

Feline Conservation Federation

March/April 2013 • Volume 57, Issue 2





# TABLE OF

MARCH/APRIL 2013 | VOLUME 57, ISSUE 2

# contents

## Features

- 7** Introducing Two Bobcats  
*Crystal Haney and Bob Culler relate how newcomer Charlie bonded with resident bobcat Kirby.*
- 13** Beat the Heat!  
*Bart Culver describes a low cost solution to keep cats cool.*
- 17** Peggy and Pussy: Unintentional Mothers  
*Heidi Fahrenholz tells of margay and oncilla motherhood in this 1976 LIOC reprint.*
- 20** The 42nd Annual Feline Conservation Federation Convention in Nashville, Tennessee  
*Della Jacot shares the latest news on the exciting FCF event.*
- 22** Introduction to FCF Convention Speaker Gregory Breton  
*Gregory Breton, from Le Parc des Felins in Paris, France our special guest at Convention has plenty of feline experience to share.*
- 24** How to Import a Cheetah in 973 Easy Steps  
*Carol Plato and Earl Pfeifer set a goal and now enjoy the fruits of their efforts.*





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A membership to the 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. The FCF works to improve captive feline husbandry and conservation. The FCF supports captive and wild habitat protection, and provides support for captive husbandry, breeding programs, and public education. Send \$35 annual dues (\$40 Canada, \$50 international) to FCF, 141 Polk Road 664, Mena, AR 71953.

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## (Features cont.)

- 36** Through Cougar's Eyes: Life Lessons from one Man's Best Friend  
*Kane Molavi review's David Raber's 2001 book about his companion Cougar.*

- 39** Bonds Not to be Taken for Granted  
*Kim Barker on the changing nature of lioness relationships.*

## Conservation

- 10** Effects of Landscape Pattern and Human Activities on the Gene Flow and Genetic Structure of Geoffroy's Cat  
*Progress report by Javier Pereira on his ongoing FCF-funded research.*
- 16** Niassa Lion Research Presentation for Wildlife Conservation Network  
*Chris T. Tromborg attended Colleen and Keith Begg's presentation at WCN.*
- 33** Ruaha Carnivore Project: An Update  
*Amy Dickman explains more on this FCF-funded project.*

## Species

- 9** African Golden Cat  
*Jeremy Hance enlightens us on this little known cat of central Africa.*

## Organization

- 4** Letter from the President
- 6** From the Executive Director
- 10** Donations
- 19** Registered Handlers
- 40** First Quarter 2013 Board Meeting Report

The Feline Conservation Federation publishes the *Journal* bimonthly. The FCF is non-profit, (Federal ID#59-2048618) noncommercial, 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 high resolution photos and articles to the *Journal* Managing Editor. Photos and articles may be emailed to

lynnculver@hughes.net, or send by postal service to: 141 Polk 664, Mena, AR 71953.



Feline Conservation Federation



## Letter from the President

The convention is almost here! If you haven't made plans yet, you better get with it. The convention committee has put a lot of effort into this year's convention and it has shaped up to be another great one. Where else are you going to be able to meet a clouded leopard cub up close and personal? Later that night, we'll see just how many boot scootin' boogiers we have when we visit the Wild Horse Saloon. We are really going to paint the town red and soak in as much of the southern hospitality Nashville has to dole out.

We'll be having our annual membership meeting Thursday night. If anyone has an item that they would like to have brought up at that time, please let me know by sending an email to [president@felineconservation.org](mailto:president@felineconservation.org). You don't have to be present at the meeting to submit an agenda item. If you aren't, I will try to get back with you and give you a synopsis of the discussion on your item. Just be sure to write me an email detailing exactly what your concerns or comments are on your subject.

Even if you can't make it personally, remember that you can ship items for the silent auction to the hotel. The auction always is a good fundraiser for the FCF and you can ship anything you want to donate to the hotel. The Radisson Hotel at Nashville Airport address is 122 Airport Center Drive, Nashville, TN 37212. If you do, it is best to let Lynn Culver, me, or convention chair Bobby Bean ([wildcon2be@aol.com](mailto:wildcon2be@aol.com)) know so we can be looking for it.

The legislation season has wrapped up in many states and, so far, I'm not aware of any major legislation that has passed. It is a constant battle to defend ourselves against the animal rights groups that try harder and harder every year to put us out of business. They spend millions of dollars against us and the only way we can keep them at bay is with good relations with our legislators. When the legislative season is over, make sure you take the time to get to know your legislator. Invite them to your facility so that when the time comes and you need their help, they will be able to place a face with your name and they will already know how devoted and passionate you are about your animals. I can attest that that is invaluable from first hand experience. We need everyone

involved, not just "professionals," but everyone with an interest of keeping the wild felid populations strong for future generations to see and love.

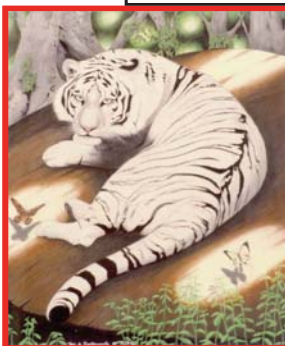
On a similar note, have you donated to the Ohio Association of Animal Owners fund to appeal the restrictive legislation passed in Ohio last year? The FCF board has allocated up to \$1,500 to match donations from our members to the cause. This could be a landmark case and could potentially benefit people from every state, not just people from Ohio. Send your donations to our secretary, Lynn Culver, and remember to state that the tax-deductible donation is for the OAAO legal fund.

The kitten season has finally arrived. I have heard of several notable births already. It is important that we support breeders so that they may continue to keep the gene pool of captive wild cats viable.

Despite the claims made by those against private ownership of excessive breeding, offspring of wildcats from lions and tigers to lynx and caracals are becoming fewer and fewer each year. Breeding is essential to keeping the population viable. There are only a couple of larger facilities that continue to produce tiger cubs each year, but other breeders need to produce offspring so that the captive population does not hit a genetic bottleneck. The FCF is working on our studbook program to help people know the genetic background of their animals and form a private sector studbook. We are also working on a survey to document this decline in captive breeding so we can show legislators the truth and just how important to the conservation of wildcats our work is.

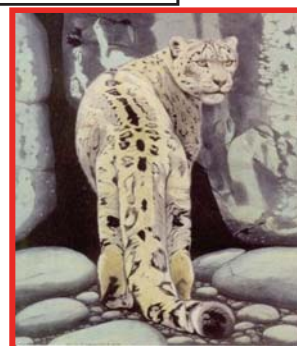
Kevin Chambers

### FCF NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT



#### Meet the Wildcat Safety Net Challenge!

A \$500 matching grant  
has been donated  
specifically to help the



Riverglen Tigers reach a new home at Turpentine Creek Wildlife Sanctuary. Your \$10 donation will become \$20. Your \$100 donation will be matched with another \$100. When members support a specific project, these donations will be added on top of the Safety Net Committee-approved grant.

For each donation of \$30 or more, choose one of three thank you prints by artist Teri Zucksworth. These 18" x 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."

Go to the FCF website to make a donation with PayPal today. Or call the treasurer to use your credit card to support this worthy cause at 479-394-5235.

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



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## From the Executive Director

By Lynn Culver

By the time you receive this *Journal* issue the final preparations for Convention will be completed. If you have not reserved a room at the Radisson Hotel yet, you will be hard pressed to find lodging. But Convention registration is accepted up until the opening day, so come late, rather than miss this annual extravaganza. Nashville Zoo is giving us a very special opportunity to experience their hand-reared young clouded leopard cubs and opportunities like this do not come around very often!

Gregory Breton is making his first visit to the United States and I am sure he will have plenty to share with us. His zoo Park, Le Parc des Felins breeds and exhibits more species of feline than can be found in our country. He brings experience with species we have never seen in this country and I am sure we will be fas-

cinated with his knowledge.

This year has been off to a slow start and hopefully we will get back on track after Convention. I want to share with you news of several new FCF products making their debut at Convention. Marketing Director Kurt Beckelman has created some FCF logo coffee mugs, which he will bring to convention where we can save on shipping by purchasing them there. Another item we have is full color embroidered FCF logo patches. These can be sewed onto shirts, jackets, bags, or whatever you wish. FCF color T-shirts will also be available at convention and on the website as well. Buying T-shirts at Convention saves you money on shipping. Another project we hope to have completed by Convention is the new FCF notecards. These cards are created from photos submitted by FCF members.

This issue of the *Journal* contains a great story written by FCF members Carol

Plato and Earl Pfeifer, recounting this past year and their efforts to import cheetah into Canada to be educational ambassadors to raise awareness and funding for cheetah conservation. It is always encouraging to read how, in spite of increasing regulations and red tape, it is not impossible to obtain this species. Earl and Carol are not the only ones importing cheetah; other FCF members in Florida and Ohio have been approved to import this species as well.

And speaking of rare species, I wish to extend congratulations to FCF members Jim and Bertie Broadus for their success in not only importing jaguarundi into the US, but, more importantly, in successfully breeding two litters from their female.

With all the facilities closing down, and states passing draconian regulations, there are still dedicated and determined individuals and facilities not giving up. That's what it takes to succeed.



Show your FCF pride by sewing this four-inch, full color embroidered FCF logo patch onto your safari shirts, polo shirts, windbreaker jackets, bags, or whatever. Pick up a supply at convention for only \$5.00 each.

FCF logo design 11 ounce coffee mugs are white ink on high gloss black background. Wake up and smell the coffee! Mugs are \$5.00 each at convention.



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## Introducing Two Bobcats

By Krystal Haney and Bob Culler,  
Bays Mountain Park

Since 1992, Bays Mountain Park has housed several bobcats in a naturalistic, quarter-acre enclosure. Over the years, we have had to introduce new bobcats to one another on several occasions. We have had varying degrees of success, mostly positive. This article is about our most recent introduction.

On October 9, 2012, naturalist Krystal Haney and a volunteer arrived at N.O.A.H. Feline Conservation Center, in Mena, Arkansas, to acquire a one year old bobcat. Lynn Culver, the owner/handler, helped prepare “Charlie” for the trip to his new home at Bays Mountain Park, in Kingsport, Tennessee. After sedation with Ketamine, he was given a check-up by the local veterinarian. He was given a rabies vaccination, flea medication, and a claw trimming. Then he was placed in a carrier with water and food and he started his journey. Arriving at the park, after 13 hours of travel, Charlie was placed in a small holding pen connected to his eventual home. He was very quiet for the whole trip and did not eat. When released into the holding pen, Charlie immediately went into a wooden box shelter.

Charlie spent his first 24 hours at Bays Mountain hiding in his box. He did not eat and we did not see him come out that whole day. By the second day, he would come out if no one were near. He also started eating. We fed him Nebraska Brand Feline Formula, rats, and chicken thighs on alternating days. For the first week, he would come out to eat and immediately return to his box. He gradually became more accepting of our presence while working in the area. By the end of the second week, Charlie was lying on top of his house while we cleaned and no longer growled at us.

Due to delays in scheduling his neutering surgery, Charlie was in the holding pen almost two months. During that time, Kirby, our existing nine year old neutered male, did not seem to pay much attention to Charlie. They would sit in their respective pens and watch each other. Charlie was neutered on December 4, 2012.

After a recovery period, Kirby was locked in his holding pen while Charlie

was allowed access to the main enclosure. This would allow Charlie to familiarize himself with the layout and hiding spots. The plan was to put Charlie back up the next day and allow Kirby to smell his scent in the enclosure. The plan went awry. We could not get Charlie locked back into his holding pen. After six days of trying to get them switched back, we decided to go ahead with the introduction.

December 15 was the BIG DAY! Charlie was still out, and we released Kirby into the main enclosure at 10 am. Kirby went over to Charlie’s holding pen, where Charlie, on top of his house, was oblivious to the events unfolding. Kirby smelled around on the floor of the pen and then jumped up onto the house with Charlie. Charlie immediately vacated the premises, with Kirby in hot pursuit. For the next 30 minutes, Kirby chased and Charlie ran. Every now and then, the two cats would engage in some loud wrestling matches. There was a good deal of snarling and lots of swatting, but no real damage. Charlie would roll over on his back or side in a submissive posture. After a few of these encounters, we noticed that Charlie started

to chirp like a kitten. This seemed to appease Kirby and lessen the tension between them. Within 30-45 minutes of the initial introduction, they both seemed to come to a sort of peace with each other. Charlie would follow Kirby around the enclosure, chirping as he followed. Kirby would occasionally turn to swat and growl at Charlie. During this process we remained in the enclosure to observe and intervene if necessary.

Over the following days, we would occasionally hear the cats fighting. These fights did not last long and we never saw any injuries to either cat. In about a week’s time, we started to see the cats lying together. The chirping, chasing, and fighting had ceased. The two cats have since formed an inseparable bond.

This introduction of two unrelated bobcats has gone very well. One of the reasons may be the age difference between the two cats. Because Charlie was a yearling, he was able to revert to his kitten-like behaviors. This allowed Kirby to feel unthreatened. Overall, this was one of our most successful introductions at the park.



**Charlie, a young male bobcat, has adjusted and now lays comfortably next to the resident adult male, Kirby, at Bays Mountain Park.**





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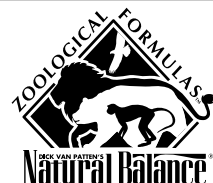
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## African Golden Cat

Adapted from an article by Jeremy Hance, for Mongabay.com  
[http://news.mongabay.com/2011/0830-hance\\_africangoldencat.html](http://news.mongabay.com/2011/0830-hance_africangoldencat.html)

Africa is known as a continent of felines: leopards, cheetahs, servals, caracals, and, of course, the one who wears the crown, the lion. But few people travel to Africa to see, or have probably ever heard of, the African golden cat. Native to the rainforests of central Africa, from Kenya to Cameroon, with a separate population in West Africa, the African golden cat (*Caracal aurata*) is considered the continent's least-studied feline. However, a team of researchers is changing this, using camera traps and recording the first ever public video of the African golden cat.

University of Kwazulu Natal graduate student Laila Bahaa-el-din, who is heading up the work, captured the video in a logging concession in Gabon, in association with the University of Oxford's

Wildlife Research Unit.

"I don't think I can put capturing the video into words," says Bahaa-el-din. "I live and dream golden cats most days. To get back to camp and put the footage on the computer and have this cat basically posing for the camera, it's incredible. I watched it five times in a row and pretty much didn't sleep that night."

The video can be watched on the site [http://news.mongabay.com/2011/0830-hance\\_africangoldencat.html](http://news.mongabay.com/2011/0830-hance_africangoldencat.html).

Additional photos show what is believed to be the same young adult male African golden cat. In the first, he grooms himself during the day and in the other chases a bat at night. Photos and videos in the area show that the cat is more active during the day than expected.

The cat is so cryptic that the first known photo of a wild individual in its habitat was only taken in 2002, by Philipp Henschel, Lion Program Survey Coordinator for Panthera, an NGO devoted to the conservation of wild cats. Panthera is also helping to fund Bahaa-el-din's work.

Bahaa-el-din is using camera traps to compare African golden cat populations in various habitats: a pristine forest, a well-managed logging concession, and a poorly managed one.

"The population densities at which they live, the size of their home ranges, and their activity patterns all remain to be established," Bahaa-el-din says. Without this information, it is impossible to set up a conservation plan - the ultimate goal of Bahaa-el-din's work supported by the University of Oxford's Wildlife Research Unit and cat conservation organization, Panthera.

"The range of the golden cat, being restricted to the forests of equatorial Africa, consists of more land within logging concessions than protected areas. It is crucial therefore to understand and reduce how this activity impacts the golden cat,"

she says. "The video footage I recently captured was actually in a logging concession in central Gabon. It is recognized as having high standards of sustainable logging practices and has a zero tolerance for illegal hunting. At the particular area I had my cameras set up, logging had taken place just two years previously and active logging was going on just a few kilometers away. As well as the videos, many photos of golden cats were captured, as well as captures of numerous other species such as gorillas, elephants, armadillos, leopards, duikers, rodents, and more."

Bahaa-el-din adds, "Logging alone should not mean the depletion of wildlife. The devastating effects of logging often result from poor management and unsustainable practices."

Although Bahaa-el-din's footage of the African golden cat received global media attention - including CNN, Reuters, National Geographic, and, of course, mongabay.com - everything was almost spoiled by termites.

"I found the camera trap completely destroyed by termites, and my heart sank. I recovered the memory card and uploaded the files to my computer, hoping that perhaps something might have happened before the termites did their worst. And to my amazement, I opened one video file after another featuring a golden cat! I watched them all through once, and then again, and then again. I felt, at last, like I was getting to know this elusive cat," she says. "I was torn between wanting to preserve the mysteriousness of the cat by keeping the footage secret and wanting to show the world this beautiful cat to raise its profile and keep it from disappearing without anybody taking notice. Of course, the latter was the sensible option."

About the size of bobcats, African golden cats are most closely related to servals and caracals. They are the only African felid wholly dependent on forest cover for survival. Listed as Near Threatened by the IUCN Red List, the species is imperiled by deforestation and hunting, largely for their skins. The IUCN estimates that the population has dropped 20 percent in the last 15 years and is still decreasing. The cat's habitat often overlaps with forest leopards, which are known to kill them.



African golden cats can be solid or spotted, as this pair living at Port Lympth Wild Animal Park illustrates. Photo by Neville Buck.

# Progress Report: Effects of Landscape Pattern and Human Activities on the Gene Flow and Genetic Structure of the Geoffroy's Cat (*Leopardus geoffroyi*)

By Juan Pereira

## Introduction

In 2009, I started a project to evaluate the effects of habitat fragmentation on genetic structure and gene flow in Geoffroy's cats. My approach is based on a comparison of genetic characteristics of Geoffroy's cats between two areas with different degrees of habitat fragmentation and human presence. This comparison will allow me to determine if populations located in a continuous and less-perturbed habitat have a more similar genetic structure than populations located in fragmented and widely-populated areas. Also, this approach is appropriate to investigate which landscape features act as dispersal barriers for Geoffroy's cats. The data are important in the understanding of which human activities are more conflictive regarding Geoffroy's cat conservation. Here, I am reporting the number of samples obtained to date, their distribution in both study areas, the analysis performed on these samples, and the next steps I am planning.



**Spotted Geoffroy's cat and the natural habitat this small feline uses. Crossing roads is a fatal hazard, as evidenced by the death of a spotted male (LP04) in the La Pampa province.**

## The Study Sites

Site 1 (South of La Pampa province) includes a plain covered mostly by semi-arid scrubland with patches of mixed shrubs and open areas. In general, the vegetation structure has been modified by cattle activity. There are some big lagoons interconnected by small rivers and flooded areas. This site is crossed by National Route 152 from NE to SW. This route has moderate vehicular traffic, but a lot of Geoffroy's cats are victims of road accidents (J. Pereira, unpublished data).

Site 2 (Northeast of Buenos Aires and South of Entre Ríos

provinces) encompasses agricultural fields, cattle ranches, and a few areas of semi-pristine natural vegetation. Several cities are interspersed within this landscape. As a result, the site is crossed by a high number of routes and roads with high vehicular traffic. There is, however, a portion of the Paraná River delta that includes big patches of pristine natural vegetation at the NE. Two big rivers cross the site at the NE.

## Project Goal

The ultimate goal of this project is to evaluate the effects of habitat fragmentation on genetic differentiation and gene flow in Geoffroy's cats, based on (1) a comparison between two areas with different degree of habitat fragmentation and human presence, (2) the use of highly variable molecular markers such as microsatellites, (3) a large sample of animals with precisely-known geographic origin, and (4) a careful study of landscape characteristics.

## Sample Collection

During 2012, I added 39 new samples to my study, mostly fresh tissues which were recovered from road-killed animals.

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Also, skins and fresh feces were obtained. These materials imply not only new genetic samples for my work, but also complete vouchers (skin, skull, skeleton, soft tissues, parasites, etc.) for the “Bernardino Rivadavia” National Museum collection (Buenos Aires). As a result, this museum has today the largest collection of Geoffroy’s cat reference material in the world. Gathering this number of samples has been time-consuming and implied a considerable field effort (I have driven more than 43,000 km of routes during the last 3½ years). But now, I have finally reached my objective of a minimum of 80 samples collected per study area. The distribution of these samples in both study areas is seen in:

Site 1 (Buenos Aires and Entre Rios provinces) - Total no. of samples of Geoffroy’s cats: 84;  
Type of samples: 61 fresh tissues, 11 fresh feces, 11 skins, and one blood sample.

Site 2 (La Pampa province) - Total number of samples of Geoffroy’s cats: 91;

Type of samples: 46 fresh tissues, 38 blood samples, 5 skins, and 2 fresh feces.

#### *Analysis of Samples*

During 2011, I performed a pilot study based on 30 Geoffroy’s cat samples to adjust laboratory protocols for DNA extraction and microsatellite amplification. Based on their levels of polymorphism, 10 microsatellites (F42, F53, F124, F146, FCA391, FCA424, FCA441, FCA453, FCA723, and FCA742) have been selected for this study. I have determined with confidence the optimal concentration of primers and MgCl, annealing temperature for each locus, and identified contamination sources. During 2012, and following this protocol, I have successfully processed microsatellites from 167 other samples. On April 11, 2013, the samples were sent to a specialized laboratory (MACROGEN, Korea) for genotyping.

#### *Next Steps*

Once results from MACROGEN will be available, the first step will be to check if all samples have been correctly processed and genotyped. If one or more



**Skin of a spotted individual (BA29) killed in 2001, and maintained by a rancher as a trophy.**

samples failed, as usually happens, I will have to reprocess these samples (new DNA extraction, amplification, purification, and re-submission to MACROGEN). With the complete data set available, I will start analyzing the results (relative genetic variability in each population, level of population differentiation, population structure, number of significant groups of individuals, number and direction of migrants, effective migration rates, existence of bottlenecks, patterns of isolation by distance, effects of landscape features on the distribution of genetic variation, and identification of spatial discontinuities) using specific software. The most challenging stage of this project was the acquisition of an adequate number of samples. Since this step is almost achieved, I will be working on data analysis and explanation of the obtained patterns during the rest of the year. I will try to have a first draft of the manuscript by the end of 2013.



**Pregnant melanistic female (ER31) with four almost-completely developed fetuses in Entre Rios province was hit by a car crossing the road.**



### *A New Linked Project*

To study the issue of habitat connectivity for Geoffroy's cats in human-dominated landscapes, I have submitted (in collaboration with colleagues from other institutes) a project proposal to the Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Food (SAGPYA) of Argentina, to apply to a GEF fund (Global Environmental Facility). Fortunately, this proposal has been approved (as part of the GEF 090118 TF project) and I am planning to start this project by the second half of 2013. My new objective will be studying movements of Geoffroy's cats related to habitat characteristics within a matrix of commercial forest plantations. I will use GPS collars and camera traps to evaluate the use of proposed corridors and refuges for this species. You are also invited to support this exciting brand new project!!!

### *Acknowledgements*

This project was supported by CONICET (Research Council of Argentina), Amersfoort Zoo (Raymond van der Meer), Le Parc des Félines (Grégory Breton), and the Feline Conservation Federation (Patrick Callahan and Lynn Culver).

### **CALL TO GEOFFROY'S CAT OWNERS TO PARTICIAPTE IN U.S. GENETIC STUDY**

Geoffroy's cat owners are invited to contribute to a DNA study conducted by Len Davidson to determine the genetic diversity of the American-held population. All Geoffroy's cats, whether they are reproductively active or not, are important to this effort. To find out more about this study, read the January/February 2013 *Journal*. Len Davidson has expanded the protocol to allow for fecal sample testing, so that non-handleable adult Geoffroy's cats can now also participate in this study. Call Len Davidson at 330-209-9019 or email Len at [bio031950@yahoo.com](mailto:bio031950@yahoo.com) to find out how you can contribute samples for testing.

Len Davidson will be speaking at the FCF Convention in Nashville on her genetic research project.



**Another road killed Geoffroy (LP71), a spotted male in La Pampa province.**

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# Beat the Heat!

By Bart Culver

The past two years, Arkansas has suffered unprecedented heat and drought, and it is predicted to recur this year and is very challenging for feline husbandry. Last summer was unbearable. The trees, shrubs, and bamboo we rely on for living shade and evaporative cooling began to die. We have lost nearly half of our red oaks, dogwoods, and redbuds. Ponds around us dried up and fall began in July. I pumped thousands of gallons out of our creek to water our landscaping, to little avail. My heart went out to our beloved cats, especially the nursing mothers and their kittens.

Two of our bobcats, Sierra and Mariah, suffered the same problem and reacted the same way. The heat was so severe it dried up their milk. Their babies fought over their dwindling supply until their necks, and their mother's bellies, were red and raw from clawing. The mothers could not



**Serval Noon lays beside the new “water cooled” house. The air inside the enclosed space was twenty degrees cooler and eventually she figured out that it was a “cool” place to hang out.**

stay in their houses with the babies because they could not dissipate their body heat. These moms had a choice of several birthing houses and they both took advantage of that by separating the babies in different houses and rotating between them. When we took the babies early, they knew we had to do it. Sierra actually invited me to take her babies at five days by placing them in plain sight, where I could see they were not as plump as they should be, then walking away from them and staring at me with her wounded belly showing. After I took them, she thanked me by kissing me on the mouth.

I am awed by the intelligence and devotion of feline mothers, especially bobcats, and I am deeply moved by the trust they placed in me.

must be crazy. I tried getting more subtle and sophisticated with misters, some bolstered with electric fans. Once again there was feline unanimity. The misters were obviously in league with the water hose demon, and the fans must be where storms come from. Their sphere of influence must be avoided and, as all good bobcats know, unwary hoses must be attacked and bitten to death. I was not impressed myself; the misters did not lower the temperature more than ten degrees, about the same as they raised the heat index. The slow rate of flow in the supply hoses allowed the water to be heated up, further reducing efficiency. And the lines would have to be buried to correct for that. These were line pressure misters available here for use in chicken houses. There are high-pressure systems available that should work better, but I had already seen the futility of trying to air condition the great outdoors. So I adhered to the first law of feline husbandry; if the cats do not like it, it's not a good idea.

Next, I investigated earth cooling. In a shady spot, I drove a rod 18 inches into the ground and inserted a probe-type thermometer. When the ambient air temperature was 110 degrees, the temperature 18 inches below the surface was a consistent 71 degrees. This was encouraging. I came up with a “cool” design for ferrocement houses that could be hinged open above ground level for cleaning and



**For the trio of caracals, a double-sized area was constructed of two small plastic kitty pools and 15 five-gallon buckets filled with water. All three would spend the heat of the day inside the structure.**



would have “basements” two feet deep. My capable assistant, Drew, dug two holes, five feet square and two feet deep, in each of the lynx cages before my brain cooled off enough to realize this idea could be dangerous. Airflow would be too restricted. Carbon Dioxide being heavier than air, it could accumulate in the “basement.” The holes alone, uncovered and kept moist, remained cool and were soon adopted by the lynxes. But to avoid CO2 problems, enclosed earth shelters would have to be built above ground. In existing cages, this would mean hauling many wheelbarrows of dirt through double door entries in blistering heat. I had neither the time nor the energy for such a slow, laborious task. In the end, I went back to water. It had to be the answer.

The thermal properties of water are uniquely wonderful. Water has an extremely high specific heat, ten times of that of iron, for example. Even adjusted for density, water has a higher capacity to absorb heat than equal volumes of most other available substances, such as concrete, dirt or rock. It also has a counter intuitively high insulating value, about as high as wood, and water can be quickly and easily transported to wherever it is needed. We happen to have a huge collection of five gallon buckets and unappreciated plastic kitty pools. So I arranged the buckets in a ring, leaving a gap for a cat to go through, put some boards across the buckets and a kitty pool on top and applied the magic elixir, H2O. As hoped, the air inside these “water houses” remained a consistent 20 degrees below ambient high temperature. And they could be assembled and disassembled almost as fast as a tent. They also became an inadvertent test of the intelligence/stubbornness of several feline species. The Canada lynxes failed miserably. Despite coaxing, they never went inside their water houses, instead they immediately began using it as a toilet and I had to remove it. This behavior was consistent with their favorite game of “hide the poop.” Servals got a “D.” It took three



**Shelby, the Canada lynx, spent her time cooling off under a water soaked blankets, creating shade and evaporative cooling.**

days before I saw a serval inside a water house. One serval went into hers to escape being sprinkled by the hose. But they did eventually learn. The caracals got an A+. I made a double size water house for Rowdy, Sweetie and Sugar and all three took up residence while I was still assembling it. Of course these guys have always trusted me unconditionally and they expect anything I do to be a good thing. Due to Arkansas’s new desert climate, mosquitoes were not a problem, so I left the lids off and didn’t cover the pools, to gain a little evaporative cooling.

I have a design for water houses that are less makeshift than these prototypes, involving barker panel frames, into which five gallon plastic Gerry cans are inserted like huge bricks. This would limit the water pollution opportunities so that the

lynxes could have more time to think about it, but I cannot find appropriate containers for less than \$45, making one water house cost about \$600. Anyone who can help with this obstacle, please contact Lynn or me.

I did come up with an alternative for the lynxes, which they adopted immediately. It was a cattle panel hoop covered with old blankets wrapped in chicken wire. If this is kept wet, it provides significant evaporative cooling. I called it a water log. Cotton blankets work best; polyester absorbs very little water and dries out too quickly. This shelter had to be periodically remoistened by spraying with the hose, and every

time I did that the lynx inside fled as if being attacked by some terrible weapon. They returned as soon as the bombardment stopped. Lastly, for my special buddy, Loki the Eurasian lynx, I just dribbled water on his back while petting him. He liked that. I am sure he associated it with being groomed by his mother. It just goes to show that the easiest cats to care for are the sweethearts and the best thing you can do for them is to raise them so they will be sweethearts.



**Loki, the Eurasian lynx, gives Bart’s hand a bath while Bart pours cool water over his backside.**



# RODENTPRO.COM® Wholesale Frozen Feeder Price List



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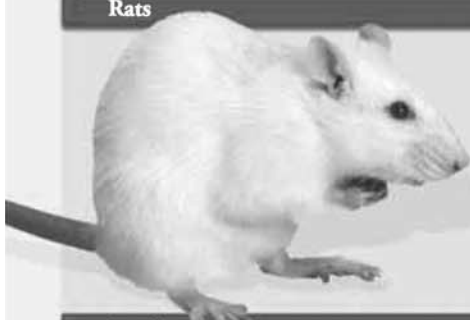
## Mice



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000	3000	5000	10000+	Length(inches)	Weight(grams)	Count
X-Small Pinkies:		\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.22	\$0.21	\$0.20	0.50 - 1.00	1.30 - 1.89	100
Small Pinkies:		\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.22	\$0.21	\$0.20	0.50 - 1.00	1.90 - 2.49	100
Large Pinkies:		\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.22	\$0.21	\$0.20	0.50 - 1.00	2.50 - 3.09	100
Peach Fuzzies:**		\$0.30	\$0.29	\$0.28	\$0.27	\$0.26	\$0.25	1.00 - 1.25	3.10 - 4.49	100
Fuzzies:***		\$0.30	\$0.29	\$0.28	\$0.27	\$0.26	\$0.25	1.25 - 1.50	4.50 - 6.99	100
Hoppers:***		\$0.45	\$0.43	\$0.41	\$0.39	\$0.37	\$0.35	1.50 - 2.00	7.00 - 12.99	100
Weanlings:***		\$0.55	\$0.53	\$0.51	\$0.49	\$0.47	\$0.45	2.00 - 2.50	13.00 - 17.99	50
Large Adults:***		\$0.65	\$0.63	\$0.61	\$0.59	\$0.57	\$0.55	2.50 - 3.00	18.00 - 25.99	50
X-Large Adults:***		\$0.95	\$0.93	\$0.91	\$0.89	\$0.87	\$0.85	3.00 - 3.75	26.00 - 45.00+	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:		\$0.50	\$0.45	\$0.40	1.50 - 2.00	3.00 - 8.99	100
Fuzzies:		\$0.75	\$0.70	\$0.65	2.00 - 2.50	9.00 - 19.99	100
Pups:		\$1.00	\$0.95	\$0.90	2.50 - 3.50	20.00 - 29.99	25
Weaned:		\$1.25	\$1.20	\$1.15	3.50 - 4.50	30.00 - 44.99	25
Small:		\$1.50	\$1.45	\$1.40	4.50 - 6.00	45.00 - 84.99	20
Medium:		\$1.75	\$1.70	\$1.65	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.99	10
Large:		\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.99	5
X-Large:		\$2.25	\$2.20	\$2.15	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.99	3
XX-Large:		\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.99	2
XXX-Large:		\$2.75	\$2.70	\$2.65	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 600.00+	2

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

## Quail



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Grams	Oz.	Count
1 Day:		\$0.75	\$0.70	\$0.65	7.50 - 10.00	.25	100
1 Week:		\$1.00	\$0.95	\$0.90	30.00 - 49.99	1.0	25
2 Week:		\$1.25	\$1.20	\$1.15	50.00 - 75.00	2.5	10
3 Week:		\$1.50	\$1.45	\$1.40	100.00 - 129.99	4.0	10
6 Week:		\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	130.00 - 154.99	5.0	5
8 Week:		\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	155.00 - 189.99	6.5	5
10 Week:		\$3.00	\$2.95	\$2.90	190.00 - 229.99	8.0	5
Reitred Breeder:		\$3.50	\$3.45	\$3.40	230.00 - 260.00+	9.0	5

\* We offer combined quantity discount quail pricing.

## Rabbits

	Size	Less Than 100	100	250+	Weight (lbs.)	Count
X-Small:		\$5.00	\$4.75	\$4.50	0.50 - 0.99	1
Small:		\$6.00	\$5.75	\$5.50	1.00 - 1.99	1
Medium:		\$7.00	\$6.75	\$6.50	2.00 - 3.99	1
Large:		\$8.00	\$7.75	\$7.50	4.00 - 5.99	1
X-Large:		\$9.00	\$8.75	\$8.50	6.00 - 7.99	1
XX-Large:		\$10.00	\$9.75	\$9.50	8.00 - 9.99	1
XXX-Large:		\$11.00	\$10.75	\$10.50	10.00 - 12.00+	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount rabbit pricing.



## Chickens



	Size	Less than 500	500	1000	3000	5000	10000+	Oz./Lbs.	Count
XSmall:		\$0.30	\$0.28	\$0.26	\$0.24	\$0.22	\$0.20	1.00-1.99 oz.	25
Small:		\$1.00	\$0.95	\$0.90	\$0.85	\$0.80	\$0.75	2.00-5.99 oz.	10
Medium:		\$1.50	\$1.45	\$1.40	\$1.35	\$1.30	\$1.25	6.00-9.99 oz.	5
Large:		\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	\$1.85	\$1.80	\$1.75	10.00-13.99 oz.	4
XLarge:		\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	\$2.35	\$2.30	\$2.25	14.00-17.99 oz.	3
XXLarge:		\$3.00	\$2.95	\$2.90	\$2.85	\$2.80	\$2.75	2.50-4.49 lbs.	1
XXXLarge:		\$3.50	\$3.45	\$3.40	\$3.35	\$3.30	\$3.25	4.50-6.50+ lbs.	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount chicken pricing.

## Guinea Pigs

	Size	Less Than 500	500	1000+	Inches	Grams	Count
Medium:		\$1.75	\$1.70	\$1.65	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.99	10
Large:		\$2.00	\$1.95	\$1.90	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.99	5
X-Large:		\$2.25	\$2.20	\$2.15	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.99	3
XX-Large:		\$2.50	\$2.45	\$2.40	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.99	2
XXX-Large:		\$2.75	\$2.70	\$2.65	13.00 - 15.00	475.00 - 599.99	2
XXXX-Large:		\$3.00	\$2.95	\$2.90	13.00 - 15.00	600.00 - 749.99	1
XXXXX-Large:		\$3.25	\$3.20	\$3.15	13.00 - 15.00	750.00 - 900.00+	1

\* We offer combined quantity discount guinea pig pricing.



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## Niassa Lion Research for Wildlife Conservation Network

By Chris T. Tromborg

This is a brief summary of a presentation sponsored by The Wildlife Conservation Network, featuring The Niassa Lion Research Project, with scientists Colleen and Keith Begg, focusing on their attempts to conserve lions in a major wildlife conservation area in northern Mozambique, Africa, held in Menlo-Atherton, California, on March 31, 2013.

The Wildlife Conservation Network was founded 12 years ago, and, since its initial collaboration with The Cheetah Conservation Fund, WCN has raised over \$26,000,000 in the cause of wildlife conservation, now supporting over 20 conservationists working in over 30 countries, with over 93% of funds actually being allocated to conservation efforts. WCN's philosophy focuses on conservation at the local level. This philosophy embraces the notion that, in order for conservation efforts to be successful, people living with wildlife must be invested in the preservation of animals and their habitats. In many instances, local people can become important field officers in conservation programs. Every October, the WCN organizes the Wildlife Conservation Expo in San Francisco, California, where many of the leading conservation organizations from around the world, including The Feline Conservation Federation, The Snow Leopard Conservancy, The Cheetah Conservation Fund, The Andean Small Cat Alliance, and Niassa Lion Research come together to promote their missions.

This year, scientists Colleen and Keith Begg reported on the progress of their

conservation efforts in the Niassa Conservation Area, located in Northern Mozambique. Their vision of conservation focuses on the preservation of lions and their habitat by inducting local people into conservation efforts. Issues of local employment and food security can then be addressed with local participation and support. Over the past few years, their staff has grown from nine to 20 people, many coming from nearby villages. Educating indigenous people is an important component of this project. Recently, two students from surrounding villages, mentored by the Begg, received their master's degrees in conservation biology.

Lions in the wild are in trouble; in 2006, their population throughout the whole of Africa was estimated to be around 40,000 individuals. In 2012, using more comprehensive censusing techniques, the total lion population was estimated to range between 50,000 and 55,000. Nonetheless, over the past 50 years, lions have lost over 75% of their habitat in continental Africa. In central Africa, the lion has virtually disappeared. This reduction in lion numbers has resulted in a troubling trend: Scientists used to refer to an area as being a stronghold for lions if it held around 1,000 animals; today, a stronghold for lions need only possess 500 individuals. Some scientists believe that, because lions breed so successfully in captivity, that they will never become completely extinct. Of course, this is based on the fact that lions are housed at some 150 institutions accredited by The American Zoo Association in the United States, and does not address the

issue of the reduction in alternate captive lion populations due to the increasingly restrictive regulation of lion populations at non-affiliated locations.

The Niassa Conservation Area covers nearly 42,000 square kilometers, or 16,000 square miles, an area nearly twice the size of Massachusetts. The environment is almost exclusively savannah, prime lion

habitat. It has been described as one of the last wild places on Earth. It has a very small human footprint, with an estimated human population of around 35,000 within the conservation area.

Ten years ago, the area was estimated to be home to around 1,000 lions. Today, the estimated population hovers around 1,200 lions. At least for the time being, lions are flourishing in Niassa.

This trend is important. Lions are a keystone species, and the status of their populations is indicative of the health of the entire wildlife community. Colleen states, "If we get it right with lions, we are getting it right with many other species."

Lions are difficult to census in the wild. They, as with all wild felids, have large territories and even larger home ranges. Typically, their presence is assessed on the basis of evidence of wildlife predation, pugmarks, and scat samples. Their movements can be monitored with telemetric collars. Interestingly, lions can be "called in" with recordings of the vocalizations of hyenas or wild pigs.

In Africa, humans and nonhumans have always lived together; after all, this is where the first hominids evolved. However, with 1,200 lions and 35,000 humans in overlapping areas, there are occasionally some negative interactions between people and predators. Lions sometimes prey on goats and even on people. Neither situation is conducive to developing affection for lions on the part of local villagers. Predation events such as these are particularly problematic in countries such as Mozambique, one of the most impoverished nations on Earth. As with much of the rest of the world, Mozambique is experiencing a growth in its human population. This growth is placing increasing demands on local resources, including wildlife. In Niassa, villagers exploit natural resources by engaging in hunting and fishing to satisfy their own needs and to supply the market for bush meat. This trend has been exacerbated by the recent improvement of roads and bridges within the reserve.

In order to begin to develop a conservation ethic, negative interactions between lions and villagers needed to be reduced. Research on goat predation revealed that attacks could be reduced by constructing simple corrals around the goats, so that lions could not reach them at night. Simi-





lar research on lion attacks on humans revealed that people were most likely to be attacked by lions if they slept in unprotected sites in the open. The construction of simple sleeping corrals and elevated sleeping platforms virtually eliminated lion attacks on people.

Niassa also features species other than lions. Up until ten years ago, there were still some remnant populations of rhinos. Unfortunately, these have all been hunted to extinction. However, the area is still home to a sizeable population of elephants. Regrettably, these animals also interact in negative ways with the local human populations. Several years ago, in an attempt to protect agricultural fields from elephants, 24 kilometers of electric fencing was introduced. None of this remains today; it has all been stolen by local villagers to construct wire snares for the bush meat trade. The 24 kilometers of snare wire also injures non-targeted species such as lions, leopards, antelopes, and zebras.

Niassa is facing daunting challenges. Recently, rubies have been found in local rivers within the reserve. This will almost certainly lead to an incursion of treasure hunters seeking riches. Elephant poaching will increase as the growing demand for ivory in Asia continues. Wealthy hunters from the United States and Europe also continue to exploit the lion and leopard populations directly. The Mozambique government receives \$400,000 annually from the sale of hunting licenses. Agricultural fields are growing by leaps and bounds every year, consuming more and more valuable wildlife habitat.

Even with these looming threats, because of its sheer size, there remains some optimism. The Niassa Research

Project is focusing on positive actions to develop a conservation ethic in the people of Niassa. Early education is important. Until recently, even with over 40 schools for children in the reserve, there was not a single course in conservation. These are now being developed. People are taught that their future is inexorably tied to that of animals, especially the lion. Educational programs first focused on anti-poaching campaigns. Young village men, of prime poaching age, were inducted into classes on snare removal and other anti-poaching activities. The young men were trained in the use of cameras, binoculars, and recording devices, so that they could keep records of their observations. Upon graduation from these courses, they were inducted into the ranks of wildlife scouts. It was important to recruit anti-poaching scouts from within the local community. Outsiders would have been viewed with suspicion and their effectiveness would have been compromised.

As the breadth of the educational program was increased, the safety of local people and their flocks was improved as education began to focus on the prevention of lion attacks.

Finally, the education effort had to address the issue of food security. Hungry people do not make very good conservationists. Additional educational projects involved improving agricultural productivity by introducing techniques such as mulching and crop rotation. Alternate sources of protein, such as guinea fowl, were sought, and then the husbandry techniques for the sustained availability of these birds were investigated. The husbandry of honeybees was introduced. Not only did this provide a source of carbohydrates, but elephants avoid honeybee

hives. Consequently, honeybee hives can be mounted on fences to keep elephants away from crops. Hives are far more effective than electrified fences at repelling elephants from crops. Also of interest, lion vocalizations can be used at the perimeters of fields to keep elephants and other wildlife away from crops.

Colleen has stated that conservationists cannot be hired; they must be created. Young people must be recruited to insure the future of conservation. This implies that some form of secondary school education program must be developed so that students can be mentored in the area of wildlife conservation. Recently, the Niassa Research Project embarked on developing partnerships with local villages to manage the reserve. A conservation center has been constructed, primarily by young men of poaching age. Here, the educational mission of the research project continues. Local people are educated in the areas of anti-poaching, policing the local wilderness, and in the ongoing process of snare removal. When local populations are empowered to manage their own futures, they often respond by developing a viable conservation ethic.

Colleen says that, while she is thrilled by seeing any lion, and that she appreciates following individuals through their development, she would rather that there were simply too many lions to count. In fact, in any wildlife area where the lions are so few that they can be individually recognized, the situation must be regarded as critical. The conservation effort might be failing. The Niassa Lion Research Project is attempting to insure that, at least in northern Mozambique, people will not know many of the lions by name for a long time.

## Blast from the Past: Peggy & Pussy — Unintentional Mothers

IslandLong Island Ocelot Club  
May/June 1976  
Volume 20, Issue 3

By Heidi Fahrenholz,  
Ringweg, Germany

I never wanted to breed. The special circumstances in Germany rather require good homes for the unwanted exotics or the kittens that are still imported. So I had decided not to block any space I had available with domestic born kittens, as I knew that I could never part with one of

my cat's offspring.

My first exotic cat was a rescue –“Once,” the oncilla came to me at the age of about one year old and had already had five “homes” before that. He had never been tame, was extremely fearful, shy, and suspicious. But with love and understanding, he has turned into a loving trusting creature and we got very attached to each other in a short period of time.

I lost Once in December 1975, to anesthesia. He got bitten on the leg, which was broken by an ocelot I boarded. The leg needed re-setting several times and

wouldn't heal; he was eight years old when he died. I miss him terribly.

Ocel, my wild-born male margay, now 18 pounds, and Herbert, a domestic born male ocelot, now 40 pounds, who was rescued from a fur farm, are the only ones that I got as babies. They are very close friends, Herbert being a bit difficult with my husband and strangers, and Ocel being the perfect, good-natured and completely tame one. He indeed is so ideal that I hesitate showing him to other people inquiring about exotics, since they might think all exotics are that way.

The other cats in are family are Ali, a wild-born male margay, discovered in an animal shelter in 1974, and Vince, wild-born adult oncilla, who came shortly afterward. He is very unusual, looking very much like a margay - his markings are margay as is his long tail. His color is very intense rust. On photographs, Professor Leyhausen classified him as being a very rare margay from Argentina. But, since his hair grows down his neck, not up, I know he is an oncilla. Dr. Leyhausen visited last summer and confirmed this and said he had not seen this subspecies before.

Pussy, a wild-born margay female, was the first girl to join the boys. I had seen her in a pet shop window where she was displayed. For three years she had been living in a cage two feet square and three feet high. Being the founder and head of FEW, Freundeskreis Exotischer Wildkatzen, a society devoted to the well-being of exotic cats, I informed the responsible authorities. With their help, Pussy came to me in August of 1975. She could hardly walk or climb, but was otherwise healthy, and she soon caught up with the others and is now the fastest of them all.

Then came Willie, a five-year-old, intact male. Someone declawed him front

and back. This always seems a sad sight when I see him carefully climbing or leaving a tree when the others just dash up and down. I had hoped to keep all my margays together, but I soon had to abandon this idea, since Willie is not compatible with the others. He had developed a tendency to bite the other cats and all are very much afraid of him.

Ali, a cat that was never easily frightened and who is much larger, urinates and defecates at the sight of Willie, so Willie is housed on his own now, which is sad. Ali and Pussy are very close friends, sleeping together, washing each other, and playing together. It is nice to see them playing together in the garden, thinking of what their lives were like a short time ago.

Pussy got very attached to me in a short period of time, as did Willie, and I always try to spend some extra time with him.

When Dr. Wolff, a LIOC member, gave up her exotics when she went to Africa for an extended trip, Peggy, an 11 year old oncilla and her three year old daughter, Olympia, came to join Vince in the oncilla house of the garden.

All my cats except Willie and the oncillas live in our house. Ocel margay and Herbert ocelot have the run of the house. Ali and Pussy live in a room of their own.

All the cats have large outdoor places with lots of grass, bushes, trees, and wading pools where they can go day or night as they please.

I separated Olympia when she came into heat in order to prevent possible kits, but I never bothered to do this with Peggy. I thought that at 11 years old, a change of ownership, a new male, and a new home would make it unlikely that she conceive. She had had several litters which all did not live, as the male Tao was not separated. When Olympia was about to be born, Tao was separated and died during that time.

I first noticed Peggy was pregnant when she was climbing a fence to greet me and I could see that her nipples were enlarged and rosy. I thought it must be an error on her or my side and left her with the others. But, soon afterwards, Peggy began getting rounder, until finally one day she was so fat that she could hardly

jump up and down a chair. I think life in the jungle must be pretty tough under such circumstances and I wondered how she could have hunted and defended herself in the wild having become so clumsy. It was obvious she was to have more than one baby.

Pussy margay came into heat every four weeks since I got her. Ali did his best, but Pussy was obviously suffering. I decided to make a final try with Willie to see whether he would get along with her when she was in heat. Pussy so thoroughly disliked Willie that I never dreamed she would conceive under the circumstances. My idea was that copulation might change her too frequent heats into more healthy intervals. On the 11th of January, I allowed Willie into Pussy's outdoor place and let him be there for only 20 minutes. Then I found it to be too dangerous for Pussy and took him back to his place. After three weeks, I noticed the same symptoms on Pussy and again could hardly believe my eyes. Pussy was also expecting. I separated Ali from Pussy three weeks prior to birth, and now both future mothers were on their own.

It is hard to believe, but both cats gave birth on the same day. The first to arrive was Peggy's son Dume, on the 3rd of April, at 6 am. The next was Jeanie, Pussy's daughter. Dume's sister arrived 24 hours later. We named her April.

All kittens were perfectly healthy except that April was only half the size of her brother. Both cats are exemplary mothers, taking care of their babies perfectly. Pussy margay had two nipples functioning and Pussy oncilla three. But Dume was always fighting his sister away from the nipples and it was obvious she wasn't getting enough to eat. As soon as Peggy would let me touch the babies, I started giving April additional food. I gave her human mother's milk substitute with calcium. They were only three weeks old when I could start feeding her and she was only one third the size of her brother and looked like a kitten from another litter. But she was healthy and active, her eyes opened on her 10th day, one day after her brother's, but her teeth came through three days later; while Dume (they are all five weeks old now) looks like he should, April looks like a two week old kitten. But she is playing and enjoying herself. I plan to remove Dume at six weeks and let Peggy look after April a bit longer in hopes that she



**This margay kitten is not one of Pussy's kittens, but a photo from Fred Boyajian.**



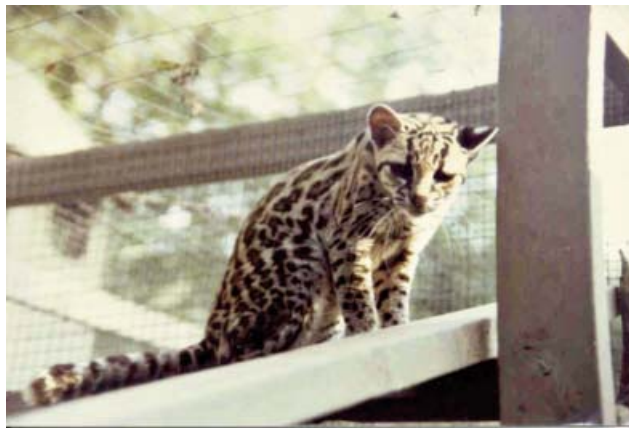
gets a chance to catch up with the others.

Peggy developed a bladder weakness due to enlargement of her uterus. She couldn't keep her urine and kept wetting her bedding in the box. I use baby's paper napkins (diapers) in the boxes and I had to disturb Peggy and her babies about three times a day to change the bedding. I think it is astonishing that this cat that has never been a pet and has always been kept under zoo-like conditions would let me do all this without getting upset as to hurt her babies. In fact, I can take the babies out as long as one stays with her.

Dume first showed interest in meat (a freshly killed mouse) when he was four weeks old. Both oncilla kittens get meat now in tiny pieces and Dume produced his first bowel movement at the age of 4¾ weeks...perhaps Peggy isn't too keen on pottyng him now that he's eaten meat.

Peggy is all right now; the condition stopped and she uses her litter box as before. The babies are tame so far, and I hope she will forgive me if I take her babies much earlier than she would want, at the age of six weeks.

Pussy margay is a very touching mother. She is so fond of her baby that I do not think I can bring myself to take her baby that early. While she allowed me to touch Jeanie in the first two weeks, she would



**Adult margay looks down from his enclosure.  
Photo by Fred Boyajian.**

not allow me any more since Jeanie is crawling about. She jealously watches my movements and I leave her alone with the baby mostly in order not to upset her.

When Jeanie was about three weeks old, I had made a mistake and allowed several strange people to see the baby on the same day. While Peggy oncilla did not mind, Pussy got very upset and began to pull out the baby's fur. Pussy had never pulled her own fur, neither have any of my cats. When I came back, harmony was restored, but the kitten looked like a trimmed poodle. But this sad event also brought me some news. Where I expected to see the naked skin of the baby on its back there was a very shorthaired coat, sleek and shining, showing all the markings of the future adult coat. While a

baby margay's coat gives only a slight idea of how the adult cat will look, much unlike an ocelot kitten, I always assumed that the baby coat falls out and the adult coat grows in. I had never detected on any margay kitten that the adult coat was present underneath the wool-like baby fluff. I would therefore be interested to hear if anyone has made the same discovery in a margay kitten. I regret that I did not make a photo of this, but I did not want to disturb Pussy further. Now, at five weeks, some of the baby fluff has grown back but one can still see the beautiful markings Jeanie will have when she grows up.

Pussy has moved into another box with her baby after the incident and is now her old self again. Jeanie is a beautiful kitten, looking much like her father, Willie. She is light colored, while her mother is very dark. She is not interested in meat, whereas the oncilla kits crave it. All three kittens are perfectly healthy, well cared for, and loved. The mothers are proud and healthy and the only thing that displeases me is that I got advice from all over the world that I have to take the babies from their mothers at six weeks or they will not tame for the rest of their lives. As Peggy has twins, it was easier to take Dume away, who looks like his father, also being a deep rust color, while April has only a little rust on the head.

I think I will leave Jeanie with her mother a little longer, hoping that a margay's natural good disposition will make it possible to tame her. I think it is unfair to take a baby from a mother who has had so few good things in life, who has been so terribly mistreated, and who is just about to enjoy life and all the things connected with it.

For those interested: I feed my cats apart from regular givings of prey animals such as mice, guinea pigs, and pigeons; they get baby chicken, whole chicken, beef, beef heart, rabbit, those who like it get cream and prawns, and all get one egg yolk per day. They have plenty of grass in their outdoor places. In addition, all get multivitamins daily and extra calcium when needed.

## **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.

**Hollie Goodwin – Basic**  
**Jen Tison – Basic**  
**Randy Tison – Basic**

**Joshua Remenar – Basic**  
**Laura Remenar – Intermediate**  
**Della Jacot – Advanced**

Basic Feline Handlers have documented at least one year of experience, Intermediate level is at least five years of experience, and Advanced handlers have more than ten years experience. Update your registration when you obtain additional handling experience or new species experience.

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

Being a registered handler is the first step to becoming a Professional Member. Professional Membership application is also online on the Members-Only website.

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

Debi Willoughby, FCF Secretary

## ***The 42nd Annual Feline Conservation Federation Convention in Nashville, Tennessee***

### **EVENTS**

Wednesday, June 5, 2013

*Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course*  
*Wild/Exotic Conservation Educators Course*

The FCF Basic Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course is for everyone, from beginner, to the breeder, from sanctuary volunteer to zookeeper. In this densely packed informational presentation, attendees gain important knowledge that affects captive husbandry success. Topics taught include regulations and governing agencies, feline diet, enclosure design and construction, contingency planning and more.

The Wildlife Conservation Educators Course helps existing wildlife owners learn how to develop a business plan for outreach education, how to prepare, promote and present wildlife to all ages and groups, from children to old folks, in libraries, birthday parties and school presentations. Students of this course who are not already USDA-licensed have a leg up on the exhibitor permit process.

Both courses offer lunch and valuable textbooks for future reference. Students are tested at the end of the day and receive decorative certificate of completion for passing grades.

Thursday, June 6, 2013, at 6:00 p.m.

### *Icebreaker*

The convention kicks off Thursday afternoon with registration, followed by an icebreaker like never before. There's always an opportunity to meet several new furry "stars;" everything from a big-footed Canada lynx to a tiny Geoffroy's kitten could be on exhibit for us to enjoy and interact with. Drop off your donated silent auction items and bid, order a drink or two at the cash bar, refresh yourself with food, and have loads of fun winning prizes while playing "Big Cat Bingo."



Friday, June 7, 2013

### *Nashville Zoo*

This will be a very exciting zoo visit. In the last *Journal*, we told you about the 200-acre facility that exhibits white Bengal tigers, Eurasian lynx, and cougar, and is the nation's leading breeder of clouded leopards.

There is also a new train ride called "The Wilderness Express," and there is a brand new interactive experience called the "Kangaroo Kickabout," where visitors can enter the red kangaroo exhibit.

We have reserved the Jungle Terrace Pavilion to enjoy a delicious deli lunch buffet. There will also be a special "meet and greet" with the zoo's latest litter of baby clouded leopards. Yes! You read correctly, we will get to be up-close and personal with one of nature's most beautiful and mysterious felines, the clouded leopard!

\*\*\*For Registered Handlers Only\*\*\* This year's continuing educational seminar for our FCF handlers who have registered is presented by the Nashville Zoo's expert on clouded leopard handling, Karen Rice. She will reveal the reasons for hand-rearing and how the Nashville Zoo has been so successful with breeding this endangered species.



## Wildhorse Saloon

Not all the wild things will be at the Nashville Zoo. To keep you energized and having a good time, we will be heading to the Wildhorse Saloon Friday night for some great Tennessee barbeque, line dancing lessons, and 66,000 square feet of foot-stomping country music!

We will have our own reserved space and a banquet of hickory-smoked pulled pork BBQ and chicken breast, all the fixings, side dishes, and desert. (Veggie substitute upon request.)

The Wildhorse Saloon is the largest restaurant in Tennessee, with an award winning menu. Well-known artists who have performed tunes there include Darius Rucker, Etta James, 38 Special, Rick Springfield, Big & Rich, and Ringo Starr.



Saturday, June 8, 2013

### Speakers

Our very own Dr. Jim Sanderson will update us on his world travels to camera-trap and research the status of wild felines in nature. Gregory Breton, director of felines at Parc des Felins, France, brings us husbandry experience from across the ocean. Len Davidson will explain her ground-breaking DNA study on Geoffroy's cats and how FCF members can participate so that breeders can improve their genetic diversity. Kevin Chambers will lead a discussion on feline attacks and analyze the step-by-step action on a YouTube video to help keep us safe.



### Banquet

We conclude our three days of fun and information with the annual banquet dinner and live auction. Come to dinner wearing your best suit or your most comfortable outfit. Either way, the only thing that matters is that you attend and have a good time! Please also remember to donate items for the auction!

See you at the Convention!!!!



## Introduction to FCF Convention Speaker, Grégory Breton

By Grégory Breton

It is a great honor to introduce myself and talk about my institution in this new issue of the *FCF Journal* before attending the upcoming FCF convention.

Where do I start? Well, I am a 34-year-old Frenchman and, since 2003, I have been fortunate enough to work for a young and small, but very specialized, zoological park located to the east of Paris, called “Le Parc des Félines.”

Our zoo is quite unique in the world, because you can find 26 different species of felids (and many subspecies) there in large natural enclosures. Thanks to Fred Hood, who wrote a nice and detailed article about us in a previous *FCF Journal* (Volume 55, Issue 6, “Cat Lover’s Paradise”), most of you may be happy to learn more about it and get some inside information! But before developing what we have done and achieved so far, let me first give you some background about myself and my interest in cats.

It will not be a surprise to hear that I am really fond of felids, although I do not know exactly how it started or why. Back in time, I remember drawing lions and tigers on my bedroom wall in my parents’ flat at 4 years old. I also recall buying a small children’s book about felids at my school and already being aware, at 9 years

old, of the existence of lesser-known species such as the snow leopard, clouded leopard, margay, and jaguarundi. Watching TV programs about African big cats, visiting some well-known zoos in France (Doué-la-Fontaine, Thoiry), and having some domestic cats at home surely reinforced my attraction and love for them.

I was actually interested in all animals from an early age; however, I think the reasons for my fascination for felids certainly came from their beauty, calm, and quiet strength, both at a morphological and behavioral level, something you do not see in many taxa. On the other hand, it seemed to me that dogs and other canids were running everywhere with no particular grace, living in packs, and making so much noise while being unable to climb, therefore appearing stupid and loony to me.

Raised by parents and grandparents who owned a TV and household appliance shop, my interest in animals was perceived as a passion, certainly not as a possible skill for finding a job, but they were nice and tolerant, letting me choose my own educational path. After ruling out a possible career using my drawing skills, I chose to study biology and graduated in 2001, with a Master’s in animal behavior science, which included research on the mechanisms and timeframes involved in ewe recognition by newborn



**Special guest Grégory Breton holds up an armful of baby leopards born at the Park.**

lambs at the French Agronomy National Research Institute (INRA).

Working on domestic livestock behavior for human use was interesting, but not my aim, and, despite the fact that not a single French university professor was interested in supervising any work on cats in France or elsewhere, I refused a PhD proposal at the agronomy institute in the hopes that one day I would end up doing cat field studies, helping to save them, or at least working with them in captivity.

At the same period, I kept myself informed, reading publications on cats, discovering the work of impressive people like Alexander Sliwa and Laurie Marker, learning about the IUCN, the Cat Specialist Group, the EAZA and AZA, and their breeding programs. And while I was a temporary teacher in biology/animal behavior in some high schools and one university, all this knowledge helped me to meet people and develop a network in the French zoo community.

And then one day in March 2003, Mr. Patrick Jardin, who owned and founded two zoos in France with his brother Thierry, asked me to join and assist him in the management of the smallest one, a zoo specializing in cats built in 1998 and located at Auneau, to the southwest of Paris. This was a dream come true!

Now, after ten years of collaboration, with a close and sometimes difficult relationship, you could say we did an amazing



**Photographer David Moret caught this snow leopard on the prowl.**



job, moving our zoo in 2006 to about 50 km east of Paris, and developing it from a small private zoo with seven hectares, 70 cats (from 22 species), eight full staff members (+five seasonal), an annual attendance of around 100,000 visitors, and a limited recognition; to one of the ten major zoos in France, with 71 hectares, 140 cats (from 26 species), 25 full staff members (+30 seasonal extra), an annual attendance of over 250,000 visitors, and a constantly growing recognition in the world!

As Fred Hood explained perfectly, in addition to having the largest cat collection in the world (but we do not seek to have all species and do not really like the word “collection”), we are trying to give our felids a “good home” or a “golden prison” by keeping them in large natural enclosures where they have space to express most of their natural behaviors, including hunting (yes, hunting, and I will develop this during the convention) and less abnormal repetitive behaviors like pacing.

Unlike common practices in zoos and animal breeding circles, we have none, or hardly any, contact with our animals. Most of our cubs and kittens are handled only twice, at two and three months for vaccinations, transponder implant, and sex determination, and some of our animals have never been sedated during their whole life! So far, we have bred 23 species out of the 26 we have, and we follow closely the recommendations of the EEPs and ESBs (similar to the Green and Yellow SSPs in North America). Hand-rearing offspring is not a regular practice here, even if a litter is abandoned by the mother or if a cub does not develop as it should. This can be shocking, but felids breed quite well and our birth rate is so high that we would face a problem finding new homes for the young if we were to try and save all the newborns. Moreover, breeding some pairs too often would have a bad effect on the whole EEP/ESB population. As a consequence, losing some litters is not an ethical situation we have difficulties coping with. I personally think that wild felids have learned to fear humans and I feel it is important in captiv-



**The Park also breeds the rare Persian leopards. Eric Simons photographed this one in a tree.**

ity to maintain this mistrust, especially with the possibility, however slight, of reintroduction into the wild. We indeed have strong opinions on some subjects, and two more can be specified here: We are not happy with the Bengal cat/Savannah trend, since artificial hybridization is definitely not good for the sake of the species; and we also communicate a lot to raise awareness about palm oil consumption, even by naming brands. To be fair, we practice what we preach in the zoo and no foodstuff sold on our premises contains any palm oil.

Since the opening of the zoo in Nesles, to maintain the loyalty of our regular visitors and also attract new visitors, we chose to add some extra attractions like an eco-tour train (Mission Nature), a 4-D movie with FX (TIGRRR), and a circuit with almost 60 free-roaming lemurs on two islands (with six species). But our main interest is, and will remain, our work with felids. We are currently working to get more and more involved in conservation and

research on a higher level, and I am with great pleasure personally involved in many duties outside of my institution. To give some examples, I am the EAZA Felid TAG vice-chair and have been a member of most of the Felid EEP committees for many years now. I have also been approved as the new Sand Cat EEP coordinator and ISB keeper as of March 2012. I collaborate with and give expertise to some international NGOs and institutions and we financially support several in-situ programs with our own association, SOS Félines & Co. I have some studies

in progress at the moment and, when I have the time and money, love traveling to see felids in the wild (or at least their habitat and environment).

Can we pretend we did a lot in such a small period? I will leave it up to you to decide, but, in my opinion, we have not done as much as I would have wanted. What a job to move a zoo...besides the numerous limits and difficulties to overcome in life.

To conclude, I am looking forward to traveling to the USA and meeting you all. Attending this convention and sharing our young experience with felids with some of you will be amazing! See you soon!



**Le Parc des Félines breeds both Amur and Malayan tigers. Jack Hurault photographed this pair of Malayan tigers.**



# How to Import a Cheetah in 973 Easy Steps

By Carol Plato and Earl Pfeifer

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” -Margaret Mead.

We would like to begin by making it clear that we are not zoologists, veterinarians, or experts on the cheetah. We are simply citizens who have decided to devote our retirement to something we believe really matters: the survival of one of the most incredible and endangered species on earth, the cheetah.

Four years ago, Earl and I got back together after being divorced over 20 years, and we enjoyed discussing what interests and ideals the intervening years had brought into our lives, and wondering how we should build our newly combined future. We had experienced firsthand how tenuous life can be and we decided our top priority would be to find some way to give back to a world that had been so good to us. This cheetah conservation idea originated with Earl, who is the visionary one in our relationship and brings single-minded, unwavering determination to everything he does; he took Subway to New Zealand where he and his

partner benefited from those traits while building one of the world’s most successful international divisions of that restaurant chain. My background is primarily in management and education and I am passionate about inspiring people to look at the world with curiosity and wonder in order that they might fulfill their highest, most creative potential.

Although as a young man, Earl helped care for some cougars and I have worked with horses and dogs all my life, cheetahs are new to both of us, so we began our quest with research, an entire year of research. We utilized the Internet, bought every book we could find, and began to make contact with people who were involved with big cats. We learned very quickly that cheetah are among the most controlled of the big cats, and initially those in control were not keen on sharing their knowledge with neophytes such as us! Fortunately, our perseverance eventually began to open previously closed doors and we discovered that each person we talked to was passionate about the cheetah, but they sometimes had radically differing opinions on who should have access to these animals. Many of those inside the AZA determined that no “outsider” should be able to own a cheetah, and those outside the AZA equally passionate about their own contributions being crucial to saving this (and other) species from extinction. Interestingly, a few very big names in the AZA told us that without the help of private facilities, zoos would in many instances be unable to fill their enclosures. Of course, what the general public may



**Earl Pfeifer relaxing with new best friends, Robin and Annie, who are obviously enjoying their good fortune and loving home.**



**Carol Plato with Kango, an ambassador at Orana Wildlife Park in Christchurch, New Zealand.**

not realize is that filling enclosures does not even begin to come close to maintaining a population with enough genetic diversity to ensure the continuation of many species. It seems incredible that such shortsightedness is not found just in the uninformed; it is rampant even in those who must surely know better, as evidenced by the far-reaching legislation currently being enacted in so many places. Uninitiated at that time regarding the politics of the exotic animal “culture,” we were dumbfounded by the apparent inability of some of these AZA and non-AZA factions to remember that they were ALL doing what they were doing because ultimately they ALL want the same thing: the survival of this species! We found it very difficult to understand the “turf war” mindset we sometimes encountered. Clearly there must be some explanation we had not yet discovered and we still did not know what our own contribution would be in this cheetah world, so we set off to spend a year traveling to New Zealand and across the United States to meet experts and visit all sizes and types of facilities, and attend the 2012 FCF convention in Cincinnati, with the goal of seeing first-hand the different types of programs and philosophies, after which we would be better equipped to make such an important decision. It was a phenomenal year! We were privileged to meet the most generous, inspiring people one could



imagine. We are forever grateful for their extreme generosity in sharing hours and hours of their time, their knowledge, opinions, frustrations and advice while helping us determine exactly where we might best contribute to this effort to save the cheetah.

We began in New Zealand, meeting with several staff and experts at Orana Wildlife Park near Christchurch. This zoological park is home to 16 cheetahs and a cheetah encounter program where a friendly ambassador cheetah named Kango decided to follow us in an open field and allowed us to pet him for an hour while he purred contentedly as we talked with his handlers; that hour was magical! Although we had been told by participants of African trips that petting a cheetah can be a pivotal moment toward a paradigm shift regarding conservation, when we experienced it firsthand we were astonished at how powerful and moving this seemingly simple interaction was. We were convinced that the hands-on/close encounter programs will do more to inspire people to invest in conservation than anything else we could do. We also visited Craig Bush's Zion Wildlife



**Judy Berens interacts with Isabella, a jaguar, at Panther Ridge Sanctuary near West Palm Beach, Florida.**

Gardens (now Kingdom of Zion at [kingdomofzion.co.nz](http://kingdomofzion.co.nz)), near Whangarei, where we unexpectedly met Mr. Bush and a

young boy who had seen every single episode of New Zealand's wildly popular T.V. show, "The Lion Man," which followed Mr. Busch's daily interactions with his big cats. Through this boy's excited recitation of his impressive knowledge of these animals, we saw how this type of program can inspire even young children to become passionate about animal conservation. We also visited another animal park near Rotorua, to see its educational and interactive programs before heading back for the USA portion of our cheetah tour.

Once in the USA, we traveled to many facilities, starting in Florida, where we met Judy Berens of Panther Ridge (FCF-accredited facility near West Palm Beach, [pantherridge-sanctuary.org](http://pantherridge-sanctuary.org)). This beautiful non-profit sanctuary provides a lifetime home for nine species of mostly retiree/health challenged exotic cats and is also home to an ambassador cheetah living in an impressive three-acre enclosure. We were interested to learn that Judy's cats have had good results with acupuncture, massage therapy, essential oils, and an impressive amount of daily hands-on enrichment program, which, in the case of



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**Two female cheetahs take a rest in the shade at White Oaks Conservation Center, north of Jacksonville, Florida.**

the gorgeous clouded leopards, sometimes involves sitting on Judy's back and stealing her hat! We appreciated spending a day with Judy, and the account of her struggle to import two cheetahs from South Africa was particularly helpful.

Judy recommended we contact Karen Meeks, the carnivore collection manager and head of cheetah breeding for the very impressive White Oaks Conservation Center ([www.wocenter.org](http://www.wocenter.org)) on the 7,400 acre White Oak Plantation north of Jacksonville, which is a private facility and breeder of an incredible collection of rare and endangered animals. (White Oaks, an accredited AZA facility, is currently for sale for an estimated \$30 million and requires \$5 million a year to care for the animals. See the Wall Street Journal article at: [tinyurl.com/cbcmrm5](http://tinyurl.com/cbcmrm5).) Although White Oaks is not open to the public, Karen and facility manager Steve Shurter agreed to meet with us to discuss cheetah conservation. What an eye opener!!! At that time we still naively thought we might focus on breeding cheetah. After our initial boardroom chat, Karen sat us down in her vehicle, turned around and proceeded to tell us in no uncertain terms that we were basically nuts, then spent several hours showing us their breeding facility and describing the difficulties involved in breeding the

fussy cheetah. It was fantastic! It was an enormous privilege to learn from Karen and we came away much better informed, though still searching for our niche.

Other facilities we toured and people we met include FCF member Carl Bovard at Single Vision, Melrose, Florida ([single-visioninc.org](http://single-visioninc.org)), whom we were encouraged to meet by fellow FCF convention attendees, vets, and cheetah enthusiasts Sharon and John Franklin. Carl is

truly extraordinary with his cats, and it was only after seeing how happy his cats were and how much time he spent with them in their big play area that I finally came to realize captive cats could indeed be happy cats. (I should admit here that keeping wild animals in captivity has been a big issue for me, and it is still one I struggle with in certain areas, though after visiting some excellent facilities with great enrichment programs, I have now seen MANY happy animals.) We also met Carl's colleagues Dilyn Jackson and Julie Sheldon, and they all spent several days with us, sharing their goals of an educational center and television series dedicated, as they are, to reaching as

many people as possible with the goal of inspiring them to become involved in conservation.

Out in California, Dale Anderson and Wendy Debbas spent many hours with us on our several trips to Project Survival's Cat Haven ([www.cathaven.com](http://www.cathaven.com)), near Sequoia National Park. In addition to the huge amount of excellent advice regarding education programs and funding conservation, one thing that really struck with us was Dale's insistence that we focus and define what we are doing and call it exactly that. Do not say we are involved in conservation unless we are actually raising money for conservation: raising cubs for zoos and presenting educational programs. These are all valuable and admirable goals, but be honest: call them what they are! Project Survival's Cat Haven's example in raising money for specific conservation organizations was the model for our decision to do the same. They actively support Action for Cheetahs in Kenya, Amur Leopards Russia, Brazil Cat Conservation, Dr. Ronaldo Morato with Jaguars in Brazil, Snow Leopard Conservancy, Dr. Alex Sliwa with Black Footed Cats, Tigris, Cheetah Center at Soysambu, Mara-Meru Cheetah Project, and Cheetah Conservation Botswana.

Based on our discussions about the types of organizations we want to support, Dale encouraged us to meet with Mary Wykstra of Action for Cheetahs in Kenya. So, we arranged to attend the Out of Africa fundraiser at Animal Ark ([www.animalark.org](http://www.animalark.org)), a wildlife sanctuary near Reno, Nevada. There we met numerous interesting staff and guests with a special interest in cheetahs, and several conservationists and fundraiser extraordinaire, Vanessa Bauer, as well as Mary Wykstra and her colleague, Cosmas Wamba of ACK ([www.actionforcheetahs.com](http://www.actionforcheetahs.com)), who spoke eloquently about their efforts in cheetah conservation and research in Kenya. We were impressed with the way they have organized the hands-on, low overhead, and high results work they are doing. Mary believes that research is important, but working with communities is crucial to the bigger picture of cheetah conservation. ACK is



**Carl Bovard and friend Sampson, a Siberian tiger, share a bonding moment at Single Vision, an educational facility in Melrose, Florida.**



committed to working with local villagers and governments as well as the creation and maintenance of a cheetah “corridor” in Kenya, which is crucial to connecting existing populations of cheetah and thereby preventing the disastrous consequences of an isolated population with its decreasing genetic diversity and all the inherent problems of inbreeding. We resolved to support ACK when we eventually begin fundraising with our future cheetahs. The fundraiser had a number of enjoyable attractions and events and we loved once again seeing Tango, Cat Haven’s ambassador cheetah. Another highlight I must mention is the exciting way Aaron and Dianna Hiibel, Animal Ark founders, run



**Chaos, another resident at Single Vision, takes a nice dip in the pool, a luxury that all cougars should have!**

their cheetahs: it was the first time we had seen cheetahs run in an irregular pattern on a non-grassy area, and the addition of the dust plume added a visual detail that made their speed and agility even more impressive! Several days later we spent most of a day with Aaron, engrossed in a discussion of the major crises facing private animal parks, sanctuaries, and other facilities in the United States, due to the current legislation mania, which, although regulation to a certain extent is certainly needed, these laws block the path to future legal ownership and will have overall disastrous effects on the survival of many endangered species. It was following this sobering conversation that Earl and I decided to once again look into trying to develop our cheetah project in Canada, rather than the USA or New Zealand. As Robert Frost said, “That has made all the difference.” Thank you, Aaron!

Another fascinating day was spent with Rob Dicely, owner of Wild Cat Education and Conservation Fund ([www.wildcat-](http://www.wildcatfund.org)

[fund.org](http://www.wildcatfund.org)), near San Francisco. Rob and Barbara have been involved with cats for 25 years and giving education programs most of that time. The Dicely’s facility is not open to the public, so it was a special honor to be allowed to visit. We were so impressed by the forethought of planning and execution of the entire facility in its beautiful redwood setting; it was remarkable. Rob was extremely generous in giving us copies of many of his educational program

guidelines, curriculum, and safety protocols; we also enjoyed sharing an evening with him and two of his longtime volunteers, Marie Scarpa and John Long, as they recounted their experiences. I am avidly interested in nutrition and “alternative or complementary” health fields, and Barbara is very knowledgeable in these areas, particularly helpful with the challenges of aging cheetahs; I hope we will have the opportunity to visit with her someday as she was away the day we were there. WCE & CF’s ambassador cheetahs have raised a tremendous amount of money for wild conservation over the years. They partner with The Cheetah Conservation Fund, Cheetah Conservation in Botswana, Snow Leopard Conservancy, Mountain Lion Foundation, Small Cat Conservation Alliance, Cheetah Outreach, and Endangered Wildlife Trust – Wildlife Conflict Prevention Group, and donations can be designated to a specific organization, with 100% of donated funds



**Carol and Earl had the chance to meet Cous the lion at Project Survival’s Cat Haven in Dunlap, California.**

going to that organization.

We saw so many other places and met so many great people; the Cincinnati Zoo, with its fantastic educational and entertaining shows and, of course, we were thrilled to meet Cathryn Hilker at the FCF convention along with many other great FCF members--too many to list--who attended the convention and were so generous in providing information and contacts for us. I will not detail the convention here, as I hope readers of this newsletter will have experienced firsthand the excellent presentations given, but suffice it to say that we were extremely glad we found the FCF just in time to book a flight! Another important visit was with the cheetah vet and other cheetah enthusiasts at Oregon’s Winston Safari, where Dr.



**An ambassador of Animal Ark, a wildlife sanctuary in Nevada, shows off cheetah speed and agility as part of the “Out of Africa” fundraiser, where Carol and Earl networked with a number of cheetah conservationists.**

Laurie Marker (Cheetah Conservation Fund) worked for a number of years developing a solid cheetah breeding program. She has since moved to Africa to accomplish so much there. The list goes on and on and I am sorry we do not have space to include everyone in this article. The one major thing we had planned, but ended up postponing, was our trip to Africa, which was to end with a stay at DeWildt while waiting to travel with our cubs; we are planning for next year and I cannot wait; Ann van Dyk, who has dedicated her life to saving the cheetah, is an absolute hero to us and we hope every FCF member will order her book, "Cheetahs of De Wildt" (ISBN-10: 186825187X or 978-1868251872). Ann Van Dyke founded the DeWildt Cheetah Foundation in 1970, and there is no question that the world cheetah population would be in even graver difficulty if it had not been for her. While the cheetah may very well become extinct in the wild, there will probably still be cheetahs in the world thanks to people like Ann Van Dyke. She talks the talk and she walks the walk and, if in the future, your children or grandchildren ever see a cheetah, it will only be because of people like her.

What an AMAZING year!

Now for "the rest of the story!"

Early in this whole process we tried to get permits to import cheetahs into British Columbia, Canada, where our home is. Not a chance. Not then, and likely never (though we WILL try again!). For those of you wondering if it is any easier in Canada than in the USA to own an exotic cat, here is an overview of Canadian exotic animal laws: Canadian federal law makers have left it to individual provinces to control exotic animal ownership, but federal laws restrict and control importation of exotic animals and, although voluntary, Canada enforces CITES recommendations regarding endangered species.

In 2007, only two provinces in Canada did not have laws regarding exotic animal ownership: Ontario and British Columbia ("BC"). In May of 2007, a 32-year-old BC woman bled to death after a single swipe from her Bengal tiger that severed her femoral artery. Many concerned and responsible exotic animal owners had long believed better regulations and enforce-



**Carol and Earl have a trip to the DeWildt Cheetah Centre in Africa in the works sometime in the upcoming year.**

ment were overdue, and they welcomed the appointment of proper enforcement control in the form of the BC Ministry of Environment's Conservation Officer Service. The Provincial government, however, then continued by passing a sweeping, prohibitive and reactionary law to curtail the ownership of exotic animals. By March of 2009, BC had some of the most stringent animal control laws in North America. It is referred to by the government as the "wall around British Columbia," and basically means that other than large zoos, virtually no exotic animals may be imported, and those facilities grandfathered into the law until the current exotic animal population dies out, are prevented from removing their animals from their enclosures. Many conservationists believe it will negate many of the positive benefits that could have been accomplished with a more conservative approach. The same exotic animal owners who did support better regulatory laws suddenly found their sources of income completely cut off and faced court battles in order to continue operating. Some are rumored to have gone "underground" and others have simply "gone under," with their animals being sold off to whoever could take them. I am sure FCF members are fully aware of heartbreaking stories of similar situations in the United States.

I will switch to Earl's account. As he remembers it, during the first months of this process, we found that if we brought the topic of participating in cheetah conservation and actually owning cheetahs, a few moments of silence ensued, while everyone stopped their discussions of new

minivans and mortgage rates, then turned to look at us with puzzled looks on their faces. "That sounds dangerous," was the normal reply from someone who had just consumed his fifth beer and was getting ready to drive home. When we would reply that driving down a road at 90km/hr (55mph), wrapped in 4,000 lbs. of razor sharp steel that can be compacted in one second when you hit a bridge abutment is every bit as dangerous as a big cat, their looks changed from confusion to disbelief. For some reason, "dead is dead" does not compute with most people when you try to explain the difference between a car accident and a tiger crushing your

skull.

Earl also writes, "It was like climbing Mt. Everest in a pair of short pants and sunglasses and a six pack of beer. But the way I see things is simple: Never surrender. Always do the things that scare you. If life were easy, everyone would be doing it. These were quotes posted all over our house. We had decided to get involved with cheetah conservation in the USA (Carol is American), but it would be a battle. At least 1,000 hours of practical experience, our own facility constructed and inspected before we could even apply for a license, which would likely take two years during which we would get used to the feeling of impending doom as the federal government seems to do what it can to ensure the world's big cats go extinct while saying "It is not our fault." Not for the faint of heart, but as Eleanor Roosevelt said, "When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die."

So, we were on our way to Florida, in our Jeep with two suitcases and our Cavalier Spaniel, to begin our year of volunteering, when we had an important conversation with Aaron Hiibel at Animal Ark, who inspired us to look once again at Canada. (The cheetah import situation still looked just as bad and it was a lot colder than Florida.) Canada has nearly the same laws in every province as the US, and some are even more stringent. There is one province, however, that has no provincial exotic animal bylaws; it is left up to individual municipalities to decide if you can have a hippo, giraffe, or tiger in your backyard. (We live in one of





**Robin and Annie in an early photo showed the great disparity of size that can be seen between male and female cheetahs.**

those very few municipalities and it will not stay like this for long!) We phoned some Ontario zoo owners and then made the decision to turn north and move 2,500 miles east across Canada. We left our beautiful 120-year-old home overlooking a large lake in a quaint historic town situated in a spectacular glacier and grizzly filled area of BC's interior and moved to a crappy little apartment in an area with bad winters and a prison. Would it be worth it? We established a relationship with a fully licensed private zoo north of Toronto, an area with a population of six million potential cheetah conservation contributors. The Northwood Zoo and Animal Sanctuary, owned by Norman Phillips, has been in business for 25 years. By working together, we will bring cheetahs and a four-pronged education, outreach, and conservation program to the zoo, and the zoo will enjoy an additional rare exhibit. We could not be more pleased with our association! The zoo's 60 acres will provide plenty of room for cheetahs, and it already houses many species, including the biggest tiger we have ever seen. Most of the other big cats and many smaller cats, including the fishing cat, Amur leopard, Siberian lynx, and bobcat, a Kodiak bear, a number of grizzlies, and an incredibly old black bear (Ben is nearly 30!), primates, wolves, buffalo, elk, Sitka deer, various birds of prey, and reptiles. Norm and his head animal keeper are extremely efficient and, after years of working together, they have the daily work down

to an art form. We thoroughly appreciate learning the art of working with exotic animals under the tutelage of people with many years of experience and an excellent safety record. We are so thankful we met Norman; his vision and generous nature will make a BIG difference to cheetah conservation in Canada!

It certainly was not clear sailing! If you want a cheetah in Canada, the only legal way to get one is to either go through a CAZA breeder (but you cannot do that if you do not belong to CAZA, and Norm prefers not to

join) or you have to import. We were fortunate to have made contacts that guided us to Alan Strachan of The Ann van Dyk Cheetah Conservation Center (formerly DeWildt) in South Africa. We told them about the programs we wanted to offer and were incredibly lucky to be chosen to receive two cubs, provided the Canadian Government did not tie us up for months. Our first contact with CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) was not favorable. They said we had to be a member of CAZA (remember, we were not), but our research indicated this was not the law. We researched incidents and lawsuits involving CFIA from the past 10 years, and then searched for a lawyer willing to represent us. His research concurred; it is not law, but policy.

After several months of going round and round, discussions with and letters from our member of the Provincial Parliament, several other government officials, and constitutional law organizations, our lawyer attempted to have a casual discussion with the person in charge of our case, but was refused entry to the building. He then had a talk with the Ontario Justice Department and we were eventually granted a "one time" permit, provided we could pass the standard government inspection (not a difficulty, as Northwood was already a certified government quarantine facility), as well as CAZA guidelines. Meanwhile, our CITES application (the only other

permit we needed) had been misplaced not once, but twice, when the CITES office moved, but they were excellent about stepping up to the plate and getting things moving again, and in due course we were approved. During all this, we learned that the broker the AVDCCC uses is a very busy man, and it took some getting used to "Africa time" and email response times much longer than what we were used to. We started to panic. This was a place on the other side of the planet with which we had to place immense trust. We, however, took advice from someone who knew the Center and broker well; she told us to settle down and trust that things would all come together in the end. And that is what we did.

There was a lot more involved than what I have just described, but I cannot wait any longer to share our exciting news: Six months after applying for our Canadian import permits, our two AMAZING, astonishingly wonderful cheetahs arrived at the zoo, safe and sound, on March 28! Ann Van Dyk's Center called the male Robin, and he is nearly nine months old, and Annie Rose is nearly a year. Robin was mother-raised and our



**Annie strikes a somber, yet artistic pose next to the window, where she can enjoy the Canadian landscape without getting chilly.**



girl was hand-raised. As Alan Strachan, Animal Manager at the AVD-CCC, says, they are both very “casual.” We cannot believe our good fortune that both our cheetahs have great temperaments and captivating personalities! Robin’s sire is Byron, the center’s main ambassador cheetah, who has helped with presentations to over 140,000 children. No wonder Robin is such a calm boy, yet, at the same time, a complete ham and prankster who seems to delight in looking for mischief! Annie Rose likes women better than men and is more watchful and cautious than Robin, but she has decided that I (Carol) am her person, and I am completely in love with her! They very quickly learned to automatically sit for a treat (always), come when called (not always!), jump up and down off objects on command, accept a collar, and other things which seem to indicate high levels of intelligence.

The male is so calm we cannot believe he is a cheetah, and the female is so affectionate with me; her purr is as loud as a Harley Davidson. When we called Alan to tell him how pleased we are with our cheetahs, we were shocked when he said he rarely hears back from anyone once he sends a cat to its new home and he worries about them. He may end up



**Robin enjoys a refreshing cup of Tim Horton's, Canada's version of Starbucks. Now we know why he can run so fast!**



**Annie strikes a comical pose, sticking her tongue out at the photographer.**

regretting telling us that as we keep sending him updates on each new brilliant feat the cats perform! (There will be more about the Ann van Dyk Cheetah Conservation Center in a later article. The center’s 42-year contribution to cheetah conservation is monumental and deserves more than a short paragraph. For now, we will leave it at this: they were great, and of course Ann Van Dyk is our hero. If you have not read her book, you MUST!)

The programs we will create at Northwood require our cheetahs to become highly socialized ambassadors. “An ambassador for the species is an animal that, while not tame, is trained to make public appearances on behalf of educational outreach for conservation. Until one sees an animal in real life, all the factual information in the world is not going to drive home the emotional and stunning impact of a live cheetah ten feet away. It is an event that nobody forgets and brings the issues surrounding the cheetah to another level for an audience that lives on the other side of the world. Going on safari is not a reality for many animal lovers, and traditional zoos with their bleak prisons break our hearts. The work of animals such as Tango [an ambassador cat at Cat Haven in California] is a vital piece in the puzzle of outreach and fundraising.” (Other

National Geographic articles describe the ambassador cheetah as a “tame” animal.)

Eventually, when (and if, as this is really up to each individual cat if they will be suitable) they are ready, our cats will be involved in four main programs, with a portion of the income going to Action For Cheetahs in Kenya:

**Cheetah Walks** (People pay a fee to go for a walk with a cheetah; we have found six places in Africa already doing this, but we are unaware of it being offered yet in North America, though we would love to hear from anyone already doing this.)

**Cheetah Pursuit Training** (People pay to watch them run; there is a new machine that will tow a lure at a full 70 miles an hour.)

**Cheetah Outreach/Education Presentations** (We take the cats to schools and other venues to speak about the cheetah and the urgency

of developing and supporting conservation in many forms.)

**Cheetah Encounters** (People pay to get their pictures taken with and have a chance to be up close and personal with a cheetah.)

We plan to add four more cheetahs during the next two years, so the cats can be rotated on an individual preference basis. We are using the safety protocols we learned from other facilities, plus a few more things such as using a newly developed Garmin GPS system which uses a hand-held tracking unit, can track up to ten animals at a time in real time, has a range of nine miles, and is accurate to within a square foot. Custom-made collars and harnesses will be ready soon, and we will be using both types of restraints when the cats are in public. We believe it is crucial that we have the highest level of actual safety protocols, as well as high levels of perceived safety; creating exemplary standards of professionalism is exceedingly important, especially in this day and age when the slightest incident is seized upon and sensationalized by the media.

It has been a long and sometimes painful few years to get to this point, and once the cats are ready to begin their work, I am sure we will have many more hurdles to leap and battles to fight, but for right now, we are just going to enjoy our cheetahs. They are worth every stress-



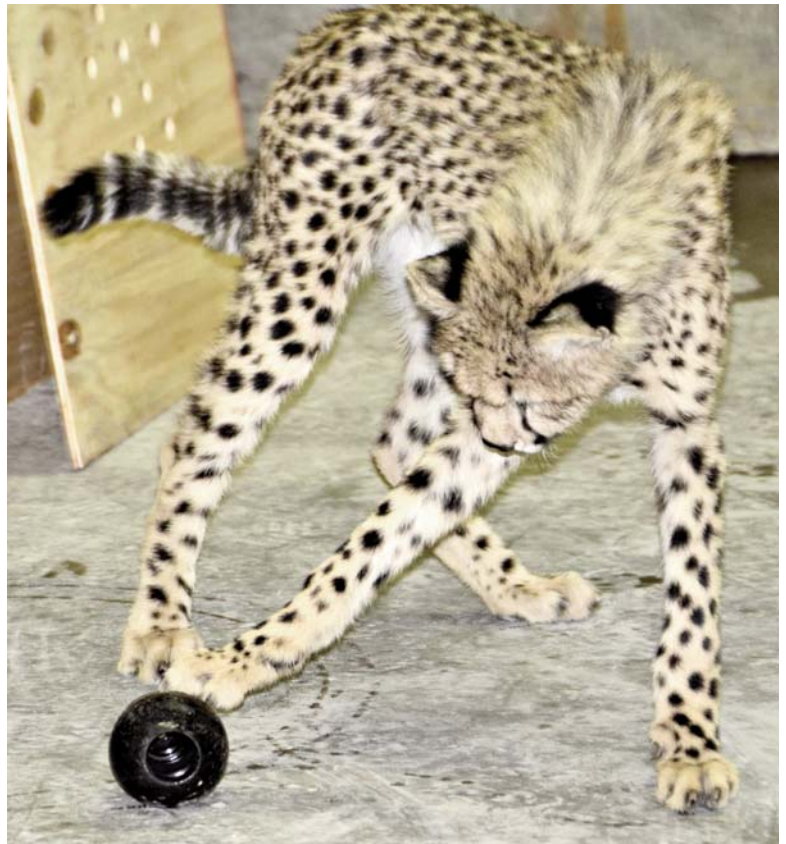
induced headache, every dollar, every tear, and every fight, a thousand times over.  
*Are Cheetahs Really In So Much Danger? What Can FCF Members Do To Help?*

I appreciate the opportunity to include some of the important facts we have learned about the cheetah. Without knowledge, we are unlikely to work toward change. There is not much time left to change the outcome of the cheetah's race toward extinction, and, as President Barak Obama once said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

"In 1900, there were 100,000 cheetahs in 33 African countries and 11 Asian countries. In 1975, there were 30,000 cheetahs in Africa, and only 200 survived in Iran. In 2000, only 12,500 cheetahs lived in 26 African countries. Only 100 survived in Iran. In one century, man has reduced the cheetah population to less than 13% of its original population." (Please note this information is now over 11 years old. Five years ago, the IUCN estimated the total could be as low as 7,500.

"The cheetah has suffered from inbreeding, high infant mortality, loss of habitat, a reduction in its prey base, conflicts with livestock farming, and a

reduced ability to survive in parks and reserves due to the presence of other predators. Yet, despite all these problems, the cheetah is the oldest of the big cats (their ancestors originated in North America approximately 3.5 to 4 million years ago in the area of present day Nevada, Texas, and Wyoming) and has survived the longest." At the current rate of loss of 1,000 per year, however, wild cheetahs may very well be extinct by the



**Robin shows off his handsome, long-legged physique while getting some playtime with a rubber Kong toy.**



**Carol and Annie – she's such a cuddly girl and tries to join Carol for a coffee each morning.**

time a child now in first grade graduates from high school. Of the big cats, only the tiger and the snow leopard are more endangered in the wild, and their numbers are still declining, just like the cheetahs', despite many programs based on wild survival.

We feel the survival of the cheetah species appears to rely on a two-pronged approach, both of which will require a tremendous amount of fundraising:

- 1) Wild cheetah conservation and the creation of huge reserves capable of sustaining truly wild cheetahs; and

- 2) Captive cheetah breeding and placement programs in semi-wild, zoological gardens or other specialized environments, with great attention paid to increasing public awareness in saving this species

through ambassador cheetah programs.

There are a number of organizations working on providing "a habitat and a rich prey-base for cheetahs on the livestock farmlands of southern Africa," and, in an ideal world, the cheetah would remain wild, but if that is the only strategy adopted, cheetahs are almost certainly doomed. Thankfully, although the restrictions are growing more prohibitive by the day in North America, both here and abroad there are numerous facilities and people working on ambassador cheetah programs and breeding programs. As yet, however, it is far from certain that it will be enough to stave off extinction.

"People are the greatest threat facing the cheetah today, but also hold the key to survival. The cheetah is caught in a conservation quandary. On the one hand, national parks and reserves where human pressure is less, also protect lions, hyenas, and other predators which keep cheetah numbers low." (Besides the obvious competition for food, cheetahs have no way of protecting themselves from other predators, other than short bursts of speed, and are often killed on sight by these predators.) Conversely, outside protected areas, competing carnivores are few, but chee-



tahs run the gauntlet of human hunters, farmers, and other people who kill cheetahs on sight. "Even without any intended malice to wildlife, humans alter the environment so radically that cheetahs cannot survive there."

The Ann van Dyk Cheetah Conservation Centre facility in South Africa, in partnership with the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria, has bred over 900 cheetahs - 54 last year - a world record! Their numbers are even more impressive when you realize their survival rate is around 75%, when world averages are 50% or less in most captive facilities. (Wild mortality rates are reported to be in the area of 90%.) They have pioneered this previously unsuccessful field and have tried valiantly to reintroduce cheetahs into the wild. In her book, "The Cheetahs of De Wildt," Ann van Dyk says that, "It has become apparent that, in the 1990s, because of a lack of suitable new habitats, the reintroduction of cheetahs into the wild is an almost impossible task. What we do know, however, is that we have overcome most of the breeding problems encountered in captive conditions (a claim other facilities are not able to make), and today our ideas and findings are being copied and applied in many parts of southern Africa, as well as in the rest of the world. As a result, I am confident that the cheetah can continue to be bred in captivity in years to come."

Cheetahs, unlike the other big cats, are very fragile and generally timid. Females weigh around 85 to 110 pounds and males can weigh in up to 120 pounds or so, but they are very lightly framed and have fragile bone structure. They are unable to defend themselves against most other predators, including man, so they are naturally timid and prefer to run away or hide rather than fight in dangerous situations. In fact, though cheetahs have been kept domestically for 5,000 years, not a single human fatality due to a wild cheetah exists today in human record. Cheetahs do not pose a threat to human life and are the most tractable of all the big cats. "In virtually all



**Carol keeps Robin and Annie company while they look out the window, a favorite activity of theirs, from the comfort of their desktop perch.**

countries, but certainly in the New World, far more people are killed by ordinary domestic dogs than are killed by any kind of cat. Still more people are killed by insects, even more are killed by lightning, and very many more are killed in sports-related accidents, to say nothing of the people killed by other people, especially those with guns or automobiles."

Although cheetahs are the fastest animals on earth, we humans have run them to the very brink of survival. It is crucial that we all understand that the ONLY way we can prevent the extinction of this extraordinary species is if we, as a society,

are willing to work every front available to us. If we take action NOW, it is possible that "the cheetah's race will be one of survival, not extinction." Time IS running out. Please support cheetah conservation NOW!

In her book, "The Cheetahs of DeWildt," Ann van Dyk concludes by saying she has reassessed the need for cheetah breeding. "Was it really so necessary? Was the world in need of so many more animal species when it could barely feed the human population? But the more I questioned, the stronger became my conviction. Yes, it all had to continue. If the

cheetah had survived on this planet for over a million years, this present generation had all the more reason to preserve the cat's existence. But it would have to be a breed of cheetah that was geared to the 21st century: a breed whose survival would depend on its acceptance of a controlled environment and restricted habitat - sadly, a breed that would never be able to experience the complete freedom its ancestors had known in the past."



**Robin has caught his prey, which he's willing to pose with, but definitely won't share!**



## Ruaha Carnivore Project: An Update

By Amy Dickman

The Ruaha landscape is a globally important area for big cats, home to about one-tenth of the world's remaining lions (*Panthera leo*), one of only four populations of at least 200 cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) in east Africa, healthy populations of leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and smaller cats, and the third largest population of endangered African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) in the world. Yet it also has an extremely high rate of lion killing, which occurs both in retaliation for livestock loss and during traditional rites-of-passage for young warriors.

Founded by Dr. Amy Dickman in 2009, the Ruaha Carnivore Project (RCP) is the only non-governmental organization working in the Ruaha landscape specifically to reduce the cost and increase the benefits to locals living amongst large carnivores. These last 12 months have seen critically important successes and challenges.

In the last year, RCP has helped villagers and pastoralists erect 50 reinforced bomas (livestock enclosures). Thus far, not one head of livestock has been lost while in a reinforced boma. With over 60% of livestock attacks occurring at night, these reinforced bomas are very popular with villagers. Getting pastoralists—in particular the Barabaig, who are extremely distrustful of outsiders—to adopt the permanent structures was diffi-



**Msago, RCP's community liaison officer, examines the carcass of a young male lion killed on village land.**

cult, but there is increasing demand for the reinforcement, with many Barabaig households now requesting bomas. Protecting livestock while they are grazing in the bush has been a harder issue to resolve. RCP has partnered with Panthera and the Lion Guardians program in Kenya to start a Ruaha Lion Guardians initiative. Under this model, young Barabaig warriors are employed to patrol village land

looking for lion spoor and alerting herders if fresh tracks are found, and are helping villagers better protect their livestock. Critically, the Guardians are only employed as long as no carnivore killing occurs in the area they patrol, so they can help to stop other warriors killing big cats. In addition, RCP soon will put the first livestock guarding dogs to work in the area protecting both cattle and smallstock as they graze in the bush.

However, reducing the cost of carnivore presence is not enough to completely change behavior—RCP also strives to increase the benefits from carnivore presence. RCP outfitted a new clinic in Kitisi village, while four primary and one secondary school have been “twinning” with schools in the U.K. and U.S. which provide much-needed books and other supplies. In addition, the project has developed a “Simba Scholarship” program, which fully pays for four years of secondary schooling for pastoralist children, and six Simba Scholars have recently started their studies. Because primary school is free in Tanzania, but secondary school is not, and because pastoralist families live on the far periphery of communities, few children from poor rural families attend secondary schooling. RCP makes it clear that the Simba Scholarships, like



**A Maasai householder in front of his newly predator-proofed boma – there have been no successful attacks in these protected enclosures.**



the clinic and the school supplies, are a benefit derived not from the presence of RCP, but from the presence of carnivores.

While the main cause of carnivore killing by villagers is in retaliation for killed livestock, the majority of livestock is lost to disease; for this reason, RCP recently launched a program that provides subsidized veterinary medicines to owners of reinforced bomas. The project team also helps villagers and pastoralists in times of trouble, most often making emergency runs to the nearest clinic. So far, one local baby has been named after an RCP staffer, after his mother waited just a little too long to start for the clinic and the baby was born in an RCP vehicle! Thus far, the results are promising: study participants report improved attitudes toward carnivores, retaliatory killings in the core study area have decreased by about 60 percent, and no lion hunts had been conducted in almost a year in the main project village.

The project has also been making important progress in terms of collecting baseline data on wild cat populations and ecology in this area. Despite its global importance, almost nothing is known about the distribution and relative abundance of wild cats across the Ruaha landscape, which has hindered the development of local conservation strategies. To address this problem, RCP is using FCF funding to equip park staff with cameras and GPS units so that they can document all big cat sightings. These photos are extremely important, as they will allow us



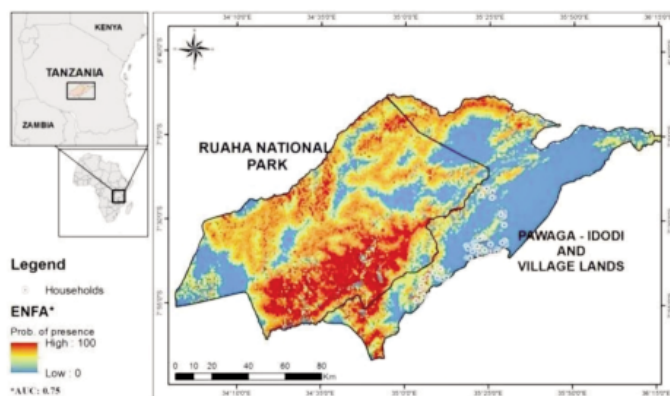
The project's first six "Simba Scholars," along with Amy and Msago .

to build up a large carnivore identification database and provide the Tanzanian authorities with the first real data on the movement, habitat use, demography, and distribution of Ruaha's carnivores. This is already enabling us to identify and track individual cats, and build up landscape-level models of likely carnivore presence. So, we are excited about it and will keep you updated as the project progresses.

Ultimately, although much remains to be done to reduce the high level of carnivore

killing in this area, and to provide data for conservation planning, the project's efforts have shown that major change is possible in this critically important area. We are very grateful to the FCF for supporting this vital work, as it really is making a difference to big cat conservation and human communities around Ruaha.

#### Predicting the distribution of lions across the Ruaha Landscape



The sightings are being used by a student, Leandro Abade, to produce the first predictive maps of carnivore presence across the Ruaha landscape.

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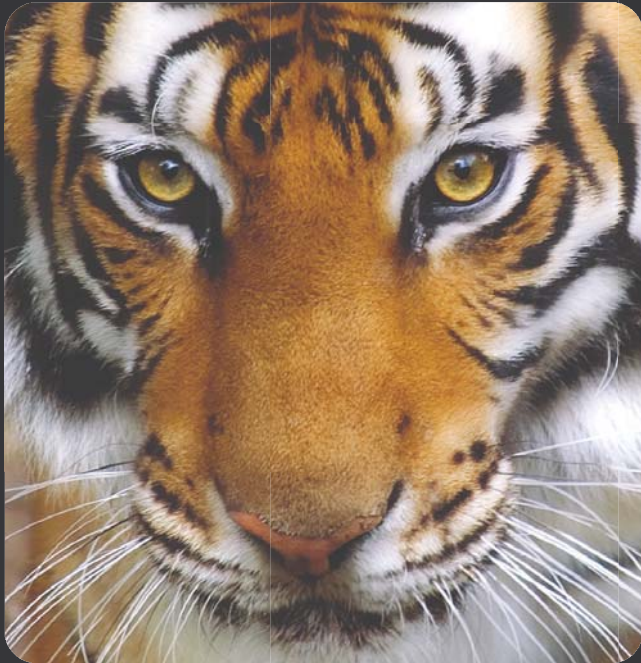
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## ***Through Cougar's Eyes: Life Lessons from One Man's Best Friend* by David Raber**

Book Review by Kane Molavi

Another successful instance of raising a cougar/puma as a pet is revealed in a book entitled *Through Cougar's Eyes*, written by David Raber and published over a decade ago, in 2001. As opposed to the unfortunate end result in Lyn Hancock's 1978 book entitled *Love Affair with a Cougar*, David Raber's situation with raising his puma which he named "Cougar," luckily produces a happy ending, meaning that an exotic cat actually receives the opportunity to live his entire life at home with his human/surrogate parents where he would seem to prefer to live and free from the unethical attacks and/or abductions committed by any government agencies or animal rights groups. Of course, we should also remember that the author was an owner who actually took the time to learn about what is really involved with responsible private ownership and made absolutely every effort to provide the best possible life for his cat.

My initial assumption about the book, due to the title, was that Raber must have written it in order to try and convince readers that it would somehow be "morally inappropriate" to keep exotic cats as pets. In addition to the book's title, Amazon's description of the book states that when Raber first met Cougar, he decided to make four promises. "One, no more petting, out of respect for Cougar; two, no more cages; three, he would educate the public against exotic-animal ownership; and, four, he would make Cougar happy, and this has become a 24-hour-a-day learning process and a duty that he adores." This description along with the title of the book saying "life lessons" will generally give any potential reader the message that Raber must have previously become involved in private ownership, underwent negative experiences, and from then on, as a result, felt that it would be best to "educate the public against private ownership." When one reads the book, however, he/she will see that the book actually seems to rather encourage or promote private ownership.

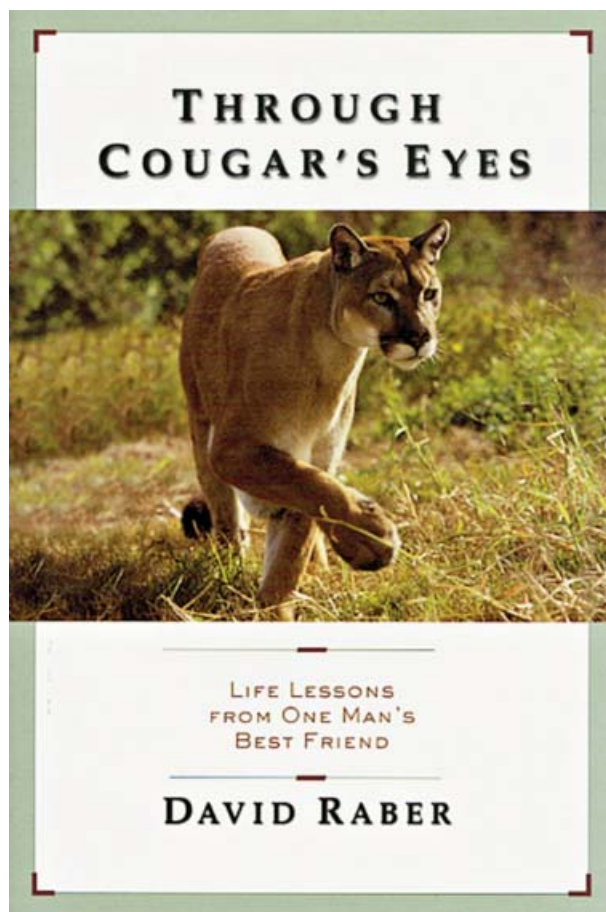
In the first chapter, Raber graphically explains what he perceives as the average circumstance under which many cougar kittens suffered during shipment from a breeding facility to the property of an exotic pet dealer back in the 1990s. According to Raber, within these grim, dangerous, yet completely avoidable situations, kittens can and are often forced to endure quite extreme levels of stress, developing fevers, starving, and dehydrating. As described, they can experience diarrhea and even die before they ever get the chance to be adopted. A very disturbing instance on page 16 regarding one of the kittens was where Raber informs us, "The employee assigned to open the store the next morning was not met with the usual chirps,

just silence. Peering inside the cub's cage, she realized that this little guy had gathered a section of towel up into a mound and pretended to suckle until he died." I understand that the intention of the pet dealers was to sell the kitten; however, I just cannot seem to comprehend why they failed to regularly and routinely bottle-feed him throughout the night themselves. Never mind the fact that the dealers left the kitten alone in the store, cramped inside some tiny carrier and without so much as a bowl of water, milk, or a chicken leg, knowing full well that the kittens were already weaned prior to receiving them. It seems like the kitten was fed only once when they first received her. Perhaps it is these kinds of bad examples that led to the improvement and tightening of the USDA inspection and regulation of exotic animal breeders, dealers, and exhibitors. In today's legal climate and limited cougar breeding, such a situation has all but disappeared.

This also reminds us of another change – which requires perspective puma owners to already be in possession of a federal license, so that after adopting from a rightful breeder, they may drive it across state lines back home.

So while Raber points out these tragic occurrences in this first chapter and despite the original messages that are given to us "against private ownership," fortunately and ironically, the situation of keeping and raising his puma as a domesticated household pet clearly shows us that the book's main character, Cougar, is a great example of positive private ownership, according to the way I understand it. The author seems to shift from initially holding the dangerous and silly animal rights-minded opinion against private ownership to understanding not only the rewarding experience, but also why private ownership is so beneficial for both the cat and owner (parent) as well.

Through his experiences, Raber successfully learns about puma behavior, as he claims, through simply "paying attention" to Cougar and watching how he responds or behaves in nearly any and every situation. If I understand correctly, as a result of his observations, he discovers how and why pumas choose certain spots for urination/defecation. With this





knowledge, it seems like owners can choose almost any spot of their choice and create the appropriate condition(s) for which a pet puma (or other exotic cat) would then select it as the spot to relieve his or herself.

According to the author, it is evident that pumas can form bonds with not just the “main” owner/parent, but also with the owner’s family members, as well as with any pets other than the puma that the owner may have. As Raber explains, after Cougar also forms bonds with his “house cat,” Regal, and his golden retriever, Chivas, he evidently becomes protective over them and ends up scaring a neighbor’s dog away from the house for attempting to attack Regal. He describes the situation in a way that a puma will develop an attitude where he/she will come to adopt the other pets as siblings.

Raber expresses one very interesting point in particular regarding how he would interact with Cougar. He suggests that it is more beneficial and effective to communicate with Cougar through cat behavior, as opposed to the forms of expression seen in human behavior. An example of this is when he points out that,

as human beings, we often like to pet cats with our hands. While the author does not consider this to be an inappropriate form of petting, he does go on to explain that when cats pet or otherwise express their love/affection for their owners or other animals, they use their heads and faces by rubbing/head-butting. He therefore mainly prefers to pet Cougar usually with his face and head, as petting a cat with your hands can give the message that you want to play as opposed to just trying to “pet” them.

In reading this book, one thing I enjoyed the most was that the author and his wife were able to take Cougar out in public with them just about everywhere they went. Clearly, this again represents another time, before the USDA created all their dangerous animal exhibitor rules, making it practically impossible to move a cat from one place to another except with a transfer crate or behind barriers that separate the cat from the public. But, back in the last century, they were also able to take Cougar for walks on a leash in several different places packed with many people. A lot of the attention they received was positive and, fortunately, according to

the author, Cougar never misbehaved with any of the strangers who were interested and approached him. Throughout various sections in the book, Raber makes us aware that Cougar was also allowed in various restaurants and hotels. Through these occurrences, he is able to provide us with reasons for why exotic cats are not self-regulating and/or reserved as discussed in the chapter entitled “Are Cats Really Independent and Aloof?”

Animal rights advocates along with those who know absolutely nothing regarding exotic cats seek to demonize and declare every single one of these large, cuddly kitties with the label “wild.” So I really need to hand it to the author for one very interesting, yet important piece of information he decided to include regarding this issue. In chapter 10 on page 226, Raber says, “In closing, I want to share a relevant question I am frequently asked when Cougar is present: Is he tame? The answer is at the core of this book. ‘Tame’ is in the eye of the beholder. Are small children tame when they carry guns to school? Are you tame when someone threatens your family? When it comes to jealousy, guarding, protecting, or



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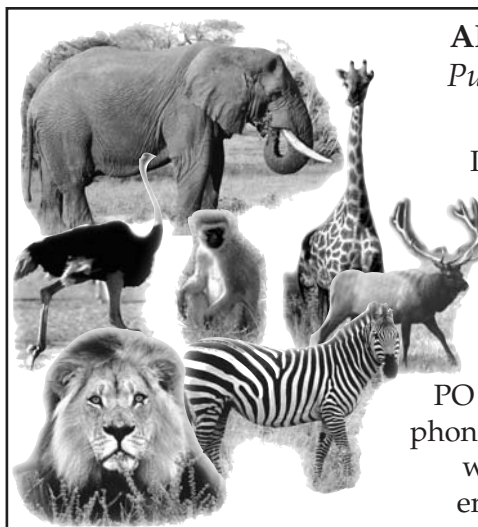
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just being scared, the lion is no different. What is unfair is that lions are called wild when they act identically to humans. When people act the same way, we just attach a long scientific name to it, saying it is understandable; for lions, it is 'wild.' The truth of the matter is that man is no better at controlling himself than a beast is. Lashing out is a way of life. Man certainly is not tame. Television, newspapers, and magazines are soaked in blood—pictures and print portraying man's inhumanity to man and animal alike. And we call lions wild! Getting along with people and with lions relies on the same principles; 'Press the good behavioral buttons and do not act stupid.'" I am assuming that Raber means that a puma or other exotic cat can be "wild" or tame depending on the way an owner raises the cat. If this is what he is suggesting, then I have to say that I agree completely.

In the fifth chapter, on pages 229–230, the author writes, "After I caught up, Cougar was comfortable with me now close by and the chase continued. In a flash, he ran, then leapt, knocking the deer to the ground, both of them rolling over and over. Cougar was like a spider, always on top, spinning a cocoon of dust and debris. And when they finally came to rest, Cougar's weight pinned the deer to the ground, both bodies gasping for air. Stalking and chasing are instinctive. And once the prey is caught, it is instinctive for Cougar to go for the back of the neck, unlike other species of cats, which go for the throat. Cougar never goes for the throat; he is programmed otherwise. For small animals, at this point it is normally all over but the memories, but mountain lions cannot kill deer without using what is called a killing bite. They must learn through experience—and some say they must be taught by the mother—how to use their canine teeth surgically to penetrate between neck vertebrae of the deer. Of course, Cougar has neither the experience nor the training from his mother, so at the very most he instinctively nibbles around the back of the deer's head and releases her—the 'catch and release' policy."



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According to what I have read and have been told by some private owners of pumas, this theory seems to be true. In *The Cougar Almanac*, written by Robert H. Busch, the author also discusses the fact that pumas are taught and must observe their mothers' actions during hunting and then must continually "rehearse" the biting between the neck vertebrae before they actually learn to hunt or kill with this specific technique.

One thing I would like to add here is that, even while Raber was able to take Cougar out in public on a leash and supposedly was also able to raise him inside the house and was against the idea of enclosures, I would never consider mak-

ing choices such as these, as it is completely negligent and irresponsible, not to mention illegal in virtually every state where private ownership is lawful. As far as whether or not it would be sensible to take your exotic cat out in public on a leash with an exhibitor's license issued by the USDA, again I believe that in this day and age it is no longer a possibility. I would think that questions related to these issues might be on many of our minds, especially after reading a book like this. Be very careful with a lot of this information. I personally would disregard a few of the methods of ownership described in this book, as they are entirely contrary to what we are taught in the FCF (particularly regarding the absence of an enclosure). I am not denying that Raber provided the best possible life for his puma; however, I would never try to go the route he did with private ownership. With that said, if anyone still has the urge to ask about anything that might seem possible as described in the book, I would recommend that they contact any of our professional members within the FCF. On another note, one thing that I myself will advise is for any of our members to purchase this book. Luckily, it is not at all hard to find. I have seen it being sold on Amazon costing anywhere from a penny to a few dollars

## Donations

The FCF Board of Directors thanks the following individuals and corporations who have made donations to FCF projects since the last published *Journal*, providing additional funding for educational materials for members and legislators, supporting conservation, and improving 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 this example and donate funds for projects that interest you.

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The FCF appreciates your generosity & continued support.



## Bonds Not to be Taken for Granted

By Kim Barker

In my six years at the Conservators' Center, I've learned a lot about the bonds we have with our wild friends. I've always had domestic animals in my life and have mostly understood the bonds that happen with them, but, before coming to the Center, I had no idea that similar bonds can happen with our wild friends. Though you cannot interact with them as you would a domestic animal, the bonds can be just as significant. Lions, in particular, have a strong sense of family and, provided you don't "break the rules," they may allow you into their pride as much as a human can safely be. And though we do not run to them and tackle them with a hug, the bond is no less there.

A few years ago, I introduced many of you to my lion "daughters," Willow and Adeena. Though I have been known primarily as the "serval girl" and human mom to the Barker Boys, my first experience in bonding to the residents at the Conservators' Center was with these two lion sisters. They were born at the Conservators' Center in 2004, to Sadie and Mufasa lions shortly after their arrival from a neglectful situation. I was immediately claimed by Willow and have been awed by my friendship with her ever since. Though with Willow you also get sister Adeena, Willow has always made it clear that I belong to her first.

Since I first wrote about my relationship with these two back in 2008, a lot has changed. When I first met the two lionesses in 2007, both were coming up on their third birthday and still very much youngsters. They were bouncy and mischievous lionesses full of energy, and their youthful spots were still quite pronounced. As I would come up to their enclosure to visit them, I could see their excitement. They knew their friend Kim was coming to visit and bring them gifts and, at the very least, lavish lots of attention on them and tell them how spectacular they were. Because I was spending so much time with them, and I agreed to continue that time commitment, I received some staff level training on operant conditioning training and protected contact handling. Protected contact means there is still fence between us, but I am able to touch certain areas at certain times as part of the lion's training. This lets us inspect

their ears, check small wounds, and apply topical medications, with no stress to the cats. What a great way to be able to cement a relationship!

In 2010, Mufasa's pride was moved into a marvelous enclosure with lots of woods and room to run. This left their old enclosure open and, since it had a little more room, Willow and Adeena were the benefactors of their parents' old home. Though similarly built, it was a little bigger and a new space for them, so I wondered if there would be any change in how I interacted with them.

My question was answered quickly and it was a relative no. They were still bouncy lions, excited to see their "mom" every time I came to visit. The only thing that seemed to change was them gradually coming into maturity. As they have gotten older, the excitement of a visit has settled a little quicker and instead has become more leisurely visits with a lion or two just sitting on the other side of the fence from me. I've also gotten some glimpses of how I am viewed by them. In 2010, I broke my right foot. In working with apex predators, walking around with an injury like that garnered some unwanted attention, and I was careful to not be in the area too often with the large cats while I was recovering. But of course, I had to keep in touch with my lion girls. While other residents looked at me with keen and uncomfortable interest, Willow and Adeena would always greet me with the expression, "Are you okay?" Not once during my recovery was I ever stalked by either of them and my friendship remained solid. The lessons I had learned, and continue to learn, about how lions view their human "pride mates" astonishes me. This species that has been labeled the "King of Beasts" carries with it a complexity and mystery we will never fully understand.

About a year and a half ago, the Center was able to give something to Willow that she had been pining for since her separation from him... Hansen lion. The two were born within weeks of each other and had been close as

cubs. So close, in fact, that much to everyone's surprise, they became parents long before maturity and Willow gave birth to Hannah and Enoch lions when she was only 16 months old. Hansen had been pining for her as well, but, after finding out later that there was the potential they were related and us having the desire to not breed lion cubs at this time, an arrangement had to be made for bringing them back together to become a reality. Doug and Mindy had carefully studied birth control implants for lions and a well-thought decision was made to perform a minor procedure on each sister to make a reunion possible.

As I have written in previous articles, every time an animal is given anesthesia at the Center, the tension is palpable, as there are risks whenever any creature is put under. I was once again given the privilege, and responsibility that comes with it, to assist that day. My duties were to distract and reassure the two lionesses as they were being sedated with medication before their procedure and to stay with them afterward to make sure their recovery went smoothly. As with the serval boys, I also consider these two my furry children, and with that comes some anxiety that has to stay hidden while you are taking care of them. We were all pleased that they tolerated the procedure well. We had to wait approximately six weeks for the birth control to take effect before we reunited them.



**Adeena grooming Willow. They are very close and will often be seen napping together and grooming each other. Photo by Kim Barker.**

After waiting the required time, a new, and happy, lion pride was established with Hansen, Willow, and Adeena. Willow and Adeena are in a new enclosure that is easier to run and play in and they have made the most of it, sometimes much to Hansen's chagrin and confusion, as the two girls are still capable of being bouncy and mischievous. He takes it all in stride and sometimes initiates play himself. It's fun to watch them play and endearing to watch them all lying together on a platform napping as a happy family. The genuine affection they all have for one another is something we all could learn from.

With this move, unlike the last, there have been changes in our relationship and I have had to adjust. Before the reunion with Hansen, I was one of the few people, and maybe the only person, Willow would not grump at while she was cycling. She would simply come to the fence and softly complain of her predicament, somehow expecting me to make it better. But now, Willow is in her own pride and sometimes she would rather be close to Hansen than to come spend time with me. Though sometimes disappointed because I wish to visit, I am not offended, but joyful that they have formed a family. Obviously, if I have treats, she will come running every time, but ever since I started interacting with both of them, I made sure there were times when there was nothing in hand. This helped build a real friendship with her and Adeena. There is nothing quite like seeing Willow waiting in the corner of her enclosure, very patiently, yet intensely I might add, for me to stop by and visit, even when she knows I have nothing to give her but love and attention. It's not long after I get there that Adeena stops by, too, and I am in the company of two queens of the kingdom who are my lion daughters.

Sometimes the unwelcome thought creeps in that maybe Willow and Adeena don't really care if I stop by and visit. After all, they have Hansen and have charmed a number of adopters with how amazing they are. My unwelcome thought is quickly chased away by an

encounter that endears them to me even more.

Over the winter, we said goodbye to Sadie lioness, Willow, Adeena, Thomas, and Ra's mother. She was a spectacular lioness who loved pretty much everyone and wildly showed affection to, and often asked for it from, her human friends. If ever there was ever an epitome of a sweet lion, it was her. She was built like a bulldog-shaped tank, so she was a perfect mixture of grace, sweetness, and power... a large lioness with a large heart. With Sadie being the mother of Willow and Adeena, I tried to spend as much time with her as I could. It was very easy to love Sadie, as she was quite loving herself. She has left a huge hole, both literally and figuratively, in her pride and in our hearts. We see so much of Sadie's physical characteristics and personality in both Willow and Adeena. They are solidly built, majestic lionesses who love life.

There was a small service held for Sadie's passing late one afternoon. After it was over, everyone dispersed, but I was not quite ready to go inside. My heart was heavy and the tears were still very hard to control. As the sun was setting, I decided to go over and see Willow, since she most likely knew I had been very close by for the past couple of hours. Seeing her always cheers me up. As I approached her enclosure, I noticed that she was high up on a platform napping. I called to her, she rose up, noticed it was me, jumped down from the platform, and came running. I burst into tears once again, as I saw "my lion" headed my way to greet me. She looked at me with a curious expression, gave me a quiet "oof," and threw herself against the fence for cheek and body skritches. She then lay down next to fence by me and listened to me cry. Not long after that, Adeena came over and did the same. For 20 minutes, both of them sat quietly and kept me company. I'd like to believe that both of them knew I needed their comfort and company, and they obliged. And though Willow most likely had no idea that Sadie was her mother, but maybe understood that she



**Willow sitting atop her den box when she was three. She could often be seen sitting up there checking out activities going on around the facility. Photo by Kim Barker.**

was a nearby pride mate, I'd like to believe that she needed me, too.

Those of you who have read my other pieces in past *Journals* know I write a lot about how valuable the relationships with my wild friends are to me. Those relationships are a privilege that cannot ever be taken for granted or treated with disrespect for a multitude of reasons. I cannot be on that side of the compound and not stop to see Willow, and Adeena, if even for a few minutes. I still call to her before I can see her and often find her sitting at the corner of her enclosure, as close to the sound of my voice as she can get, waiting excitedly for me to visit. Bouncing up and down has been replaced with her sitting and waiting and watching expectantly. As I come up to the fence, there may be a short-lived dance, treats are sometimes given, and we sit and visit for as long as possible. Willow lion is the first creature, human included, that I bonded with at the Conservators' Center. She will always have that place.

## First Quarter 2013 Board Meeting Report

Meeting was held on the FCF Forum from February 15-23, 2013. The following board members participated: Kevin Chambers, Lynn Culver, Mindy Stinner, Debi Willoughby, Chris Stromberg, and

Pat Callahan.

### **MOTIONS AND VOTING RESULTS:**

1 – Appoint Moderation Committee privately.

Moved by Debi Willoughby, seconded by Mindy Stinner, that we appoint the moderation committee as discussed privately, so that they remain anonymous.

6 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.



2 – Review Board positions requiring Professional Membership.

Moved by Lynn Culver and seconded by Kevin Chambers that by-law 8.8 be stricken. By-law 8.8 stated, “An FCF member must be recognized as a professional member within the organization to qualify for a nomination or appointment on the board of directors.”

5 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

3 – Someone to be in charge of the classified advertisements on the website. Debi moved that this be a task of the Marketing Chairman. This was passed by acclamation.

4 – Board of directors in charge of the seven standing committees. The bylaws state that the three board directors should have oversight of the seven standing committees: education, legislation, conservation, marketing, public relations, development, and member services. Pat wants to be in charge of Conservation; Chris wants to work on the conservation and education committees. Pat, Chris, and Jim need to figure out who will be in charge of each committee and inform the board of their decisions.

5 - Professional membership- review definition and process. Moved by Lynn Culver and seconded by Mindy Stinner. The board replaced all language after #16 Professional Membership in the FCF Programs and Policies to: 16.1 Definition: Professional members possess enough training, experience and skills to be a mentor to others and are willing to do so. Professional members conduct their businesses, animal husbandry, and public image in an ethical manner. A Professional member may either possess substantial experience in the captive husbandry of wild felines, operating with high standards of animal care and facility management, or may be substantially involved in the education, research, veterinary, or conservation fields benefiting wild felines.

16.2 Standards: Professional members with felines have legal standing in their location at the time of their application and do not have a recent history of serious issues in areas related to safety or animal husbandry. Professional animal holders provide sufficient and proper care, maintenance, housing, equipment, display, transportation, veterinary care, and safety for all. Professional member websites and social media presence do not contain images or words that indicate poor handling or husbandry skills or behavior that

is putting the public at risk, or that contradict the stated mission of the FCF.

16.3 Licensing: Professional members may hold a USDA license to engage in the breeding, brokering, sales, or exhibition of wild felines, or be employed by such facilities, or hold substantial, but unpaid positions at USDA-licensed or non-profit wild feline facilities, or may be experienced, permitted owners that meet the Professional Membership standards. Professional members who are wildlife educators, researchers, veterinarians, or conservationists are experienced, knowledgeable, and recognized by their peers, and, where applicable, licensed in their field.

16.4 Compliance: A Professional member's facility must have an established record of good compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. Professional members must disclose any charges, convictions, or judgments, involving animal welfare, or public safety related to animal ownership, or serious wildlife violations having occurred in the past ten years, which may be grounds for denial.

16.5 Support: Professional members must support the goals of the Feline Conservation Federation, which include protecting the rights of qualified individuals to own and to pursue captive husbandry of wild felines, providing the expertise and material support to ensure the continued welfare and viability of captive populations, and funding research and protection programs for felids living in nature.

16.6 Denial or Revocation: Professional membership may be denied or revoked for charges, or convictions, or judgments involving animal welfare, or public safety related to animal ownership, or serious wildlife violations, or for other reasons deemed applicable by the committee or board.

16.7 Process: To qualify for Professional Membership, the member must:

a) Register their feline handling experience with the FCF Registered Handler Program and have met the standards for registration as either an Intermediate or Advanced Handler, or be registered under the Research, Conservation, Veterinary, or Education status.

b) Register their wildcats with the FCF Feline Census if they possess wild felines.

c) Sign a commitment to meet the FCF Professional Code of Conduct

d) Disclose charges, or convictions, or judgments involving animal welfare, or

public safety related to animal ownership, or serious wildlife violations occurring in the past ten years.

e) Provide a statement outlining their qualifications that meet the definition, standards, licensing, compliance and support requirements outlined in this Professional Membership Policy.

f) Pay a \$15 non-refundable fee after submitting a truthful, and completed, online application for Professional Membership upgrade.

16.8 Committee Review: The Professional Member Committee, consisting of three Professional level members, will review the applications to ensure all requirements have been met, and will grant or deny the upgrade in a reasonable amount of time using the definition of a professional member as found in the Constitution and this policy. A simple majority of two yes votes from the committee is required to be accepted as a Professional member.

16.9 Privacy: The results of Professional Member Committee's vote will be recorded in the Administration section of the website, but will not be made public.

16.10 Terms of Service: The members of the Professional Member Committee will serve two-year terms running concurrently with the term of the appointing board.

5 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

6 – Appoint Director on the FCF Board. The following members have submitted their interest in the position: Carol Cochran, Leah Aufil, Jim Sanderson, and Diane Mask.

5 votes for Jim Sanderson, 0 votes for others

7 – Donation to OAAO legislative lawsuit. Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Debi Willoughby. FCF to donate \$1,000 to OAAO for use in their lawsuit protecting private ownership of exotic animals. In addition, that the FCF allocate up to an additional \$1,500 to be used for matching funds with donations from FCF members to the same cause.

6 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

8 – Registered handler policy. Moved by Lynn Culver, seconded by Kevin Chambers. The FCF replace the existing language after #6 Registered Feline Handler Program in the FCF Programs and Policies: 6.1. Submit an application along with a \$30.00 nonrefundable fee for each person registering his or her wild feline handling experience, or to register under the conservationist, researcher, educator, or veterinarian status and fill out all

appropriate information and submit either by mailing to the FCF secretary, or using the online registration in the members-only FCF website.

6.2. The applicant should be a current member of the FCF at the time of the submitted application for registration in the feline handler database.

6.3. All statements made on an application must be truthful and factual. Misrepresentations or statements not factual are grounds for removal from the registration program.

6.4. The secretary will examine the application to determine that one of the following is met:

a) For registration under the basic status, the applicant must document a minimum of one year's experience up to five years', handling any of the species of wild feline, not counting experience with domestic/wild hybrids.

B) For registration under the intermediate status, the applicant must document no less than five years' to ten years' experience handling any of the species of wild feline, not counting experience with domestic/wild hybrids.

C) For registration under the advanced status, the applicant must document ten years' or more experience handling wild felines, not counting experience with domestic/wild hybrids.

D) For registration under conservationist, researcher, educator or veterinarian, the applicant must document significant, ongoing work involving wild felines as pertains to the specialties chosen.

6.5. Once these basic requirements have been met, the secretary will record the applicant's registration and forward the acknowledgment of the registration back to the applicant.

6.6. At the next issue of the FCF publication, the secretary will publish the names and experience level of registration that has been issued to applicants to the membership.

6.7. The registration is valid for as long as the member remains an active member of the Feline Conservation Federation. Members are encouraged to update their experience(s) to keep their registration current. The secretary will send out an annual reminder to members who have registered experience in the FCF handler program to update their experience for their registration. There is no fee for annual updates, or to request a registration upgrade when the member meets the high-

er experience requirements. Letters of authenticity for participation in the registered handler program will only be issued by the FCF secretary for valid FCF members. If a handler is not a current member of the FCF, their registration in the handler system will not be accessible until they renew membership in the FCF.

6.8. Application fees are non-refundable. If a member has not met the minimum standards for registration, the secretary will notify them. The member's handler file will remain open, and additional handling experience can be added to at any time and the applicant can request the secretary review the application again, to see if it meets minimum registration requirements without paying another registration fee.

4 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

9 – Safety net grants. Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Lynn Culver. We approve the grants to Catty Shack and Turpentine Creek for \$1,000 each from the Safety Net.

5 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

10 – Conservation grant. Moved by Pat Callahan, seconded by Kevin Chambers. The sum of \$2,000 be awarded to the Ruaha Project aka Amy Dickman from the Conservation Grant Fund.

6 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

11– Review FCF mission statement. Moved by Lynn, seconded by Mindy.

New FCF Mission Statement: The mission of the FCF is to support the conservation of wild felids by advocating for qualified individuals to own and to pursue husbandry of wild felines, providing expertise and material support to ensure the continued welfare and viability of these populations, contributing to research, and funding protection programs that benefit felids living in nature. Our acclaimed Husbandry and Conservation Education courses, personal mentoring, and Wildcat Safety Net ensure the continued survival of captive-born felid populations, essential as public educational ambassadors, and as a last defense against the escalating peril of extinction.

Motion passed by acclimation.

12 – Belize trip. Kevin suggested anytime the website or our database is used, the board should be apprised so they can answer questions if they are asked. Debi explained what the Belize trip was about.

13 – Appoint professional member review committee. Two positions need to be filled. It was decided that additional dis-

cussion is needed beyond the quarterly meeting.

14 – Appoint Accreditation committee members. Three positions need to be filled. It was decided that additional discussion is needed beyond the quarterly meeting.

#### **BUSINESS CONCLUDED BY WAY OF ACCLIMATION:**

A budget for 2013 was approved by acclimation.

Lynn Culver gave a treasurer's report showing a current balance of \$110,908.61.

The minutes of the January board meeting on January 1, 2013, were approved by acclimation.

APPOINTMENTS: The following people were appointed to the following positions:

*Journal Editor* - Lynn Culver received 5 voters, Brandi Redfield received 0 votes.

*Executive Director* - Lynn Culver was appointed with the approval of a ten month contract beginning March 1, 2013.

The Executive Director is responsible for implementation of policies set by the Board of Directors, as well as annual goals and objectives and financial, program, and administrative management of the corporation. The Board of Directors provides guidance and direction. (The entire contract can be read in the members-only website under *2013 Board of Director Minutes*.)

*Director of Legislation* - Amy Flory. Amy Flory received 5 votes, Diane Mask received 0 votes, and Sara Comstock received 0 votes.

*Director of Conservation* - Pat Callahan. Pat Callahan received 6 votes, Sara Comstock received 0 votes.

*Director of Education* - Debi Willoughby. Debi Willoughby received 5 votes.

*Director of Public Relations* - Brande Redfield. Brande Redfield received 5 votes, Lynn Culver received 0 votes.

*Director of Marketing* - Kurt Beckelman. Kurt Beckelman received 4 votes, Lauren Bean received 1 vote.

*Director of Development* - Erin Patters. Erin Patters received 5 votes.

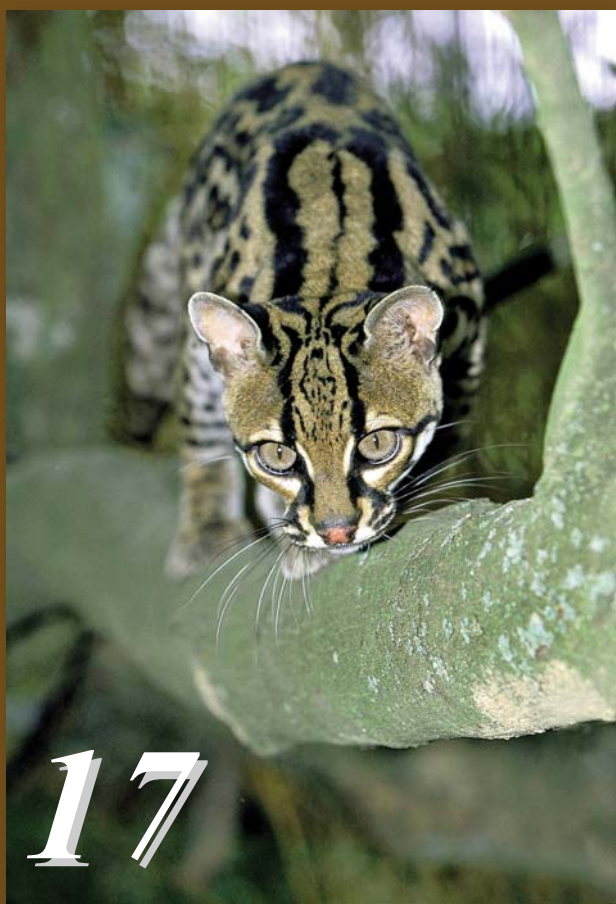
*Director of Member Services* - Jennifer Kasserman. Jennifer Kasserman received 5 votes.

*Wild Cat Safety Net Chair* - Caroline Alexander. Caroline Alexander received 5 votes.

*Convention Committee Chair* - Bobby Bean. Bobby Bean received 5 votes.

*FUR Team Chair* - Diane Mask. Diane Mask received 5 votes.









Feline Conservation Federation

March/April 2013 Volume 57, Issue 2

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**Front Cover:** This golden cat female, called Hoi An, born April 2001, at Singapore Zoo and kept for a while in Auckland Zoo, New Zealand, before being transferred to Le Parc des Félines, Paris, France, in 2011. She has not bred so far... It may be too late because of age, if we compare with other animals bred, but actually the species is not studied in the wild and very little information. She is however with a male and lives peacefully... We might have a surprise at some point. Photo by Jack Hurault ©.

**Back Cover:** Spotted Geoffroy's cat born at Le Parc des Félines. Photo by Morgane Tarnat.

