



Feline Conservation Federation
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Members are invited to participate in e-mail list discussions on-line at:

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The_FCF/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The_FCF/)

Cover: Pallas' cat painting by Rochelle Mason © 2005. Rochelle Mason raises awareness about endangered species through her paintings, columns, and traveling exhibits. Her wildcat prints and paintings can be purchased through <http://www.Rmasonfinearts.com> • Background: Ocelot by Judy Berens.



Zuzana Kukol's tiger, Pepper, has outgrown her favorite rock. Pepper has not, however, outgrown her enclosure which measures 10,000 square feet and includes two pools.



Feline Conservation Federation

This magazine is published bi-monthly by the LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc. d/b/a as the Feline Conservation Federation. We are a non-profit (Federal ID# 59-2048618) non-commercial organization with international membership, devoted to the welfare of exotic felines. The purpose of this publication is to present information about exotic feline conservation, management, and ownership to our members. The material printed 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'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 magazine may not be made without the written permission of the original copyright owners and/or copyright owner FCF. We encourage all members to contribute articles. Articles on exotic feline ownership, husbandry, veterinary care, conservation and legislation are gladly accepted. Articles involving other related subjects will also be considered. Letters and responses to articles may be included in the Readers Write column. Submission deadline for the next issue is the first day of even numbered months. Please submit all photos and articles to the editor. Persons interested in joining FCF should contact the term director in charge of member services. Dues are \$30 US, \$35.00 Canada, and \$40 international.

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Feline Conservation Federation

Letter from the President

I've returned from a four-day trip to Nashville to attend the annual AZA Felid Taxon Advisory Group conference in Nashville, Tennessee. My husband Bart stayed home to feed himself and our 45 cats, care for two caracals kittens, and remain on birth watch for an expecting serval momma.

The 2881 room Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center where everyone stayed is actually three structures in one, each consisting of three levels of hotel rooms all surrounding four internal atrium greenhouses of tropical plants, huge rocks, water fountains, and water falls. You can even ride a boat on the indoor river.

Yesterday I got a call from a distraught lynx owner. She has reached the point where she must part with her boy. She is crying and this will be a traumatic separation for her as well as for the lynx. His natural instinct to mark his territory, which happens to be the inside of her home, has not been suppressed by neutering and this owner has learned a painful lesson. She cannot provide a suitable outdoor habitat. She has been referred to me by Brian Werner to help place her beloved pet. She wants

him to be content. For the rest of her life she will carry the pain of this decision and she is desperate for a happy answer. I listen and assure her I will help her find the right home for him.

Today I received two calls. The first is from Bill McKinley, a private zoo owner in California who has lost his first cat ever, a male Canada lynx. Bill now has a lone female lynx that needs a companion. Bill is proud of his zoo and describes his beautiful habitats. I asked if he is an FCF member. No, he answers, he is too busy to join organizations. I urge him to join FCF, we want the best and he is invited. I tell him to expect a visit from our journal editor, Mike Friese. I wonder if this might be the right match for a neutered lynx.

Later on that day I get another call from a couple that has one of my Canada lynx offspring. Larry explains that they have come home from work to discover Yazzi, their perfectly healthy and happy lynx girl



is dead. Not a mark on her. Nyla, the older lynx companion is fine. He has called me for advice. What can cause the sudden death of a two-year-old lynx?

I think about snakebites and spider bites or poisoning but it seems too sudden; I would suspect her to hang on for a while. I think about heart attack and stroke, but the age is too young, the cat is not fat and the weather is mild. The only other thing that comes to mind is asphyxiation. Could she have choked on something? I ask Larry, "Did you feed her before you left for work?" "Yes", he says, and then he runs his hand down the luxurious fur of her neck and confirms my suspicion. Yazzi has a large lump about halfway down her throat and he knows it must be a chicken neck that has lodged. He calls his wife over to feel their beloved feline's neck and I hear Sandy gasp and begin to cry and I feel the pain of a mother who has lost her feline child.

A freak accident brings a premature end to the life of a beautiful, intelligent, and much loved companion. We have both lost this feline. Yazzi spent the first eight weeks of her life with Bart and I and our other kittens. We chose her guardians from many applicants and we handed her over to live a life full of promise with people who were experienced and devoted. I try to comfort them and tell them I have fed literally thousands of chicken necks to many dozens of cats and never had this happen; it is nobody's fault. I tell them I know of two cases of zoo cats that have died from meat lodged in the throat.

I share this story of tragedy in hopes it may help save another life because it reminds me of my own situation. Some of



Yazzi and friends

our cats share housing and this causes competitive eating and a tendency to bolt food. That behavior can increase the risk of food getting lodged in the throat and cutting off the airway. Practicing separation during meals would reduce this risk.

Sandy will cherish her memories of the two years of love she and Larry shared with Yazzi. We must all treasure every moment with our precious felines because sometimes we are robbed of long life.

It is in the pain of this tragedy that I tell Sandy of a male lynx that needs a new home. I have heard it said that God never closes a door without opening a window and I wonder if this might be what is unfolding now. I have put these two heart-broken mothers in touch and they will visit by phone and they will determine if their future lives are to be woven together.

FCF is very important and each of us has a mission worth pursuing—we are here to preserve, protect, and propagate the feline species we love. We are here to be

the voice for these great cats, to educate our neighbors, friends, school groups, and media of their struggle to survive. We are conservation educators—all of us. Some of us will stumble, some of us will fall, but if we stick together and help those that need it, we improve our image and our success.

FCF is documenting professionalism with the Registered Handler Program. In this journal issue we have published our first group of registered handlers. We will continue to build on this program and demonstrate to the world our dedication to our felines. I invite every FCF member to join in this mission by paying a small fee and submitting an application to give evidence of the collective husbandry knowledge and experience of the Feline Conservation Federation.

The Field Representative Program is moving forward. Last issue we introduced the concept and this issue we publish the official program in the board minutes. It is also posted on the FCF web site. The board

will soon vote on the six regional directors. Next they will be appointing state representatives. Please read over the program and consider volunteering for state representative. The time for passiveness is over; we must be proactive if we wish to protect our cats from the onslaught of legislative attacks.

I would like to congratulate Robert Turner and Dr. Bhagavan Antle for submitting their applications to the Feline Facility Accreditation Committee for review. Both facilities are now certified as FCF Accredited Facilities. This accreditation program is designed for any type of facility, from the single animal owner to the large-scale breeder or private exhibitor. The forms are on the FCF web site or you may contact Kevin Chambers, Accreditation Chairman to have them mailed to you.

The Maryland Husbandry Course had to be relocated after course hosts Richard and Many Ann Hahn were involved in a head-on auto collision that left them both injured and in Rick's case, needing several surgeries. Rick will need months of rehabilitation to be able to walk and move normally. Everyone at FCF wishes him a full recovery. Another zoo in New York, the Ashville Game Farm, is now hosting the May 12 husbandry course. Registration information is on the back cover of the journal.

If you cannot make the New York class, please consider registering for the husbandry course being held July 25 in Dallas as part of our annual convention. I look forward to visiting with everyone at the convention. The convention committee has planned many fun additions to this annual event.

Convention is our time to shine and this year we have an opportunity to mix with the wildlife artist and art collector community. This mixing of two cultures should be an easy blend. We all share a love of nature and FCF members offer model opportunities to artists and the artists creations bring appreciation of our felines into homes and offices across America. [Ed: The color pages in this journal are sample of the melding of the art and cat world.] Be sure to read about this event in this journal issue. I want to send a special thank-you to Deborah Rabinsky for her efforts to set up this feline art show in conjunction with the annual FCF convention.

—Lynn Culver

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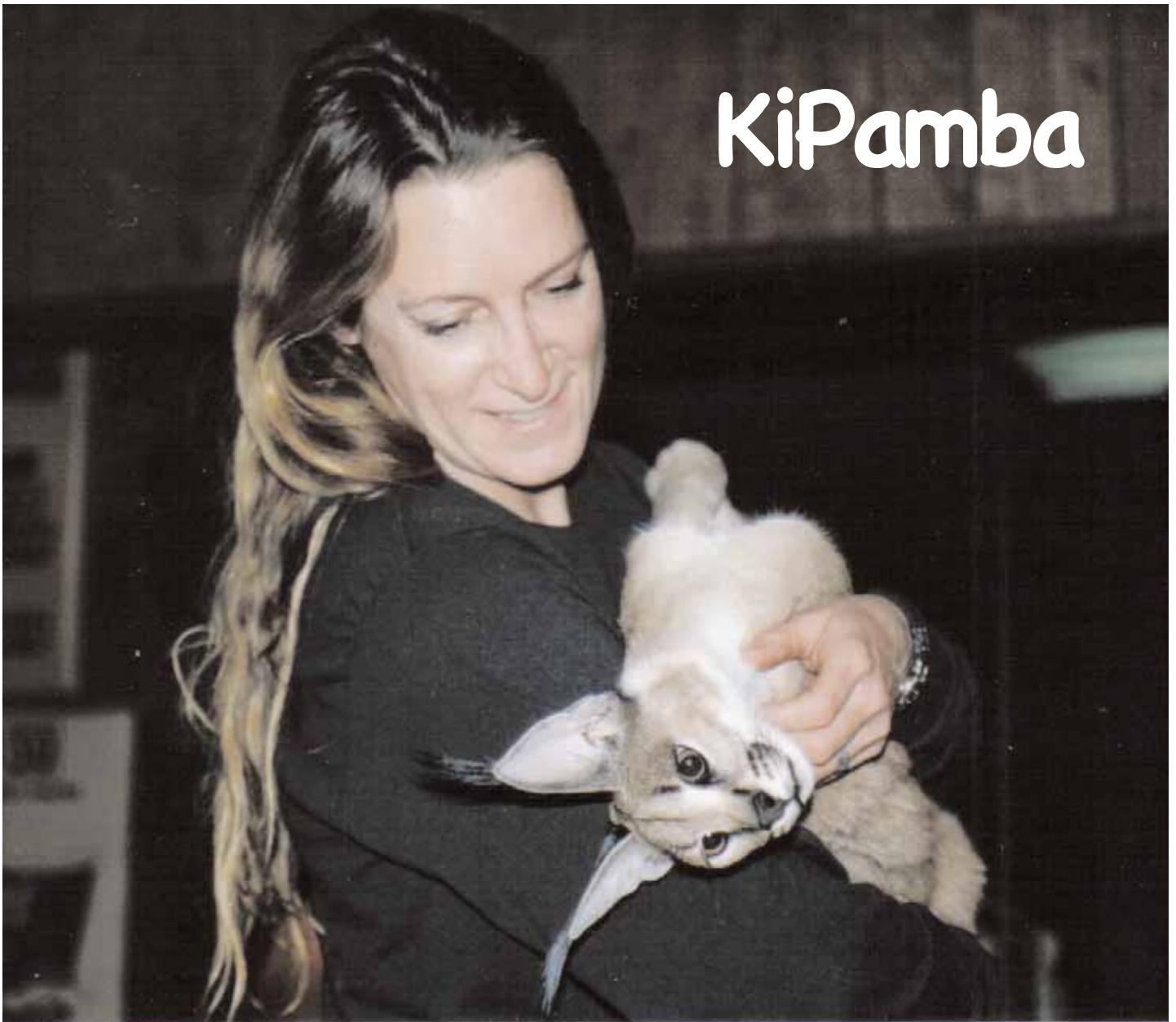
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KiPamba



*Denise Little,
Little Animal Kingdom and Preserve*

On the rainy night of August 23, 2002, I sat outside on a soft quilt under a tarp hung like a tent. With me was our fully intact female caracal KiPamba curled in my lap.

Five year-old KiPamba, hand raised by Bruce and I since day one, was about to give birth to her first litter. As each of the three bundles of joy was born, she took care of them and cleaned them up as though she had done this hundreds of times. I was so proud of her.

After cleaning each one up she then gently picked them up and put them in my lap, as if to say, "Here you go, see what I did for you!" As the third cub was placed in my lap

KiPamba nuzzled them, licked my cheek, laid down beside me and went to sleep.

I kept busy finishing the fur drying process and keeping them warm. After awhile the cubs began crying and KiPamba continued sleeping. I gently woke her and gave her cubs back to her. She did not know what to do.

I finally lay down on my side facing her and she lay on her side facing me. I placed the cubs in a row against her belly. The cubs took over, they were hungry and they seemed to know what to do!

For two days I spent most of my time with her in this position. KiPamba and I would touch toes and heads. The cubs would nurse, sleep, and crawl around

between us in this goofy circle we made.

KiPamba lost interest in the cubs by day four and just refused to lie still for them to nurse. She continued to push the cubs to me or place them in my lap, so I took the cubs inside to finish raising them on a bottle.

Bruce and I have a joking rule between us. We won't name any offspring. We have learned in the past if we name something we get so attached it doesn't find a new home.

There are other good people that will give wonderful, loving homes to these animals. They are not always easy to find, but they are out there.

With this in mind we called the three cubs, Brother—because he was the only

boy, Black Nose—because she had a solid black nose, and Eraser Nose—because she had a pink nose. The names were not anything special, just something to distinguish the three when we talked about them, but they are another story to be told some other time.

It was a wonderful and endearing experience to share. Since that day KiPamba has continued to share her births with me the same way. She is now nine years old.

A caracal is such a beautiful cat. Their face reminds me of a porcelain doll whose face features are expertly and delicately hand painted.

The black ears just make their perfect face stand out. Did you know the word *caracal* is from the Turkish word that means “black ear”?

The super white bellies with reddish tan spots are so soft. I love to run my fingers through their fur

Everyone is always surprised to see the ear tufts on a caracal. I think it's interesting that the tufts are not the exact same length

on each caracal. KiPamba's tufts are very long like her father, Sampson. Sometimes one or both ears will bend forward.

In one litter of cubs there was a female

with such long tufts her ears dropped to the sides. We named her Sally, for Sally Fields in the Flying Nun TV show. Some readers may be too young to remember that one. •



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AZA Felid Taxon Advisory Group Meeting

By *Mindy Stinner*

The field researchers making presentations at the TAG meeting stayed with the southeast Asia focus and emphasis on clouded leopards and fishing cats present in many of the other reports.

Namfon Cutter was at the meeting to report on the progress of her work in Thailand. Her project began with a study of the history of documented sightings of carnivores across SE Asia, with an emphasis on wild cats. They found that in many areas where they interviewed the residents, they reported seeing “lots of cats.” Further investigation proved, however, that there was little trace evidence in the forest lands and camera traps in the area documented few sightings. Areas which seemed like ideal habitat for clouded leopards and fishing cats had no sign of those species being present.

They searched for documentation of these cats in photo traps from Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand over the last ten years and found only seven clouded leopard photos. Two of those were taken in the Thale Noi non-hunting area, where they concentrated their efforts to find this cat.

The objectives of the study were to assess the distribution of these animals, identify threats, document evidence of their distribution, gather information about effective detection methods, and assess the management and conservation efforts needed to protect them.

The team began extensive interviews with rangers, poachers, ex-hunters, and other residents in the non-hunting area and two wildlife sanctuaries managed as reserves. They charted a survey route that would give them a cross-section of the areas. As they went, they also gathered evidence of the cats’ presence through identifying paw prints, feces, photo trap shots, and other markers.

In Klongsaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, they surveyed 15 people and 40 km of the park. They set up camera traps based on the reported sightings, evidence seen in the field, and the diversity of prey animals documented in the area. In over 528 camera trap nights using six cameras, they gathered photo evidence of animals in residence. They identified as threats to these animals:

a dam, poachers, fishing nets floating free in the water ensnaring animals, and “ecotours.” The ecotours were being conducted in such a manner as to damage habitat, draw groups to inappropriate locations, and use too many natural resources. They documented the presence of many species including leopard cat, banded linsang, several otter species, sun bear, tapir, rare birds, and deer.

In Maenam Pachi, their 60 km survey included interviewing 20 people and putting out six cameras for 90 nights. Though they documented leopard cats, leopards, jackals, and several rare otters and civets, they found the area at significant risk from the local poachers and from soldiers stationed very nearby.

The area where the majority of their work was focused was in Thale Noi, in the Pattalung Province. The area is predominately wetlands, and includes both public and privately owned lands protected since 1975. This non-hunting area is an open park where people are welcome to walk, camp, boat, and visit, but not to hunt. Because it is so open, it is very hard for rangers to do their job and protect against poachers. The land also abuts cultivated palm oil plantations and rice paddies. Along the 20 km survey route, they put out

14 cameras for a total of 880 camera trap nights. These traps documented the presence of many rare small animals, among them, the fishing cat. The 25 rangers and poachers interviewed identified the fishing cat as an animal hunted for food and leopard cats as hunted for food or for sale in the pet trade. The team found prints and scat from both juvenile and adult cats. Besides poachers, threats in this area include the 500+ cows being farmed in adjacent areas, additional clearing of land for rice paddies, water pollution from fish processing operations, and new ecotour paths through critical habitat areas.

In summary, the survey route covered 120 km across the three areas. With 1948 camera trap nights, they acquired a total of 227 wildlife photos, plus many of poachers and their dogs. There were 19 photos of seven carnivore species, including four photos of the same fishing cat at different times. There was additional documentation of one carnivore species, the dhole (a wild dog) which was shot by the rangers patrolling the area when they said it turned to charge at them. This was far more scant evidence both in numbers and diversity than the team had anticipated. This underscores the need for continued work and additional protection in the area.



One of the many presentations at the Felid TAG.

Mike Friese

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One of the issues the team faced was the accuracy of their documentation. If someone sees a cat and then prints are found in that location, it can be said with some certainty that this is a documented presence, to the same degree if there is a clear camera trap photo. If, however, it is simply scat or tracks without a sighting, or marking and hair on a tree, then additional lab work assessment is required to ensure accuracy. The team has many scat samples accumulated to analyze. This should provide some additional information about numbers and sexes of the individuals in the park area.

Continued regional assessment will require more camera traps, radio collar and capture equipment, and permits to continue work in this area. In addition, the team hopes to develop community-based conservation approaches including engaging the local residents, educating children in the area, and increasing the Thai ranger capacity and training.

Also speaking about the SE Asian region's cat issues was Andreas Wilting, a German researcher from the Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research now working in Borneo. His team has studied the results of the clouded leopard work by Stephen O'Brien with the belief that it is a good start requiring much follow-up work. They have undertaken some of this less glamorous continuing work to test additional sample animals and extrapolate more data.

The current taxonomy of the clouded leopard lists four sub-species. Genetic work being published in the next month suggests all the mainland cats are from one distinct sub-group. The three cats sampled from Borneo indicated they were quite a separate population from the mainland cats, though discussion is still open regarding whether they are a separate species or not. Testing work had not been done at all on the Sumatran population, which was expected to be as distinct as the Bornean.

Microsatellite work completed on sample cats from this region concluded the Sumatran and Bornean populations are similar, and both quite distinct from the mainland animals. As the result of these preliminary findings, Wilting's team has recommended that the mainland cat continue to be called *neofelis nebulosa*. They recommend additional assessment be undertaken to determine if there are distinct subspecies within this group. The Bornean and Suma-

tran cats may be declared their own species; if so, the team recommends the name *neofelis diardi*, the Sundaland Clouded Leopard. The Bornean and Sumatran populations would each be subspecies.

Wilting is continuing work in Sabah, in NE Borneo, at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve. His goal was to use track classification and hair trapping to help estimate the population and distribution of the clouded leopard in Sabah.

In March of 2007, the World Wildlife Federation published findings that they estimated 5,000-11,000 clouded leopards present in Borneo and 3,000-7,000 are in Sumatra. Wilting questions the data on which this estimate is based, since there is little scientific evidence cited. He believes this estimate is very high.

In a total research area of 56 square km in Tabin, Wilting was only able to locate six good track sets of 1-14 tracks each. Each set was measured and photographed. This type of track classification can be used reliably mostly to distinguish between individuals based on distinguishing features and location. Surfaces and substrates can affect measurements enormously. As a long-term monitoring methodology, it is cheap and easy to apply, but is not as accurate as some more expensive or training intensive methods.

To create hair traps, he used a wire brush scrubbed horizontally across a tree's wood grain to roughen the bark. The area is scent marked with an attractant. He used valerian, Obsession perfume, and catnip as his scents. None of the traps were successful in bringing in clouded leopard samples.

The track sets enabled Wilting to identify six distinct individuals. Extrapolated to a study area of 100 square km, one would expect to find approximately eight individual animals. In Sabah, only 5% of the land area, divided into four isolated areas, is appropriate habitat for

these cats. These four areas cover approximately 1400 square km. Extrapolating further from the same data would lead to an estimate of up to 120 individuals across the whole region. Wilting believes this is not an accurate estimate because the many variables including poaching, logging, commercial hunting, and availability of prey will limit the habitat further than can be estimated from this first survey.

Disappointed with these sketchy results, Wilting explored other options, including molecular scatology. This is only able to provide useful data if the samples are fresh, and there was no way to process them in the field. Night surveys have been conducted successfully in the past, but their accuracy is questionable, in part because our vision makes it hard to accurately determine numbers and species of animals and making positive identifications of individuals is difficult in the dark.

Wilting believes continued study of these animals through a variety of means will be the only way to improve the accuracy of our information. Camera traps could provide more coverage of areas over the long term. Radio collaring cats would provide more information about their habits and movements. By the end of the meeting, he was already coordinating with Jim Sanderson to negotiate borrowing some equipment for long term monitoring in the area. •



Mindy Stinner

The people attending the Felid TAG visited some wonderfully active cloudeds at the Nashville Zoo.

Some More Notes from the Felid TAG

Genetic history of cats - Steve O'Brien

The renowned geneticist of the American Cancer Institute explained that from DNA and molecular studies science has determined the original ancestor of all 37 cat species existed 11,000,000 years ago and that the creation of a new species takes approximately 2,000,000 years.

Steve recounted a study that did a complete gene sampling for sequencing to recognize the phylogenetic methodology. Using phylogenetic reconstruction and divergence timetable, it was determined that cheetahs left North America 10,000 years ago and that pumas have a homogeneous bottleneck, as do cheetahs. Pumas left North America and then returned. Of 134 known tiger samples, DNA examination showed that they were all almost as genetically uniform as cheetah. Of the five living groups today, they share a common founder event in very recent times—just about 60,000 to 70,000 years ago.

There are an estimated 600,000,000 domestic cats world-wide. The molecular study of domestic cats shows that they are descendents of a mix of the three wildcat species—European, African and Asian, and the Chinese desert cat.

The birthplace of the domestic cat is the Fertile Crescent in Israel and the United Arab Emirates, where the domestication of cereal plants and the birth of horticulture began. Cats, O'Brien believes, came to us, filled this new eco-niche created by agriculture and settled into domestication on their own. It was not man who domesticated, but cats which decided to coexist with man.

These early species were hybrids of the sand cat, European, African, and Central Asian felis sylvestris beyetti and the Chinese desert cat, which O'Brien says is just another sub-species of wildcat. This mixing of species began about 230,000 years ago. And 100,000 years later the domestic cats began to diverge from these species.

Setting Priorities of Recovery of Tigers 2005- 2015 - John Sidensticker

Tigers are sensitive species that cannot disperse easily. They require large landscapes and roads are limiting their travel. The species needs more monitoring. Mobile Oil has been a driving force in fundraising for tiger recovery. In 1997 two priorities

were set: Identify areas most likely to support viable tiger populations to help guide future investments and garner international support.

Progress report 1997 – 2006

Improvements in key data created better maps, improved knowledge, created the new concept of Tiger Conservation Landscapes (TCL)—large areas of habitat that show evidence of tigers.

What is status of tiger today?

Tigers occupy just 7% of their historical range and there has been a 40% decline in habitat use in just the past decade. (Things are getting worse since all this attention to saving tigers began.) 80% of available tiger habitat is outside of protected areas and there is a 26% decline inside reserves as well.

Good News?

Large blocks of habitat still remain. Many landscapes are still big enough to function as bionomic representatives. Data collection and data synthesis has improved.

Tiger distributions are more accurate.

Range wide statistics have determined there are 76 Tiger Conservation Landscapes comprising 1.1 million km². Of these, 17 must be kept, 15 can be worked on in the next generation, 15 are targeted for future projects, and for 22 not enough information exists.

Global Priorities:

20 projects have been identified—many in Russia. There is still time to save tigers. We must establish priorities for investment and promote regional landscape level conservation because these remaining TCL cross country lines.

Sidersticker closed by reminding us that the curators are the storytellers. We are conservation storytellers. We must form partnerships between both the public and private. We can rant loudly while the reserves crumble or we can roll up our sleeves and adjust to keep them alive in changing conditions.

I believe John's advice rings true for our American captive populations as well. Ranting loudly is not enough. We have our work cut out for us. The private conservationist storytellers must roll up our sleeves and work to save our population of cats as well. In captivity the core areas are being legislated out of existence. We need to document what habitat is still available and what has been lost to legislative over-reaction. With better information, we can better manage our tigers and other captive populations.

Camera Trapping in Sumatra - Ron Tilson

The infamous tiger man declined to speak on his trademark species, which was most disappointing to me. Instead Ron recounted his experiences camera trapping in the Way Kimba Wildlife Park for clouded leopards in Sumatra.

After seven years of photo trapping in lowland rainforest on the Sumatran coast, Ron concludes that this is a science and an art based on the difficulties of protecting cameras from both poachers and elephants. He shared photos of leopard cat, golden cat, marbled cat, clouded leopard, and flat-headed cat. Ron told of a recent wildfire that devastated the park after a five month

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draught. Over 60% of the park burned and 50% of the Sumatran rhinos died and a good portion of the tiger population died.

Reintroduction of Amur Leopards - Ron Tilson

Ron Tilson, whose name comes to mind most often when discussing the 'conservation relevance' of the privately owned Bengal tiger and his opinion that they are irrelevant to conservation and useless for reintroduction due to being 'generic,' spoke on a international plan for reintroduction of captive raised Amur leopards into Russia.

While this plan is a long way off, I am sure we will be hearing a lot about it for a long time as they milk every bit of PP potential from this cash cow. Preliminary discussions begin in September 2007. Issues such as where to reintroduce and how to reintroduce captive-born animals were discussed. This will be to my knowledge, the first of its kind plan to release zoo-born large cat species back into nature. However, the first mention of a reintroduction plan was back in 2000 and at that time the hope was to be in the release stage by 2005, so we can see this is already a bit behind schedule.

Ron has traveled to Russia participating in a camera-trapping project in the world's only reserve of Amur leopards, home to under three dozen of these critically endangered cats. Ron reported the curious finding that the leopards hang around the cameras for about 6 to 7 months and then disappear and new leopards arrive. Since none are radio-collared, it is not known what exactly is happening with their use of habitat.

Photos show in the high elevations the prey is sika deer, roe deer, pig, and sural. This tiny Amur leopard population is suffering from poaching, habitat loss, and genetic impoverishment. Some unfortunate leopards get caught in snares intended for deer.

Faced with such tenuous future, the Minnesota Zoo has pledged \$25,000 to partner with Russia and be able to link their ex-situ population with the in-situ conservation. Captive born zoo descendents are to be released into the wild in a separate reserve location to be determined. Ron hopes this

will establish the Minnesota Zoo as a credible partner in Amur leopard conservation in the Russian far east in the next five years.

While I am all for efforts to save this incredibly beautiful leopard from extinction, I cannot help but notice the complete hypocrisy of Ron and others in the AZA as they deal head-on with the absolute, documented fact that their Amur leopards are proven hybrids, or as the AZA zoo world likes to call our tigers, they are 'generic.'

Why are they generic? And how does that affect this global reintroduction plan? They are generic because in the US, the Amur leopard population consists of just ten founders, and one of those founders was a North Chinese leopard who entered into the breeding program very early on and whose genes are nearly ubiquitous in the US population.

A major controversy unfolded in the zoo world as Russia and Europe rejected the generic America AZA population. After

intense negotiations and politics played out, the American AZA zoos finally got their cats recognized as Amur leopards. The compromise was that America would have to further dilute their North Chinese genes until American Amur Leopards are 80% pure. Presently they are only about 70% pure.

So there you have it. AZA studbook Amur leopards are not pure, they are documented generic. But AZA refers to them as Amur leopards. Private Conservationists need to remember this when attacked by Ron and others and take the same stance with their Bengal tigers, because these tigers are more pure than their leopards.

It is ironic that the AZA has had to endure the denigration of their leopards and be told by other counties that they are not significant to conservation. I guess this is where AZA learned this obnoxious behavior that they push onto us about the private conservationist tiger population. •

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Taking Conservation to School

Hello! It's me, the 12 year-old FCF member, Danielle. I have to tell you all something that I did!

I wanted to go to my brother's school and teach them about the big cats. I got in contact with my brother's teacher and told her what I wanted to do. She said I could. So I did some drawings, made some games, purchased donuts, and went to my brother's school. I taught them about big cat conservation. When I was standing in front of the class, I saw their little happy faces, and I realized they were so interested in me and my group, the FCF.

We colored big cat pages from the FCF Children's Activity Book that Sara Comstock made. We even made lion and tiger sounds—roooooaaaaaarrrrrr! Lastly we ate the donuts!

A few days later, the class all wrote me thank you notes for talking about the big cats. One little girl wrote me saying, "I like lions and tigers. Thank you for coming to



Danielle accepts 2007 Youth Service Award



Danielle, along with her parents, shows her award plaque.

our class and teaching about them!" Another child told me that he liked the FCF magazines.

I think the greatest moment was when a boy came to me and said, "I want to be an FCF member, too!" It made me think that I was making a difference one classroom at a time, which would make anyone feel great, but for me it was extra amazing.

Oh and one more thing: I forgot to tell my mom about my plans of going to my brother's school, until the day I was supposed to be there! Mom was amazed by the poster I created, my presentation to my brother's class, and the donuts I paid for out of my own pocket! But I had to promise her to give her a couple of days notice from now on! •

Inspiring the Cat Keepers of the Future

By *Raven Simons*

People try and save those things that they know and care about. On the other hand, humans are often frightened of the unknown. In our modern technological society, human beings are separated from nature and the wild by city living and lack of experience with space and creatures not “tamed” by humans. People are commonly afraid of what they think of as “wild.” With this fear and alienation from other species, how can human beings learn to care about the other creatures that share our planet?

With human population on the rise and the resulting habitat destruction and fragmentation of wild lands, what hope do other species that share our planet have for future survival? If there are currently too many people and not enough space for other animals, what happens to the other animal species? It is becoming apparent that human animals are causing a great mass extinction event that compares to the global upheaval that determined the end of the dinosaurs. Is there any hope for the survival of wild felines and other creatures that are left? If there is hope, who carries this hope and how might it happen?

With less and less wild space and an increasing majority of human beings living in urban environments, the opportunity for people to have positive experiences with other animals becomes more rare and even more critical. Without these positive experiences, people fear the animals that they have no chance of getting to know. It seems that human instinct causes people to destroy that which they fear. Fearing other animals can thus lead to the animals’ destruction. With this in mind, how can we hope to curb the destruction of other creatures and learn to value them and their habitats?

Going with the concept of people caring about what they know, it seems critical that human beings at a young age be exposed and familiarized with the other creatures that inhabit our planet in a non-threatening way. Currently people live with other animals. We have been living with other species, animals we consider “domesticated” for thousands of years. There are even some theories about who domesticated whom. Did wild canines and felines first domesticate human animals or vice versa?

Did we “tame” our dog and cat pets, or did they tame us? Regardless of the answer to this question is the fact that we have been living with and aiding in the propagation of other species for many generations. At one time these animals and their human companions were thought of as “wild.”

Human beings have ingenuity and great capacity for invention, adaptation, and creation. To harness these gifts, people have to care. People also have to know and be familiar with something to care about it. How in the modern world, with technological city living, can people learn about “wild” animals? How can a city kid learn about a tiger or a cheetah or a lion? With the destruction of habitat, loss of species, and separation from humans, how does anyone learn caring for these and other creatures when they may not even stand a chance of survival in their original habitats?

Personal experience and getting to “know” other creatures is the key. If you speak with most animal enthusiasts that are actively involved in living with other animals or championing the survival of animal species, you’ll often hear a common theme. These people usually have stories about positive personal experiences with animals during their formative years. Sometimes the critical positive experience happens as an adult. When these people haven’t had actual hands on personal experience, they have, instead, been exposed to a charismatic animal champion through the media. Jim Fowler and the late Gerald Durrell and Steve Irwin are examples of charismatic animals champions who, through the media, have inspired future generations of animal lovers and those who will work to see the survival of other species.

Many, many modern day animal keepers/propagators, lovers, and champions have a common tale of early personal exposure to the species they love. They might share a story of having a pet chipmunk as a child, holding a baby tiger at a zoo, having a neighbor who had a pet ocelot (before this became prohibited) that they got to play with, going to the circus and getting to pet and feed the elephants, visit the neighborhood exotic feline breeder and being allowed to help clean enclosures, pet/social-

ize kittens and do other volunteer activities, or maybe just running around in their neighborhood woods or other wild areas to observe animals in their habitats.

The need for urban dwellers to have the opportunity for positive experiences with other animals is more critical than ever. More and more people have lost any opportunity of observing animals in the wild. Many urbanites will never have a wilderness experience, see an animal in its original habitat, or have a personal experience with any animal, except other humans. The loss of personal experience means a loss of caring by people and the lost potential for future animal and habitat advocates.

The Feline Conservation Federation and its members have an opportunity to inspire and champion future generations of animal lovers. Through educational outreach we can directly expose young people to the wonders of the human/animal bond and inspire caring through personal experience. Mentoring young people offers the opportunity to nurture future cat keepers who might specialize in feline husbandry. Inspired and educated youth might help regain the rights to keep and breed exotic felines, those very rights that are being eroded state by state, county by county, all over the USA by the Animal Rights activists’ agenda—which opposes all human/animal relationships.

The FCF members can also work to educate all people about the issues facing felines and other animals in the modern world. We can help folks gain positive personal experience and knowledge with and about exotic cats. We can help alleviate people of their fear of “unknown wild” animals and their “wild” habitats. We can inspire many animal lovers to become knowledgeable about the real issues and facts versus the false propaganda being perpetuated by AR. We can get to know enthusiastic young people, teach, and inspire them. We can even reach adults and bring the light of wonder to their eyes when they have their own positive experience with an exotic feline or other animal. Educational outreach, especially in urban areas, is more important now than ever. Positive personal experience is one of the keys to inspiring cat keepers and the animal champions of the future. •

Celebrating the Life of Hobbs the Liger

By Tim Stoffel

Back in August of 1992, a tiger somewhere in Indiana had unexpected cubs. She had been living with a lion and one or both of them were supposed to have been neutered. Apparently not, as the cubs born to this tigress were ligers, a cross between a male lion and a female tiger. There were five cubs total, with one of them being smaller than the others. While there was some interest in the four bigger ligers, there was not much interest in the runt. The owner of this facility had another friend at a new zoo that had just been started in Reno, Nevada. He offered them this unique cub, and told them to take a whirl at trying to raise it.

This special cub did thrive in his new environment, and quickly drew lots of attention both inside and outside the zoo. They named this little (but rapidly growing) liger Hobbs after the tiger in the comic strip, Calvin and Hobbes. Hobbs was a pleasure to work with and very well-behaved for a big cat. And Hobbs helped put Sierra Safari Zoo finally on the map.

Hobbs shared the only big cat enclosure

in the zoo with a lion named Claude. The zoo was rapidly growing at this time, and a large grant allowed the acquisition of several other big cats and a new enclosure system, which is the present-day big cat area. One of these cats was a tiger named Tasha. Although Tasha actually grew up with Kenya the lion, they paired her with Hobbs. The two lived together for nearly nine years, and were best friends.

Hobbs, though starting out as a runt, grew to an enormous size. In the years I was working with him, he weighed about 900 pounds. This is about double any other cat we had in the zoo, including our magnificent male lion, Kenya. Big cats concentrate a lot of weight in small areas. So Hobbs had trouble walking on ice, but that didn't stop him. I remember Hobbs plowing through the ice in our pond on more than one occasion. At least Hobbs liked water, and even though it was a bit cold, never hesitated to go swimming if there was an important need like retrieving an interesting object from the middle of the pond.

And speaking of water, in summer,

Hobbs would try to hide in the water so he could surprise you and get you all wet. The look on his face when he was in the water was, "What cat? No, there's no 1,000 pound cat hiding in this water!" Both keepers and visitors were recipients of these baths.

Because Hobbs was so large, they had a contest to have people guess how much he actually weighed. So, for his birthday that year, they were going to take him to a truck scale and have him weighed. The cat keepers tried to get Hobbs to get into their animal transport trailer. But ligers are cats after all, and he refused to cooperate. End of promotion!

Hobbs was, as much as he could be, gentle with the other cats of which he had frequent contact. Lori Acordigotia, the zoo's manager, has a wonderful story about this. It took place when she introduced a lion cub named Jambo to the adult big cats. I will let her tell it in her own words:

"...Even the other cats had great respect for him and not from fear but from friendship. He showed kindness to them all often rubbing up against the fence next to them and greeting them happily. A great example



of this was the first time I took our lion cub Jambo to meet Hobbs; Hobbs was so excited coming quickly to the fence and chuffing eagerly. Jambo was not prepared for this gentle giant and was startled and ran off. The next time I took Jambo to see Hobbs, Hobbs came over slowly and close to the ground chuffing in a gentle quiet way I had never heard before. This time Jambo was not intimidated and they became instant friends rubbing and licking each other. I found out then just how special he really was...

Indeed, Jambo has lived next door to Hobbs for most of his life and they have always been great friends.

Hobbs liked everyone and was well-behaved. Zoo manager Jimmy Martin described Hobbs as a “very wise cat.” But one day, Hobbs noticed a new keeper that had joined the Sunday zoo crew. He liked this new keeper, Kelly Wiggins, who was tall, with silver hair. Soon, Kelly found he had a huge new playmate who wanted him to be with him all the time. Hobbs had adopted him!

Hobbs was not once, but twice photographed for publication in various National Geographic publications. The one published in May of 2006 in National Geographic Kids magazine shows a full side profile of this huge and magnificent cat. The movie *Napoleon Dynamite* made ligers famous overnight. For weeks after the movie came out on video, the zoo was getting lots of calls asking if ligers really existed. Of course, we were able to confirm that firsthand! Hobbs narrowly missed being on Good Morning America at that time, the honor going to Doctor Bhagavan Antle’s liger Hercules.

In early 2002, another new cat-oriented keeper started working at Sierra Safari Zoo.

That was me. Kenya the great black-maned lion was the first to adopt me. I think he saw “lion man” written all over me! But Hobbs for once ignored Kelly and started paying attention to me. Kelly didn’t mind, as this gave him a chance to play with Tasha tiger. As the spring of that year turned into summer, Hobbs’ unusual interest in me became readily apparent. He would follow me around wherever I went. He would invent games with me. He went out of his way to get me wet whenever he could via the aforementioned liger in the water game. Despite his immense size, he was a very quiet stalker, and would occasionally surprise me.

All male cats can spray their scent-marked urine backwards to mark various objects. Hobbs liked to spray-mark people. He marked both zookeepers and, much to their annoyance, visitors! He made a big game out of it. Most visitors did not care much for this behavior. But one day, a boy and his father came into the gift shop while I was working there. The boy was grinning from ear to ear. Hobbs had sprayed him and he was thrilled to be property of a liger! Eventually, we had to post a sign in his area, warning visitors about his penchant for spraying.

There was another humorous spraying incident involving Hobbs. One day, I had just let Kenya into the run. He slowly made his way over to the common fence between Hobbs and the run. Hobbs was waiting for him. Both cats then turned around, lifted their tails, and proceeded to repeatedly spray each other—a proverbial pissing match!

Initially, Hobbs made every attempt to spray me. But he eventually stopped doing this because I think he knew that I knew he owned me. Instead, I was able to start train-

ing him to spray on command!

I have had the pleasure of working with Hobbs through all sorts of adventures and misadventures. We were always best friends, and looked forward to seeing each other. As Hobbs got more comfortable with me, he would purr for me. Big cats aren’t supposed to be able to purr, but Hobbs could, after a fashion. Hobbs rarely purred for anyone except me. When Hobbs figured out that I was going to stay down by him, he would roll on his back and look goofy. This was Hobbs at his most very relaxed. I have lots of pictures of him doing this.

In late 2002, we had a terrible windstorm in the Reno area. The zoo is in one of the windiest areas of Reno. I remember working at the zoo that day. We saw an emu almost fly. A tractor-trailer overturned in front of the zoo. Next door to the zoo, I watched the shingles blowing off the roof of my house, as all the neighbor’s horses ran through my yard. We struggled to do any zoo chores that day at all. I finally went home, hoping and praying I would still have power. I happened to look out the window that overlooks the zoo, and saw an amazing sight. Hobbs and Tasha were out in the exercise run, not in their cozy house! Hobbs was laying on his back, slowly opening and closing his big mouth. He must have really enjoyed how that stiff wind was blowing on his body! There was just enough light left that I was able to get a picture of him doing this.

Kelly Wiggins also had Hobbs trained to jump up against the fence to his full height—nearly 12 feet! A time came when we needed to measure how tall he was when he did this. But just like the weigh-in many years before, he stubbornly refused to cooperate, especially if anyone had their camera at the ready!



Land Shark?



In the last year or so, Hobbs started to slow down a bit. He would still play and stalk, and act goofy. He just didn't do it as much. He also seemed to be a bit more protective of Tasha than he had in previous years. Hobbs was getting old. The nominal lifespan for a liger is 15 years. Hobbs had just turned 14.

Being so big, Hobbs had an enormous appetite. He got 14 pounds of hamburger-like meat a day. But, he could easily eat 50 or 60 pounds at a sitting. When in his finest form, he could eat his 14 pounds of food in about a minute and a half.

Hobbs had incredibly deep feelings and emotions for the people he loved. He could read your feelings and act accordingly. To back this up, one day Hobbs was somehow sad about the way he thought he had acted towards me the day before and came up to greet me, crying. This was really touching, and a behavior I have only seen once in any other cat.

In early January of 2007, I observed from my home, a most amazing sight. Kenya and Hobbs were sleeping together, snuggled up along the fence between Kenya's enclosure and the run. Normally, these two cats kept their distance from each other because they were both intact males though Hobbs was naturally sterile. This was not a one-time occurrence. I saw them do this a number of times over the next few weeks. I somehow think Hobbs was being

friends with Kenya because he knew something we didn't.

It was just a few weeks later that Hobbs started to not feel well. I started to spend extra time with him, and I am glad I did. He had liver problems, and it took him quickly.

At about 10:30 on Friday, February 23, I got the call from the zoo. The zoo manager, Lori, was bawling. Hobbs was dying. I dropped what I was doing and rushed to the zoo, because I knew that Hobbs needed his

best friend to be there in his time of need. At 7:50 PM that evening, my big friend Hobbs breathed his last breath with me by his side. It was a terrible experience to have to watch such a magnificent creature die. But, it was also a strangely thrilling experience to have helped my big friend make that very scary step into the next life. Hobbs knew he was loved, and that his friend was by him to help as only a friend can at these times. •

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Notes from the Field: The Pallas' Cat Conservation Project

*Dr. Bill Swanson,
Director of Animal Research,
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden*

The Pallas' cat or manul (*Otocolobus manul*), a small-sized (3-5 kg body weight) cat species native to central Asia, is facing growing threats to its survival in the wild. The species is listed on Appendix II of the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) and as 'near-threatened' on both the global Red List and the Mongolian Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Pallas' Cat Conservation Project was initiated in Mongolia in 1999 as a collaborative effort involving veterinarian Dr. Meredith Brown, presently a PhD student at Michigan State University, and Dr. Bar-iushaa Munkhtsog, a field ecologist working for the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the Snow Leopard Trust. In 2005, Steve Ross, a Scottish PhD student at the University of Bristol, joined the project to expand the scope of the radio telemetry component and add prey-monitoring studies to gather more extensive data as part of his dissertation research. A number of other ongoing studies with wild Pallas' cats are being conducted under the auspices of the project, including assessments of infectious disease exposure, genetic diversity, nutritional status, and reproductive patterns. The project has received financial support over the past eight years from a number of zoos and conservation organizations including the Cincinnati Zoo, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Woodland Park Zoo, Columbus Zoo, Wild about Cats, and most recently, the Erie Zoo and Utah's Hogle Zoo.

Mongolia has among the lowest human population densities of any country in the world, with about three million people inhabiting a country that is twice the size of Texas in geographic area. Of these three million people, 40% reside in the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, while another 40% still eke out their existence as nomadic pastoralists in the countryside, raising 35 million sheep, goats, and cattle in a region virtually without fences or private land ownership. Ulaanbaatar is now a boom town, with money and investors pouring in to take advantage of the opening up of the economy since the collapse of Mongolia's com-



unist patron, the USSR, and many of these players are eager to promote exploitation of Mongolia's vast natural resources. Illegal wildlife hunting and trade, primarily to supply the growing demand for meat and fur in China, has become rampant. Although Ulaanbaatar is teeming with humanity, smog, and a ridiculous overabundance of SUVs, a short drive out of the city provides a ready antidote to these urban excesses. The primary study site for the Pallas' cat project is located just 70 miles southwest of the capital near the small town of Atlambulag. In traveling that brief distance, you feel as if you have been transported back in time one hundred years or more. Most of the rural residents still live in traditional gers (domed felt tents) without running water, toilets, or electricity, with only the occasional appearance of a solar panel, satellite dish, or motorcycle destroying the illusion of visiting an earlier century.

Steve Ross and his field assistants, Gana and Nara, have spent the past two years searching for wild Pallas' cats roaming across the steppes to capture individuals for placement of radio collars and monitoring of their subsequent movements. In just the past six months, they have captured and radio collared 15 Pallas' cats (six males and nine females) in the study area located in

the buffer zone just south of Hustai National Park. The pace always picks up with the first snowfall, allowing the field team to locate free-ranging cats more easily by tracking them through the snow to their underground burrows for rapid extraction and radio collaring. On a daily basis, Steve and his staff crisscross the steppes by car or motorcycle, scaling the taller hills to gain vital altitude and using radio telemetry to mark the geographic location of every radio collared cat several times each week.

The previous winter (2005-2006) was particularly harsh for the local Pallas' cat population, with all six radio collared cats succumbing to predation or severe winter conditions before the onset of springtime. However, this past summer produced a bumper crop of prey species, including mice, jirds, and pikas, and even now in mid-February, there appears to be a relative abundance of plump pikas and rodents sunning themselves outside their protective burrows. Steve's dissertation study is the first comprehensive assessment of the ecology of wild Pallas' cats and, when he finishes up his research at the end of 2007, his findings should help us to better understand the intricate relationships and interactions of Pallas' cats with their prey and other environment factors found on the Mongolian steppes.

One other major advantage to having radio collars on 15 wild Pallas' cats is that it provides the opportunity to easily incorporate additional research disciplines into the field ecology project. My primary interest in traveling to Mongolia in the middle of winter was to investigate the reproductive biology of these wild Pallas' cats. In captivity, we know that Pallas' cats are highly seasonal, with females only breeding during the winter months and males only producing meaningful numbers of spermatozoa for five months of the year, bracketing the female's breeding season. We suspect that wild Pallas' cats show similar reproductive patterns and, with access to six radio collared males, had the chance to test this hypothesis by collecting semen from cats in the wild. In addition, freezing this semen in the field would allow us to preserve the genetic contribution of these wild founder males and potentially use their frozen sperm with assisted reproductive techniques to produce genetically-valuable offspring in U.S. zoos.

For the field expedition in February, all of the radio-collared males had to be recaptured in a relatively short time frame (about one week) to allow for anesthesia and collection of blood and semen samples. Because of cold winter conditions (temperatures ranged from +20°F during the day down to -30°F at night), the cats had to be anesthetized and handled within the confines of an enclosed van and allowed to fully recover before their subsequent release. Fortunately, Dr. Amanda Fine, an American veterinarian who heads up the Wildlife Conservation Society's Mongolia program was available to assist us with all of the anesthetic procedures. Over the course of four days, all six males were recaptured by first fixing their general locations with radio telemetry and then by physically finding and restraining the cats. In most cases, the cats began running as soon as we approached and disappeared into marmot burrows, requiring 30-60 minutes of strenuous digging for final recapture.

Blood samples and excellent quality semen were obtained from each male, frozen for storage in a liquid nitrogen tank and subsequently imported into the U.S. via DHL over the following week. From the six males, we froze down a total of 85



semen straws, each containing one to two million motile spermatozoa. Assisting with the sample collection procedures was a young Mongolian PhD student, Oyuna, who was receiving her initial training in field research techniques with Pallas' cats. Anesthesia and recovery of each male was uneventful and all were released back into the wild within a few hours of their initial capture.

The long-term conservation of wild Pallas' cats will depend on increasing local awareness and involvement, controlling

poaching and illegal trade, and promoting the development of the scientific infrastructure in Mongolia. By supporting these in situ/ex situ connections involving native Mongolian scientists, conservation-minded North American zoos, and free-ranging and captive Pallas' cat populations, the Pallas' Cat Conservation Project is working to ensure that wild Pallas' cats will continue to survive and thrive on the steppes of Mongolia well into the future. More information is available on the project website at www.fw.msu.edu/links.htm. •



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Confirmed Cuddlers

By Leah Aufill

I am young and innocent no more. My husband retired and casually mentioned that he would like to get a cougar. He had previously owned various large cats for 20 years and I figured he knew more about this topic than I, so I was passively supportive. After a couple of years a dealer called to let him know he had a litter ready to sell. Now this casual request just turned into reality and it was my job to do homework to prevent any future resentments at you know who. So, I asked the dealer how big would she get and how much would she eat. His answers were digestible, after all, we owned dogs that were bigger.

We were so excited that we went to visit that weekend and met the two littermate sisters who were two weeks old, their mom, aunt, grandma, and dad. This was my first experience to see large cats (The dealer also had leopards and an one-year old tiger.) When we walked up to grandma puma's cage, she just started purring. No one had petted her and she was very happy to see us. It was a very impressive rumble and I was slightly hooked. Next we went to see the litter that was ready to sell and helped carry them into the house where we visited for a couple of hours. While we would have liked to have taken both kittens, we stuck to the original plan and picked one. We also got a care package of formula, bottles, and instructions. We struck out for home and found Zinnia, our new baby cougar, to be a restless traveler. Over the next few weeks my husband had the job of bottle feeding and they have a beautiful bedtime bond. To this day, nearly three years later, she nurses on his arm every night.

As she grew, her spots faded, perfect blue eyes changed and she tried many cute and adorable tricks such as opening the fridge to help herself to her food shelf, but forgetting to close the door. She volunteered to remove all the upholstery, one chair at a time, and doesn't mind if we sit

on pillows instead. Her experience with a bowling ball was cut short after rolling it into and shattering the toilet. She has met many people and is very social, which can be intimidating when it is their face she

...she tried many cute and adorable tricks such as opening the fridge to help herself to her food shelf, but forgetting to close the door.

wants to meet first. If the visitor won't squat or kneel for easy access, she has developed many fancy stretch-twists on the nearby door frame meet them face to face. When we have been gone for several hours, we come home to enthusiastic squeaking, face to face rubbing, and hugging to let us know she is glad we are home. She likes to eat several small snacks

throughout the evening and night. After the first big one, she thanks us with a squeak, a big hug, and a cute little satisfied burp. Each cougar my husband has owned liked to shred something and Zinnia likes sheets. Her pile is on the closet floor and it serves as a place for several toys. Occasionally, she forgets herself and takes her toy onto the bed and "accidentally" drops it to get a mouth full of sheets, pillow cases or blanket. She is not picky.

At one year old we thought it would be good for Zinnia to have a playmate. She needed the exercise, companionship and when we left her alone, it was very hard on her. Shortly thereafter, the state notified us that a tame raised cougar had been rescued and was available for adoption. "Misty" was six years old, sweet and liked to play, so we brought her home. It was the first time either had seen another cougar but they knew

what to do. They fussed, cleaned each other and slept together during the day. Misty came into this world with great love but was abused. We work with her to show her a positive home and a positive relationship with us. She loves to be held and hugged and likes for me to sit with her and tell her how beautiful she is and how much I love her. Her comfort toy are rolls of toilet paper, which she shreds into confetti. In addition, her idea of a perfect spa is to sit in an empty bathtub for hours.

After another year of a successful cougar home and plenty of food, we received a notice that a cougar had been confiscated who had been nearly starved to death. We wanted to visit and give her encouragement. We found that she was very small

We work with [our cougar] to show her a positive home and a positive relationship with us. She loves to be held and hugged and likes for me to sit with her and tell her how beautiful she is and how much I love her.

and seven years old. A life too precious not to help, so she joined our family in January. She has proven to be nothing but a love baby. She likes to be hugged, to do face to face rubbing and to be scratched on the neck. She loves to have her food held by our hand until the very last couple of bites.

With proper training and discipline, our hand-raised baby has given us many gifts. We are a full house (mom, dad, and three grown cougars) and blessed

to know the beauty and grace of this creation of God. To know love this purrfect is beyond words and a lesson I found only from cougars. And yes, I have hugged my cougars today! •

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Is it any wonder?

By Lynn Culver

Another year, another battle to protect our freedoms from our own government taking them away. We are being 'protected' to death by the same legislators who have given our government permission to order fellow Americans halfway around the world where they risk losing their lives on a mission to bring democratic freedoms to a formerly oppressed citizenry. Something is wrong with this picture, but then there are a lot of things that don't make sense in this world.

Meanwhile back at home, we know that the animal rights movement has successfully merged HSUS, Fund for Animals, and the Doris Day Foundation. We know they have increased spending for lobbyists and their mission to total extinction of captive gene pools in America. So it is no wonder that we are faced with Ohio's HB 45, Oregon's HB 3437, North Carolina's HB 1614, Washington's HB 1418, Iowa's HB 564, Indiana's HB 1472, Missouri's SB 206, and Louisiana's new W & F Department regulations to implement last year's HB 715. The very latest onslaught is the federal Haley's Act, HR 1947.

Fortunately Indiana is a state that already has regulations and home to an intelligent and connected animal community. Some sort of animal incident usually helps the push for a ban law. This year's incident is an escaped cougar from one of this country's largest and most respected sanctuaries, the Exotic Feline Rescue Center. That's a hard sell since it is too big to close down, and where are you going to put all the confiscated animals if you pass the AR ban law? Senator Waterman is a friend of FCF (he was the distinguished raffle prize picker for the FCF African safari) and he worked to help insure this bill did not leave committee. The animal community packing the public hearing insured this AR bill is dead for another year.

Residents of Washington State were not

so successful. Every year they valiantly face the onslaught of the animal rights backed ban bill. This year the bill only addressed large cats (as well as all primates including the dreaded pygmy marmoset) but didn't allow future ownership, breeding, or exempt USDA professionals. Due mainly to a switch in political party power, for the first time in a decade the API bill reached both floors for a vote and passed. The headlines of a tiger owner being evicted for non-payment of rent was probably the final straw that helped to tip the scales.

Two states I worked on and felt the pain of defeat were Louisiana and Iowa. Louisiana legislature passed HB 715 last year. The act mandated the wildlife department to 'control' the import of big cats and to pass 'regulations' for ownership. I think I will send a dictionary to the W & F Department because it interpreted both words to mean 'forbid'—a bitter lesson for sure. After effects: A Louisiana sanctuary was told it could not rescue any new cats. And when a vasectomy failed to prevent lions from being born at this sanctuary, these offspring had to be 'rescued' by a sanctuary in California. I never thought I

would see the day when California laws were more permissive than those in the south...

Iowa is a sad, sad state of affairs. The registered lobbyists of the various hunting, trapping, and animal associated industries did not understand that allowing animal rights to gain a legislative foothold will come back to bite them hard. They didn't join in opposition with the one animal owners' lobbyist in opposition to this all-species total-ban API mange-to-extinction bill. These lobbyists remained undecided and that spelled defeat.

Now we are facing serious assault in Ohio with HB 45. This is another total ban bill disguised as a 'caging and public safety bill.' It is pages and pages long and what legislator has time to read it? The carefully

prepared summary misleads the committee members into believing it won't end private ownership. Fortunately Evelyn and other FCF members have taken the bull by the horns and spent time visiting committee members in person at the capitol prior the sponsor hearing so that the legislators understood what are the real effects of this bill. In the critical days before the hearing Carol Bohning and Nancy Nighswander personally handed out information, shook hands, looked legislators and their aids in the eyes, and made them understand. And when Distel's bill came up for the sponsor hearing, FCF members sat in the audience gratified to hear an informed committee asking intelligent questions based upon their recent education. This was a shining example of what we can do to fight the big money of AR. We are the voters and we are the experts.

Ohio is still an uphill battle. Ohio has many exotic owners and a wide variation in the quality of animal care. Present state and local ordinances are not uniformly enforced and some owners are downright irresponsible. An escaped bear seriously injured a neighbor who is now politically motivated to see legislation to force upgraded caging, fencing, and insurance laws. Ohio is also home to the Siberian Tiger Foundation and just this past week, owner Diana McCourt was evicted for non-payment of rent.

In the Federal arena we have the return of Haley's Act in Congress. This is the ultimate AR fantasy, a legislative dream to federally criminalize the contact with any big cat, of any age. It is a religious fanaticism that seeks to sever our ties with nature and keep our society from loving and caring about wildlife, all under the false guise of being concerned for animal welfare and public safety.

As the Big Cat Element for the Uniting a Proactive Primate and Exotic Animal League (U.A.P.P.E.A.L.), I am asking all FCF members to financially support the right of Americans to experience responsible, legal, federally regulated contact with young big cats by making a donation to the FCF so that we can forward these funds to U.A.P.P.E.A.L. Lobbyist Bill Hanka has

Meanwhile back at home, we know that the animal rights movement has successfully merged HSUS, Fund for Animals, and the Doris Day Foundation.

registered in opposition to this AR legislation for U.A.P.P.E.A.L. Look for the address in the U.A.P.P.E.A.L. ad in this journal and consider joining this 501(c)(4) organization.

The FCF message to Congress is reject Haley's Act. Adequately fund the agencies in charge of oversight so that violators are punished and those that follow regulations are free to continue to operate. Do not allow the Animal Welfare Act to be amended by Animal Rights organizations and do not criminalize all contact of big cats of all ages because this is a dangerously misguided effort that harms not only those who need to raise funds to provide permanent daily care of these cats, but also harms conservation and conservation education.

I have no doubt that Haley Hilderbrand deeply loved tigers. It is a great irony that her love and attraction to the tiger is being exploited as a reason to forbid every American to ever come in contact with these beautiful, intelligent, and highly endangered species. Haley's friends and family are in pain, I have no doubt. Hopefully Haley's grieving family will discover they are being used and that they cannot honor Haley's memory by attacking the very thing she loved.

We may well be the last generation to live in a world with tigers in nature. Our children just might be the only hope for the tigers of the world. Tigers need all the friends and allies they can get and passage of Haley's act is the wrong thing to do. It builds a wall between humans and the big cats. It foment fear and distances us from nature, all to insure that something that has never happened before Haley will never happen again.

We are the storytellers for the tigers and our stories are so much greater than the tragedy of Haley. We must drown out this negativity with our love, compassion, and understanding. Those of us who walk among giants in this world know we cannot expect to never be stepped on. We accept it. We know it is our duty to protect the public and abide by the existing regulations when we work with and speak for big cats. Our job as private conservationists is to make America listen to our message of conservation and our young cats are our most important tool in the noble effort to educate and build empathy for endangered wild places. •

Our World Gains Another Exotic Animal Veterinarian



Amanda Lauren Whitlock will graduate from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine on May 9, 2007. Ms. Whitlock is a 1999 graduate of Franklin High School and a 2003 graduate of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a major in biology and minor in chemistry. The daughter of Stan and Betsy Whitlock of Franklin, NC, she intends to return to Franklin in the fall and hopes to find employment in a Western North Carolina or North Georgia veterinary practice. She hopes to work with both small domestic animals as well as exotics. A member since 2004, the FCF has been instrumental in encouraging Amanda to champion responsible private ownership which will carry over to her veterinary practice in the future.



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AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION

FCF Convention in Dallas, Texas

Things are shaping up nicely for the upcoming convention in Dallas. It's going to be another memorable event full of fun and learning opportunities.

The Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course will be held at the convention hotel on Wednesday, July 25. If you haven't taken this class yet and are attending convention, be sure to sign up. Fees are \$65.00 for FCF members and \$95 for non-members. You will find a line for it on the registration sheet enclosed in this issue of the journal.

Register on Thursday and share kittens. Several commercial vendors will display their wares and services throughout the convention. Make sure you take the time to look these items over and talk to the representatives. They are a fantastic bunch of people and deserve our support right back.

Our fun filled Friday foray for felines just keeps getting better. The Dallas zoo is going to line up some behind-the-scenes tours especially for FCF convention attendees. Of course, the cat areas are a given but if there is any other particular area of the zoo that you would like to see behind-the-scenes, get in touch with Kevin Chambers and he'll see what he can do about getting it lined up.

From the Dallas Zoo we'll head over to the Southfork Ranch, the homestead of the Ewing family from the popular television series Dallas. After a tour of the grounds and mansion, we'll settle back in air-conditioned comfort for the annual FCF membership meeting. If you have any items that you want to bring up at the meeting, contact President Lynn Culver so she can put it on the agenda. Following the meeting, we'll partake in an authentic chuck wagon barbeque from the old west. Singing cowboys will entertain with campfire songs and ranch hands will tell authentic tales of the Old West and recite cowboy poetry during dinner. [Ed: Cowboy poetry? Whatever.]

Saturday will bring our line-up of knowledgeable and entertaining speakers. We're still waiting for some of our speakers to confirm, but those who have so far include:

Jim Sanderson of the Small Cat Conservation Alliance and FCF Conservation Advisor. Jim will update us on his adventures and research projects covering the globe. He never fails to bring information

that leaves you in awe.

Jim has also invited two international colleagues of his to come to our convention to speak:

Fernando Vidal from Chile is the only person in the world to own Guignas, the

South American species Jim has been working so hard to conserve.

Anne-Sophie Bertrand is from the Mar-gay Project located in Brazil.

The FCF is very honored to host these international visitors. The FCF is soliciting



chuck wagon barbeque



JR's suite

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funds to raise \$2,000 to sponsor the airfare expenses for these international guests. FCF member Judy Berens and Don Shadow have pledged generous financial support. We are still seeking additional donations to cover their expenses. If you wish to contribute you may make a donation and mark it "Airfare for South American Speakers" and mail it to the FCF Treasurer, 7816 N County Road 75W, Shelburn, IN 47879

Joel Slaven, professional animal trainer, has worked with a variety of exotic animals including: lions, tigers, cougars, primates, camels, hoofstock, birds, reptiles, and small mammals. Joel Slavens Professional Animals, Inc. is the largest producer of domestic animal shows in the world producing domestic animal shows for Sea World Orlando and San Diego, and Busch Gardens in Williamsburg and Tampa Bay. Joel will be talking about animal training and give us a private show with some of his trained felines.

Ken Kaemmerer, curator from the Dallas Zoo will give a presentation on the USF&W's Ocelot Recovery Plan that hopes to reintroduce ocelots into the wild in the US.

Bill Williamson is known as the "Tom Sawyer of Zoo Construction." He does it all—hot grass, vines, concrete work, and more. He works private facilities with little budgets all the way up to multi-million dollar municipal zoos. Some of the things he will teach us can be accomplished with items picked up at the Home Depot.

Saturday will bring about a new and exciting addition to the convention. FCF's own Deborah Rabinsky, a fine arts dealer and curator from PA has taken on the task of coordinating an art show in a separate room at the Southfork Hotel. This open to the public show will feature talented local and national artists. FCF will be advertising in the Dallas area to invite local art enthusiasts to attend and make purchases and expose them to FCF. We're expecting a lot of media from this event. As a matter of fact, a New York art critic is already planning on coming! An additional draw for the public and FCF members too will be a display set up in the art show room by Marcus Cook featuring one of his adult white tigers and one of Kevin Chambers' adult white lions. Now what art show can boast of hav-

ing two of nature's masterpieces in addition to all the artists' interpretations?

The Saturday night banquet will kick off with a social hour, giving everyone a last minute opportunity to bid on the items in the silent auction. These items will be on display and available for bidding throughout the convention. The bidding will close right before dinner. We'll then have our buffet dinner followed by award presentations and various announcements. A very select few items donated for the auction will then be auctioned off live. To finish off the evening, we'll have our very own version of American Idol for entertainment. You won't want to miss this. I highly suspect that this will be the one and only performance for these groups, not that anyone would want to see them again.

For those staying an extra day on Sunday, July 29, an optional activity will be an open house at Tiger Creek Wildlife Refuge in Tyler, TX from 10 am to 3 pm. Tiger Creek is operated by Brian Werner and is approximately two hours from the Southfork Hotel. Tiger Creek houses 38 cats including tigers, lions, leopards, cougars, and bobcat. If you plan to visit, you will need to arrange for your

own transportation to and from the facility. Directions will be available at the convention or contact Brian for more information.

FCF needs everyone to bring an item for the auction and check them in with a member of the convention committee. If you are unable to attend the convention but still would like to donate something, just contact a member of the convention committee for instructions on shipping directly to the hotel or to one of the committee members who will be driving to convention.

To reserve your room, call the hotel reservations department at 972-578-8555 or the toll-free number, 866-665-2680. To receive the special rates, FCF attendees should identify the group as Feline Conservation Federation. All reservations should be made by July 17, 2007. Arrangements have been made to allow our members to bring along their cats. A \$50.00 fee applies. **IMPORTANT:** Contact Kevin Chambers for the special requirements necessary.

The Southfork Hotel is located 27 miles from Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport (DFW) and 21 miles from Dallas Love Field (DAL). One of the many shuttle services available is Super Shuttle, <http://www.super-shuttle.com/htm/cities/dfw.htm>. They can be reached by phone at 1-800-258-3826. •



Southfork Hotel



Southfork Ranch

Convention Fast Facts

Howdee Pardners! The 2007 Member Services Outfit would like you to have a knee slappin' good time at this year's convention. We want you to be aware of the services we will be offering to our long time members as well as to all our new friends.

REGISTRATION:

Registration will begin at 2:00 PM on Thursday in the Trinity Ballroom. We want to help make your experience the best ever. Don't hesitate to mosey on up to a member service outlaw any time and let us know your needs. If you are registering after Thursday, we are offering roving registration. Just call the cell numbers listed at the front desk and we will arrange to meet and help you get registered!

NEW WRANGLERS:

This year we are making an extra effort to introduce our new pardners to longer-term members. We hope that everyone can really feel at home here in the FCF and will benefit from each other's experience. If we don't find you, please find us and we will do our best to introduce you to everyone!

LITTLE OUTLAWS:

We'll have a supply of activity books and games for our younger cowboys and cowgirls. You should receive the activity books at registration for the young-ens. Ask Sara to provide you with games, which can be checked out library style to help the little buckaroos have a great time too!

TRANSPORTATION:

This year we will have a couple of big fancy buses because we were just runnin' out of room on the wagons! We'll have two committee cat herders assigned to each bus heading out to our off-site events. Stay with your assigned bus or let your cat herder know if there's a change, as we don't want to be losin' any of the herd.

BANQUET:

We've been a doin' a whole bunch a planin' and think we've come up with some

purdy darn good ideas to tickle everyone's fancy at the banquet. We'll be havin' a couple of contests for those who want to get into the spirit of things. For them who want to get gussied up, we'll have a prize for best fancy dressed dude and gal. For you'ens who always wanted to star in a John Wayne flick, we'll have a prize for best western dress cowpoke and cowgirl. (Miss Kitty eat your heart out!) Last but not least, for all of those true, dyed in the wool (or fur) cat people, we'll have a cat dress king and queen cat-agory so all those fake furs and spotted stuff you been gatherin' won't have been a waste of good closet space. We're cookin' up another surprise or two, but we just wanted to be sure you pack the right stuff in your saddlebags when you hit the trail to Dallas. We look forward to seeing ya'll there!

THE CONVENTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE

Kevin Chambers: Co-Chair
Carolyne Clendenin': Co-Chair
Mindy Stinner: Auction Subcommittee Chair
Irene Saterfield: Vendor Subcommittee Chair
Betsy Whitlock: Member Services Subcommittee Chair
Stan Whitlock
Tami Medina
Raven Simons
Mike Friese
Brandon Johnson

Who do you think is a great conservationist?

The desire to conserve the world's great cat species is deserving of recognition by the Feline Conservation Federation and more than one member has asked the board to give the members an opportunity to present an award as recognition of achievements and dedication to feline conservation.

This award is separate from the LIOC Lotty, which focuses on cats, but also on service to the organization as well.

Nominations can be made by any FCF member. Send your nomination by mail, or e-mail to the secretary; contact info is on the inside of the front cover of this journal.

When submitting your nomination, please be sure to provide the name and contact information and, if known, some of the accomplishments of your nominee.

This award is open to anyone of merit involved in habitat protection, scientific research, conservation breeding or education or other work that promotes the survival of wild cats.

The list of nominees will be published in the July issue and you will have two weeks to vote for who you most wish to honor this year. •

The registration fees for the convention are:

FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course:

FCF members	\$65
non-members	\$95
Convention Registration (before July 11)	\$150
Late Convention Registration (after July 11)	\$165
Children 6-18	\$75
Children 5 and under	Free
Single Day Registrations	
Thursday	\$25
Friday	\$100
Saturday	\$75

Art Show: Cats—Legends and Myths

*Feline Conservation Federation Annual Convention
Southfork Hotel, Dallas, Texas
July 28, 2007, 11:00am-11:00pm*

The art show is based on an anthropological investigation of legends and myths of cats. Inscriptions of past and present images how different cultures view cats. The theme of this show is for artists to interpret images, artifacts, and myths regarding the family feline. The art show will be put together as an installation. We're asking for artists working in multiple disciplines to participate in this exhibition.

We will be working with artists from Dallas, FCF,

and others throughout the nation. Marcus Cook will be setting up his big cat display as part of the art exhibition. Art sales are split 50/50 between artists and FCF. Artists wanting more information should call Deborah at 610-820-3829.

Deborah Rabinsky has curated art shows on a national and international levels, including Lafayette College, and numerous galleries. Presently Deborah is an independent art dealer.

* Installation: The term was coined in the late 1960s. It's a way to group and space art to take into account the viewer's entire sensory experience. The placement of art to push rhythms through color form and size. Like music rhythms, it can calm or excite.

- Potters—dishes vases jars
- Bookmakers—scrolls
- Installation artist—Zen litter/sand box
- Doll maker—idols and toys
- Sculptor—idols, scratching post, other things
- Jewelers—amulets, imagery
- Drawings—cats, plants, birds, imagery
- Paintings
- Prints
- Photographs
- Ceremonial vestments, costumes
- Performance artists



Blast from the Past. . . .

California Valley Branch of LIOC

Long Island Ocelot Club

November/December 1967—Volume 11, Issue 6

REPORT OF MEETING

September 17, 1967

Manhattan Beach, California

at the home of John and Juleen Jackson.

Someone said the Jackson's place was hard to find, but if someone failed to find it I don't know who it was. What a crowd! At least 60 people attended. I lost count.

We arrived at the Jackson's house shortly after 1:00 and found their lovely, side hill home just a few blocks from the ocean. After leaving our contribution to the potluck in the kitchen, we walked through the patio, which overlooks a lower yard where the furry ones could be staked. This was an ideal arrangement. It was almost like having a seat in the balcony, conducting a meeting and being able to look down and watch the various pets below. I do mean "various." We even had a little fox in the group.

The fox pup came with his buddy a jaguarundi who preferred to hide under a bush, but the fox took it all in stride. Neither people nor cats disturbed his composure. There were seven ocelots, including one young male we hadn't seen before that had the most beautiful coloring I have ever seen. His owner knew how to really show it off. His cage was carpeted in a beautiful olive green. You could almost picture him on jungle moss. There were two pumas. "Candy" Raccow didn't appreciate being on a level lower than the people and kept tangling her chain around the stairs trying to climb up. You can't blame her really—Candy lives like a "people" and, I'm sure, thinks she is people.

There were two little margays, two little leopard cats, one beautiful baby leopard and I lost track of how many chaus cats and chaus kittens. John carried his little chaus kitten around in his arms all day because he said he took some to the last meeting and exposure to man and "beast" improved the kittens' dispositions, making them much more calm and self secure.

We held a brief meeting. Topics dis-



cussed: The fact that we have now been organized one year! It is time to renew your dues. It was voted to raise the local dues to \$10.00. We don't have much money in our treasury and should have a reserve in case of emergency. We sent a check to Santa Ana to help pay the fee for the veterinarians from the Veterinary Society for the Treatment of Exotic Pets that represented us in court there. Their arguments fell on deaf ears, but we tried anyway. At any rate, this almost depleted our treasury so please send your renewal checks as soon as possible. Dick read a letter from Catherine Cisin to Bill Engler congratulating him on being given the Lotty award and expressing sympathy over his loss of his beloved Chita.

Meeting adjourned, we had our raffle. Laura Engler won a lovely electric blanket. Then we were more than ready for the potluck. The aroma from the hot dishes had been wafting out

over the patio all this time. I nearly had my plate filled when someone gasped behind me. I looked around to see the huge shoulders of what I thought was a small jaguar until I saw his face. On a leash being led by a small attractive dark haired gal was the biggest ocelot any of us ever saw. This three year old, sixty-pound ocelot had belonged to the late Jayne Mansfield. He was beautifully well mannered and thoroughly enjoyed attention. It was quite a surprise when you noticed that he still had claws and fangs, because he certainly didn't use them. I hope he will come to future meetings because I would like to take a picture somehow to show his size. I'm afraid, though, you would have to see him to believe it.

Respectfully submitted,
Alyce Crafts
Corresponding Secretary,
CAL-VAL Branch of LIOC



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Mark McDaniel, president

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What I Learned About the FCF

By Sari Gordon

When Cynthia Gamble was fatally attacked by one of her three tigers in Northern Minnesota, the headlines exploded. I'm a freelance journalist. After the news died down, I was hired to write a story about people who own cats. I hoped to put the headlines into context. I knew nothing about this world.

I began to research. There were plenty of people who opposed big cat ownership. There were plenty of horror stories. There were plenty of legal resources. But I couldn't find a single cat owner in the area. Like most, I had never even heard of the FCF. I was excited to learn more and share my discoveries with our readers.

I emailed the media contact for the FCF and introduced myself as a journalist. I hoped to attend the FCF convention in Cincinnati the following week. I gave my credentials, explained my story, and requested a press pass. The response I got was a foretaste of the chaos, paranoia, sus-

picion, hostility, and irrationality I encountered for the next year.

I was accused of being "AR," a term I'd never heard. I was flattered when someone accused me of writing for the Associated Press International until I found out the API was a group I'd never known. I thought that intentionally avoiding talking to AR people would prove that I was trying to hear "the other side."

Here was the chance and you slammed the door in my face. I pushed my way in and with a few trusting board members; I was enlightened by your mission and met some wonderful members.

It's been nearly a year since the convention. I turned in my story. The fact-checkers at my magazine were scrupulous. Every sentence was clarified, every quote verified and double-checked. Every observation was challenged and scrutinized. Every anonymous source was carefully concealed and permissions sought. When it came time to find graphics, I asked Lynn

Culver and others for images. I knew cat owners had been betrayed when pictures were used against them and the art department pledged not to do the same. Once again, my request was met with dubious caution and even outright histrionic spite.

After a year of research, did anyone at the FCF have the basic media sense to check in and ask what I had learned?

No.

Because I was moved by your cause and your arguments, I offered my observations to the one person who has best represented the FCF to me from the beginning, Lynn Culver. You were smart to elect her president. She asked me to share my thoughts with you.

I think your arguments are sound. I agree with the majority of your stands. I also believe that a lot of money and time needs to be devoted to enforcing any law that keeps the novice, the naïve, the abusive, and the uneducated out of caring for captive wildlife. I think the USDA needs to enforce



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existing laws and that we don't need further government intrusion in our lives.

Supporting you doesn't usurp my responsibility as a journalist. Not everyone will like my story. I am not spokesman for your or any organization. It's not my job to champion your cause. That's your job.

I know I'll have the opportunity to write more about the FCF, your members, and your causes. So I hope you'll continue to have a dialogue with me and with all other reputable reporters. At the very least, I hope you will be available as a source for quotes, for facts, and resources.

Please, if you cannot get everyone to sing the same tune, please hire someone who can do it for you. Still, there are some basic PR principles you can memorize and

enforce without spending a penny:

- Your board is your clergy. They should lead by example and their words are sacred.
- The board should define your purpose in a sentence or two.
- Pick three objectives for the general public and three for your membership. Memorize them, boil them down to slogans, and repeat them everywhere, all the time.
- Make a plan to educate and publicize your goals.
- Diplomatically but decisively ignore detractors and dissenters. Do not censor or exclude anyone, but don't tolerate divisive behavior. Do not get trapped into mediating internal conflicts. Distance yourself from radicals who can't cooperate long enough

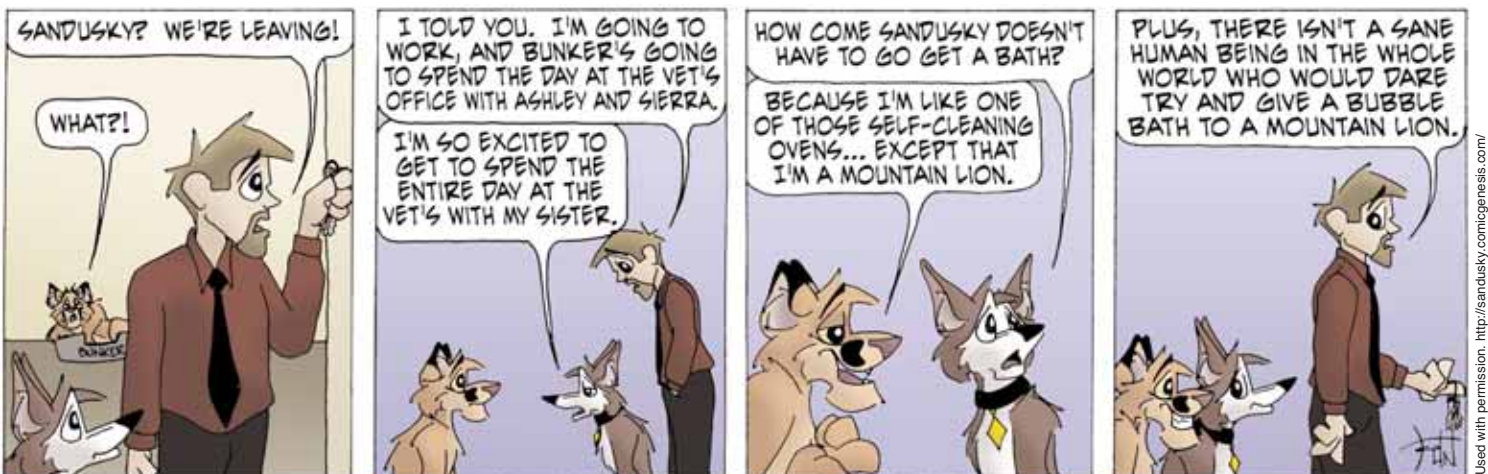
to achieve your goals.

- Create a press kit and a protocol for dealing with the media, local and national.
- Invite people to participate, witness, and learn.
- Be impeccable in all your communications—review and approve all external written and spoken communication. Be vigilant about language: keep it positive, intelligent, concise, and correct. Even misspellings and bad grammar create chinks in your pedestal. Corporations don't hire professional writers because they like to read.
- Respect your audience.
- Always promote, never attack. Refrain from name-calling and rock throwing.
- Don't be paranoid. Assume and expect the best.
- Don't be emotional. Be factual. Your goal is to help animals, not yourselves.
- Beat the rush to the fire. If there is controversy, get there first and pronounce your purpose with authority and optimism. Share your vision of a solution.
- If there's a fire, get there first. State your mission. Invite the public to envision the solution as you see it.
- Always show up.
- Answer the phone.

Not everyone will like my story, but I can promise that I did my best to be fair and to give voice to an argument that has gone unheard. If you choose not to listen to my advice, that's fine with me. I thank you for taking the time to read this with an open heart and an open mind. I especially thank you for trusting me and I'll continue to follow your progress. •

SANDUSKY

by John Prengaman



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Moving?

We are studying the physiology and behavior of Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) in order to improve lynx conservation efforts. Currently, we are examining the effect of translocation on lynx behavior and hormone expression. If you have a Canada lynx that will be moving to another institution, if you are expecting to get a lynx, or if you are building a new enclosure for your lynx, we would greatly appreciate your participation.

Project Goals:

The goal of this project is to monitor how the transfer process affects the behavior and hormone expression of lynx. Additionally, we hope to determine if lynx with different behavior/personality types respond differently to the transfer process.

Qualifying Participants:

- Adult Canadian lynx (>1yr) which will be transferred to another facility OR to a new enclosure at the same facility within the next year
- Institutions on both ends of the transfer that are willing to assist with the project

What is Involved:

- 1) Collect fecal samples for hormone analysis every other day for a few months before and after the transfer
- 2) Complete a survey about the behavior and "personality" of the lynx
- 3) Allow a biologist to conduct behavioral observations for a few days immediately before and after the transfer

In Return:

- 1) We will provide all research supplies and cover shipping expenses.
- 2) The assistance of your institution

(and individuals, when appropriate) will be acknowledged in resulting presentations and publications.

3) Your institution will receive a copy of the resulting manuscript(s).

4) While at your institution, the biologist conducting behavioral observations would be willing to give a presentation about the project.

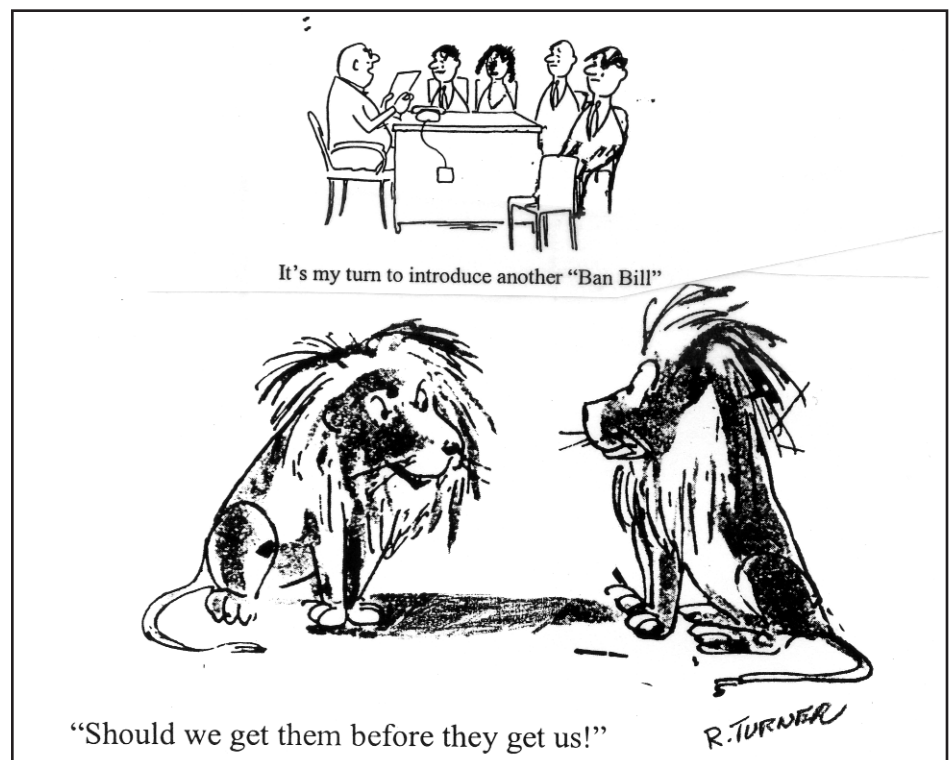
Project Significance:

The information obtained from this study is particularly important in light of recent lynx reintroduction efforts. With the help of captive institutions, we can more closely monitor the response of lynx to the transfer process, and possibly identify traits that make a lynx a good or bad candidate for translocation. The information will also help us improve the welfare of wild or captive cats that are transferred in the future.



Contact:

If you are interested in participating in this project, if you have any questions, or if you would like more information, please contact:
Kerry Fanson – Purdue University / Brookfield Zoo
E-mail: kerrypetterson@yahoo.com
Office phone: 765-494-9654, Cell phone: 262-951-0857



Tara's Three Male Cougar Cubs

By Lynn Culver

This is the story of Tara's three male cubs. They were born on Wednesday, July 13, 1988. Tara shared the entire experience with us. The babies were allowed to stay with Tara for many weeks. We were in touch with experts and we planned to co-raise them. We decided to remove one kitten at the age of nineteen days because we began to lose confidence in the success of co-raising. We named this kitten Cinnabar. He adjusted to human school relatively quickly. He was despondent and depressed for forty-eight hours but then he began to suck my finger and then suck the bottle on the second day and the bond of love was formed.

Because he made the transition easily we kept the other two cubs with Tara for another twelve days, but then decided on August 13 to bring them in for hand-rearing also. Tara never seemed upset about the cubs being gone and she immediately re-bonded with Mercury. We named these two cubs Arjan and Sharu. Arjan and Sharu took much longer to accept bottle-feeding. For six days I tried various nipples to encourage these boys to suck. Finally they accepted the Playtex nurser. Arjan also purred on that day for the first time since he was removed from Tara. Sharu needed a couple of weeks before he fully adjusted to living with us and he finally bonded and purred for us.

Jump to the September 20 – 25 logs in the journal...



Sharu and Bart. Sharu is the one with the big ears.

Tuesday, September 20, 1988

I haven't logged lately because I have been busy videotaping the cougars. They have been super active. Really ripping through the house. It is most funny to watch, as our house gets turned upside

down daily.

Today we leash walked Mercury and Tara from their cage to Cougar Country, the seven-acre habitat we fenced in for them. We are completing a new enclosure for the cubs that connects to Cougar Country. It encloses 2,500 square feet and has a sixteen-foot tall, four-level wooden tower in the middle of the cage. There are many young pine trees in this space. The pine trees are taller than the cage and we are installing the roof wire around the pine tree trunks.

We decided to bring the brothers outside to play in the cage while we worked on the roofing. Tara showed up from the woods in Cougar Country and was very interested in the boys. She was very vocal and she walked the fence line that is the common wall to this cage. Sharu was the most attracted to Tara. Arjan hissed and growled at Tara and so did Cinni. Then Mercury appeared from the woods and he growled at the cubs. They stood their ground, growling back at him. We had to move them away



Cinni plays with a rope.

from the fence line a few times as they didn't have the instinct to stay away from their father.

Mercury became angry with Tara, growling at her if she got near him. Bart decided to remove Tara from Cougar Country for her own safety. He brought her into the new compound to try reuniting her with her cubs. She greeted the cubs with much affection and licking. Only Sharu remembered her and accepted her actions. Arjan and Cinni both fought her attentions. Arjan and Cinni would growl at her if she licked them. Cinni totally freaked out in my arms when she approached him to lick his feet. I have never heard such a wild sound out of him!

After a half hour they were curiously following Tara. Cinni and Arjan would bite her tail and sniff her as she traveled the compound. I believe that given a few more visits and Sharu's good example, the brothers will reunite with Tara. After all, she is not going to hurt them and their fear is due to the unknown. We were very pleased with this development.

Wednesday, September 21, 1988

Today we brought the brothers out to the new compound again. Bart walked Tara over so they could relate to each other again. Sharu was very happy to see Tara and he allowed her to lick him all over. He jumped on her and purred and followed her. Arjan hissed at her when she tried to lick him. Cinni actually screamed and scratched and freaked out again when she tried to lick him.

Arjan started biting her tail, moved up her back then climbed onto her and bit her all over. He seemed comfortable as long as she didn't lick him. Cinni too was biting Tara all over in the usual, playful cougar cub manner. They stayed together for about another hour. There was no hostility on Tara's part. She is patient and understanding, though it must be difficult to have your own offspring clawing your face when you try to lick them.

We didn't bring Mercury over to Cougar Country. He stayed behind and he did some screaming in protest so I went over to Cougarama and visited him. He is so gentle, laid back, and purry. He is a wonderful animal.

The brothers seem to be very active each morning, really wearing themselves out. They sort of slow down during the daytime but after dinner, watch out—they are so active—running, jumping, biting, playing. They can last like that for hours.

We were working on the compound again this afternoon and we left the brothers alone in our home. I returned to check on them thinking they might be tearing apart the house. Cinni was asleep on our bed and Arjan and Sharu were asleep on the porch bed. They were being very quiet without us.

Thursday, September 22, 1988

We drove the brothers to Lake Ouachita again today. We left about 2:00 p.m. and returned home at 9:00 p.m. We transported them inside a homemade cat carrier made from two laundry baskets pinned together. They fought the confinement for a little



while and then settled down to nap through the drive. While we were boating to the islands, they were quiet on our party barge, passing the time by lying around.

We stopped at three different islands. Sharu was the first off the boat all three times. They didn't swim today. It was very sunny, hot, and windy. They explored the islands, staying within sight of the boat when taking off on their own. We walked with them around the first island. When we were ready to move to another island Sharu wouldn't come to the boat so we shoved off without him. He just watched, not seeming upset. Bart returned to the island on the float, towing the boat behind him to rescue Sharu. Sharu walked to the float, put one paw on the float and then thought better of it and walked away. I ended up having to carry him onto the boat.

The next island we landed at had a very muddy shore. The cubs all smelled the mud and duckweed exposed from the lower water level and covered their mouths with mud and seemed to eat some also. They explored while we cooked dinner over a campfire. Sharu walked the furthest, staying away the longest but returning to be with us and eat some chicken wings on the boat.

At the final island we stopped at Arjan stayed on the boat sleeping while we walked Sharu and Cinni around the shore. Cinni followed closely but Sharu strayed



Tara and cubs. Bart in the background.

behind. We returned to the boat and Arjan and Cinni played nearby on shore. Sharu finally made it back and the three were playing with the boat rope. Bart and I made love on the boat and Bart noticed all three lined up in a row staring intently at us.

On the last leg of our journey to the dock the cubs insisted on jumping out to the front of the party barge, beyond the safety rail. I had to leash them up and control them while we prepared to dock because they were quite persistent.

Friday, September 23, 1988

We worked today installing more sections of the wire roofing on the new cougar compound while the brothers and Tara played inside. It was a great reunion, with Tara licking them and Cinni and Arjan noticeably more tolerant and less fearful. Sharu chased Tara and kept jumping up on her neck and hugging her and hanging on. He really loves Tara. The brothers seemed more active and comfortable in the compound also, like they are getting used to it. Sharu kept climbing different trees inside the enclosure and Tara would stretch up the tree and call back at him, seeming very worried.

Sharu climbed one pine tree that connected by way of wire mesh to the common wall of the Cougar Country compound. Suddenly it dawned on us that Sharu might climb into Cougar Country where Mercury was only thirty feet away lying on the tower. Or he might even touch the hot wire with his body. We were frantic! Bart ran to the shed to turn off the electricity to the hotwire and I ran into Cougar Country to grab Sharu. But it was hopeless and he climbed down the welded wire wall and hit the hot wire with his head. Sharu screamed and hissed and became very hysterical. I managed to grab him immediately. He was very upset and all claws and hisses. He made no effort to scratch me or bite me but he wanted down and he didn't want any comforting. I was able to carry him out of Cougar Country without any interference from Mercury, who remained calmly lying down on his tower. Sharu took about fifteen minutes to settle down. He hissed at Tara when she tried to comfort him and he hissed at us also. I could smell burned hairs on him.

Tara became visibly upset when she



Arjan at 10 weeks

heard Sharu freak out. I was afraid she would try to climb out herself. She paced around nervously but I think she truly trusts us and depends on us, because she remained inside the compound.

Sharu was better after fifteen minutes, back to purring at me and allowing contact. All day long I would have to say he was a better-behaved cougar. I wonder if he lost some memory or if he had the equivalent of shock therapy.

Sunday, September 25, 1988

Yesterday we brought the brothers outside while we worked on their compound. We leashed up Tara and walked her over to be with them. They spent at least two hours together. Cinnabar and Arjan are definitely tolerating Tara better and they played comfortably with her today.

Sharu is so happy to see his mom Tara. He loves to jump up on her neck and grab her and he purrs so loud. This reunion has made him very purry and also friendlier to us. He is finally our little boy also. He turned out all right after all. He sure had us worried for a while, but I really think that is behind us now.

The brothers played in our home all morning and then we put them up in their playpen because we had to attend a meeting about the wild cougars of Arkansas. We

returned four hours later. They had made no attempt to escape confinement. They seem to only cry to get out of the playpen when they know we are there to hear it.

We let them out and Sharu and Arjan both peed on the rug. Bart was very disappointed. They have been very good lately about just peeing on the disposable bed pads we have placed all over the house.

Then we leash walked them to their new compound to exercise and play. Mostly I dragged them. They are still getting used to the leash. We also brought Tara over to visit.

We walked Mercury to Cougar Country. He doesn't even like to see the cubs. He doesn't stare intently at them; instead he walks away from them. I went into Cougar Country to visit Mercury and the cubs all whistled at me and ran along the fence line, ignoring their mother Tara. They were totally obsessed with me. I was flattered. Even Sharu was doing it.

Bart and I walked with Mercury around Cougar Country like the old days and left Tara to baby-sit with the brothers while we were gone. We trust Tara completely. Cinni and Arjan still scratch and bite her when she licks them too much, but she tolerates it completely. And we have seen her playing with them. She plays biting games also. I think it is important prey catching lessons. •

Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program

The members of the FCF Board of Directors are proud to announce that the following individuals have applied for and been accepted into the Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program. The board cannot stress enough the importance of participating in this program as it is proof positive to the legislators that make decisions which directly effect our ability to continue to own, breed, or exhibit our cats that we as an organization are committed to responsible ownership and excellence in the care of our charges. We hope more of our membership

will take advantage of this program to show their commitment personally.

The board has decided to allow both members of an FCF membership to register as a handler for the same \$30.00 fee if appropriate. However two applications must be submitted with supporting handler information provided for each member of the dual membership.

Further the board hopes that the membership will make every effort to participate in the Facility Accreditation Program. It is vital during these times of negative publici-

ty and restrictive regulatory climate that we show that we are taking the necessary steps to insure the quality of care for our animals as well as the safety of the general public. The application for both the Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program and the Facility Accreditation Program programs can be found on the FCF website www.the-fcf.com under husbandry.

Once again, congratulations to all of these participating members for their dedication to their cats. •

Robert L Boyce	Basic Level	9 years experience
Marcus Cook	Advanced Level	20 years experience
DeeAnna Lynn Croasmun	Basic Level	4 years experience
Lynn Culver	Advanced Level	20 years experience
Gary Dale Hardison	Basic Level	3 years experience
Harry Taylor Lackey	Advanced Level	12 years experience
Charlie Lopez	Basic Level	4 years experience
Michaelyn Marie Reeves . . .	Basic Level	7 years experience
Timothy John Stoffel	Basic Level	5 years experience
Robert L. Turner	Advanced Level	13 years experience
Laura K. Walker	Basic Level	3 years experience

Cougar Development DVD

Cougar Development covers a two and a half year period of research and behavior observation.

It is produced and shot by Lynn and Bart Culver at the Natural Order Animal Husbandry (NOAH) Feline Conservation Center.

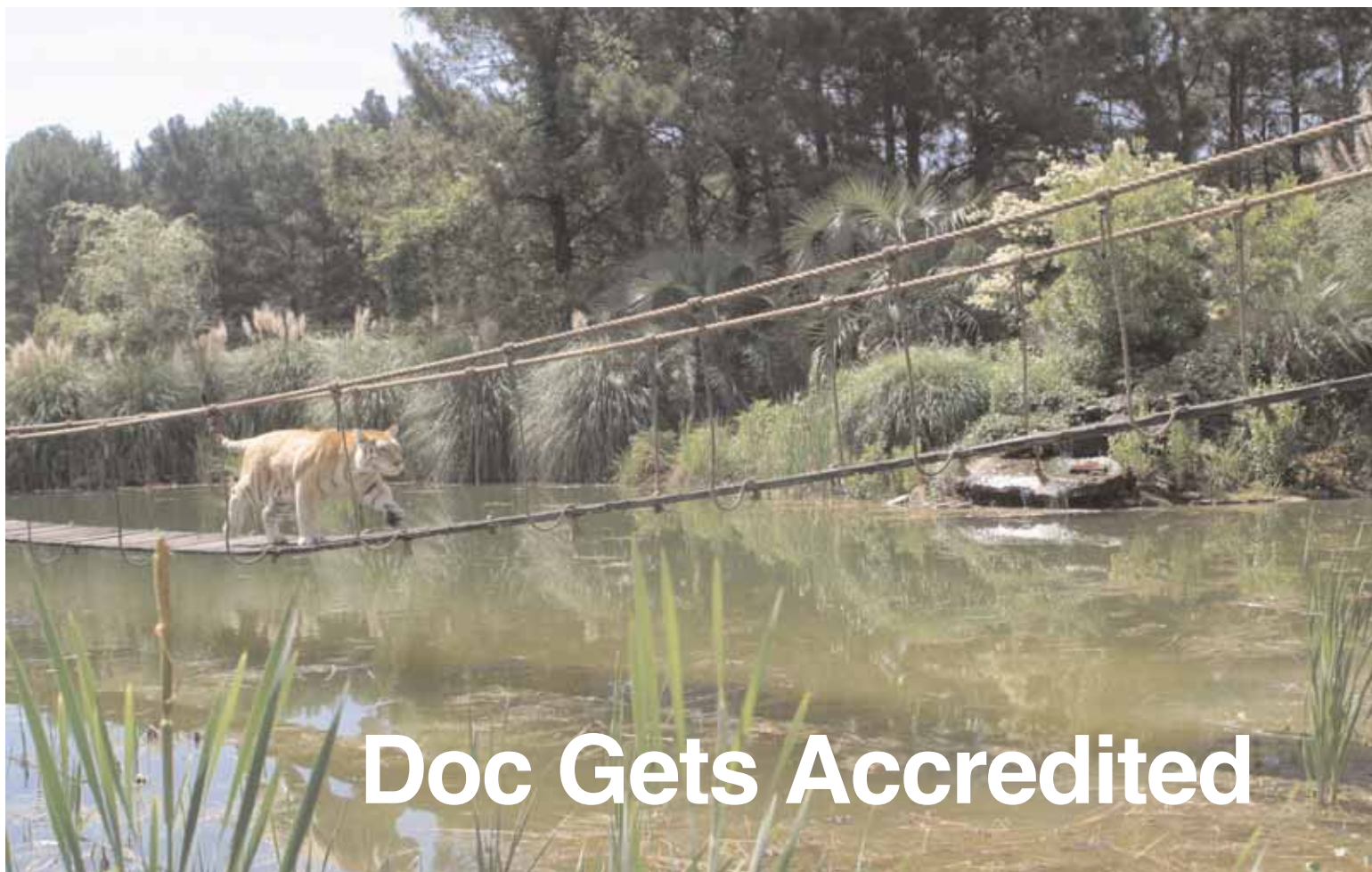
Shot in 1988 to 1990 with a video camera and now remastered on DVD, the amazing two hour program offers viewers entertainment as well insight into the stages of growth, behavior, and personality development of America's great predator, puma concolor.

This video contains amazing footage that could not have been captured without the close bond of love and trust existing between cougar and researcher. View-

ers of this video watch Tara's natural instincts guide her through her first delivery. Other scenes include Tara and her sons playing in the snow, the adolescent cougars running through their spring-fed watercourse, fantastic jumping demonstrations in a lively game of catfishing, and finally, the adult cougars walking with researchers through Cougar Country.

Cougar Development teaches you about the patience necessary to be a cougar mother, the sibling roughhousing which is a natural part of cougar behavior, the humor, good nature, and the incredible capacity for love that exists in these wondrous creatures. Order a copy today for only \$25.00. Mail check made out to FCF to: Cougar DVD, 7816 County Road 75 W, Shelburn, IN 47879.





Doc Gets Accredited

The FCF Accreditation Committee is proud to announce a new facility to be accredited. T.I.G.E.R.S. Preserve in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina operated by FCF member Dr. Bhagavan Antle has been certified as operating with excellent standards in feline facility and management.

The Institute of Greatly Endangered and Rare Species, T.I.G.E.R.S., is a 50-acre preserve and home to over 70 felines, many of them tigers. Bhagavan “Doc” Antle designed the preserve to provide enriched

habitats for the resident felines that enable the keepers, trainers, and employees of T.I.G.E.R.S. to perform routine feeding and cleaning chores and facility maintenance safely and effectively. Public safety is also addressed, since the facility is open for educational tours and filming.

T.I.G.E.R.S. features chain link fenced-in exercise areas between 1/2 and 1 acre in size that comprise a variety of habitats to hold mainly tigers and ligers. These landscaped enclosures adjoin a climate-controlled barn, customized with thirty-two interior cages. The concrete reinforced building is secure housing capable of withstanding hurricanes and severe weather.

The FCF Feline Facility Accreditation is awarded by an independent committee of five FCF members who are appointed by the FCF Board of Directors awards the FCF Feline Facility Directors Accreditation. The present committee consists of Kevin Chambers, chair, Doc Antle, Mitch Kalmanson, Richard Hahn, and Tom Har-

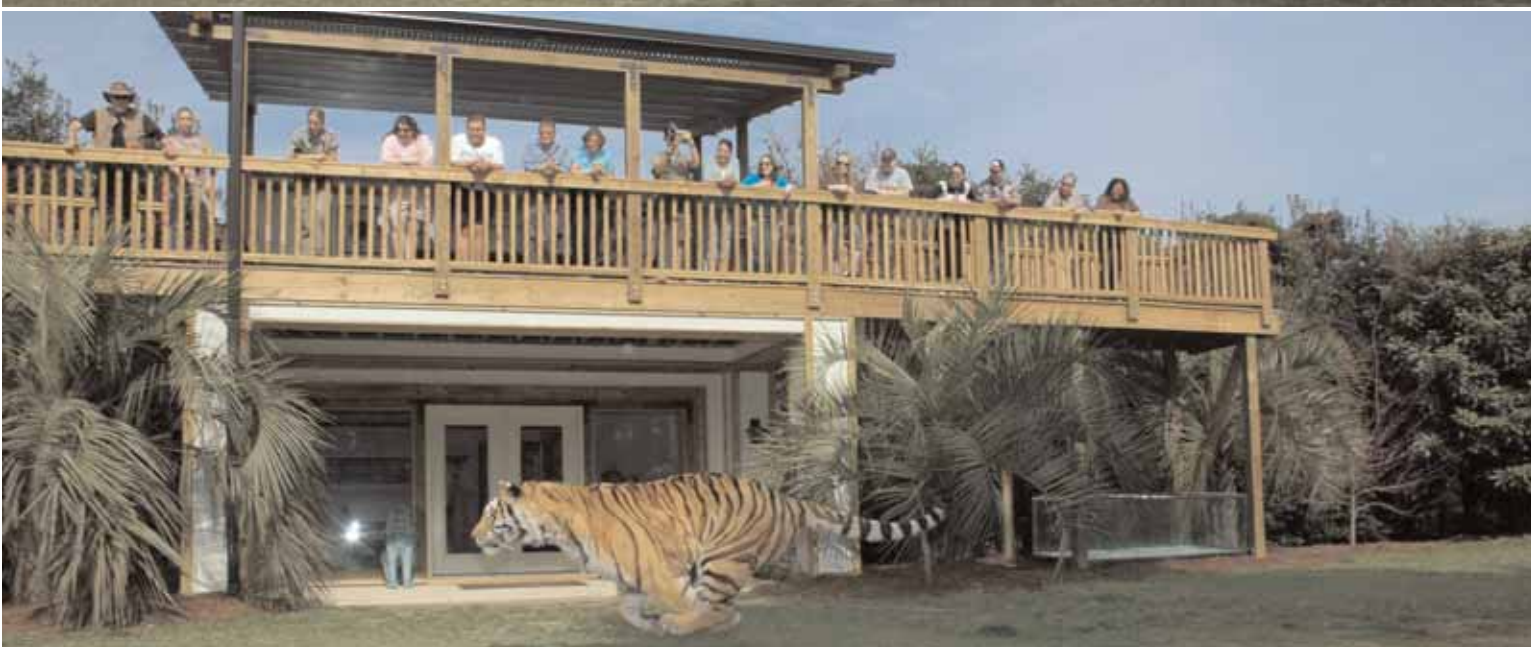
vey. These gentlemen have extensive knowledge and experience in feline husbandry and facility design. Doc Antle’s facility is the first accreditation committee member facility submitted to the review process.

Kevin Chambers, chairman of the committee, believes the committee takes this duty very seriously and close attention was paid to every detail of the T.I.G.E.R.S. application.

Chambers remarked, “This facility is well planned and well built and it is clear the cats are well cared for and visitors are safe. Doc’s experience level is extremely high. T.I.G.E.R.S. is a showplace that others should look at and aspire to.”

T.I.G.E.R.S. Preserve is open to the public for private tours. Visitors view a wide variety of animals, including, tiger, lion, liger, leopard, lynx, apes, orangutan, binturong, kangaroo, and more. Birds of prey are flown for the visitors as well. Each exciting personal experience is recorded in photos and DVD video. •





About FCF Facility Accreditation:

The Accreditation Committee reviews applications on a bimonthly basis. Deadlines for submission of applications to the Accreditation Committee are Jan. 1, March 1, May 1, July 1, Sept. 1, and Nov. 1. The applications will be copied and distributed to the rest of the committee by the 15th of that month. The Committee has until the 15th of the following month to review and

approve or reject the application. A two-thirds majority of the entire committee is required for approval.

An Accreditation Inspection Form can be printed off the FCF web site or requested from the secretary. Your facility must be inspected by your veterinarian, who then fills out the inspection form after viewing the facilities, cats, and documents. Once the

inspecting veterinarian has completed and signed the inspection form, the applicant is responsible for sending it along with copies of the documents and other requested materials, along with a \$30 (\$75 non-FCF member) Non-refundable processing fee. Mail check made out to Feline Conservation Federation to: FCF Accreditation, 7816 N County Road 75 W, Shelburn, IN 47879.

Cheetah Preservation Research Center USA Is Accredited

The Cheetah Preservation Research Center in Mooresville, Indiana is one of the latest facilities to be awarded FCF Feline Facility Accreditation by the accreditation committee. The non-profit incorporated center began in 1995 and presently houses five serval, three bobcat, and 35 domestic cats. The main focus of the USDA licensed facility is to conduct education outreach programs using a few of the bobcat and serval as ambassadors.

The facility sits on the Turner's 37-acre rural property and consists of a 900 square foot geo-thermal heated and cooled building that is divided into eight indoor compartments plus a food preparation and storage area. The kitchen has running hot and cold water, refrigerator, cabinets, and counters.

Bob installed an air filtration/purification system to keep the air healthy for the cats. When asked what Bob is most proud of he replied, "I am really pleased with the way I suspended the walls from the ceiling and left about two and a half inches of space to enable me to clean and mop the floors and eliminate the build-up of hair and debris

that can often accumulate against walls. There are eight drains in the building and the floor slopes so that I can wash the floors and excess water can drain away."

Outdoors the cats have the benefit of three runs that are 10 x 80 feet long and another run that is 12 x 100 feet long. This allows the servals and bobcats room to really get up a head of speed as they chase balls and play with each other. Surrounding the facility is an eight-foot perimeter fence.

Bob shares another idea he incorporated for his exterior outdoor enclosure walls. "Rather than dig a channel and bury the wire in the ground subjecting it to moisture rot, Bob says, "I used a two by four board as a guide to measure off four inch increments and I drilled holes in the wood, laid it

flush with the fence, and then pounded eighteen inch long pieces of ½ inch rebar into the ground through the hole guides to lock the walls to the ground and prevent animals from digging in or out. It works

great and the USDA inspector loved the idea."

In addition to housing the resident cats, Bob is working on a high-speed cheetah exercise system and hopes to finish fencing in a 160-foot diameter ten-foot tall wall with a three-foot recurve this year. Bob has designed a unit that will enable an operator to program a

random course for a suspended lure to be chased by cats. Since there are presently no cheetahs at the facility, the resident small cats will get the fun of testing out this invention. •



This is not Bob's home. This building with its attached runs (seen on the left) is home to cats only.

Mike Friese



Karl

Stan and Betsy Whitlock of Belle Hollow Farms and Exotics are pleased to announce the arrival of "Karl." Karl is a ten-year-old Geoffroy's cat from Zoo Jihlava in the Czech Republic. We were fortunate to acquire this cat on an exchange program arranged by the Czech American Consortium for Small Felines-David and Simona Sparandara with the added assistance of Lynn Culver and Kevin Chambers who acted as our US import broker. We hope to breed Karl to our US bred girls to bring new bloodlines to the gene pool which is extremely limited in this country and to provide Zoo Jihlava with a US bred male to enhance their gene pool as well.

Geoffroy's cats are small South American cats that are full of personality but can be quite tenacious, making them suitable only for persons willing to accept that they retain wild personalities. These cats are CITES 1 and as a result very difficult to import thus making the ability to maintain a captive bred viable breeding population more difficult.

Being only four to twelve pounds in weight, they are not big draws at zoos and as a result are not being heavily propagated. Add to their plight, there is an emerging market for hybrids known as safari cats, which has taken many male Geoffroy's out of the breeding gene pool. Lynn Culver currently retains the US studbook and handles the SES (Species Enhancement Strategy) for the species. New breeding programs by responsible private facilities are the primary hope for retaining a viable captive bred population of these beautiful small cats. •

Going once! Going twice! Sold!

The FCF ebay Fund Raiser Store has had great success since its opening in November 2005. Little did we realize the store would generate funding greatly needed so quickly. We were able to generate the appropriate funding needed for transport two precious tigers.

After noticing the traffic being generated to our store and discovering our purpose, several ebay sellers have donated items for our continued fund raiser store or have given us excellent discounted prices to supply our store with auctioned items. As one seller stated, "you guys are the troopers, saving and preserving our precious wildlife. We have the utmost respect for you." And yet another, "knowing our product line is going to a good cause in helping the big cats, is reward enough for us."

Several hot items were the collector's plates and the painted rocks! The painted rocks are custom made for the FCF ebay Fund Raiser store, as well as the custom switch plates and the Italian charms. The FCF DVD and the Cougar Development DVD are also popular items.



Can you supply the FCF ebay Fund Raiser Store with hand-made items? We are always in need of new items!

Come and join in the fun of trying to win an auction! All proceeds from the auction go to helping felines in need!

<http://fcffundraiser.com/>

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Cats
Snakes
Birds
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Rusty Spotted Cat Field Report

Use of agriculture areas by the rusty spotted cat (*Prionailurus rubiginosis*) in Panna Dist, Madhya Pradesh, India.

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1) Back ground information, prior studies and rationale behind the investigation.

Between October 2005 and March 2006 rusty spotted cats have been sighted and positively identified on seven different occasions.

Data on wildlife species was collected while on night safari (coordinates : N24°47.082'E 080°07.759', conducted by the Sabbal Shah Eco-camp, Jinnah Village, Ajaygadh Dist, Panna, Madhya Pradesh, in a patch of mixed dry deciduous forest that existed around the eco-camp. Sightings of animal species observed during the night safaris, habitat they occurred, other ecological factors like moon shine, temperature, time of their occurrence, and behaviour exhibited by the sighted animals was recorded in a data sheet.

Data collected over a period of five months (October 2005 to March 2006) reveals occurrence of many carnivorous species of which the rusty spotted cat (*Prionailurus rubiginosis*) is one. Rusty spotted cats were sighted on seven different occasions. (As individual rusty spotted cats are not differentiated. We may have captured the same individual on more than one occasion.)

The occurrence of the rusty spotted cats close to or in agriculture areas on six of the seven sighting occasions and on one occasion in an open clearing close to a dried up stream bed instigated the need to initiate this investigation. *Felis chaus*, jungle cats, which prefer open habitats, are also known to frequent agriculture areas. Dr. Shomita Mukherjee mentions the beneficial support the jungle cats get by foraging for prey in small mammal rich agriculture landscapes. However nothing is known about the habi-



Pic 1: A vegetative hedge comprising of local scrub and thorn bush separates the fields on the left and the forest lands on the right of the photograph.

tat preference, prey preference, or other ecological and biological aspects of the rusty spotted cats in the wild.

A study to investigate the occurrence of the rusty spotted cats in privately owned

agriculture areas in Panna Dist, M.P was initiated in Oct 2006.

Objectives of the investigation:

1) The occurrence of rusty spotted cats in



Pic 2: Rusty spotted cats are commonly sighted in the agricultural fields at night and actively foraging. They however don't seem to be denning in these areas but venture into the forest seen in the far end of the picture.



Pic 3: Feral cat 1

agriculture areas.

- 2) Level of dependence on agricultural areas by the rusty spotted cats.
- 3) It is a known fact that they forage in agricultural lands. What does their diet comprise of?
- 4) Prey species found in farmlands.
- 5) If there are any visible or immediate threats to the species survival in these agriculture areas?

Study design and results so far:

Agricultural areas that are privately owned exist along the Ken River that flows in Panna. These lands are wedged between the river on one side and forested areas, which are under the jurisdiction of the forest department of Madhya Pradesh, on the other. Between October 2006 and December 2006, with the permission of the land owners, 11 agriculture farms amounting to an approximate area of nearly 85 acres have been systematically surveyed for the presence of animals.

To establish the presence of the rusty spotted cats in these areas, four Cam-Trakker passive photo camera traps have been used. The photo traps functioned for a period of 59 days resulting in 217 trap nights. The traps have been installed after carefully surveying the farmlands and in majority of cases after having established positive cat activity (scats, spoor, or kills). Unfortunately the photo trapping session did not result in any positive rusty spotted cat pictures but a few feral cats have been photographed. Two factors may have influenced the trapping exercise.

A) Rusty spotted cats are very small c.1 foot in length and c.20-25cm in height and weigh about 1 kilogram. At this size they are very vulnerable to predation by a whole guild of carnivorous animals and birds. They are killed by feral cats and feral dogs (pers observation) at the agricultural landscape level and also predated by raptors. A hawk eagle was observed to have picked up a rusty spotted cat. This coincides with the fact that all the sightings recorded of the rusty spotted cats in Panna region occurred only after night fall. By being active during the nocturnal hours, the rusty spotted cat may be avoiding many raptors that could easily predate on it and also the feral dogs and cats which are more diurnal and crepuscular in their activity. It was also observed that in all the instances when the rusty spotted cat was sighted under spotlights the cats seldom ran into cover but froze and usually crouched making them hard to detect. The rusty spotted cats may be using this freeze and crouch mechanism to avoid detection, as a predatory avoidance strategy. This needs to be further investigated and verified. To sum this up, the rusty spotted cats are very wary while they are active and hence may have escaped detection by photo traps.

B) The passive Cam-Trakker photo traps that I use are nearly seven years old and their sensitivity to detect very small mammals like the rusty spotted cats may be diminishing. However they effectively photographed feral cats, which are about two feet in length and 40-45 cm in height, in the same study area. This leaves me with a question that I need to figure out “Are

the camera traps ideal for generating consistent photographs of very small mammal life like the rusty spotted cats?” The odd photo capture is very likely, but can they be used to generate photos consistently to be able to use the devices for anything more than establishing “presence.” Are the devices efficient enough to be used for generating enough capture histories to be able to estimate relative densities? This performance function of the photo traps needs to be discussed with the manufacturers and other researchers using the devices for similar purposes.

Feral cats, palm civets, small Indian and grey mongoose, jackal, and rusty spotted cats are the six carnivore species actively using the agricultural lands in the study areas. Large owls also actively forage near agricultural area.

Prey identified in cat scats collected



Pic 4: Palm civet



Pic 5: Feral cat 2

from agricultural areas:

67 cat scats were collected from 85 acres of farm land in a systematic manner between Oct 2006 and March 2007. Due to the difficulty of separating rusty spotted scats from those of other cats at the field level scats were sent to a lab where they will be analyzed at a later stage. While collecting, care has been taken to pick up scats that only occurred along with cat spoor. At the field level 14 cat scats were analyzed to understand dietary preference. Also three stomachs of dead specimens, one of a rusty spotted cat and two belonging to feral cats were analyzed for prey consumed and the details are listed below.

Prey species identified in the cat scats and three cat stomachs collected in the farm lands around Panna.

Rodents:

Spiny field mouse (*mus platyhris*)
Indian field Mouse (*mus booduga*)

Reptiles:

Skink
Unrecognised snake

Others:

One unidentified bird, unidentified insects and plant material also found in the scats.

Some of the insects found in the agricultural fields and preyed by cats are listed below.

Insects:

Alfalfa Ladybird (*subcoccinella viginti-quatuor-punctata*)
Alleculid Beetle (*omophilus lepturoides*)
Auger beetle (*bostrychopsis parallela*)
Bark beetle (*hylurgops glabratus*)
Asian gypsy moth (*lymantria dispar*)
Date palm thrips (*palmiothrips palmae*)
Indian meal moth (*plodia interpunctella*)
Thrips - unrecognised species

This report does not try to quantify prey consumed nor does it try to establish prey preference at this stage because 1) not all the scats that have been collected are analyzed. 2) For any robust estimations prey specific information should be collected from different seasons in a given year.

When I return back to Panna later this year more prey related information will be collected and from a different season. This should give us a comprehensive understanding of the prey preferences of the rusty spotted cats in the agricultural areas around Panna, Central India.

Visible and immediate threats to the survival of the rusty spotted cat in and around the agricultural lands in Panna.

1. Rodenticide usage is limited and not a problem: All the 14 private farmland owners were met and informally interviewed to understand their farming practices and if they used chemical agents like rodenticides during certain times of the year to control rodent populations. The results are very encouraging because none of the farmers used any chemicals to eliminate rodents. The only chemical used is urea (a nitrogen compound) to boost vegetative growth. However what needs to be established is the rodenticide usage practice of the farmers on a larger landscape level. Farmers in and around Panna's forests sow the seeds twice a year only. First with the onset of monsoon in June-July and again in November. March is when they harvest their crops. The agricultural fields are left fallow from April through June and this is also the hottest time of the year when temperatures rise to over 45°C. How this extreme heat and lack of water and nutrition in the farms lands effect rodent populations and other prey of the rusty spotted cat need to be investigated.

2. Feral cats and feral dog's presence and activity were recorded periodically in the agricultural areas. Presence of other small mammals like small Indian mongoose, grey mongoose, palm civet, Indian fox, and small Indian civets were recorded on the traps in and around agricultural areas. Feral cats and feral dogs are known to dispose small wild mammals. Fox, small indian civet, Rusty spotted cat, small Indian mongoose were found killed by cats and dogs during the study period. The uncon-



Pic 6: Indian field mouse and the Pic 7: Spiny field mouse are found in the agricultural lands.

trolled and numerous numbers of feral cats and dogs and lack of any existing method to control their numbers is one of the biggest threats to smaller mammals like the rusty spotted cat in and around Panna.

Note: This is not a final report. It is an ongoing study and periodically all the contributors will be updated with the progress reports.

Acknowledgement:

I thank the FCF for the help and support to carry out small wildcat work in India. The M.P. Forest Department and its personnel have been very cooperative in issuing permits. I also thank my friends, Shyamendra Singh and his wife Miss Bhavana Kumari, for hosting me and for all the encouragement. My regards to the field staff with out whose help I would not be able to achieve half as much and all those superstars who have not been mentioned, you know with out your support and love its just not possible to move ahead in tough India. •

Minutes of FCF Board Of Director's Meeting on March 29, 2007

The FCF Board of Directors meeting on the FCF Forums was called to order on March 29, 2007 by President Lynn Culver. C. Bohning, K. Chambers, C. Clendinen, L. Culver, I. Satterfield, E. Shaw, M. Stinner, B. Turner, B. Werner participated.

Our first order of business was to appoint a new secretary. The candidates were Nancy Nighswander, Raven Simons, and Elizabeth Whitlock. Votes were Nighswander 3, Simons 0, Whitlock 6. Whitlock was appointed.

JB Anderson has resigned as the Lotty Chair. Lynn Culver moved to appoint Bob Turner as the Lotty Chair, motion was seconded by Brian Werner. Motion passed with 6 votes.

Kevin Chambers is entering all financial data into QuickBooks online and all BoD may access this information.

Carolyn Clendinen will need additional membership handbooks printed as soon as they are updated.

Kevin Chambers reminded the board of our policy for reimbursements when items are purchased with personal funds. Send receipt or a copy of receipt for the item(s) to the treasurer and note what the item was for. When requesting stipends for travel to Felid TAG conferences, legislative hearings, FCF membership drives, etc, a report to the board usually in a form suitable for publication in the FCF Journal is required along with the receipts before reimbursement will be made.

Lynn presented an offer from Marcus Cook to host an FCF promotional outreach educational booth in conjunction with the Royal White Tiger traveling display that is featured in 17 states and viewed by millions of people yearly. Booth would gain FCF national mainstream America exposure, donations, and raise funds through sales of plushy tigers.

A motion was made by Lynn Culver and seconded by Evelyn Shaw to add "Any further violations of the list rules subjects the member to removal from the The_FCF list" onto the FCF moderation policy. The motion passed with 6 votes.

Kevin Chambers submitted a first quarter financial report. He also advised the board to notify him if FCF property changes hands in order for him to be able to account for it.

Kevin Chambers has been in touch with Bobby Hartsliel. Bobby has gifted FCF a free stay at his Savannah Cheetah Foundation in South Africa for FCF to use as a conservation

grants fund raiser. This gift could be promoted in conjunction with the traveling FCF outreach booth. The board is awaiting further information before acting upon the offer.

Evelyn Shaw gave a legislative update. West Virginia and Indiana did not pass. Washington did pass and is at the governor for signature. Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Oregon, Texas and North Carolina all have bills or regulations that have been introduced that would have a negative impact on felines.

Lynn Culver attended a seminar to improve management skills on March 28. She has been working on target mailings for the states that have negative legislation.

Kevin Chambers presented the 2007 budget.

A motion was made Lynn Culver and seconded by Mindy Stinner that the board approve the Field Representative Program 8.1 to 8.13. The motion passed with 6 votes. This information is uploaded on the FCF web site under Programs and Policies.

8. FCF Field Representative Program

8.1 The purpose of the FCF Field Directors Program is to support its members and private exotic feline ownership. This is accomplished by providing a network for training members to interact with legislators and media persons on three fronts: the local, state, and federal levels.

8.2 The FCF Field Representative Program shall be operated under the guidance of the FCF Legislation Director.

8.3 There shall be six Regional Directors appointed by the FCF Board of Directors, each residing in and representing one of the following geographical regions:

Region 1: California, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Hawaii, Alaska

Region 2: Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico

Region 3: Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota

Region 4: Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky

Region 5: Maine, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia

Region 6: Colorado, Utah, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas

8.4 Each Regional Director is responsible to identify exotic feline related issues, both good and bad, in their region. They will act as a liaison between the FCF board and the media and legislators.

8.5 To be eligible for a Regional Director or State Representative position, the individual must be, and remain current, as an FCF member; they must be able to attend and direct various meetings electronically or in some cases in person; they are expected to present an annual report to the Board of Directors at the FCF conference; they must establish clear communications with the chain of command both up and down and provide needed advice and open door accessibility to information; they must be willing to attend professional developmental training seminars as called upon by the board.

8.6 The Regional Directors are able to engage federal legislators and committees as needed and may also engage the state levels providing that they do so along with the advisement of the State Representative for the state involved.

8.7 Each of the six Regional Directors shall nominate a State Representative for each state in their region. The nomination shall also include a biography of the nominee's capabilities, training, etc. The other five Regional Directors shall make the appointment by a majority vote, with the nominating Regional Director abstaining. The states of Florida, Texas and California may be sub divided into areas for multiple State Representatives. If sub-divided, each subdivision will be clearly identified by geographic region of the state.

8.8 State Representatives will be responsible for organizing state working groups within their state to increase local involvement in exotic feline related issues. They are not authorized to engage federal levels of legislation nor national media platforms but may be called to do so on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval by the FCF Board.

8.9 Each State Representative is required to appoint a secretary to take minutes of any meetings which shall be forwarded to the Regional Directors and the FCF Secretary for filing within 90 days after each meeting. A copy of the minutes is to be kept on file with the State Representatives.

8.10 Anyone interested may attend a state working group meeting once as a guest, but to join the state working group, they are expected to first join the FCF. The state representative can waive that requirement for persons working

FOCUS ON NATURE® *Insight into the lives of animals* PALLAS' CAT

The temperature plummets below zero as the sky turns from blue to indigo. Persistent, frigid winds howl past a protected burrow hidden deep within the rocks. With a well-insulated, thick coat of luxuriously long fur, a 10-pound, adult Pallas' cat, or manul, (*otocolobus manul*) emerges stealthily and makes his way around rocks, grasses, and snow drifts. Large, low-set ears allow him to hear prey in the dark and peer over rocks and vegetation without being seen. He can usually ambush something delicious to eat, such as a rodent, small mammal, or bird.

The rocky deserts and steppes of central Asia, particularly Mongolia, provide habitat for this small wildcat and its prey species. Summer rains below have turned to snow here at the 12,000-foot elevation. Interestingly, the long winter months generally produce very little precipitation. Although hunters don't come around much these days, the ranchers continue to use rodenticides to protect the grain used to feed their livestock. This, in turn, has diminished the once-abundant pika populations which now threatens the survival of the Pallas' cat.

Named for the German naturalist Peter Pallas, who discovered the wildcat in Russia, the elusive, solitary Pallas' cat continues to be a challenge to study in the wild. As with most of the small wildcat species, scientists must use camera-trapping, radiotelemetry, and fecal analysis to study population densities and range sizes. Dur-



ing the last decade, a handful of manuls were taken from Russia as a founder population to breed in zoos.

Initially disappointing, felid conservationists have since improved reproductive rates and disease management of the Pallas' cat resulting in a high degree of success with captive breeding.

Even in the 21st century little is known about the small wildcats, weighing less than 45 pounds and comprising three-quarters of the world's 37 cat species. However, as the public's understanding and interest blos-

som, starting with a visit to the local zoo, conservation programs there along with organizations such as the Small Cat Conservation Alliance can garner support needed to study these elusive cats. Ultimately, conservation through understanding benefits all.

© 2007 Rochelle Mason. Rochelle Mason raises awareness about endangered species through her paintings, columns and traveling exhibits. Her wildcat paintings and prints are sold through www.Rmasonfinearts.com •

Board Minutes cont.

with the group who are involved in non-cat species issues.

8.11 An up-to-date roster of working group attendees shall be on file and roll call should be called at the start of the meeting. All attendees that are unknown must provide a legal ID to attend. All confidential information shall stay with the state working group itself and only provided to the State Representatives, Regional Directors, and FCF Board of Directors.

8.12 The Regional Representative shall alert the FCF Legislation Director to any concerns that may be deemed important or of concern. The Legislative Director will

then be responsible for relaying the information to that state working group.

8.13 All Regional Directors and State Representatives must present media presentations to the FCF Public Relations Director for prior approval. Television and radio presentations may be approved via telephone before interviews until the State Representatives are formally trained in media presentations.

A motion was made by Brian Werner and seconded by Mindy Stinner to dissolve the branches. Two yes votes, the motion failed.

Moved by Brian Werner and seconded by Evelyn Shaw that any renewal or mem-

bership can be denied if the member is found to have caused harm to the FCF mission or policies or who have been convicted of animal welfare violations. The FCF board may address the membership status of persons and the Executive Board will open discussion on the matter and ultimately vote. A majority vote is required to reject membership or renewal. Two yes votes, the motion failed.

Mindy Stinner has begun appointing members to the FCF Conservation Committee.

President Culver closed the meeting on April 6, 2007. •



Your best Art



Counterclockwise from top left:

Pallas' cat © 2001 Cara Mitten • Predatory Pallas' © Roz Gibson • Pallas' eating an ice cod cone © 2001 Karena Klieforth • Pallas' cat © 2007 Sarah Friese • Friendly looking predatory Pallas' © 2002 Heather Riesen. All reprinted with permission.





Pallas' cat mom seems to catch a bit of attitude with her youngsters. Illustration © 2002 Tracy Reynolds. See more Pallas' art inside the back cover.

FCF Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 12, 2007: Husbandry Course. NEW LOCATION! The course at the Catoctin Wildlife Preserve has been moved. Students who cannot travel to the new location will be refunded their fees. We regret this development, but a tragic head-on auto collision has seriously injured Catoctin founders Richard and Mary Ann Hahn. The new location is Ashville Game Farm, 468 Lick Springs Rd, Greenwich, NY 12834. 8:00am - 5:00pm. Cost: \$65 FCF members/ \$95.00 non-members. Species exhibited include lion, tiger, cougar, leopard, and more. Questions: call Louise Fairbanks, Secretary, Ashville Game Farm 518-695-4337 and reserve by phone. Registrants can pay at the gate, but you must pre-register by phone. Motel information: Sunshine Inn (2 miles away), 12624 ST RT 40, Greenwich, NY, (518) 692-2997 • Olde Saratoga Motor Inn (5-7 miles away), 173 Broadway, Schuylerville, NY 12871, (518) 695-9997 • Holiday Inn Saratoga Springs (about 15 miles away), 232 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, (518) 584-4550.

Wednesday, July 25: Husbandry Course. Southfork Hotel, 1600 North Central Expressway, Plano, TX 75074. Cost: \$95.00 for non members and \$65.00 for FCF members. Hotel info below. More details inside.

July 26-28: Annual FCF Convention. Dallas, Texas. Hotel: Southfork Hotel, 1600 North Central Expressway, Plano, TX 75074. \$79.00 double occupancy. Convention early registration \$150. Details inside. To reserve your room, call the hotel reservations department at 972-578-8555 or the toll-free number, 866-665-2680. To receive the special rates, FCF attendees should identify the group as Feline Conservation Federation. All reservations should be made by July 17, 2007.

