



**Feline Conservation Federation**  
January/February 2011 • Volume 55, Issue 1





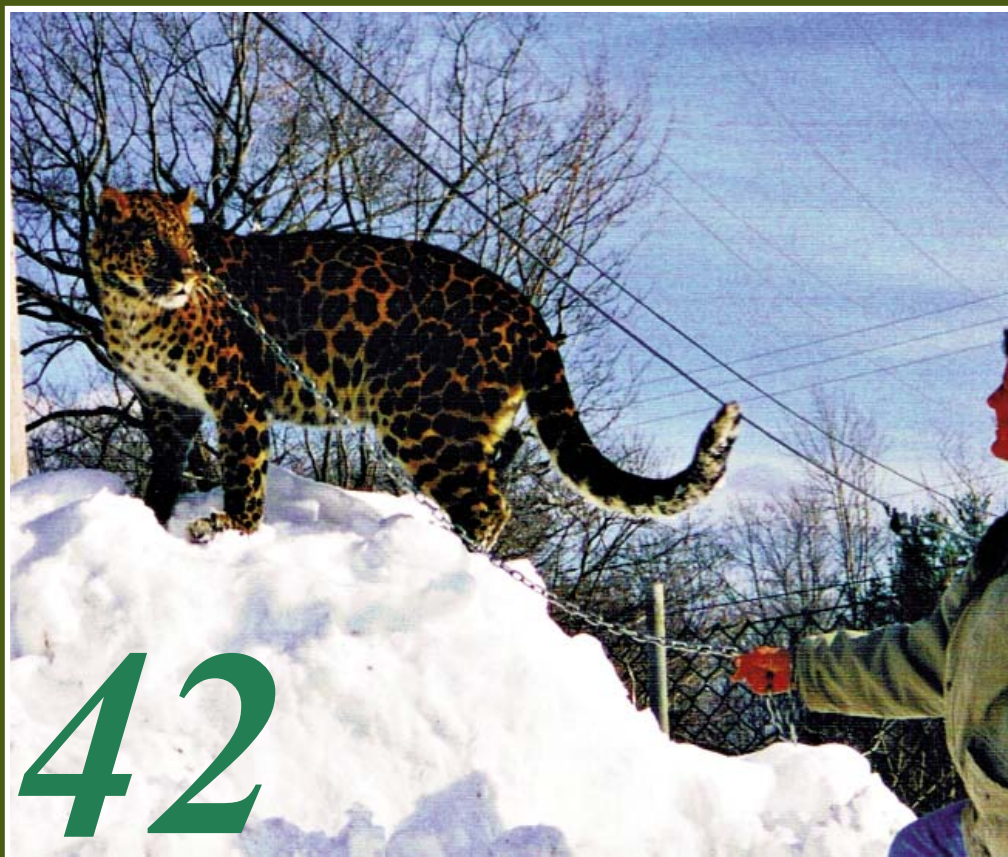
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## COVER PHOTO:

Gracie Geoffroy's cat catches snowflakes on her tongue. Photo by Kim Pyne.





## TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE FCF JOURNAL AND JOIN FCF IN ITS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

A membership to FCF entitles you to six issues of the Journal, the back-issue DVD, an invitation to FCF husbandry and wildlife education courses and annual convention, and participation in our online discussion group. FCF works to improve captive feline husbandry and ensure that habitat is available. FCF supports the conservation of exotic felines through captive and wild habitat protection, and provides support for captive husbandry and breeding programs and public education.

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The Feline Conservation Federation publishes the Journal bimonthly. The FCF is non-profit, (Federal ID#59-2048618) non-commercial, and international in membership, devoted to the welfare and conservation of exotic felines.

The Journal publishes articles on exotic feline conservation and husbandry, management, and regulatory and legislative issues affecting ownership for our members. The author's point of view does not necessarily represent the point of view of the organization. Reproduction of any material in the Journal may not be made without the written permission of the original copyright owners and/or copyright owner FCF.

Letters to the editor and guest editorials are also published.

Display advertisement space is available at the following prices: \$10 business card, \$25.00 quarter page, \$50.00 half page, and \$100 full-page ad.

Submission deadline for articles and advertisements is the 10th of even numbered months. Please submit all photos and articles to the Journal Managing Editor. High Resolution photos and articles may be emailed to lynneculver@hughes.net, or send by postal service to 141 Polk 664, Mena, AR 71953.



Feline Conservation Federation



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. The worst part about the holidays being over is that we jump right into the legislative season. This year will no doubt bring about more challenges to our ability to keep and breed wildcats. We all must be vigilant and keep an eye on our respective state legislature. The FCF as an organization will work with our members and comment on proposals to back up our members, but remember, the most effective lobbying comes from the citizens of the state. Rob Johnson and his legislative committee are available, so don't hesitate to call or write them for advice. FCF members need to contact their legislators outside of the legislative session and introduce themselves. A legislator will take the time to listen to a constituent rather than someone from another state. Oklahoma FCF members have been in close contact with their legislators for several years now, and this kind of relationship helped them to stave off bad legislation last year. Now they are working with legislators to introduce their own positive legislation. The best defense is a good offense.

It is disheartening to hear that the outgoing Ohio governor Strickland has issued an emergency order restricting the ownership of "dangerous" animals. The definition of "dangerous" is all the big cats, plus bobcat and lynx. The emergency prohibits ownership, breeding, and transfer, and only exempts AZA zoos and non-profit, non-commercial sanctuaries. The FCF submitted recommendations last September after the governor signed the infamous back-door deal with HSUS and Ohio Farm Bureau. The FCF letter to Mike Eckhardt, Ohio Dept. of Agriculture, and Mike Shelton, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, agencies that would be in charge of rules and enforcement, stated, in part:

The FCF strongly urges Ohio to recognize that commercially licensed facilities that are following the guidelines set by the Animal Welfare Act and Ohio state laws should not be put out of business, as this will be harmful to not only the lives of the captive felines, but also the facilities holding them, and the local communities as well.

Any regulations or legislation proposed should exempt those already federally or state licensed and regulated, and allows for their continued operation, and should also allow new facilities to come into

existence in the future, under the state or federal licensing guidelines. Ohio should strive to be part of the captive habitat needed for the protection, and propagation, and educational display of wild feline species.

Respectfully,  
Lynn Culver  
Executive Director, Feline Conservation Federation

Just one day after the emergency order was drafted, a permanent order was proposed to take effect at the end of the 90-day temporary order. Polly Britton and the Ohio Association of Animal Owners have offered valuable advice to make sure this 90-day order is not made permanent. Call incoming Governor John Kasich at (614) 824-2017 and email him at john@kasich-forohio.com and urge him to amend this rule to allow USDA and state licensed facilities to continue to conduct business. Don't wait!

There will be a public hearing on this rule change at the Ohio Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review. Ohio FCF members and their friends and family need to attend this hearing and testify how this rule will affect them. This will happen quickly, possibly even before this *Journal* reaches you, so the FCF legislative committee will be contacting Ohio members by phone and email about this critical matter.

The FCF organization is working to educate Ohio agencies and representatives on the harm to conservation and commerce this extreme order will cause. As a back-up plan, the FCF will attempt to add FCF accredited facilities to the list of exemptions. I strongly urge every wildcat owner in Ohio (actually everywhere) to log into the FCF members-only website and download the accreditation materials and being the process of having your facility FCF accredited.

I would like to con-

gratulate Debi Willoughby and Patty Perry, whose facilities have become the latest FCF accredited facilities. Remember that you don't have to be a huge facility to become accredited. Debi is a prime example of this. Anyone can be accredited as long as you fulfill the requirements. Speaking of accreditation, Tom Harvey stepped down last month after several years of service.

On a different note, I hope everyone is making plans to attend the FCF convention June 8-11 in Orlando. This promises to be one of the biggest and best conventions ever. Several well known guest speakers are being courted. FCF member and renowned animal trainer, Joel Slaven, has graciously offered his home and facilities to host the FCF Friday field trip and 40th anniversary celebration. His feline enclosures are inspiring. He and his trainers will have several animal ambassadors of many species out for interaction. Don't delay in registering and booking your room. There is a good chance that if you wait and don't reserve a room by the cut off date of May 17th, you may not be able to get a room and it definitely will not be at the discount price if you do.

Kevin Chambers

### ACCREDITATION BOARD OPENING

The FCF board is accepting applications for this position. The committee reviews applications and approves or rejects the application. If you are interested, please send me an email or letter (contact information is on page 3). Please state: 1. Your name, address, telephone number, and email address. 2. The number of years of exotic feline husbandry experience you have. 3. The type of experience, i.e. breeder, exhibitor, employee of another facility, etc. List all that apply. 4. Species that you have worked with and approximate number of cats. 5. Any other qualifications that make you eligible for this position. This is a very important position and applicants need to have a wide range of experience since the committee receives applications from the homeowner with one pet cat to the facility with hundreds of big cats. Please get your application in as soon as possible.



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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Lynn Culver

The FCF is getting off to a great start this year with two Wildlife Conservation Educator courses, as well as a Basic Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry course and the 40th anniversary of the FCF Convention being scheduled in Florida.

On February 26th, at the Jungle Island Park in Miami, Florida, a special presentation of the educators course will be coupled with two live wildlife shows and an opportunity to speak with and question the presenters of the "Tale of the Tiger" show. This is a great opportunity to escape the winter blues and cabin fever and combine it with continuing education and feline networking in the warmth of the Florida sunshine. See you there! Look for more details on page 17 of this *Journal* and hurry up and register to attend.

For the 40th anniversary of the FCF annual convention, we will meet in Orlando, Florida, June 8 through 11. The Husbandry Course and Wildlife Educators Course will be taught on June 7th. Mark your calendar and plan to attend. Read all about it on page 26. A registration form is included with this *Journal*, or you can register and pay with PayPal online. When you are looking for your flights, don't forget to use Goodsearch and Goodshop, and purchase your ticket using your Capital One card. These are all ways you can help the FCF raise funds for your benefit.

By visiting Florida twice this year, the FCF will pick up many new members, giving the FCF a stronger voice in regulatory issues. Florida has been reviewing their regulations for the past few years. It is increasingly more expensive and difficult to obtain and keep a permit for wild felines. Outspoken anti-exotic animal

fanatics have mastered manipulating the ignorant masses, and agencies get flooded with canned comments that are outnumbering those of the stakeholders. There is more reason than ever to get involved in FCF programs, such as handler registration and facility accreditation, to help this organization increase its effectiveness.

Several USDA-licensed members with fenced-in habitats for their large cats have recently been cited as non-compliant. Their USDA inspectors are requiring that they raise their fence heights. The common theme is that fence heights for tigers must be greater than 12 feet. I would not be surprised if the Florida Fish and Wildlife Department also began proposing changes for large cats. I need all FCF members to contact me if their USDA inspector cites them for an enclosure that previously was acceptable. We need to collect this information.

Inside this *Journal* is another great mix. To continue the theme during the last month of the Year of the Tiger, we have two tiger submissions: one by Dr. William Smith, linguistic anthropologist and zoo archaeologist, and then a book review of John Valliant's *The Tiger*. Two new facilities, Wildlife Conservation and Environmental Education and Jungle Encounters are now FCF accredited members, and their achievements are reported in this *Journal*. Debi Willoughby also takes us through her feline evolution in her story, "Nitro to Spirit." We have an update on Rare Species Fund support of habitat in Indonesia. Jim Sanderson closes in on a building site for the Andean Cat Conservation Center. Marian Holmes gives us news of her predator education and the latest on her conservation breeding of the black-footed cat. Her report is a com-

PELLING example of the necessity for captive populations of any species to be large enough to withstand genetic losses. Our "Blast from the Past" is about a species that will probably never again be seen in America, the marbled cat. Anthony Giordano shares his passion for jaguarundi and his research of this feline in Texas. Devoted pet bobcat owner J.W. Everitt shares his amazing feline friend Bob, in story and in poem. This bond of love works both ways, and Teresa Shaffer tells a true story of a serval's devotion to "his" people. Finally, Kimberly Wiacek-Richards introduces herself and gives us some Facebook pointers that can help the FCF.

I know that times are hard, money is in short supply, and we are all overworked. But if each of us does just a little bit and gives just a little bit, the burden will be lighter and the results more rewarding.

Right now, the FCF Wildcat Safety Net Fund is in need of financial support. Last year, it awarded over \$1,800 to help transport big cats. By helping cats reach safe havens, the FCF organization is improving feline welfare and defusing potential ammunition used against private ownership. If you think the Safety Net is a good idea, won't you please show your support by making a donation today? Artist Teri Zucksworth has donated her original artwork to help the FCF raise funds. Take a look at page 29 and please chose the print of your choice and write a check today.

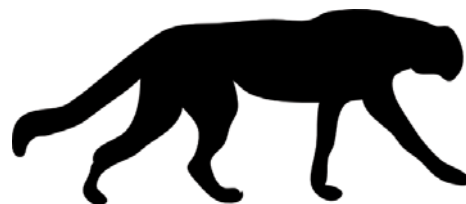
Teresa Shaffer challenged FCF members to increase our membership. Everyone please sign up a fellow feline owner and help the FCF double our membership in one year. To further this challenge, each quarter the FCF will be rewarding the person who signs up the most new members and, at the end of the year, a final prize for the whole year will be awarded. Mindy Stinner is our first quarter winner, having signed up 11 new members. She will receive a beautiful signed print by Teri Zucksworth for her efforts. A new challenge is underway for the next quarter and everyone has an equal opportunity to win.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The address and phone number for the FCF treasurer has changed. Our new treasurer is Marilyn Antle and the address is:

FCF Treasurer  
P.O. Box 31210  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29588.

Please mail all membership applications, course, and convention registrations to this address. If you need to speak to the treasurer to supply credit card information ask a question, call (843) 283-2826.





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## Mice



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000	2500	5000+	Length(inches)	Weight(grams)	Count
X-Small Pinkies:		\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	0.50 - 1.00	1.30 - 1.80	100
Small Pinkies:		\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	0.50 - 1.00	1.90 - 2.40	100
Large Pinkies:		\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	0.50 - 1.00	2.50 - 3.00	100
Peach Fuzzies:		\$0.19	\$0.18	\$0.17	\$0.16	\$0.15	1.00 - 1.25	3.10 - 4.40	100
Fuzzies:		\$0.19	\$0.18	\$0.17	\$0.16	\$0.15	1.25 - 1.50	4.50 - 7.00	100
Hoppers:		\$0.30	\$0.28	\$0.26	\$0.24	\$0.22	1.50 - 2.00	8.00 - 12.00	100
Weanlings:		\$0.40	\$0.38	\$0.36	\$0.34	\$0.32	2.00 - 2.50	13.00 - 19.00	50
Large Adults:		\$0.45	\$0.43	\$0.41	\$0.39	\$0.37	2.50 - 3.00	20.00 - 29.00	50
X-Large Adults:		\$0.55	\$0.53	\$0.51	\$0.49	\$0.47	3.00 - 3.75	30.00 - 50.00	25

\* We offer combined quantity discount mouse pricing. \* Measurement does not include tail length.

## Rats



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Length (inches)	Weight (grams)	Count
Pinkies:		\$0.39	\$0.34	\$0.29	1.50 - 2.00	3.00 - 8.00	100
Fuzzies:		\$0.49	\$0.44	\$0.39	2.00 - 2.50	9.00 - 19.00	100
Pups:		\$0.79	\$0.74	\$0.69	2.50 - 3.50	20.00 - 29.00	25
Weaned:		\$0.89	\$0.84	\$0.79	3.50 - 4.50	30.00 - 44.00	25
Small:		\$0.99	\$0.94	\$0.89	4.50 - 6.00	45.00 - 84.00	20
Medium:		\$1.39	\$1.34	\$1.29	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.00	10
Large:		\$1.49	\$1.44	\$1.39	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.00	5
X-Large:		\$1.59	\$1.54	\$1.49	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.00	3
XX-Large:		\$1.79	\$1.74	\$1.69	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.00	2
XXX-Large:		\$1.99	\$1.94	\$1.89	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 600.00+	2

\* We offer combined quantity discount rat pricing. \* Measurement does not include tail length.

## Coturnix Quail



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Grams	Oz.	Count
1 Day:		\$0.34	\$0.29	\$0.24	7.50 - 10.00	.25	100
1 Week:		\$0.64	\$0.59	\$0.54	30.00 - 40.00	1.0	25
2 Week:		\$0.84	\$0.79	\$0.74	50.00 - 75.00	2.5	10
3 Week:		\$1.04	\$0.99	\$0.94	100.00 - 125.00	4.0	10
6 Week:		\$1.34	\$1.24	\$1.14	130.00 - 150.00	5.0	5
8 Week:		\$1.44	\$1.34	\$1.24	155.00 - 185.00	6.5	5
10 Week:		\$1.64	\$1.54	\$1.44	190.00 - 225.00	8.0	5


\* We offer combined quantity discount quail pricing.

## Rabbits




	Size	Our Price	Weight (lbs.)	Count
X-Small:		\$4.00	0.50 - 0.75	1
Small:		\$5.00	1.00 - 1.75	1
Medium:		\$6.00	2.00 - 3.75	1
Large:		\$7.00	4.00 - 5.75	1
X-Large:		\$8.00	6.00 - 7.75	1
XX-Large:		\$9.00	8.00 - 9.75	1
XXX-Large:		\$10.00	10.00 - 11.75+	1

## Chicks



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000	5000	Grams	Ounces	Count
Small:		\$0.25	\$0.20	\$0.15	\$0.12	30.00 - 35.00	1.0	25

## Guinea Pigs



	Size	Less Than 500	500	1000+	Inches	Grams	Count
Medium:		\$1.39	\$1.34	\$1.29	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.00	10
Large:		\$1.49	\$1.44	\$1.39	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.00	5
X-Large:		\$1.59	\$1.54	\$1.49	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.00	3
XX-Large:		\$1.79	\$1.74	\$1.69	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.00	2
XXX-Large:		\$1.99	\$1.94	\$1.89	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 600.00	2
XXXX-Large:		\$2.29	\$2.24	\$2.19	13.00 - 15.00	601.00 - 900.00+	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount guinea pig pricing.



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## ANDEAN CAT CONSERVATION CENTER NEWS

By Dr. Jim Sanderson, PhD

Last year, the people of Chile elected the first conservative government since General Pinochet allowed them to choose their own president in 1990. Since 1990, Chilean politics have been middle-of-the-road, with liberals winning government

my Chilean counterpart, Constanza Napolitano, and I met with CONAF officials in Arica, regarding our desire to construct the first Andean cat conservation and monitoring center. We chose three possible sites: Salar de Surire, Parinacota, and, as a third choice, a location near the village of Putre. We also met with profes-

sors from the University of Tarapaca in Arica who had experience constructing solar-assisted buildings. In fact, we met in a solar-assisted building on campus.

In mid-December, we received news that a building at our first choice, Salar de Surire, was possible, under the condition that we attach (or share) a wall with the existing building. Under this constraint, why

not use the existing CONAF building?

The existing building measures 26 by 30 feet, just 750 square feet total. It is permanently occupied by a CONAF guard, often a visiting guard, and is at times used by tourists visiting the Salar. Salar de Surire is a popular tourist destination because it is a RAMSAR site, a wetland of global significance, where three species of flamingos breed. It might be the only such site in the Andes. Sadly, it is also being extensively mined for its vast reserves of borax. The mining permit was issued prior to the establishment of the national park and, hence, takes precedence.

A portable trailer, known as the "Icebox," where I lived during my initial stay in 1997, will be

removed, thus making space for our building. The solar hot water heater between the buildings was not working in 1997, and remains nonfunctional.

The professors from the University of Tarapaca visited Salar de Surire and Parinacota shortly after our November trip. They are now preparing several optional buildings for us to consider. Solar PV panels and hot water panels will power all options as well, since there is no electricity and nothing to burn for fuel. Propane is used to cook food and is presently used to heat water. Our building will be heated by the sun via a trombe wall. This is achieved by having a north-facing window, behind which and interior to the building stands a dense adobe or rock wall (the trombe wall) that is heated by the sun's energy. Through Steve Gold, the Wildlife Conservation Network's solar specialist, BP Solar has agreed to donate PV panels. We must purchase deep cycle batteries, an inverter, and hot water panels. This equipment and all necessary materials must be assembled and shipped by container to Arica, Chile, then trucked high into the Andes (14,100 feet) at our expense. Steve has agreed to visit Salar de Surire to assist with installation of this solar equipment.

So what will this cost? We anticipate that all the necessary solar equipment for



Existing CONAF building at Salar de Surire was a possible choice, as long as we attached or shared a wall of our building, with this building. Photo by Jim Sanderson.

positions consistently, but only by the narrowest of margins. Now, for the first time, the margin has fallen in the conservative direction. This sea change in outcomes rippled throughout the government for more than a year. Officials I have dealt with in the past were either moved or replaced.

On a recent trip to Chile in November,



A portable trailer, known as the "Icebox," where Jim Sanderson lived during his initial stay in 1997, will be removed to make space for the Andean Cat Conservation Center building. Photo by Jim Sanderson.



Intense feline hunter blends in perfectly with the Andean Mountain rocks. Photo by Jim Sanderson.



installation, including the deep cycle batteries to store the electricity, will cost about \$20,000. The estimate to ship the container from San Francisco to Arica, Chile, is \$8,000. Of course, the container costs \$7,000, and it makes no sense to return it. Most of the building material must come from onsite, however, and cement and a mixer can be delivered to the Salar. With a range of buildings to choose from, we hope to estimate construction costs soon. We will most likely have to bring in several people from nearby villages (where we have worked with the school kids), and perhaps Arica and Putre,

to assist with the construction. I cannot say at this time what the building will cost. However, if a promise was made to erect an 1,800 square foot rock building with an insulated roof and walls, complete with double-pane windows, functioning doors, a single working bathroom, and kitchen, with all solar equipment functioning, I would consider this a bargain at a total cost of \$150,000.



Andean cat taken by a camera trap near Parinacota in the foothills of Lago Chungara. There is no better site in the world on which to wake up in the morning, look out the west window to the boulder field, observe a large mountain viscacha colony, and see an Andean cat stalking its favorite prey.



Looking in the opposite direction, east toward the Bolivian frontier, you will see the Salar and perhaps thousands of flamingos building their elevated nests. Photo by Jim Sanderson.

This might seem excessive to some and cheap to others. It is just my wild guess, so do not hold me to it. However, whatever the cost, I can assure you this fact: There is no better site in the world on which to wake up in the morning, look out the west window to the boulder field, observe a large mountain viscacha colony, and see an Andean cat stalking its favorite prey. Look-

ing in the opposite direction, east toward the Bolivian frontier, you will see the Salar and perhaps thousands of flamingos building their elevated nests. Vicuñas are common, while rheas and, overhead, an Andean condor can be occasionally observed.

With these exciting opportunities, we hope to attract students, researchers, and the occasional tourist from all over the world to the high Andes. With more people interested, the less likely it will be that we lose this unique place and the interesting creatures that live there. I will keep the FCF membership posted regularly.

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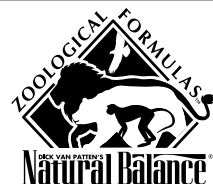
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## ACCREDITATION FOR JUNGLE ENCOUNTERS

By Lynn Culver

The latest facility to be accredited by the FCF is owned and operated by Debi Willoughby. Debi has always had a love of animals, so it was only natural that she should be the founder of Jungle Encounters, an outreach educational service in Massachusetts. Her wildlife collection consists of a variety of small mammals, including skunks, ringtails, and marmosets, and a couple of species that can be petted and held by children, like chinchillas and naked guinea pigs. For the boys, she offers a few reptiles, like lizards and iguanas, but no snakes (at her husband's request). Of course, the crown jewels of the show are the cats. Massachusetts is a very restrictive state when it comes to the possession of wild felines, and, for years, Debi had to substitute a second generation serval/domestic-cross Savannah to represent its wild grandparent from Africa, and a beautifully-rosetted Asian leopard cat/domestic-cross Bengal had to suffice as a symbol of the small wild cats of Southeast Asia in her talks. In a state where even high-percentage hybrids require state permission, even these faux wildcats were unique.

Debi's passion for feline conservation and her regular contributions to Jim Sanderson's wildlife conservation efforts

have built up her reputation and standing in the Massachusetts Wildlife Department, until it could no longer justify denying permission to Jungle Encounters to possess a real small jungle cat ambassador for its valuable wildlife education shows. That is where Spirit, the spotted Geoffroy's cat, came in, and he and his environment are the focus of attention by the FCF Facility Accreditation Board.

Ron Young, one of the five members of this accreditation team, notes that, whether the facility houses just one little Geoffroy's cat or as many tigers as The Institute of Greatly Endangered and Rare Species, you

are equal. You become part of the "one voice that speaks for all." The more members who belong to the FCF accredited facility listing, the more people will pay attention to the FCF. Ron is proud of Debi and welcomes her by saying, "Jungle Encounters, with one wild cat, joins the distinguished group of facilities that meet the FCF high standards of facility design and husbandry."

Jungle Encounters is situated on eight rural acres, with plenty of room for various outdoor enclosures which house beautiful pheasants, game birds, pea-

cocks, and even a pot-bellied pig. The exotics are all safely housed in one section, behind either six-foot or eight-foot chainlink perimeter fencing.

Spirit, the Geoffroy's cat, gets along great with two feline friends, so the trio shares an eight by 16-foot, eight-foot tall outdoor enclosure. Plastic-coated 1.5 by



Spirit is about to perform for the audience. Debi places his toys on the platforms to elicit jumping demonstrations.



Spirit has both an indoor and an outdoor enclosure. This arched design is all plastic coated wire and the back half is covered to provide protection from the sun and rain.

1.5-inch wire is fashioned into an arched structure, and the back half of the roof is covered to give protection from the wind, sun, rain and snow. A double-door entryway keeps the cats safely inside, and they have plenty of platforms and ramps in their outdoor environment. In the summer, Debi fills a pool and tosses in balls and toys that keep the cats busy as they bob around on top of the water. The floor is sand and it covers a layer of wire laid on the ground to prevent digging out.

Debi provides enrichments, such as branches and piles of leaves, for the cats to jump and play in. Spirit and his Bengal and Savannah friends have plenty of visual stimulation too, as their enclosure allows them a prime view of the nearby enclosures that house the ringtail cat, fennec fox, and skunk.

The cats also have an indoor room in Debi's home and get to spend a lot of time with Debi and her husband, Ed. Their room is one of the home's bedrooms. It has been divided with a wire-mesh wall, and the cats can either have access to the full room or just half. The window is cov-



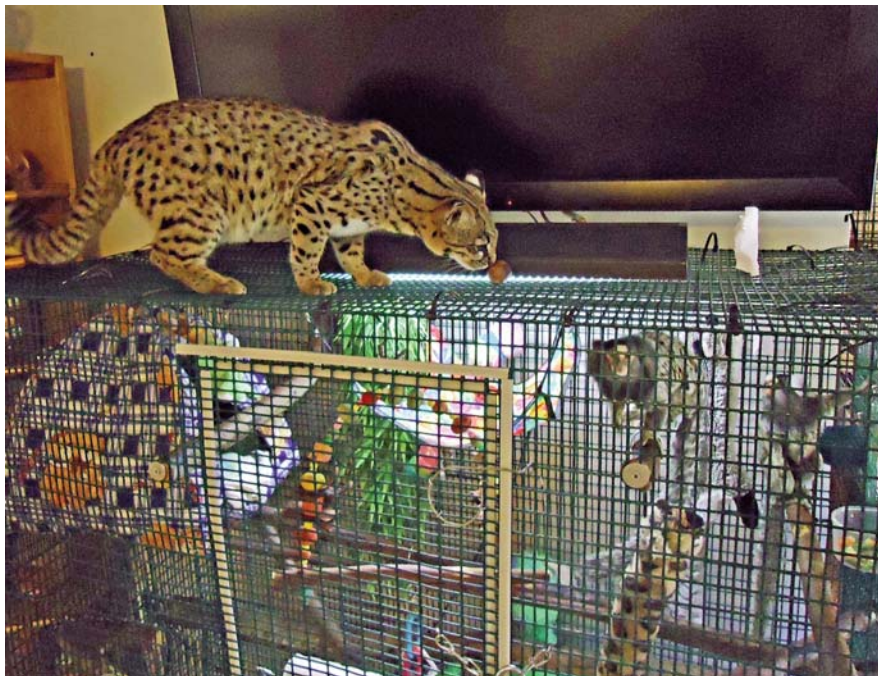
ered with coated two by two-inch wire, and there is also a window fan to give the room fresh air. Ed has fashioned a variety of ramps and platforms for the cats as well. Spirit and his buddies get supervised access to the rest of the Willoughby home. One of Spirit's favorite things to do is to sit by the chinchilla or marmoset cages in the living room, where he can watch his version of "Animal Planet TV."

Debi has Spirit collar- and harness-trained. She began his leash training at about two months of age to prepare him for public exposure. She takes him for walks from the house to his outdoor enclosure. I visited

Debi in October, and was very impressed

with Spirit's leash manners as she walked him from her home, across her backyard, into the perimeter fence area, and to his outdoor enclosure. Debi says he likes to check out the bugs in the summer and the leaves in the fall.

In the shows, Spirit sometimes walks on a table, sometimes on the floor. He demonstrates his climbing and jumping abilities on a scratching post with multi-tiered platforms. Debi specializes in school-age presentations and books her wildlife encounters for elementary schools, libraries, and birthday parties, and, because you are never too old to experience something new, she also brings her wildlife collection to nursing homes.



Spirit can't resist a chance to get a closer look at Debi's marmoset monkey pair. While Spirit is allowed to have free run of the house, he is not allowed to bring on chaos, so close encounters like these are cut short by Debi's watchful eye. Photo by Debi Willoughby.

## FCF WILD FELINE HUSBANDRY COURSE IN REVIEW



What's a husbandry course without a feline in attendance? Here Vitor makes an appearance before the students. Photo by Mindy Stinner.

By Tina Rochester

I am very excited to tell you about my trip to North Carolina, on the weekend of November 6th and 7th, 2010. I took the Wild Feline Husbandry Course at Elon University. On Sunday, November 7th, I got to attend a tour of the Conservators' Center. I would like to thank Mindy Stinner for hosting the course and for allowing us to tour the Conservators' Center.

The Wild Feline Husbandry Course is very informative and educational. This course is a must for all exotic feline owners. It teaches you what you need to have and know to legally own wild felines. The

course teaches about the various regulatory departments. It outlines the names of the different agencies and what they mean and stand for. It teaches about the roll private owners play in the conservation of wild felines' caging requirements, stimulation, and the emotional and nutritional needs of exotic felines. It covers the different feline species. This course should be a requirement for all wild feline owners. It is great. I would recommend the course to anyone who has an interest in wild felines or wants to know more for educational purposes.

The tour of the Conservators' Center was very nice. The place is huge. Mindy is doing a great job there. The animals are all well cared for and happy. Mindy gave us a wonderful private tour. She and her volunteers teach the public about the conservation of wild felines and about the other wild animals there. The singing dogs were terrific, and it was my first time seeing a singing dog. I enjoyed all the animals, but the Geoffroy's cat captured my heart. All the animals were in large cages, and the Conservator's Center tries to make the enclosures as natural as possible.



I would recommend the Conservator's Center to anyone. The visit was fun and, sometime in the future, I hope to go back. Next time I will take my family for a visit. I had a great time. Thank you, Mindy.

By Patricia Thomas-Laemont

The single-day FCF Wild Cat Husbandry Course is an overview of the many aspects of wild cat husbandry. Topics covered include natural history, regulatory guidelines, and maintenance of a variety of species of large and small captive felids. The information presented would be of interest to individuals from many fields, including private owners, wildlife rehabilitators, researchers, and students.

Natural history of the Felidae focuses on the various species of cats found globally, their status in the wild, and how captive husbandry can contribute to the conservation efforts of these species, many being threatened or endangered.

Being familiar with the regulatory laws and permits needed to keep any of these species is critical to anyone interested in becoming a responsible owner. This course clearly outlines the federal and local regulatory agencies that oversee trade and maintenance of wild animals, and, specifically, the regulations and permits necessary for obtaining and housing wild cats.

The maintenance and housing of wild



CCI volunteer Christy LaMountain hands Gracie over to one of the students who is enthralled with the opportunity to visit with such a rare and beautiful little cat. Photo by Mindy Stinner.

cats presents special challenges. Appropriate building materials, facility and enclosure design, space requirements, and safety equipment are covered, as are nutritional requirements and feeding, health care, handling, and enrichment.

Emphasis on public safety is a necessity for persons in this field, and this course addresses many issues that could potentially arise. Most importantly, how to create a contingency plan for dealing with unexpected events is outlined.


The course did

a very good job covering a great deal of material in a short time. This did make for a long day, but I think expanding it to two days would be unnecessary. Anyone in a field targeted by the class should be accustomed to this sort of course (I have taken a basic wildlife rehabilitation class that was organized in a similar manner.). I am sure that the subject that was most interesting to students would be the section on natural history, so putting this section last might energize flagging attention spans, but I do not believe you can get around covering this material first. The slides were clear and well organized.

The exam did a good job of highlighting the important information that should be taken away from the course.



Christa Denofrio holds melanistic geoffroy Vitor while a husbandry course student gets a closer look. According to Mindy Stinner, Vitor spent the first few months of his life being held by all the volunteers and he is completely at ease with this form of travel. Photo by Mindy Stinner.



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*The FCF Conservation Grants committee approved the request for a projector to aid in school educational programs. In November 2009, FCF director Robert Johnson visited the Cat Conservation Trust and delivered a multipurpose projector, and, while in Clifton on behalf of the Rare Species Fund, a trailer to transport traps and equipment were purchased and donated to the Trust.*



## CAT CONSERVATION TRUST UPDATE

By Marion Holmes

We were only able to reach one school in the first two months of 2010, but the presentation went off very well. Taxidermy Africa joined us and brought along a full mounted leopard with the two full mounted black-footed cats, as well as a full mounted caracal. This gave us the opportunity to show one of the biggest and smallest cats in Africa.

It seems that the 2010 Soccer World Cup has affected all the school schedules and it was difficult for them to include us in their already full calendars. Two of our bookings for the third school term were postponed due to the national teachers'

strike. We were, however, able to obtain a booking at a primary school during the fourth term. We are eager to schedule more bookings for the 2011 school year, which, hopefully, will have no disruptions. Both local schools that visited our facility this year have expressed interest in returning next year with other students.

In 2010, we were able to change the attitudes of many children and even some adults about their environment. Those who have visited the facility learned how every action in nature has a reaction. Not only did we teach them about the cats, but we also touched on caring for their own pets, hygiene, and the importance of keeping their living areas clean, not littering,

and picking up trash.

### CAT NEWS

We welcome our new female black-footed cat, Anja, to Clifton. Anja, currently in our quarantine enclosure, was born wild about three years ago and was living in a dangerous situation in the Kalahari. A farmer contacted us about her after seeing our appearance on the national news. Beryl Wilson, of the Black-Footed Cat Working Group, based in Kimberley, set the wheels in motion to transport the cat down to us. This trip and associated medical expenses cost around \$1,000, and, although this was not in our budget, we managed to pull together the funds. We are now waiting for the results of the blood tests.

This "rescue cat" follows on the heels of Jessie, who was brought to us at the end of 2009. Fortunately, the Black-Footed Cat Working Group was able to fund that trip. We hope that both of these females will become part of the captive breeding gene pool.

Amani, our adult male, has cataracts and is mostly deaf due to a virus he contracted as a three month old kitten. We considered having the operation done to remove the cataracts. It is very expensive and only done in Johannesburg or Cape Town. We received money from the lottery for the operation, but, when we did the preliminary blood work, it was found that he is FIV-positive. Therefore, it was felt that he probably would not survive the operation and postoperative treatment. It is very disheartening, since I had always wanted to give him his sight back. No one can tell me how he could have contracted the FIV. He was born here and both of his parents are FIV-negative. The virus that affected him killed his brother and left his



Marian Holmes teaches the Nxuba SP School students in Cradock, July 29, 2010. The multimedia projector donated by the FCF is used along with feline taxidermy mounts and animal skins to educate the children about predators and their role in nature.



sister with an eye infection that we battled for eight weeks. Thankfully, she recovered, but later escaped onto the farm when she was about nine months old during a very bad storm which had affected some of the enclosures. Amani has previously lived with several females, and they all test FIV-negative. He has never been with another male or in a fight. It has been suggested that he could have come into contact with one of the grey or yellow mongooses which often move through the cat enclosures. We have a veterinarian in Denmark (Rheepark), who is looking for blood tests to be done on Amani, since she has some theories as to the trigger of FIV in small wild cats, but I won't have him anaesthetized unless it is for something serious. The process is very stressful for him and I have to drive an hour to the nearest vet to have it done. I am hoping that, when one of the vets working with the Black-Footed Cat Working Group in Kimberley comes over from the United States or Europe, they can make the long trip down to us and do the tests here.

In 2009, we lost ten kittens, all to various diseases which we had no control over. Two five-month-old kittens died during teething (actually a combination of teething, toxoplasmosis, and depressed immune systems), one four-month-old kitten was lost to salmonella (from a frog!), and then pneumonia was the final straw. We lost one two-month-old and one three-month-old to rhinotracheitis. We removed four ten-day-old kittens because of bad



Beryl Wilson (BFCWG) taking blood samples and micro-chipping Anja.

mothering, but then the kittens got so sick that we couldn't save them. One first-time mom lost her kitten to toxoplasmosis at around two months.

All cat enclosures have various sorts of wildlife running through them or living there: mice, frogs, birds, grasshoppers, termites, guinea pigs, etc. This allows the cats the opportunity to hunt for some of their own food, but, unfortunately, one theory regarding the toxoplasmosis problems is that the mice may be carriers.

In June 2009, we lost a breeder female who was only about six years old. The post-mortem revealed perfect health and no amyloidosis. They tried almost every test in the book (and about R2500 later) and everything was negative. They even checked for African horse sickness (we

feed free-range zebras and horses), avian flu (feed live birds, chickens, and ostriches), Newcastle's; oh, you name it, they tested for it. I was devastated, but as Pat Callahan said, they sometimes just die of death. During that same winter, we lost one of our breeding males, Jock. Although he was at the ripe old age of nearly eleven years (and had lost most of his teeth around six years of age), he was a darling and is sorely missed. Again, the vet

said, perfect condition and health, no heart muscle injury, and no amyloidosis, and, again, no noticeable cause of death. One of the vets we deal with said that maybe he just knew it was his time.

Earlier this year, we lost our main breeding female, Sonja. She dropped dead overnight. That post-mortem showed anaphylactic shock/asthma, but the report showed no amyloidosis. Also, the vet said he had never seen such a healthy wild cat before. Sadly, Sonja's six-week-old kitten, Harry, found the shock of losing his mother too much. He was already eating when she died, but I think that he was just too heartbroken. We tried everything, but to no avail! Sonja had been with me for six years and was eight years old when she died. We will never know what caused her allergic reaction. It was heartbreaking!

We also had a bad start to the breeding season this year. Two first-time moms lost both their kittens. Phoebe lost her kitten either during or straight after birth. It was abnormally large. We leave the moms to do their thing and only check on them at certain intervals, which they are used to. When I checked on her in the morning, she was busy giving birth, and when I went up to check about three hours later, it was buried in her little "river." The same week, Jessie, our other rescue cat, gave birth. She abandoned the kitten at seven days and, although we tried desperately to save it, it was just too late. The vet said the kitten was malnourished, but showed no other signs of illness. So, as you can see, working with these cats is an uphill battle, sometimes heartbreaking, and has of late been soul-destroying, because, no matter what you do, there are always some factors that you just cannot control.

Our policy here is that the mother must raise the kittens and we will only step in if their lives are at risk. These cats stress very quickly, and often this causes more damage than taking a wait-and-see attitude.

We had a group of our African wildcat juveniles move to Mount Camdeboo Game Reserve, situated near Graaff Reinet. We managed to get together a group of six cats to be released on this 30,000-hectare private game reserve. All the cats bonded well through the fence of their acclimatization bomas. Two of the males were released at the beginning of



Anja in her quarantine enclosure after her medical. The black-footed cat is one of the smallest feline species. Females can be as little as 4 pounds.



In some parts of the South African Karoo, the black-footed cat has been called an “anthill tiger” because of its tenacity in defending itself and its habit of sometimes using hollowed out termite mounds for shelter.

December, while the remaining were to be freed later the same month. We are hop-

ing to help the reserve obtain more wild females for their project.

Two of our African wildcat females have given birth so far this year. The five kittens are battling with the viruses that they are usually subject to between the ages of three to five months. They are now three months old and, as soon as they are healthy enough, they will be vaccinated against these diseases. We are currently trying to find safe release sites for this group.

The two serval kittens, which are now almost three months old, will be acclimated in a boma at the Mount Camdeboo Private Game Reserve when they reach about nine months of age, in preparation for eventual release.

We no longer breed the caracals, as finding a safe release site for the offspring has proved almost impossible. Caracals are still considered “vermin” by many farmers and are hunted with dog packs, shot onsite, and poisoned.

We would like to thank the Feline Conservation Federation and the Rare Species Fund once again for your financial contributions to our program.



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# THE FELINE CONSERVATION FEDERATION IS PROUD TO PRESENT A VERY SPECIAL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EDUCATORS COURSE



Course instructor: Ron DeArmond,  
VP of the Association of  
Professional Wildlife Educators

When: Saturday, February 26, 2011

Time: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Where: Jungle Island, Jungle Theater  
1111 Parrot Jungle Trail  
Miami, Florida 33132  
(305) 400-7000

Registration Fee: \$125  
(after February 14,  
fee increases to \$135)



The registration fee covers the one-day course,  
wildlife education textbook and feline ambassador booklet, tests, certificate of successful completion,  
lunch, entrance fee to Jungle Island, the "Winged Wonders" show, and the "Tale of the Tiger" show.  
\*

The course covers the wildlife educator's code of ethics, different program themes, how to build a wildlife education  
program, special considerations when using live animals, and how to establish a professional image and maintain  
credibility. Special emphasis is placed upon the safe exhibition of wild felines.  
\*

You must arrive at the Jungle Island entrance by 8:00 am for this class. Do not be late! Students will be led to the  
Jungle Theater, where the course will be conducted. Lunch will be provided.  
\*

At 2:30, we'll attend the "Winged Wonders" show at the Parrot Bowl. See how professional educators present unique  
behaviors in a diverse collection of avian species, such as a huge vulture flying inches above the audience, a six-foot  
tall cassowary that swallows an apple whole, and - a performing favorite - a cockatoo riding a high-wire bicycle!  
\*

The class concludes with a special performance of the Tale of the Tiger Show at 5:15. Jungle Theater educators will  
present a variety of felines, such as panther, lynx, cougar and tiger, and a variety of primates, from orangutan  
to gibbon, capuchin, and lemur. Educators will be on hand afterwards to answer questions about animal  
conditioning and wildlife programs.



## Registration for FCF Wildlife Conservation Educators Course - February 26, 2011

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P.O.Box 31210, Myrtle Beach, SC 29588.

## BOBCATS RULE!

By J.W. Everitt and Carol L. Chaffee, who are allowed to live at the Lodge by its feline owners, Bob, Moxie, Mouse, and Sydney

I recently had occasion to travel to Atlanta to pick up my new car. I decided to make a mini vacation out of my return to the Northwest and took the time to visit Lynn and Bart Culver at their facility in Arkansas. I met Lynn by phone just a few months ago, and I told her that even though I was a bobcat owner, I thought most people should not have exotic cats. I explained that I have formed this opinion over the years from seeing bad owners and crummy facilities. I only know a couple of exotic cat owners, who, like me, dote on their cats and give them the kind of attention and care they deserve. Lynn assured me that the FCF attracts many good owners who are dedicated to their cats' well-being and provide them with enriched environments, and that she and her husband were some of those people.

I arrived late in the day, but Lynn and Bart were gracious hosts and allowed me total access to their marvelous cattery and its residents. Any FCF member who is in the area and does not stop by is missing out on something special.

Lynn and Bart, you guys are the bomb! What a place! It was wonderful to see

such unique habitats and all the special features you provide. I am so glad I made this stop to see for myself.

After Lynn and Bart showed me around, I shared some photos of my bobs. Lynn was particularly interested in my 10-year-old boy, Bob. When I mentioned that Bob loves to ride—in cars, trucks, ATVs, motorcycles, even boats—Lynn commented that most bobcats become homebodies and do not like to travel by the time they are two or so. Not Bob.

I was present in Montana when Bob was born. The facility that bred him held a state fur farmer license, and the caging they provided for their breeding bobcats were designed like rabbit hutches; elevated wire runs and nothing more. It saddened me, because these intelligent cats certainly deserve much better. Bob was born with a bad hip



Bob can get a better view from the canopy top. Being chauffeured by J.W. is one of Bob's favorite pastimes. Photo by Carol Chaffee.

and the breeder was going to put him to sleep. I wanted a chance to rehabilitate him, so she gave him to me. I carried him with me for the first three months of his life, fixing the joint whenever it popped out, until it finally stayed in

place. And when he was recovered, the breeder wanted me to pay for him.

I was on the road that summer with my dragster motorcycle and we traveled in a 40-foot NASCAR-style race trailer with full living quarters. With Bob as my constant companion, we raced at Sturgis, Daytona, Laughlin, Phoenix, and numerous other venues. My crew chief had a Jack Russell puppy about the same age as Bob, so they were playmates virtually joined at the hip, but Bob's favorite part of the day was his ride on one of the bikes. In Laughlin, a fan gave Bob his own Harley bandanna that he still wears from time to time.

Bob now resides at the BearCat Lodge in Seneca, Oregon, and prefers his Arctic Cat Prowler to motorcycles. He rides about 2,000 miles a year in the Arctic Cat. Bob is a real traffic stopper when he is "cruisin'" around the valley and through the forest, visiting his animal friends. There are llamas, mules, dogs, horses, and cows to check out, in addition to local wildlife, including deer, elk, chipmunks, ground squirrels, and muskrats. Bob is very social and receives a couple hundred visitors a week in the summer. The Lodge, located in eastern Oregon's Bear Valley, at the foot of the Strawberry Mountains, is a

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| ✓ <i>Identification Guides</i> | ✓ <i>Reference Books</i>    |
| ✓ <i>Encyclopedias</i>         | ✓ <i>Veterinary Manuals</i> |

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destination adventure motorcycle resort, and Bob is a big attraction for the guests. He loves to sit on the bikes and pose for pictures, then tear off into the woods on his chauffeured UTV with a pack of dirt bikes chasing after him. It is big fun! We call him the “go boy,” because you only have to ask once! He also enjoys Jeep rides, and this year he will get to experience snowmobiling for the first time. You can ride with Bob on YouTube.com (BushWhacking With a Bobcat) or check him out at [www.bearcatlodge.com](http://www.bearcatlodge.com).

We spend a lot of time with Bob—several hours a day. His enclosure is 20 by 24 feet, with an 18-foot-high roof and a great view of the Lodge grounds. He has direct access from his enclosure, through two windows, into his own 13 by 18-foot room in the Lodge, complete with comfy furniture and a big screen TV (Bob likes Animal Planet & NHRA Drag Racing.). Bob shares the Lodge with three domestic cats and enjoys visits from tourist pets. His meals, prepared fresh daily, consist of beef, poultry, liver, heart, and gizzards, with a chopped turkey neck on top. Bob eats about a pound to a pound and a half, twice a day and, except for his funky hip when he was little, he has never had any health issues. He is neutered and declawed. Since his claws were removed by microsurgery when he was only three weeks old, he has never missed them; he climbs trees like a squirrel and can dig a pocket gopher out of the ground like a



Bob stares intently for photographer Carol Chaffee.

badger. He is very spoiled and lives by a simple motto: “Dogs have masters, I have staff.”



Bob is completely at ease riding in the snow with J.W. Photo by Carol Chaffee.

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## BLAST FROM THE PAST: THE MARBLED CAT

LIOC Endangered Species Conservation  
Federation  
Volume 13, Issue 1  
January/February 1969

By Robert Baudy

One of the most fascinating feline species in the world, from the point of view of mystery, beauty, and rarity, is certainly the almost-unknown creature commonly called the marbled cat, or *Felis marmorata*. Three races of this genus have been defined previously, but, since the six specimens we have obtained during the past four years were completely different in background coloration, markings, and texture of the fur, I feel safe in stating that the identification of *Felis marmorata* subspecies certainly deserves further and more extensive work.

The marbled cat's range superposes almost exactly that of two other felines: the more common leopard cat (*Felis bengalensis*) and the larger clouded leopard



(*Neofelis nebulosa*).

Evidently versatile and highly adaptable, the species ranges from the high and snowy forests of Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, where it overlaps the habitat of another prestigious star of the feline family, the unique snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), down through Burma, Assam, Laos, North and South Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, and all the way south to the hot and humid rainforests of the Malay

Peninsula, Sumatra, and Borneo.

### *Size, Physical Characteristics*

The six marbled cats received at our compound were probably in the one- to two-year range. The mean body and head measurement was 20 inches. In every case, the tail was slightly longer than the head-body measurement by one-half to one full inch. The head was relatively small, with very large and beautiful eyes and small, rounded ears.

The texture of the fur is extremely soft and rich. The markings, which are somewhat reminiscent of the clouded leopard's, but more blurred, are never similar in size and shape on different specimens. The irregular, large, dark brown or black blotches are edged on one side only with a lighter shade of brown than the general background, which varies from a dull olive gray to rus-

set brown, according to individual differences. The lower part of the front legs and hindquarters are spotted on a lighter background than that of the rest of the body. The most striking feature of this species, however, does not rest with its peculiar markings, no matter how surprising they may appear to be, but in the unforgettable stance of the animal in motion.

### *The Marbled Cat in Action*

The hind legs are extremely long and slender, and the back is slightly arched, while the richly-furred, very long tail is carefully kept either upturned at the end or curled around, seemingly to avoid at all times any possible damage to this gorgeous appendage. In a reclining position, the tail is curled beside the animal or completely wrapped around him. The fact that the feet are large in comparison with an ocelot or domestic cat is probably responsible for the assertion made by some zoologists years ago that the marbled cat is completely arboreal. In captivity at our place, however, most of the specimens received did not seem to be overly anxious to reach the top part of the oak limb which we placed in the 15 by 8-foot wire enclosure. Instead, and after several months in the same cage, most animals ignored the high limb for lower, more comfortable plank shelves. After becoming familiar with our setup, most of them would leave the little connected wood house at 5 p.m. and remain outdoors until about 7 a.m. the next morning.

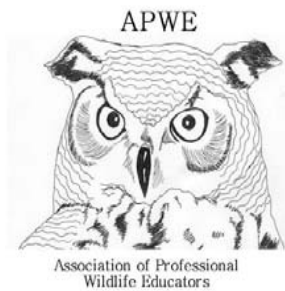
### *The Captive Cats*

Often badly undernourished, always heavily infested with intestinal parasites, and under the stress of a flight halfway around the world, the poor animals usually make a very sad appearance on arrival.



In a reclining position, the tail of the marbled cat is curled beside the animal or completely wrapped around him. This 1964 historical photo is from the library of the San Diego Zoo.





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We know that our chance of saving them is about fifty-fifty, but we keep trying desperately to better the ratio. The news of a marbled cat's arrival always generates excitement at the compound. The species, for some unexplained reason, seems to be extremely rare everywhere across its enormous native range. According to reports from our various contacts and collectors in Asia, it is by far the most rare and secretive feline in its natural haunts. The current captive population of this mysterious cat, among all the zoos of the world, according to the highly reliable *British International Zoo Year Book (1968 Edition)* is composed of one male and three females. We furnished three other animals to private collections.

Under date of May 3, 1967, we received from Mr. W. D. MacVeigh, one of our contacts in Malaysia, a letter stating: "Marbled cats are extremely rare, and up to the present I have been unable to meet outstanding orders for this species, even though I collect and trap in coordination with jungle dwellers in the foothills of their main range."

Los Angeles and Cincinnati Zoos are the only zoological collections in the Americas currently exhibiting the species, with one single female in each

earlier as practically untamable, yet Char-

lotte succeeded fairly rapidly with the only specimen with which she experimented (a young adult female, which was later sent to the Cincinnati Zoo). She obtained the complete disappearance of flight reaction and happy acceptance of head petting by hand. Since this specimen was, like all other marbled cats received here, wild-caught and raised by the mother, it would seem that the species' bad reputation has been somewhat hastily established.

This great little cat remains, in our book, the most intriguing feline personality. While it may seem paradoxical to some that, despite our luck in importing the species, we do not have a pair of our own. I will say this: This little aristocrat and almost legendary animal among zoologists truly belongs to public exhibit. Keeping them, almost greedily for our own pleasure and satisfaction, would give us no joy. While it is true that we have in the past furnished this species to private collections, it will no longer happen, because this star of the cat world belongs to everyone.



This male and female pair of marbled cats lived at the San Diego Zoo in 1964. Robert J. Wiese, Ph.D., Chief Life Sciences Officer, was unable to provide any additional information, as in those days, zoos did not keep many records. FCF greatly appreciates the San Diego Zoo's permission to reprint such a rare and beautiful image.



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## A Short Tail

There's a bobcat on the dresser  
There's a second top the bed  
S'pose I could have chose  
a normal pet

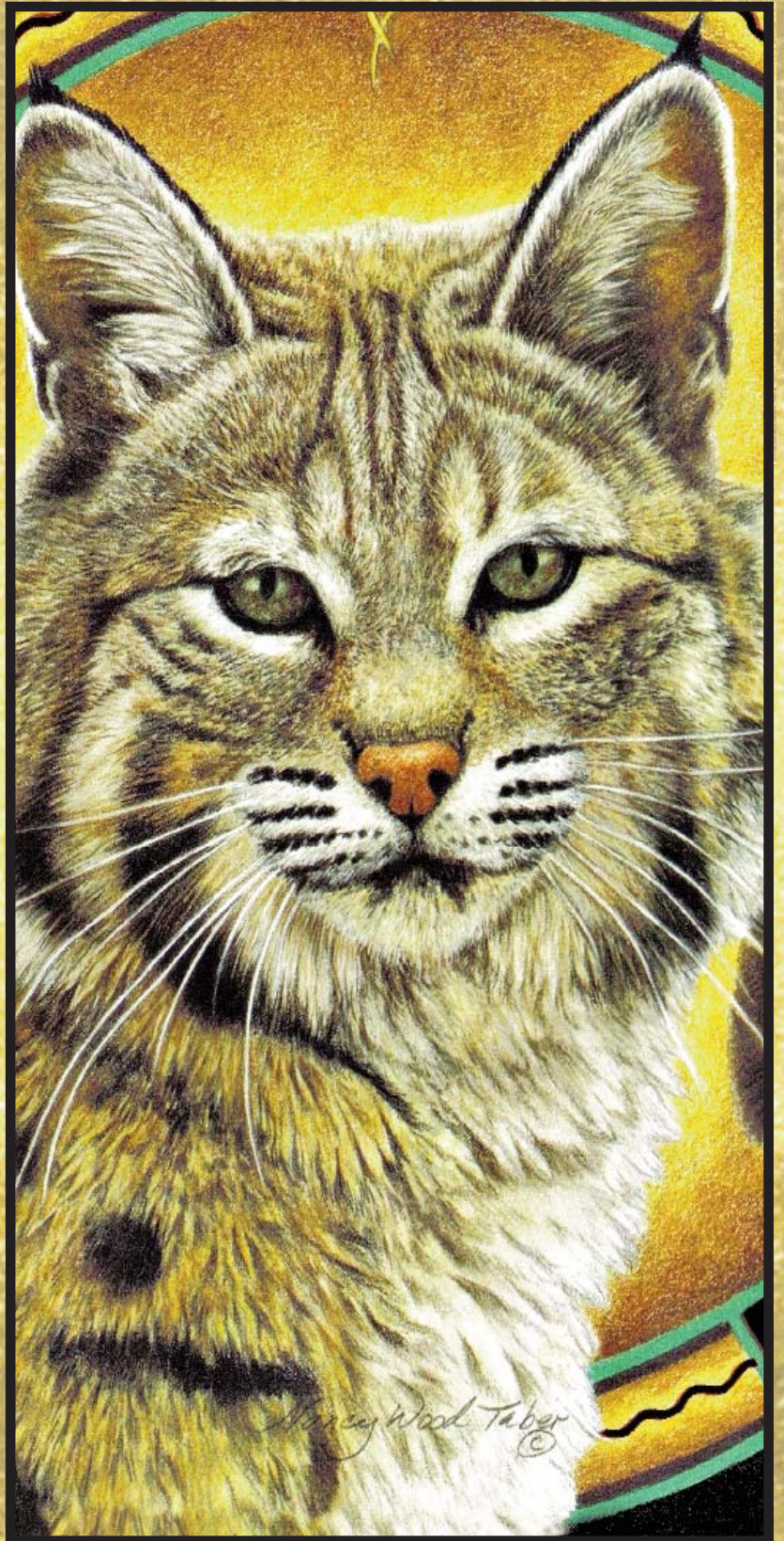
A Jack Russell dog instead.  
But the choice for me was simple  
As I explained to my dear wife  
One spotted thing was not enough  
Two won't complicate our life.

I'm sure that they won't eat me  
If I fail to fill their dish.  
I'm certain they'd prefer a  
Leg of lamb or even fillet of fish.  
I sometimes sit and ponder  
What goes on inside their head.  
Are they plotting my demise,  
Or simply coveting my bed?

We live up near the frost line  
Where winter comes in fall.  
When the north wind  
comes a-whistling  
Neighbors seldom come to call.  
But if I be slack my duties  
And forget some little thing,  
Would you find me mostly eaten  
When you come around in spring?

Living with two bobcats  
Is not an easy task.  
Friends say why'd you do it?  
That's the question that they ask.  
So I posed myself that query  
And it came so plain to me  
That with all our little differences  
They're an awful lot like me.

©J.W. Everitt 2003





# Rare species fund

Over the years, the RSF has increased its financial support of Orangutan Foundation International (OFI). The most recent contribution was part of the "Give The Rainforest Some Relief" project that the RSF has put together from payments made to RSF's Tiger Preserve resident Surya the orangutan for his role in the new "Relief Finder" ad campaign from Robitussin. Funds from the RSF help OFI with their many projects.



*Moksha Bybee and Doc Antle with world-renowned Dr. Biruté Galdikas at an orangutan fundraiser in New York City.*

*Suryia the orangutan's appearance in the Robitussin "get some relief" ad campaign generated vital funding which went directly to provide relief for wild orangutans.*



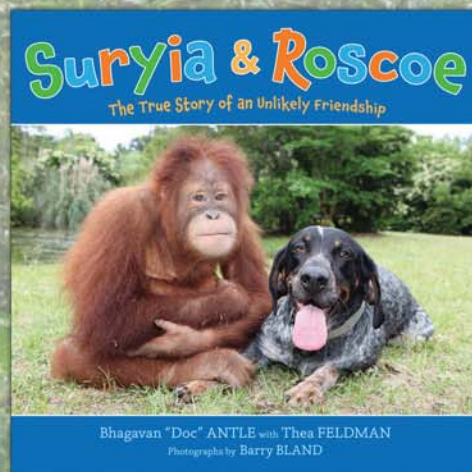
RSF has supported OFI for many years in ongoing projects. Recently some new creative funding projects have come to fruition. Orangutan Foundation International (OFI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of wild orangutans and their rainforest habitat. Founded by Dr. Biruté Mary Galdikas and associates in 1986, OFI operates Camp Leakey, an orangutan research area within Tanjung Puting National Park. OFI also runs the Orangutan Care Center and Quarantine (OCCQ) facility in the Dayak village of Pasir Panjang near Pangkalan Bun, which is home to 330 displaced orangutans, and helps manages the Laman-dau Wildlife Reserve, where rehabilitated wild born ex-captive orangutans are released into the wild. Through its field programs, OFI also provides employment at these facilities for over 200 local Indonesians. OFI partners with World Education and the Orangutan Conservation Forum, a consortium of groups that is working to counter the primary threats to orangutan survival throughout Indonesia.

*"Here is the internationally famous story of one of the most unusual animal friendship stories ever."*

*This new book teaches children the importance of friendship*

*and the need to protect our fragile environment.*

*Generating more money for orangutan conservation, this book, will be released this year.*





*As orangutans move through the jungle tree tops, their home ranges encompass the territories inhabited by a vast number of other species. By preserving orangutans in their natural territories we also set aside essential habitats and help to save numerous other lesser known plant and animal species which might not otherwise be protected and may eventually become extinct.*



*Among their jungle neighbors, five species of felines can be found within the jungles of Borneo, including: marbled cats, Bornean bay cats, flat head cats, Asian leopard cats and the Sunda clouded leopard.*

The top five priority issues OFI works on in concert with these partners include:

Stopping illegal logging, mining and forest conversion.

Increasing sustainable economic alternatives for communities

surrounding critical orangutan habitat. Assuring sustained funding for long-term in-situ orangutan research vital for effective conservation efforts. Educating the local public to understand orangutan and forest issues and take pride in orangutans and their forests. Releasing ex-captive orangutans into suitable, protected habitat. President of Orangutan foundation International OFI, Dr. Biruté Mary Galdikas has studied orangutans longer than any other person in human history and has worked ceaselessly to save orangutans and forests, and to bring orangutans and their plight to the attention of the world.

The Rare Species Fund directly supports grass roots in-situ wildlife conservation projects around the globe. Significant funding for these projects has been generously provided by:

**Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Inc.  
Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey  
Marine World Africa USA**

[www.RareSpeciesFund.org](http://www.RareSpeciesFund.org)



**PARTY** like an **ANIMAL** at the...

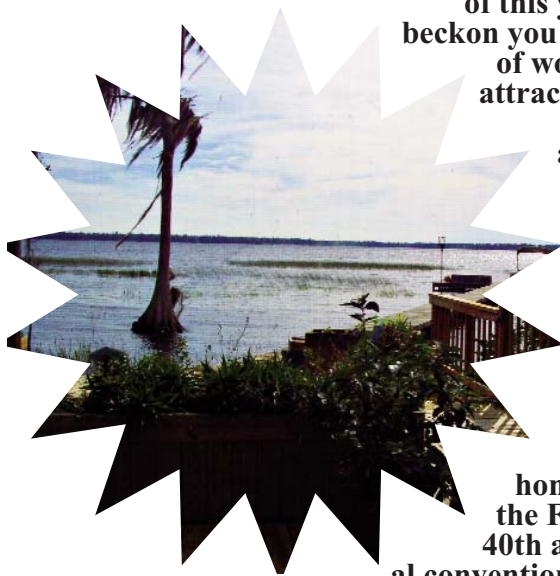
## Feline Conservation Federation's 40th Annual Convention!



Bush  
Gardens  
Williams-  
burg, and  
“Critter  
Castaways” at  
Busch Gardens  
Tampa.



Let the radiance of the southern sun greet you on your journey toward this year's annual convention, June 8th through 11th, 2011! Enjoy balmy weather and let the warmth and welcome of this year's location beckon you with promises of world-renowned attractions, five-star restaurants, and, of course, the cats!



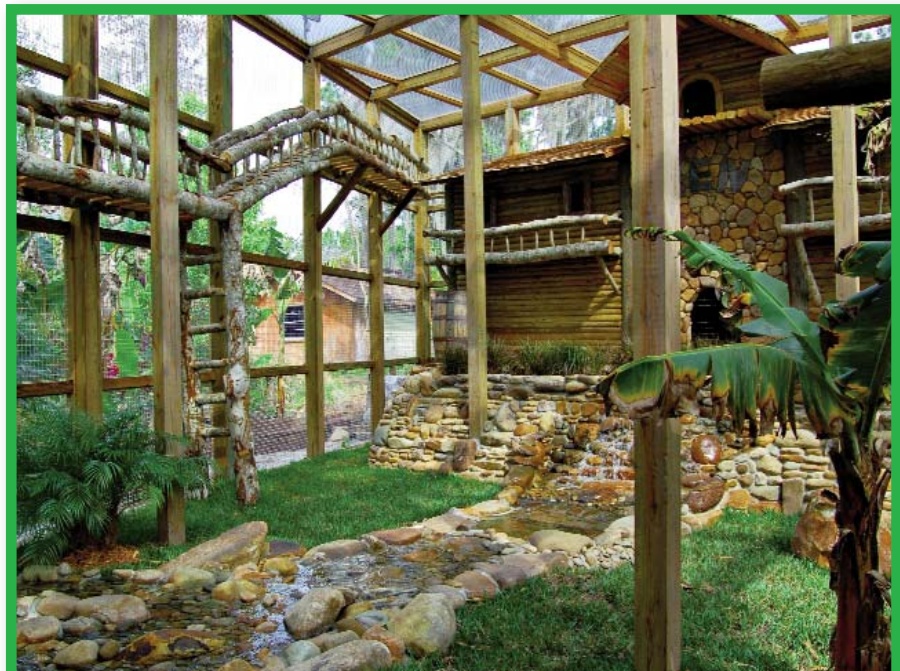
In honor of the FCF's 40th annual convention this year, we will be meeting in Orlando, Florida!

Our Friday field trip is one you won't want to miss! We'll head to St. Cloud to spend the day and evening visiting the home and premiere animal facility of renowned animal trainer Joel Slaven. With over forty years' experience working with exotic and domestic animals, Joel has raised and trained exotics for “Animals on Safari” at the Columbus Zoo, and domestic shelter animals for “Pets Rule” at Sea World San Diego, “Pets Ahoy” at Sea World Orlando, “Pet Shenanigans” at

We are in for a treat when we tour the many spacious animal habitats featuring unique enrichments and designs. Most of the animals are trained ambassadors, and we will not only see, but also visit with, lemurs, tamarins, bush babies, marmosets, binturong, kangaroos, giant anteaters, a variety of exotic birds, as well as caracals, Geoffroy's cats, bobcat, Siberian lynx, and African servals. There will be professional photographers and printing equipment to take our portraits with the trained exotic ambassadors.

For FCF Registered Feline Handlers, a special training workshop with Joel will demonstrate for us his proven animal training techniques. If you have handling experience and have not registered, be sure to visit the members-only website and register, because you don't want to miss this!

We are welcome to swim and fish from Joel's private pier at the lake, and there will be airboats for us to ride! Our day concludes with an evening cookout







June 8th through 11th, 2011



## Sheraton Safari Hotel, Orlando, Florida

while we enjoy the summer sunset.

We'll be staying at the spectacular, African-themed Sheraton Safari Hotel in Orlando. On Wednesday at the Safari, we will kick off the convention with another offering of the Husbandry and Educators Courses, both of which are pivotal courses for proper handling and captive management of exotic felids in their specific fields. Please choose the class that suits your needs.

On Thursday, our hospitality suite will be open for Convention registration and evening Icebreaker fun. Come meet feline ambassadors and socialize with old friends, make new ones, or just network with others in your established (or hopeful) field. This is your chance to hear from more experienced minds and to pick up tidbits and information that can better the lives of the exotic felids you work with.

Saturday will be spent at the Sheraton Safari listening to the annual line-up of superb speakers, followed by evening cocktails and a sumptuous banquet dinner.

Cats are welcome at this convention. The Florida Wildlife Department requires an importation and temporary possession permit, but there is no permit fee. You must have at least one year's experience and 1,000 hours with the species you intend



to bring. The permit requires that you provide at least two letters from persons familiar with your experience. This is where your Feline Handler registration really comes in handy. In addition to your registration, the FCF can provide one of the letters, and your vet or a government agency can write the second one. If you fax your application, allow at least two weeks to process. If you mail it in, get it in at least a month early. The Florida Importation permit

application is available for download on the FCF members-only website.

Reserve your hotel room now for \$90, as the special FCF rates and block are only good until May 17th.

The Safari Hotel is pet-friendly, but you must mention you will be bringing a cat.

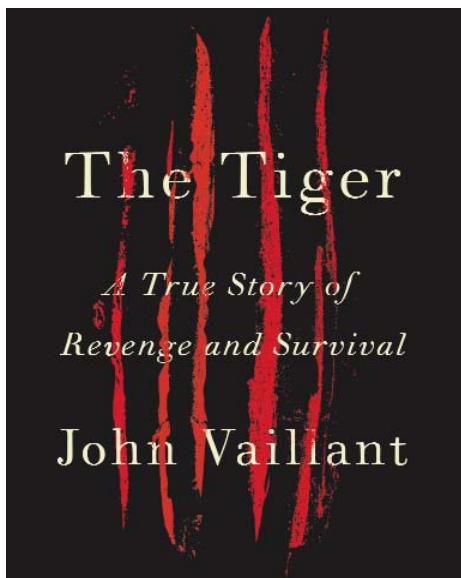
You can come early, stay late, and take advantage of all that Orlando has to offer.



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## BOOK REVIEW: *THE TIGER* BY JOHN VAILLANT



By Bart Culver

All conservationists and animal lovers need to read this book. It is as compelling as the great novels like *Lord Jim* or *Gone with the Wind*. But, as the subtitle says, this is a true story of vengeance and survival. John Vaillant does not speak Russian and he was not there, but, by dint of meticulous research, consummate skill, and evident passion, he takes you there, making you see, hear, smell, and feel the incomprehensible remoteness and grandeur of the Taiga and the hardships of

the people and tigers that live there. On nearly every page, Vaillant's prose soars to the level of the most exhausted poetry, making your skin crawl, and he takes you right down the tiger's throat.

Most important to me, this book provides a profound insight into the mind of the tiger. It is a masterpiece of empathy. You will read about behaviors that prove the tiger's formidable intelligence and capacity for abstract reasoning. And still, this can only be fully explained by invoking the supernatural. The ultimate message, confirmed by native cultures, investigators, scientists, and the people who have lived and died in these events, is that the tiger is as certain as a Christian that he has dominion; he is the lord of the forest. He is the lawgiver. As long as the native people have shared this worldview, they have lived in peace with the tiger. Inevitably, the fortune hunters and desperados have invaded this pristine realm with their cultural contempt for nature, and they have begun audaciously poaching the lord of the forest.

Today about 80% of surviving Amur tigers have been wounded at least once by



Tigers are completely at home in the bitter cold of the Taiga. Here Spike, a large male from the Conservator's Center in Mebane, NC, puts a chill down your spine when you imagine such a sight staring at you. Photo by Kim Pyne.

gunfire. Their response is not fear, but outrage. They can and do identify their specific assailant and, very cleverly and remorselessly, hunt them down to administer tiger justice. The lord of the forest refuses to be hunted. So now, after millions of years of supremacy, the tiger is locked in a war he cannot win.

War has been a major influence in the history of this region. Ironically, it was Russia's war in Afghanistan that inadvertently pulled the Amur tiger back from the brink of extinction, not the intentional efforts of conservationists. Even more bitterly ironic is that perestroika has dealt a devastating blow to the Russian people and any resources within their desperate grasp. It has destroyed a relatively efficient, well supplied, trained, motivated, and respected cadre of conservationists. Its remnants, albeit heroically dedicated, have no way to restrain the escalating numbers of newly improvised Russians pouring into the Taiga. They come on better roads, with better vehicles, better chainsaws, and better firearms, intent on feeding the insatiable Chinese appetite for everything.

Vaillant spends a few pages trying to



Amur tigers are golden, but have more white fur than orange tigers living in the tropics, as well as longer fur to insulate them from the extreme arctic weather. This big male is Shelby, another resident at the Conservator's Center. Photo by Kim Pyne.



offer the tenuous hope that foreign non-governmental organizations might achieve what a totalitarian but paternalistic sovereign state could not. But the bulk of his work makes it clear that the tiger is doomed in the wild.

Vaillant makes one brief reference to captive breeding; he rightly dismisses the Chinese “breeding and rehabilitation centers” like the one he visited in Harbin, Manchuria. He deems it a factory farm disguised as a theme park. He includes a picture of the enormous vat of tiger-bone wine they are brewing in the lobby, which they sell for \$140 per liter. He does not think captive-raised tigers could ever be successfully released into the wild anyway and says it has never been done. Actually, there is one such case I know of. In his book *Tiger, Tiger*, Arjan Singh describes the long and devoted labor of doing so. But it is a moot point. Released into what?

## Screen Adaptation in the Works for *The Tiger*

According to the online entertainment news blog CeleLog.com, plans are currently being made to turn John Vaillant's new book into a big screen adventure, starring no other than Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie! Pitt has secured rights to star in and direct the new project with filmmaker Darren Aronofsky, whose 2008 film, *The Wrestler*, was nominated for two Academy Awards. Aronofsky has reportedly been scouting locations for the new movie during the past few months. Guillermo Arriaga, of *Babel* and *21 Grams* fame, is now working on the screenplay for *The Tiger*, which is slated to premiere sometime in 2012. Hopefully, with such well-known and respected names to back up the story's importance and credibility, this adaptation of such an intense, ecologically significant, real-world event will help to open the collective eyes of mankind as to the true strength of mother nature and what consequences we might face if the mighty “lord of the forest” remains doomed to a bleak future of inevitable extinction.

When the arch is reduced to rubble, the keystone cannot stand alone.

But I would like to elaborate on captive tiger husbandry. The people in Vaillant's story know of the tiger's intelligence from interacting with them as adversaries. Many members of the FCF know of the tiger's intelligence from interacting with them as friends. Vaillant speaks eloquently of the fearsome fire in a tiger's eyes. I have seen something else. I have been in a situation so dire that 26 tigers I had never met would surely die unless I alone did what appeared to be impossible. I knew it and the tigers knew it. As they watched me struggling to restore their health and dignity, I saw the fire in their eyes become as lambent as a lover's. I heard their voices soften, imploring me to stay, to persevere, touch them, comfort them, and trust them. I can still see the looks on those magnificent faces as they realized that they, apex predators, needed me, a puny little fire monkey, and the looks said that they would never hurt me. It is a story for another time, but they kept their promise. This kind of knowledge is not taught in schools, nor is it accepted in academia. Only people like you and I have it. And we must convey it. The same intelligence that enables the tiger to adapt to the harshest environments in the world enables it to adapt to benevolent captivity, which will soon be the only place it can live. Even though the forest may die, long live the lords of the forest.



group 1

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For a \$50 donation, choose one of three thank you prints by artist Teri Zucksworth. These 18" by 24" colored-pencil drawings are ready for matting and framing. Pick the black leopard “Hanging Around,” the lounging white tiger “Paying a Visit,” or the snow leopard “Standing Guard.”

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Do your part to help transport captive felines out of harm's way -- support the FCF Wildcat Safety Net with a donation today.



group 3



## ACCREDITATION FOR WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

By Lynn Culver

Patty Perry founded Wildlife and Environmental Conservation, Inc. (WEC) after years of practicing raptor rehabilitation at the Ojai Raptor Center, which treats over 1,500 wild birds annually. She is federally licensed to rehabilitate and hold wild migratory birds, and she is also permitted by Fish and Wildlife to hold eagles as well. She is licensed by California to exhibit birds and wild cats.

Patty gained her California feline exhibition permit after her years of rehabilitation work with bobcats and internships at several feline facilities. In 2007, the USDA licensed her as an exhibitor and California gave her permission to import a captive-born serval for use in her wildlife programs.

WEC moved its Ojai facility to Moorpark, California, in 2009. In addition to the many species of owls, hawks, eagle, and falcons, there are also wild felines. The outreach programs use Sabi, a trained education serval, and a female Siberian lynx named Temba. WEC also houses four Bengal tigers, named Prauna, Tajas, Vishnu and Hari. Conservation education for school-age children is the major focus of WEC, and Patty presents programs to schools and churches, also offering community outreach, private programs, and tours of the WEC facility by appointment.

Patty says, "While my programs do include exotic endangered animals like tigers, I spend a lot of time focusing on local wildlife issues – the 'think global, act local' formula. For example, educating people so they won't pick up perfectly healthy wildlife babies under the mistaken impression their moms abandoned them. I talk about the damage domestic cats can do to the native songbird population and explain how people can protect bird feeders from cats, and to keep their tabby confined, or at least bell any cats that run free."

Patty believes that the next generation may be the last to see many of the species listed as endangered today. She feels that her job is to bring understanding and build emotional connections to wildlife in

today's youth.

Patty says, "Children that are knowledgeable about the loss of our natural heritage will grow up to be passionate wildlife protectors. We have to shape attitudes while the children are still impressionable, that way, when it is their turn to be consumers and voters, they will make

People who apply for accreditation and become accredited set the standards for those who have not. There is no way the private sector can look any better than with private facilities like Patty's."

The WEC facility consists of 12 lovely acres, and the entire property is fenced with eight-foot-tall chainlink with addi-



WEC founder Patty Perry has her hands full bottle-feeding young snow tiger Vishnu and tabby tiger Hari. Like the commercial says, "You never outgrow your need for milk," and Patty reports that all her tigers continue to drink milk from a bottle as a treat. Photo by Melissa Faust.

decisions and sacrifices to save nature and the environment."

Accreditation board member Ron Young has a 35-year career in the zoo world, having opened three zoos and closed four others. He has worked at every Busch Gardens zoological park. Ron has helped with the breeding and rearing of feline species as diverse as clouded leopards, snow leopards, tigers, leopards, and servals.

One of the focal points of the WEC application was how much room was provided for the tigers. Ron says, "I have worked at six different zoos, and Patty provided her tigers more room than Busch Gardens in Florida does for their tigers.

tional security provided by surveillance cameras throughout. This former lemon orchard still grows plenty of these fragrant and beautiful fruit trees.

WEC's serval and Siberian lynx are buddies and share a 1,500 square-foot enclosure. Inside the spacious habitat is a pair of lemon trees. Patty is particularly proud of the elevated ten by ten-foot platform with a five by five-foot cathouse on top built by Juan, who she describes as a "jack of all trades" and a valuable member of the WEC team. In addition to preparing the animals' meals, Juan does feeding, cage housekeeping, and back-up handling when Patty is working the animals. Patty says this "cat condo," as she calls it, was





Patty Perry works with her tigers to keep them conditioned to the leash and table. Here she signals Prauna up onto the table for a tie-down lesson. Photo by Melissa Faust.

built with all native materials; the bamboo flooring and eucalyptus bark shingles and wood house were all harvested from the property. Chainlink is laid over the entire floor of the cat's enclosure to prevent a dig-out, and five inches of sand is deposited on top of that. A concrete-pad feeding area is sheltered under a ten by twenty-foot solid roof.

There are numerous morning glory vines growing up the sides of the 11-gauge chainlink enclosure, creating shade and beauty. Patty designed the shape of the habitat to be 22 feet wide by 72 feet long to allow the pair to reach top running speeds. Patty exercises these cats using a horse lunge line with a leather dangle on the end. Both join in the chase, and Patty says, "Sabi the serval will go flying over the condo structure and all around the cage chasing it." According to Patty, Sabi is particularly well mannered and she also enjoys house privileges with her own bedroom, compete with bed and play toys.

For the tigers are twin 20 by 30-foot retreat enclosures that connect to a 10,000 square-foot communal habitat that gives these big cats plenty of room to romp and play. The retreats are constructed using nine-gauge chainlink, 14 feet tall, and are completely covered with solid aluminum roofing over steel purlins. For the feed-

ing area, there are concrete feeding slabs with automatic waterers. Another feature is a pair of tie-down tables built of a welded iron frame covered with decking.

Above the large tiger exercise habitat are mister systems and fly spray systems. Amazingly, a couple of lemon trees are growing inside this exercise area and, so far, have not suffered any tiger damage to the trunks or branches. Patty says she has even harvested fruit from the trees. The tigers have their own platform and cat condos, albeit, much larger and stronger than the one built for the smaller cats. Their condos are 20 by 20 feet, sitting four feet off the ground, and the platform supports a ten by ten-foot house that is eight feet tall.

A pair of metal ten-foot water troughs

gives the tigers access to water for soaking and playing. Patty says that an inground pool is in the works for the future as soon as funding allows. For toys, the cats have boomer balls and plastic 55-gallon drums, which they love to roll and bite and toss into the water troughs.

Two of the tigers are about three years old, and the two younger ones are around 16 months. About six months ago, the two groups were successfully integrated so that they can all share the big habitat together, or they can be separated. The four tigers are leash-trained and also respond to voice commands such as to lie down, come up, come forward, come up on the platform, or come up on the tie table.

When working the big cats, Patty uses the buddy system and has a number of reliable associates who are part of the WEC team. Patty keeps the big cats conditioned by leash walking the tigers inside their habitat and around the fenced property. Patty has a pair of custom-designed heavy-duty welded transport cages and a specially equipped van that enables her to transport the WEC cats and raptors to presentations or to the veterinarian. Her long-term plans are to acquire a few more felines and offer onsite educational programs by appointment.



Serval Sabi perches on her cat condo in her spacious outdoor enclosure. Photo by Melissa Faust.



## CAT OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

By Anthony Giordano  
Director of Conservation Science and  
Field Projects  
S.P.E.C.I.E.S.  
Society for the Preservation of Endan-  
gered Carnivores and their  
International Ecological Study

“Stop, stop!” I yelled to Rogelio as we cruised one of the west roads. The pickup truck ground to a halt, and I lurched forward with a grunt, slamming my hands against the glove compartment.

“What?” he asked excitedly.

“There are some tracks on the right here,” I said. “You were just about to run over another one. They’re fading a bit...”

I jumped out of the full-size extended-cab Ford and ran over to the imprint in the desert sand. It was only 10:30 am and already 90 degrees in Big Bend National Park. Before I closed upon the nearest track, however, I could see that it was only a bobcat print, nothing more.

“Bobcats appear to be doing well here,” I said, somewhat sarcastically. In actuality, I knew this already. Although the track was small, likely representing a young female, it was out in the open and parallel to the road, if even only for 30 yards or so.

“You have no idea,” Rogelio said. “Did you see the drawer for bobcat sighting

reports?” he asked. “Biggest drawer of all...”

I had seen it. Dr. Rogelio Carrera, now a professor with Nuevo Leon State University, in Monterrey, Mexico, and a former departmental colleague of mine, was referring to the sighting records that the park’s administration kept filed at its headquarters. There had to be literally hundreds of cards describing bobcat encounters by park visitors, researchers, and official personnel working in the park. Still, I could not get my head around all of those other sighting cards. I pulled them off the dashboard and onto my lap as I climbed back into the truck. Almost obsessively, I started to flip through them again.

The card sitting on top of the pile read, “Strange, cat-like animal. Long tail, appeared longer than the rest of the body. Body was long and low to the ground. Reddish-brown in color.”

This sighting apparently happened two weeks before Rogelio and I got to the park, making it the most recent in the batch. It occurred at a spot we were driving to now, along a little trail called the “Sam Nail.” The trail itself is a small loop path, less than 200 yards long, the entrance of which abuts the road. The vegetation surrounding the trail is not particularly

characteristic of the Chihuahua desert, the oaks being much taller than usual and providing a lot of shade along an arroyo, a dry riverbed. A credible observer, a doctor from Arizon, filed the report, stating that he viewed the animal while sitting on a trail-side bench.

Another card read, “Quick-moving, weasel-like cat or cat-like weasel. Long with an even longer tail. The animal was

chocolate brown to black, and about 14 inches high. We saw it at about the same moment it saw us. It made its way up a steep embankment, and disappeared over a ridge.”

I literally had dozens of these sighting cards. All of them were consistent in their description; these observers were seeing something very similar. And all were apparently describing an animal that is not supposed to occur in this park. Well, at least not officially. Now, although there were not nearly as many of these reports as there were for bobcats, there were more than enough to catch my attention. Particularly the recent ones, which occurred during the past 10 years or so. More interesting, however, is the fact that reports were still being collected in those areas of the park frequented mostly by many visitors.

Mythology and lore are replete with magical denizens of the wilderness, creatures supposedly only rarely seen, but which are surrounded by a shroud of mystery that follows them through time. Spirits, fairies, and elves are best known for hiding amidst deep woodlands and playing tricks on would-be passers-by. Nymphs and gnomes are said to lurk behind waterfalls or in the undergrowth, some good, others with malice in mind. Stranger still, will-o’-the-wisps are believed to emerge on certain nights, if only to flutter and hover above the foggy moorlands of Britain. These creatures have weaved their way in and out of travelers’ tales and journeys for centuries and provided campfire fodder for many cultures over many generations. What these creatures all seem to have in common, however, is that they are almost never seen; a characteristic which can only enhance their mystical and legendary status.

With the diversity of denizens which “the Wilderness” keeps behind her curtain, reality is no less interesting. In the Chihuahua desert of the United States and Mexico, and across many other habitats in Latin America, she, on the rarest occasion, shares one secret with would-be observers; a slightly less magical but perhaps more interesting creature, the jaguarundi. A small, secretive, and usually darkly colored cat that makes its home throughout much of Mexico and Latin America, the jaguarundi is one of the most



Jaguarundi have a distinctive face shape, with small, rounded ears. Their silhouette is more like that of a weasel or otter than a typical cat, which can contribute to false sightings or true sightings not being reported because the observer believes it was not a cat. Photo by Anthony Giordano.





This brown-phase jaguarundi was photographed at the Bear Creek Feline Center. Photo by Jim Peacock.

tors of various professional back-grounds.”

All of these reports are, for the most part, consistent in their description of a jaguarundi. Furthermore, the details of many reports tend to imply an attempt by the observer to accurately describe an animal unfamiliar to them, or at least one never seen before. “Long body, long tail, low to the

ground, short, weasel-like, cat-like,” are among the various adjectives and descriptive phrases used. The differences in the cat’s color, as reflected in some observer descriptions, may at first appear to indicate an inconsistency, until one learns that jaguarundis occur in three different and variable color phases, any of which is capable of turning up in a litter of offspring. And, although the jaguarundi is a cat, I would not say that it is “obviously” a cat. By that I mean, the jaguarundi is far from a typical cat in appearance. In my opinion, any report describing an animal as “unmistakably some kind of cat” by someone who is unfamiliar with the species probably did not actually witness a jaguarundi. Ranging from the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico south to south-central South America, the jaguarundi’s closest relative is much more familiar; the

interesting cats in the world. Interesting because of what we do not know about it. Usually part of a predator community that includes several small to medium-sized carnivores and a few larger ones, the jaguarundi has become more than adept at keeping itself out of the spotlight. Fairly low in the pecking order and no match for larger bobcats and ocelots, the jaguarundi’s strategy has become one of invisibility.

Jaguarundis are not officially listed as residents of Big Bend National Park. Indeed, their presence has never officially been confirmed in the park. Furthermore, many experts dismiss the animal’s presence in the park as nothing more than whimsical imagination. I, however, am not one of them. On the contrary, Rogelio and I are here, during the week May turns into June of 2007, to begin our journey down a road which, we hope, ends in documenting their presence here once and for all. As I flip through these sighting cards, I wonder why they have been so casually dismissed.

“Cat-like animals. Two. Dark slate gray, extremely long tail. Scurried low to the ground. Darted across the road and disappeared in low-lying sage and scrub thickets.”

“All I can say is that there are a lot of reports,” Raymond Skiles, the NPS park biologist, told us on the day of our arrival. “Many of these are filed by credible people, including park personnel, visiting scientists and researchers of various disciplines, and recurring long-time park visi-

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puma, or mountain lion. Formerly, jaguarundis occupied a genus all their own. Regardless of any recently-determined relationships, however, the jaguarundi is not merely a small or scaled-down version of the puma. In fact, aside from some overlap in coloration, it hardly resembles its larger congeneric cousin in other respects, such as morphology, behavior, or habitat. And as far as what we actually know about jaguarundis, let's just say that our current knowledge is one or two steps above "absolutely nothing." Most of what is known is either anecdotal or surmised. Certainly, the number of published scientific papers discussing jaguarundis, most of which only marginally address jaguarundi behavior or biology, can be counted on one hand.

So why should a species of the

jaguarundi's size, relative familiarity, and fairly wide distribution, still be so little-known today, at least among scientists? They are certainly interesting enough to warrant further study. The answer to this has several components. For one, most government and nonprofit wildlife funding in the U.S. goes into research and management of game animals. And, although the majority of the funds remaining are generally earmarked for controlling damage caused by more widespread nuisance predators such as pumas, bobcats, coyotes, and black bears, we are spending more on nongame species, particularly endangered and threatened species, than ever before. More important than all of this, however, is that for our purposes, the cat does not even officially range into the United States as of right

now. At least it has not been officially confirmed in several decades, when the last legitimate sighting was made in extreme south Texas. As for our lack of knowledge about the jaguarundi overall, including throughout the rest of its range? Well, in my opinion, the answer is a little more straightforward and a lot less complicated: the cat simply cannot be caught.

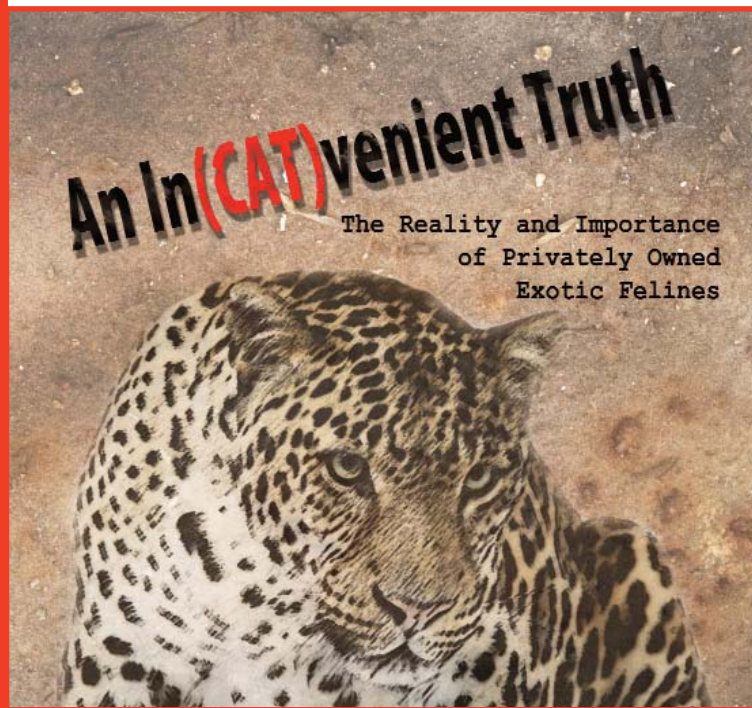
Or rather, let me at least say this. While it's not impossible to capture one, it is probably much harder to see one in the wild. And, for the record, they are nearly

impossible to see in the wild! Unless, of course, you are not a biologist or you are not actually looking for one. I, however, have been fortunate enough to see these unusual cats on no fewer than 10 occasions, each nowhere near Big Bend or, for that matter, anywhere else within the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. On all occasions, the cats I saw were in the scrub forests of South America, and they were crossing quickly from one dense thicket or shrub stand to another. Each sighting was little more than a fleeting glimpse, lasting less than several seconds. Several sightings involved a pair of cats crossing a sandy road, and, as such, I was able to confirm the identification and description of their tracks; tracks which are otherwise difficult to differentiate from sympatric small cat species in the area.

After reviewing the evidence from Big Bend, I have less doubt that jaguarundis do actually inhabit the southern Pecos. On the other side of the Rio Grande, south through the El Carmen Mountains Protected Area of northern Mexico, jaguarundi sightings have a long history. By extension, then, to believe that they actually inhabit Big Bend National Park is not that big of a stretch. Confirming their presence there once and for all, however, is quite another story. Here, at the northernmost end of their range, they probably occur in very low densities. Also, many techniques that field biologists commonly use to detect the presence of a species in an area simply do not work for jaguarundis. But such a population would be fully protected in the U.S. under the Endangered Species Act, and also as part of the National Park System's protected fauna. Furthermore, their confirmation in Big Bend could be indicative of a resident and reproductively viable population, something that has never been unequivocally demonstrated for this species in the U.S. The challenges are great, however, and it certainly would not be prudent to put the cart before the horse. Answering the first question definitively, in this case, is also the most important: Do jaguarundis occupy Big Bend National Park? With all of the secrets which remote stretches of wilderness like Big Bend keep hidden from its visitors, I truly hope that this is one she will one day share with us.

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## BONDED FOR LIFE?

By Teresa Shaffer

We have all heard what a commitment it is to own an exotic animal. Any responsible breeder tries to screen and ask the new owners-to-be all the right questions. Where do you live? Do you have an area for an outside enclosure? Any experience? Do you have small children or are you planning on starting a family in the future? And one of my favorite questions: What would you do if you came home and your serval, caracal, bobcat, etc., has chewed up your new couch or pooped right in the middle of your bed?

These are all good questions, but no matter how carefully a breeder screens, people's lives change and they find themselves needing to find their cat a new home. Over the past few years, I have helped foster and/or rehome a few servals and would like to share one of my experiences. On one hand, the experiences have been very joyful when a cat can be reunited with its parents, but, on the other hand, it makes me think of all the exotic animals out there that are rehomed, never to see their original momma or daddy again.

One particular story concerns a serval born at our facility and sold to new owners, only to need rehoming due to state laws. The serval went to one temporary home for about a month or two, then to a sanctuary for a few months. At that point, I was contacted by his owner and asked if I would be willing to foster him until she received the proper permits to take him home. I agreed and brought him to my house. The previous year, I had seen him and he was a well-adjusted boy, the sweetest serval you could ask for.

Well, was I in for a huge surprise! After he arrived at our home, he was very scared, hissy, and even aggressive. I figured he was having trust issues and would come around in time. Well, I was wrong.

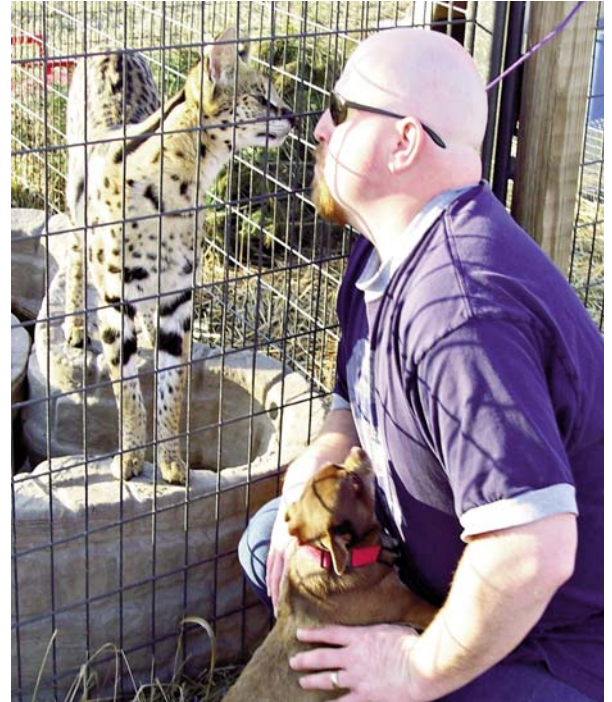
It was a few months before his owner gained the permit necessary to take him back to her place. I explained to her that her baby was not the same boy she had last seen. Quite a few months had passed and he had grown a significant amount since living with her. I stressed that it would take time for her to rebuild the bond they previously had.

At last, the day came and I loaded her serval up and met her in Oklahoma (as I was going to the FCF convention). She called me when she got close, and I could tell how excited she was to finally see her boy again. She was telling me how she had brought him his favorite treats and toys. I again explained that not only had he changed, but he was also very upset right now from the traveling and being in a crate. She was planning on staying in a hotel that night and talking about him sleeping with her. Now, I was definitely concerned.

It was very late when she was scheduled to arrive, so we took him down to my van in his crate where I could wait for her. I cannot even explain how nervous I was. I was so very hopeful that I would be wrong, but felt strongly that this was not going to be the happy reunion she was anticipating. Well, let me say... I WAS TOTALLY WRONG! As soon as he saw her, he immediately started stomping his feet in joy, chirping, and even drooling. He was purring so loud. I had not heard a chirp or purr since he had been with us. For a few minutes, she left him to get some treats from her car. He took one look

at me and went from his happy purring mode to the hissing and spitting cat I had known. You could just see in his eyes that he was saying, "Don't you understand? I don't like you. You are NOT my momma!"

Only an hour later, I heard from the owner, and the serval was playing with his toys and lying on their



Scott Shaffer is committed to his felines. He's spending time talking and visiting with one of his hand-raised, adult male servals. Even though this mature breeder lives outdoors now, the bond of friendship between them continues. Photo by Teresa Shaffer.

bed in the hotel room! I could not believe it!

As I type this, I still get goose bumps thinking about it. The moment this boy saw his momma, I knew in my heart that he had been waiting this whole time for her to come and get him. As sweet as the reunion was, it was bittersweet, as it made me think of all the cats out there whose owners never come back to get them. It gave me a whole new perspective on the bond these cats form with their people. I always share this story with any prospective buyers to illustrate how important it is that they understand the commitment required to own an exotic.

There are no guarantees in life. I will never forget the wonderful reunions I have witnessed. As a breeder, I will continue to do everything in my power to screen anyone who contacts me wanting an exotic cat, and I will educate them to the very best of my abilities. When I hear about circumstances that cause exotic cats to be separated from their people, I know those cats are very unhappy, and these felines will always be in my thoughts and prayers.

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Millie, the Indo-Chinese tiger lives at Heaven's Corner Zoo and Animal Sanctuary. Amanda Dalton took this photo of her staring at the snow-covered winter wonderland.



Deb Hendrickson took this photo of Bella, her Canada lynx, relaxing on her easy chair Christmas night after the crowds have left.

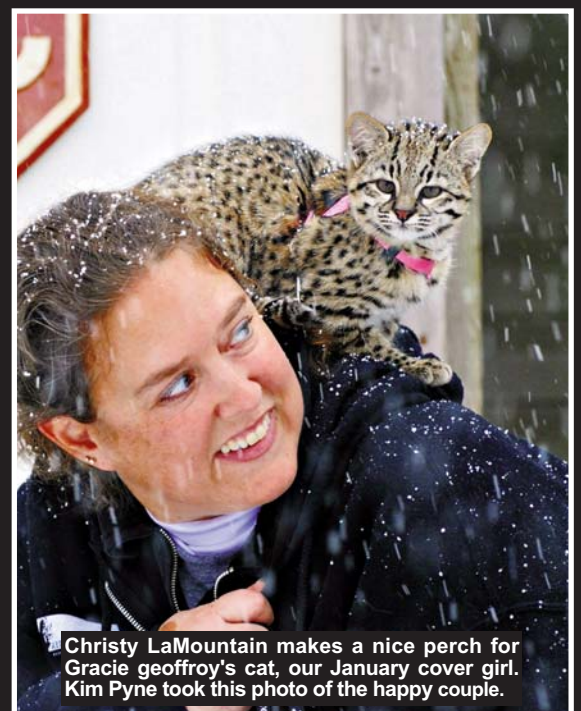


Forget going for a walk! Kimberly Richard's bobcat Chaos charges through the snow.

# YOUR BEST SHOTS



Jeanna Terider's Siberian Lynx Ozzie wonders, "What happened?"



Christy LaMountain makes a nice perch for Gracie geoffroy's cat, our January cover girl. Kim Pyne took this photo of the happy couple.





Sampson Canada Lynx loves the snow, and photographer Laura Walker loves Sampson!



White lion cub Sheila seems to be asking the snowman, Are you my Daddy? Photo by Dawn Cloutier-Jones.



Hesperia Zoo's newest additions, white tigers Bombay and, on the right, Cashmere pose for a Taunton family photo with Kevin, Stephanie, and Judy.



Six week old white tiger Sita and six year old Lena Tran look knowingly into each others eyes at the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo in Gulf Shores. Photo by Eden Tran.



Teresa Shaffer caught Crackers caracal tossing Santa into the air.



## TIGER: ENDANGERED LORD OF THE ASIAN FORESTS

By William Smith, Ph.D.

The primary intention of this monograph is to discuss the marvelous nature of the wild tiger as a top keystone predator and its status as a possible survivor of human population growth, modernity, and globalization.

The tiger (*Panthera tigris*) has been indigenous to virtually all parts of mainland Asia from subarctic Siberia to tropical Indochina, and from eastern Turkey to Manchuria. Tigers are thought to have evolved and speciated in China, during the Pleistocene epoch, and then gradually spread to the rest of Asia. In the region of India, the earliest fossil evidence of the tiger is from Sri Lanka, and has been radiocarbon 14 dated to 16,500 BP. The feline structure of the tiger and other cats has remained basically unchanged since the Felidae clan was established over 34 million years ago by the feline progenitor – proailurus - who weighed a mere 20 pounds.

The Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) surpasses the African lion (*Panthera leo*) in size, and, at 12 feet long and over 650 pounds, is currently the world's largest wild feline. Three of the nine species of modern tiger are now extinct.



Bengal tigers are native to Asia, but this beautiful Bengal, Jacob, resides at Conservator's Center, Inc., in Mebane, NC.

The remaining six species are classified as endangered. The Caspian tiger (a variation of the Amur tiger), famous in Middle Eastern myth and fable, was driven to extinction in the late 1950s. The most numerous subspecies of tiger remaining today is the Bengal. Previously

referred to as *Panthera tigris bengalensis*, it is now classified as *Panthera tigris tigris*. The current population estimates are 1,411 Bengals in India, 200 in Bangladesh, 155 in Nepal, and between 67 and 81 in Bhutan.

In Asia, the tiger is often referred to as a keystone species, because of its significant role in keeping the entire ecosystem intact. The tiger is also called an umbrella species, because it is at the top of a complex food chain.

Many feline experts claim that the tiger is the ultimate "genius" of the feline clan. Several years ago, a feline caregiver and researcher, with over 20 years' experience living with and caring for big cats, told me about an experience he had with a 15 year old female Sumatran tiger named Princess. Princess had previously been a circus performer. Under unusual



At Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaew, a character from the ancient Hindu/Buddhist epic *Ramayana* is shown riding a tiger, a symbol of strength and protection, while fighting off an army of monkeys. Photo by Eden Tran.

conditions of isolation and record cold temperatures, Bart Culver saved Princess from starvation, sickness, and freezing to death. Culver related to me how he rapidly developed an intense relationship with Princess, which amazed and touched him deeply. He maintains that Princess clearly understood his role in saving her life from the onset and clearly expressed her gratitude, loyalty, affection, and devotion through "tiger language" many times over.

The tiger is the national animal of India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and both North and South Korea. The tiger is one of the most important religious icons of India and the most ritualized faunal species in Asia. The typical facial markings of the tiger closely resemble the important written Chinese logograph for king. In Euro-American culture, the two principal animals associated with and representative of the classic five-ring traveling circus are the tiger and elephant. In one world opinion poll the tiger was voted to be the world's favorite animal with 21% of the vote, while the second most favored animal, the dog, had 20% of the total vote. Many notable plants and animals have been named after the tiger because of coloration or disposition.

The tiger's coloration and markings indicate that it is primarily adapted to a jungle (including bamboo) or forest envi-



ronment. This markedly differs from the tiger's close relative, the lion, whose coloration basically resembles the yellow grass savanna of southeast Africa. Because of its capacity for stealth and camouflaged coat, the tiger has often been referred to as a ghost, phantom, or shape-shifter. The basic tiger coloration is a tawny yellow with heavy brownish or black stripes. This pattern mimics the sunlight and shadow pattern of the jungle floor, taking focus away from the tiger's large body and into the forest. The belly is normally colored white. The white tail is marked with black rings. Animals that live farther north (such as the Amur) are usually paler than southern tigers and have lighter stripes. The Sumatran tiger (*Panthera sumatrae*) is generally the darkest in coloration and the smallest of the variations of *Panthera tigris*. Normally, colored tigers have yellow eyes, while white tigers are blue-eyed. Although very rare, both black and white wild individuals have been recorded.

Southern Indian male Bengals average 488 pounds, with southern

Indian females at about 308 pounds. In northern India, tigers are somewhat larger, with average male weights of 518 pounds. Before 1967, the heaviest Bengal tiger on record weighed 570 pounds and was shot

in north India, in 1938. In 1967, a Bengal tiger was taken in north India, which weighed 858 pounds. It is presently on display in the Smithsonian Institution. In the wild, the tiger's lifespan is ten to fifteen years. With proper care in captivity, they have been known to live over twenty years.

Unlike gregarious lions, tigers are normally alone unless involved in mating or the care of cubs. Tigers are solitary hunters that use stealth and ambush to surprise and take prey. Tigers have been known to consume as much as 80 pounds of meat in a single night. These striped cats prefer large prey, such as deer and cattle, but are also capable of taking small prey such as rodents, reptiles, birds, and fish. Older tigers may become man-eaters because of the ease of capturing human prey, and reported cases exist of vengeance against humans. Tigers are excellent swimmers, known to cross bays, rivers, and lakes to get to new hunting territory. In the 1980s, in Ranthambore National Park in India, a male tiger known as Genghis preferred to hunt while



In July 1993, a boy, in self-defense, killed a young melanistic tigress with a bow and arrows. The incident occurred in Podagad village, west of Similipal Tiger Reserve. The main peculiarity in body coloration was that the black stripes were wider than the orange dorsal and white ventral backgrounds. Reprinted from [www.savethetigerfund.org](http://www.savethetigerfund.org).

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swimming in deep lake water. He managed to sustain a 20% successful kill-rate with this hunting technique. Normally, only one in ten food gathering attempts by a mature tiger is a success. This is a significantly lower rate than lions (one in six attempts), which generally hunt in packs. Tigers are even more diligent than lions in protecting taken prey. Despite the tiger's large size, it is considered more agile and stealthy than the lion. Tigers are extremely powerful and successfully hunt the massive 2,000-pound guar (*Bos gaurus*), the largest wild cattle of tropical Asia. In the Russian far east, black and brown bears make up 5-8% of the tiger's diet. As nocturnal hunters, tigers tend to rely on their keen sense of hearing rather than sight or smell. Large, healthy males have the biggest territories, which may encompass hundreds of square miles. Female territories are smaller and will sometimes overlap with those of a dominant male. Young males generally occupy the smallest territories, located on the forest periphery.

#### *India – Last Chance for the Wild Tiger?*

With such high human populations present in India, the tiger would have already been eliminated if it were not for its religious, mythic, and iconic importance.



The Hindu goddess Durga is shown riding a tiger, protecting the faithful from evil.

India's tiger myths, rituals, and worship have been intense and widespread because, at one time, tigers and people lived in close proximity in nearly every rural habitat across the land.

The great Hindu mother-goddess



This hunting stance epitomizes the strength and agility of the tiger. The taut muscles, spring-loaded crouch, and obvious concentration demonstrates just why this powerful, yet graceful, feline is more successful than other large cats at overtaking prey. Photo from itsmeena.com.

Durga (who protects people from evil and preserves moral order) is often depicted riding a tigress. Shiva, the destroyer, is shown seated on a tiger skin. Followers of Buddhism are also portrayed riding tigers, symbolizing the ability to overcome evil. The well-known Indian Hindu saint, Ramana Maharshi, occasionally sat or reclined on a tiger skin. Tiger skin is said to represent the potential energy of creation itself. Creation follows destruction, and, in India and much of Asia, the tiger has symbolically represented both. In major urban areas of India, such as New Delhi, images of the tiger are commonly used to sell everything from shampoo to insurance. Tiger paintings and photos appear in restaurants, on vendor stands, and the backs of taxis and trucks. In southern India, young men traditionally paint their bodies to resemble

tigers during Kalipuli, the annual tiger dance.

As a feline, the tiger is specifically adapted to the dense Asian jungle environment. India has more types of jungle than any other place on earth. The English word jungle comes from the Indian San-



With the largest wild tiger populations worldwide, India has many reserves, like this one in Thekkady. It was declared a reserve in 1978, and covers about 300 square miles of evergreen forest.



skrit word *jangli*, meaning dense forest. Optimum forest environments in India may support as many as 40 tigers per 100 square miles. In contrast, the less optimum forests of SE Asia support only four to six tigers per square mile. One half of the world's wild tigers presently exist in India. India's diverse climates and landscapes range from subarctic conditions in the Himalayas to dense tropical jungles, deserts, plains, marshes, and grasslands. The tiger has, at one time or another, successfully existed in all of these climates. Cats in general have been very successful (until recent human population growth and urbanization) in adapting to changing climates and vegetation.

During the Neolithic period (10,000 – 5,000 BP), tigers were negatively impacted by the arrival of Aryan immigrants to India from western Asia. These early agriculturalists began clearing and burning vast tracts of land for food-producing purposes. Although adaptable, the tiger's coloration and markings indicate that it evolved for forest-jungle living, not savanna or open farmland. During modern times, tigers have become much easier to hunt, with the intensive development of agriculture and the turning of still more dense forests into areas of cultivation. The Mogul emperors of 16th century India used tiger hunts to train soldiers and elephants for war. Nearly every tiger reserve and sanctuary in India today was once a private royal forest. Tipu Sultan of Mysore, India, made his palace into a "tiger shrine." He wore tiger-striped clothes and fed his British war captives to his cadre of pet tigers. The British finally defeated Tipu Sultan in 1799. With the systematic mass killing of tigers throughout India during the 18th and 19th centuries, the British repressed the ethnic resistance symbolized by tigers and persons such as Tipu Sultan.

British colonial rule in India began the large scale and systematic elimination of tigers. Beginning in the 17th century, Europeans, primarily British, shot and killed more tigers in a short period of time than any other group in history. The British used the control and elimination of the tiger as a representation of the defeat of ethnic Indian defiance against British colonialization. Eventually, the British developed protective forestry laws against hunting. They established the World Wide Fund for Nature (in east Africa), which later helped fund Project Tiger in India, in



Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (shown holding his rifle), poses with other members of his hunting party to commemorate a successful outing during his tour of India, circa 1875. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

1973, a noble project spearheaded by Indira Gandhi.

In 1920, the estimated world population of tigers was about 100,000. By the mid-1960s, the number had dropped to 11,000, which was further reduced to 6,000 animals by the late 1990s.

In 2008, as few as 3,000 wild tigers were known to exist worldwide. India formally banned tiger hunting in the late 1960s, when tiger populations dropped below 2,000. Poaching, insufficient law enforcement, and too few sanctuaries of adequate size or habitat have made the future of the tiger very dubious. Wild tigers of all living subspecies are presently in great danger of extinction. In 2006, India's Sarisha Reserve lost all 26 of its tigers to poaching. In 2009, the Panna Tiger Reserve lost all 24

of its tigers, also due to poaching. In June 2009, tigers were still found in 37 reserves spread across 17 states of India. Wild tigers continue to be victimized today by the black market for bones and body parts used in traditional Chinese medicine. The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) has apprehended poachers and body-part traders in India, but, obviously, they have not stopped the illegal trade entirely.

Will globalization finally destroy or save the wild tiger? In order to save the tiger, conservation, understanding, respect for the natural world, and religiosity must become part of a new economic paradigm.

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## FROM NITRO TO SPIRIT

By Debi Willoughby

It is funny where life takes us. How many of you ever thought you would be doing what you currently do for a living? How many of you thought you would be actively involved in a wildcat organization? Probably not many of us.

I have always surrounded myself with animals as far back as I can remember. Tigers were my ultimate favorite for over 25 years, then something (or should I say someone) changed that.

Because of this love for cats, when a brand new wildlife park opened about an hour's ride from my house, I made a phone call and met with the owners the very next day! At the park, I walked around to see what animals they had. All of the animals were in small cages, but they were happy. They looked great, their gums and teeth were in great shape, and they seemed pleasantly content. The owners explained that they had just moved to this location recently and had over 80 acres to expand on. And over time, expand they did. Large enclosures were erected and the animals were moved into their new homes. But why were the animals happy even in their small cages?

Because the owners worked hands-on with them every day, and there was a very strong bond between them. I wanted to learn as much as possible from these people, so I offered to volunteer. This experience and knowledge potential with the big cats was something not available within a hundred miles of my home. Hands-on with big cats is not practiced in New England.

My first life changing experience was when their white tiger gave birth. Amazingly, I was standing in the nursery with the mother tiger and one of the owners,

holding one of the one-day-old white cubs! I still remember that day vividly; how did I become so lucky and privileged?

Once the cub was old enough, I was given the honor of working with and training it. His name was Zabu. We had a lot of fun together and we

learned a lot from each other. Zabu would be placed in another facility soon, so I prepared myself for that day. This park had 30 big cats, along with many other animals, so they could not keep every baby born there. I knew this up front before working with Zabu. When that day came, I felt proud of what I had accomplished with him, but very sad to see him leave. He was going to a great new home, but I was going to miss him very much. At that point, tigers were still my favorite animals and I was still in awe of being able to actually work with one!

Shortly after Zabu left, their spotted leopard, Sassy, had a litter of cubs. All were healthy and growing well. But one of them stood out above the rest. When his siblings were busy attacking and killing everything in sight, this one little leopard cub preferred to sit in your lap and be loved. Do not get me wrong, he still had the "leopard attitude" when bottle-feeding, and he still tried to kill you and drag you off to eat you when he played, but he seemed to crave human attention and approval. It was his personality that made me realize this was a great opportunity to work with a leopard that



I'm holding Nitro as a four-month-old cub on our back porch during a visit to our home. This was his first snow. Photo by Ed Willoughby.



In 2003, I was giving Nitro, now a two-year-old, a training session on the Park grounds inside the perimeter fencing. This shot of us was taken by one of the park staff as we rested from our routine.



was a little more docile than most, which would make training him a bit easier! His name was Nitro, and we went for walks every other day. I trained him to behave well in front of an audience, and he learned basic commands: sit, walk, wait, jump, etc. This leopard was very different from Zabu. Zabu had the “top predator” attitude, laid-back and like the king of the park. Nitro was more of a challenge. Winnie the Pooh says, “Tiggers bounce,” well, I think leopards bounce more! I do not believe Nitro knew he was a leopard. For instance, one brisk fall New England morning, we were walking along a path through the woods, and Nitro jumped five feet straight up in the air and then back four feet. I looked at him, following his eyes to see what he was afraid of. I expected to see a wolf or some other large animal, but was surprised to find that all the excitement was over a one-inch-long spider walking across the path about five feet ahead of us. Looking back at Nitro, I said, “You are embarrassing; thank goodness there was no one around to see that.” He hung his head low, put his tail between his legs, and slumped up next to me. Imagine – a full grown leopard afraid of a tiny spider! Even though he was not outwardly aggressive, I always had to be alert and ready for anything. I enjoyed this type

# DONATIONS

The FCF board of directors wishes to offer a special thanks to the following individuals who have made donations to various projects since the last published Journal.

Your generous donations enable the FCF to provide additional funding for special projects, develop and deliver educational materials to our members and legislators, and help FCF support feline conservation, and improve captive feline welfare.

We appreciate each donation, no matter the amount, recognizing that it is the many small gifts that when combined, add up and make a difference in the effectiveness of the FCF. We encourage everyone to follow their example by donating funds for those projects that are of special interest to you.

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The FCF appreciates your generosity and continued support.



Spirit makes an appearance at a small wildcat fundraiser in Ashland, MA in October 2010. Debi was raising money for the work of Fernando Vidal, in Chile. Photo by Jungle Encounters staff member Tabitha LaFrancois.

of challenge, and at this point, my lifelong love for stripes suddenly changed to a love for spots. Leopards had surpassed my love for tigers.

Nitro and I have made many wonderful memories during our training sessions and leisurely walks. Snow time was always fun, climbing “snow mountains” made by the plows; sitting on Nitro’s bunk in his cage while he licked my hand ever so gently; and jumping from picnic table to picnic

table to see how far we could jump. After working with Nitro for the first two years of his life, the time had come for him to be placed in another facility. Saying goodbye to Nitro was much harder than saying goodbye to Zabu. I could not keep doing this; it was too hard for me to give up a relationship built of so much time and with so much love invested.

I acquired my own licenses to have exotics. Massachusetts has had tough exotics laws in place for many years, so it was going to be a battle to get any exotic cats. As my wildlife education business grew and expanded, after many years dealing with Fish & Game, the permit was finally granted for a small wildcat. I decided that a Geoffroy’s cat would fit in well with my small wildcat conservation shows. I named him Spirit. People warned me that he might live up to his name, and I secretly hoped he would. My wish came true! He is now a year and a half old and acts like a mini-leopard. He bounces off the walls in my house like a trampoline, just like Nitro used to do. He also has Nitro’s attitude, but with “little kitty syn-



drome" on top of it. Some Geoffroy's cats are sweet and loving, and some have a full personality like mine does. I prefer the full personality; they are livelier and more challenging to work with.

I enjoy teaching people about small wildcats, and everyone loves to watch Spirit when he is at a show. He keeps the audience entertained by climbing his scratching posts and jumping from one post to another. I try to show the public what these cats would do naturally in the wild. People are amazed at how well they can climb and jump. When you capture people's attention, which Spirit does every time, that is when you can get your most important message across.



Spirit climbs the tree to get a better view of his back yard world. Wearing both a collar and a harness allows Debi to keep control over the adventurous feline while giving him the freedom to explore the great outdoors. Photo by Debi Willoughby.

a shy person who hardly ever spoke to standing in front of an audience doing wild animal shows. And my love for tigers has evolved into a strong love for spotted cats. Everything happens for a reason, and, for me, it led to spreading awareness about small wildcats. Who knows where life will take me over the next decade or two? I only hope it will be to better the world for our wild furry friends.

I will always be very grateful for the many cat experiences I have been fortunate enough to have, and I hope to have many more. Life without paws would not be a good life at all. Take some time today to love and enjoy your cats; you will all be happier for it.

Reflecting back over the years, I am surprised at where I am today; going from

some time today to love and enjoy your cats; you will all be happier for it.

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P.S. Searching at iGive is a great way to get people involved helping Feline Conservation Federation. It's free to you and free to them, and it can really add up quickly.



## WILD "WONDERZ" AND FCF ON FACEBOOK

By Kimberly Wiacek-Richards

My experience with exotics goes as far back as my memory! Our household was a miniature zoo; you never knew what to expect when walking in the door. Just about anything that might have crossed your mind most likely, at some point in time, either walked, flew, slithered, hopped, swam, or crawled into our world!

We are currently owned by two Siberian (Eurasian) lynx, Ginger and Ivan, who are both six years old; two hussies (bobcats), Chaos and Flash; two caracals, Lexa, who is approximately four and a half years old, and Chance, the man of the house (right now), who is just a few months old; a Bengal girl, Lilo, who is nearing ten; and lots of German shepherds! This is our life and passion simply put - 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year! As most, if not all, of you will probably agree, this is a lifestyle, not a job. We wouldn't trade it for the world!

Our ultimate goal is to have a successful caracal breeding program. Yes, we know this is going to be easier said than done, but we are prepared for the adventure. This is a species that we've adored for as long as we've owned them. We appreciate their traits, good, bad, or neutral. For whatever reason, the success of breeding programs has plummeted over the years. I realize there are a lot of factors as to why, such as economy, health, age, laws/regulations, retirement, death, etc. No matter the reason, it is an absolute shame to the species, as it is an impressive

specimen of the feline family!

Please keep in mind that we are always looking for new caracal additions or even leases. If you can help us, don't hesitate to contact us!

We've got some great ideas and thoughts for the organization. With that said, two heads are always better than one, and this is especially true in our organization! We really need to work together as a team. The FCF has huge potential that has yet to be exposed. We need to utilize our power of existing members to move forward. There are so many avenues that we members can employ by pulling together as a team and getting things going!

One of our members, Erin Patters, has done a wonderful job with creating the "Feline Conservation Federation - FCF Group" on Facebook. Thank you, Erin. This group provides lots of opportunities and benefits to all members: communication publicly or privately; opportunity to meet other members; discussion boards; a list of events; links to other sites of interest for members; as well as uploading, sharing, and admiring photographs of all members and feline species! We have a broad variety of members, from single exotic cat owners to zoos, and everything in between. This social network is a great way to communicate and further promote the FCF, regardless of your exotic ownership status.

We realize that life can get

crazy and chaotic and that it's not always easy to keep up to speed with the updates and changes in the FCF. Facebook is a very user-friendly, simple, and overall safe for users. Better yet, it's free! If you aren't already a member of Facebook, you can join by going to [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com). Members who are already part of Face-



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Chance the baby caracal, gets mothered by Tina, one of our German shepherds.



Chaos bobcat gets introduced to Tina.



book can view and join the FCF group by searching for the following "Feline Conservation Federation - FCF". As new members ourselves, we'd like to see the FCF Facebook page be a greater source of support for the entire community. Personally, I would love to see each member post a quick note on the FCF wall, introducing themselves, so all the members can get to know each other.

For those who are concerned about privacy or incoming emails (spam) from Facebook with friend requests, ads, posting, etc., you may contact me privately at [WonderzOfTheWild@gmail.com](mailto:WonderzOfTheWild@gmail.com) or 304-462-9453. I will send you instructions or talk you through how to change your settings to ensure that you can enjoy your experience with the FCF group on Facebook!

We would also like to start a chat group for members. This "chat group" would be free, but you would be required to download a program. It could be either a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly meeting. There will be scheduled sessions giving all members the opportunity to join in if they'd like. There will be basic guidelines that members will need to follow, in order to keep things friendly and under control. Please email or call me with your thoughts, good, bad, and everything in between!

We are going to be working with a few of the committees to jump-start some of the great ideas that are just floating around! This is an organization where we as individual members are part of a team. Lynn Culver has done an amazing job for the FCF over the years, but she is only one person. She has a family, friends, animals, and probably other hobbies and interests just as the rest of us do. As a thank you to Lynn for all her hard work and sincere dedication, I feel that other members need to come forward and share the responsibility and work. The more members who come forward and work together, the less time, effort, and work there will be for everyone involved! The end result will allow all members, including boardmembers, to enjoy the organization.

If you are reading this, YOU too are a member, so let your voice and ideas be heard! Here are some ideas on how to help out: locate another FCF member and write an article together, members who have websites for their animals can

post and hyperlink the FCF logo to drive more members to our organization, volunteer for a committee that suits your abilities, get out there to other exotic feline owners and promote the FCF to bring in new members. As the FCF expands and advances, so do the benefits of being part of such a wonderful organization!

We look forward to getting to know and work with other members of the FCF! You can see more about our animals at: [www.WonderzOfTheWild.com](http://www.WonderzOfTheWild.com) & [www.vonHaydenGerman-Shepherds.com](http://www.vonHaydenGerman-Shepherds.com).

"Mr. Lynx", a young adult caracal, is the newest arrival at the Wonderz of the Wild household. Hopefully, he will be the future mate of Lexa, their breeding-age female.



## **Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program**

The FCF board of directors congratulates the following individuals for being accepted into the Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program since the past *Journal* issue.

**J.W. Everitt – Advanced**  
**Mona Headen – Basic**  
**Craig DeRosa – Basic**

**Sheri DeFlorio – Basic**  
**James Milbee – Basic**

The three levels of FCF Feline Handler registration are: *basic* – at least one year of experience, *intermediate* – at least five years of experience, and *advanced* – more than ten years' experience handling exotic felines.

Be sure to update your registration in the members-only website when you obtain additional handling experience or new species experience. If you believe your experiences qualify you for an upgrade in registration status, make a request with your updates and the secretary will process the registration.

The following members have been upgraded in their handler experience registration:

**Kamala Strohmeyer – Advanced**  
**Caroline Alexander – Intermediate**

**Debi Willoughby – Advanced**  
**Dolly Guck – Intermediate**

The online registration form can be filled out directly in the members-only section of the FCF website and the \$30.00 registration fee can be made through PayPal.

The board further challenges all FCF facilities to apply for accreditation by the FCF Accreditation Board. The overview, basic standards, and accreditation application are on the FCF members-only website.

Congratulations to all of these members for their dedication to their cats.

George DeLong  
FCF Secretary





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## Feline Conservation Federation

January/February 2011 • Volume 56, Issue 1

Photographer Christian Hunold has an eye for art and balance. This lovely image is of his exotic feline Clive, a first-generation hybrid Chausie, waltzing in the snow. According to Christian's May/June 2010 *Journal* article, Clive has a "bold and prickly nature," but here he seems soft and peaceful. Christian is a professor of history and politics at Drexel University, and also an avid photographer. For this shot, Christian used a Nikon D80 camera with AF-D 50 mm AF-D f/1.4 lens and exposure of 1/125 sec, f-4.5 ISO 640.

