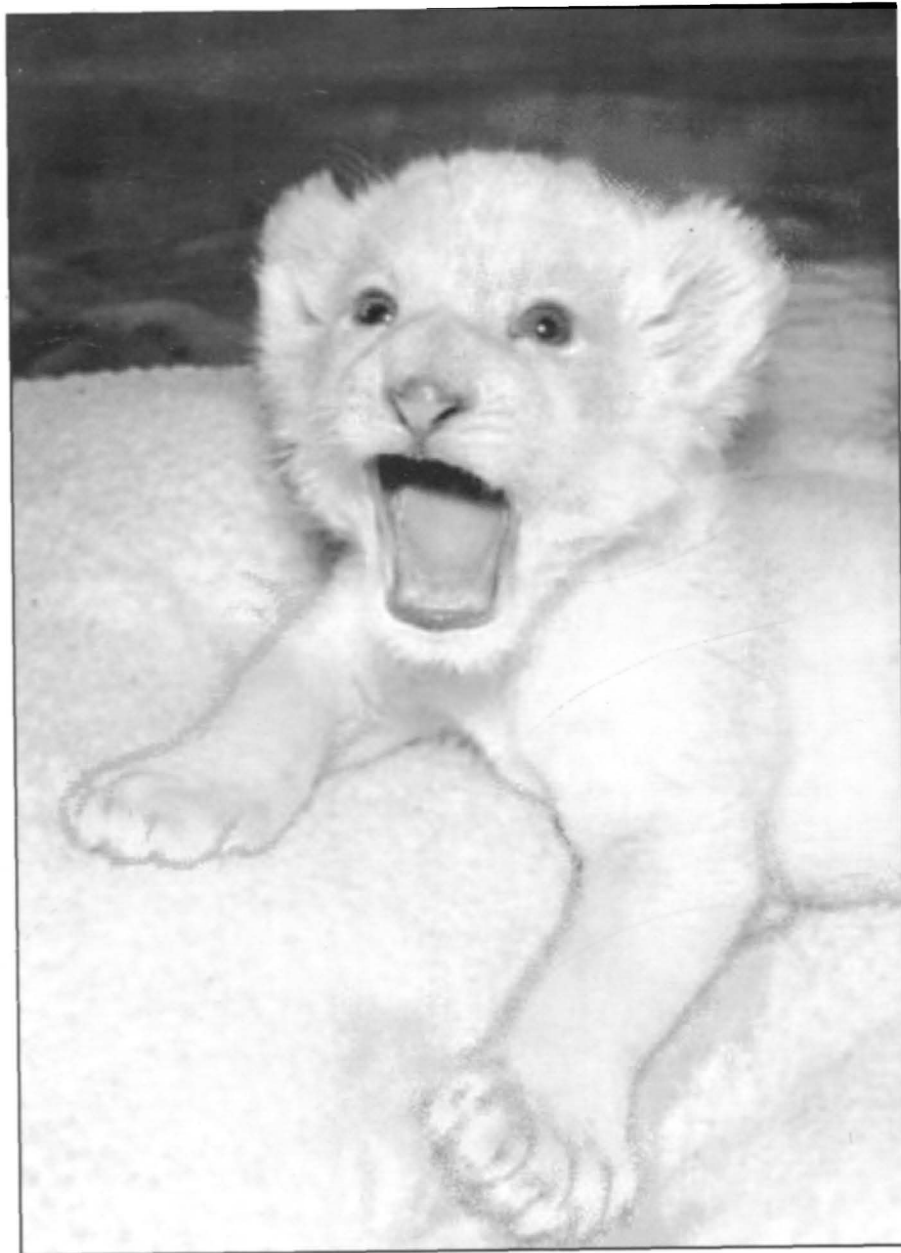


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Feline Conservation Federation





Feline Conservation Federation

This newsletter is published bi-monthly by the LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc. d/b/a/ as the Feline Conservation Federation. 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 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 tenth of odd 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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**Members are invited to participate in e-mail
list discussions on-line at
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**To sign up, contact
Leann Montgomery,
Member Services Director**

Cover: A little Shazam,
rare white lion cub is
roaring to go! Shazam
recently provided some
extra pizzaz for the FCF
informational booth at
the Lolli Brother's
auction in Macon, MO
in March.

BRANCHES:**ACEF: Alliance for the Conserva-
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**The newly updated FCF web site
is available at
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This spring issue is devoted to kittens. Here are a couple of bobcats doing their best to help out the FCF editor staff make sure we have some kittens.

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*Special thanks to expert article contributors Gail Hedberg, James Godsmark,
Joshua Reichert, Loretta Jones and Andy Jennings*

Classified

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Momma cat being nursed on by Amigo, a bobcat kitten and Tuti, a Geoffroy's kitten. Read more about Momma cat on page 24

FCF Sets up Booth at the Lollis Brothers Spring Auction

Volunteers Lynn Culver, Leann Montgomery, J.B. Anderson and Kevin Chambers spent two days in Macon, Missouri in April to help spread the word on FCF and sign up new members.

This was a great opportunity to give out flyers on FCF and the next Husbandry Course scheduled for May 8th in North Carolina. We also passed out informational flyers about our FCF sponsored rainforest habitat, Playa de Oro Reserve.

The volunteer efforts paid off as 28 new members joined the Federation those two days, including zoo owners from Virginia, Tennessee, Wisconsin and Kansas. Also joining were breeders from Kansas and Minnesota, educators from Arkansas, volunteers from Georgia, plenty of exotic cat owners from states all over, a future sanctuary from Arizona, and a veterinarian from Missouri, to mention a few.



One Viewpoint

By John K. Babb

There are segments of the population that believe the keeping of animals which they describe as “wildlife” should be made illegal for private citizens to keep as pets. This group also opposes the propagation of wildlife in the private sector. This is one viewpoint; but I hold another.

Many people would rebuke this argument with a simple statement of: “It is my right to keep animals defined as “wildlife” for pets as well as to make my living and livelihood from their propagation and sale!” Although this statement may be a factual one at present in the majority of the U.S., this legal right may not always exist. So let me go beyond this rebuttal, which is one that can be easily compared to a child’s reply of “because!” when a question is put to him/her, and address the main issue directly. Keep in mind our contention, as a people who live in a free democratic society, that to protect the rights of all to disagree openly is an essential part of how new laws are made and old ones are upheld. Also, remember the rights of a minority section of our population to be protected against the majority opinion is of course the purpose for the first ten amendments to the Constitution of The United States commonly referred to as the “Bill of Rights”. So in expressing the reasoning behind my one viewpoint maybe I can change someone’s mind or at least show him or her how I arrived at my way of thinking.

Mankind is but a part of the ecology of this planet. We can’t simply separate ourselves from the other animals in our environment. In fact, by doing so would be effecting the lives of the very animals with which we are trying to separate ourselves. It has even been stated that the mere observance of our environment affects its processes. When we shine a light on something in order to observe it we have in fact changed what we are observing. Man’s over population and destruction of “wildlife” habitats is a fact whether we like it or not and is a prime example of the unavoidable influence we have on the animal kingdom. Therefore, it is not whether or not to interact but rather how we choose to interact with our brother animals.

In my heart, I just can not believe that my serval cat that plays with me so eagerly and receives the best veterinary care, the best nutrition, a great deal of space in which to play freely with his mate, is being mistreated either physically, mentally, or philosophically. The “domestic” cats of today were once wild but over time became domesticated because it brought great joy to the people who kept them. The domestic cat itself has flourished, unlike many wild species of today, which with their habitats disappearing and their numbers decreasing are in danger of possible extinction unless man intervenes positively.

Many within the group of people, which disagree with my viewpoint, have no problems with wild animals kept in a zoo. In response to this I simply say there is nothing magical about the word ‘zoo’. For a relatively nominal fee and some additional paper work a private owner’s facility can be legally categorized as a “zoo”. This guarantees no better or worse treatment of the animals. As in all walks of life, there exists both good and bad. There are good responsible zoos and ones not quite so responsible. Another fact about zoos is that many of them don’t have breeding programs for all of their exhibits so they go to the private sector in order to replenish or improve their animal populations. For some species of animals private ownership and propagation programs are the only things between them and outright extinction. The increasing number of private breeders also helps with the problem of breeding animals too closely related and thereby eliminating certain genetic defects “in-breeding” can cause. To conclude this point, I personally have seen many private facilities far superior in size, animal care, and maintenance than those offered a particular species of animal within a “zoo”.

In the final analysis, if the animal is well cared for physically, mentally, and shown compassion with a commitment to last the animal’s entire lifetime then a healthy and beneficial interaction for both man and animal exists. This is one viewpoint.

Why Grieve for One Species?

One by One, the World Is Becoming a Lonelier Place

March 15, 2004

Los Angeles Times, COMMENTARY

By Joshua Reichert

Last month, with little fanfare, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed two tropical birds, the Mariana mallard and the Guam broadbill, from its list of species that are endangered. The birds are extinct, having joined a growing list of animals that have disappeared from the face of the Earth.

The announcement that these two birds, which were native to the islands of the western Pacific, had vanished forever elicited little attention. Their numbers had been declining for decades. And few people, other than the most avid bird enthusiasts, even knew what they were or had ever seen them. So there will be few who will mark their passing with the same nostalgia or sense of loss that might accompany the disappearance of a better known species like the snow leopard, the Siberian tiger or the black rhinoceros — all on the brink of the same abyss.

The fact that the extinction of these two creatures was virtually a silent one is a tragedy. Both were the product of millions of years of evolution. Both were connected to a larger network of species that interrelate and depend on one another in many ways that still remain a mystery to science. And both succumbed to the same types of human-induced pressures that threaten so many other animals in this country and elsewhere in the world: habitat loss, over-hunting and the introduction of nonnative species against which they have little or no defense.

Many would ask why we should care that these two birds are no longer here. The answer is that we now know enough about how the world is put together to recognize that each species on Earth plays a role in nature. When one disappears, it is a harbinger of trouble. Just how or when or if the extinction of one species will affect us in any material way is difficult to know. However, there are stark examples of how our disregard for other life forms has imperiled our own survival.

Take, for example, the case of Easter Island. This remote, barren island in the South Pacific, which is best known for its huge, mysterious stone statues, was once covered by a subtropical forest. But its Polynesian inhabitants eventually deforested the island, driving most of its tree species into extinction along with every species of native land bird. With no wood available to build boats for fishing, and the soil so depleted that crops could not be grown, an estimated 90% of the human inhabitants died of starvation.

There are many different reasons why we should rail against extinction. Biologically, because each species is part of a larger, complex assemblage of living things, we should strive to protect them all, particularly because we don't understand how each piece fits with the others. There is also a moral reason. It is

that Earth's creatures, great and small, are not simply here for our benefit but are here with us in the world. As such, we have a fundamental responsibility to treat them all with respect and a sense of stewardship.

We are clearly failing in this task. There are more than 12,000 species of animals and plants that are known to be threatened, 1,816 of which reside in the United States. And the list gets longer every year.

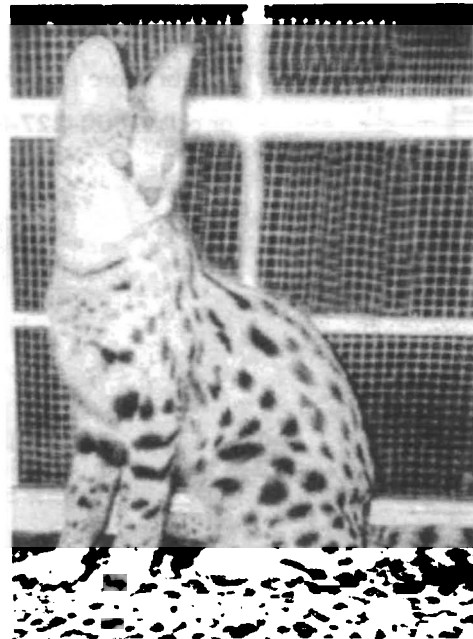
From the earliest days of life, many species have come and gone. To a certain extent, extinction is a natural event. Up until modern times, it is believed that one to two species per million vanished annually. We are now losing them far faster, at a rate that is estimated to be up to 1,000 times as high as in the past. Indeed, many scientists believe that by the middle of this century an astonishing 25% to 50% of all existing species will be on the path to extinction.

We have both a practical and an ethical responsibility to ensure that this does not happen. Every species that disappears represents one less strand in that remarkably intricate web of life of which we are a part and which ultimately sustains us.

There were no bells that tolled the departure of the two Pacific birds. But they should have tolled for us, as a sad reminder of what we have lost and as a warning for the future.

Joshua Reichert directs the environment division at the Pew Charitable Trusts.

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Donna Hickman's serval kitten Ozzy Joe



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A field project to study the ecology of wild cats in Malaysia

By Andy Jennings

Editor's note: Andy Jennings has worked in the field with Jim Sanderson (past FCF Convention speaker) on camera trapping. Since the FCF has become more active in its support of in situ observation work, I asked Mr. Jennings to summarize his current project and let our readers know how to contact him if they wished to send support.

The tropical rainforests of Peninsular Malaysia support eight species of wildcats: tigers; leopards; clouded leopards; leopard cats; Asiatic golden cats; fishing cats; marbled cats, and flat-headed cats. Sadly, five of these cat species are now considered endangered, and Malaysian lowland forests are under severe threat from human activities such as logging and clearance for agriculture. Despite the threat of extinction for many Malaysian cats, little is known about their natural history and ecology. Field studies are urgently required if we are to help conserve these wonderful animals.

I am a British carnivore biologist, living in Maine, who has been passionately interested in wild cats and other small carnivore species for many years – they are beautiful animals and fascinating to study in the wild. During my professional career, I have worked on several carnivore projects in North and South America, studying fishers, Canada lynx, and kodkods (a South American wild cat.) Over the last three years, I ran a radio-tracking project on Malay civets in the tropical forests of Sulawesi. Sulawesi is a picturesque, relatively unexplored part of Indonesia, just east of Borneo. Civets are a little-known carnivore group closely related to cats and found mainly in Southeast Asia. This was the first time that Malay civets had been studied in Indonesia.

The tiger is the largest cat of Peninsular Malaysia and perhaps one of most charismatic animals of the rainforest. Although most people are familiar with tigers and other carnivores such as lions and giant pandas, who has heard of a flat-headed cat, a banded palm civet, or a crab-eating mongoose? Many of these small Asian carnivores have never been studied in the wild; several species could become extinct unless we learn more about how to conserve them. Therefore, I have been looking to set up a comprehensive field research project on small carnivore species in Asia. Recently, the opportunity to establish such a project has arisen on Peninsular Malaysia. With an international team of wildlife biologists, I will study the wild cats (and other small carnivore species) within Krau Wildlife Reserve: the second largest wildlife reserve of Peninsular Malaysia, containing one of the largest remaining blocks of lowland forest. Krau Wildlife Reserve is perhaps unique in Malaysia, and the world, for the diversity of landscape, fauna and flora found within such a compact area. The central lowland forests of Peninsular Malaysia support extensive plant communities and animal species that are severely threatened due to loss of habitat. Of the original 6.5 million hectares of lowland forest only 817,140 ha still remained in 1992. In Krau Wildlife Reserve, 115 mammal species have been observed, including 17 species of carnivores, 39 species of small mammals, and several species of monkey. Further details of this project and information on Malaysian carnivore species can be found on our website at <www.carnivoreproject.org>.

This pilot study will form the basis of a long-term radio-tracking project to fully investigate the natural history and ecology of Malaysian cats. My dream is to continue this vital study for many years to come. If conservation strategies are to be implemented for Malaysian wild cats we need to know more the ecology of wild cat species and their small mammal prey (mice, rats and squirrels).

Our fieldwork will begin in July 2004 to investigate the critical factors that affect felid diversity within the lowland forests of Krau Wildlife Reserve. Over a period of 2-3 months, wire-cage traps and camera-traps will be set up on 1km² study grids to determine the diversity and relative abundance of felids and small mammal species and to investigate the relative importance of the small mammal



The author with a Malay civet, a subject in recent studies of biodiversity in Sulawesi

prey base. Habitat plots will be set up around trap sites to investigate the relative importance of habitat features for felids and small mammals. Dietary analysis of felid scats will be undertaken to determine prey preference. To investigate the systematics of Malaysian wild cats, captured animals will be anaesthetized and morphological data and DNA samples collected. We will use large wire-cage traps to catch animals in order to radio-collar some individuals and collect genetic materials and body measurements. Selected individuals will also be radio-collared so that we can gather some preliminary radio-telemetry data and discover important additional information about their natural history and ecology. We also plan to use camera-traps within the reserve to determine where each species lives in the forest. A camera-trap consists of a small, self-winding camera and an infrared sensor housed inside a plastic box. The camera-trap is tied to a tree, where it will automatically take photographs of any animal that passes by.

Public awareness and environmental education are important components of any conservation strategy. The knowledge and skills of the project researchers will be passed on to the reserve staff, project workers, and the local community. We plan to publish our results, produce educational materials, and involve Malaysian university students as assistants and project students. The information generated from this project will be used to formulate conservation strategies for Malaysian wildcat species and help identify areas where further research is required. After the success of this initial project, I intend to continue this project by setting up a long-term radio telemetry study of the small carnivores of Krau Wildlife Reserve.

This is only the beginning of much longer term conservation work needed in this area. The camera traps are a critical step in documenting the animal life present in these locations. For further details on this project and Malaysian wild cat species please visit the website: www.carnivoreproject.org. If you need further information, or would like to financially support this project, then please email Andy Jennings at smallcarnivores@yahoo.com or contact him at the address above.

The Royal Geographical Society has generously awarded us a grant of \$4,000. But I still need to raise about \$3,000 for the initial phase. This is where you can help these wild cats and other small carnivore species. Any contributions you can make to help us buy equipment and cover some of the field expenses will be very gratefully received! Please make your check payable to 'Andy Jennings' and send your contribution to:
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A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF TAURINE IN ZOO CARNIVORES

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Taurine is an amino acid that is not found in any plant-based food and is an essential nutrient in all mammalian cells. Taurine, an osmolyte is important in cell volume regulation and as an β -amino acid that is not incorporated into protein synthesis that resides free in the intracellular fluid (Chesney, 1998). Aside from cell volume regulation, taurine's major biological role is the conjugation of bile acids.

Carnivores tend to be exclusive taurine-conjugators (Huxtable, 1992). Taurine-conjugated bile acids are important in triglyceride and fat-soluble vitamin absorption from the gut lumen into the blood stream (Hoffman 1999). Taurine-conjugated bile acids absorb vitamin D more efficiently than glycine-conjugates (Hoffman, 1999) (Zamboni, 1993).

All bile acids must be conjugated in order to form bile salts, which are important in the formation of mixed micelles that enhance diffusion through the unstirred layer of the small intestine (Hoffman, 1999) (Zamboni, 1993).

The amino acid taurine is sometimes in short supply in infant formulas (Chesney, 1998). Infants fed a taurine-free formula have been reported to have Vitamin D deficiency with nutritional rickets (Zamboni, 1993). The commercial canine milk formula that is often used in hand rearing carnivores and as well as cow's milk are free of taurine.

Feline taurine-deficiency leads to retinal degeneration, tapetal degeneration, cardiomyopathy and, in F1 generation kittens, fetal wastage and renal abnormalities (Sturman, 1995) (Chesney, 2000) (Hayes, 1975). These disorders have been noted in domestic and barnyard cats, (Morris, 1990) (Lippincott, 1988) (Kenny, 1998) captive white Bengal tigers and leopards (Pickett, 1990). The major reasons for feline taurine deficiency in cats are due to a vegetable-based canine diet which is taurine free or a canned feline diet labeled to contain adequate taurine (Morris, 1990) (Hayes, 1975)). The heating process of the canned feline diet produces a Maillard reaction with the sugars in the chow, rendering the taurine in the chow incapable of being absorbed from the gut of the feline (Morris 1990). A recent study indicates a taurine deficiency in the domestic dog fed commercial lamb and rice based dry dog food (Stratton-Phelps, 2002).

All of this background information led to a review of taurine values in both blood and diet of exotic animals. Little information is available about taurine and its relationship to infant and adult zoo animal nutrition.

Specific nutrient requirements have not been established for giant anteaters, *Myrmecophaga tridactyla*. They may have many of the same unique dietary requirements as described for felids and taurine (Edwards, 1996). Preliminary results indicate that a dilated cardiomyopathy in two captive adult Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) were a result of these animals being fed a diet low in taurine. The San Francisco Zoo, in collaboration with Audubon Zoo, Chaffee Zoo, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Nashville Zoo, and Santa Barbara Zoo is reviewing plasma, whole blood and dietary levels of taurine and general cardiac health for giant anteater.

Vitamin D deficiency with associated rickets has been reported in captive polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) (Kenny, 1999). Zoos routinely feed commercial puppy milk replacer formula that does not contain taurine to hand reared polar bears (Hedberg, 2002). Poor Vitamin D absorption and the lack of taurine in the diet may contribute to metabolic bone disease in captive Polar bears. (Kenny, 1999). The San Francisco Zoo's objective is to expand the database of blood and maternal milk values for taurine using samples from both captive and free ranging polar bears. Serum vitamin D levels will also be measured. Serum and whole blood samples have been collected from polar bears from several zoos including San Diego Zoo, San Francisco Zoo, Detroit Zoo, and Sea World San Diego. Plasma and whole blood taurine values are significantly lower (60%) in captive polar bears when compared to four-month-old cubs that were wild caught.

We have approached the American Zoo and Aquarium Association Bear Taxonomic Advisory Group to investigate collaboration among a wider group of zoos. We also developed collaboration with Dr. Andrew Derocher, Polar Bears Land Ecology Leader, Norwegian Polar Institute, Tromsø, Norway and Dr. Robert J. Letcher, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER), University of Windsor Ontario, Canada. They have collected blood and milk samples from free-ranging polar bears and have made samples available for our study. A review of taurine levels in free ranging polar bear maternal milk samples will also be included in this investigation.

Dr. Quinton Rogers, Professor of Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences at University of California Davis, has been instrumental in providing evaluation, interpretation and guidance with this study.

Taurine deficiency is usually found in feline species due to a lack of the critical biosynthetic enzyme cysteine sulfonic acid decarboxylase (CSAD) to synthesize taurine. However, it is interesting to speculate that the lack of dietary taurine may have a nutritional consequence to other carnivores. Taurine deficiency is well documented in cats with established normal ranges of plasma, whole blood and diet. The cause of taurine deficiency in the dog is under investigation by veterinary nutritionists at the University of California-Davis. The common factor appears to be diet.

Using the dog and cat as models, it would appear that taurine deficiency is a potential concern for selected zoo mammals. Giant anteaters with cardiomyopathy and Polar Bear cubs with rickets led the San Francisco Zoo and Quinton Rogers of University of California Davis to measure plasma and whole blood and dietary taurine in zoo carnivores.

This paper is to stimulate awareness that taurine deficiency may have a role in these disease processes. Additional work is needed to evaluate diet composition for taurine and blood levels of taurine in non-domestic carnivores to further help understand taurine as an important nutrient in the formulation of zoo carnivore diets.

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FCF Issues Press Releases

The FCF has begun issuing press releases utilizing PRWeb, an Internet based press release company that provides a minimal service without charge and expanded services for reasonable fees.

Internet press releases are sent by satellite feed to target media markets and can be customized for a single metropolitan area or the entire county. They are sent according to the area of interest – such as state government, lifestyles, environment, hobbies, miscellaneous, opinion, etc. Most of the target category choices listed has nothing to do with our animals, such as computers or sports. At this time we are not aware of any of our press releases being reprinted in any newspapers. They are receiving enhanced interest by the news media, according to the tracking data kept by PRWeb.

FCF press releases are posted in the PRWeb archives and picked up by the Yahoo and Google news services and have resulted in gaining exposure for the FCF and our views in support of private captive husbandry. Our press releases have been found by the feline community and posted to the various feline chat lists and one assumes they have probably been found by our adversaries and posted to the AR lists as well. This can be an important demoralizing tool in the war of public relations against those who wish to abolish captive husbandry and private ownership of wild felines.

The following Press Releases have been issued by FCF and can be found on our FCF web site as well as the PRNews web site. In the information below, the date the release was issued is followed by the title of the FCF press release and two numbers follow that. The first number is the Reads - This number tells us how many times our press release was accessed from the PRWeb site. The second number is the Pick-ups - This number estimates the number of times our press release was picked up by a media outlet. This does not tell you how many times our story appears in the media. It simply represents an enhanced interest in our story by a media outlet. These numbers were current the beginning of April, but they continue to climb daily, as the releases remain on the Internet forever. Beneath each FCF press release is the summary of the release.

February 12, 2004 - Feline Conservation Federation Decries Animal Rights Tactics 57,802/570

The Feline Conservation Federation opposes House Bill 1151. It will add more uprooted felines to an already overburdened sanctuary community and hurt the conservation work of responsible owners.

February 18, 2004 - Feline Conservation Federation emphasizes keeper safety in light of recent leopard attack 34,884/357

“Responsible captive husbandry of large and endangered felines requires keeper

experience and training plus facilities that provide proper housing in legal, stable and secure circumstances”, notes Tracy Wilson, FCF Director of Education

February 21, 2004 - Cat Lovers back two state bills 62,658/722

The Feline Conservation Federation has rallied behind SF2001 and HF2079, measures that will “put everyone on equal footing” while giving Minnesota authorities tracking information and enforcement power over owners who fail to meet the standards.

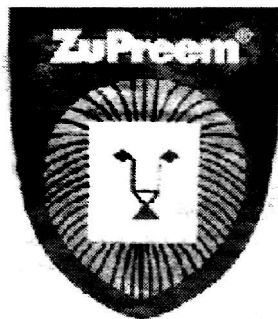
March 11, 2004 - Animal Owners Support Exotic Animal Bill 23,133/195

“This is definitely a win-win situation. HF1593 will protect the personal freedom to have an animal business or an exotic pet and insure that all owners meet care guidelines”, says Culver.

March 12, 2004 - Attack on Exotic Cats dies in Washington Legislature 26,457/216

Tracy Wilson, FCF Director of Conservation, said the FCF applauded the many Washington state representatives who protected exotic animals and the rights of their owners.

Submitted by Lynn Culver



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Legislative Update

Sara Schimke holding a baby bob while visiting friend

Minnesota: The RAOA of Minnesota hired a team of professional lobbyists to fight the ban bills. Senator Betzold's 1530, and the companion House Bill 1593 by Representative Strachan are both "manage to extinction" bills that prohibit all future ownership or breeding of cats, bears and monkeys and put serious restraints on present owners.

Rather than expend energy and time to defeat these bills and face this challenge all over again next legislative season, two good faith efforts at registration bills were presented by the RAOA of MN's lobbyists as acceptable alternatives to these ban bills and assigned to committees. FCF issued a press release by PRWeb in support of these two bills and opposing Betzold's and Strachan's bills.

However, the committee chair has final say on what bills reach the floor and the lobbyists were told their bills would not be heard. FCF Legal Affairs Director sent letters opposing SF1530. SF1530 committee hearings went first and private owners were given opportunity to testify against the bill. While they did a great job of representing themselves, and some amendments to it were made, it remains a broad ban bill that if enacted, will spell the end of captive husbandry of these species in this state.

Then HF1593 was heard in the House Agriculture Committee. Representative Lindgran, friend of animal people and the sponsor of HF2079, the bill responsible owners support, proposed a powerful striker amendment to HF1593 that gutted it entirely and replaced it with language written in favor of responsible owners. The House Ag committee overwhelmingly approved the amendment. The FCF issued another PRWeb press release in support of this newly reworded HF1593. FCF Legal Affairs Director also wrote the members of the House Civil Law and Judiciary Committee members urging them to approve the bill without making further amendments. However, HF1593 traveled through the House Civil Law Committee and animal people lost ground as new amendments passed that brought it back closer to its original intent as a ban bill. HF1593 was heard in the Judiciary Committee and further modified.

SF1530 has been heard in the Senate, HF1593 heard in the House. Today as each bill is written, SF1530 is horrible and HF1593 is unacceptable. They are different and further negotiations will be necessary to reach middle ground before anything can be signed into law. Unfortunately, there is a philosophical slant to each bill that fails to acknowledge the usefulness of captive husbandry, privately held gene pools or the need for these species or new animal keepers in the future. The Animal Rights movement is solidly backing the ban perspective and is a very powerful advocacy in Minnesota. Unlike some of the other states such as WA, where ban laws have also been proposed, MN does have several high profile cases of animal cruelty, several tiger bite incidents, illegal commerce and substandard USDA licensed facilities, that cast a dark shadow upon the good works of the many and provide ready fuel for the AR fires. What can FCF members do? At this point, with the constant amendments, I think our greatest need is to write MN legislators and communicate support for captive husbandry, for future generations, for reasonable regulations and voice your opposition to any ban law intent. AR is feeding legislators crap and they do not understand species survival, or the size or the nature or value of most feline species they are seeking to eliminate from private possession. Lynn Culver

Washington: Since the last FCF newsletter went out, WA HB1151 "—regulating (prohibiting) the keeping of dangerous animals" made fast wild tracks through Washington's Congress. The FCF issued a PRWeb Press Release to the Washington state media and Internet opposing this "Animal Rights Agenda bill" in hopes of influencing the House vote. On February 13, 2004 HB1151 passed the House floor with 60 yeas and 36 nays. HB1151 was handed over to the Senate. The FCF Legal Affairs Director contacted each Representative that voted against the bill to thank them for their decision and request their help to influence their colleagues in the Senate.

Only 4 days after the House vote, the bill had its first reading in the Senate and referred to the Judiciary Committee and then on February 20th it was referred to the Health and Long Term Care Committee. FCF Legal Affairs sent written comments to the H & L T C Committee members opposing this bill and suggesting several amendments. A public hearing was held and responsible owners and keepers of exotics voiced their opinions, as did the opposition. Timing was not on our side but some WA residents including FCF members spoke in opposition to the bill at the H & L T C Committee hearing held just two days before the annual Phoenix Wildlife Association meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

It amazes me that H & L T C Committee members did not propose any amendments; it passed as written by an overwhelming majority vote and was then whisked off to the Rules Committee at lightning speed. This is the final stop before reaching the full floor for a vote. Time was running out, and it certainly appeared this bill was being railroaded on the fast track for passage.

The Rules Committee consists of the who's who of the legislative leadership and they decide what bills make the cut and what bills get cut. The clock was ticking and WA owners and exotic animal owners and supporters across the country watched and listened anxiously via the Washington Senate and legislative web sites, hoping it wouldn't reach the floor for a vote. FCF Legal Affairs Director again contacted every Republican Senator by e-mail to ask each of them to propose amendments to the bill, knowing that any amend-



ments proposed this late in the game might buy enough time to stop the bill completely, since an amended bill would have to return to the House for their vote as well.

And there was a reprieve. Senator Benton (R-17) filed amendments to the bill that would have to be addressed on the Senate floor. Three amendments were listed on the web site, but only one had completed the filing process. Even though it was an amendment to exempt only wolf dogs from the bill's list of prohibited species, it did the trick and brought progress to a halt. By March 8th HB1151 was dead because the Senate was only considering bills that originated from their house the final week in session before they completely adjourned on March 11th.

HB1151 did *not* make it through in time before the session's end; it was an extremely close call. Alas, it's still a victory won and many fought very hard for their right to own exotic felines and other species. The FCF issued another PR Web national press release to thank the Washington Legislators for their support of private ownership rights. Until next year's session...Sara Schimke

Iowa: HF2405 – Introduced and sponsored by Rep. Swaim (D-94) on March 1, this bill prohibits possession and breeding of “A member of the felidae family of the order carnivora including, but not limited to, lions, tigers, cougars, leopards, cheetahs, ocelots, and servals” with exemption for AZA accredited institution, wildlife sanctuary, circus, state fair, pound, animal shelter, and/or locations for educational, research, veterinary, transport, exhibition, or scientific purposes. Sara Schimke

West Virginia: SB723 – Introduced and sponsored by Sen. Edgell (D-02) on March 1, it creates two state boards called Animal Health and Safety Control Board and Technical Advisory Committee which would work together and be in charge of regulating and proposing rules or amend legislature regarding the possession, sale, import/export, care and cage requirements, and trade of domestic and exotic animals by way of a registration/permit system including requiring \$100,000 insurance policy per occurrence and animal identification.

Obviously, the WV version is much better than the IA ban bill but both were introduced towards the very end of their state's legislative sessions and thankfully died while in committees because of this. Basically, they timed out. It will be interesting to see what comes up with the new session this fall – FCF members please be alert. Sara Schimke

Boyle County, Kentucky: On March 9th, the Fiscal Court Magistrates of Boyle County, KY listened to an ordinance proposal introduced and presented by an agent of the KY F&W Department that would prohibit possession of a long list of exotic animal species including the following felines: lion, jaguar, leopard, tiger, clouded leopard, cheetah, cougar and mountain lion. On March 23rd it passed with a vote of 4-2. Magistrates Hudson and Ryan were in opposition of this ban and voted accordingly. When I was doing a follow up call, Mr. Hudson stated that there was no one present either for or against the ordinance at either meeting (except for the KY F&W spokesperson present at the first one). Sadly, this is yet another KY county that has been closed. It was confirmed that the agenda is to sweep the state, going county by county, until all or most ban counties possession of exotic animals. This is a reminder to please be aware of your county or township meetings, schedules, agendas, and attend them if possible. Sara Schimke

Seneca County, OH. The Seneca County General Health District is adopting regulations for the ownership of “wild dangerous” animals. Animals already present would be grandfathered, but it will be unlawful to bring any new “wild dangerous” animals into the county. Violators face fines of \$100 per day and/or prosecution. Exemptions include: temporary circus, fair, sporting event or zoo exhibition and retail pet stores, and those licensed by the USDA, USDI, or the State of OH.

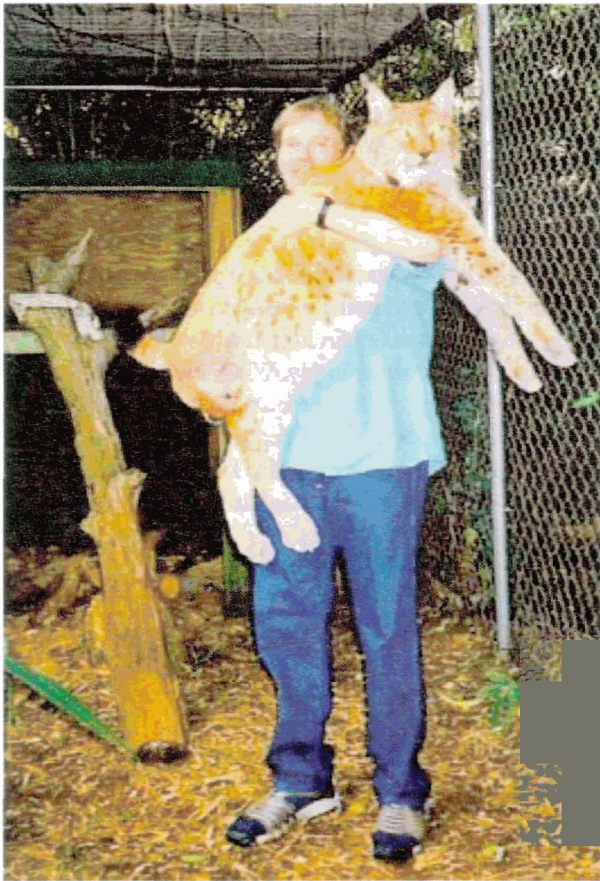
“Wild dangerous” animals include but are not limited to...bears, cheetahs, elephants, hyenas, jaguars, leopards, lions, lynx, panther, cougar, non-human primates, tigers, ocelots, bob cats, leopard cats, wolf, wolf-dog hybrids, alligators, crocodiles, all venomous or poisonous reptiles, all constrictor snakes greater than 6 ft in length and any other dangerous wild animal that poses a threat or potential threat to the health, safety, and/or well being of the residents of the Seneca County General Health District. Present owners are required to apply for a conditional possession permit and must supply the county with legal proof of possession and ownership, proof of age and projected life span of the animal, two photos of the animal, proof of ability to respond in damages in a single limit amount of \$100,000 for bodily injury to or death, and ID such as microchip or tattoo are required. For more information contact the Seneca County General Health District (Marjorie Broadhead, commissioner) at 71 South Washington St Suite #1102 in Tiffin, Ohio 44883. 419-447-3691



Think Global - Act Local NOW! - I just wanted to remind everyone that most candidates that are running for election this fall have registered with the board of elections. I have been asked to help with several campaigns. I always ask the candidate how they feel about laws on ownership. I let them know my feelings and the fact that I am an owner. I think this is the best way to combat new laws. I have done this the past 3 elections. I have received calls requesting information but no laws came to the table. I would like to think that this is because I was able to give good data that helped the Representative that I helped get elected.

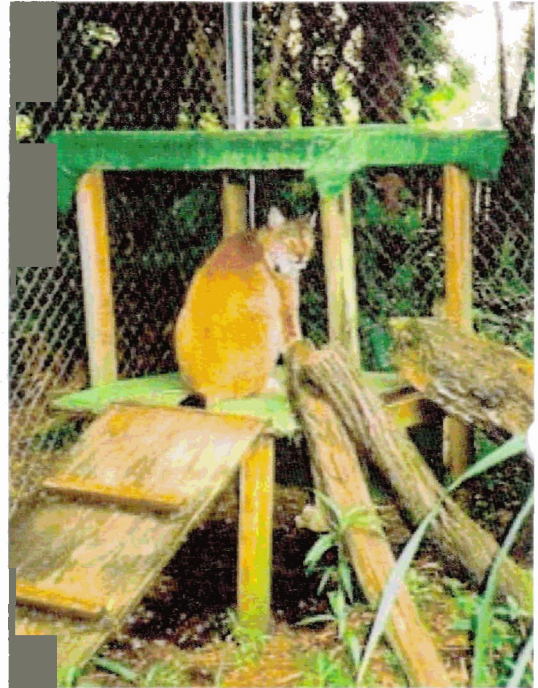
It does not take a lot of time to pass out a few flyer's, put a sign in your yard and make a couple of calls. They will remember you! If you would like to get involved call your local board of elections and get contact information for the candidates. It is well worth your time.

The only reason that I was able to fight and get a ban law dropped is because I had made political contacts that understand me and the many loves of my life! Evelvn Shaw



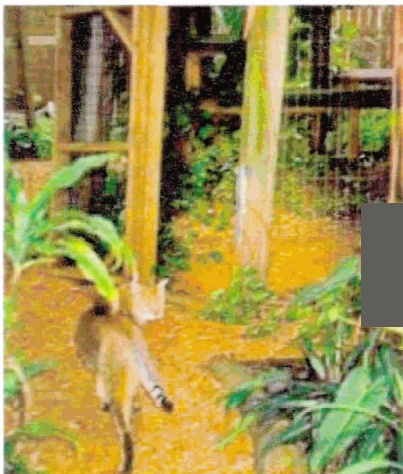
top left: A view of the elevated covered catwalk that connects the second story porch area to the back cage and allows the cats free access to their porch room.

top right: Logs are great for clawing and walking on. Make sure the vegetation is non-toxic. We place the igloos (den box) under a shelf to protect from weather (rain) and still elevated in case of excessive rain causing temporary standing water – there should be good drainage so felines do not have to stand in water.



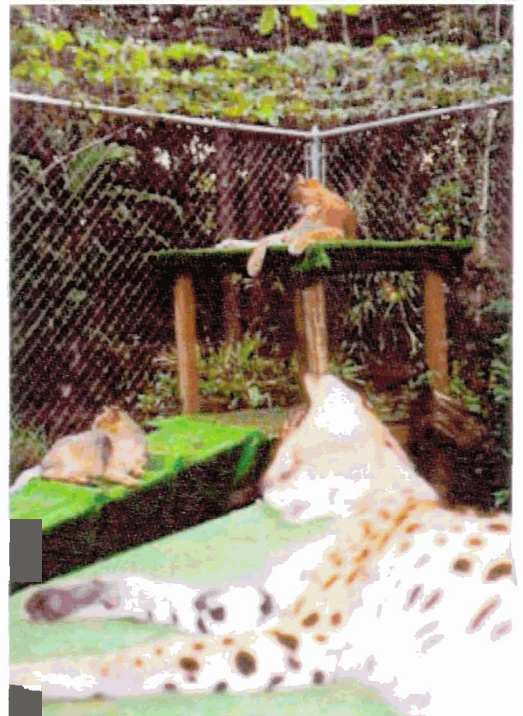
middle left: My husband John, holding lynx, Bala Sai, in front of his den – a 2 by 8 corrugated fiberglass roof keeps the rain out.

middle right: We build stands with 2 levels so the cats can get out of rain and still be outside – also provides 2 levels to sit or lounge on.



bottom right: All three cats on shelves – they love AstroTurf! Different height shelves and ramps give the cats an opportunity for jumping and exercise. Structures need to be strong enough to hold the cats.

bottom left: Make sure the ground material is comfortable on their feet. We mulch their paths.



Building Exotic Cat Enclosures

Mary Robertson

Next to love and attention (food, medical care, etc.) the enclosure you create will be the biggest influence on the quality of your exotic cat's life. The saddest sight is an animal living its entire life in a minimum size cage; never being able to really run or lay on a bed of grass basking in the sun.

I first became involved with exotics when I purchased a six-week-old jungle cat. We built a 20' x 20' x 10' high octagon shaped enclosure with a ramp connecting to a 8' by 20' screen and wired second-story porch. It has French doors loading into our home and allows the cat to roam freely when we are home. Soon after, we adopted a serval kitten and the two became inseparable. We leash-trained the cats so we could go on long daily walks through our jungle yard. Then came our third cat, a Eurasian lynx. We built a 40' x 60' area with lots of vegetation, dens, logs, shelves, a 50' walkway with a 20' ramp connecting the new enclosure to the cats' porch and our home. Next we augmented the front octagon cage with an additional 25' x 50' area—this way we could separate the cats if necessary.

The cats really enjoy the space and freedom to roam at will. We bring in new logs (with new smells) and mulch their walk paths regularly. A kitty pool is a great enrichment tool. Floating rubber toys offer fun, as the goldfish don't last long! (toys depend on the size of your cat) Another thing to consider, lynx love to poop in the water so make sure to change the water when needed.

The basic cage design includes the cage, den box entry, lounging shelves, claw logs, and food, water and enrichment items. With just one area, we created large, landscaped, natural front and back yard enclosures,

vine-covered walkways, ramps and a porch with lots of space and enrichment.

The minimum size requirements of many states and the USDA are pitifully small. We as exotic cat owners need to work for larger cage size requirements to insure the mental and physical health of exotic cats in captivity. We can directly affect our animal's health by how we define their space. Is it a minimum size, concrete and steel cage devoid of vegetation, and enrichment? Or an all natural vegetated green space with sun, shade, shelves, dens, logs, pools, walkways, ramps and more?

Remember, providing a safe, healthy and enriching environment is our responsibility as animal owners. Our cats live in the house as well as outside so they have a lot of space and freedom. Unfortunately, this is not the case for other exotic cats. For the majority of exotic cats, the enclosure you create is their whole entire world so make sure you give them the most enriching environment possible.



covered elevated walkway connects outdoor habitats with the second story back porch room.

by Robert Turner

I want to warn the FCF members that we have a dangerous enemy lurking out there that can harm the FCF and other similar organizations. It is the faceless Internet. While it is probably known best for all the useful information and humor it delivers to our personal mailboxes each day, that is not all it brings.

Many of us who use it almost on a daily basis consider it a tool that we cannot live without, but unfortunately it can be a dangerous enemy also. It can deliver gossip, lies, and misinformation, hate, malice and discontent. Because the Internet is faceless, people are bolder in what they share with others.

This dangerous enemy can be especially harmful to national organizations like FCF that conduct business on a nationwide basis. It is even harmful to regional organizations like the branches of FCF.

Since the Internet is instant and faceless, people write negative things on a public chat list that they would probably not say face-to-face or in hand written correspondence. When we read this negativity by e-mail, especially when it seems to be designed to hurt us personally or the things we care about, it is easy to quickly lash out with rude or hostile returned comments and send them instantly by e-mail for all to read. This does not help. Others reading these remarks can also be drawn into the argument and before you know it the whole organization can be too.

The tool I use to fight this enemy is **restraint**. One method to accomplish this is to always wait 24 hours before writing a response to a negative Internet correspondence. This allows time to think things over and judge issues and opinions and statements more fairly.

Hope this enlightens you that the Internet can be our silent enemy.

Amazing Exotics, Something for Everyone!

by Liz Hatton

Fed up with the cold weather in New York this year, I decided to venture south to take advantage of the warmer climate. I called my good ole pal Lynn Culver before I left. She excitedly told me about a facility in Northern Florida and suggested I make a point of stopping there. I did, and the expectations Lynn set for me were more than met, they were superbly exceeded.

Amazing Exotics is located in Umatilla Florida. Run for over twenty years by owners Yvonne and Justin Finser, it truly is an amazing facility on over 85 acres of beautifully kept land. This is something for everyone, from the passively curious, to the religiously active big cat lover. It's a visit worth making for the novice and experienced handler alike.

Michaele Forbes and Amy Migliori, two of the primary handlers, recently participated in the FCF captive husbandry course. (I must say I admire those with vast amounts of knowledge who seek to expand and network!) Ashley Olrich and Brad Osborne can be found at Amazing Exotics as well, sharing their knowledge of captive husbandry with visitors. I was fortunate enough to meet Rob, who in addition to his care of other animals, was going about the business of raising a white tiger cub. Those who have done hand rearing can appreciate the effort required. (For those who haven't yet, it is an emotionally rewarding, but physically exhausting task.) Michaele was my guide through the grounds. An extremely bright young woman and well versed in her trade, she makes a visitor feel most welcome. As we walked through the grounds, I could not help but notice how clean and well kept the cages were. The animals are magnificent specimens, one more beautiful than the next. Michael explained to me, in addition to the excellent physical care provided for the animals, their social needs are thought of as part of their routine care. Enrichment activities are provided for the animals to be sure their natural behaviors can be acted out in a fashion appropriate for captive living. In addition, plans are in the works to expand living quarters for the animals. If in my next life I come back as a big cat, I hope I will be fortunate enough to land myself a spot at Amazing Exotics. The animals there could be considered among the socially elite in the cat world.

What kind of experience you will have there depends mostly on what you want. One could simply reserve an educational walk through. If you're looking for a more "hands on" tour, that can be arranged also. You can expect to see cougars, tigers, leopards, servals, a lion, a caracal, a Eurasian Lynx, a clouded leopard and a beautiful Tabby Tiger. (For those looking to expand beyond felines, they have a stunning collection of primates, as well as bears and wolves.) With legislation tightening up, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for the novice to get started. Amazing Exotics also provides long-term hands-on training, a quality every big cat owner should have prior to ownership, regardless of current regulations.

For more information, you can visit their web site: www.AMAZINGEXOTICS.com. Tours and additional information can be obtained by calling: (352) 821-1234



Michaele with Darwin, tigers at home



UPDATE:

Playa de Oro Reserve In Ecuador

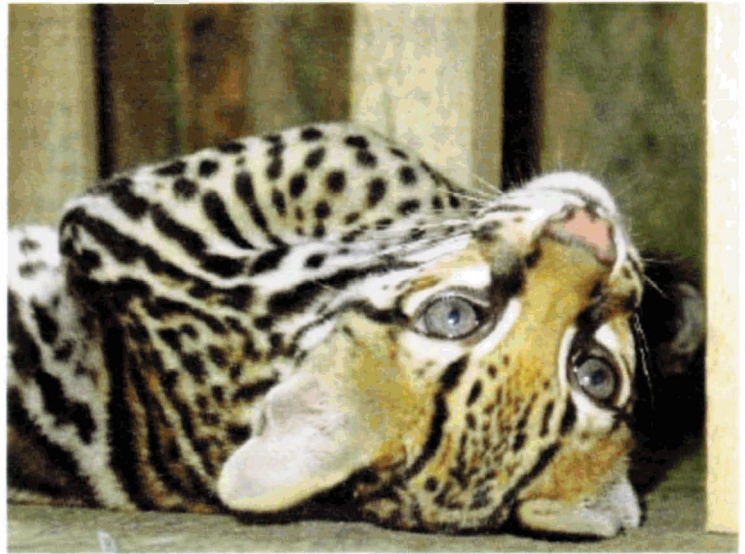
By Tracy Wilson

February--We have received some recent news about the cats at Playa de Oro. The reserve director Mauro called Rosa with the satellite phone to report an "emergency." The emergency turned out to be that Missy, the ocelot we've been looking after for the past year, had escaped. There has been a wild male coming around in recent months courting her. We heard him in November, and even saw his tracks around the lodge, but never caught a actual glimpse of him. Mauro is not sure if the male tore a hole in her cage, or if Missy did it herself. At any rate, we had estimated her to be sexually mature by January of this year. We had also planned to move her to a slow release cage in early February anyway and start preparing her for release. But it seems that Missy knew what the schedule was supposed to be, and she took it on herself to follow the schedule and beat us to it. So I really do not consider this to be a tragedy, the ultimate goal was to release her, and we thought she was about ready. I glad she waited this long, she looked very healthy on our last trip, she was nice and fat. Mauro reported that she has been hanging around close to the lodge, they have had some sightings of her. He put a camera trap around the areas she has been sighted in hopes to capture pictures of her. He thinks he has got some photos of her. Hopefully we will continue to get pictures of her so that we can monitor her progress adapting to the wild. He has also been leaving food out for her, in case she needs it. He failed to mention if she has been taking it or not, so I'm not sure. Let's wish Missy all the best for her wild jungle life!

In other exciting news, Mauro was able to rescue the 2 ocelots that we first found out about during our trip in November, that a man was "holding" for their pelts. It had looked for a while that Mauro was not going to be able to get these cats from this man, but he succeeded finally. They are both rambunctious and healthy, and very frightened of humans, so they do appear to have been trapped as wild adults as the man claimed, not hand raised. Mauro was instructed to worm them and hold them for a few weeks to get them nice and fat, make sure they exhibited no signs of illness, and then carry them to the very far side of the reserve by boat and release them. He'll probably release them within a month.



one photo it is very difficult to make out the cat because it is halfway behind a tree and very blurry. A rodent hanging from a string was used as bait to attract a cat in front of the camera. We were aware that there had been an ocelot that frequently prowls the lodge late at night in the past. Sometimes you can hear him calling out at night, and we saw his tracks in the mud during the day, but we never did get a glimpse of him. Now we probably have! As of late March, we have received word from the reserve that more photos have already been mailed to us, and there were puma tracks seen near this camera site. So keep your eyes open for more photos soon!



Little Chief is doing very well also. Mauro is anxious to move him to an outdoor pen—Little Chief is very macho and demands to be the Chief of the lodge :) It seems Little Chief has a lot of personality. There was a tourist at the lodge this month, who reported that while Little Chief was full of himself, that the reserve staff was very patient and tolerant of him, and seemed very knowledgeable in their care taking of the animals. So that is great news, ocelots can be so macho, that one does have to be very patient and tolerant training them.

Last but not least: The reserve is struggling financially right now and the burden of the extra cats we helped rescue has been a difficult struggle for them. They need extra funds for buying food for the cats and extra salaries for cat care. December and January are typically their hardest months with little to no tourists. They had no tourists for December or January, and only a few for February. I had left only enough money to care for Little Chief and the 2 other ocelots through early February. Rosa will be going to the reserve in early March, and I plan to send any donations we have on hand for cat care with her to get them through this dry spell. I am also sending vitamins and other cat care supplies with her at that time for the cats. Please everyone, send a little donation as soon as possible to help us pay for the care of these cats. Every little bit makes a difference. And thanks to everyone who have already responded and sent in donations to help take care of Little Chief.

We are having a wonderful response for our late May trip to the reserve—so if you are considering going on this trip—we have just a couple open spots available, so get signed up ASAP if you want to go. The next trip won't be until late fall or winter.

OCLOT 'CAPTURED' IN ECUADOR!

Our patience has paid off for the long wait for results from our Playa de Oro camera traps. We just got in some new photos from Playa de Oro....and we caught a ocelot!!! Caught it four times, to be exact.

The photos are a little blurry, but what can we expect with an automated camera and a moving target at night? In one photo, that ocelot has got some gorgeous huge spots. It looks like a pretty big ocelot too, probably a male. These camera trap photos were taken near the lodge on different nights, all between the hours of 2 AM and 3 AM in February on one of the new digital cameras. It does appear that all four photos are of the same cat, though in

FCF'S ADOPTED BABY OCELOT

Visitors to the Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos climbed out of the boat onto the "pena," a large flat shale-type rock, and picked their way carefully across its slippery surface. Their progress was closely monitored by a six-month-old ocelot, peering at them from above. As travelers climbed the steps toward the stone path leading to the lodge, "Little Chief" strolled forward to greet them, as if he were the host and the rest of the staff were just incidental.

Little Chief, originally from the Ecuadorian Amazon, was scarcely a month old when a hunter shot his mother. Rescued by members of FCF, he was brought to the Playa de Oro reserve. For a week, FCF members woke at all hours of the night to feed him with a doll bottle filled with kitten formula brought down by an FCF member. Then he was weaned onto raw meat supplemented with FCF-supplied vitamins. Now, five months later, he is in excellent health!

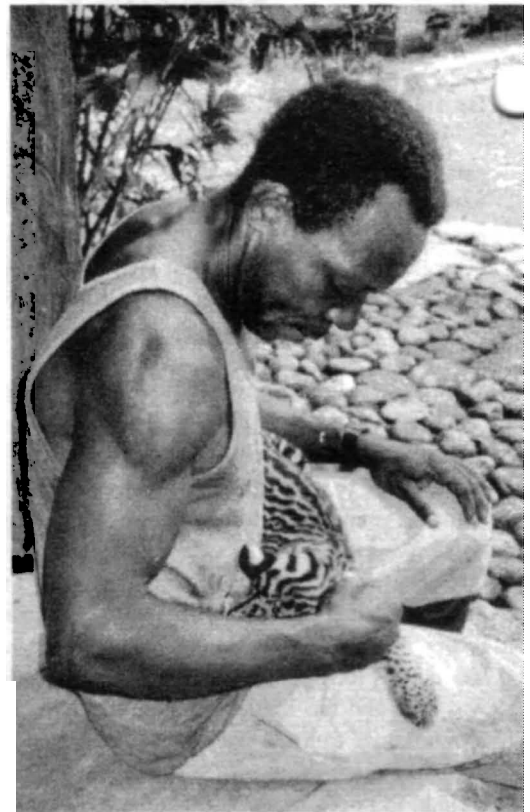
Little Chief (or "Mishi," as the staff calls him, which translates as "Little Master"), lives more or less freely at the lodge. This works well but is not exactly problem-free. Little Chief is not allowed in the bedrooms because he rips up the mosquito nets and Enma, who is in charge of domestic services, must spend hours mending them. He is not allowed in the bathroom because like most ocelots he prefers to pee and defecate near running water, and will opt for a shower stall rather than his litter pan or the great outdoors. He is not allowed in the hammock room because he attacks swinging hammocks and bites the bottoms of guests reclining there. He is not allowed in the dining room because he has been known to grab the table cloth by a corner and run with it, bringing everything crashing to the floor. Then, pretending terror, he leaps through the serving window into his favorite room—the kitchen—and creates holy havoc before the cook, Mercedes, can get him out.

But only indoors does he vie for the title of the World's Worst-Behaved Ocelot. Outdoors, with either staff or visitors, he is extraordinarily tranquil. When Mauro, the reserve's director, goes to check the wildlife surveillance traps set along various trails, Little Chief follows him as faithfully as a dog. If he wanders too far astray, or climbs too high up a tree, Mauro has only to growl "Mishi!" and the cat is back at his heels in a flash. Little Chief pads along behind the women when they go down to the river, quite content to chase butterflies or lie quietly among the rocks as they do the laundry. He will chase the end of a jump rope or play ball

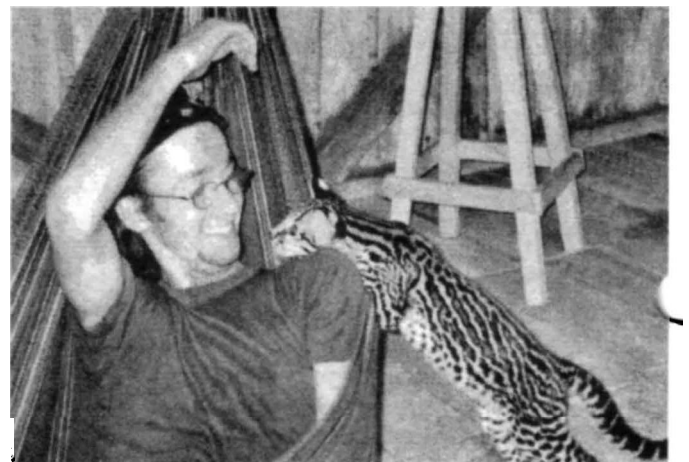
(you throw, he catches) with Enma's nine-year-old granddaughter for hours on end. When there are visitors going upriver to a trail leading to the waterfall, Little Chief is usually on the boat, growling his impatience to get there already, so he can join them in the hike and a refreshing swim.

Having been hand-raised by humans, Little Chief will probably never have the ability to go back to the wild. Even at the lodge, he must be shut up at night to protect him from a wild male ocelot who claims the surrounding jungle as his territory, and the rambunctious little cat but occasionally is confined during rainy afternoons when there are no outdoor activities in the offing and he becomes too assertive in his attempts to get guests to play with him. But most of the time he has the best of all possible worlds—life in the rainforest (his natural habitat) with humans who love him and, thanks to FCF expertise and generosity, are able to give him quality care.

Rosa Jordan, March 2004



Reserve Director Mauro Caicedo with Little Chief, and Head Cook Mercedes Extracting Little Chief from her Kitchen. As you can see, Mercedes is wearing an FCF t-shirt. Little Chief Checking out Guest



.....
● FCF would like to give a special thanks to the following ●
● members for their recent donations to the Playa de Oro ●
● Reserve and towards the care of Little Chief ocelot. ●
● Every bit counts and the staff at Playa de Oro send ●
● their heartfelt appreciation for your continued support. ●
● THANK YOU!! ●
● Grace Lush, Carolyn Bakker, Nanette Eve McGann, Lisa ●
● Padula & Paul Richardson, George A. Stein IV, James E. ●
● & Bertie Broadus, Robert & Patty Turner, Harold & ●
● Peggy Epperson, Jennie W Good, John Thomas Smith, G. ●
● Nash, Mike & Tonya Jones, Amy Rassmussen ●
●.....

Ocelot Releases at Playa de Oro Reserve

March saw the release of three ocelots into the 25,000-acre Playa de Oro Reserve. Two of these were male ocelots who were rescued in December from trappers who had brought them into the Ecuadorian port city of San Lorenzo, if not to sell, then to skin for pelts which fetch \$40 each. Mauro Caicedo, director of the Playa de Oro Reserve, was able to obtain the cats and, with financial assistance from FCF members Grace Lush, Tracy Wilson, and Carolyn Baaker, transported them to the reserve. The two full-grown males, dubbed San Lorenzo Macho #1 and San Lorenzo Macho #2, were maintained in quarantine for three months, treated for parasites and fattened up, then released on opposite sides of the river in the most remote part of the reserve—that is to say, the part furthest from human habitation.

Although IUCN guidelines were followed as closely as possible, one thing lacking is the reserve's ability to monitor the cats it repatriates back to the wild. We do know, from a previous fauna survey, that prior to the area being designated as a protected area for all species of neo-tropical felids, that jaguars, cougars, and most of the ocelots had been hunted out. These particular ocelots were trapped in an unprotected area about 20 miles away, so in being released in the Playa de Oro reserve, were not that far from their home range. In fact, they may try to return. We will never know. What we do know is that they returned to the wild in a large, uninhabited area of virgin rainforest, the Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos, which itself backs on the half-million-acre Cotacachi-Cayapas Biosphere Reserve. They should have no difficulty finding plenty of game, and space to move on if it happens that the immediate area is already claimed by another ocelot.

They were not released near the lodge because the forest there is patrolled by a large male ocelot we call Romeo. As if his tracks and nightly huffing under our windows were not enough to inform us of his presence, he often leaves his calling card in the form of a pile of poop on the lodge veranda. We have also captured him on film with the wildlife surveillance cameras which FCF member Tracy Wilson obtained from the Cincinnati Zoo.

In February, Romeo contributed to our release program by ripping a hole in the enclosure of a young female ocelot who had come into heat, allowing her to elope with him. We were preparing to release her anyway, as she had been in quarantine for eight months and was in excellent health. It was probably in her best interest to make her debut back into the forest with a wild male who could teach her anything she may have forgotten about life in the jungle.

Our major concern at the moment, and the reason we are repatriating so few cats back into the wild, is that we have no way to monitor them after release. Eventually we hope to set up a tracking program utilizing radio collars—but that will have to await donated equipment and researchers willing to spend some time there to train staff in data collection.

Rosa Jordan, March 2004

Excerpts from Rosa's letters to Tracy Wilson...

Little Chief was in wonderful condition, as reported previously, follows Mauro like a puppy and DOES NOT play-attack him, as he does with others. He never scratches, not even when being held down on his side. His paws would lay right on my wrist and not a



Motorist Julio and Reserve Director Mauro releasing Macho #1

claw would come out. But he bites A LOT. And it's hard to discipline him because of it being so continuous. He really behaves good when you're out walking with him, anywhere, down to the river or on longer walks to the waterfall. Those were wonderful and he was great company. For some reason, that attack behavior was only in the house. Out in the yard, Noli (age 8) played ball with him and dragged a jump rope or a vine and he never ever jumped on her. Or walking down to the river or anywhere outdoors, he behaved like a normal, well-behaved puppy-cat.

Mauro was set to disinfect Missy's former cage as soon as we left, then he was going to put LC in there all the time EXCEPT when he and the guys were working about, or when the women were going down to the river to wash clothes, in which time he was to be taken out to go along, because like I say, he never misbehaved then. He was much to interested in climbing trees and creeping through the grass and plopping into the pools of water by the river, or just lying there watching the water.

We were very puzzled by one camera trap with many (50 or 100) shots, not being able to see anything in it. The battery was new so it wasn't that. It's one of the cameras with a feather as an attractant. Mauro said they had seen puma tracks in that area, and thought maybe there was a puma hiding in the bushes watching the feather. He analyzed the time the pictures were taken, the first one on each day usually around 5 to 7 am, then others later. So SOMETHING was setting it off. The question is just—what? Mauro said the track found near that camera with dozens of shots of what we could not see was not jaguar but cougar. Can they tell the difference from a track? I don't know, I just know that when I said Jaguar, he corrected me, and said again, LEON. Lion-cougar.

I'm bringing back two of the 35mm camera traps, which again filled with moisture and melted the film. Mauro says he's having no problem at all with the new digital ones. But the tampex in the ones he showed me were very swollen with moisture.

When I got to Coca this evening and checked into Hotel Auca, I got talking to a New Zealand family and mentioned Playa de Oro, and the daughter in the family said, "Do you have an ocelot there named Little Chief?" "Seems she had read about him on the internet, something posted by someone from FCF who had been there.

Rosa Jordan, March 2004

SPRING AT LAST!

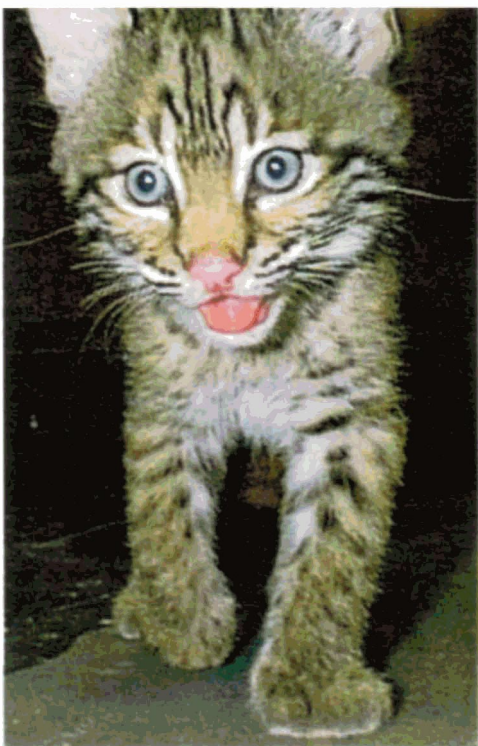
right: Serval mom was bred by a caracal male. Now she nurses her litter of hybrid “caravels”.



below: Snuggles, Nanette McGann's servacal hybrid. His mom was a caracal his dad is a serval.



Dinner Please!
right: Tonka, owned by Faith Clement



Blue eyes,
pink nose
and tongue
- look at me
and tell me
I'm not cute!

Taz gives his little niece Tela a bath. This pair of cougars owned by Tom and Julie Roper, are now grown.



FCF Convention...A Guaranteed Winner!

Join us for the 33rd Annual FCF Convention at the New Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada!

July 29 through August 1

Advanced Registration (before June 20th) \$100 per person (kids 6 to 18 are \$75.00, kids under 5 are free)

After June 20th, registration increases to \$115 per person.

Mail your registration information and check made out to FCF to:

FCF, 3310 Remington Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46227



Special FCF Convention room rates good until June 20th - \$39.00 double occupancy Tuesday through Thursday. Friday and Saturday nights \$89.00 (children 12 or under stay free with adult, additional occupancy is \$15.00 per person)

Call the New Frontier to reserve your room at 800-634-6966 or 702-794-8200.

New Frontier Hotel says our kittens and cats under 30 pounds are welcome so start planning now.

FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course is Wednesday July 28th

\$65.00 FCF members \$95.00 non-members – mail payment to the FCF treasurer

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.

Thursday afternoon is our annual FCF Membership Meeting. That evening, mingle with FCF members and our corporate sponsors at their vendor booths in our FCF Hospitality Room while enjoying cocktails and snacks. Then experience the Vegas nightlife on the strip! *Friday* we will tour local feline attractions, have a buffet lunch, enjoy a magic show and more. That evening it's free time for whatever you please. *Saturday* is our day for learning. After listening to an assortment of informative and entertaining guest speakers, it will be time to get ready for Saturday night. Dress formal or casual, whatever you choose, for the legendary FCF banquet dinner and fund-raiser auction! *Sunday* morning enjoy full breakfast before saying goodbye.

It's Showtime!

Besides touring the Hotel Casinos on the strip, there are free shows visible from the street that we promise that you don't want to miss!

Volcano Eruption Show at the Mirage Hotel – It manages to stop the traffic nightly and is an awesome sight to see. This 8-minute show starts at 6pm outside the Mirage Hotel and repeats very 15 minutes thereafter until 11:30pm – don't leave town without seeing this! *The Sirens of Treasure Island Show* – 2 huge 50-foot high battleships with oodles of pirates and an abundance of sexy sirens put on a spectacular show with plenty of lights, explosions, singing and dancing that delivers lots of entertainment. Shows run at 6 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. *Bellagio Light and Water Fountain Show* – A nine-acre manmade lake in front of the Bellagio Hotel has 1200 individual water nozzles and over 4500 white lights. Watch the dancing, gurgling water as it twirls, sways, bellows, flies, and jumps to music before your eyes. 5 minute shows run every 15 minutes after 6 p.m. until midnight. *Fremont Street Experience – Downtown* – A mega million-dollar canopy and light show shrouds four blocks of the original Downtown Las Vegas Fremont Street. This show is really a sight to behold. Starts at 8pm with shows every hour on the hour finishing at midnight and runs approximately 12 minutes long. The #301 CAT bus goes from the Las Vegas Strip to Downtown Fremont Street every 10 minutes, 24 hours a day.

FCF FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2003

Submitted by Secretary/Treasurer Harold Epperson

		\$ 31.51	Miscellaneous
		\$15,033.19	Total Conservation & Education
			CONVENTION
		\$ 2,911.72	Banquet Meals & Breakfast
		\$ 329.44	Awards at Banquet
		\$ 3,206.50	Bus fare, Zoo, Lunch & Hilker's
		\$ 889.09	Reception Refreshment
		\$ 289.50	Speakers
		\$ 506.82	Registration Refunds
		\$ 293.37	Miscellaneous
		\$ 8,426.44	Total Convention
			FCF CORPORATE
		\$ 786.25	Attorney, Filing Fees & Bond
		\$ 405.00	KHMSF
		\$ 500.00	Donations
		\$ 548.15	Legislative Press Release
		\$ 237.18	Miscellaneous
		\$ 2,476.58	Total FCF Corporate
			LEGAL AFFAIRS
		\$ 146.72	Total Legal Affairs
			MEMBER SERVICES
		\$ 412.58	Membership Handbook
		\$ 518.51	New Member Packages
		\$ 42.00	Bank Service Fee
		\$ 100.60	Miscellaneous
		\$ 1,073.69	Total Member Services
			NEWSLETTER
		\$ 6,756.16	Newsletter Printing
		\$ 1,399.47	Newsletter Postage
		\$ 402.13	Newsletter Envelopes, Supplies
		\$ 8,557.76	Total Newsletter
			PRESIDENT
		\$ -	No Expenses Declared
			VICE-PRESIDENT
		\$ 37.00	Postage
		\$ 37.00	Total Vice-President
			SECRETARY-TREASURER
		\$ 232.40	Supplies and Postage
		\$ 232.40	Total Secretary-Treasurer
		\$36,186.91	TOTAL EXPENSES
			HUSBANDRY COURSE
		\$ 4,110.00	Total Income
		\$ 2,699.33	Total Expense
		\$ 1,410.67	Profit (\$15.00 deposited in 2004)
			Total Attendees - 58
			New Members Signed - 22

Summary of Accounts

\$11,975.32 FCF General Fund
 \$11,958.41 Ken Hatfield Fund (KHMSF)
 \$12,241.11 Smith Barney Money Account
 \$36,174.84 Total Assets 12-31-02

\$38,128.03 2003 Income and Interest
 \$36,186.91 2003 Expenses
 \$13,966.50 FCF General Fund
 \$11,853.08 Ken Hatfield Fund (KHMSF)
 \$12,296.38 Smith Barney Money Account
 \$38,115.96 Total Assets 12-31-03
 \$1,941.12 Increase in 2003

ITEMIZED INCOME

\$ 285.00 Advertising
 \$ 5,058.00 Convention Auction & Sale Table
 \$ 8,750.00 Convention Registration Fees
 \$ 200.00 Convention Sponsor Fees
 \$ 310.00 Donations to FCF
 \$ 3,492.00 Donations to Playa de Oro
 \$ 1,270.00 Proceeds from Frase Print Raffle
 \$ 140.00 Donations to Little Chief Fund
 \$ 6,850.00 Playa de Oro Trip Fees
 \$ 1,395.67 Husbandry Course Profit Sharing &
 Convention Class Registration Fees
 \$ 1,060.92 Purina Grant to Husbandry Course
 \$ 275.00 Donations to KHMSF
 \$ 24.67 Interest on KHMSF Account
 \$ 55.27 Interest on Smith Barney Account
 \$ 8,895.00 Membership Dues
 \$ 10.00 Microchip Sales
 \$ 15.00 Newsletter Sales
 \$ 41.50 Miscellaneous
\$38,128.03 TOTAL INCOME

ITEMIZED EXPENSES

ADVERTISING & PUBLICITY

\$ 203.13 Total Advertising & Publicity

CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

\$ 837.55 Booklets & Brochures
 \$ 400.00 Felid Tag Seminar
 \$ 5,596.98 Playa de Oro Reserve
 \$ 6,850.00 Playa de Oro Trip Fees
 \$ 1,295.38 Husbandry Course
 \$ 21.77 SPARKS

2004 FIRST QUARTER FCF BOD MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson of this Board Meeting is Robert Turner

Motion #1: FCF to donate \$200 toward the lobbyist fees for the Minnesota battle against animal rights legislation. *By Lynn Culver, Second by Bob Turner Motion Failed – 4 Yes and 4 No*

Motion #2: FCF to allocate \$35 to join NAIA. *By Lynn Culver, Second by Bob Turner Motion Passed – 8 Yes and 0 No*

Motion #3: FCF to allocate \$400 to offset a portion of the expense for Lynn Culver to attend the NAIA legislation workshop in Washington, DC at the end of March. *Lynn withdrew motion.*

Motion #4: FCF to form a committee to solicit applications from felid researchers for granting financial assistance with their projects. *By Lynn Culver, Second by Bob Turner Motion Passed – 8 Yes and 0 No*

Motion #5: BOD to change the title Director of Advertising, Publicity and Fundraising to Director of Public Affairs. *By Bobby Bean, Second by Tracy Wilson Motion Failed – 3 Yes, 4 No and 1 Abstain*

Motion #6: FCF to allocate \$300 for expenses to file an opposition on behalf of the FCF members against the trademark registration for the Long Island Ocelot Club service mark by Jeanne Hall. *By Lynn Culver, Second by Bobby Bean Motion Passed – 7 Yes and 1 No*

Motion #7: BOD to grant a quick approval of the Accreditation Committee's recommended accreditation process. The FCF BOD will recommend any necessary changes at a later date. *Motion by Leann Montgomery, Second by Tracy Wilson Motion Passed – 8 Yes and 0 No*

Motion #8: BOD to approve the amended KHMSF Article XII – Dissolution, which was approved by the KHMSF Board on 11-02-2003. The amended version reads: The corporation may be dissolved in accordance with the laws of the State of Minnesota. Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, transfer all of the assets of the corporation to The Feline Conservation Federation for educational, charitable, literary or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. *By Harold Epperson, Second by Robert Turner Motion Passed – 8 Yes and 0 No*

Motion #9: FCF to join the Responsible Animal Owners Association of Minnesota at a cost of \$100 annually. *By Lynn Culver, Second by Tracy Wilson Motion Passed – 7 Yes and 1 No*

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A Tribute to Mamma Cat



by Lynn Culver

This is Momma Cat, a lactating queen with 4 of her own kittens that we adopted to help us raise our litter of abandoned-at-birth, geoffroy's kittens, born in September of 2002.

We did not know Momma Cat; a friend of ours brought her and her kittens over when he heard I had tiny neonates to hand rear.. Fortunately, Momma Cat was very mellow and possessed strong mothering instincts and I was able to get her to accept my two day old geoffroy's kittens. I rotated access between them and her kittens, which were at that time, 3-weeks old.

Later on however, she was less cooperative and I had to bribe her to lay still while they nursed. I would squirt milk formula on her front paw and she would contentedly lick it up while the geoffroys nursed, or I gave her one of her own kittens so she had to let my kittens nurse.

We named the kittens Pesto (he was a pest) and Tuti (short for attitude). Both were somewhat independent, being mother cat raised, but since I handled them from birth, they accepted me just fine.



Pesto left our facility to live with an unrelated female geoffroy's and form a future breeding pair. Tuti loved to nurse – as you can see – *“you never outgrow your need for milk”*

STOP PLAYING WITH YOUR FOOD or FOOD CAN BE FUN

by Donna Verba

Many of us have had a few chickens running around, well okay maybe just some of us. You know the ones who have the luck of being in Tyson country, smack dab in the middle of chicken country. We get the calls to come empty out the chicken house after the catching crews are gone; the ones they missed are ours for the taking. Never turn down free food, you take it every chance you get.

The freshly deceased are waiting for us to come gather them up, take them home, clean them and freeze them. But sometimes, just sometimes, there are a few left behind that are still alive, if we can catch them we can have them too. That is the fun part, chasing a few strays down a 400-foot chicken house; I envy those who buy the processed chicken sometimes.

When I do get the live chickens I put them in the chicken pens, feed and water them, until they start to get good size. But every so often some escape out of the pen. Then the fun begins, keeping the birds away from our black Labrador, after all she is a bird dog, and she is doing what bird dogs do, hunting down the bird.

The chase around the yard and cages can get very entertaining, cats bouncing off the wire trying to get the dog or the bird, they don't care, it's moving and it must be for them. Well once in a while a chicken makes its way into the walkway between cages through the 4x4 wire, this is where the real entertainment begins. Once in the cage with Biggie and Rufus, the game of hide and go seek begins. This becomes a tag team effort, the chicken hides in the bush and the cat pushes him out with his paw, the other cat follows the chicken around the cage, until the first cat steps in again, such team work, and precision, not as much as one ruffled feather through-out this whole thing. The chicken knows the routine and has already picked out some of the best hiding places. Now it's up to the boys to see who can find her first.



Rufus and his new friend share the den box for an afternoon nap. For all of you out there who may be worried about the chicken, never fear, this boy likes his food already cleaned and straight off the grocery shelf. Being a city boy this whole down on the farm thing is just too much work. To Rufus this whole idea of "I'll work for food" is just way over rated. Rufus thinks everybody should

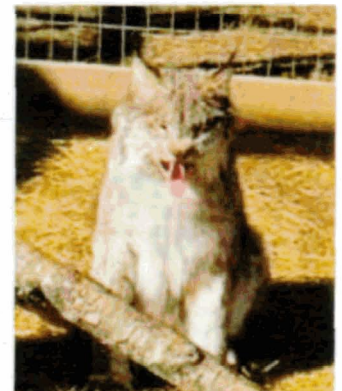


True friends, bobcat Rufus shares his enclosure with his Canadian lynx buddy Big Foot, or "Biggie" for short. Rufus thinks it sure feels great to get those ears washed after dinner.



Bobbie, born-in-the-wild bobcat has lived with Donna since kittenhood and relishes a fresh chicken, ready for plucking.

have a friend, even if it's just a chicken.



Phoebee lynx says "Not chicken again. Where's the beef?"

Wild Cats at Hawk Creek

by Loretta Jones

It's 7am and I am on a skiing vacation, a rare event for those who care for animals. I received a call from one of my staff, Matt Zymanek. Matt states that he has received a call to see if we could help two bobcats, housed in a pet store in Long Island. He tells me that I have 30 seconds to decide if we could take them, he had to act fast since they were being confiscated in two days and would be destroyed. With a groggy head I said yes and hoped that Matt would still be alive when I returned. That was seven years ago and that morning would be the beginning of our relationship with wild cats.

I am the executive director of Hawk Creek Wildlife Center, located 20 miles south of Buffalo, NY. I founded the Center in 1987 and its mission is to help injured and orphaned wildlife, present environmental educational programs and to breed and release barn owls. We specialize in birds of prey and house over 80 resident educational animals. During the last seven years we found that our work has led us in another direction, taking in exotic wildlife.

The two bobcats, one male and one female, were located in a 5 foot glass enclosure in the front of a pet store. The pet store owner held them illegally and was forced to relocate them. NY is known for being expensive; rescuing wildlife was not to be an exception. The cats and carrier has to be purchased, additional expenses included hiring a cat handler and plane fare. The store did close down and the owner disappeared.

When I returned from my trip, I found that the cats were being housed in our porcupine enclosure which was relocated to a smaller cage. This was no easy task to prepare the cage since the two of them release 60,000 quills each year! The door was locked and a sign said, "Absolutely no entry for two weeks!" to allow the cats to adjust and for us to figure out how to care for them safely. I was surprised to see the cats playing with the light snow that was falling and they were running up and down the vines, and not bothered at all by my presence. For three years they were kept indoors so they were thoroughly enjoying themselves. We were so pleased to be able to provide them a better environment that we decided to keep them instead of finding a new home.

Two years later on Memorial Day, I went in to feed the cats and found two kittens. This wasn't a complete surprise since they copulated once while I was in cleaning their cage three months earlier. I did feel like I was intruding so I had offered them my apologies and excused myself, but they didn't even notice me. After a few phone calls we found out that we could not release captive bobcats in New York State so we now had two new educational animals. The trick was how to remove the kittens from the mother before their eyes opened so that they could imprint on us. I had dropped the trap door so the male couldn't come inside and possibly kill the kits so the mother was confined to a small indoor enclosure, too tight to safely remove the kits. After coming up with a plan to remove the female without letting the male in, I ran assorted ropes on several doors and dropped food into the mammal house, through an outside hallway that opened into the bobcat cage. I opened the inside door to her cage and hid outside with ropes in hand. Between cabin fever and curiosity, she left the kittens, bam! The first set of ropes slammed the door behind her. At this point it was safe to open the cage door to rejoin the male. She turned around a couple of times but then went outside to the hall and into the cage. She immediately went over and chatted with the male and began eating. She never seemed to be too concerned about the loss of her kits.

Now we were parents to one male and female bobcat kitten, they were eight days old. From my previous rehab work, I chose to feed with a syringe instead of a pet nurser (bottle) due to a high risk of aspirating their formula into their lungs. This turned out to be an excellent choice due to their strong sucking response during their feedings. Stomach capacity was determined by their weight, daily caloric requirements were calculated, which was then divided by the stomach capacity to determine the number of daily feedings. We changed from KMR to a homemade formula from which the kits thrived. The formula consisted of whole milk, quality canned cat food and lactaid tablets, ground up in a blender. The cats were aggressive during meals so they had to be held with gloves to protect our arms from getting scratched. The kits were also held with their heads upright and always located above their stomachs to prevent aspiration which can easily kill the kits. After each feeding the cats were stimulated to



Sinew and Shadow Bobcats

eliminate. Since they are more precocial than domestic cats, they were able to walk at two weeks of age. After their feedings, I took both kits out on the lawn and they would be stimulated by the grass. This reduced a lot of the work and I was also able to take advantage of the cat's instinct to follow their mom. They would respond immediately to my call and would follow; this was great preparation for future programs.

When they were just six weeks old, we found a nearby zoo that was looking for a pair of bobcats for their new natural enclosure; we placed the parents and the sister with the zoo in a huge outdoor enclosure and felt great about being able to find them a beautiful permanent home for them.



Whisper and Thunder together



The male, whom we named Thunder, lived in the house until Spring. It is interesting that at the same age when bobcats leave their parents in the wild is when Thunder became a terror to live with—clothes and furniture destroyed, spraying, etc. When the weather broke, Thunder spent short periods of time in a cage next to another rescued bobcat named Whisper. She was placed at our center after being confiscated by authorities. She needed extensive dental work since the breeder or owner cut her canines, leaving the nerves exposed. After a month we introduced the two cats and at times it seemed like a bad idea. Since the fighting was just gesturing and intense growling we toughed it out and were thrilled when we found them inseparable just a few days later!

Since then we have received a baby ocelot from another wildlife center, two servals were placed at our center from a private owner that could no longer care for them and we received from another center a Siberian lynx that was held illegally. While our hearts are saddened with the growing number of wild cats being abused and in need of proper homes, our lives have been changed by living with these magnificent feline creatures. Their stories have touched us and getting to know them on a personal level has forever changed our lives. Thunder and Whisper continue to be great ambassadors for their species, teaching children about the magnificent wildcats that live in our own backyard.

For more information on Hawk Creek Wildlife Center, Inc. you can log onto www.hawkcreek.org.



Thunder in his new cage

UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN THE CAPTIVE PROPAGATION OF ENDANGERED FELIDS

James Godsmark, B.A., B.Sc.

With each passing year, all known felid species, are becoming more critically endangered. Indeed, all currently known cat species are threatened or endangered in some way.¹ This includes two subspecies of the wildcat, *Felis silvestris*, from which the domestic cat, *Felis silvestris catus*, was developed. One of the two endangered subspecies, the African wildcat, *Felis silvestris lybica*, is known to be the direct ancestor of today's domestic cat.^{2,3}

As apex predators, especially in the case of the larger cats, *in situ* conservation of these species has proven increasingly difficult. Especially when the amount of territory required for each of these animals is taken into consideration. Male Bengal tigers for example, require ranges up to fifty square miles in size, in order to ensure that they have adequate access to prey, water, and breeding females. The ranges required by Siberian tigers, in their much harsher environment, are many times larger.⁴

In the case of Bengal tigers, even a range requirement of fifty square miles is quite difficult in an area of the world, which also has among the highest human population density, and highest birth rates on the planet. For example the two countries where the majority of wild Bengal tigers are currently found are India and Bangladesh. As of July 2003, India's human population had reached the staggering figure of 1,049,700,118 people, and an equally large birth rate of 23.28 births/1,000 population. In the case of Bangladesh, as of July 2003, the human population had reached 138,448,210 in a nation roughly the size of Wisconsin. Bangladesh's birth rate is currently among the highest on earth, at 29.9 births/1,000 population. (All population data taken from the CIA World Factbook, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>).⁵

Some prominent ecologists and conservationists have said in recent years that saving wild populations of large cats especially, may now be impossible, at least until such time as human overpopulation is brought under control. Unfortunately, in countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, such a decrease in population growth is decades from occurring, if at all.

In countries such as these, as well as in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, huge problems with human overpopulation tend to go hand in hand with crushing poverty, and its side effects, all of which have proven devastating to wild felid populations. Even where reserve systems have been created and are heavily patrolled, the desire of the few to conserve wild cats will always suffer where the many are desperately poor. This desperation gives incentive for activities such as poaching, and for blatantly ignoring reserve boundaries. It should not be all that surprising that to the desperate peasant, a tiger reserve does not look like a place where valuable biodiversity is preserved for the good of the planet, and for future generations. Rather, the peasant is frustrated at seeing 'wasted' grazing land that he could use for his goats and cattle, as well as trees that he could use for building, and for firewood; and in addition, this 'unused' land is filled with dangerous predators that might devour the livestock, which represent what little wealth he has.

When one considers all these factors, it appears pretty much inevitable that captivity is, and will be the only way to conserve these species. Most people would likely agree that captivity is a far from ideal situation for any animal, especially species which are used to roaming over vast distances as part of their natural, wild behavior. In an ideal world, perhaps it *would* be possible to admire these wondrous animals only from a distance, and only in their natural state.

In the case of people who belong to more extreme "Animal Rights" (AR) organizations, the idea has been put forth that unless wild species can be saved *only* in their natural territories, and in a completely wild state, it is likely better, and more ethical in the long run to simply let them die off, or as has been said in a popular AR slogan, "Better dead than bred".⁶

Fortunately, most people in both the zoological and the private ownership communities believe differently, realizing that even though captivity is far from an ideal life situation for endangered felids, it still remains the best hope for saving these species. Once this basic tenet of captive propagation is accepted as a truism, then the question is not only how to optimize the care and breeding success of captive animals, but as part of this, how to preserve a healthy amount of genetic diversity. The importance of this cannot ever be overstated, as a captive population with low or limited genetic diversity is just as doomed to eventual extinction through inbreeding pressures. These include steadily increasing incidences of genetic defects and diseases, as well as a precipitous drop in male fertility, as has been seen in wild Florida panthers, and Ngorongoro crater lions.⁷

There is a fair amount of controversy with regards to what number of healthy, fertile animals constitutes the minimum population size in which genetic diversity can be maintained. In the case of most wild cats held in captivity, with the possible exception of African lions, it is a fairly safe assumption that the numbers of animals housed in all of the public, or government-run (or otherwise "accredited") zoological parks on Earth is likely not enough. However, when the private sector, (i.e., private owners, so-called "sanctuaries", and other non-accredited facilities), is added to the equation, in the case of many species of wild cats, the captive populations now represent a large enough population to maintain genetic diversity.

With these factors in mind, it could be said that the current trend of attacking and demonizing *all* forms of private ownership of exotic cats is incredibly irresponsible from a conservation standpoint. Nevertheless, it has become *de rigueur* to paint a broad picture of the private ownership of wild cats as being abusive by its very nature, and completely inexcusable, as private ownership is supposedly *only* done for reasons of human vanity. To top all of this off, AR groups, and their sympathetic elements within government have been wildly successful in creating a trendy 'Moral Panic' about the "Extreme, and growing public menace" of private ownership of "dangerous, wild, untamable and bloodthirsty" big cats. As part and parcel of this, many, (including scientists who should really know

better), have come to believe statements such as, “Privately-owned wild cats are useless for conservation”, and “There is no such thing as *responsible* private ownership of wild, dangerous cats”, without question.

Not only are ideas such as these highly fallacious, but they are loaded statements as well, as they operate from the assumption that one should already believe that it is wrong to keep wild cats in private hands, and that if you don't currently believe that, you *should*. I would also argue that stigmatizing *all* private owners is *dangerous* to the overall survival of these species. The reason for this is quite simple. When, (not “if”), private ownership is abolished, not only will captive genetic diversity be reduced, for reasons, which I have already discussed; at the same time these species are likely soon to be extinct in the wild. Hence, though wide, sweeping bans on private ownership may be supported by the vast majority of the American public, it will actually serve to hasten the extinction of the species that such legislation was promoted as helping to “conserve”! As Marx famously said, “The road to Hell is paved with good intentions...”

If all this weren't bad enough, there is another, less well-known factor that is serving to compromise the success of captive conservation, especially at the level of accredited zoos, and this stems from the current practices in the care and husbandry of valuable breeding animals, specifically males.

Some of the current protocols in the assisted reproduction of captive male felids, which are designed to try and maximize captive genetic diversity, and reproductive success may actually be *harming*, rather than helping captive propagation.

Some of these factors include:

- (1) Breaking up mated, proven-breeding pairs in order to ship entire, adult animals to other facilities. This can lead to lost breeding potential through several factors. The first is that some cat species, especially cheetahs and snow leopards are notoriously difficult to naturally breed in a publicly-run zoo, as breeding pairs need time to be acclimatized to one another. Hence, separating mated pairs, apart from arguably being cruel and inhumane, could theoretically lead to the loss of a year or more worth of breeding potential.
- (2) Regular use of anesthetics such as Ketamine and Rompun (either singly, or in combination) during regular physical examinations/semen collections. Recent studies have shown very serious side-effects associated with use of these drugs, including kidney, liver, and neurological damage.^{9,10,11,12,13} It is quite likely that such treatment could very well shorten the lives of valuable males, and thus rob conservation efforts of years of valuable breeding potential. Many would answer that this is not an important concern with the technology to freeze semen almost indefinitely, however, there are also still serious obstacles to universal success in these endeavors.
- (3) Treatment of extracted germ plasm. A good example can be found in the work of Roth *et. al.*,¹⁴ with snow leopards, where Roth *et. al.*, found that electroejaculates from snow leopards show higher sperm mortality than samples from other felid species. Roth *et. al.*, found that snow leopard sperm is unusually sensitive to alkaline conditions, and as a result, tends to die quite rapidly when the extenders and buffers commonly used for other species are applied. Roth *et.al.*, concluded that the problem, and the concomitant poor freezability, and post-thaw viability of the sperm of many felid species is due to the extenders commonly used. However, using bovine semen as a model, Cormier *et. al.*,¹⁵ found that the freezing process itself, almost irrespective of extenders of buffers used causes a great deal of damage, and loss of viability.

It has been suggested by several researchers that there may also be an additional source of difficulties with regards to the application of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) in felid species. This arises from the fact that that male felids are conscious ejaculators, (Defined as requiring both physical and psychological stimulation to achieve ejaculation). This is opposed to reflex ejaculators, such as canids, for whom tactile stimulation is more important than psychological stimulation in achieving ejaculatory response.¹⁶

What has been suggested is that when felids are subjected to unconscious ejaculation (i.e., electroejaculation), there may be certain biochemical factors missing from the seminal plasma, which are present during normal, conscious ejaculation, which contribute to, or enhance sperm motility and viability. Hence, a manually collected sample subjected to cryopreservation might show greater post-thaw viability than an electroejaculate. And indeed, this has been found in studies on other species, most specifically in cattle.

However, such a study has historically been impossible with cats held in accredited zoological facilities due to the fact that most animals held in these institutions tend to be mother-raised, and familiarity, (and in many cases even *contact*), with human caretakers is forbidden, or at the very least strongly discouraged. Thus, there has been no real opportunity or desire to do a comparative study between manually-collected and electroejaculated semen samples in wild cats.

I would suggest that such a study is very much possible within the private community, especially when working with hand raised and trained animals. The study of Durrant *et. al.*,¹⁷ where a tame, male cheetah was trained to service an artificial vagina, and collected without incident at least once a week for over thirteen years, until he died of old age at 15.5 years shows that such efforts are indeed possible. Durrant *et. al.*, provided the first truly accurate picture of the fertility of a male cheetah over his entire lifespan.

Among the interesting results discussed in this study is that the subject animal seemed to reach his peak fertility (highest ejaculate volume, and viable sperm count) between the ages of 8 and 9 years. Durrant *et al.*, discuss this, referring to the studbook data available at the time (2001), which stated that few captive cheetahs reached that age (only 16% reaching or exceeding their eleventh year).

Therefore, if similar results were found in other captive cheetahs, i.e., that they are dying long before their full reproductive potential is realized, this shows a serious problem in captive breeding and conservation programs. However, as Durrant herself states, a longitudinal study of this sort would simply not be possible on wild or mother-raised captive cheetahs. In addition, the results of a longitudinal study are not as useful as a latitudinal study involving many animals, as it is possible that the results Durrant *et al.*, discussed may have been idiosyncratic to the particular subject animal, and not reflective of the species population as a whole.

Thus, the private sector, with a relatively large pool of hand raised, tame animals of many felid species might be in a unique position to cooperate and collaborate with a truly empirical comparative study of feline semen quality, the results of which could be invaluable to aiding and better understanding assisted reproduction in felids.

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* The Sociological phenomenon of a 'Moral Panic' is describe thusly in 'Wikipedia'" "A moral panic is a semi-spontaneous or media-generated mass movement based on the perception that some individual or group, frequently a minority group or a subculture, is dangerously deviant and poses a menace to society. These panics are generally fuelled by, although not always caused by, media coverage of social issues. A widely circulated and new-seeming urban legend is frequently involved. These panics can sometimes lead to mob violence. The term was coined by Stanley Cohen in 1972 to describe media coverage of Mods and Rockers in the United Kingdom in the 1960s.⁸



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Coccidia and Exotic Kittens

by Lynn Culver

Stress plays a role in the development of coccidiosis. Hand-rearing exotic kittens can create such stress. The sudden change from the mother's perfect milk, to man-made formulas is a drastic challenge to the neonate's immune system. And later on, when the kitten is transferred from the breeder to the buyer, it is subjected to another major stress factor.

Most infected kittens are in the four to twelve week age group. At this age they have immature immune systems and are more susceptible to infection. The possibility of coccidiosis should always be considered when a loose stool or diarrhea is encountered in this age group. A microscopic fecal exam by a veterinarian will detect the cysts confirming a diagnosis.

It is not uncommon for a seemingly healthy kitten to arrive at its new home and develop diarrhea several days later from coccidia. If the kitten has been at the new home for less than thirteen days then it had coccidia before it arrived because the incubation period (from exposure to illness) is about thirteen days. If the kitten has been with its new owner several weeks, then the exposure to coccidia most likely occurred after the animal arrived at the new home.

Although many cases are mild, it is not uncommon to see severe and bloody diarrhea result in dehydration and in some cases, even death. This is most common in kittens that are ill or infected with other parasites, bacteria or viruses.

One of the first symptoms of coccidia is a kitten that acts hungry but when offered the bottle it chews the nipple, or clamps down on the nipple and refuses to drink, or drinks some and then suddenly stops, as if the formula in the stomach is causing discomfort. At this point, the kitten's stools might still be fine, or the kitten may even have been experiencing a bit of constipation. However several hours later, up to a day later, the stool will start to loosen and then become watery, have a foul odor and possibly be tinged with blood.

Fortunately coccidiosis is treatable. Drugs such as sulfadimethoxine (Albon) and trimethoprim-sulfadiazine (Tribrissen) are most commonly used to treat coccidia. If the diarrhea is severe, it is recommended that you administer anti-diarrhea medications such as kaolin and substitute electrolytes such as Pedialyte for the water in the milk formula, or even take the kitten off milk formula completely and just feed just Pedialyte for a day to let the intestines rest while they heal. Also, it is important that you give the kitten a good neonate B vitamin supplement such as Lixotinic, Pet Tonic or Vionate daily. Coccidia interfere with the intestine's ability to absorb the B vitamin Thiamin and a severe case may cause neurological symptoms. A classic symptom is a stiff and arched neck that the kitten is unable to move. Injections of B-complex will be needed should this occur. When you have returned the kitten to milk formula, you might consider adding thickening agents to the formula such as baby rice cereal,

which slows down the travel time in the intestines allowing more water to be extracted from the bowel.

Albon and Tribrissen are coccidiostats. They do not kill the organisms, but rather inhibit their reproduction capabilities. This means the longer the organism is allowed to reproduce and multiply before the kitten is given medications, the more time it will take for the kitten's immune system to eliminate all the organisms. Elimination of coccidia from the intestine is not rapid. Improvement depends on the degree of infection and also upon the kitten's immune system; the healthier it is, the sooner you will see improvement. Average amount of time is about 5 days, but drug treatments of 10 to 14 days are usually recommended.

Coccidiosis is very contagious, especially among young kittens. Because the feces of carrier animals spread it, it is very important to practice strict sanitation. Housing needs to be such that food and water cannot become contaminated with feces. Clean water should be provided at all times. Most disinfectants do not work well against coccidia; incineration of the feces, and steam cleaning, immersion in boiling water or a 10% ammonia solution are the best methods to kill coccidia. Coccidia can withstand freezing. Isolate an infected kitten from any others in the house and remove feces immediately from the litter pans and wash floors if the kitten has an accident. If the kitten is allowed to come in contact and ingest its own feces, it will become re-infected and the cycle will start all over again, necessitating that the course of medication begin again.

Cockroaches and flies can mechanically carry coccidia from one place to another. Mice and other animals can ingest the coccidia and when killed and eaten by a cat, for instance, can infect the cat. Therefore, insect and rodent control are very important in preventing coccidiosis.

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Metabolic Bone Disease

by Gail Hedberg

Introduction

Metabolic bone disease is a general term for conditions that develop as a result of prolonged deficiencies of calcium, vitamin D or an improper ratio of calcium to phosphorous in the diet. Many names are given to this syndrome, such as osteoporosis, rickets, cage paralysis, paper bone disease, nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism. Metabolic bone disease should be considered to be a disease caused by dietary and husbandry mismanagement (Fowler 1986; White 1988; Wisman 2003). The disease is erroneously thought by some to be the result of too much protein in the diet. In fact, a simple adjustment of the mineral balance will correct the absorption and retention rate of calcium (Wallach 1983).

Mother reared cubs initially receive a balanced diet from their mother's milk but at weaning a cub or kitten becomes dependent on solids for continued growth and development. In the wild, cats would consume the whole prey-skin, fur, feathers, bones, intestines, and intestinal contents. The overall intake provides a balanced nutrition. Meat alone contains a relatively small amount of calcium. It also has high levels of another mineral called phosphorous which further depresses body calcium levels. Calcium deficiency is usually associated with diets of skeletal muscle and viscera, but not bone, or diets of neonatal prey (baby chicks for example).

When carnivores are fed a muscle meat without bone, calcium intakes are deficient calcium to phosphorous ratios are inverse (approx 1:20) and nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism may result. Excessive vitamin A intakes from the consumption of liver may interfere with vitamin D metabolism, which can affect uptake of calcium from the diet. True rickets is a disease where there is a reduced density of bones at the points of growth and it is caused by a deficiency of vitamin D (Wallach 1983).

Mineral oil is often used as an oral laxative. When mineral is used orally for more than two weeks it coats the the mucosa of the small intestine and reduces absorption of vitamins. As a result, calcium and phosphorous utilization is reduced, possibly leading to a deficiency (USDA 2002).

Pathophysiology

Metabolic bone disease occurs as a result of biochemical reactions regulated by the parathyroid glands, small glands located near the thyroid glands in the neck. Calcium regulation is not a simple process. The body uses three specific hormones together for bone development. A delicate balance by the interaction of parathyroid hormone (PTH), calcitonin (TCT), and the active form of vitamin D (1.25-di-hydroxy cholecalciferol) must be maintained throughout the process for proper uptake and distribution of nutrients to tissue, and for bones to develop normally. Major organs involved in this process include the intestine, liver, kidney, parathyroid gland, thyroid gland and bone.

Calcium

Calcium is required for normal muscle function, including the heart. Other functions for which calcium is essential include blood clotting, cell membrane permeability and activation of enzymes (Fowler 1986). It provides structural framework for the skeleton. The majority of the body calcium is stored in bones.

Calcium absorption occurs during the digestive process with the help of vitamin D and the parathyroid hormone. Any disease of the small intestine such as chronic diarrhea, or complications from liver disease, can interfere with calcium absorption. Ingestion of a high fat diet may reduce calcium absorption and impact vitamin D effectiveness.

Phosphorous

Phosphorous is required for proper acid-base levels in the body fluids. Together with calcium it is an essential nutrient for bone formation and affects calcium metabolism. The nutritional relationship between calcium and phosphorous is expressed as a ratio. Calcium is always listed first then phosphorous. In the body, calcium and phosphorous are in a ratio of 2:1. The optimal ratio in the diet should be between 1:1 to 2:1 (Wallach 1983; Fowler 1986; Allen 1996). Most dietary errors involve too much phosphorous which causes low calcium. Adding too much calcium to the diet can throw the imbalance the other direction producing a phosphorous deficiency.

Bone

Bone is composed of living cells. Proper nutrition allows bone formation to be complete. A mammal is still growing and developing proper bone formation for a full year (or longer-like humans!). The mineral composition of bone is calcium and phosphorous.

Vitamin D

Cats do not effectively convert precursors of vitamin D to active isomers, but nonetheless appear to have an extremely low dietary requirement for vitamin D provided that they have exposure to some sunlight and are otherwise well nourished. Vitamin D controls calcium and phosphorous levels in the blood stream and also the absorption of dietary calcium. Vitamin D occurs in two forms, vitamin D₂ (ergocalciferol) and vitamin D₃ (cholecalciferol). This vitamin, when given as a supplement in excess, results in a condition called hypervitaminosis D (Hoskins 1990). Adding oral vitamin D₃ will cause withdrawal of calcium from the bones of a felid fed a calcium deficient diet. Vitamin D toxicity can be produced relatively easily and is usually the result of overzealous dietary supplementation with, for example, cod-liver oil. As with all fat-soluble vitamins, excesses are stored in the body and their effects are cumulative.

Rickets is the term used when bones of young, growing, vitamin D-deficient animals become soft and pliable. There may be neuromuscular abnormalities, including general weakness and poor motor reflexes, and resorption of bone resulting in pathological fractures (Fowler 1986). Cases are normally presented because of the most obvious signs of renal failure and the prognosis is always guarded (Hoskins 1990).

Clinical Signs

Felines and canines are highly susceptible to MBD. General signs first appear as lameness caused by fractures or painful joints. Often cage paralysis or a distinct hesitation to move is noted. Felines are prone to cataract formation and cross-eyes due to prolonged low calcium levels. Bowed legs are a common result of poor nutrition in the early stages of development (Fowler 1986).

Diagnosis

Metabolic bone disease is diagnosed by a combination of clinical signs, radiographic studies and a thorough diet evaluation. Blood levels of calcium and phosphorous will remain approximately normal until severe collapse is imminent (Wallach 1983). Further trauma and injury can result when restraining an animal suspected to have MBD. The bones are very brittle and can fracture easily.

Diet Summary

Muscle meat (chicken, beef) is notoriously low in calcium and phosphorous, especially calcium, resulting in an imbalance of the Ca: P ratio from 1:5 to 1:30 (Wallach 1983; Allen 1996). Organ meats such as liver, kidney and heart have an even worse ratio- 1:44 (Wallach 1983).

Conversion to a properly balanced diet is difficult but can be accomplished by mixing the old with the new. The composition of commercial diets may be found on the label or by direct communication with the manufacturer. Feeding commercial diets is the industry standard but it is always advisable to check with the manufacturer for a diet analysis report. Nutritional and metabolic bone disease has largely disappeared in zoo carnivores with the use of commercial meat-based diets (Allen et al., 1996).

Food	Form	% dry matter	% crude protein	% fat	% ash	%Ca	%P	Ca: P Ratio Optimal 1:1 – 2:1
Commercial Products								
Milk Matrix 33/40	Powder	97.9	34.7	43.8	5.52	1.19	0.82	1:45:1
Esbilac	Canned	15.10	31.06	40.6	6.0	1.02	0.71	1.43:1
Nebraska Feline Classic	Frozen	39.5	46.3	39.4	3.3	1.65	1.39	1.19:1
Nebraska Feline Premium	Frozen	35.2	54.8	40.0	6.0	2.14	1.45	1.47:1
Nebraska Canine Classic	Frozen	30.2	64.9	30.8	4.6	2.18	1.84	1.18:1
Nebraska Canine Premium	Frozen	33.1	58.6	22.1	4.2	2.33	1.54	1.50:1
Dallas Crown Carnivore	Frozen	30.0	30.0	10.0		1.3	1.2	1.08:1
Miliken Freline	Frozen	28.85				1.53	0.835	1.80:1
Zu Preem Canned Feline	Canned	36.7	39.3	42.3	6.1	1.20	0.80	1.50:1
Mazuri Exotic Feline	Dry	88.0	40.9	22.7	8.1	1.82	1.51	1.2:1
Meats								
Nebraska Brand Horsemeat	Frozen	28.2	71.0	20.9	3.8	0.07	0.50	0.14:1 or 1:7
Beef Round	Raw	28.7	76.2	21.9	3.6	0.02	0.70	0.02:1 or 1:50
Beef	Raw					0.011	0.188	0.06:1 or 1:17
Beef Liver	Raw					0.008	0.352	0.02:1 or 1:44
Pork Ham	Raw	27.1	75.6	20.0	3.9	0.02	0.8	0.02:1 or 1:50

Conclusion

Correcting the diet and husbandry practice is essential for reversing this disease. Offering a balanced diet with the addition of whole prey is a simple way to provide an excellent source of available calcium for many exotic felids. (See details in www.nal.usda.gov/awic/zoo/WholePreyFinal02May29.pdf) New product resources are available to help meet the dietary requirements for calcium. These products are designed to use when skeletal muscle meat is used or in combination with whole prey and organ meat. Examples are *Mazuri Carnivore Supplement*, *Oasis*, and *Meat Complete*.

This disease is present in non-human primates, birds, iguanas, guinea pigs, ferrets, and in puppies and kittens. Let's all work together to educate owners of domestic and exotic animals regarding appropriate diets and husbandry practices. Metabolic bone disease takes just a few weeks to develop and within months, it is a life threatening condition and becomes catastrophic. It takes even longer to correct so it is important to diagnose it early. If clinical signs of lameness, reluctance to move or distorted limbs are present, seek immediate veterinary care for a complete physical exam and review nutritional history along with a radiographic evaluation. Then, hopefully, a treatment plan will help reverse this condition.

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Shazam, the little white ham, brought a lot of traffic to the FCF booth, and made a few friends too. New FCF member Cindy Severin holds him for a moment. See story page 4



Big Rambo and white cub Hollywood, two tigers of Amazing Exotics - see story page 16

Looking Back at our Past. . . . Long Island Ocelot Club Newsletter Volume 28, Number 1 January/February 1984

On the cover, below the masthead of the Long Island Ocelot Club Newsletter is an ornately framed blank page. Underneath the frame, editor Shirley Wagner chastises the membership with the following caption—THIS IS NOT A PICTURE OF A WHITE TIGER IN A SNOW STORM. It is the space your cat's picture would be in. It is the space filled by apathy. Quite frankly folks, its empty because no pictures were received to fill it.

The 12-page newsletter contained an announcement of a new vaccine for Feline Leukemia - projected to cost \$80.00 per shot. Also covered was the groundbreaking blood sample study of 55 wild cheetahs revealing they were almost identical genetically and supported the bottleneck theory of cheetahs. Contributed also was a review of Guy Coheleach's just published book of his feline paintings, The Big Cats.

The featured contribution was part one, of a three-part original and informative series contributed by LIOC member Barbara Grimes on the ongoing tails of her delightful, but no-so-potty-trained female geoffroy's cat Tara, titled Tara-ific. Considering the excellent toilet training article by Jessie Clark-White in the last FCF magazine, we thought you would enjoy reading this abbreviated version of that humorous account below:

Tara-ific

By Barbara Grimes

I went out to my mailbox the other day and was the delighted to find a Newsletter. I really look forward to reading them, more so then my new Sears "wish book". First I look though all the pages to see if anyone I know has anything printed about them, and then I go back and read it cover to cover. I enjoy all the articles but I am especially fond of the personal stories about people and their pets.

Tara is my Geoffroy's cat and is now two and a half years old. I though Tara was such a lovely, romantic name, straight out of my favorite movie, Gone with the Wind, which not only does that describes her speed, Tara is also short for Tara-izor when she has one of my friend's backed into a corner; Tara-dactyl, when she's being a little monster; and Holy -Tara, when she's racing though the house knocking lamps over.

She lives in our house with a little sidekick of a security blanket, a three year old blue point siamese names "Pierre". Also living with her are my husband and I, two teenagers, and an old outdoor dog names Daisy, who is thirteen years old.

When she arrived from Minnesota she left the security of someone who had raised a lot of Geoffroys and knew how to care for them to someone that had never laid eyes on one before. I have reared her using the "trial and error" method; I don't recommend it, as it has been hazardous to her health.

She is a little rascal and could climb the draperies and walk curtain rods like a tighrope walker, it was love at first sight. Pierre had never been around another cat and was thrilled to have a friend, even though she had those funny little spots all over.

The first couple of days after Tara's arrival, we tried keeping her in the family room during the day and would put her in the carrier at night. We had a litter box in the room and soon discovered that she wasn't using it. Now, I was under the impression that once you show the kitty her box - bingo - she uses it. Boy was I wrong. She didn't have the foggiest idea what the litter box was for and didn't like that kitty litter on her feet one little bit. She much preferred the corners of the room and along the walls. She never went in the middle of the room, so there as no fear of

stepping in anything, but heaven help the baseboards and carpet. Only the owner of an exotic knows what "wildcat wine", fermenting in the carpet, smells like. It is entirely different from anything you have ever smelled before, it has an unmistakable odor that penetrates your nostrils leaving you unable to soon forget it as it lingers and gets worse as time goes by. Here's where the trial and error method came in handy, if you care to take notes.

First, you get four litter boxes cause there are four corners in a room. Now they don't necessarily have to be your standard, rectangular, store-bough type; in a pinch, to keep up with the exotic, you can use your old pizza pan, large pie plates, and cookie sheets. I went to the store and bought a bunch of aluminum foil cookie sheets.

Tara loved "using" the shag carpet. She hated kitty litter and wasn't too fond of the newsletter on the cookie sheets as it didn't absorb fast enough and she would soil herself standing in a puddle (can't blame her for that) I even tired "pampers" (on the cookie sheet, not the cat - but she soaked these also) The shag carpet didn't do that - besides it was gold so it matched real well and if the family had stuffed up heads, it took us all awhile to realize what she was up to . . . She had been going next to the pans along the wall. Once in a while she would do me the honor of going on one of the cookie sheets so I could bust my buttons with pride and brag about how good she was getting. Well, being as she loved that shag carpet so much I went to flea markets and garage sales and purchased dozens of those little squares of carpet samples. I about dislocated my shoulder patting myself on the back - I had finally outsmarted her. Ignorance is bliss.

It was only a matter of days before; un-intentionally Tara had the run of the house. She was faster then lightning and could sneak out the family room before we could get the door closed. Oh, well, she is so cute and she had been doing so well on her cookie sheets, so why not?

It wasn't long before there was a dozen cookie sheets scattered around the house. As our noses would point us in the direction of her latest "accident" - Oh ves. I'm sure they were

idents” and I made excuses for her as fast as she could make takes. Love is blind - and I had a reason for all seasons as to why she did the things she did. After all, she was just a baby and she looks so innocent- she couldn't possibly know what she was doing. In the meantime, the carpet samples couldn't hold up to the washing machine - Necessity being the mother of invention, I came up with “piddle pads”. I got some of these packing pads that movers use and cut them to fit in the cookie sheets and we were back in business. They absorbed very well and I had to check a couple of times a day to see which ones needed changing cause now she decided to stake out her territory. She would go from one pad to another every day or so to make sure everyone knew that this was her house - believe me there was no doubt about it.

About a year after we got her - she had done enough “idents” to earn her a place in the Guinness Book of World Records, Ripley's Believe it or Not or whatever. The whole family was fit to be tied with her and even though I loved her so much, enough was enough. I decided to send her to Jean's field. It tore me up.

Jean and I couldn't get together for a week, and meanwhile I was sleeping thinking about how mean I was being and what I was going to do without her, and after all she was being pretty good that week. Tara knew I was mad at her and did everything she could to make up to me, from rolling over and over at my feet to doing somersaults. At the end of the week I wrote Jean and told her I couldn't part with Tara and for better or worse, I was going to keep her.

Since most of the mischief has been at night, we decided to move her in the laundry room at night. I reasoned that this would at

least cut the smell in half - it worked! The laundry room was a treat for her cause it was a change of scenery and for the first few months she could wait at the door to be taken out at night.

For the first time in quite a while our cathouse smelled like a home again, although on damp, humid days the carpet reminds us of the days past.

I was still getting tired of her using so many of the cookie sheets, even though she was doing so much better at night, so one day for curiosity I thought I'd take her out to the laundry room every few hours and sit her down on the pad to see what she would do. She always used just one tray out there cause I had realized my mistake in the beginning of trying to cater to her bad habits by giving her all those trays in the first place. Out there she was going to have only one. Anyway, I picked her up and out to the room we went. I sat her down and told her to “go potty”. Well knock me over with a feather! Can you believe the shock I got when she went? She looked up at me, blinking those big brown eyes, and squatted down and did her business. Boy, did she have to wash the kisses off when she got back in the house. This has been going on now for almost a year. She knows if she goes right away she can come back in the house, and if she fools around, I'll walk out and leave her for a while. She still is not perfect and once in a while will sneak in a flowerpot, or some other unlikely spot. If I catch her I'll spank her and put her in her room, if she sees I've discovered her plant watering she'll run for cover. I now realize she was not as innocent as I thought. I take her out about three times a day and if I'm going to be gone for any length of time, I put her in her room. A couple of piddle pads have had to stay, cause when I remove them she will deliberately go there.

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DOMESTIC CATS ARE WILD!!!

by Sara Schimke

Does this sound conflicting in terminology? Well, I have several wild tigers trapped in 8 to 18 pound bodies living with me in my house. Pupils dilate, crouch position, ears at half-mast, butt twitch, and then POUNCE. The prey is attacked or captured whether it's a toy mouse, roll of toilet paper, or a piece of human body. If given the chance, the prey is bitten, scratched, shredded, or torn apart. Sometimes it's in play and sometimes more serious. Sometimes it's by chase and other times by ambush.

Is this because my cats are psychologically or genetically imbalanced, or of poor breeding stock? NO. It's simply because these are things that felines do. Some studies and research state that it took thousands of years to domesticate the feline we now know as house-cats, domestic cats, lap cats, and even snuggle-pusses. I find this hard to swallow. There are many of these cats surviving and reproducing in the wild as hard-stray or feral cats (whether they were initially born in captivity or not). And on the same note, many disgruntled cat owners swear their house-cat is purposely damaging their home, marking their territory, or "attacking them for no reason."

Cats can adapt to environment change and have proven it time and time again. A kitty born in the wild without human intervention or contact can be taken from a feral cat colony and placed in an indoor-only environment and if given time, it will adjust to its new home and territory. The same can be said with the situation reversed. Cats that are raised as "house cats" and find themselves dumped or tossed outside can survive in the wild whether it's in an urban area with dumpsters to raid or a forest with lots of small rodents and birds to prey upon. However, chance of survival is much less when human intervention and sustenance is not present, but it DOES happen (and I hope no one supports "dumping" of animals anywhere).

I am not a feline behaviorist with numerous degrees to back me up, but I can't help noticing the similarities with my house-cats' behaviors and that of lions, tigers, leopards, servals, etc. that are seen on TV, in articles, and at zoos, sanctuaries, or homes. They are all CATS! What is the biggest difference between my so-called "domestic" house-cat and a tiger? Size, is the main answer. Felines of different species can range anywhere from 5 to 800 pounds. It is up to you to decide what is right for YOU. Just be sure to do your homework.

My question is: Why on earth do people think that exotic feline species can NOT be domesticated or labeled as "domestic"? Pound for pound, cat for cat, they are all the same. Some feline species (and breeds) have certain characteristics and qualities associated with them. Does this mean that ALL Maine Coon cats enjoy playing in water? Or ALL cougars in a captive environment will pee in your bed? Of course not, it's just general standards, with the term "general" being stressed.

Each cat (regardless of species or breed) has its own personality and uniqueness. Some animals will be bred for certain characteristics, but this is NO guarantee. Just as in the wild with natural selection; they do NOT breed indiscriminately. There is a reason and purpose. Prospective cat owners must understand this and except the fact. A cat, is a cat, is a cat.

I have endured the death of a toaster, clothes, and dish drainer due to a territorial dispute of spayed/neutered residents. Our toilet paper can never be on its holder and our shower curtain can never be anywhere but slung over the curtain rod when not in use. We no longer celebrate Christmas with a tree in our living room. My fold-out-couch has been stripped to the bare wooden frame on one end due to scratching. Would I take it all back and NEVER have a cat in my life? NO WAY!

Cohabitation with any feline species should be a personal choice and privilege, not a convenience or banned practice. Regardless if it's a 10 lb. tabby cat mix you adopted from a local pound, a purebred Himalayan, a hybrid such as a Bengal or Chausie, or a big cat like a lion or tiger, there are many things you need to know about "felines in general" before taking on such a commitment.

Be aware of your local, state, or federal laws, statutes, or ordinances. Amazingly, there are many townships, cities, counties, and states that regulate or restrict ownership of feline species. Many places are outlawing possession of certain species or limiting the number of cats allowed to possess. Is this right? Just look at your house-cat and ask "is this fair to you or your cousins?"

Let's look at terminology in today's society. According to good ol' Merriam-Webster, the term domesticate means: "2: to adapt (an animal or plant) to life in intimate association with and to the advantage of humans". Also, I agree with the definition Merriam-Webster uses to define "domestic animal" as: "any of various animals (as the horse or sheep) domesticated so as to live and breed in a tame condition".

Aside from the fact that I have witnessed some seriously dangerous horse and sheep, why can't the general public and government legislators agree with the most widely used dictionary in regards to cats? Honestly, it's beyond me. I know of several situations where a captive-raised wild feline has adapted to a life in intimate association with its owner. And for the most part, if allowed, these animals live and breed in a tame condition.

So, the next time you think of purchasing or adopting a snugly house-cat to add to your family, please accept the fact that they are actually mini-tigers and will still do "wild" behaviors about your house to some degree (some more than others). And the next time that your state or local government decides that it's time to regulate or restrict ownership of such glorious creatures deemed "wild or dangerous", just look at your furry family member and remember...

"A cat is a cat is a cat!"

Bringing Home Baby... Got Fluids?

by Christine Manley-Duerksen

As I hear the joyous news of kittens arriving this spring, my thoughts have turned once again to the experience I had with the homecoming of my first serval kitten.

I spent months researching the African Serval, and then weeks preparing as I awaited the day he turned six weeks old. It was a 15 hour car trip, but a beautiful, sunny Friday afternoon when I arrived at the breeder's to meet my new baby boy. Before we left for our long drive home, the breeder watched as I fed him a bottle, and all was well.

We stopped on the way home for his scheduled feeding, but he showed little interest in eating. So we made two more stops in order to get one "normal-sized" feeding into him, without forcing him to eat. Being under the assumption that this glitch in his feeding behavior was due to stress from the car ride, all *still* seemed well, and we arrived home safely.

My happiness about returning home soon turned to concern after my serval kitten began vomiting. All was definitely NOT well. It was such a small amount of vomit.....but that small amount times three over the next few hours had us at the emergency clinic in the middle of my kitten's first night home. I hadn't even named him yet!

By the time we arrived at the clinic he was completely lethargic with white gums and a protruding tongue. After a brief examination, I was offered little hope by the veterinarian. They immediately began administering fluids and said they'd call me in a few hours. I left the clinic feeling so empty, and knowing that I'd already lost him.

At three thirty in the morning I received a call from the vet. He said, "You're not going to believe this, but your kitten is up and playing!" The tears began to flow as I rushed to the car and headed to the clinic. My first glimpse of my kitten was him pouncing around in his little metal cage, IV still in place, going after the corner of his blanket like it was a mouse. The change was

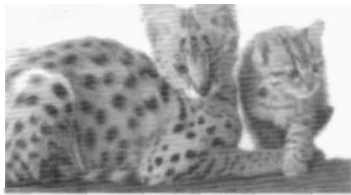


unbelievable, yet I was seeing it with my own eyes! He was back!

The vet and I sat and talked at length about what could have caused the vomiting, and stress seemed the most logical explanation at the time, as there were no indications of any other problem. As they removed his IV and prepared him to go home, I went to the desk to pay the bill and noticed that under "breed" on the intake form, they had listed him as an ocelot. And from there I got his name; Oscar.

Unfortunately, Oscar continued to vomit intermittently throughout the following week. I replaced everything I could think of; the distilled water, the can of formula, the bottles and nipples, but nothing made any difference. And even having just been made so painfully aware of the risks of dehydration and watching so carefully for any signs, we ended up back at the clinic just one week after the first incident. Again, he was near death. And again, he was brought back in a matter of hours with only fluids. The vomiting subsided shortly after that.

Now a year and a half and an additional serval later, I keep lactated ringers on hand at all times which my veterinarian was kind enough to teach me to administer in an emergency. The experience of seeing first hand just how quickly a kitten, or any smaller feline, can become dehydrated and close to death is one I hope never to repeat.



WANTED: Serval cats (2) females to private party; prefer bottle fed / socialized under a year old. Midwest only as I will pick them up. Call Ron at 616-836-2348 (Michigan).



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Remember Radar?

Radar wrote letters to his Daddy, Keith Wilson, while Keith was overseas. In fact, we printed a few in this newsletter. Everyone was pleased that Radar remembered Daddy when he came home. Radar spent time earning his living working on Mom Tracy's computer, and then took over running the household when Daddy had to ship out again in 2003. He's also rather settled down to family life. Here's the result. Radar and Piper are the proud--and tired--parents of a baby fluffball!

Mom Piper shares her opinion on parenting a newborn



An hours-old baby serval



One week old today!



cute fuzzy faces
left bobcat,
right caracal,
below snow
leopard and
ocelot



left: Tigrinus
on a bottle--
at Cleber's
Bungalow

