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Feline Conservation Federation





Feline Conservation Federation

This newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Feline Conservation Federation, Inc. We are a non-profit (Federal ID# 59-2048618) noncommercial organization with international membership, devoted to the welfare of exotic felines. The purpose of this newsletter is to present information about exotic feline conservation, management and ownership to our members. The material printed in this newsletter is contributed by our members and reflects the point of view of the author but does not necessarily represent the point of view of the organization. FCF, Inc.'s Statement of Intent is contained in our bylaws, a copy of which can be requested from the Secretary. Reproduction of the material in this newsletter may not be made without the written permission of the original copyright owners and/or copyright owner FCF. Since the newsletter consists primarily of articles, studies, photographs and artwork contributed by our members, we encourage all members to submit material whenever possible. Articles concerning exotic felines are preferred and gladly accepted. Articles involving other related subjects will also be considered. Letters and responses to articles may be included in the Readers Write column. Deadline for the next issue is the first of even numbered months. Please submit all material to the Editor. Persons interested in joining FCF should contact the Term Director in Charge of Member Services.

Founder: Catherine Cisin

Editor: Mindy Stinner
PO Box 882
Mebane, NC 27302
336-421-0065, fax 336-421-0809
e-mail: mstinner@mindspring.com

OFFICERS:

President: George Stowers
PO Box 80
Lycoming, NY 13093-0080
315-964-7751
e-mail: gstowers@twcny.rr.com

Vice President: Bob Turner
4467 E. Dayhuff Rd.
Mooresville, IN 46158
317-831-0817
e-mail: robert.l.turner@gm.com

Secretary/Treasurer:
Harold Epperson
3310 Remington Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-889-3922
e-mail: hpepperson@aol.com

**Members are invited
to participate in e-mail list
discussions on-line at
The_FCF@yahoogroups.com.**

**To sign up, contact Leann
Montgomery, Member
Services Director**

**The newly updated FCF web site is available at
www.felineconservation.org**

DIRECTORS:

Advertising and Publicity:
Robert Bean
5504 Central Avenue Pike
Knoxville, TN 37912
865-938-0702
e-mail: wildcon2b@aol.com

Education/Conservation:
Tracy Wilson
PO Box 1382
Searcy, AR 72145
501-368-0399
e-mail: wildcat@ipa.net

Legal Director: Lynn Culver
141 Polk 664
Mena, AR 71953
479-394-5235
e-mail: culvers@voltage.net

Member Services: Leann Montgomery
269 Woodfield Circle
Shelbyville, KY 40065
502-647-5945
e-mail: LM4WILDCATS@cs.com

Life Director: J.B. Anderson

1825 E. Nashville Church Rd.
Ashland, MO 65010
573-657-4088

BRANCHES:

**ACEF: Alliance for the Conservation of
Exotic Felines-Cascade Branch**

Jeanne Hall
PO Box 103
Green Bank, WA 98253
360-269-1488
e-mail: acef@acef.org
web site: www.acef.org

**MEFES: Midwest Exotic Feline Educational
Society:**

Harold Epperson
3310 Remington Dr.
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317-889-3922
e-mail: hpepperson@aol.com

**Cover: tiger cubs of
ZooPros, owned by
Marcus Cook**

**Right: Arrow enjoys a
soak in his tub. Read
about Arrow's life with
Amy Rasmussen on
page 4.**



In this Issue, a focus on tigers

Raising Tigers in a Changing World, <i>Amy Rasmussen</i>	4
Sumatran Tiger faces extinction	6
Namdharma Carnivore Project in India, <i>Shekhar Srinivas Kolipaka</i>	7
Do You Believe in Magic?, <i>Karen Sculac</i>	8
Convention in Las Vegas, <i>don't miss it!</i>	10
Unraveling the Illogic behind exotic cats and their owners, <i>Jessie Clark-White</i>	11
Blast from the Past, <i>Baby the geriatric ocelot</i> , <i>Ann Eichelman</i>	14
Call for Volunteers dominates FCF News	15
Generic Tiger Ruling by US F & W S leads to Lacey Act Amendment, <i>Lynn Culver</i>	17
Bangladesh mangrove forest has at least 500 tigers	18
The Cow Jumped over the Moon, Literally, <i>Lynn Culver</i>	21
Nine Generations of White Tigers, <i>Lynn Culver</i>	22
Felid TAG Report, <i>Leann Montgomery</i>	27
Alpha, a short story by <i>Bart Culver</i>	28
White tiger cub arrives at CCI, <i>Mindy Stinner</i>	29
The Price of Conservation, <i>Alan Shoemaker</i>	30
AR Groups claim to have proper data – NOT!, <i>Marcus Cook</i>	32
Ohio Lions Sightings lead searchers on wild goose chase, <i>Evelyn Shaw</i>	34
Playa de Oro Updates, <i>Rosa Jordan</i>	36
Upcoming Playa de Oro Trips, <i>Tracy Wilson</i>	37
Getting ready to travel to Ecuador, <i>Grace Lush</i>	38
The Majestic Tigers, <i>Rick Thomas</i>	40
A Sanctuary's Perspective about Tigers, <i>Mary Parker</i>	41
US District Court upholds lower court ruling, <i>Lynn Culver</i>	42

We wish to extend our appreciation to the following contributors to the May/June FCF magazine. Alan Shoemaker, Lynn Culver, Marcus Cook, Jessie Clark-White, Mary Parker, Karen Sculac, Rick Thomas, Bart Culver, Amy Rasmussen, Rosa Jordan, Tracy Wilson, Grace Lush, Shekhar Srinivas Kolipaka, Mark George, Leann Montgomery



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RAISING TIGERS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Amy Rasmussen

Raising Arrow was one of the happiest times of my life. It all started in the spring of 1999. My friends and I drove to Dallas to an exotic cat meeting and to pick up Arrow. My friend was exhausted and she fell asleep right after we checked into the Best Western. I was left with this chunky five-week old baby tiger. He immediately cuddled in my lap and chuffed for his bottle. I prepared his bottle and the bonding began.



Arrow quickly adjusted to me and living in our small house on 36 acres with lots of trees and a pond. Arrow and I took long walks every day for the first seven months. He slept with me cuddling right next to me for the entire evening. We played during the day, and then he would take naps in his favorite recliner. As he got older, Arrow started to terrorize the recliner trying to kill it several times during the day. As part of this ritual, he started dragging the recliner from one end of our living room to the other.

At six months, Arrow moved into my back bedroom that opens to an outside chain link enclosure of 87 feet by 23 feet with a seven-foot top. I moved him out of the living room because he started to push on the windows. I didn't want him breaking

out while I was shopping at Wal-Mart.

Arrow's constant companion in the outside enclosure was a black retriever-like mutt named Vadar. Vadar only weighed about 40 pounds, but he quickly put Arrow in his place. That dominance served Vadar well. He lived and played with Arrow for the next two years. Admittedly, Vadar enjoyed Arrow less as Arrow got bigger, but I still think that putting Vadar with Arrow during those early years was the best thing that I did to develop Arrow's disposition. Vadar and Arrow would play for hours inside and outside of the house.



Then one day, my USDA inspector came out for a visit. She kicked my chain link fence and said, "This is not going to hold him." Of course, I knew that. I was already designing Arrow's future home. That enclosure is approximately 30 yards by 40 yards, and it is another one of those expenses that became considerably more than I ever imagined it would. The basic cage was not so bad, but the perimeter fence, swimming pool, cedar boxes, landscaping touches, toys, and lots of meat started to add up. I gave Arrow a bottle of Esbilac every day at 1:00 p.m. until he was eighteen months.

The Esbilac and the continuous presence of Vadar

helped develop a gentle but powerful side to Arrow's personality.

Arrow was about eight months old when I stopped taking him for walks on his lead. I think he was about two hundred pounds then. I would jerk the lead out of my hands at times. If I'd had some other adults around, I could have continued taking Arrow for walks, but he was starting to get to big for me to handle by myself. Arrow missed those walks. Shortly after being confined to his pen, he saw my husband and I walking to the pond and he roared. It broke my heart, but my relationship with Arrow was starting to change. He was becoming a beautiful but incredibly powerful Siberian.

I kept going into Arrow's cage giving him his bottle and strategically placing some of his stuffed animals in the trees. Arrow use to love playing with his toys, but as you can imagine, they did not last long. I can still remember, as Arrow got older, his toys got bigger. I had a hell of a time getting the 55-gallon drum and truck tire into his cage, but he loved them. He immediately started picking them up with his mouth and throwing them into the air. Virtually every day, I had to take his new toys out of his swimming pool.



When he dropped his baby teeth, I saw the canines replaced with three to four inch long permanent teeth that look like railroad spikes. At about the 18-month point, Arrow started to turn into the large Siberian Tiger that he was meant to be! I was still going into the cage with him, but I started to get nervous for Arrow's 1:00 bottle-feeding. He would jump up on his cedar box to take his bottle, lean his head onto my shoulder and chest. In his mind, he loved me. I was his nurturer, his protector, playmate, and his "Mama." And, in my mind as well, I truly loved this big cat, feeling him close to me, playing with him, throwing toys into his swimming pool, and seeing his joy and delight as he played. Life just does not get any better for those of us who love cats. My heart and soul wanted to stay in that cage with him forever, but sadly my brain and intuition started to warn me that his brain was wired differently than mine. Yes, Arrow was a tame captive tiger on the surface but an inherently wild predator within.



At about the two-year point, I started taking pepper spray and a pump bottle filled with vinegar and water. All I had to do was point the vinegar and water at Arrow, and he would behave. But Arrow was sneaky. One day, as I was starting to leave the cage, he snuck up behind me and gave me a bear hug with one of his powerful forearms. It scared me. I had become increasingly more careful every time that went into the cage, but this time, despite my vigilance, Arrow caught me by surprise. At that point, a chill came over me and I knew that my relationship with Arrow needed to change again. I decided I would not go into the cage with Arrow by myself, and I would not allow my burly six foot two inch son go in by himself either. I started to give Arrow his bottle through the fence. If he sensed a change in our relationship, he accepted it well. He continued to be happy to see me.

Life was still good. I cleaned his large cage as needed—you know, scrub the algae out of the water buckets, scrub and refill his pool (a twelve foot wide circular cattle tank). Taking out the old hay, bringing in new bales of hay, and scooping poop was a weekly chore. Of course, there's always the filling of five gallon buckets with left over chicken and deer heads. The smell didn't bother me, but I have to say, in the summer those gross wiggly maggots that form overnight made it impossible for me to eat hindquarter chicken again. I could go on and on about the work and money that goes into this but you get the idea.

At this point, I had exactly what my friend had predicted, "A beautiful cat in a cage." Not long after that, I had to take his little back dog Vadar away from him. They really didn't play anymore. Arrow would get too rough and bite which sent Vadar into a rage. One day Arrow was dragging Vadar across the cage. I was scared but Arrow let Vadar go and then let out those sweet churdlles. Nevertheless, I let Vadar out and we all knew it was for the best!

A little more time went by and I put the word out that I was looking for a new companion for Arrow. After interviewing a few people, I met a great animal man, Tom Harvey. Tom was looking for a good home for one his female Bengal Tigers. So Kamari was delivered and placed in the cage next to Arrow. Tom just walked her in like a puppy dog. He had more control than I had over Arrow, but Kamari was only about 65 percent of the size of Arrow.



After an orderly introduction, the door between the two enclosures was opened. Kamari walked into Arrow's cage like she owned the place. The expression on Arrow's face was funny. His wide gold eyes were frozen open in place like a statue, he chuffed, and tiger size spray came out the other end. It was love at first sight for Arrow. Kamari, on the other hand, just walked over to him and said something like, "Hi, big boy! You look like a big sissy!" She probably noticed he didn't have any testicles.

I was so happy. My baby had a friend, and I was now less important. I still enjoy my cats. They are truly one of God's most beautiful animals. I still try to sit next to their cage every day. I pet them both through the four-gage wire fence. They are happy and so am I, but now I long for a bigger enclosure and more time and opportunity to watch my big babies play. Maybe some day! In the interim, I also need to take care of the Servals, Caracals, Cougars, and Ocelots, but that is a story for another day!

So then life went on normally for a while but then a tragic event occurred. My daughter-in-law died. My son was heart broken. He had two beautiful children—a four-year-old son and a five-year daughter. He immediately moved in with his dad and me—he couldn't bear to be in his home without his wife.

My world of raising cats turned upside down. I had a lot of wild cats living with me - tigers, cougars, lynx, servals, and caracals. I had told people for years that these cats were not for children. I did not approve of people owning large cats if they had small children. And, now I had them living in my house, running inside and outside all day long. My husband, son and I had serious discussions about getting rid of the cats. We could find good homes for them my husband would say. He had never wanted wild cats in his living room, and now he thought he could persuade me to get rid of at least the tigers and cougars for the safety of the grandchildren.

I was in the most horrible emotional turmoil. I had just been through a year of nursing my father for terminal cancer, and now I had to worry about my grandchildren and cats. Of course, the perimeter fence is there and locked, but we all know how weird things can happen. My son's in-laws were not happy with the situation either and they arranged for unscheduled visits by the child protective services. Fortunately, child protective services and the sheriff's department were pleased with the safeguards, but nevertheless, there were moments of uncontrolled weeping. I loved my grandchildren, and I loved my cats. My cats are everything to me, and they will be with me after my son and grandchildren move on with their lives.

The situation got better. I did not have to part with my cats, and there was some normalcy for my son and his children. I was so glad. The last thing I wanted was to have to put my cats to sleep or become one of those irresponsible owners that needs to turn their cats over to a sanctuary. The point in telling this part of the story is to point out how drastic changes can and do occur in our lives and those changes almost affected the long term care of my Arrow and Kamari.

I wanted my tigers with great passion. I love them dearly, but prospective tiger owners need to know there is a price to ownership and I do not mean just money. The stress and worry that comes with such a tremendous liability never leaves.

For prospective tiger owners, I encourage them to do extensive reading and research. Volunteer at a facility that keeps adult tigers. Get the license and then wait for at least a year (I waited five years). Have a large cage already built because they outgrow the house in a matter of months. Make sure you have a perimeter fence. Find a vet willing to work on a tiger. Have the equipment to safely transport a large tiger to the hospital and realize you will have some hefty vet bills if you ever have medical problems. And even with all this, recognize that nothing can prepare you for the reality that these beautiful and cuddly cubs will become big dangerous animals that can potentially complicate your life at the most awkward time.

I strongly support private ownership, but that ownership needs to be responsible and endearing for the life of the animal. As one of my cat friends has stated, "If private owners do a good job of raising and protecting their animals, it's no one's business if we have them." I fully agree, and I appreciate the work of the FCF as it works to create the awareness and support that we all need. Please call if you have any questions.

I will be glad to talk to you in between my trips to the cat cages. My telephone number is 830-424-3360.

Sumatran tiger faces extinction

GENEVA (AFP) - The Sumatran tiger is threatened with extinction unless the Indonesian government takes steps to stop poaching and the "rampant" destruction of the animal's natural habitat, the rainforest, environmental groups warned.

About 50 Sumatran tigers were killed every year by poachers between 1998 and 2002, according to a joint report by WWF and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Only an estimated 400 to 500 remain in the wild on Sumatra, one of Indonesia's biggest islands, it added Tuesday.

"The Sumatran tiger is on the brink of extinction," said Susan Lieberman, Director of WWF's International Species Program.

"The current poaching is jeopardizing the survival of entire populations, and indeed the very future of tigers on Sumatra — a tragic loss for the world, and for the very heritage of the people of Indonesia," she added.

The report condemned "relentless killing" of the tigers by hunters catering for a "substantial" Indonesian market for tiger skins or claws and teeth used for trophies, charms and souvenirs.

A probe by a wildlife trade monitoring network set up by the two organizations found tiger products in 20 percent of the 453 shops it visited.

The report also revealed an illegal international trade in Sumatran tiger parts to other parts of Asia.

"Increased and improved enforcement is critical to saving Sumatran tigers", Steven Broad, executive director of the network (TRAFFIC), said.

Namdapha Carnivore Project will study Indian species

Indian jungles habitat the highest diversity of wildcat species in the world (IUCN, CSG). However, most of these wildcat habitats are under tremendous pressure from the ever-increasing human presence in their habitats and the resulting deterioration of the jungle and its species. In the last 50 years India lost its last Asiatic cheetah population and wildcats like the caracal (*Caracal caracal*) have become extremely rare in their western range. Fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) habitats on the east and west coasts of India have virtually disappeared except for a few isolated patches. The IUCN lists the Rusty-spotted cat *Prionailurus rubiginosus*, the Marbled cat *Pardofelis marmorata*, the Fishing cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* and the Clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) as Vulnerable (IUCN 2003). The Snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) are listed Endangered. We know little on the exact status, distribution, population sizes, ecology, and behavior in the wild, gene pool originality, etc. of these wildcats. The Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, East India with its large tracks of unexplored jungles is known to habitat at least 10 species of wildcats and numerous other carnivore species and may hold the richest carnivore diversity on earth.

The unexplored reserve has to be systematically surveyed to understand its carnivore species composition and their prey, collection of scats and pellets and to understand the species current status and distribution within the reserve area. The studies will also enable us to understand the exact man-animal interaction on the periphery and within the reserve area. These studies will build into future studies that will enable us to understand in detail densities of individual carnivores, prey-predator relationships, carnivore habitat preferences, originality of gene pool and if the tiger reserve is indeed a reservoir for carnivores. Further on it will enable us to formulate and design an effective education and awareness campaign focusing the locals and staff of the Namdapha Tiger Reserve.

Millions of Indians depend on the jungles for their daily needs of firewood, wild meat, non-timber produce, grasses and leaves for animal fodder, etc. This huge dependence on the jungles and the ever-increasing human population have a tremendous impact on the wildlife populations of these habitats.

Research clearly indicates that local hunting is not compatible with large carnivore conservation in India (Madhusudhan & Karanth, 2000). Hunting of carnivore species that normally exist in low densities, like civets (Viverrids), mongoose (Herpestes spp.) (Madhusudhan & Karanth, 2000), leopard cat, jungle cat (Felid spp), ratel (mustelid spp.), otter (*Lutra* spp.) (Shekhar, 2004) for meat is common in parts of India. The tribes of east India are known to consume high quantities of meat as part of their daily intake and it is vital to understand the level of dependence on carnivore species for their diet. Adequate data on the species that are harvested by the locals and the resulting threat to their populations is unavailable.

The Namdapha Tiger Reserve, a Project Tiger reserve since 1983, known for its endemism in species, and that has recorded a increase in its *Panthera tigris* population, also habitats other endangered and vulnerable carnivore species like *Uncia uncia*, *Neofelis nebulosa*, *Prionailurus viverrinus*, *Pardofelis marmorata* and the Golden cat *Catopuma temmincki* – and others with population status not listed (IUCN 2003). Reenlisted species like the Oriental small clawed otter

(*Amblonyx cinereus* – LR/nt), Indian smooth coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata* - VU), Common otter (*Lutra lutra* - VU) (IUCN 2003) also habitat in these jungles. However, information on their distribution in the reserve, relation between habitat and species, prey availability, prey niche separation, human-carnivore species interactions etc that are essential to formulate any detailed studies on the species in the future or are important for formulating effective conservation programs, is unavailable. Lack of adequate scientific data on many species, especially low density and nocturnal species like the wildcats and other carnivores misleads wildlife managers and in many instances these species are not incorporated into the conservation plans for the area. For instance *Caracal caracal* was thought to be extinct in Central India until studies showed that the species still exist, but in alarmingly low densities (Shekhar, 2001). Even the locals are unaware of some of the species because of the carnivore's nocturnal and secretive habits.

Awareness levels on the carnivores among the locals and forest staff are low and information collected from these sources is highly unreliable and can be misleading. A lot of myth and superstition is usually attached to information on carnivores and uniformity in animal terminology is absent, thus leading to difficulties in generating secondary information.

This project will address all the above issues thus providing a strong base for future research in individual species and habitats, park managers will benefit from detailed information of habitats and species, and effective awareness and educational programs can be developed that focus on the local communities.

The project aims to study the reserve areas to gather primary information on species composition and habitat data in various parts of the reserve, interact with locals to understand what and how they harvest wildlife, and understand levels of awareness in the locals and forest staff to conserve the habitats and species of the Namdapha Tiger Reserve. Collecting this information will be the first step of generating data for future studies on carnivores in this reserve. It will help this study and any future researcher who wishes to start a comprehensive study in the area. The park-management will benefit by the first ever data collected on the individual habitats and their species composition. Information on the locals and their hunting practices will enable the design of an effective education and awareness program for its own staff, and to the local communities in and around the reserve area. IUCN Redlist SG's will be informed before hand of the project and their information requirements on endangered and vulnerable species of the area will be incorporated. Awareness programs focusing on local people in the area will initiate highlighting carnivores as charismatic mega fauna.

continued on page 13

Do you believe in Magic?

Karen Sculac,
Big Cats of Serenity Springs

If you do chances are you probably have met a tiger. Perhaps visited with a friend who has one, watched a 'show' where they appear as cuddly as your little 'Morris' or heard someone say what aw inspiring creatures they are. You may have even heard some one say they are great 'pets' if you love them enough.



At the risk of bursting a lot of bubbles out there, tigers are tigers, and as with all things magical, there is an illusion.

Here at Big Cats of Serenity Springs of the more than 80 exotic cats that call us home, over 60 of them are tigers. We have sweet ones, standoffish ones, old ones, young ones, and a few down right nasty ones! What they all have in common is that they are tigers.

When we first started offering permanent placement to cats we thought we could help, the mixture of species was pretty varied. In the last 4-5 years the need for Tiger placements has sky rocketed. Lots of reasons factor into the breed specific rise in numbers, including the current pattern of 'banning' which is gaining momentum every day. There is also the undeniable fact that to often someone is caught up in the cycle of Tiger magic. Ill prepared, ill advised, and convinced their tiger will be the one that is just a 'pussy cat' if they love it enough. After all, how could that 10 lb ball of fluff with the most adorable 'baby chuff' become anything other than you best buddy for life.

I've already burst bubbles so here comes the part where I make a lot of folks mad. You cannot love that tiger enough to make it what it is not! As an industry, as responsible caretakers, as sensible people we have got to stop perpetuating the notion that these animals are no different than your average dog and cat. They do require more than 'love'

"Fido" when he's a pup will chew the corner of the coffee table leg, Fluffy when she's a kitten will pull a few threads on your drapes. "Tigger" just might eat the whole coffee table and rip the drapes, rods and all right off the wall!! The illusion starts to fade.

"Fido" as he grows, will need a back yard with a fence, hopefully one he can't jump over or crawl under. "Tigger" MUST have a fence he cannot jump over, crawl under or rip apart with one grab of the teeth and a mediocre tug! Thinking he won't want to go anywhere won't cut it, he must not be able to go anywhere. Think 'Fort Knox' and your getting close to what's actually needed. The illusion fades some more.

Fluffy, will use the little box and you'll get away with a tiny scoop made for cleaning up the litter box. "Tigger" will have you using a wheelbarrow and a stock shovel. The illusion fades some more.

When it's time for Fido to give up an overly chewed bone, you'll tell him to drop it and take it away. When it's time for "Tigger" to leave a bone he still wants he'll tell you "Like Hell you're taking this! (see Dorado's photo on next page) The illusion fades some more.

When you start to think about vacation, and have the epiphany that you own a tiger, that a neighbor kid can not come in and feed, that the Kennel isn't going to board for you, and you are probably never going to do much more than a trip to Wal Mart for the next umpteen years, the illusion is darned near history!

And about the time you get your 1st emergency vet bill, feed bill, vitamin bill, insurance bill, and A.R. slam, you are left with NO illusion about what is involved with 'owning' a tiger.

Sanctuaries though often started with the very best of intentions, some times over look the fact that tigers are darned expensive to take care of, especially in mass numbers. We've been caught in jams ourselves. It's a harsh realization when you discover a gold mine is a more important requirement then a heart of gold. It can and does take a toll and an unpayable price to some, the illusion



fades, and for self-preservation a sanctuary ceases to exist. 5, 10 or 30 tigers need a home. (one of the reasons I thought the TAOS conference was a good idea. Alas see the 'no vacation' comment)

Exhibitors, thinking they are going to educate a large number of 'visitors', are dependent upon the traffic of others. When gate receipts are down, they are faced with the unnerving truth that a lot of people are content to see one or 2 tigers. They don't want to see or care about the other dozen you've tried to provide a safe haven to. The visitors do not become 'sponsors'. The illusion starts to fade, and those cats that no longer pay their way need to move on to save the others on site.

There's another Tiger, likely by now a whopping 2 to 3 years old needing a

Opposite page: Adult tigers box at FCF member Karen Sculac's Big Cats of Serenity Springs Sanctuary in Colorado.

Above: There is no denying the 'awww' factor...but these bundles of cute grow into Dorado (at right) NOT wanting to relinquish his horse leg!! Folks tend to forget you get about 4-12 (max!!) months of 'awwww' and 25 years of 'oh shit its a tiger!!'

Right: Does Dorado look like a pet to you?

Below: Buffy and Talulah will grow up to weigh over 300 pounds.



home. Education, and perhaps more importantly, reality checks, must be part and parcel of the ability to 'own' one of these magnificent creatures, and it needs to be done by all of us, breeders, exhibitors, placement centers, sanctuaries, USDA licensed or not.

When you see past the illusion, and still find the magic makes your heart soar, that's the time to keep on going.

The illusions must be addressed so the true magic of the tigers is allowed to continue.



Time is running out so find your cat sitter, book your flight and hotel room & mail in your reservation because you don't want to miss the 33rd Annual FCF Convention at the New Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada!

July 29 through August 1

Registration \$115 per person. (kids 6 to 18 are \$75.00, kids under 5 are free)
Fill out enclosed registration form. Special FCF Convention room rates good until July 6th - \$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.

Exciting Updates on this Las Vegas Event!

Your \$115 registration fee buys you Thursday night Icebreaker complimentary hors d'oeuvres in the FCF hospitality suite while visiting around the vendor booths, all day pass Friday on the brand new Las Vegas monorail, behind-the-scenes guided tour of Siegfried and Roy's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat at the Mirage Hotel, lunch at the Rainforest Café at the MGM Grand Hotel, tickets to see Friday afternoon show "The Magic of Rick Thomas" full of wild felines and amazing illusions at the Tropicana Hotel, Saturday line-up of speakers, Saturday night banquet buffet dinner, and Sunday morning full plate goodbye breakfast.

Saturday speakers include: JOE MAYNARD- Founder/Director of the EFBC Feline Conservation Center, home to 19 feline species in Rosamond, CA - "An introduction to EFBC's Feline Conservation Center" EVELYN SHAW- Founder of "Hunter and Lea's Project" and nominee for FCF Legal Affairs Director from Ohio - "Becoming politically active to protect your cats" SARAH SCHIMKE- Director of Feline Utopian Rescue and Refuge, Inc. in Manistee, MI and nominee for FCF Legal Affairs Director - "Lobby as a Hobby and Fight a Good Fight" TRACY WILSON- FCF Director of Education & Conservation - "Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos: Ecuador Project Update" MOLLY HOGAN- Director of The Nature of Wildworks, a wildlife care and education center in Topanga, CA- "Training wild and exotic cats for husbandry, voluntary medical treatment and Public education programs" JONA JORDAN, DVM- Veterinarian from Santa Rosa, CA- "Vaccinations for wild felines" RICK THOMAS- Las Vegas magician/performer- "My life working with big cats" U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE REPRESENTATIVE- "The newly drafted regulations for the Captive Animal Safety Act"

***Sign up now for the next
FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course
Wednesday July 28th 8:00am to 6:00 pm
at the New Frontier Hotel,
Las Vegas, NV \$65.00 FCF members
\$95.00 non-members***

This 8-hour course on responsible captive husbandry covers: Natural History of the Feline Species, Nutrition, Health Care Basics, Handling Equipment, Facility Design, Behavior Conditioning, Contingency Planning & Regulatory Agencies. This is an instructor led multimedia presentation that includes 83-page student textbook, workshops, final exam & decorative certificate of successful completion. Send registration info and check to the FCF treasurer at: 3310 Remington Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46227

WIN A GEORGIOUS JAGUAR PRINT AT THE SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET!

'Jaguar on Rock', by renowned wildlife artist, Don Balke. The frame is molded gold and leopard spotted. WildTrax Supply donated this beautiful matted and framed print. www.wildtraxsupply.com) Raffle tickets are \$5 each, all proceeds benefit Playa de Oro Margay Reserve in Ecuador. The winning ticket will be drawn at our convention banquet dinner on July 31st, 2004. Enclosed are 4 tickets for you to purchase now. Tear the ticket in half and fill in the contact info and mail back to the treasurer with your payment. More tickets can be requested, just enclose payment with a note as to how many raffle tickets you would like to purchase.

DON'T DELAY - REGISTER TODAY!

Donations to the fund raiser auction can either be brought with you or if you cannot attend contact Robert Bean, 865-938-0702, or Kevin Chambers, 812-397-2302, for shipping instructions.

Unraveling the widely held misconceptions about exotic animals and their owners

Media Influence on Public Perception of Exotic Cat Owners

By Jessi Clark-White

What makes something news? The fact that you take good care of your pets isn't newsworthy. Neither is your recent trip to the supermarket; if something is normal, it isn't news. Only aberrations capture our attention enough to warrant screen time. Why is murder reported on the six-o'clock news? Because it's unusual; it's a shocking deviation from routine events. But when we are repeatedly exposed to the abnormal, it begins to seem normal. If we see murder on the news every night, we begin to view it as a common occurrence. This naturally leads to fear of falling victim ourselves, thus we start buying guns and installing security systems. In his best-selling book *Fear Less*, security and threat analysis expert Gavin de Becker writes, "We're hard-wired to entertain every thought of danger that's put in front of us."

How do you hold the attention of a nation that just watched a war fought on live television? You start looking for tiger attacks.

Before rushing to judgment on exotic cat owners based on a few negative headlines, we might be wise to realize that we only get to read about the horror stories.... News stories about responsible people and happy animals don't sell.

When judging any group, whether it is a nation, race, religion, profession, or demographic, we must look at the primary values and behavior of that group. When we base our opinions on the well-publicized negative incidents involving only certain members of that group, we risk reaching incorrect conclusions.

Just because certain individuals have betrayed the core values of that group does not mean that the whole group should be frowned upon. Unfortunately this happens far too frequently. We live in a world of 30-second news bites and a continuous bombardment of information. We are kept "informed" of a dizzying array of issues; so many; in fact that it would be impossible for us to truly research all of the issues we are confronted with. We make thousands of snap judgments, based on news broadcasts, (fictional) scenes in movies, comments made by strangers in a restaurant or friends at work, what happened to the first cousin of a friend of your dad's, that magazine at the dentist's office, and other equally reliable sources of information.

Years ago, the viewing public was treated to a videotaped broadcast of a group of Los Angeles police officers severely beating Rodney King. What this isolated group of officers did provoked a backlash against the entire law enforcement community, as people reacted by condemning the entire police profession. If people had simply looked at the core values of the law enforcement profession, they would have realized that the majority of police officers would risk their own lives to protect them from the sort of violence portrayed on that tape. Of course there are some thugs, some thieves, and some murderers in that group. With the large number of officers in this country how could there not be? The broadcast led many people to distrust the police officer next door, judging an entire group consisting of hundreds of thousands of people by one single incident.

We also need to take a hard look at the accuracy of the information we are basing our judgments on. Let's turn to Rodney King again. The incident was caught on videotape and you watched it with your own eyes. Can't ask for more reliable information than that, can you? Well, did you know that the tape you saw was edited? That shots showing King fighting the officers and of the officers' frantic commands to King to stop fighting were cut from the tape?

Today, that infamous video is shown in police training classes for two reasons; to show bad police work, and to point out the damage that can be done when someone only wants to show part of the story.

On April 29, 2003 Environmental News Service reported that nine tiger and two leopard cubs were rescued from a private home where carcasses of some 30 tigers and 58 cubs were found. This led to the arrests of the operators of the California nonprofit organization Tiger Rescue. The article quotes Michael Markarian, President of The Fund for Animals: "The plight of these babies demonstrates why people who care about animals must boycott the exotic pet industry as well as commercial animal displays that often pass themselves off as sanctuaries." He also states: "Congress can save young tigers and leopards from this cruel fate by passing the Exotic Pets Bill."

Heart wrenching, isn't it? What this article and others like it failed to mention is that California is one of the most heavily regulated states in the country. *Private ownership of all exotic pets is banned*. Sanctuaries must comply with an extensive permit process. Far from proving the need for legislation, this sad incident highlights the utter failure of ban laws to prevent cruelty.

The Tiger Rescue sanctuary operators allegedly failed to acquire required permits and violated animal cruelty laws. If laws are the answer, why did this happen? If atrocities like this can occur in a state so heavily regulated that one cannot legally own even a ferret, what is the justification for barring responsible exotic pet ownership? The Fund for Animals' use of this incident to tug at people's emotions and mislead them into supporting destructive legislation is despicable manipulation. We need to enforce our animal cruelty laws, not ban loving and law-abiding citizens from owning animals.

Are Exotic Felids a Threat to Public Safety?

Animal rights groups and bills attempting to ban private ownership of exotic animals are increasingly portraying wild felines as unpredictable and dangerous creatures. And unfortunately, the general public is beginning to believe them. This is a clear case of “what you don’t know you will fear.”

As Gavin de Becker writes, “Unfortunately, when it comes to security, the American way has often been to implement procedures that are more relevant to assuaging public anxiety than they are to reducing risk.” Ban laws are a prime example of an action that may ease anxiety, but fail to make the nation safer.

By saying that tame exotic cats are “extremely unpredictable and dangerous creatures,” people show their lack of understanding of animal behavior. These statements are wild exaggerations of the reality. Even wild animals in-situ (i.e. roaming untamed in the wilderness) do not behave in a dangerous, unpredictable fashion. I would like to clarify for everyone that we are talking about tame, hand-raised pets bred in the United States. It’s not like you take a trip to Africa, rope yourself a serval, and drag it home hissing and spitting! Every animal has species-specific behavior patterns. These behaviors can be learned and understood by the owners of such animals in captivity, especially since they are very similar to the behaviors of a domestic cat.

These behaviors are not greatly different from domesticated animals. For example, the pattern of naturally occurring behaviors in wolves and domestic dogs is virtually identical. A poorly socialized domestic dog with a careless or un-informed owner can be far more “dangerous” than a serval or a caracal.

Our society’s standard for a safe and lovable pet predator seems to be the domestic dog. However, even man’s self-proclaimed best friend has been known to injure and sometimes kill us. Statistics suggest that between 2 and five million dog bites occur yearly. In fact, during the five-year period between 1989 and 1994, domestic dogs killed 45 children. Why doesn’t this sad figure shock us more deeply?

Maybe it has something to do with the fact that during a similar length of time, an estimated 4,605 children were killed by humans (Lindsay, Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training). Approximately 5 children lose their lives every day due to maltreatment and child abuse homicide (U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1995).

To further put this in perspective, we must now consider the fact that even with the enormous number of dog bites each year and the number of fatalities due to dog bites, a child is statistically safer in the presence of the average pet dog than with its own family! The number of children murdered each year by their own parents and guardians overwhelmingly overshadows the number of people killed by dogs. We ourselves are the most dangerous and unpredictable animals on the planet.

Am I saying that exotic cats are not dangerous? No, if we define “dangerous” as having the potential to cause injury to a human being. Every animal can be dangerous, and every human can be dangerous. One thing I teach my dog behavior clients is that all dogs have the potential to bite. They will show aggression if placed in the wrong situation, just as even the most benevolent of humans will react with violence when sufficiently provoked.

However, these cats are certainly no more inherently dangerous than a domestic dog of comparable size. In fact, some are probably safer than domestic dogs; there has never been a report of a serval killing a human being, and exotic cat owners are generally very responsible about keeping them controlled.

Whether a dog, a person, or an exotic cat eventually injures someone depends on an uncertain balance of genetics, temperament, environment, and the unique circumstances they find themselves in.

Horseback riding is an example of a far more hazardous animal-related activity. In fact, many stables and equine event centers post signs informing patrons that participation in equine activities is inherently dangerous. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 1218 people died while riding an animal between 1983 and 1994.

Horses have been known to viciously attack and kill their handlers and even people entering their pastures. A single kick from a horse can cause serious injuries or death. Horses are so powerful that even the strongest person stands no chance of restraining one if it is determined to break loose. When frightened, they flee and can easily trample one to death. Yet, horseback riding remains a popular youth sport.

Why doesn’t the neighbor’s 1200-pound horse or his Great Dane inspire as much fear as his tiger? I think two factors are involved: fear of the unknown and fear of predators. One of man’s most primal fears is that of being eaten by a wild animal, of being the hunted rather than the hunter. Police canine units are so effective in subduing violent individuals that officers report that criminals are often more afraid of a dog than a gun. Offenders are more willing to risk death than a non-fatal bite from a German Shepherd.

Horses and dogs are deeply familiar to us; we’ve lived with them for centuries, watched them on TV, read cute and fuzzy stories about them, and associate them with companionship and service. When one happens to attack or kill us, we see it as an anomaly.

We know little of exotic cats through direct experience; for most of us, exposure is limited to nature programs emphasizing their killing power and the occasional sensational news article announcing the mauling of some hapless zoo employee. When you think about it, it comes as no surprise that we develop a disproportionate fear of these animals.

The failed Oregon HB 3065 stated, “This 2003 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, an emergency is declared to exist.” There is no emergency. Try to find any evidence of a public health or safety crisis being caused by the ownership of exotic animals.

Now turn your attention to how much death and destruction has been caused by drunken drivers, parole violators, shoddy building contractors and even catholic priests. Shouldn't we as a country focus our efforts on legitimate public safety threats, rather than discriminating against the safe and legitimate activities of the citizens?

Tiger Reserve continued from page 7 The Namdapha Tiger Reserve became a Project Tiger Reserve in 1983. The “Project Tiger Reserve” status allows better patrolling of the reserve from poachers and illegal woodcutters, periodic tiger census opens doors for tourists, etc. A few bird surveys and surveys to document butterflies took place in some parts of the reserve area. However, in-depth systematic studies are required to understand the status of other species, their habitats and their inter-relationships, man-animal interaction, etc. in the reserve area. Only then can in-depth studies on the habitats and its species be initiated and appropriate awareness and educational programs be designed for local communities and the staff necessary to safe guard the future of this wonderful reserve.

The aim of this study is to understand the wildcats and other carnivore's composition in the Namdapha Tiger Reserve and the inter-relationship of carnivore species and their prey within the Namdapha Tiger Reserve. The project will generate data that will be useful for any future studies on the habitat or at a species level in the Namdapha Tiger Reserve.

The objectives for the first phase of the study are:

- To determine carnivore and small mammal diversity in different habitats and sites within Namdapha Tiger Reserve.
- To investigate the habitat factors that affect carnivore and small mammal diversity and abundance.
- Collection of scats and pellets for analysis.
- To understand man-animal interactions and the level of awareness on wildlife conservation with in the communities.

Shekhar Srinivas Kolipaka E-mail: Shekharks@hotmail

A Blast from the Past.

Long Island Ocelot Club
Volume 17, Number 5
September/October 1973

Baby the Geriatric Pussy Cat

Baby, a nineteen-year-old ocelot, is the oldest ocelot in L.I.O.C., and the sole survivor of the original trio, which caused L.I.O.C. to come into being in 1955. Owner Ann Eichelman recalls her nearly two decades living with this wonderful jungle feline named Baby.

Baby, an ocelot was born in 1954, 19 years ago in the jungle, and came to me when he was a few months old. He has been a constant source of pride, enjoyment and amazement to me during this long life.

Baby always traveled with me and, of course, has always attracted attention wherever he went. He once posed with a beautiful model in a bathing suite on the beach in Dayton. All that pulchritude must have been too much for him, because when he returned to our hotel room, he promptly upchucked.

Once, during our travels, a little boy named Tony became fascinated by Baby, and spent much of his time playing with him. Baby was also taken with little Tony, and they enjoyed many happy hours together. Later, I found out that Tony's father had died recently, and that Tony had been extremely bereaved and declining rapidly. However, after meeting Baby and playing with him, Tony had improved so remarkably that Baby was given the credit for helping this little boy over that terrible period in his life. That tender memory will live with me always.

Baby's love for water got him in hot more than once. He would drop all his toys in the toilet bowl and proceed to bat them around. We decided to get him a child's outdoor swimming pool when he started pooping into the shower or bath when it was being used. I'll never forget the time we were visiting my son and Baby removed the lid on the toilet tank, knocked off the flushing device, and had a ball in the ensuing spray that hit the ceiling wall and covered the bathroom in two inches of water, before we wondered why he was being so quiet and checked on him.

He is only allowed to have hard rubber toys that can't be eaten. A stuffed life sized chimp used to be his favorite toy, but as the stuffing dwindled, his possessiveness of it increased, and I had a time taking away his very skinny friend.

Baby has always been a fastidious groomer, and even now is a handsome dude, even though he is getting a Dewlap. He's not fussy with his food. We no longer give him bones; he still has all his teeth but his digestive system is

more sensitive than it used to be. He loves cantaloupes and apples. In fact, he'll turn up his nose at his beef heart or chicken gizzards to munch on a piece of fruit. Along with fresh fruit, he likes chicken breast, celery, lettuce, green onions, raw eggs and cheese. To top off a meal, Baby will eat ice cream, angel cake, or a tasty piece of orange roll. He and I share tasting duties when I attempt a new casserole.

Routine suites him best. Any change upsets him, although he has had to make great adjustments on various occasions in his life and has done it well given time. I feel routine next to diet and T.L.C. is keeping him alive.

I have been extremely fortunate that Baby has rarely been ill. He doesn't like a visit to the vet, and luckily, with few exceptions, there has been no need to take him. Since he doesn't leave the house, I have not given him injections for the past few years in order not put any undue stress on his heart.

Baby's eyesight, hearing, sense of smell, and teeth are all still good. Arthritis in his legs slows him down a bit, but he does have his playful moments, and can still get a little rough on occasion.

We are extremely close. We communicate both verbally and silently. He "talks" frequently and expects a verbal answer. As to the silent communication, it is as though we both have a built in sixth sense of understanding with each other. It is very gratifying and wonderful.

I hope that Baby has many more years with me as he has given me so many years of happiness thus far. I only ask that God grant us this continued relationship until it is time for both of us to say Au revoir.

Ann Eichelman

Historic 1973 photo of Pacific Northwest Branch of LIOC meeting shows seven ocelots in attendance.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS DOMINATES FCF NEWS

Volunteers wanted to serve on Conservation Committee. The FCF is soliciting members to participate on a conservation committee for the purpose of approving grants for conservation and research projects. FCF members interested in volunteering for this position contact Director of Conservation, Tracy Wilson (see inside cover page)

Volunteers wanted to serve on the Accreditation Committee. The 5-member committee will consist of those who have husbandry and facility experience with variety of feline species. We hoped to have the committee formed and running by Convention when we sent out a notice for volunteers in the January/February newsletter. But have not received enough applications. The Accreditation Committee will review applications for facility Accreditation on a bi-monthly basis. The applications include an inspection form filled out by a licensed veterinarian of the applicant's choosing and other required documents and materials. The applications will be copied and distributed to the rest of the committee by the 15th of a deadline month. The Committee has until the 15th of the following month to review and approve or reject the application. A 2/3's majority of the entire Committee is required for approval. The Committee will notify the applicant of the disposition of the application. The information should be sent to Harold Epperson, 3310 Remington Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46227, or e-mail him at hpepperson@aol.com. In your FCF Accrediting Committee Application letter, please state: 1. your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. 2. The number of years of hands-on experience you have with the husbandry of exotic felines 3. The type of experience, i.e. breeder, exhibitor, employee of another facility, etc. list all that apply 4. species that you have worked with and approximate number of cats. 5. Any other qualifications that you feel make you qualified for this position. 6. a statement that you agree to the following confidentiality: *I agree that I will maintain all information obtained or involved in the accreditation process in a confidential manner and will not disseminate any information without the prior written consent of the applicant.*

Volunteers wanted for Newsletter Editor position. Every two years during the Annual Convention BOD meeting, the Board of Directors appoints the newsletter editor position. Please contact the secretary, Harold Epperson and express your interest if you would like to volunteer. This position involves about 20 to 30 hours of time every other month. Presently our publication is being produced using Adobe PageMaker software.

Volunteers wanted for Convention Committee Chairperson. This is a two-year position appointed at the annual Convention BOD meeting. The chair works with the other committee volunteers to negotiate with hotels for food and lodging contracts, speakers, events and transportation arrangements. If any FCF member has experience with this line of work and is interested in applying for the chair position, please contact our Secretary, Harold Epperson to express your interest.

Barbara Wilson Memorial Gift Membership is awarded to Lynette Chappel. Lynette is Siegfried and Roy's leading lady and is looking after Roy and the feline collection while he continues to recover. Lynette graciously arranged for the FCF to have a special guided behind-the-scenes tour of the Secret Gardens at the Mirage during our Convention in Las Vegas.

July 28th FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course scheduled to be held at the New Frontier Hotel and Casino prior to our FCF Annual Convention. Fee is \$65.00 FCF members, \$95.00 non-members. Registration form is inserted in this newsletter. For more information contact Tracy at 501-368-0399

August 21st FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course scheduled to be held at the Black Hills State University in Black Hills, North Dakota. This class is being hosted by new FCF member Mike Welchinski, and the Spirit of the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary. Fee is \$65.00 FCF members, \$95.00 non-members. Registration form is inserted in this newsletter. For more information contact Mike at 605-641-4189

FCF 2004 NOMINATIONS

Submitted by the Nominating Committee

Listed below are the FCF Members who were nominated for the respective officer positions and accepted their nominations. Nominations were dated from 01-08-04 thru 03-16-04 inclusive.

President - Robert Turner
Vice-President - Kevin Chambers
Secretary-Treasurer - Harold Epperson
Director of Legal Affairs
Sara Schimke
Evelyn Shaw
Director of Conservation & Education
Leann Montgomery
Hope Bennett
Director of Member Services
Donna Verba
Elizabeth Hatton
Director of Advertising & Publicity
Deborah Rabinsky
Marcus Cook
Life Director
George Stowers
Robert Bean
Tracy Wilson
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AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION



AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION

The Generic Tiger Ruling by Fish and Wildlife Service leads to the passage of the Captive Wildlife Safety Act

Lynn Culver, FCF Director of Legal Affairs

The Captive-bred Wildlife (CBW) registration system followed an extensive public review in 1978 and 1979. The final rule granted general, conditional permission to take; export or re-import; deliver, receive, carry, transport, or ship in the course of a commercial activity; or sell or offer for sale in interstate or foreign commerce any non-native endangered or threatened wildlife that is bred in captivity in the United States. For persons or institutions to operate under the CBW permit, certain conditions must be met, including that the person or institution must first register with the Service.

September 11, 1998, the US Fish and Wildlife Service published their final rule that deleted the requirement to obtain a CBW registration for eight species of pheasants, a few parakeet species, the Laysan duck, and the “generic” or inter-subspecific crossed tiger.

This was not the first time the CBW (Captive bred Wildlife) registration had been modified. On December 27, 1993, the Service ruled that public education through exhibition of living wildlife could no longer be the sole justification for issuance of a CBW registration. Then the Service reopened the comment period on the larger question of *“the value education provides to the conservation of non-native species in the wild as it applies to endangered and threatened species permits.”*

The Service believed that the breeding of generic tigers had not been affected by the CBW system and noted at the time few people were actually registered for a CBW permit. They stated generic tigers could be found in most of the 50 states and intrastate commerce was not regulated, breeding loans or donations were not prohibited and those who did hold CBW registrations could legally purchase and sell generic tigers in intrastate commerce.

The Service’s logic in removing a CBW registration for the interstate commerce for the breeding of generic tigers stated *“generic or crossed tigers cannot be used for enhancement of propagation of the species, however they can be used in a manner that should enhance survival of the species in the wild. Examples include exhibition in a manner designed to educate the public about the ecological role and conservation needs of the species and satisfaction of demand for tigers so that wild specimens or captive purebred subspecies are not used.”*

In other words, generic tigers could not fulfill the strict goals of a CBW registration, but they had value to conservation as educational animals. Since the issuance of that ruling, the population of generic tigers has grown significantly. And because the permit requirement was lifted, breeding centers

could legally advertise and buy and sell stock from other out-of-state breeders to diversify their genetics. This is what happened, much of it fueled by a desire to breed and sell rare colors of tigers. Emphasis on the white and tabby tigers drove breeders to obtain unrelated gene carriers to compliment their existing stock. White tiger offspring and their white-gene, orange colored siblings saturated the available captive habitat.

The deregulation of tigers did indeed encourage diversity of genetics through interstate movement of bloodlines. But misunderstanding of this ruling also led to advertising and sales of tigers for reasons other than breeding without parties obtaining the federally required Interstate Commerce permits. And some believed that generic tigers were completely unregulated and were engaging in interstate commerce of tigers for pet purposes in violation of the ESA.

Sales to inexperienced persons who discovered they were not willing to spend the money, or make the sacrifices it takes to really provide quality captive habitat led to accidents, escapes and the need for ever more sanctuaries. Tigers are by far the most common species found in big cat sanctuaries. Karen Sculac, owner/operator of Big Cats of Serenity Springs noted of their 80 resident cats, 60 are tigers and there has been a big increase in the number of calls for tigers needing placement over the past 6 years.

National media highlights each and every tiger incident, state legislators are hounded by AR radicals wanting to ban private ownership statewide and sanctuaries struggling from a decline in public charity are burdened with an over abundance of tigers. Would we be in this mess today if the US Fish and Wildlife Service had not approved the Generic Tiger ruling?

Enter the frustrated and determined and legislatively connected AR movement and their “answer” to this problem.

President Bush signed into law the Captive Wildlife Safety Act amendment to the Lacey Act just before Christmas last year. Utilizing that KISS (keep it simple stupid) formula, this bill managed to avoid the widespread opposition that foiled its precursor, the Shambala bill, but still, it probably would not have passed into law had it not been for the one-two punch of super star Roy Horn’s injuries on stage last October followed almost immediately by the discovery of a 450 pound tiger residing in a fifth floor Harlem apartment.

continued page 18

Media hype of these two events created a moral panic that whipped America into a stupor of emotions. The end result of this frenzy was that Congress passed an animal rights bill that mandated that our US Fish and Wildlife Service, whose primary mission is to protect wildlife and the habitat it depends upon for survival, be sidetracked into another duty – the federal exotic pet police.

The CWSA stipulated that the Secretary of Interior had 180 days to come up with proposed regulations to describe and clarify the exempted entities and the prohibited activities.

I was told by Senate and House committee members this CWSA amendment would not affect donations, just sales and the interstate transport of big cats sold. I was skeptical, since so much language was devoted to describing exempted sanctuaries that do not buy or sell.

FCF president President George Stowers sent written comments to Representatives and Senators and state media headquarters objecting to the CWSA because it would severely limit the available captive habitat for adult cats needing relocation and was largely redundant and unnecessary due to the ESA prohibitions against interstate sales for pets.

The CWSA will reduce some pet sales because it closes a loophole that exempts donations from the ESA. Some interstate transactions are falsely recorded as being “donations” or “breeder loans” to bypass the ESA prohibition against interstate pet sales.

The CWSA will have a chilling effect upon the future stability of captive feline populations. This legislation forbids someone who has proper state permits, caging and experience, but is not exempted (USDA licensed or operating as a federal tax-exempt sanctuary, or is not a state licensed rehabber, or vet or school) from providing refuge to any out-of-state big cat in need of relocation.

This is a radical departure from the Congressional intent of the Lacey Act, which was to federalize state and international wildlife laws to stop commercial trade in illegal wildlife.

This AR amendment in the Lacey Act makes it either a civil offence or felony crime for someone who is legal in their state, to transport a legal animal across state lines to another person who is legal in their state. In essence, no state laws are being broken and the animal doesn't not have to be illegally taken or previously involved in illegal commerce for a violation to be committed.

Another concern FCF has is whether a private owner of a protected feline moving from one state to another would be allowed to transport their pet. I was told that this scenario had not been considered and that the US F&W Service will try to clarify the regulations to make this an exempted activity.

The CWSA draft regulations will be published in the Federal Register in July, a comment period will follow and then the final rules will be published and become law. Then movement of the six species of large cats, (lion, tiger, leopard, jaguar, cheetah, cougar) whether they are being given away or sold in interstate transactions will only be allowed to occur between USDA licensed facilities or tax-exempt sanctuaries or wildlife rehabbers, vets or schools.

Will it be legal to utilize a USDA licensed broker to act as a conduit to allow a non-exempted party to purchase or receive by donation an out of state big cat from an in state broker? It should be. It adheres to the letter of the law. However a USDI representative told me “it would depend upon how long the broker keeps the feline before re-selling or donating it instate.” Sounds like a sticky wicket to me.

Bangladesh mangrove forest has at least 500 tigers

DHAKA (AFP) - Game wardens have found 500 endangered Royal Bengal Tigers in a Bangladesh mangrove forest after carrying out a similar survey in neighboring India, according to preliminary figures released.

No figures were available for the number of tigers in the Indian part of the forest where the UN-funded survey was carried out earlier.

Bangladeshi and Indian game warden teams have spent weeks crisscrossing the Sunderbans delta that straddles the border of the two countries, searching for paw prints, or “pug marks,” of the powerful cats.

The study aims to determine the size of the tiger population in the delta amid poaching and loss of habitat due to human encroachment.

“The teams collected a total of 1,546 pugmarks and we believe, after initial study, there are at least 500 Royal Bengal Tigers in the Bangladesh part of the Sunderbans,” Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj said.

The last official count covering the Bangladeshi section of the Sunderbans was in 1993. Although it put the number of tigers at 362, it is believed it was less thorough and failed to count all the tigers.

Siraj said the final count of the “critically endangered” tigers was likely to be available in July after scientific analysis of the pugmarks to ensure each tiger is only counted once.

The tigers are Bangladesh's national animal but are being pushed towards extinction by poaching for their skins and bones which are used in traditional medicine.

The study is the first major attempt to find out how many of the animals remain in the Sunderbans, a vast swathe of mangrove swamp, lush forested islands and rivers and the largest habitat for the tigers in the world.

Sixty percent of the Sunderbans is in India and the rest lies in Bangladesh.

From the prints, experts will be able to tell the age, sex, weight and gender of the animals, as well as estimate their numbers.

Experts believe just 5,000 to 6,000 Royal Bengal tigers are left in the world, down from some 100,000 in 1900. Most of them are found in India and Bangladesh but they also live in Nepal, India, Bhutan and Myanmar.

The census is key to planning strategy for the animal's survival, as four of eight sub-species in the world are believed to be extinct.

The shrinking of their habitat is bringing more tigers into dangerous proximity with people. There are sometimes reports of the cats entering villages in search of food and mauling or even killing people.



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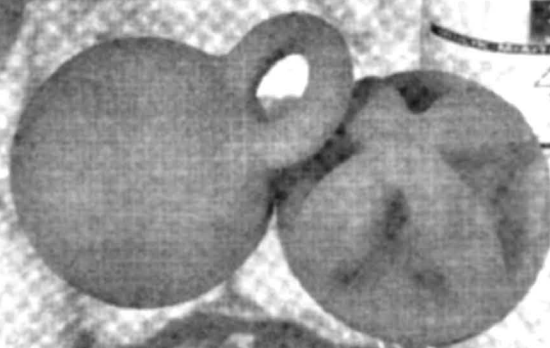
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The Cow Jumped Over the Moon—Literally

Minnesota Legislators pass new regulations governing possession of exotic animals

Lynn Culver/FCF Director of Legal Affairs

Minnesota animal people proposed friendly legislation for state regulation of exotic animal possession. This approach was in response to Senator Betzold's bill introduced earlier that was philosophically opposed to private ownership of wildlife. In fact, during public hearings when it was pointed out that Betzold's bill would put animal people out of business, Betzold, a rabid AR supporter responded, "We don't want your business in Minnesota."

Capitol Resources, a MN lobby firm represented the Responsible Animal Owners Association of Minnesota. They crafted a favorable bill to insure a future for private captive husbandry in Minnesota, and superimposed it over a House companion ban bill authored by Representative Strachan, giving the animal people an early victory. However, the next two Committee hearings managed to amend and reword Strachan's bill until it was closer to the Betzold ban philosophy than the RAOAM group's intent.

The two bills wandered through the maze of committees all the way to the floor for voting in the final week of the session. Both bills passed. As is customary in situations where there are differences in companion bills, a Conference Committee of six persons representing the two sides met in private to attempt to develop a single bill they could both approve. If a compromise could not be worked out, the bill would die. Both legislative bodies must approve a Conference Committee Report.

The committee met late Wednesday evening and due to circumstances beyond control, Senator Dille, a key supporter of the animal people, missed the Thursday morning session. He was not going to sign off on the Conference Committee Report. Betzold approved the report without Dille present and late that afternoon the Senate voted overwhelming in favor of the amended bill. This was no surprise; it was known the Senate would support Betzold's prohibition legislation.

Friday I e-mailed and called House legislators to urge they vote no on the ban bill, and spoke with aids to find out the voting schedule. Senator Lindgren, friend of the animal people, returned my call and assured me he felt they had the situation under control. It was a great relief to hear that news, as I spent the previous two nights unable to sleep due to worry.

Saturday all parties arrived at the MN capitol ready to face the judgment day. Lobbyists took a head count and knew they were one short of the votes they needed to kill the bill. When the Betzold bill came up for a vote in the House, a motion was made to send the bill back to the Conference Committee for changes. This was a calculated risk. To take

the bill to the floor for a vote in its present condition, not knowing if it would pass or fail was to risk passage of a bill that would end **any and all** private captive husbandry. And if the House voted it down, they knew they would have to face this same exhausting and expensive battle again next year. To return to Conference Committee meant negotiations had to be made, signed off on, and then the new bill had to be voted on in the Senate and then in the House – all on the last day of the legislative session. Highly unlikely it would be accomplished in the time left but they were determined to try. And amazingly that is exactly what happened. With only one dissenting vote, the House ordered the ban bill back to Committee and set the ball in motion. Never before in the history of the MN legislature can the lobbyists remember a bill being sent back to Committee for further revisions, hence the cow jumped over the moon.

The Conference Committee got off on a bad start – the general mood at the Capitol was ugly due to serious budget issues and tempers were short. Then the lobbyists laid their cards on the table and shared their convincing evidence that Betzold as well as other members of the MN legislature, were indeed under the control of PETA and other animal rights extremist groups. The tide turned and Representative Strachan broke from the ban camp and threw his support to the RAOAM viewpoint for regulation. Quickly many concessions were made. The numerous changes left the bill confusing and poorly worded and possibly unenforceable. The final version turned from a total "manage to extinction" ban bill into a USDA exempted regulatory bill that while allowing existing pet owners to keep their animals, regrettably does not allow any new exotic pet owners.

The Conference Committee signed off on the new bill after 4:00 p.m. and the Senate passed it at 7:00 and the House passed it at 9:00. To clarify the legislative intent of the bill, the authors were questioned by the RAOAM group in front of the full legislature on several points and were told that USDA facilities were allowed to operate "however necessary" to continue their business, allowing for inventory increases or changes. It was stated that nothing prevented new USDA licensed persons from obtaining prohibited species. These remarks were tape recorded for future needs. Everyone was amazed at the events of the day and the turn around from total ban to regulate.

It is unfortunate there was not a strong showing by non-USDA licensed and pet owners at the MN capitol. Future pet owners are an unknown group, even to themselves, so they did not voice opposition. FCF wrote letters in support of the pet owner and informed legislators that legal pet ownership insures a diverse and healthy breeding population with plenty of dispersal options. Our views did not prevail. On the brighter side, cougars, lynx and bobcats are still allowed through a DNR pet permit. In the future, owners will have to either be USDA licensed or form a Board of Directors for a non-profit sanctuary.

Nine Generations of White Tigers

Lynn Culver

Bonnie Ringo, owner and operator of the Tiger Preservation Center in Oregon deliberates the future of one of her white tiger cubs. “As he lay across my lap with his silvery white coat untouched by the inhumanity in our world, I am painfully aware his future lies in the decision I am now responsible for. Where will he go when he leaves my facility? Will he inspire awe for the incredible beauty and variety of life that he represents? Will his presence remind us that it is humanity’s selfish actions that have forever removed such a wondrous image from nature?”

Mohan, the start of “white tiger fever”

White tigers are documented in Indian literature dating back to the 15th century. Prized for their beauty, several were taken into captivity by royalty for breeding. But Americans are most familiar with one white tiger named Mohan. Born in 1951, he was orphaned when those who found and captured him in Rewa, India, shot his mother and three orange siblings. When Mohan grew up the Maharajah bred him to Begum, a normal orange female. They had three litters of normal colored offspring that inherited the recessive white gene from their father Mohan.



The Maharaja then bred Mohan with Radha, his daughter from Begum’s second litter. They produced a litter of four white tigers - one male Raja, and three females, Rani, Mohini and Sukeshi. It was the first time white tigers had been born in captivity.

Early breeding history of the white tiger in US Zoos

While lions have always been bred with ease, there were very few records of tiger births in captivity before 1950’s, according to the 1968 issue of the International Zoo Yearbook, and those that were born seldom lived to maturity. Difficulties in breeding success were thought to be due to the tiger’s solitary nature and the aggression the female showed towards the male after mating that discouraged further attempts to copulate. Other factors thought to interfere with breeding success were related to vitamin and mineral deficiencies in the diet of the times, which was commonly just horsemeat and milk. Tiger mothers often failed to care for young, and hand rearing was not often attempted. Feline Distemper also took its toll on cubs. These factors explain many of the early mortalities of white tiger breeding programs. However today the tiger is a species that breeds easily in captivity, and hand rearing is usually successful. “Research has improved diet, kitten formulas and inoculations, but most importantly,” according to Rotterdam Zoo, a leader in early tiger breeding success, “it is the improvement in keeper knowledge and awareness that has been the secret to the survival of tigers in captivity.”

The National Zoo, Washington DC - In 1960 amidst much excitement, the National Zoo received one of Mohan's daughters, a white cub named Mohini. Later, when Mohini became mature, her uncle Sampson, brother of her mother Radha was imported to be her mate. The first litter produced one white cub and two orange cubs but only the orange male Ramana, survived. The second litter produced two more orange cubs; one was stillborn, but the female named Kesari survived.



The National Zoo efforts concentrated on producing white offspring. Mohini, who was born to her father and her sister, was now mated with her orange son, Ramana. Rewati, a white female born in 1970 was the surviving cub of this litter. At that time the worldwide population of white tigers in captivity numbered just three dozen. The next litter consisted of two white and three orange cubs and a day later another stillborn was delivered. Mohini crushed three of the cubs during her strenuous labor leaving only the white female cub Moni alive.

Cincinnati Zoo, Ohio - The National Zoo loaned the Cincinnati Zoo the orange brother and sister pair Ramana and Kesari while it renovated its cat habitats. This pair was grandchildren of Mohan as well as great grandchildren of Mohan, and their father Sampson was the half-brother and uncle of their mother Mohini. In 1974 they bred while at Cincinnati producing a single litter that consisted of three white cubs and one orange cub.

Ramana passed away a short time later. One white male

from that litter, named Ranjit was eventually sent to the Henry Doorly Zoo, the other siblings returned to the National Zoo.

In 1976 the Cincinnati Zoo borrowed an unrelated white tiger named Tony, on loan from John Cuneo of the Hawthorne Corporation and bred him to the lone female white tiger Kesari. Tony was a white cub, born to normal orange parents from a different bloodline than Mohini. Sumita and Bhim, the white siblings from this pairing were bred to each other many times. They produced white cubs with stripes and cubs that had almost no stripes. In April 1983 a litter of 3 white cubs, including the first pure white tiger born were sold to magicians Siegfried and Roy and formed the foundation stock for their white tiger program. Many other white and white-gene tigers were born at Cincinnati and sold or traded to zoological parks in the US, West Germany, Thailand, Japan and other countries for different valuable species.

In 1989, Cincinnati Zoo received two new female white Bengal tigers. Sipra and Swapna were born in 1983 at Orissa Park in India and were pure Bengal tigers. Director Ed Maruska supported the idea of breeding white tiger genes into the Bengal population, however, the Bengal tiger was not an SSP approved animal so in the 10 years these sisters were at Cincinnati they were never bred and they passed away in the late 1990's without contributing their genes to the US population.



Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha, Nebraska - In 1978, Henry Doorly Zoo received Ranjit, the son of Kesari and Ramana. Dr. Lee Simmons was in charge of the tiger-breeding program. He was a leader who was influential in his field and located expertise on all levels of species management to bring them together for the betterment of conservation. This was before the creation of the first Species Survival Plan and it was this collaboration among professionals that aided Dr. Seal to develop the concept of the SSP adopted by AZA zoos today.

Dr. Lee Simmons was dedicated to improving the health of the white tiger gene pool. Henry Doorly built a stock of heterozygous tigers by pairing Rangit with normal colored tigresses, namely Mus Kative, Soma and Tanya.

The sons and daughters of Ranjit by different mothers were crossed to produce litters of both orange and white tigers. Offspring were mostly healthy and free of defects, though there were individuals that had problems. Dr. Lindsey Phillips recalls operating on a 7-day-old tiger cub to correct gastric dilation.

Heterozygous tigers Rajah and Sheba II and their daughter Obie were purchased from Baron VonUhl of Shrine Circus to enhance the gene pool of the Henry Doorly white tiger breeding program. Ranjit was bred to heterozygous Obie and produced litters of white and orange cubs.

Racine Zoological Gardens, Racine, WI - In May 1984, a white female was born to a pair of orange tigers in the Racine Zoological Garden. The father of this cub was Chiquita, the brother to Tony, the white male owned by John Cuneo, purchased from Baron VonUhl of the Shrine Circus. Jim Witchie, a private breeder in Ohio, owned Chiquita. The mother of this litter was Bonnie, who was born at the Racine Zoo. Her father Bucky came from the Indianapolis Zoo. When Bonnie was accidentally bred to her father Bucky they produced a litter of white and orange cubs in 1982, revealing that Bucky carried the recessive white fur gene and had passed it on to his daughter.

Columbus Zoo, Ohio - Ika, a three-legged white female tiger on loan from the Hawthorn Corporation was paired with a heterozygous female, Dally on loan from Cincinnati Zoo. In 1986 they produced a litter of 2 orange and one white cub.

Other white tiger bloodlines in the US

Baron VonUhl - Shrine Circus Sarasota, Florida - In addition to the progeny of the National Zoo's Mohini and Sampson line in the US, other identifiable lines do exist. The Baron purchased an imported Bengal tigress named Susie and a Siberian-cross tiger Kubla from the Sioux Falls Zoo in South Dakota. These tigers apparently carried a recessive gene for the white coats and when the Baron bred them together white offspring unexpectedly were born. Since these cats did not have white parents, they must have inherited the white gene from grandparents or even their great-grandparents imported from India. Tony, the white male purchased by John Cuneo was one of their offspring. Other litters born to this pair were sold to the Ringling Brothers Circus. Eventually, the Henry Doorly Zoo purchased Rajah and Sheba II for their white tiger breeding program.

John Cuneo, Hawthorn Corporation, Illinois - John Cuneo of the Hawthorne Corporation traces one of his lines back to Rajah and Sheba II, two tigers owned by Baron VonUhl, of the Shrine Circus. Mr. Cuneo purchased Tony, the two-year-old white offspring of this tiger pair from Mr. VonUhl.

The Hawthorn Corporation also had another line of white gene tigers. A sibling pair of heterozygous tigers named Sheba III and Prince were purchased from the International Animal Exchange, who had imported the pair from India. This pair produced at least five litters with two of these offspring white. The heterozygous daughters Rani and Baby were bred to Tony to produce mostly white litters.

The Hawthorn Corporation, which specialized in breeding and training of tigers for circus acts, was a major leader in white tiger breeding in the early decades, producing nearly 3 dozen white offspring by the mid eighties.

Jim Witchie, Ohio - Private breeder/dealer Jim owned Chiquita, the brother of Tony and used him in his white tiger breeding program selling many offspring to other private facilities.

Josip Marcan, Florida - Josip's white tigers originated from another bloodline from Yugoslavian imports and are of pure Bengal origin. He has carefully maintained his Bengal purity and his breeding program produces the snow-white tiger and golden tabby tiger as well as the classic white tiger with the magnificent black stripes. Marcan, a doctor of veterinary medicine, recognizes the dangers of overpopulation and limits his breeding program to insure that his offspring have a secure future.

White Tiger Genetics

The white coloration is part of evolution, a process where nature plays with many variations to be responsive to a changing environment. If the time is right for the change, it will become dominant and the species is said to evolve. If it is not the best choice, the genetics for that variation may stay hidden in recessive genes, available for a future need. White tiger cubs are produced when the recessive gene for the color white is inherited from both parents. There are orange tigers that have inherited a white gene from one parent, but an orange gene from the other parent. Such cats have one of each gene to potentially contribute to its offspring and are known as heterozygous. It is a roll of the dice which gene is inherited. If an orange tiger that carries the white gene is mated to a white tiger - there is a 50% chance of white offspring, since the white tiger has only has white genes to contribute and the orange has two possible colors to contribute. If two such heterozygous tigers are mated, there is a 1 in 4 chance the offspring will be white. A white tiger only has white genes for its offspring to inherit; therefore two white tigers mated together produce only white cubs.

As this article shows, the white gene can be inherited for many generations in an orange tiger and if it is bred with another tiger carrying this recessive gene, seemingly spontaneous white offspring can occur. Most likely this happens when offspring are bred to parent, such as the cases of Bonnie and Bucky, or siblings are bred such as Sheba II and Prince, because that greatly increases the random chance that two cats being bred are carrying the white gene. The spontaneous occurrence of white tigers in the US shows that apparently several orange Bengal tigers imported from India were surprise carriers of the recessive white gene.

Sadly, the AZA Zoo's Felid TAG recommended phasing out the Bengal tigers in US collections and Species Survival Plans were developed for only three out of five existing tiger sub-species. This change of interest meant that the work of the previous decade performed by Henry Doorly Zoo to improve the genetics of the white tiger bloodline was abandoned. As the AZA zoo world turned its attentions to other sub-species, some of the white and heterozygous orange tigers were sold and traded to private zoos such as Tanganyika, owned by Jim Fouts, and dealers such as International Animal Exchange operated by the Hunts where they became founders of the private sector white tiger gene pools.

44 years after Mohini arrived there are now several hundred white tigers alive and well in the US today. That translates into approximately 9 generations since Mohini. If all private owners had continued to inbreed their tigers as intensively as was done in the early history of Mohan and Mohini, this would be impossible. Inbreeding decreases survivability by compromising immune systems and increasing genetic defects. Inbreeding continued on the level described in this early history would eventually result in extinction due to total loss of offspring survivability.

Instead, the opposite occurred. Through countless out-crossings the white gene is no longer rare in the privately owned captive tiger population. Josip Marcan guessed the white tiger population in the US ranges from 250 to 300. Other estimates bring it closer to 400. For every white tiger there are several orange that carry the white gene so one could be looking at 1000 tigers with this white gene. This seems to be a reasonable estimate considering that in a privately kept white tiger studbook, 233 tigers were documented born white or heterozygous in the first 3 decades since Mohini.

It is true that some breeders operate with limited resources and understanding of the importance of genetic diversity, inbreeding parent to offspring or brother to sister producing cubs with hip dysplasia, cleft palates and crossed eyes. However, many facilities produce this color variation by introducing unrelated genetics to known white gene carriers to increase the genetic diversity and strengthen the health of their bloodlines.

A big boost to the diversity of the white tiger genetics happened after the US F&W S Generic Tiger Ruling in 1998 eliminated the CBW permit requirement, allowing breeders to purchase new bloodlines in interstate commerce without restriction - and they did. Unfortunately the boom in breeding tigers for color produced an abundance of tigers that exceed the carrying capacity of the available captive habitat. This overpopulation has caused instability and is the driving force behind many of state and county ban laws passed in recent years, as well as the Congressional passage of the Captive Wildlife Safety Act amendment to the Lacey Act.

Two views of Conservation

Conservation is a word with many meanings. The US Department of Interior is charged with conserving our natural resources and defines this word to mean using habitats, resources, animals, and plants *wisely* so as to save them for future generations.

The present interpretation of conservation held by AZA zoos is that species held in captivity should be managed with possible re-introduction in mind. This requires animals in a breeding program be the same sub-species as those found in the wild that they might someday be released into. This dictate has caused species managers to turn against the "generic" white tiger, even though the possibility of actually reintroducing such a large and dangerous predator as a tiger into native habitat is remote at best.

Just look at the facts, notes Josip Marcan, "In 1960 there were 3 billion people on this planet. In 2000 the world population had doubled to 6 billion. In the next 40 years experts predict 12 to 15 billion humans will be competing for space on a planet that isn't getting any bigger. Tigers are going to be gone. They are nearly gone now, found only in a few protected reserves. There is no sense in tiger reintroduction unless we are going to reduce human population. China has a one child per family policy, India does not, and India will surpass China in population shortly. The tiger's future is dependent upon captivity."

Could the white tiger survive in the wild? Outspoken and opinionated critics like Ron Tilson of the AZA's Tiger SSP say the coloration is just an aberrant mutation, a freak of nature destined to die out. This ignores that fact that most animals do not see in color, and the white color of a tiger might not be any disadvantage when hunting prey. And as this article documents there are several wild tigers captured in India that must have carried the white gene.

One thing *is* for sure, we humans see our world in full color and white attracts *our* attention, our admiration, and our desire - the desire to possess, especially anything rare. Some seek to possess the living being, others want the trophy body. Either way, over time the white tiger was selectively removed from nature whenever man observed it.

The white tiger lives in a captive habitat controlled by humans. Someday, captivity may be the only environment where *any* tigers live. Humans are the major selection factor that determines what genes get passed on to the next generation. In the private sector the genes that please humanity are the ones chosen by breeders and collectors to survive – personalities that are reliable and stable and colors that delight the senses are selectively allowed to reproduce and flourish.

The AZA zoo community concentrates on maintaining three sub-species pure tiger populations, importing new pedigreed-to-the-wild breeding stock to build up their tiny gene pools. The entire population of Indo-Chinese tigers in the SSP had only 4 founders until more wild tigers were imported last year. The Sumatran tiger plan has just 14 founders. Zoos continue to seek out new wild blood in the hopes of building a captive population for future reintroduction onto the wild. Great sums of money are spent each year for a plan that deliberately ignores the conservation value of the already existing generic tiger population. These tigers exist in captivity in great abundance and *could* be exhibited by zoos to educate the public about the ecological role and conservation needs of the species so that wild specimens or captive purebred subspecies are not needed.

Ironically this AZA approach to tiger sub-species purity management might someday be universally accepted as unnecessary if the findings published in a paper titled *Tiger (Panthera tigris) molecular diversity and conservation genetics: Progress towards a better understanding of the evolution of Asian cats* submitted by Warren E Johnson to the AZA Felid TAG receives further scientific corroboration. In this paper, Johnson writes “Relatively low genetic variation was found among all tiger subspecies, particularly with mtDNA and DRB markers, where tigers had tenfold less overall variation compared with other Felidae species. Genetic homogenization of the entire species was followed by rapid dispersal throughout its current distribution. Since 20,000 to 25,000 years ago, genetic drift and reduced gene flow has led to a small amount of genetic differentiation among some tiger populations. Although, recognizable, these differences are relatively slight, suggesting perhaps that there has been insufficient time for subspecies-level genetic adaptation to be established and that tiger populations and subspecies do not necessarily have to be managed in isolation.”

Our Spiritual Reserves

Bonnie believes that the experience of viewing the amazing beauty of a white tiger gives us all a wake-up call on the depletion of our diversity. She is outraged at the critics that would have the white tiger banished from captivity. “In spite of their early inbreeding history, private breeding programs have brought us new color variations; the rare snow white tiger that lacks any striping and the beautiful tabby tiger with its dark orange stripes against an orange and white background. These new color variations exist today and many

are perfect specimens showing no genetic defects. These amazing cats delight audiences at educational shows and magic acts, theme parks and private zoological facilities. Emphasis on producing the white tiger in private facilities has mixed this white gene with much of the country’s orange population, preserving this phenotype so that future generations can enjoy them.”

Bonnie reminds us that extinction is forever. “I don’t want to think of a future where our white tiger is viewed only in a picture book. AZA has chosen to implement a policy of extinction of this gene pool in their collections. It is up to those of us in the private sector to carefully breed our white tigers for genetic diversity to help insure that our children, and our children’s children have the opportunity to see one of the greatest wonders of nature - the white color variation of the Bengal tiger. This is conservation of one of the planet’s most spectacular inhabitants. Yes, it is true that this cub that lay upon my lap, and his progeny will probably never grace the wild’s of India, but his presence in our human society brings joy and wonder and a profound appreciation for the beauty of nature and the variety of life that will translate into an ethic that values wildness and wild places as biological and spiritual reserves that must be protected and preserved forever.”

Special thanks to the following people for providing information for this article: A.K. Roychoudhury, G.C. Banerjee, R. Poddar, Abhay Kunj, Gene Schmitt, Lindsey Phillips, DVM, Bonnie Ringo, Josip Marcan, Baghavan Antel, Pat Callahan, Warren E. Johnson

Photos for this article.

Page 22: heterozygous orange and white tigers of Zoopros, operated by Marcus Cook

White Bengal tiger from Josip Marcan’s bloodline

Page 23: Boris, tabby tiger at Serenity Springs.

Tabby tigers are another recessive gene tiger color.

Aries, white tiger at Serenity Springs

Page 26 below: Aries again



FELID TAG REPORT

Leann Montgomery

At the end of March, I attended the AZA Felid TAG meeting to represent FCF and to give a presentation on FCF's Playa de Oro conservation project. The board felt that our attendance was important to demonstrate to the AZA that the private sector can and does participate and is becoming a valuable asset in conservation of wild cat species. We also wanted to say "Thank You" to the Cincinnati Zoo for donating the 3 new digital cameras that are working quite well at the reserve and hopefully encourage other zoos to get involved.

Although I was extremely nervous about giving the presentation in front of a room full of AZA people, I was pleasantly surprised by the interest shown after the presentation. Several zoos approached me after the presentation with ideas about how they could help. I am still currently following up with those people and hopefully this will lead to more financial and technical support for the reserve. The Playa de Oro project is something that I feel very passionate about and with our members continued support, this project stands to benefit not only the cats but the people of Playa de Oro.

Since this issue of the newsletter focuses on tigers, I thought it only fitting to bring our members up to speed on what the AZA is doing to save tigers. The SSP meeting was somewhat of a disappointment as I was hoping things would be different than Lynn Culver had reported last year. Unfortunately this was not the case, in captivity tigers are still faring no better. There are 59 Sumatran tigers in AZA zoos at the time of the TAG meeting. The Sumatran Tiger SSP continues to see a steady decline in their success rate, which is 20%. Out of 15 recommended pairings in 2003, only one was successful. This I believe is in part due to the 3 year moratorium on breeding that occurred 7 years ago. It seems there was some uncertainty about the genetics of the tigers that came from Indonesia. During that moratorium, many opportunities for successful pairings were lost. Individual animals became post reproductive or were lost. However, I am happy to report that since the TAG meeting there has been some good news for the Sumatran SSP. Their total numbers have increased by at least 3 animals. The Louisville Zoo produced 3 Sumatran cubs that are doing very well and recently made their public debut. In the wild Sumatran tigers aren't doing better than in captivity. The wild population declined from 500 to less than 400 since 1997. Habitat loss in Sumatra is at an all time high. The forest has declined from 10% of what it once was to 5%. In Sumatra, law enforcement against poachers is ineffective. On a positive note, steps are being taken to change their plight in their homeland. The first tiger reserve of 100,000 acres was established in Jambi and two problem tigers were translocated. Research is currently being done to see if low frequency roars will repel problem tigers near villages. The Tiger Talk Task Force was created to work with law enforcement and locals on tiger issues.

The South China tiger is the most endangered of the tigers and Ron Tilson, the Tiger SSP coordinator is convinced that it is extinct in the wild. According to him, no verifiable data of their existence in the wild has been produced in years.

The Indochinese SSP was able to import 5 new founder animals, bringing their current number to 45. In India, a law enforcement project was initiated in 2002.

The Amur tiger SSP is having a little more luck. 22 Amur tiger cubs were born in 2003. However there seems to be a problem finding facilities to house any new tigers. Though on paper there are 150 spaces for Amur tigers in AZA zoos being filled by 109 tigers, they are having a hard time finding actual cage space. This to me is something that could be remedied by the private sector if appropriate facilities were found and AZA was willing to work with the private sector.

There were many other interesting presentations too numerous to discuss in the space I've been allotted here during the Felid TAG meeting. One of the more interesting presentations was by Kerry Fanson. Ms. Fanson has been using fecal hormone metabolites to assess reproductive status and stress levels in Colorado's reintroduced lynx. One of the problems Ms Fanson was having was finding captive lynx to use as a control study group. Upon learning of her troubles, I was able to put Kerry in touch with several FCF members who own lynx and they've agreed to provide her with fecal samples from their lynx. Research is another way that our members can assist.

Another thing that I learned at the Felid TAG that I'm happy to report is that the Ocelot Recovery Team has been reconvened by US Fish and Wildlife Service. (You guys didn't really think I'd write anything without discussing ocelots, did you?) There are still 2 populations of ocelots in the US. There is a small isolated population in Southern Texas and others make up the 2nd population, I'm assuming in other parts of Texas and possibly Arizona. The Recovery Team will be a joint effort between the US and Mexico. Arturo Casa is doing some excellent research in Mexico and will be part of the Recovery team. I was able to talk with Ken Kammerer, the ocelot SSP coordinator privately about the recovery team and discovered that Dr. David Maier of the University of Kentucky will be part of the recovery team. Since UK is close to me, I'm hoping in the near future to be able to talk with Dr. Maier and more with Mr. Kammerer to find out how we can help. I think the biggest thing holding them back right now is funding. I believe that conservation should start in your own backyard. Let's face it, next to the jaguar, the ocelot is the most stunning and the one of the most endangered of North America's wild cats and we have an obligation to do everything in our power to protect them. If anyone has any ideas on ways we can help or would like to know what more I find out about the Ocelot Recovery Team, let me know, as this is something that I will definitely be following up on.

I've touched on only a few of the things that I learned at the Felid TAG meeting. While we may never see eye to eye with AZA, after attending their TAG meeting it's obvious that we do have something in common with them. We all want wild felines to survive in our world. I believe that neither the private sector nor AZA will ever save a species on their own, but if we continue to try to find common ground we just might stand a chance at preserving future generations of felines. I encourage all of our members to attend a Felid TAG meeting. It was a very informative meeting and it was obvious that all those in attendance truly cared about future of wild felines.

Alpha

A short story

Bart Culver

Adam was born a warrior on a world that had been at war for thousands of years. In a time beyond memory, the planet had been invaded by aliens with invincible weapons, and they conquered all the tribes before they could even organize a resistance.

The aliens plundered the planet of its resources and colonized it, enslaving some of the tribes to build enormous enclosed structures. Most of the world's population had disappeared inside these structures, never to be seen again. Those who dared to speculate on their fate said that it was one of two things; death or something much worse.

Terrible sounds emanated from these structures, like screaming amplified thousands of times. Acrid brown smoke billowed from them day and night. The rivers flowing away from them were putrid and poisonous. There was literally a circle of death around them, 100 miles across, where every living thing had either been killed by the poison or taken inside the structures.

Huge vehicles roamed the entire planet searching for resources and dumping mountainous piles of stinking, feculent poison, constantly enlarging the circles of death, until they began to touch. The planet was dying, as if consumed by some grotesque cancer.

Adam's tribe considered themselves the lucky ones. Not because they had managed to remain free, but simply because they had survived. Niceties like the concept of freedom had long disappeared from Adam's world, if it ever existed. Even though very few individuals of very few tribes still survived, there was still so little food and shelter available, that everyone was at war with everyone else for every bite of food. The cohesion of tribal society had disintegrated into chaos.

Adam had been one of the strongest and proudest hunters of his tribe. Now he was alone, starving and plagued with parasites. There were sores all over his body. He hunted desperately and in fear. For he was also the hunted. A role he was not born for. It would have enraged him, if he had the strength for rage. But he succumbed to fear. There was nothing else to do when you are hunted by aliens with invincible weapons riding in untiring machines.

Adam was surviving day by day, that was all. He had no rest, no peace, no hope. He no longer had the strength or the dignity to attract a woman. He hadn't even seen a woman in months. And if he did, it was just as likely she would try to kill him and cannibalize him. Starving women aren't interested in love. There had to be a future for love. And there wasn't. That's what Adam was thinking when the dart hit him in the shoulder. It stung like a 10-pound hornet and then Adam felt his consciousness fading and he thought "my suffering is over, the aliens have killed me."

When Adam regained consciousness, he was inside a structure. He immediately looked for a way out and saw none. There were openings you could see though but they were too small to get through. Outside the structure there were aliens, looking at him. And inside the structure, there were fantastic things. Food, spread out on a long low table on clean platters. Every delicacy he had ever heard of. Beautifully prepared, a sumptuous repast, fit for a king. He was too hungry to be suspicious. He ate ravenously and every bite was indescribably delicious. He gorged himself; afraid the aliens would come and take it away. The aliens looked at him with, well, smiles, on their strange faces. If one ignored the grotesque pumpkin-like craniums, they had faces; two eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, that made recognizable expressions.

Adam devoured everything on the table, and the aliens pushed more goodies though one of the openings. Adam ate this more slowly. He had not been satiated since he was born. Not ever. He looked around the apartment, for that's what it was. A luxury apartment, filled with art, sculptures, musical instruments and exercise machines. There was a huge bed, piled high with the softest perfumed pillows and quilts. Adam had never slept on a bed either. There was a large bathroom. Adam had never seen a bathroom, but he understood at once what an incredible luxury this was.

As Adam bathed he noticed that all the parasites had been removed from him. And his many sores were no longer painful and were beginning to heal. Over the next several days he realized that his internal parasites were gone also as he was rapidly gaining strength and muscles and virility again.

He continued to look for a way out for a very specific reason, it was not for the freedom to starve and be hunted and make war and face death for every morsel of food. No. There was only one thing out there that he lacked now. A woman. Not long after he thought that, an opening appeared in the wall and through it stepped the most beautiful, sultry, sensuous woman Adam had ever seen, built for love, and clearly proud of it.

"What's going on here"? Adam asked.

"They want to make pets out of us", she said.

"Pets?"

"Yea. Some of us they hunt for sport, some of us they eat. Some of us are slaves, some of us they leave to live between the dead zones. The lucky ones get to be pets.

"What's a pet?" he said

"Well some of the aliens must feel guilty about what they are doing to the planet and they pick out some of us to treat really well to make up for it."

"And what do we have to do in return?"

"Breed", she purred with an irresistible smile.

"That's it?"

"That's it. So what do you say?"

"There's a future then?"

"I think so."

"Then I say yes."

Together they experienced the pleasure Adam had only dreamed of and it was at least twice as wonderful as his dreams, for it as the union of two spirits no longer frightened and alone. And her pleasure magically resonated with his own. There is a future, Adam thought. They were making it, together.

For the first time in his life Adam was exhausted from the exertions of sexual intercourse and digesting a satisfying meal. Not from running for his life, starving, and being bled by parasites. He decided that a pet was like a king, his every need attended. He yawned, swished his long tail and stretched his claws contentedly and slept peacefully for the first time in his life.

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White Tiger cub arrives at CCI



Photo by Mark Kostich

Baby Nia came to us at three weeks old and under five pounds in weight. She was born with a cleft pallet that will need to be surgically corrected when she reaches about four months of age. She was unable to nurse and we agreed to accept her and provide her long-term care.

She is now nine weeks old and weighs more than 17 pounds. She is eating chopped meat as well as formula and has had no further infections or illnesses. She is a remarkable young cat with an extraordinary will to live.

Mindy

The Price of Conservation

Alan Shoemaker
Columbia, SC sshoe@mindspring.com

For thirty years I worked at a medium-sized zoo, primarily as the Curator of Mammals. And for thirty years, I was offered an animal a day. **Each week** one of those offerings was a large carnivore, usually a felid. All were turned down. I am supposed to be retired now but just last week I was called upon on two different occasions to help a county sheriff in this state and humane officials in another state deal with a tiger and a lion cub in a back yard or shopping mall. No, some things never change. The worst scenarios I faced always involved tigers and in every case, the animals' owners claimed they were involved in tiger conservation. Where does this foolishness come from? All these cats are of untraceable origin and none have any link to tiger conservation. In the case of the most recent and illegally acquired tiger that was seized last week, law enforcement officials humanely destroyed the animals.

Three years ago the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) changed the way they interpreted the Endangered Species Act. Up until that time, both zoos and private owners could get permits to import, export and purchase captive born endangered species in interstate and international commerce if they were part of an organized management program such as a Species Survival Plan (SSP). The permitting process was pretty straightforward. Then FWS decided that SSP and other zoo and private breeder activities really had no relationship to endangered species in the wild. This then is the origin of the enhancement activities that must now be demonstrated before a permit can be issued for an otherwise prohibited activity like importation, exportation, etc. More details about the nuances of this interpretation have already been published in this journal.

In the case of zoos, directors and curators ranted and raved. Without question it appears to raise the cost of business. But does it? If the first pair of pedigreed Amur tigers I helped import from Germany cost \$12,000 in 1973 dollars, their cost is now much less for a zoo the size of mine. And because some zoos have developed conservation programs that support their permitting needs, the cost of importation and exportation is not only lower than the huge animal purchase budgets of the 1970's, but significant moneys are being funneled directly toward the wild animals' programs' that need financial support the most. Indeed, many times the hardest part of the equation is determining how to get funds to the biologist or organization in need without losing some of it to corruption. Although the purpose of this article, then, is to provide Feline Conservation Foundation (FCF) with some examples of how zoos have dived into the world of zoo conservation during the last two years, it should also provide some members with ideas on how to truly put some of your conservation money into, well, conservation.

Tigers have received a lot of enhancement support of late. Although, for instance, generic tigers do not need permits (unfortunately) for interstate commerce, white tigers are different. When an American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) member wanted to export 3 white tigers to two safari parks in Japan, and 6 more to a zoo in Thailand, FWS balked. The owner was going to receive a whopping \$40,000 from the Japanese zoos; our government wouldn't have anything to do with it. When the dust settled, three animals were sold



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planned for \$40,000 to the two locations in Japan but the entire sale price was donated (got that word!) to Dr. JoGayle Howard's felid survey project that was just starting in Khao Yai National Park, Thailand. Many of the great photographs of clouded leopards in nature are from this project. The other six cats proceed on to Thailand gratis. In a similar action just this past fall, three US zoos imported five wild born 'problem' tigers that had been captured in Malaysia and held at the Malacca Zoo, four of them since they were cubs. This was a terrific boon to the SSP for Malaysian tigers but it didn't come cheap. In addition to providing \$10,000/per pair to the Malaysian wildlife department's Tiger-Rhino Protection Units (RPU), a partially US FWS-funded project to develop anti-poaching teams for the national parks in Malaysia, the crates themselves cost \$650 each. And then there is the transportation of two Omaha staff members to Malacca and the return of both staff and five tigers (one tiger had to temporarily remain behind because she had just had cubs). Aside from the organizational aspects of this importation, each of the three zoos had approximately \$17,000 invested in this project by the time it was over. For permit purposes, it also had to be demonstrated that each of these three zoos had a long track record of tiger conservation. Fortunately that was easy but they had to pledge to continue doing so for many years thereafter as well as to send a team to Malaysia to teach captive (tiger) management to the Malacca Zoo in order to provide a better life to the animals that were left behind.

In a similar vane, another zoo is importing a pair of captive born clouded leopards from Thailand, cats that are totally unrelated to any in North America. But to get permission, the zoo provided \$5,000 in support to the same RPU that the tiger importers did, and has pledged future support for Dr. Howard's survey in Thailand.

Small cats haven't received as much focus to date but a good, albeit challenging example is the AZA Brazilian Ocelot Consortium. Developed two years ago, it is designed to facilitate the importation of 10 pairs of unrelated captive born ocelots for 10 zoos over a five-year period. The first application for two pairs is currently under review by FWS. To participate in this project, each zoo had to commit \$7-10,000 to in situ projects involving ocelots. Most of these projects involve Brazilian researchers although several zoos also support radio telemetry projects in Mexico. Additional ex situ projects being supported as well. Unfortunately, none of these can be considered in the permitting process.

This thought process is identical for tapirs, gaur, and Grand Cayman rock iguanas. The zoos interested in exporting or importing these endangered species are having to put up or shut up. The zoo exporting a pair of gaur as well as some gaur embryos (research applications for tissues have the same application requirements as those for live animals) to a zoo in Canada is also funding the RPU projects

in Malaysia because anti-poaching teams not only support tiger and rhino conservation but also guar, tapir, clouded leopard, elephant, siamang and gibbon, and all other endangered species within the Malaysian national park system. A small zoo in Kansas is exporting a captive born Baird's tapir and informed the AZA Tapir TAG that it had never supported an in situ project before. Regardless, they are now and they have pledged \$250/year for two years in support of a Mexican tapir biologist as he traps and radio collars wild tapirs for his telemetry work. FWS realizes that not all zoo budgets are created equal and do not require nearly as much for a small zoo with a one million dollar budget as they would expect from one with a ten million dollar budget. AZA zoos exporting tapirs to Europe have been able to get permits as long as they send them to regions like this where there were in situ projects in place. And the European zoo community has been generous toward tapirs, funding field work in Brazil and Ecuador (>\$1,000), a recent international symposium in Panama (\$3,633), last year's Population Habitat and Viability Assessment (PHVA) meeting in Malaysia (\$10,000) and another upcoming one this fall in Colombia for mountain tapirs (>\$1,500).

Now that zoos have been encouraged to figure out what conservation is, where is the private sector? The small cat project in Ecuador at Playa de Oro Reserve is an excellent example of putting individual and organizational dollars where their mouth is. Without this demonstration of interest by FCF members, the reserve inhabitants would have little motivation to preserve the small felids you all enjoy. And if they aren't trapping cats, the Indians are not, by default, trapping anything else either because traps are not selective and they would be killing cats even if they weren't being targeted. So what's next? What about the owners of tigers and lions? Now it's time for the big cat owners to pony up. And if they aren't, don't talk about conservation, especially if the cats aren't pedigree animals in the first place. Private owners with a tiger in a pen, or even a pair, aren't doing anything but making their neighbors mad. Conservation is a bigger picture. It's time to get on board.

SPECIAL NOTICE

To any and all FCF members who want to present a topic for discussion at the 2004 Convention, it may added to the agenda for presentation during the General Membership Meeting. Topics from members unable to attend will be presented at the meeting by one of the board members. Please mail the topic in its entirety to the address below no later than 06-20-04.

The FCF Secretary-Treasurer
3310 Remington Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46227-8126

AR groups “claim” to have proper data,.....**NOT !!**

by Marcus Cook, *proud member of the FCF !*

It seems that every day there is some news or new law that is “trying” to be passed, proposed, or even suggested concerning the ownership of exotics,.... whether its as a commercial business or private owner.

Now don’t get me wrong,..I am all for new laws, and changes, concerning animals,..ONLY when it will benefit the animals, the people, and of course for a VALID reason. However,..it seems that this new tactic that the AR groups like to play is to take reports, news articles, and other tidbits of information,....and totally exploit what the reports actually state. They will twist and turn the data into the fashion statement that best suits them and “their” cause,..(or I should say their “religion”),..and then vomit these reports all over law makers and pressure them into passing laws that make absolutely no sense.

So it has become up to us, as animal owners to make sure that such lawmakers are educated and properly informed to the correct statistics, and reports, and further exposing just what most of these AR groups are all about. One of the latest victories in this arena for our side has been with the latest Showtime™ special ‘Penn & Teller,..**BULLSHIT®**’ which took on PETA and exposed just what lying, urban terrorist supporting, (*classified by our own government*), hypocrites, and self-proclaimed “experts” they really are! In short,..just because they, (AR groups) may seem to be big and powerful, this does not mean that the information they vomit is true and accurate.

Needless to say, I could fill up an entire Sunday paper contradicting what some of these groups claim,....but lets take a look at just a few of the latest, and most recent “crap reports” that are floating out there:

PETA “reports” that there have been 244 big cat incidents (attacks/deaths) over the last 14 years. I don’t know about you, but before we as a society try to fix something,..it’s a good idea to see where and what the problem is. Thus to keep us from over reacting to a situation,....i.e. cutting off the head to cure a headache,...

If we look at PETA’s “report” we do find that there are in fact 244 “incidents” with big cats since 1990. However,...

- * 107 of the 244 incidents did not even occur in this country !
- * This now leaves us with 137 “in country” incidents to review.
- * From the 137 incident to review, 105 of them ACTUALLY had injuries, which are broken down as follows:

Professional: (44) A staff worker tasked with the duties of care for the animal(s) at a licensed facility.

Pet Owner: (26) Person injured/killed by animal owner not currently licensed.

Guest at Zoo: ((26) A visitor/guest at a licensed zoological park or facility.

Intent: (4) Victim caused criminal trespass or elected “suicide by big cat”

Big Cat Incidents



Ok,...now that we have had to cut through PETA’s bull___ report, we can get a true focus on what this “report” is telling us. I don’t think that anyone will disagree that becoming a big cat keeper or trainer is a dangerous profession. It is. And so is being a racecar driver, a fire fighter, police officer or even being in the military. But this is a risk that we, (as professionals and owners) have elected to under take. And the fact that a percentage of our fellow keepers are injured or fatality wounded should not carry the message “stop working with nature,...and ban the zoo’s and animal ownership” To sum it up in one sentence from a famous handler that was recently injured, “Don’t do a thing to the cat! ! !” Mr. Ron Horn, October 3rd, 2003, (as he is being transported to the hospital)

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Working and being around animals is probably one of the oldest professions around. Even in some religions, we are told from childhood why “Adam” was placed on the earth,...and that was to take care of the animals and planet. But as with any religions, there are those that may see things a different way. Just ask PETA,...their belief, (oh,...excuse me,...I mean religion) is that all animals should be free and carry the same rights that we all have today,...and be able to pay rent, pay bills, and act like humans...and roam the streets freely,...and NOBODY should be able to have pets of any type! But when PETA is asked why they seem to destroy about 2,000 animals per year at their home base,...no one can give us a clear answer. I wonder why that is? Could it be that this is where their religion meets common sense and they don’t want to admit it? You decide.

Another topic that I have a hard time dealing with is these AR groups that say no one should have exotics as pets,...they are to dangerous. Ok why are they dangerous? Because they (exotics) have injured about 50-60 people as pets over the last 14 years? Try these numbers.... The CDC, (Center for Disease Control) this year released a report that tells us:

- * each YEAR there are over 4.7 million injuries inflicted by the family dog/cat in the U.S.
- * over 800,000 of these incidents require medical attention. EACH YEAR!
- * over 386,000 of those, required emergency treatment, EACH YEAR !
- * and about 12 people die each year from pet injuries. EACH YEAR !

You do the math. This would mean that about 168 people have lost their life to domestic dog/cat “incidents” over the last 14 years, as compared to about 50-60 resulting by exotics. That’s almost triple the amount! But do we see PETA running around wanting to ban domestic pet ownership? Well,...not yet,...but nothing would surprise me.

My point is that if your state, county or community falls prey to these AR groups wanting to ban, regulate or otherwise your animals,...remember that the stats, and reports that these groups usually vomit on the lawmakers are inflated, and total bull____! Do your research,...talk with others,...stay alert and stay involved, whether its within your animal industry or as a group of owners,..... STICK TOGETHER and keep sharing the information! It is a powerful tool and weapon against the AR religion.



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Ohio Lions Sightings lead searchers on wild goose chase

Evelyn Shaw

On May 3, 2004 while I was attending a city council meeting, I was told a large cat was loose in Gahanna and asked if I could go home and call the sheriffs department, which I did.

I was asked that Hunter and Lea's Project volunteers come to a secret location in Gahanna. My phone was ringing off the hook so my husband Jim stayed home to man the phones. The officer I spoke to advised me it was a "large lion around 500lbs." I called other owners that lived close and we met at the command post. The description I was given was a large tan animal with a dark ring around the neck and long tail with a ball on the end. I gave the officer who originally called in the sighting some photos and he picked out a lion. I was skeptical, but told them "it is dark, late and rainy. It may not be what we are thinking it is, but we will help any way we can."

The police did not want us to enter the woods since it was dark and the police had a good perimeter set up. We worked on a game plan. There was a second sighting from a truck driver within 1/4 of a mile from the officer's sighting. A short time later came a third sighting from a CSX (train) worker. All three sightings were prior to any media announcement. Helicopter's equipped with infrared heat seeking technology flew the area but only located a horse – no loose lion.

Once the media got involved there were people coming out to look. The story got bigger as we went and the description began to change. The next day we were called out to a wooded area near the airport. "It" was pinned in a cemetery. The only animal found was a very scared coyote.

The sightings started showing up miles apart and the police were flooded with calls. They began checking out each report and calling Hunter and Lea's Project volunteers if they thought they had something. A large paw print was found but turned out to be a retriever. I am so glad the owner came forward and allowed the prints to be compared.

A search was done on foot, with dogs, by helicopter and by vehicles. Nothing was found. No prints, no carcasses. All local owners, including myself, allowed our animals to be accounted for. Later sightings described a feline as being a cougar and rumors got out of control. I am so glad that the police trusted our knowledge and allowed us to help. The communication started what I hope to be a life long trust.

What it really was may never be known. Chief Murphy feels it was a lion or cougar. The Columbus Zoo officials stated it was nothing. All I can say is it sure did cause a lot of problems.

A citizen made a complaint asking them to ban exotic animals in my area. This devastated me. I sat in a council meeting and was stunned to hear that one of the council members had made a motion to revisit the ban ordinance that was dropped last year. I began calling each council member and trying to explain and assure them that there was not a problem.

People's imaginations were out of control and the lack of education on exotics made it worse. The council was familiar with me so I began the education process again. An owner from nearby came and sat through the next 4-hour meeting waiting to see if a new law would go before council.

Councilman Ken King stated "I see no reason to create legislation to solve a problem that is not a problem". Our Pataskala Police Chief Chris Forshey said an exotic animal ordinance would create a manpower issue for his department, particularly if they had to spend time registering animals. In addition, Forshey said he has a source he can contact (i.e. Hunter and Lea's Project volunteers) if the city is confronted with an exotic animal issue.

"I have a good source of information should I run into that problem again," said Forshey, adding the city has a "limited" number of exotic animals.

That explanation appeared to comfort city council, which reached a consensus to drop the issue.

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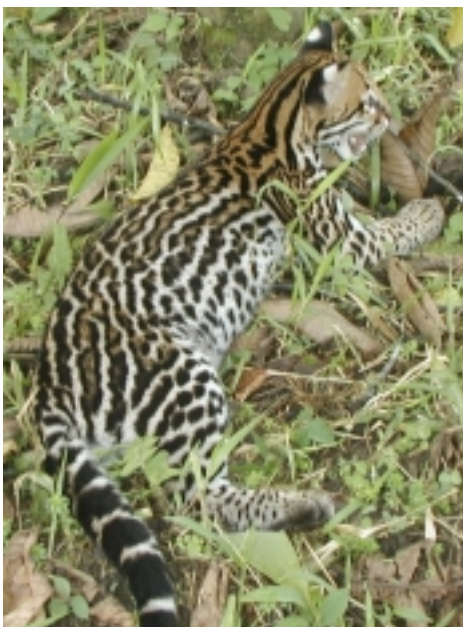
Progress Comes to Playa de Oro Reserve by way of FCF volunteers

Recent travelers to the Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos from the US, Canada, Australia, and South Africa did all the usual things visitors do when they get to the 25,000-acre jungle cat sanctuary: they took a boat ride upriver to see interesting geological formations, hiked to the waterfall, swam in a jungle pool, and increased their knowledge of rainforest flora and fauna.

However, FCF members in the group were a lot busier than that. They installed two solar panels on the roof of the lodge. The panels do not collect enough energy to power a refrigerator (it would take 20 panels to do that!), but they amply meet the lodge's more critical energy requirements. The two panels and one massive battery collects and stores enough energy to light the library, kitchen, and dining room, and to charge batteries for the satellite phone, and power tools (also contributed by FCF members.)

Although FCF members on this trip spent most of their time installing appropriate technology at the lodge, FCF members enjoyed surprises that the rainforest seems to hold in store for visitors who tread softly. The guides showed them the tracks of a three-toed sloth. (On previous visits, sloths have been sighted in trees both near the lodge and near a waterfall-fed pool in the jungle.) And they saw an Amazon umbrella bird. These big, peculiar-looking black birds, which have an elaborate mating ritual, are known to have a nesting area within the reserve.

Naturally everyone was enchanted with the resident ocelot, Little Chief, rescued by FCF members six months ago when he was a tiny, not-yet-weaned orphan kitten. Now a strapping adolescent, Little Chief pads along with visitors on their treks through the rainforest, often exploring vertically as they move forward on the ground. It no doubt gives the macho young ocelot a sense of superiority to be able to observe his human friends from thirty or forty feet up in the canopy.



Most of the visitors returned to Quito on the morning of the 16th, stopping en route to visit the big indigenous artisans' market in Otavalo. The only one who stayed behind at the reserve was a South African woman who has volunteered to spend a month or longer helping the staff develop a vegetable garden.

Previous attempts to develop a kitchen garden have met with failure due to the lack of an agricultural tradition among Playa de Oro's hunter-gatherer people, and the difficulty of raising vegetables in the wet tropics. Basically, in the rainforest, whatever doesn't grow on a tree or climb on a vine drowns. Nor did raised beds solve all the problems. The torrential downpours beat off blossoms, and the hot tropical sun "fried" the few veggies that did develop before they reached maturity. The reserve staff had just about given up on a garden and resigned itself to bringing in vegetables from four hours downriver, when Earthways project facilitator Rosa Jordan attended an organic agriculture conference in Cuba. Cuba, with its similar climate is successfully raising vegetables in greenhouses—not the kind used up north for warmth, but shelters built of heavy-duty screen which allows sun and rain to pass through, but softly. Now the reserve's staff, with the help of the volunteer from South Africa, is attempting the same thing. With a little luck, the FCF members who visit Playa de Oro with Grace Lush in November will enjoy salads and other vegetables organically grown right there at the reserve.

By Rosa Jordan

Photos by Grace Lush

Upcoming Playa de Oro Trips Schedule

Come along with Feline Conservation Federation as we explore Ecuador, one of the most biodiverse and culturally rich countries in South America. Journey along with us as we experience breathtaking views of the Andean Mountains, wonder at sleeping volcanoes, browse native craft markets, sample native foods, canoe the swift Rio Santiago, hike through virgin rainforest (with Little Chief Ocelot trailing along with us), dance to the Afro-Latino rhythms in a jungle village, and sleep to the sounds of the jungle. Join us on our adventures to the Playa de Oro Reserva Tigrillos for an adventure of a lifetime!

FCF is currently conducting photo trap research at the reserve, and we will be carrying in new cameras in September to set up, as well as doing maintenance on the current cameras. This is your chance to participate in this exciting research. (We caught photos of a wild ocelot in February 2004!) Currently, a little ocelot kitten, named Little Chief, that we rescued out of a market in November 2003 is still living at the lodge, and has become the lodge ambassador to the guests. He has been teaching the reserve staff all about ocelots, and welcomes all the guests to the lodge. He's been reported to ride in the boat with guests, hike jungle trails with guests, play in the river with guests, and hangs out around the lodge with guests. Don't miss your chance to meet this little ambassador before he matures into an adult and goes his way into the jungle reserve.

Upcoming Playa de Oro Trip Dates:

Aug 28-Sept 6, 2004. SIGN UP NOW!!!! Cost \$650. Nonrefundable Deposit of \$300 due by July 1, 2004. Space is very limited and are filling quickly, so get your deposit in asap to reserve your spot! Total due by August 7, 2004. We'll accept deposits until all spaces are full.

Nov 11-20, 2004. Booked full. No longer accepting deposits for this date.

January 28-February 6, 2005. Note: PRICE INCREASE to \$760 due to lodge and van rates increasing in January '05. Accepting deposits now until all spaces are full.

Private Group Tours Available If you have any kind of group of who would be interested in going to the reserve, whether it is family members, a church group, your softball team, etc., we will do private groups of 5 or more people on dates you select, providing lodge availability. Check with your church, clubs or other organizations, schools, etc to see if they would be interested in a group tour just for their members. We can accommodate groups of between 5 and 8 people for each trip. Please contact Tracy Wilson for more information.

The cost for this 10-day adventure is \$650, which includes almost everything on your trip except airfare. (Fly to Quito, Ecuador) This includes 3 nights at a charming bed & breakfast in Quito (breakfast included), 6 nights at the Playa de Oro Reserve Lodge (all meals included), boat transportation, private van transportation, visit to Otavala market (largest Indian crafts market in South America), village tour, village children dance performance, most of your meals, and jungle guide service. (your out of pocket expenses are a minimum of \$85 or less, while in Quito.) Your trip fee supports the Playa de Oro Reserve by bringing income to their village and providing them with work, and also assists with feline conservation projects that are being conducted at the reserve. In exchange, you will see, taste, smell, and hear ancient rainforest as you have never imagined while being safely guided by local men through the jungle, seeing and experiencing their land and it's inhabitants as they do.

Space is limited on each tour, so please sign up as soon as possible to reserve your space. You are required to have a passport to travel to Ecuador. Your deposit is nonrefundable if you cancel attending the trip for any reason. If FCF has to cancel the entire trip for any reason your deposit will be refunded.

If you are interested in going on a trip to Playa de Oro, please contact Tracy Wilson for more detailed information. Email: wilecat@ipa.net or call 501-230-4072.

Playa de Oro Reserve Donations....New FCF Members Offer Generous Support!

Special thanks to Dr. Carl and Gail Maier for their generous donation of \$500 to reserve so that the reserve can buy a new gas stove to replace their broken one. Thanks to the Maiers, the reserve staff can continue to cook us delicious meals when we visit!

Special thanks to Lori Schroter for her generous donation of \$1000 to be used towards animal care at the reserve. The reserve is always in need of funds to help buy food and supplies for animals in their care, as well as pay salaries to staff member who are the animal caretakers.

Also, special thanks to Carolyn Maddox for promoting the reserve and soliciting this donation!

Getting Ready for Ecuador *lots of preparation but certainly worth it*

By Grace Lush, FCF tour guide

Getting ready to leave for the jungle is not just a matter of packing a suitcase, and this is probably what is holding some of you back from going. I care for about 110 exotic animals, many of them active breeders. Animals are what I do for a living, so this is no simple thing to leave my livelihood behind. It's serious business. So obviously animal care is always an issue for me and takes a lot of careful planning before I can leave. Nine weeks before leaving all the male Bengal cats have to be separated from the females. For the servals and caracals, the males are removed 10 weeks before I leave, because I don't want any babies born while I'm away. Also, the babies that were born earlier need to be going to their new homes before I leave. Then I have to hire 3 people to do the work that I do myself each day, and they have to work under my supervision for several weeks before I leave. This way I know they know how to do everything. I also have several people on call for helping out in an emergency.

The vet is also notified that I'll be out of town and temporary helpers are doing animal care, and told to make sure there actually is a problem before they come out. Last time I was out of town, a cat that has had a head tilt for 5 years after a plane ride, was taken into the vet and all kinds of tests performed on her to find out there was nothing wrong with her. I already knew this, because when it originally happened a vet checked her out. But my helper person never noticed this head tilt was normal on this particular cat. So now I make a list with each cat on it and any idiosyncrasy noted on it and have another breeder on call before any vet work is done.

The real excitement starts about a month before we leave for the reserve. I start to pack at least a month in advance. Useful things for the reserve and village need to be packed, so you need a very big suitcase. I start with the most important items, this time 4 stainless steel pots. They fit nicely inside each other but there is enough room to put a tea towel around each pot when packing, and the last pot can be filled with more tea towels for the lodge. Then I need the tube of silicone to fix the cooler, and plastic beads to do crafts with the village people. I want to take them some clothes, so friends have brought things over that they think will be great. I go through them and end up sending a lot of it to the Good Will store but there are many items that will work for the village. I need bug spray, suntan lotion, shampoo, and some Imodium and Pepto, just in case. These things are packed in zip lock bags in case the altitude in Quito explodes them in the suitcase. These important items go in my carry-on bag for the plane, just in case my checked luggage is lost. Everything we NEED goes in our backpacks as our carry-on bags. This includes rubber boots for hiking in the jungle, slacks, shorts, bathing suit, sandals, and underwear. The other stuff is in the checked luggage and you hope it gets there. It usually does, but sometimes a day or so after the passenger arrives!

I check my passport and photo id, and my plane ticket 50 times to make sure I have it all. I need a passport pouch for my passport, money in small US bills, and a fanny pack for my camera with more money in there. Then maybe some more money in hidden in my sock, or inside pants pocket. Credit cards are useless down there, any time I tried to use one the machine ate it.

Then we all have to deal with our friends and family that think we are all completely out of our minds to be going to "Columbia", where they think some drug lord is "going to get you", even though you tell them you are going to Ecuador which is completely different from Columbia. But to most people, they think it is the same thing. It's not! I have found Ecuador to be very safe, the people very friendly and there is usually a policeman within yelling distance anyway.

I always want to take something for the village children's dance troupe who work so hard to entertain the guests at the reserve lodge. There are about 16 of them, so I try to figure out what you can take that doesn't take up much room in the luggage, and can be all the same for the entire group, while not ahead of their culture and yet interesting too. It's mind-boggling!!

I arrange for a ride to the airport and someone to pick me up from the airport when I return home. I arrive in Quito a day or so ahead of the rest of the group to make sure I'm there to meet everyone in the FCF group, and that the hotel is ready and waiting. Then I have to write down when everyone else is going to arrive and try to meet them at the airport.

You have no idea how wonderful it is to be in a place where there are no phones, electricity, or worries. Once you get there it is like the rest of the world doesn't exist, at least not until you get back. You don't even worry about problems at home, because you quickly accept that there is nothing you can do about it while you are in this tropical paradise. It is such a release! You become totally submersed in the different culture and the amazing environment. You feel like you have been taken way back in time. But for all the lack of our normal creature comforts, it is an amazingly comfortable place to stay. Working bathrooms, nice beds, clean rooms, and hot food—what more could you ask for in a jungle paradise?

So for those of you that think you can't leave your animals or lives behind, things carry on without you. There are many of us that have gone to the reserve with lots of animals to care for back home, and other difficult personal situations, but we've all found a way to make it work. The reserve needs you as much as you need the experience. If I can make this trip several times a year with my 110 animals (not counting babies), and Tracy can do it several times a year with her nearly 30 animals, then you can manage your animals and go too! Most of the problems that have occurred back at home during our absences have solved themselves by the time we get home. So forget the excuses, start training your cat sitter, stash away a bit of your tax refund now, and start packing now for the next reserve trip at the end of August with Tracy!

Playa de Oro Director thanks the FCF

Esteemed Directors of FCF,

It is with gratitude on my part, as director of this project and our team, to make it known to you by this manner our recognition and appreciation for the valuable support that the Feline Conservation Federation has provided to our institution with your donation of \$1500 and the contributions of four groups of tourists per year. This offers moral support for the work we are trying to realize in the process of conserving small wild cat species here in their natural environment.

Our knowledge of this support from you gives us spiritual strength to continue our work in this process of protection and conservation. Moreover, the income received from the groups helps to finance the operating expenses needed for the work.

For these reasons we applaud with joy the decision made by the directors of FCF, and also the membership of FCF, to offer us this help and in this way, to recognize our labors.

With all respect, receive our sincere gratitude.

Attentively,

MAURO CAICEDO, DIRECTOR
PROYECTO TIGRILLOS PLAYA DE ORO

May 8th Husbandry Course at the CCI

People have always known that I have a soft spot for those of the feline persuasion. That's probably why no one batted an eye when I told them I'd be driving nine hours to take a class on basic wild feline husbandry. Of course, most people hadn't a clue what I'd just said to them when I told them the name of the course. My own mother even said, "That's nice, dear". I'm not sure the public at large even knows what husbandry is. Not so surprising really when you consider that a great many pet owners think that the extent of taking care of their animals is feeding them and getting them to "go" in the appropriate place, i.e. not on the carpet. Some of these people are the same ones who think that Charlie the cat and Rex the dog can fend for themselves when "turned loose" in the wild. What the hell does this have to do with the FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course, you may ask? Well, I'm glad you did ask, because I'm going to tell you. Education. It all comes down to education.

The May 8th FCF Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course was held on the beautiful campus of Alamance Community College in Graham, North Carolina, and was attended by 22 people from seven states. Even though I drove nine hours to get to the class it couldn't match Leann Montgomery's ride down with a hungry white tiger cub. You'll have to ask her about it the next time you're on the list serve. The participants ranged from college students in their 20s to professionals in their 50s. Represented were a wide variety of individuals, from the merely curious to zoo keepers, sanctuary volunteers, and even two members of the USDA.

The course material was presented by Mindy Stinner of the Conservators' Center Inc, and FCF's Membership Services Director, Leann Montgomery, and they did an excellent job. It was a great introduction to wild feline husbandry, and a real reality check about the awesome responsibility of being a steward of one of these magnificent creatures. I think my favorite part of the course was getting the opportunity to meet others in the class who were as enamored with these animals as I am. This was a pretty thorough course. Now if we could just get these same courses for people who were thinking about becoming parents.....

Mark George/Network Services
Enterprise
www.muohio.edu/nse
Miami University 110 Gaskill Hall
Oxford, Ohio 45056
(513) 529-8774

Doug Evans shows students the welded panel cage designs that feature feeding and water station lock out areas for the small cats of CCI.



The Majestic Tigers

Rick Thomas

I have had the pleasure of performing as a professional magician for the past 22 years. I perform illusions worldwide and count my blessing having the opportunity of seeing the world 4 times over. My show weaves magic, music and dance into a seamless production. However, the moment my tigers appear on stage, the show seems to take on a natural beauty far beyond the realm of illusion.

Without a doubt, the tiger is one of the most beautiful, regal and intriguing animals in the world. It is magic within itself to be working with these fabulous creatures and I know I am one of the privileged few.

Privilege, however, does not come without many hours of work beyond the stage. I feel it is important that I devote much of my time to the tigers and give to them an extensive part of my life.

We are all privileged to witness the majesty of my tigers as I walk them across the Las Vegas stage. I remember the first time I stood next to "Zeus" my first tiger. It was simply breath taking and I cherish the joy on the faces of the audience members as they experience the same thing.

Zeus performed in my show for 6 years straight. Two shows a night, 6 nights a week. He never missed a performance. You see, tigers sometimes get up on the wrong side of the den box and do not want to work. They usually get their way and we drop the effect from the show. Not Zeus, he loved to perform. He would hear his music back stage and personally get prepared for the magic to happen. Let's just say, he would go through the show back stage before he ever made his appearance. Now he is retired and he is king of the wonderful habitat at my home sprawled out on two acres of land. Zeus lets every one of my other tigers know that he is number 1...and he is! He clears 500 pounds and has a powerful stance.



Each tiger possesses a personality like no other. These personalities are expressed on and off stage every day. My number one tiger...the one who stands out above all the rest has to be Samson. Samson is a magnificent 475 pounds royal white Bengal tiger. Samson is the first tiger to appear in the show. He greets the audience every day with a chuff He walks the stage as if he owns it. Walks back to his cage back stage and falls asleep.

Kyra loves to be scratched, specifically behind her jaw. She just lies down and says, "More, give me more!" On stage, however, she is my most frisky cat. The female tiger seems to be the more aggressive cat in the tiger family. She is fast and spunky. The female tiger, in the wild, is responsible for the raising of its cubs. The female tiger teaches survival. It seems to be on instinct that the female cat shows more energy and is much more aware of her surroundings.

Sometimes the male tigers just don't seem to care. Not Kyra, she checks out everything. You can always count on Kyra giving the audience a real show when she appears on stage.

Maximillian is just beautiful. I believe the orange Bengal tiger is the most exquisite animal alive. It carries majesty and strength not seen in the white tiger. I call Max my sweet boy. He is a kind tiger. He stays by my side and just visits. He doesn't roll on the ground like Samson and he does not bounce off the walls like Kyra.

Rocky appears with his brother Max. They are 5 years old and were born at the same time. Rocky stays to himself. He and I always spend time together, but he likes his space. Rocky can always be counted on in the show. At the end of the show two cages are raised high into the air and the two brothers make their grand appearance within an instant.



A Sanctuary's Perspective about Tigers

Mary Parker founder of Tiger Haven

I shall begin by saying that I do not consider myself a writer in any fashion. My calling is to clean, feed and care for animals, which I try to do to the best of my ability. Having said that, I will proceed with an attempt to express my observations on why a big cat sanctuary like Tiger Haven needs to exist.

Most people believe that all the big cats in the sanctuaries around the county have come from private owners. In fact, sanctuaries take in animals from a wide variety of sources. Many of Tiger Haven's cats have been retired from circuses or zoos, some come from other big cat facilities that have closed for various reasons, and some do come from private owners. There is a vast and mostly unregulated exotic animal trade in this country that the average citizen is completely unaware of. The lack of regulations in this type of industry is what causes the need for sanctuaries to exist.

The first thing that needs to be addressed is the term "private owner". Many animal activists condemn "private ownership" of big cats, but what exactly does that mean? Does private ownership refer to anyone who governs the care, housing and physical location of an animal? Many animal institutions are governed by a committee or board of directors—so would anyone who incorporates and appoints a board no longer be a private owner? And if so,

does

this qualify them to own a lion or tiger? Does buying a commercial USDA permit qualify someone to own a big cat? Apparently not, as the vast majority of cats we have at Tiger Haven have come from USDA-permitted facilities.

Yes, we do have some cats that were "pets". These animals came from people who, through lack of regulations, were allowed to purchase a lion or tiger. Most of these people provide improper housing, inadequate nutrition, and a complete lack of experience or knowledge in big cat husbandry. The most common problem with "pet" owners is their lack of respect for the cats. There is a shocking misconception that if the animal is raised in a loving home and treated like a domestic animal that it will be "tame". No matter how sweet and loving a particular cub may be, there is still a lion or tiger lurking just below the surface. This does not mean that they are raging savages all of the time, it just means that they are capable of doing what they instinctually know best—taking down prey. Although many cubs may seem gentle and handleable, just wait until you try to do something they do not like (vaccinations, for example). Wild animals raised in homes are still wild animals. Unfortunately, it takes a really bad situation to open these people's eyes.

Basically, I am opposed to *anyone* having a big cat that is not qualified to do so. My definition of a qualified person is someone who has 1) experience with the kind of animal they are interested in acquiring; 2) a proper facility (which would include proper materials, enough space, double entries for safety, lock out area for

cleaning, feed slots, shelter, den, heat if needed, shade perimeter fence and secluded area for the protection of both the public and the animal); 3) a source for proper food and supplements; and 4) a veterinarian who is willing to work with exotic cats. There also needs to be a contingency plan in the event that the original owner can no longer take care of the animal—be it health, financial, divorce, or what ever else may come along. If these basic needs are met, and all existing laws are obeyed, then I have no problem with the owner no matter what you label them. As to who should make these decisions, and who should enforce them is a matter that would take a great deal of debate. I personally think the privilege should be regulated instead of eliminated.



[illegible]

Higher Court orders indictment against Kenneth & Nancy Kraft, Robert Baudy dismissed

On June 8, 2004 US District Judge Ann Montgomery ruled to uphold a lower court ruling that the Lacey Act violation indictment against Kenneth and Nancy Kraft and Robert Baudy and Savage Kingdom be dismissed due to critical flaws in the US Government Prosecutor's interpretation and understanding of the Lacey Act.

Nancy Kraft was charged with conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act 15 U.S.C. 3372 et seq. The indictment alleges that on or about October 1 1998, (just 13 days prior to the F & W Service generic tiger ruling which removed the permit requirement for interstate commerce of generic tigers) Mr. and Ms. Kraft drove from Minnesota to Florida and paid \$5,000 for a white Siberian tiger cub named Como from Robert Baudy, and then drove the cub back to Minnesota. Even if true, the court ruled that the allegations in the indictment fail to state a criminal offense under the Lacey Act.

3373(d) defines a felony violation of the Lacey Act, which requires a two-step process. First an animal must be “taken, transported, or sold” illegally, second, the defendants must “engage in conduct that involve the sale or purchase” of the animal, knowing of the initial illegality. In other words, in order to violate the Lacey Act, a person must do something to wildlife that has already been “taken or possessed” in violation of the law.

The Government's case was based upon the sale and transport as satisfying the two-step process, when the sale was legal and the transport by itself was legal, but the transport combined with the sale was not. Therefore the court ruled there was not a two-step process that is, there was no illegal sale followed by an interstate transport. It was a legal act until the tiger was transported, then it was a misdemeanor violation of the Endangered Species Act, punishable by a maximum one year in prison, and the defendants could not be charged and prosecuted with felony Lacey Act violations, punishable by a 5-year maximum sentence.

A black and white photograph of a young tiger cub lying on a large, weathered log. The cub is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. Its body is covered in distinct dark stripes, and its tail is long with a prominent ringed pattern. The cub's front paws are resting on the log, and its hind legs are extended to the right. The background consists of tall, dry grass and some low-lying vegetation, suggesting a natural habitat. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the cub's fur and the bark of the log.





Another exhausting day at the sanctuary.
Liger yawns while he lounges at Big Cats of Serenity Springs
Good-bye everyone.
Hope you enjoyed the Tiger issue.
See you in Las Vegas in July!