank of registered private owners that could qualify for temporary neutral placement? He did not even remember that the bill locked the sheriff into placing any confiscated animals into a sanctuary or zoo. I asked him why the sheriff was used at all and he said it was because they were the only ones who would agree to handle permitting. With that I asked him to consider WHY the sheriff would be willing when no one else was???? When he could not even produce a guess I told the class that MY sheriff would agree knowing he never intended to allow anyone a permit because they lack resources for inspecting, expertise on exotics, and would not want the publicity they fear may someday be targeting them for granting a permit.

I asked him to explain how "his" bill would have prevented the Elkins incident. He said "it might not have prevented but it would have given a method of holding the guy accountable and allowed them to trace the cats to him." I asked him if he knew the cats were allegedly brought here from out of state so Arkansas permitting would not be traceable to him and that Arkansas already has laws prohibiting the release of ANY non indigenous animals into the wild— but he broke the law and

*continued on page 22*



## 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual FCF Convention



Plans are really coming together for this year's convention in Cincinnati, Ohio and one thing is for sure, it's going to be an event you won't want to miss! We are calling this a 4F Event because it is going to be four days of Friends, Fun, Feasts, and Felines.

FCF friends from all over the country are already sending in their reservations. It is looking like this is going to be one of the best attended Conventions ever. The more the merrier! Be sure to get your reservation in before July 1 when the registration fee goes up. Reservations will be accepted after July 1, but there is no need to procrastinate. Check for the insert in this newsletter and send it to:

FCF c/o Harold Epperson  
3310 Remington Drive  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46227-8126

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### The fees are:

FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course	FCF members \$65.00, non-members \$90
Convention Registration	\$95.00
Late Convention Registration (after July 1)	\$110.00
Children 6-18	\$75.00
Children 5 and under	Free
Single Day Registrations-	
Thursday or Sunday	\$20
Friday or Saturday	\$50

A full slate of fun and informative events are scheduled.

### Wednesday, August 6

**8 am - 6 pm-** FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course- A full day course to teach the basics of keeping wild cats including diet, building cages, regulations, emergency protocols, and much more. Separate registration fee required. (Lunch on your own)

**1 pm -11pm-** Hospitality Room open- Registration and check in. An informal area for everyone to meet, chat and meet the feline friends, many are planning to attend including servals, caracals, a snow leopard, bobcat, and others. Also, view items for the auction and raffle while registering for the door prizes. Several displays from vendors providing for exotic cat needs will also be on exhibit. Free non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks.

### Thursday, August 7

**8 am-** FCF Board of Directors Meeting- FCF members are invited to attend but participation is limited to BOD members

**9 am- Noon-** Hospitality Room Open

**2 pm- FCF** General Membership Meeting - An open meeting for the membership to express their views and ideas for the organization. Afterwards, we'll break down into working groups to further explore ideas for the future.

**6 pm-11pm- Welcome** Reception in Hospitality Room- Opening comments from the FCF Board and a chance to meet and mix with all in attendance. Free drinks and food to satisfy any appetite.



Hope to see everyone there!!!!!!



## **Friday, August 8**

**9:00 am - 5:00 pm** - A visit to the world famous Cincinnati Zoo. A day you will not want to miss!! View the spectacular collection of animals and botanicals at your leisure. A special highlight will be a presentation given only for the FCF convention attendees by Cathryn Hilker and her Cat Ambassador Program friends, featuring Sahara, the cheetah, a serval, a Canadian lynx, cougar kittens, and an ocelot. Meet them all up close and personal after the show. Times will be set throughout the day for special behind-the-scenes tours guided by the keepers of various areas. See them all or just your favorites. You **cannot** miss the cat area tour which includes white lions, white tigers, Indo-Chinese tigers, snow leopards, Siberian lynx, bobcat, serval, clouded leopards, cougars, ocelots, pallas cats, pampas cats, jaguarundi, caracal, fishing cats, sand cats, margays, golden cats, and cheetah! Nowhere else can you see this many species of cats at one place. We will also enjoy a picnic lunch at the zoo.

**5:00 pm - 7:00 pm** You don't want to miss this! What can we do for a finale after a day at the Zoo? Get ready to witness the speed and majesty of one of the fastest creatures on earth! FCF members have been invited to Narnia, the farm of Carl and Cathryn Hilker! Narnia, known as the enchanted land of talking animals and valiant battles, from C.S. Lewis' classic tales, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, is the magical setting for the release of Saraha and Moya, which means "moving spirit," the word the Xhosa people of Africa use for "wind." Indeed it will be a moving, spirited, and breath taking experience as we witness these great felines chase lures at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour. Be sure to buy some high-speed film for your camera for this event! While at Cathryn's, we'll have refreshments to tide you over until we get back to the hotel. Dinner will be on your own.

Upon our return to the hotel, the hospitality room will be open to talk and re-live the events of the day.

## **Saturday, August 9**

**9:00 am - 5:00 pm**- Presentations by guest speakers, with lunch on your own. Topics covered are protecting our rights, feline nutrition, enrichment ideas and two authors share their personal accounts with many exotic felines.

Polly Britton of the Ohio Animal Owners Association will talk about legislation and what we can do to insure fair and acceptable laws.

Tracy Wilson will talk about FCF's conservation program and give updates on the Playa de Oro project in Ecuador.

Rich Freitag of Central Nebraska Diets will provide information on feeding a commercially prepared meat diet.

Debbie Hoffman of Pet Ag will speak on milk replacers for exotic feline kittens and other Pet Ag products.

Gloria Johnson will regale us on her soon-to-be-published book about her life with cats

Laura Carpenter, cat keeper at Cincinnati Zoo, will tell us about methods for enrichment used at the zoo.

Cathryn Hilker, author and Cincinnati zoo educator, speaks about her involvement with cheetahs and other cats.

**6:30 pm**- Banquet Dinner and Auction- The social event of the year in the feline world! There will be a cash bar social hour followed by a delicious banquet meal. Afterwards, we'll settle back for the awards ceremony where the presentation of the 37th Annual LIOC Lotty Award will be given as well as the Newsletter Reporter of the Year, Newsletter Photo Contest winner announced, other special presentations, and raffle winners drawn. The incomparable JB Anderson will then take centerstage as the auctioneer for the annual benefit auction. Who knows who may show up as his lovely assistant this year?

## **Sunday, August 10**

**8:30 am - 10:30 am** Banquet Breakfast Meeting- a buffet breakfast with all the fixings followed by announcement of the time and place for the 2004 FCF Convention along with farewells.

*In addition to all of that, we'll be having door prize drawings of items donated by corporate sponsors.*

Anyone wishing to donate items for the auction is heartily encouraged. Not only will your generosity go to benefit the Feline Conservation Federation and the cats it represents but an added bonus is that the amount of the donation is 100% tax deductible for you. You can either bring these items with you to the convention or you can mail them ahead of time to Robert Bean, 865-938-0702, or Kevin Chambers, 812-397-2302.

The hotel is the Radisson Hotel Cincinnati Airport. Rates are \$78 for our attendees until July 22, when our discount expires and rates go back up. Rooms can be reserved through Radisson at [www.radisson.com](http://www.radisson.com) or by phone at 1-800-333-3333. The hotel's local number is 859-371-6166. Be sure to mention the FCF Convention to get our special rates. Charlotte Adams at All-Ways Travel, 1-800-552-5611, 865-675-1800, or [ca.allways@wspan.com](mailto:ca.allways@wspan.com), can also arrange for hotel reservations, discount airfare, or car rental for our attendees. For those wishing to bring along their wildcat friends, a current health certificate and approved Kentucky import permit will be required. Applications are available from Lynn Culver, 479-394-5235 or [culvers@voltage.net](mailto:culvers@voltage.net).

## **Barbara Wilton Remembered**

*Longtime FCF member and Chapter  
founder passes away March 20, 2003*

Barbara Wilton passed away March 20, 2003. In the 33 years she has been a member of this organization, she has served in many capacities, including Director of Member Services, Vice President and then President. In the 1980's and early 1990's as Director of Member Services, Barbara was often times the first friendly contact a new member had with our organization. She welcomed countless cat owners and fanciers and made them feel a part of this club. As Vice President, she served under Ken Hatfield until his death in 1995, when she assumed the office of president and then represented our organization for 2 more terms, until she declined re-nomination in 2000.

Barbara and her husband Herb helped to found the Oregon Educational Exotic Feline Club branch of the Long Island Ocelot Club. They were active in work parties and "speak outs". Barbara and Herb were each awarded the Lotty in 1981 for their many years of service to the Long Island Ocelot Club and for hosting two of the conventions in Portland and for helping so many felines over the years.

Barbara was a regular attendee of conventions, and she served on the Convention committee for nine years helping this organization's annual get together be successful yearly events, before she retired from this position in 2002. She was a tremendous asset to this organization. Over the years Herb and Barbara cared for ocelot, bobcat and cougar, and provided shelter for felines in need. She will be remembered by her warm smile, friendly nature and abundant knowledge of felines and their husbandry. Many will miss her presence at this year's Convention.

Letters of sympathy can be mailed to:

Herb Wilton  
7800 SE Luther Rd.  
Portland, OR 97206



*Barbara Wilton at the Las Vegas LIOC-ESCF Convention*

### ***Membership Bestowed in Her Honor***

To honor this wonderful friend and all her efforts to help this organization grow, the Board of Directors of the Feline Conservation Federation has proposed an annual gift FCF membership in memory of Barbara Wilton, and this year's recipient nomination is Cathryn Hilker.

***(continued from page 19)***

did it anyway. As a last thought I added that the same sort of bill has been passed in other states, and that may well have been the cause of that guys desperation to find somewhere to dump his cats. The imposition of a badly researched bill cost 4 lions their life and endangered the public! The class hated him by then. He was beaten by the end of the exchange and had lost interest in trying to defend the bill he knew almost nothing about.

I am trying to get in touch with my rep in Hot Springs to meet with him and ask him to sponsor mediation (which I will organize among other mediators I know) or just outright sponsor a containment bill drafted by FCF members!!! I have high hopes that we can beat them to the punch- we know the topic better, we can make it easy for a reasonable person to accept the logic of a good bill, we can use our energy on this. No congressman really wants to put any energy in this subject that is why we keep getting resubmitted bad bills.

Julie Roper

## Lakota's Courage

by Gloria Johnson

My 4 year old female cougar, Ashukalee (Sugar) was very sick as a baby and was never socialized (by my choice) to do public appearances away from home. Therefore to do the educational programs I so wanted I needed a baby. This is why I came to own Lakota. He came from C.W. Wathen's Chestatee Wildlife Preserve in Georgia.

When I first saw him, he seemed so fragile I was almost afraid to pick him up. It was as if I'd never done this before. Lakota was only 4 weeks old – so young! This was *my* baby and I would not be giving him back as I do the tigers I work with for Robert Baudy. I had also never had a single baby. With no sibling, he looked to me for everything. And I fell into a paranoid "new mom" syndrome that had me stressed at every hiccup. Fortunately I had friends from the FCF, like Bobbie and Jessica Bean, Mindy Stinner, Lynn Culver and Tracy Wilson, who were always there to take my calls and reassure me.

He was a happy baby, playful and energetic and very affectionate and as the weeks passed, I saw him change quickly. He came home with little nubby ears, like a teddy bear. Soon afterwards his ears were bigger than him! At 7 lbs. he ruled the roost. Since he had proved he knew how to use the litter box, I let him roam the house. He loved my house cats and he loved to sleep with me.

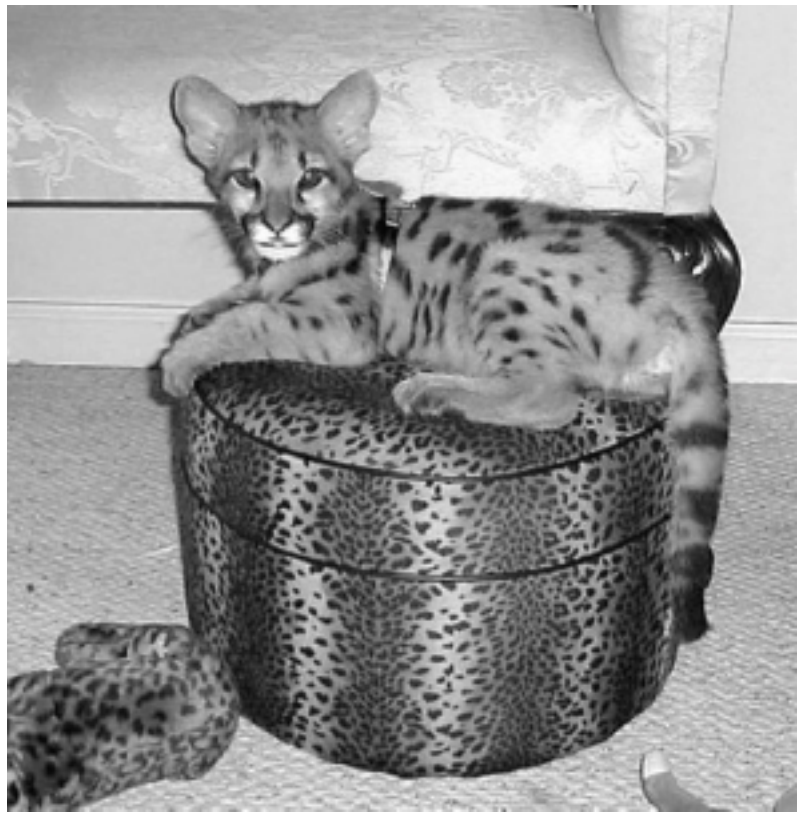
Lakota was very smart. His bottles were heated in the microwave and any time he heard it beep he would come running in anticipation of food. He took to the harness and leash very easily and fell in love with Sugar when he met her.

Our first visit to a school was to a private school for gifted children – the brightest of the bright. I was as very nervous but they were warm, polite and helpful and he was very well behaved and sweet. He got in my lap and hung his little paws over my knee and watched them all very fascinated. I left so fulfilled! They made me feel so appreciated and they understood the message I was trying to share with them. I received the most beautiful thank you letters too.

Our next class visit would require a three hour drive and an overnight stay. My mother went with us to help drive. The previous April I had been diagnosed with a broken L5 vertebrae and was healing from a bone graft and I still was having severe and constant pain. This appearance would involve about 5 times as many students as our first time but also went very well.

After my surgery in April, it had been Sugar who inspired me to get out of bed. Pain was relentless. It was worse than before the surgery. The only thing that gave me any solace was to lie with her. To be close to her, to feel her warmth and hear her purr, as if she knew I was in pain and not feel I was a burden to her as I felt I was to all of the people in my life. But try as I might I felt myself slipping quickly into the deep depression that comes from chronic pain. I was definitely at the end of my rope. Yet I kept trying to keep up with my school programs, training of Lakota and writing my book which has been purchased by Lyons Press. I had responsibilities that must be met for my life to be complete. But truthfully, I didn't know if I could. Even in the best of times pain was stealing all of my joy.

In November the annual Thomasville Plantation Wildlife Arts Show was coming to Georgia. Mark Kelso, one of my favorite painters, would stay with me so he could photograph and sketch Sugar and Lakota. C.W. would also stay with me because he was providing all the animals for Jim Fowler and I would help C.W. take care of and show the animals. I would once again be reunited with my favorite white tiger who used to sleep in my bed, but was now 350 lbs. I should have been thrilled, but wrenching pain just the week before had me on the floor in tears wondering how I would ever manage to perform all the duties of hostess, animal keeper, trainer, exhibitor and teacher. I prayed this weakness would pass and I would find the old me again. All of my guests arrived as planned and the first day showing the animals with Jim Fowler was a huge success. As Jim spoke C.W. and I arose out of the ground on a rising stage behind him in with surprise animals. The white tiger, of course, was the exciting finale!



*Today, a playful Lakota has recovered from a bone disease that almost ended his life*



On the second day of the show, I decided to bring Lakota. His sister had come with her playmate, a baby African lion. They played affectionately and gently. All agreed it would be good socialization to put Lakota with them. I also sat inside to “chaperone.” I wasn’t very pleased with his unfriendliness towards them, but they ignored it. CW and I stayed with them for about an hour until it was time to move his big trailer truck onto a football stadium. This day the show would be outside since the weather was beautiful. For that short time I was unable to see my baby and was very nervous. Everyone reassured me things would be fine. Lakota was the last baby big cat to come out. He was clearly distressed. I didn’t want to show him, but there was no time for change of plans. As I carried him out behind the others he bit down on my hand very hard and was growling. There were 3 animals on stage, so I quietly stepped aside and put him back in my van which was parked close by.

When we got home he went straight to sleep. The next morning however I was horrified for Lakota could not walk! He was struggling to get up but could not move his back legs! I immediately took him to my veterinarian. X-rays, however, showed that his pelvis was cracked! I was beside myself with guilt. I had literally “thrown him to the lions.” Dr. Winter tried to calm me by telling me he would have done the same thing and that the socialization should have been good for Lakota. He instructed me to keep him confined for 2 weeks and then to only let him have one room for 4 more weeks. I set up my walk-in shower for him. I lined it with several soft comforters and pillows. It is a large shower and I stayed with him to help him roll over, use his litter box and eat and drink and I slept with him in the shower stall.

I immediately cancelled our school commitments for the next two months. I could only hope that by February we could reschedule with the schools despite the lack of socialization this would mean for Lakota. The realization then struck me: this could be just like Sugar! It could bond us tighter than normal, but make him fear others. I pushed this out of my mind as I cared for him. The children sent “Get Well Soon” cards.

On the fourth night of Lakota’s recovery I had a chair collapse under me. I landed right on my surgical site. By morning I was in searing pain and feared I had hurt my healing bone graft, so I left Lakota for the first time to see my Doctor. When I returned I found him in such a state that I knew his pain had tremendously increased. Another x-ray revealed something unbelievable! Lakota’s left leg was fractured so badly that the bottom part of the femur was pushed up inside the top part which had splintered and sort of “flowered” open. Dr. Winter began to tell me that this would require wiring all the broken pieces and placing a pin down his entire leg.

During surgery the Doctor discovered that Lakota’s bones were so soft that he could squeeze them with his fingers. That, in fact, the pin that he had placed down the femur usually requires a drill to exit the bottom plate of the bone, but that in Lakota’s case he could push it right through! His blood level read normal to high for calcium. The calcium supplement wasn’t being absorbed by his bones!

When I brought Lakota home still unconscious, I put him in his “bed” on the floor and started making calls. First I called Dr. Tom Callahan of the USDA. He knew of a similar situation with two brother tigers. One brother tiger was perfectly healthy, the other was described like Lakota. He was constantly fracturing and breaking bones. The owner used the same calcium supplement I use. He decided to leave the healthy tiger on it, but to change the sick one’s brand. This did the trick for them. I changed to Primal Cal, made by the same manufacturer as Oasis.

While I tended to him, he would let me slide him off of the wet blankets to change the bedding without too much fuss so I assume that pulling that bone back out into its proper position probably relieved some pinched nerves and greatly reduced his pain. I also kept him mildly sedated to still him. He was a very good patient, but I feared that during the time it would take to improve his bone density he would be breaking others. He had about 30 metal sutures or “staples” on his surgical site and a long pin which would come out in about 8 weeks. He looked so pitiful with his shaved leg and all of the apparatus that it was heart wrenching to look at that part of him. I often wonder now, if this was fate’s way of taking my mind off of my own pain, for now he had become my focus 24 hours a day.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> day, a Sunday, Lakota and I had our first really rough day. It began at 6:00 am and from his behavior I began to suspect another injury. He was very cranky. At one point when he was trying to change positions, to try to still him, I used my whole body against his back and gently put one hand on his rear end, my chin on the top of his head and put his paws in my hand because he loves being rubbed between the toes. All the while I sang to him and cried at the same time. When Sugar was ill I would sing an old Beach Boy’s tune “Surfer Girl”, but changed the words to “Panther Girl”. This I now sang to my Panther Boy to try to calm him.

The evening was Hell. Lakota was in so much misery I started to doubt my decision-making ability. I tried not to think of what those decisions might involve. Dr. John Mounger called. He is Robert Baudy’s veterinarian and if anyone has big cat experience, John does. It was John who helped me through Sugar’s illness. To John’s credit, I did feel less panicked when we got off of the telephone. But shortly afterwards, I noticed that the sound of Lakota’s breathing was not good at all.

On Monday Dr. Winter and his assistants made a house call. They drew blood for a T4 test. Hyperparathyroidism was the only known condition to rob the body of calcium, but it was very rare. It would take 3 days to get results. He did a full examination and there were no new injuries, but he agreed that he sounded like he was getting pneumonia. We started a new round of antibiotics.

On Tuesday, Lakota was in much pain, was refusing to eat, and had begun thrashing around. He was out of control and before this episode was over I was totally hysterical. I could not see him suffer like this. I called Dr. Winter and asked for a new plan for his daily care. I would shave his neck and stick on a strong narcotics cancer patch used for humans. Wednesday he woke up alert, playful, purred when I rubbed him and ate a whole bowl of food on his own. I was so relieved! It must have been the patch that helped. We also got the test results. There was not a thing wrong with Lakota’s parathyroid and Dr. Winter instructed us to start physical therapy. I would hold his back end up with a towel sling style, bearing most of the weight and make him take little steps. This would be done 3 times a day for about 5 minutes.



That afternoon when Lakota seemed to be napping I went outside to see Sugar. She missed me so much she climbed up onto the lounge chair and laid across me and like always, sucked my fingers. With my other hand I rubbed my fingers through her fur. She had grown her winter coat when I wasn't looking! These were my favorite days to spend with her: when the relentless Florida heat has taken its leave and it is cold except in sunny spots blocked from the wind. This is when I love to lay in the hay with her, snuggle and feel the warmth of the sun, free from summer humidity and mosquitos. God I was missing this! And so was she. My quick moments with her were tense and I would dash away to check the baby. All three of us were paying a tough price. I was beginning to feel spread too thin.

On Saturday morning we tried our "sling-walk" again and didn't do very well. Lakota was not trying hard enough and would let his legs just dangle (even the good leg). He was letting me do all the work. When he started to cry we quit. I opened the blinds and there was Sugar on her perch only 5 feet away from the window. When she saw me she called loudly, as usual. Lakota's response was amazing. He called back and lifted himself up and before I could grab the sling he took 3 tiny steps on his own before he fell in pain! He was headed for that window to see Sugar. I couldn't help but remember just last Spring when I too couldn't walk and had laid in bed for endless days in pain, until someone opened the blinds and Sugar saw me and called out loudly. That was the day I got in my brace and painfully walked outside to see her. It was the last day I spent in bed. She is our guardian angel!

As the next several weeks went by Lakota improved amazingly fast and my house showed it! One Sunday morning when I sleepily filled a plastic tray he liked to eat out of, he was scheming. The length of the tray made it easier for me to spread out his meat to sprinkle the vitamins evenly across it. On this particular morning he had some very bloody meat. When I put his dish down he came running as usual and landed with both his front paws right in the dish! Then he decided he wasn't hungry and that it would be fun to make Mom chase him all over the house as he put bloody footprints on everything! Now all the counters and the floor were covered with bloody paw prints (the size of which amazed me)! Oh please, I prayed, let the weather warm up. Needless to say, the next morning, his breakfast feeding routine was handled much differently. It was time to move outside!

One day when the weather was warming I let Lakota out into my yard. There is a 10 foot perimeter fence so I needn't worry about him escaping at his size and he wanted to get closer to Sugar, who he loves dearly. In a flash I saw him take off and run straight up the pool stairs of my above-ground pool. Then in another flash he was gone! The pool only had about 1 foot of water in it, so I expected him to come right back up shaking his paws. Well... I waited... no Lakota. Then I heard splashing. I looked over the edge and there he was prancing and splashing around in circles just having the time of his life! This cat would need no gradual introduction to the pool! In fact, I couldn't get him out! I got a towel and dried him all off and darned if he didn't wiggle out of my arms and dash for the pool again. I had to duck under the ledge of the side playing peek-a-boo to get him to stalk me to make him come back up the stairs. I wonder if I'll have to get him his own floating chair for the summer? In the meantime, since my pool needs repair, I have made him his own out of an oversized horse trough.

I was so comfortable with Lakota's recovery I committed to a March 1<sup>st</sup> appearance to represent the Florida Panther Society at a festival a few hours out of town. On the day that Lakota was the "Ambassador" for the Florida Panther Society we had a two hour drive. He did well, but when we arrived strangers from all directions were opening doors and unloading the van of our gear to quickly set up inside. He didn't like all this chaos and I had to lead him through strangers making noise everywhere and nothing but strange sights, smells and sounds. He was frightened and we were not off to a good start. Stephen Williams, FPS President, suggested we close the doors and give him a little down time. I was ever so grateful. Lakota clung to me like glue. We brought his favorite chair and he stayed in my lap. When the doors

opened we answered questions for 6 hours. Although his behavior was good I knew he was stressed. Being a mother of two now, who have had near death experiences, I suppose I'm overprotective and I only focused on his discomfort. However, the Gainesville Sun newspaper said "Lakota stole the show." And that "Lakota, the captive bred Florida Panther may have worked overtime, drawing an endless line of onlookers as he licked his paws and glared at the children and adults crowded around him." Yep! That's my boy!

I have scheduled another surgery to remove the screws from my back. Apparently that is all that is left to try to stop the constant annoying pain. But I scheduled that surgery after school gets out so we can do 3 or 4 more classes first. Lakota is a brave little boy and has been through more than he deserves. Yes, I'm very proud of him.

*Lakota explains to his mom that he's a big boy now and doesn't need kisses...*



## 2003 1st Quarter FCF Board Of Directors Meeting Minutes

By Chairperson, Vice-President Bob Turner  
Submitted by Harold Epperson

### The Motions, Seconds and Vote Totals Are as Follows:

**Motion 1:** 1-6-03 Tracy Wilson, seconded by Leann Montgomery: Move that the Sharp Fax machine owned by FCF, currently in Shirley Wagner's possession, be donated to Shirley for her to keep permanently. 1-7-03, Seconded by Leann Montgomery 5-10-03 Motion Passed (7) Yes (1) No - The Secretary notified Shirley via email.

**Motion 2:** 1-10-03 Leann Montgomery, seconded by Robert Turner: Move that FCF research and Join NESARC (National Endangered Species Act reform Coalition. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (5) Yes (2) No (1) Abstain

**Motion 3:** 1-20-03 Lynn Culver, seconded by Robert Turner: Move to pay the Minnesota Non Profit Council \$200 to locate us a pro-bono attorney to amend the Articles of Incorporation for the Ken Hatfield Fund to reflect the name change and the right to grant scholarships to the practicing veterinarians and file with the Minn. State the new trustees and officers appointed by FCF in the amended articles. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (8) Yes

**Motion 4:** 1-20-03 Lynn Culver, seconded by Robert Turner: Move to appoint someone in FCF as official representative for FCF to attend both the USDA symposiums and approve \$100 for each event to help defray the expenses of attending the USDA symposiums. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (8) Yes

**Motion 5** 1-20-03 Lynn Culver, seconded by Robert Turner: Move to approve the expenses of adding the names and addresses of those who attend the Dallas March and Las Vegas April USDA symposiums to the mailing of the May/June issues of the FCF newsletter. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (8) Yes

**Motion 6** 1-20-03 Lynn Culver, seconded by Robert Turner: Move to review and adjust the 2003 Budget approved in August 2002 to reflect the various changes in the budget items which have developed since last August.

5-10-03 Motion Passed (8) Yes

**Motion 7** 1-28-03 Bobby Bean, seconded by Tracy Wilson: Move that the FCF BOD formally approve and adopt The\_FCF Yahoo list moderation policy listed below:

First Offense – Remind the offender of the list rules and point out their infraction, and politely request that they refrain from similar action in the future. Second Offense – Point out the infraction and prior warning, notification of 1 week to 1 month suspension (at the moderators discretion depending on offense) from the list and that once reinstated, any further infractions will result in indefinite suspension. Third Offense – Point out the infraction and previous warnings and suspension notification of indefinite suspension and that they may submit a written request for reinstatement to the BOD via the Sec. Treasurer after six months. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (7) Yes (1) Abstain

**Motion 8** 2-01-03 Bobby Bean, seconded by Lynn Culver: Move that any member that has been **found guilty** of bylaw violations or actions not adhering to the purpose or policies of the FCF shall be permanently disqualified from holding an elected or an appointed position within the FCF. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (4) Yes (3) No (1) Abstain

**Motion 9** 2-12-03 Lynn Culver, seconded by Leann Montgomery: Move to approve the printing of 2000 FCF brochures, 2 (two) color, cream stock. Note: This design was approved 2 conventions ago and has been on hold since then. 5-10-03 Motion Passed (8) Yes



## Minutes for MEFES meeting, April 19, 2003 Held in Bean Blossom, Indiana

President Harold Epperson started the meeting by thanking Mike and Theresa Taylor for hosting the meeting and to Dr. James and Paulette Brester whose lovely shelter house that the meeting was held in.

The meeting was attended by 19 members and 12 guest. We have 1 new member, Pam Holdgrafer.

Peggy Epperson read the minutes of the January meeting and the current treasury report.

Peggy asked for parents to assist their children with articles, pictures etc. for the children's part of the newsletter.

Monte Francis stated our website is not quite ready yet.

A MEFES logo has been designed and embroidery was voted on as the choice application.

Harold read former editor Sherri Fecker's resignation letter. Carol Siegley Bohning is now the new MEFES editor. Carol spoke

briefly regarding any articles you want printed in the newsletter, to please send them to her.

Harold, Vice President Bill Johnson, and Marvin Hierlmeier all spoke of the recent death of former member Bill Olson.

A husbandry course is scheduled next Sat. in Terre Haute. Harold recommended anyone interested to take it. Carol recommended it for all the information you gain.

An auction was held to raise money to buy chain saws for the Ecuador camera trapping.

A sum of \$82.00 was raised.

Bob Turner spoke about the recent Felid TAG meeting he, Kevin Chambers and Bobby Bean attended in Dallas, Texas.

A motion to adjourn was then made by Bill Johnson, and Peggy Epperson seconded it.

## KHMSF MEETING MINUTES

submitted by Harold Epperson

On 05-04-03, the KHMSF Board held its first meeting via 3-way telephone. Present were President J.B.Anderson, Secretary-Treasurer Harold Epperson and Director Robert Turner. The following agenda topics were discussed.

1. Re: the FCF By-Laws Article XVI, Line 16.1 which reads: "The Feline Conservation Federation Board will appoint four trustees to the

*KHMSF minutes continued*

- Ken Hatfield Memorial Scholarship Fund (KHMSF). These appointees will be the four Life Directors. " The KHMSF Officers voted to eliminate a fourth appointee and the appointees shall not be restricted to the Life Directors. Bob Turner will submit an amendment as a 2nd quarter motion to initiate these changes.
2. Re: a KHMSF spokesperson to contact the MAP lawyer on legal matters: The Officers appointed Harold Epperson to contact the assigned lawyer, Chris Stall. J.B.Anderson inquired if KHMSF should reimburse FCF for all or part of the \$200 paid by FCF for this service. Question will be presented to the FCF Board for resolution.
  3. Re: the Treasurer's Report: The present balance is \$11558.31. The previous balance on 03-15-03 was \$11958.41 with interest received of \$4.90 and expenses paid of \$405.00. The \$405.00

was paid to Newquist & Ekstrum for filing fees authorized by the previous Life Directors to initiate proceedings to dissolve the KHMSF account without approval of the FCF Board.

4. Re: relocation of the KHMSF registry from the State of Minnesota to another state was discussed. No action was taken.
5. Re: a motion by Bob Turner to change the method for distribution of funds from the KHMSF account and to delete Scholarship from its name was withdrawn and will be added to the agenda for the FCF 2003 Convention.
6. Question was asked if KHMSF is 501(c)3. Answer was unknown and will be presented to the FCF Board for determination.
7. Meeting was adjourned.

## ACEF Meeting Minutes

### Minutes for March 2003 meeting:

This meeting was held at John and Priscilla Lussmyer's place. We spent much of the day working on the outdoor pen for the bobs, Lady and Jinxy. Priscilla prepared a fine feast. Some of us took turns going for a spin in John's 1 seater electric car, and eventually we got down to business of the meeting. We were short 2 officers, so VP wore both those extra hats. But then it is easier to keep up on notes when you're also the one running the meeting :-). No I didn't say that!

We discussed the current House Bill 1151 which would ban most of the big cats as well as bears, monkeys and various other exotics state wide. By the time of the meeting, the bill had passed the house and moved onto the senate.

We really need ACEF volunteers to go to Olympia to represent the club. Contact one of the officers if you are available to do this. No experience needed!!

We all had a look (and oohs and ahs) at the new book published by Phoenix Exotics. The books are available for \$8 each, or 5 for \$32, or 10 for 48.00, plus shipping if applicable. Some members have bought bundles of books and donated them to be handed out to state Reps and Senators. Contact Jeanne or come to a meeting for your book.

T-shirts - The company we ordered last years T-shirts from is running a sale again this year, but even better as more styles are available. We will be compiling an order for a target due date of May 15th with a delivery at the July meeting. Sizes, styles and colors will be covered in another section of the newsletter.

Cat Food - Since most using the food seem to have plenty, we were going to lighten the order this time, but because of the ship date falling on a weekend, they shipped early so the call didn't make it in on time, so we have a few extra bags of 40 lb cat food. Contact Christi or Jeanne if you need a bag or 2!

FCF- Our parent organization, Feline Conservation Federation, has FINALLY provided us a handout!! As a branch, we had been asking for something like this for a very long time. It is a very professional looking, well written tri-fold. Very nice handout! These were handed out at the meeting and will be used in addition to our ACEF handouts when we do public events. Come to the next meeting to get yours!

And finally we wrapped up the meeting with a surprise. Member, Cathy Spohrer has made and donated to the club, ACEF coffee cups and ACEF magnets! The cups are being sold as fundraising. It's \$6 each or 4 for \$20. The magnets will be given free to members and encouraged to be given out to others

### Minutes for April 2003 Meeting:

This meeting was held at the home of Frank Bodenmiller. This was a work party to help finish the outdoor pens for Franks Cougar and Tiger.

Old Business -

Jackets and T-shirts - There is interest, but not enough commitment to

place an order at this time.

Legislation - House Bill 1151 appears to be dead at this point, however could pop back up later, so we still need to keep a watch on it.

EList - Jeanne Hall and John Lussmyer will work on setting up a new EList for members.

Review existing projects - It was decided that all old committees be dropped at this time since all are inactive and if interest comes up again, they can be reestablished.

New Business

Election for a new Vice president ... Welcome Jeanne Hall to the VP position!!

Officer appointments- John Lussmyer will continue as newsletter editor. Coffee cups - In addition to selling the coffee cups as fundraisers for the rescue fund, it was decided that they will also be used as rewards to members who refer new members. That's right, refer a friend get yourself a coffee cup as a thank you gift!

Cat show booth - Christi, Jeanne, Selena and Teresa will attend.

Aug meeting - Phoenix has invited ACEF and the Herp group to a combo meeting in Aug, which will be held at Dave Coleburn's place

submitted by John Lussmeyer

## PNWE FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

The February meeting was held at the home of Steve Higgs and Cheryl Jones in Oregon City.

Steve Belknap opened the meeting with introductions. We had two guests, Sharon and John Insley from Washougal, Washington. Sharon and John are planning on joining the club and have recently moved from southern Oregon with their serval, Simon. Welcome aboard!

We talked about the current legislature issues; which was for Washington state. The bill is still pending, and more information is being obtained.

Upcoming meetings were scheduled. We are still in need of volunteers for August (summer picnic) and October. So, please let us know if you are willing to host a meeting.

The Unique Animal Expo in Hillsboro will be the weekend of February 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> at the Washington County Fairgrounds. PNWE was not invited to attend this year.

The Northwest Companion Pet Fair will be held the weekend of April 12th and 13<sup>th</sup> PNWE has been offered a booth at the show and membership agreed that it is worth the time and effort, as there was a great turnout last year and the booth looked great!

*continued on page 35*





# Leopards, Etc.

## *Wild Cats From Around The World*

Submitted by Rob and Barbara Dicely

Leopards, Etc. has been a state and federally licensed facility for 18 years. We are located in Sonoma County, California on 22 acres of redwoods. Currently we have 24 cats including cheetah, African leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, cougar, serval, caracal, bobcat, Canada lynx, Siberian lynx and ocelot (you can check out our website at [www.leopardsetc.com](http://www.leopardsetc.com)).

We have been doing educational outreach programs with our ambassador cats for the last 12 years. We travel to about 150 schools, in the San Francisco Bay Area, each year. So far, over 600,000 children have seen our school assemblies.

In 1994, we purchased our first cheetah from Wildlife Safari, in Winston, Oregon.

Samburu immediately became one of our most popular ambassadors. Soon after Sam entered our lives, we started fund-raising for the Cheetah Conservation Fund (please visit [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org) to find out more about this wonderful organization). Literally, over \$1 million was donated to CCF by one generous contributor after meeting Sam.

Unfortunately, Sam died very suddenly in 1999. He was one of those very special animals that leave a huge hole in your heart. Even though he lived only 5 ½ years, he touched many lives and made a huge contribution to the success of CCF. When Sam died, we had a difficult time locating another cheetah for our outreach program. Even though we had all the necessary permits, none of the zoos were breeding cheetahs and there were no hand-raised cubs available anywhere. We were finally put in touch with the DeWildt Cheetah Breeding Centre in South Africa, and after nine months of permits going back and forth between two countries, Kgosi and Mopane came into our lives. Both were 7 months old when they arrived. Kgosi is a male king cheetah and Mopane is a female regular cheetah. They both went to work immediately as ambassadors for their wild cousins. We again had cheetahs in our school assemblies and continued to participate in fund-raising for CCF.

By the time she was two years old, Mopane was very uncomfortable doing outreach programs. She was definitely a home-body. So, we went back to DeWildt and purchased Kamau. We definitely needed a “normal” cheetah as well as the king for our school assemblies. People are in awe when they meet a cheetah and then are blown away when they see the king. Both Kgosi and Kamau are a wonderful presence at programs representing their wild cousins. They cheerfully, purring the entire time, greet people at fund-raising events while teaching them why the cheetah deserves to be saved from extinction.

During her United States tour, last year, Laurie Marker (CCF’s founder) told us that if Mopane was not going to help save cheetahs through our outreach programs, she had to help save cheetahs by making baby cheetahs. We contacted John Aynes, whose cheetahs are part of the SSP and worked out a trade. Mopane went back to Oklahoma to participate in the SSP and Kibibi (a four week old female cub) came to live with us. She is now five months old and a great addition to our ambassador cats.

*continued on page 37*



*Kamau and Kibibi, residents of Leopards, Etc.*



# Working Group – Global Cheetah Issues Hosted by Jack Grisham, SSP Coordinator

Group minutes submitted by Robert Turner

## Statements by Jack Grisham:

- World wide, the captive cheetahs are declining 5% per year in captivity.
- North America has 18% (248) of the total of 1376 cheetahs in captivity.
- Reason for decline in America:
  1. SSP recommendation of a moratorium on breeding due to cage space. Limit of 300 cages with in the AZA. Approximately 75 of the 300 cages are presently unfilled.
  2. Failure of the zoo's transporting cheetahs among the AZA facilities, which limited breeding.
  3. Did not properly train new personnel in breeding techniques.
- If the world wide rate of decline continues at 5%, the cheetahs will be down to 100 cheetahs in captivity in the next 20 years.
- Large captive breeding centers like DeWildt in South Africa are doing excellent work in breeding.
- Large breeding centers have less people traffic and this has resulted in less stress to the cheetah.
- Large breeding centers specialize in separation of species, which result in less stress to the cheetah.

## Proposals:

- Go to three (3) or four (4) regional breeding centers.
- Move the cheetahs from zoos to the breeding centers for breeding and then back to the zoos either before or after birth.
- Partnership between breeding centers and zoo's for exhibit stock.
- Look at leaving kittens at the breeding centers until (6) month of age.
- Looking at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Texas as a breeding center.
- Develop a Global Management System.
- Breeding centers need to have a training program.

## Comments:

- Jack Grisham made the comment that AZA has to do the above proposals soon, before it is too late. If the AZA waits till next year or later, it could be too late to reverse the cheetah decline.
- Dave Dewitt commented, "AZA needs to market this regional breeding center idea very well in order to sell this idea to each zoo director".
- Alan Strachan from DeWildt Cheetah Breeding Centre, in South Africa commented, "we need to keep in mind it will take another (3) years for imported kittens to be of breeding age".
- A member commented, "it looks like AZA is going back 20 years where cheetah breeding was done at larger breeding centers and this worked well for stock for the zoo's".
- Jack Grisham commented that the cheetah experts are getting older and the knowledge they have needs to be shared with the younger group.



- Jack Grisham commented , 800 captive AZA cheetahs have been tested from 1988 to 2003 for disease and have we still have no good understanding or prevention".
- Jack Grisham commented, "there is little disease in the wild cheetahs, but large problem in the captive cheetahs – why?"  
Leaning towards stress may be the main cause of disease. Long-term stress may be more of a problem then short-term stress. Gastritis of the intestine is not common in the wild cheetahs, but common in the captive cheetah. They both basically have the same bacteria and amount in the intestines, but the wild cheetah is free of the Gastritis.
- I, Robert Turner commented, "attending this cheetah workshop enforces my belief that lack of high-speed exercise of the captive cheetahs is by far the main reason the cheetahs are getting ill in captivity".

*Cheetah cubs from the Oakhill Center for Rare and Endangered Species, FCF member John Anyes*

# 2003 AZA Felid TAG Report

Lynn Culver

This year's annual American Zoo and Aquarium Association event took place at the impressive Adam's Mark Hotel and Convention Center in the heart of Dallas, Texas. My roommate, fellow FCF member Amy Rasmussen and I shared a room on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor that overlooked a vast array of architecturally unique skyscrapers, a benefit of having registered early. Other FCF attendees, Director of Advertising Bobby Bean, Vice President Bob Turner and convention committee member Kevin Chambers waited until the deadline to make their reservations and received a 5<sup>th</sup> floor room with a view of a solid wall.

The range of speakers was wide and the topics covered varied. These annual educational get-togethers build on the accomplishments of each preceding year so there is an element of review and redundancy. Issues that concern the attendees do not go away, they are dealt with until they have accomplished their goals. So as in previous TAG's I have covered there was the familiar subject matters of the Global Cheetah breeding problems, research into conquering toxoplasmosis and herpes in Pallas Cats, finding new wild blood for Indochinese tigers and of course updates on the new AZA "Consortiums" approach to satisfying the USFWS in-situ conservation requirements in order to gain new wild blood for Clouded Leopard and Ocelot and now there are plans underway for a Consortium for the Fishing Cats' Species Survival Plan as well.

Overall, I feel that if state legislators understood the condition of the various AZA zoo's Species Survival Plans they would not be so comfortable with passing so many ban laws that only exempt AZA zoos and breeding only for SSP's. These management plans are generally not well at all; in fact some are actually teetering on disaster. The answers to each problem they are facing are being sought in the most high tech and expensive of approaches, with artificial means of reproduction the main objective and it seems almost as if old fashioned natural sexual reproduction is going to be a part of ancient history in AZA zoos.

While I learn a vast amount by attending these scientific and research oriented presentations, the problems exposed give me great cause for alarm and I know that the future of captive gene pools lies in the much larger private sector with its ability to house redundant copies of genetic representation, use facilities that specialize in breeding and are off-view from the public, and our practice of dispersing kittens not needed for future breeding to individual homes as sterilized pets to act as tame ambassadors that represent the species and responsible captive husbandry in a positive light.

## **Cheetahs – In-situ and Ex-Situ Report**

Early on was a discussion by Budhan Pukazhenthi of the National Zoo on the in situ/ex situ research activities in cheetah. Interesting details of his presentation was an overview of the status of the captive cheetah population. Currently there is a 5% yearly decline in the North American population which has been steadily losing its population from its peak of 330 individuals in 1996 to its present population of only 210 today which includes the 10 cheetah given to the US by the government of Namibia last year. While the desired number of yearly offspring are set at 40, only 13 births resulted from numerous pairings last year. Of the 13 born, only seven are still alive today. This is serious concern and the bottom line is that the cheetah SSP management decision to stop all breeding a few years ago has upset the balance to such an extent that valuable genetic diversity is being forever lost and the stability of the AZA's proudest SSP breeding achievement is now threatened with extinction in captivity.

To turn the tide on this trend, in 2001 six cheetah were participants in an Artificial Insemination program. However, the females were an average age of nearly 10 years old and none of them conceived. What was learned from these failures is that a better age for AI is in the 3 to 5 years range since the successful age range of natural reproduction is from 2 to 8. In 2002 another set of younger cheetah were artificially inseminated, but none of them conceived either. So now there are serious studies into the hormone cycles of cheetahs to aid veterinarians in gaining success with AI. Trials were conducted using Norplant to shut down the hormones cycles of younger cheetahs to help reach a more universal base level and hopefully improve AI. Research into improving the sperm motility and acrosomal integrity in cheetah sperm after thawing are underway. Sperm from 82 wild-trapped cheetah was collected in Africa and samples from 40 males were added to the Genome Gene bank.

## ***Improving hormonal treatments for artificial Insemination in tigers***

Studies into Artificial Insemination in tigers are also being conducted to try to improve their conception success rate. Over 20 attempts to induce ovarian activity in tigers using chorionic gonadotropin, only two attempts resulted in pregnancy. Clearly this is not a well-understood procedure and Laura Graham outlined the various trials conducted to try to establish and graph the hormone cycles of tigers.

### ***Rearing specific pathogen free Pallas' Cats***

Veterinarian Suzanne Kennedy-Stoskopf, whom many FCF members remember as one of our speakers at the 2000 North Carolina Convention gave an update on her Pallas Cat research. She was given 6 Pallas Cats from Oklahoma City Zoo after they were diagnosed infected with herpes and also toxoplasmosis carriers. Since herpes is an infectious virus, their presence in any zoo collection threatens all other felines. At one time euthanasia was considered until Suzanne offered to house them at the North Carolina University and research the possibility of using them to produce offspring free from viral contamination.

Earlier this year a litter of four Pallas Cat kittens were removed from their natural mother just after birth and placed on a laboratory raised and viral-free foster domestic queen. This has proved successful, as all four kittens have survived and all titer tests so far have revealed no indication of either toxoplasmosis exposure or herpes virus. However, these Pallas Cats if allowed back outdoors in a zoo environment will no doubt be exposed to toxoplasmosis and it is still not certain they can withstand such an infectious challenge and of course the same problem will face any offspring from them. But for now, Suzanne has proved that the cycle of herpes can be broken by removing just after birth allowing their important genetic representation to hopefully someday be re-integrated into the population.

### ***Report on the Private Sector***

George Stowers was scheduled to give an update on the private sector, however demands upon his time at the nuclear power plant prevented his attendance and I stood in his place to represent the Feline Conservation Federation. My presentation began with announcing our new name, then highlighted our commitment to education through the husbandry courses we offer throughout the year and our various other programs that aid ex-situ conservation, such as our placement service and the emergency assistance to facilities in need, and the ongoing project by our Vice President Bob Turner to develop his cheetah exercise machine.

I relayed the recent collaborative effort between Jim Sanderson and Conservation International and the Earthways Project and FCF to help the native peoples of the Playa De Oro Reserve in Ecuador find support for their 25,000-acre rainforest habitat that will directly benefit the in-situ populations of six species of wild felines native to that region. I passed around the brochures that went out with the last FCF newsletter inviting the audience to join us on our July trip to Ecuador. Bob Turner then took the microphone for a few minutes to further explain his cheetah exercise machine and share some slides of the project in various stages of development.

### ***Overview and Discussion of USF&WS policy regarding the Endangered Species Act***

Mike Carpenter was a new addition to the AZA list of familiar guest speakers. And I felt eagerness from the AZA community for him to be a witness to all their intensified efforts to be involved with in-situ conservation as the various SSP managers have great plans for successful importation of new founder blood from many countries. Mike clarified to the audience that importation of CITES II Threatened species permits are granted for research, and captive propagation and conservation education.

However, in order to be granted CITES I Endangered species importation permits or interstate commerce permits, the transaction must be directly tied to actions that benefit the survival of the species in the wild. Permits must be applied for in "good faith" and not interfere with conservation or operate to the species' detriment. Mike made mention that in the past the USF&WS relied upon the fact that SSP's, TAG's etc. have stated an involvement in species conservation however the USF&WS has become aware that this involvement may be only espoused or on paper and that in fact little conservation may have been accomplished. It was clear he was explaining that the days of gaining an automatic rubber-stamp of approval based upon the zoo's involvement in a SSP are over.

The USF&WS looks at ongoing and long-term benefits – a one time financial contribution, or short-term commit to a project is likely to not be sufficient to gain the permission to obtain species deemed endangered by the USF&WS. Further, he stated that a sliding scale is used to determine the necessary level of financial assistance to a project, realizing that larger zoos can afford more and so more will be expected of them than a small zoo or an individual applying for a permit. Also, the number of applications for which the F & W S can find enhancement for a species from one project is finite. (read WAC article for a personal look at the permit process for CITES I felines)

### ***Importation initiatives involving Indochinese tigers from Malaysia***

Here was an example of a very pressing Species SSP need for new founder blood. The present day Indochinese tiger population has an extremely small founder size – the current population of 35 animals are almost entirely decedents of 3 founder animals, though now their has been a forth founder added to the mix. Clearly this is not a self-sustaining SSP and the Corbetti tiger population has no chance of captive survival without a serious shot in the arm of new wild blood.

Fortunately for the managers of this SSP, Rick Swartz, of the Nashville Zoo has been globe trotting again and located a large population of captive Corbetti tigers in Malaysia zoos, descendants of man-eaters, or orphan tiger cubs brought into captivity. In fact 11 wild caught tigers and 6 born in captivity were offered to the US Indochinese Tiger SSP but many were related to the current USA population. After careful examination of ISIS records three pairs were identified as being useful for augmenting the captive SSP and several zoos, Bronx and San Diego among them, are in the process of applying for CITES permits to import these pairs. Of course to gain permission to import this much needed new blood, the Indochinese tiger SSP must anti up substantial funding for in-situ conservation efforts to benefit the wild populations of Corbetti tigers and the search is on for such projects.

### ***Update on Spermatogonial stem cell xenotransplantation in cats***

While I find this research to capture sperm stem cells from immature individuals who pass away unexpectedly rather far-fetched, it is in keeping with the goal of not losing a single genetic diversity opportunity. And when dealing with such small gene pools as the AZA has, every rare individual lost can be catastrophic to the population as a whole. Alex Travis asked me to relay to FCF members his need for their help with this research by donating their male cats' gonadal material when they are neutered. Dr. Alex Travis will pay the Federal Express charges and all he asks is that your veterinarian follow a few simple steps to insure that the specimen reach him in a useable form. Considering FCF members neuter many cats each year, it does seem a great opportunity to help out with cutting-edge science. Before you neuter your next feline, see our website for more details on how to contribute to this research, or contact Lynn Culver and she will FAX a copy of the Preparation of Male Tract Gamete Recovery information to your veterinarian.

## **Cheetahs, cheetahs and more cheetahs – Overview of Cheetah programs in other counties**

**De Wildt, South Africa** - Alan Strachan gave a very interesting talk and slide show of the DeWildt cheetah breeding facility in South Africa. The DeWildt facility has an impressive record of over 600 cheetah cubs born over the past 30 years. They are also known for their wild dog breeding program. There are 75 enclosures spread over 250 acres. 120 cheetah are on the farm and 15 are currently pregnant. DeWildt is registered with CITES as a commercial breeding facility enabling them to sell cheetah offspring worldwide. 20,000 people see tours yearly and DeWildt has authored 80 research publications.

**Wassenaar Wildlife Breeding Center, Netherlands** - Another fascinating speaker was Jan Louwman of the Wassenaar Wildlife Breeding Center, Netherlands. This private facility was established in 1980 and has recorded 60 litters in the past 23 years with 200 cubs born. The secret to this success was revealed in a very detailed photo presentation that illustrated their 9 large enclosures that house 10 to 20 cheetahs each. The male and female are housed in separate areas during the long non-breeding periods. Potential breeding pairs are removed to new enclosures that are large outdoor enclosures, or one of two indoor enclosures when they can detect each other's scents, but do not have direct contact. The first sign that a female is in season is when the male is given access to territory she recently occupied, he walks in a quicker pace from one smell to another. Females may increase rolling and emit a soft calling. If the male calls in a loud yelp or a stutter call they are given access to each other. The honeymoon areas are beautiful – several acre fenced-in areas containing massive shade trees, open grassy areas, and numerous felled tree trunk carcasses that function as cheetah lookout posts. It is in human aesthetics, a very romantic setting. For 48 hours the pair remain together and on the third day the interest in breeding is over.

**Laurie Marker and the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Namibia** - Laurie was clearly a very special guest of the AZA function and living icon for in-situ success stories. Her efforts in Namibia are too numerous to do justice in this short piece. Just 13 years ago she arrived in Namibia to help the nation change the way they treated their wild cheetah population. Back then, it was estimated that over 7,000 cheetah had been killed by farmers in the previous decade. In fact the yearly average number of cheetah killed by each farmer was 19, today, it is down to just 2. But Laurie is not satisfied and her work is not over. The future survival of cheetah is still challenged by indiscriminate killing, fragmentation of the habitat, prey availability and bush encroachment in Namibia.

Much has changed in with the help of massive fund raising efforts by the members of American Zoo Association and by many other conservation interests. Today, thanks to generous donations, The Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia owns 100,000 acres of land and the buildings now house a Research center, state of the art Veterinary Hospital, public Conservation Educational center, and there is a wild cheetah Refuge on site and a new 110 acre holding pen is currently under construction.

Laurie and volunteers from around the world have tagged and released over 300 cheetah and radio collared 55 animals, revealing their average home range to be about 1750 square kilometers. This translates into a single territory being about 15 to 20 farms, each about 10,000 acres. One of Laurie's more promising developments has been for the farmers to sign



up as Conservancies where they cooperate to manage wildlife for long-term sustainability and allow the free-flow of wildlife. The Cheetah Conservation Fund is also tackling the problem of habitat degradation by bush encroachment by developing a bush harvesting business for firewood needs. The breeding of Anatolian guard dogs continues with 160 of these dogs distributed to the Namibian farmers to guard their livestock against cheetah predation. These animals have a 76% success record in reducing stock loss by cheetah. 100,000 Namibians yearly and nearly 20,000 school students visit the Cheetah Education Center annually.

### **Wild About Cats – Dawn Simas**

Dawn was invited to speak on her work as director of Wild About Cats, a small private sector nonprofit corporation that performs feline rescue and placement, public education, and in-situ conservation fund-raising using her ambassador felines. It was a very inspiring Power Point presentation that hammered home the future potential for all FCF members and especially our USDA licensed educators to join forces and generate results for the conservation of felines and their natural habitat.

With two tame cheetah, located in densely populated, animal friendly and relatively wealthy California, Dawn has the benefit of what every real estate agent knows – location, location, location. And she has capitalized on her good fortune to the tune of over \$300,000 being raised to benefit cheetah conservation in the past 4 years. In addition to raising funds for cheetah, a few of WAC's other fund raising accomplishments have been donating \$3,700 to the same Touch the Jungle project that FCF Conservation and Education Director Tracy Wilson recently visited to set up camera traps donated by Jim Sanderson. Dawn's Wild About Cats non-profit status and website has raised \$21,000 for Jim Sanderson to help pay for his many camera traps used around the globe. Other recipients of WAC's successful fund-raising have been east African lion research that received \$4,000 in WAC generated donations, \$11,500 was raised for the Mongolian Pallas Cat study, and with the help of Jethro Tull and Ean Thomas who donated proceeds from their concerts, WAC raised \$24,000 to aid Chile and Bolivia's Andean Mt. Cat.

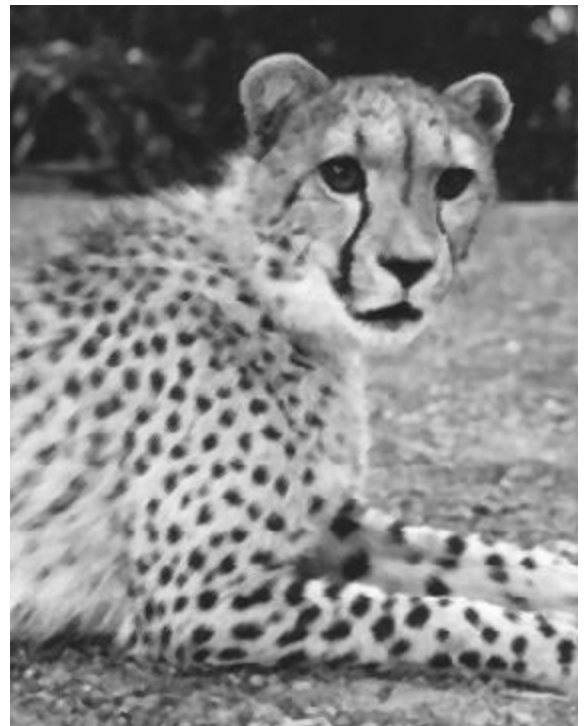
### **In Conclusion. . .**

These proceeds leaving me a bit concerned of the future and a legislative climate that is tending towards only permitting AZA zoos and SSP species breeding. This conglomerate of municipal zoos, with their political power and their slick public relations has managed to gain the respect of the common man and our state and federal legislators. One cannot ignore their motivation to hold a monopoly in species breeding and exhibition, and yet they do not contain the numbers necessary to accomplish the goal at hand according to their own scientists.

Over 30 years ago, when the concept of a Species Survival Plan was developed by Ulysses Seal, it was recognized that a minimum number of living individuals were necessary to reach a desired goal of long-term sustainability. Trying to save too many species with too few cage spaces has strapped them all. In an effort to intensify successful results, the felid TAG has abandoned many species common to the private sector, such as geoffroy's cats, leopard cats, Eurasian lynx to name a few. Other felines still part of their regional collection plans, are not participating in any organized breeding programs, like bobcat, cougar, serval and caracal.

The AZA would benefit from greater cooperation with the private sector, but as more species management plans are upgraded to SSP's that are more dictatorial and communistic in nature, it hampers such private involvement.

The Feline Conservation Federation has a wonderful opportunity to upgrade our participation in conservation relevance if we organize our membership and others outside our Federation into cooperative breeding efforts that utilize our registration program and allow genetic tracking and population statistics to be generated. And we must provide for the educational ambassador needs for those federally licensed to do this work. Together, we can act responsibly and insure the future of private participation in captive breeding. There must be a greater priority placed on participating in our SPARKS registration program and I hope that in this next year we will identify willing volunteers who would like to be trained to be part of our private sector gene pool registration process.



*Mopane, a resident of Leopards, Etc.*

## WildCat Haven Hosts the June 28<sup>th</sup> FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course

WildCat Haven is looking forward to hosting the June 28th FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course. As a rescue facility for abused and displaced captive-born wildcats we feel strongly about educating the public about the care and commitment it takes to understand and provide for these incredible animals. And it certainly isn't for everyone. But for the people who are determined to learn all they can, FCF has created a wonderful way to help teach those very issues in a fun, informative one-day class.

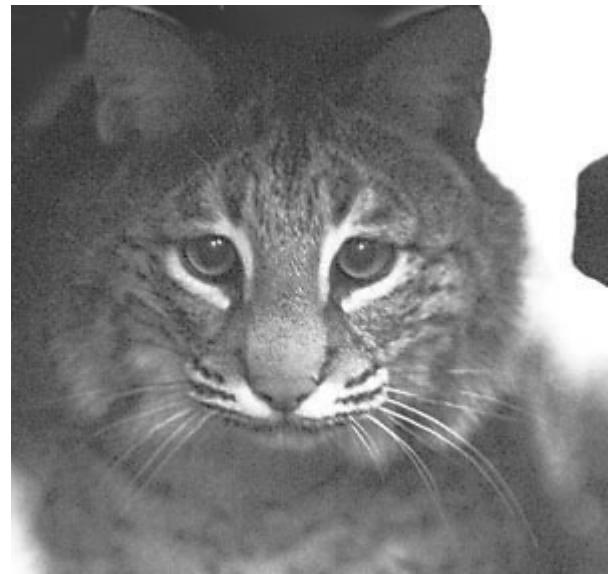
Like many of the wildcat owners, we started out with a bobcat kitten that was being touted as the perfect pet. He was adorable, and sweet and we had to have him. Of course the breeder told us everything they thought we wanted to hear, just like a regular housecat only bigger, eats regular cat food, blah, blah, blah.....But we can only blame ourselves for letting our hearts overrule our heads.

Being naive is no excuse; it was our duty to research what actually went into the care of this incredible little baby. Well, by the time BoBo was six months old, we finally had to admit that he wasn't going to be like a 'regular' house cat and either we should learn what it takes to keep a bobcat happy and healthy or place him with someone who already knew.

We started researching every avenue available and found the LIOC-FCF branches in Oregon and Washington. Finally we got some straight answers about life with wildcats! I will be forever grateful to the good people who were patient with our foolish questions. We started volunteering at Wild Ones Sanctuary, a rescue facility in Brush Prairie, where Shirley Malar, (who I swear is part cat) was gracious enough to teach us the ropes about enclosure building, poop scooping, and Basic Wildcats 101.

Now, seven years after we first brought that tiny bobcat home, we are working hard to create a better life for the wildcat residents that have found their way, for one reason or another to our facility, WildCat Haven.

We currently house and care for twenty-five incredible wildcats, representing nine different species. Our lives have certainly changed in more ways than we could ever have imagined, but everyday we are so grateful to be able to share our lives with these amazing animals. It is truly a labor of love and we look forward to showing a glimpse of our residents with the people attending the Wild Feline Course. Mike & Cheryl Tuller, WildCat Haven <http://www.wildcathaven.org/>



*Josie, a WildCat Haven resident*

### **WILDCAT HAVEN, INC near Portland, Oregon is hosting the next Wild Feline Husbandry Course**

**Date: Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Time: 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

**Place: Wilsonville Public Library**, 18 miles from Portland. 8200 Time: SW Wilsonville Rd. Wilsonville, OR. 97070  
<http://www.wilsonville.lib.or.us>



**FEE: \$65.00 FCF members \$90.00 non-member**

**Registration Deadline: June 20, 2003**

**Mail Registration check or money order to: WCH, P.O. Box 1071 Sherwood, OR. 97140**

**Nearest airport: Portland**

**Motel information:**

**Comfort Inn Wilsonville** 8855 S.W. Citizen Dr. Wilsonville, OR US 97070

**Best Western Willamette Inn** 30800 Southwest Parkway Avenue Wilsonville, OR US 97070

**Wilsonville Super 8 Motel** 25438 SW Parkway Ave. Wilsonville, OR USA 97070

*Noni eagerly awaits visitors*





*A lump of sleepy servals wakes up to see who's watching*

This 8-hour course focuses on responsible captive husbandry. Featured topics include: Natural History of the Feline Species, Nutrition, Health Care Basics, Handling Equipment, Facility Design, Behavior Conditioning, Contingency Planning and Regulatory Agencies. This is an instructor-led multimedia presentation, complete with 83-page student textbook, workshops, final exam and decorative certificate of successful completion.

Sunday, June 29th, students are invited to visit our rescue facility, WILDCAT HAVEN, which is home to 25 wildcats representing 9 different species. Get an up close and personal look at our wonderful residents. We are asking for a \$10 donation per person to help support the work that we do.

**For additional info contact Mike or Cheryl: 503-625-0812**



Bella Lynx and Bear Bobcat are determined to see all wildcat owners are well-educated about their commitment. You really shouldn't disappoint them.



*Host Cheryl Tuller with Sophie*

**Minutes** continued from page 27

We will have a special meeting on Sunday March 16th at 12:00 pm to get ready for the show and discuss details.

Members threw around the idea of the club rummage/garage sale.

We'll discuss more details at a later date as to details & if anyone has any ideas, please don't hesitate to let the officers know!

The meeting was opened up to general discussion. Our guest, Sharon had some interesting information on using prescription drugs used in humans for depression and anxiety being used on exotics to calm their nerves. She recently had an incident with her serval and the vet put him on antidepressants to calm his nerves. Cheryl and Steve B had some insight and have heard of people giving their animals Prozac® and Paxil®.

The meeting was adjourned and we had the raffle game and money game.

Thanks to all the attending members and to Steve H and Cheryl for hosting the meeting!!

Jen Anderson, Editor-Secretary/Treasurer

## **Report on the USDA Big Cat Symposium**

### **April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003, Las Vegas, Nevada**

by Tim Stoffel

About six months ago, the USDA announced it would be holding a series of symposiums on big cat husbandry at various locations across the country. I attended the Las Vegas Symposium with the other people from the Sierra Safari Zoo near my home.

The main room where the plenary sessions were held was quite large. About 200 or so people were in attendance. Many of the attendees were USDA employees. A surprising number of people present were people I knew from FCF or Phoenix Exotics functions I had previously attended.

There was a literature table containing handouts for all the presentations that were given. That way, you could at least have the reading material for all the presentations given at the symposium, even if you could not attend them.

The seminar was divided into two two sessions. The morning plenary session addressed topics of general interest. The afternoon consisted of a series of breakout sessions, set up such that you could attend four of the seven sessions offered. There was then a brief closing plenary session, which was primarily held to thank all those that contributed to the event.

The first morning presentation I attended was 'Basic Nutritional Considerations for Large Cats,' presented by Ann Ward of the Fort Worth Zoo. This session started out with a brief review of feline nutrition requirements. She discussed ways of meeting these requirements, which ranged from feeding diets of just muscle meat to whole animals. The largest part of the session dealt with maintaining the integrity of the food supply for your cats. At times, some of the recommendations seemed a bit much (visiting your food suppliers on a quarterly basis, conducting bacteriological tests on every lot of food, etc.), especially for the private owner. But still, there was much useful and practical information presented. (For instance, even partial thawing of meat at room temperature results in much higher bacteria levels than thawing in a refrigerator.)

The second presentation was entitled 'Big Cats: Veterinary Care and Tranquilization,' presented by Scott Amsel of Zoo Veterinary Services. This was a good, down-to-earth look at veterinary care. First, there was an overview of what a good veterinary care program should accomplish. This was presented in the context of good overall husbandry practices. Veterinary care needs during the various stages of an animal's life were considered. Throughout the presentation, he gave examples of how this was applied in practice. A large portion of this presentation dealt with the problems and challenges of proper tranquilization of big cats. Nearly every tranquilization method in common use was discussed, as well as different 'cocktails' of tranquilizing agents. The most important message here was to leave your tranquilization needs to a competent vet!

During the break between these sessions, I ran into Zuzana Kukol of Phoenix Exotics. She was busy handing out copies of their new book on private ownership of small cats to all of the presenters and USDA officials. She made sure I was well-endowed with supplies to recruit more Phoenix members!

The third morning presentation was entitled 'Transport and Management of Circus Cats and Elephants'. It was presented by Ted Friend of Texas A&M University. This was an interesting presentation addressing issues of people who have their big cats on the road most of the time. The transportation methods of seven different circus organizations was studied. These ran the gamut from cages loaded into semitrailers, to elaborate self-contained transport-cage units. These units were equipped with instruments and then driven through a variety of different climate conditions. The cats themselves were given swallowable temperature recorders that would record a day to a day and a half's worth of internal body temperature. The general findings were that all of the systems in use generally worked as advertised. The cats exhibited a wide range of normal behaviors while in transit, and those that were exercised just before the trip rode the best. The ventilation needed in these cages while in transit did not result in excessively high or low temperatures for the comfort of the cat. In conclusion, well thought-out transportation schemes for big cats did not produce any excessive levels of discomfort for these animals.

The fourth and final morning presentation was 'New Training Methods,' presented by Gary Noble of Disney's Animal Kingdom. This presentation dealt with training cats with behaviors useful for their day-to-day husbandry. Some of these behaviors included opening the mouth, presenting ears, presenting tail for injections, etc., and coming consistently when they hear a certain sound. For the most part, this training was based on operant (clicker) training techniques, and should be easy to implement at any facility holding big cats. Also discussed was keeper education used to implement these training programs.

I realized during our lunch break that this seminar was being attended by animal rights people as well. Representatives from the Humane Society of the US (HSUS) were seen, and I was told that there were representatives from PETA present as well. Their presence cast somewhat of a chill on the seminar.

In the afternoon, I chose to first attend the APHIS regulatory breakout session. I thought this would be a regulatory tutorial. Instead, it was an open, 'ask the inspector' type of session. Most of the questions centered on the potentially dangerous animal policy the



USDA is currently working on. Much of this was related to a case involving the Siberian Tiger Foundation. As a result of a court ruling in this case, it has been determined that the public should not be allowed any contact with a dangerous animal. Other questions dealt with how USDA license jurisdiction works, repeat occasional noncompliance, etc. I asked a question regarding the sources for the statistics to back up claims that the USDA makes in their infamous publication 1560 (a publication which discourages the ownership of big cats as pets.) The general response I got was that “the statistics exist.”

Unfortunately for me, this opened a floodgate of questions and comments about cats needing placement from private owners. Cattales out of Washington State reported that the last 40 big cats they had to place were from ‘the private sector or misappropriated from the wild’. The representative from HSUS reported that no statistics exist to show that private owners do a better job than the USDA. A 2002 study done by TAOS shows that 64 percent of their placements were former pets. They also noted that this was from among all classes of animals, not just big cats. One person reported that exotic cats were ‘passed around like a shell game’ in New York City. In any case, there were a lot of people in attendance that did not like private owners of big cats. (However, there were at least several private owners I knew in attendance.)

The second afternoon breakout session I attended was entitled ‘Carnivory’. It was presented by Ellen Dierenfeld, a nutritionist. The primary focus of the session was showing how the computer program ‘Zootrition’ could be used to enhance the feeding program for your animals. (Zootrition is used by most AZA zoos.) The presentation was also an outstanding look at big cat nutrition and how different diets can meet these nutritional needs. Part of the presentation was a side-by-side comparison of both commercial diets and popular supplements. This was perhaps the best presentation of the entire symposium.

The third breakout session I attended was an expansion on the ‘New Training Methods’ seminar from the morning. After a brief opening presentation by Kay Rosaire (Who advocated a rather politically correct method of handling big cats), Gary Noble and Michelle Skurski of Disney’s Animal Kingdom continued their presentation from the morning. The bulk of the presentation was a videotape showing how the training at the Animal Kingdom worked. It was really easy to pick up on these methods, and see how they could apply to your cats. (This videotape is available from Disney’s Animal Kingdom.) The session concluded with an informative question-and answer time. (Before the week was out, one of the other people who had attended with me had already begun training a couple of our zoo cats!)

The fourth and final breakout session I attended was loosely entitled ‘Fixed Exhibit Design’. It was presented by Craig Racicot, who is the Quality Assurance officer for the San Diego Zoo. This program was less about designing new enclosures than finding problems with existing enclosures. He addressed a lot of problems that can exist with caging, floors, rest platforms, food handling and storage, etc. He pointed out over and over again that the USDA could write you up for a lot of really minor things. This presentation left me with impressions like ‘No rust must ever come in contact with an animal.’ Although a lot of practical suggestions were made on shortcomings to look for in your facility, I doubt that many places could afford all the construction or maintenance ideas that were suggested.

After the closing session, the four of us walked out of the seminar with many new ideas and concepts to think about. We continue to this day to discuss these concepts with each other, and will probably do so for some time.

*Check the FCF web site for a longer version of Tim’s adventures in Las Vegas, visiting the MGM Grand Lion Habitat and other sites.*



**Leopards, Etc.**



*continued from page 28*

People frequently ask us how we exercise our cheetahs. They have been taught to chase a lure (designed for coursing greyhounds and modified for running cheetahs). We run them at least twice a week so they keep their hearts and lungs healthy.

Several years, in a row, the Northern California chapter of CCF put on the “Run for Survival”. We had Kgosi and Kamau run on the football field of a local junior college. People paid admission to watch the cats run and of course all the money raised went directly to saving cheetahs in the wild. We also have the cheetahs at events during Laurie’s annual tour. Last year we traveled to Portland and helped raise money at that chapter’s events as well as the ones held here in the Bay Area. The “boys” were such a hit, this year we have been asked to participate in the Seattle chapter’s fund-raising.

Having the cheetahs in our lives has been a truly rewarding experience. The cheetah is definitely an animal that deserves to be save from extinction. As Laurie Marker says “if we can save the cheetah, we can save the world.”

## **2002 FCF Convention Videotapes**

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## AZA 2003 Felid TAG's SSP Summary Reports

**Sand Cat** – 2003 the American SSP and the European EEP have joined forces for global breeding plan since neither continent has enough diversity to sustain their populations. The interest in San Cats is very low in AZA institutions so last year no breeding was attempted. 17 individuals were located in the home range of this feline, however with the present world tension in that region the advisability of importation is questionable. (Not to mention the lack of interest in housing this species by AZA zoos)

**Black Footed Cat** – 11 institutions hold black-footed cats and the total population is 21 animals. One litter of three was recorded this year and 1 kitten is still alive from that litter. San Diego Zoo imported more individuals for the SSP however, four of these individuals have recently tested positive for the herpes virus, most likely a result of using a modified live vaccine. A five-year old died of amyloidosis this past year, a persistent medical issue with this species. More research is needed on this condition and there are investigations into the vaccination protocol for this species as well.



Clouded leopard kittens from the Point Defiance Zoo

**Clouded Leopard SSP** - Last year there were 7.9 births at 5 institutions with 6.6 alive today. 17 animals died at 13 institutions since January 2002. Presently there are 54.64 Clouded Leopards in the AZA SSP and according to ISIS records, another 112 internationally. The European population is in bad shape; there are only two breeding pairs in their collections so they offer no genetic swapping opportunities. Presently the US population consists of 36% of felines in paired situations and a whopping 64% are not. 11 of the pairs are under 8 years of age. Six new pairs were created in the last 2 years. The Clouded Leopard Consortium with Thailand Zoos is the main hope for this species, and progress has been made this past year. Representatives from the National Zoo and Nashville Zoo have spent time in Thailand overseeing the renovation of abandoned hornbill exhibits to create off-site breeding facilities, helping establish guinea pig farming to improve diets fed these endangered felines, and sharing modern veterinary techniques with the Thailand vets including sperm banking.

**Pallas Cats** – present population is 27.21 in 12 institutions, descendants of 19 founders. The survival of this species in captivity is complicated by the short reproductive life. After about 7 years of age, the females reach reproductive senility. 9.5 were born last year and none of them were mother-raised, making this the first time ever the kitten survival rate has been 100%. However this has been achieved by raising them in an environment completely devoid of any exposure to pathogens or virus. It remains to be seen whether these cats can survive when they are given access to a public zoo

exhibit situation that will undoubtedly expose them to toxoplasmosis through errant rodents.

**Fishing Cats** – Present population is at 68 in AZA Zoos and 256 internationally. Three litters were produced last year with 7 kittens born. Several importations are planned including some from Thailand by Rick Swartz and others from Cambodia by Joe Maynard of the Rare Feline Breeding Compound. This population is not managed on a sub-species level and there are presently a sub-species mix represented. The new Thailand Fishing Cat Consortium, riding on the coat tails of the Clouded Leopard Consortium is hoped to bring in 10 captive-born offspring in the next three years.

**Lion** – There are 36.33 pedigreed lions at 27 institutions descendants of 42 founders. 18 recommendations for breeding were made which involves 15 animal transfers. Three institutions have had either exhibit or mate killings in the past year and there is concern that several breedings did not result in conceptions. Zoo demand for this species greatly exceeds the present population.



Lions at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center

**Amur Leopard** – 43.46 individuals are located in 34 institutions, descendants from 10 founders in the US. Space allotments for the only leopard sub-species to be approved for exhibit in AZA zoos have been increased to 150. A re-introduction program is being considered. The location will be separate from the remaining natural population to double as protection from catastrophic loss.

**Ocelot** – The Brazilian Ocelot Consortium is still the main focus of this SSP. The following Zoos have signed onto the plan to raise \$90,000 over the next 5 year period in exchange for an unrelated pair of pure Brazilian founder kittens: Cleveland,

Dallas, Oklahoma City, Oregon, Salisbury, Santa Ana, Caribbean Gardens, Burgen County and El Paso Zoo. Last fall the consortium sent the first \$12,000 installment payment to Brazil with \$7,000 going to teach them to use studbooks and the software programs, and \$5,000 for habitat recovery. This recovery will be accomplished through a seedling nursery for replanting trees. It is hoped the first of 10 pair of ocelot kittens will arrive in the US next year. Presently there are 10.5 Brazilian ocelots in the US now, and an additional generic population of 66.67. A management plan to reduce the generic population gradually is being implemented as the purebred Brazilians enter the country.



Tiger at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center

**Tiger** – Current AZA zoo populations are 150 Amur Tigers, (formerly called Siberian) 55 Sumatran tigers and 35 Indochinese tigers and more than 90 generic tigers. 22 Breeding recommendations made last year resulted in 3 being successful so far.

**Snow Leopards** – Current population is 106.130 in 90 institutions. 45 breedings were recommended for 2003.

**Jaguars** – There are presently 11 pairs of recently imported Jaguars traceable to wild stock, and an additional 62 generic cats not recommended for any breeding plan. This species is not managed on a sub-species level, but there is emphasis upon importing all new traceable stock for the SSP and managing the existing generic stock to extinction.

**Cheetah** – There are 227 animals in North America (some are not part of the AZA's population) Disease is a major factor in cheetahs and more research is needed. Stress levels recorded in fecal samples are astronomical. The Husbandry Manual published a decade ago is slated for an update. And the SSP managers have come to the conclusion that rather than attempt zoo setting reproduction, off-site breeding facilities are needed and larger areas for cheetahs are recommended.

**Mountain Lions** – The target population of 100 animals has been increased to 120, due to regional demand for this native American feline. Presently there are 49.70 in 56 AZA zoos and there are no plans for breeding this species. Replacement animals will be brought in as wild caught orphans.

**Serval** – 91% of the current population is from unknown origin. This population has no breeding recommendations. The first ever studbook was published earlier this year.

**Caracal** – There are 52 of these felines in AZA zoos. The target population is 80 animals.

**Canadian lynx** – the first studbook for this species was published this past March. There are 34 animals in 19 AZA zoos, with a target population of 80 animals.



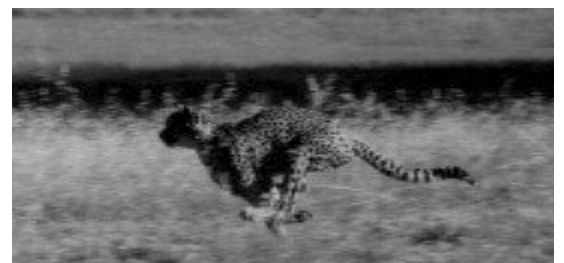
photo courtesy of Lynn Culver

Report by Lynn Culver

## NEEDED - FOR THE 2003 FCF CONVENTION

Any and all FCF members who wish to present a special request to the Board of Directors during the General Membership Meeting should mail or email the request to the FCF Secretary-Treasurer. All requests must be submitted in writing and dated no later than June 30th to be considered for presentation at the meeting. Members need not attend to submit their requests. Please mail your requests to me at 3310 Remington Drive, Indianapolis, IN. 46227-8126 or email to [Hpepperson@aol.com](mailto:Hpepperson@aol.com).

Harold L. Epperson, FCF Secretary-Treasurer





## Cloning Could Bring Nearly Extinct Cheetah Back

Sources:

<http://www.elements.nb.ca/theme/endangeredspecies/cheetah/mediaarticle.htm#2>

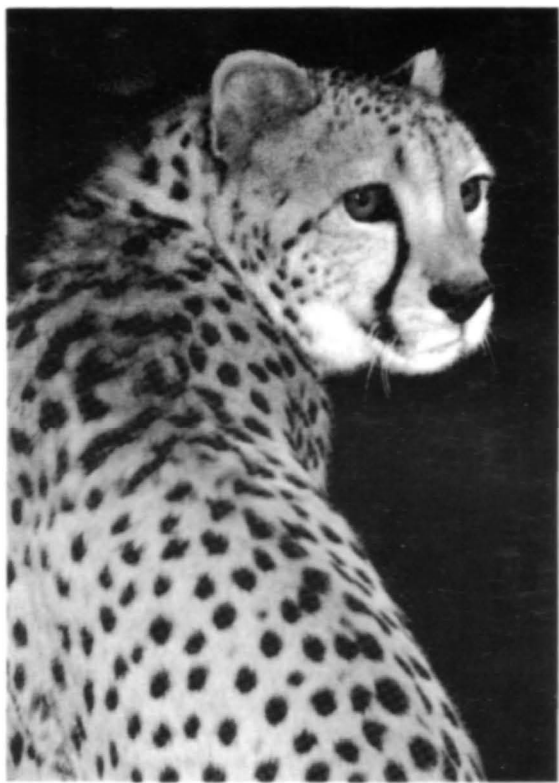
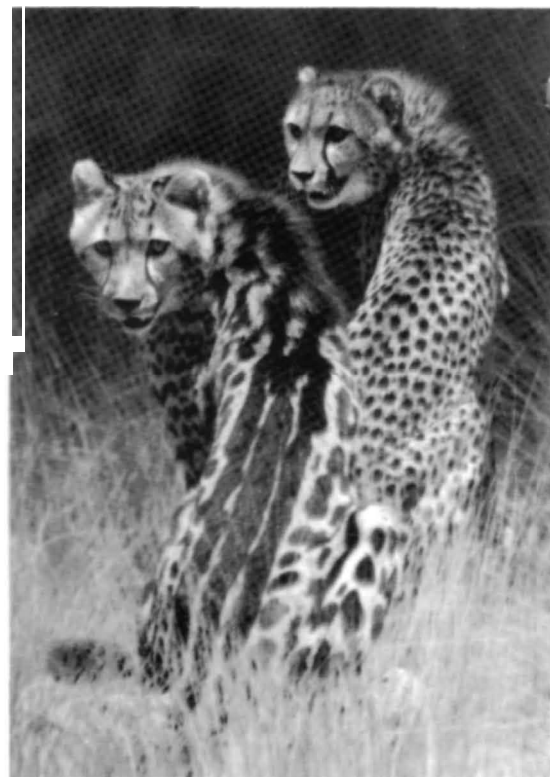
<http://www.wildaboutcats.org/asiatic.htm>

Betterhumans Staff [Friday, January 31, 2003] Iran appears ready to support an attempt by Indian scientists to clone a nearly extinct cheetah.

The quick and agile Asiatic cheetah went extinct in India about 50 years ago. There are thought to be less than a few hundred of the animals left worldwide.

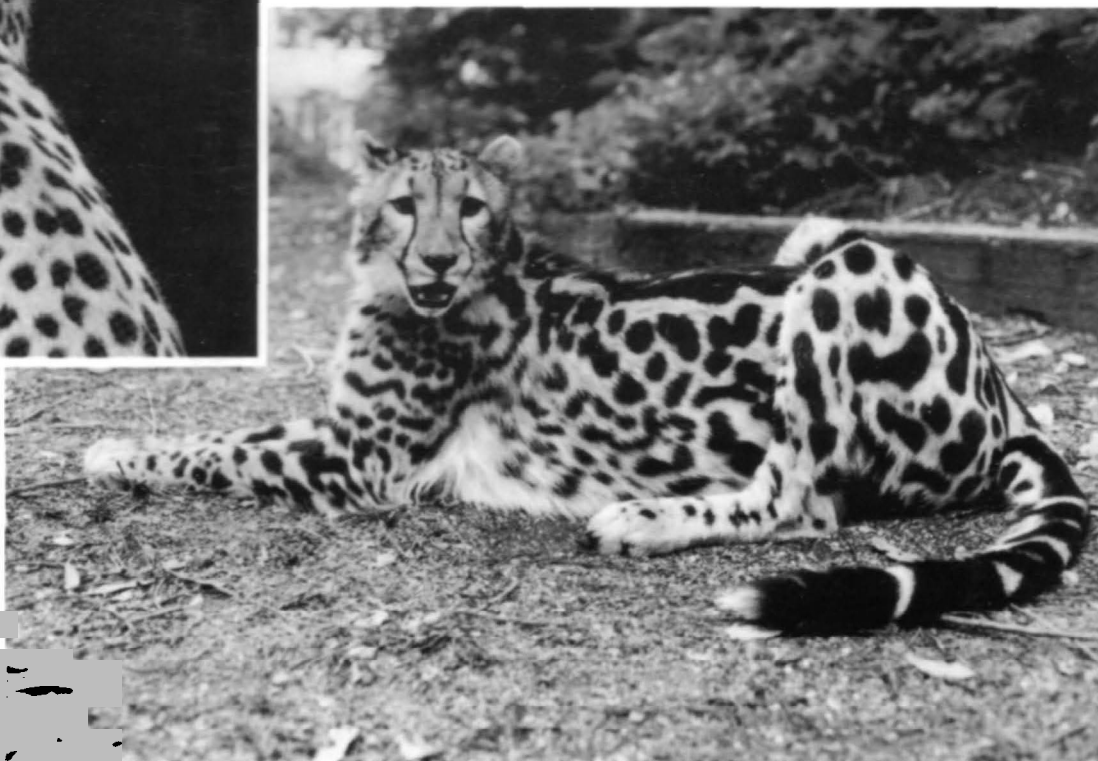
India's Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology project to clone the cheetah in 2000 has been hampered by a lack of access to live cheetahs or their genetic material.

Hunting during British rule wiped out the cheetahs from India, but they still live in some parts of Iran.



During a Tuesday visit to the biology centre by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, the cloning project appeared likely to gain the country's support.

Indian scientists plan to insert the nucleus of an Iranian Asiatic cheetah cell into the eggs of a leopard. The mixed cell will be carried by a surrogate leopard mother.



Cheetahs of Leopards, Etc

Top: Kgosi and Mopane  
Middle: Samburu  
Bottom: king cheetah Kgosi