

Feline Conservation Federation

March/April 2014 • Volume 58 Issue 2





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## JOIN THE FCF IN ITS CONSERVATION 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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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

This is an election year, which means the nomination period began May 1 and ends on August 10. All positions on the FCF Board of Directors are up for election: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and the three general director positions. Any FCF member who has been a member for at least one year may nominate someone for these positions, and it takes two nominations for a candidate to be fully nominated. To make a nomination, you need to state who you are nominating and for which office and it must be in writing. The nomination must be signed by the member making the nomination. You may either mail these to our secretary, Debi Willoughby, whose address is on the inside front cover of this

*Journal*, or scan the signed nomination and email to [secretary@felineconservation.org](mailto:secretary@felineconservation.org). Just an email without a signature is insufficient. Also, just to make sure that the email is received, you should either follow it up with the hard copy by mail or cc [executivedirector@felineconservation.org](mailto:executivedirector@felineconservation.org) just to make sure that it is received. Nominations must be received by August 10. Anyone being nominated for president must have been an FCF member for two years or must have served at least one term on the board of directors in another position. Remember that our constitution does not allow for write-in candidates, so make sure you talk with people who you would like to see in office and get them nominated.

Existing board members are automatically renominated for their current position unless they inform the secretary in writing that they do not wish to run for that office again.

Voting will take place in the fall. Statements from all of the candidates are published in the September *Journal* and you will receive instructions for voting and where to send your ballots. The FCF uses outside sources to tabulate the ballots and no one on the board of directors ever sees the ballots. Not everyone will receive a ballot. In order to receive a ballot and vote in the election, you must have been a member of FCF for one year by October 1. If you joined FCF after October 1, 2013, you will not be receiving a ballot and will not be eligible to vote.

I hope everyone is making plans to attend the convention in Phoenix. If you cannot make it, but wish to participate in the General Membership Meeting, you may send a written request for agenda or discussion item to our secretary, Debi Willoughby, by email and it will be discussed Thursday evening. Also, please join us in spirit by donating to the Convention's fundraiser auction – perhaps something from your gift shop, like T-shirts with your facility logo, will draw plenty of attention, as will cat-handling equipment and supplies, cat art, and home decorations. Mail your auction donation to the Scottsdale Cottonwoods Resort, c/o FCF Auction, 6160 North Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, Arizona 85258. Once again, we have an excellent program lined up and the trips to Out of Africa and Wildlife World Zoo will no doubt be memorable experiences. There won't be a better way to put the frigid and snowy past winter behind us than to meet with all of your feline friends in the desert!

Kevin Chambers

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# From the Executive Director

By Lynn Culver

This *Journal* issue shares the heartbreaking details of what happens to tigers and lions when they are infected with canine distemper virus. Vicki Keahey introduces us to each of eight big cats and their fight for life in the face of this devastating disease that strips the myelin off the cat's nerves and causes the nerves to twitch and seize. Myelin cannot be rebuilt; the damage is irreparable.

Captivity allows felines to live in unnaturally close proximity, increasing the ease of transfer of infections. Canine distemper virus, however, is not confined to captive cats; it has been documented in India, Russia, and Sumatra, and poses a very real threat to these wild populations. Let this be a wakeup call to the "they belong in the wild" believers. The wild is too fragile to entrust with endangered species. Back-up populations and human managed recovery plans are their only real hope.

As I read over the heroic efforts of Vicki and her staff and volunteers to bring comfort and relief to the big cats affected, and to ward off infection in those free of the virus, I cannot help but think about the tigers in nature also going through this very same ordeal. They stare into space, walk into villages, and exhibit a lack of response to stimuli. From Vicki's descriptions, I envision they are also "asleep," like several residents of InSync Exotics had become. No one was providing these wild tigers vaccines or medicines to boost their immune systems. The tiger species has not had time to evolve a defense response to this new virus. If it becomes an epidemic, it could replace poaching as the number one threat to the future of tigers on Earth.

The animal rights community is undermining all our efforts to save these endangered felines. They are the real enemies of tigers, pushing for laws that would prevent captive breeding, laws that would eliminate captive habitat, and laws that cut the bonds of love and trust between the keepers and the cats in their care.

FCF members have the unique and priceless privilege to be able to immerse ourselves into the lives of our great cats. We know our cats as individuals. We give them love and they return the emotion to us. And the pain of losing them is some-

thing real, not abstract.

The FCF is composed of people who care deeply for all of nature's cat species. We work hard to provide for those in captivity, and we support global efforts that protect felines in nature. In this *Journal* issue, FCF reports that \$500 was donated to Dr. Ullas Karanth, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society, India, to help stop poaching and reclaim habitat encroached on by villagers.

Another *Journal* article introduces us to the highly endangered Arabian leopard. The rapidly expanding economy of the Arabian nations has led to the building of roads and the fragmenting of habitat. National Parks may hold the key to the Arabian leopard's existence in nature. And in captivity, conservation breeding programs conserve this rare sub-species. Balazs Buzas works for the Crown Prince

of the Emirate of Fujairah, owner of the Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW), Sharjah, UAE. The Prince cares deeply for wildlife and plans to provide a second breeding center for this leopard sub-species. Balazs is hopefully going to join us in Scottsdale, Arizona, for the FCF Convention. Balazs will personally speak to us about captive and wild leopard conservation.

Throughout the world, the future is uncertain. Our experiences and knowledge of captive husbandry is very important. Gathering like minds together, sharing hard-earned lessons, and helping the next generation continue in our footsteps happens each year at Convention. 2014 is no different. Won't you join us in Scottsdale, Arizona, and be a part of the most important annual event put on by this society?

## Update on Ohio and the Need for a Cavalry

Seven Ohio exotic animal owners filed lawsuits to have the "Dangerous Wild Animal and Restricted Snake Act" ruled unconstitutional by the courts. The latest motion was for a re-hearing on an earlier appeal decision made in March, which upheld Ohio's law restricting the ownership of exotic animals. That three-judge panel had denied their plea, alleging the law violates their free speech and free association rights.

The motion filed by Attorney Robert Owens requesting the re-hearing of the case was just denied by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The next step would be to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

One of the Ohio plaintiffs in the appeal to the "Dangerous Wild Animal and Restricted Snake Act," Sean Trimbach, is no longer pursuing ZAA accreditation because "we just simply ran out of money." Trimbach said he recently had to euthanize seven of his animals because he was unable to afford about \$70,000 in fencing upgrades to meet ZAA requirements. He said if he were to relinquish the animals to the State of Ohio, the State could charge him for transportation and possibly other costs such as medical care and food. He has stated that, "The State wanted the animals gone, and that's what they're getting...this law doesn't benefit anybody."

Ohio exotic animal owners face grave consequences if they have not registered their animals and met the new regulations. Many are living in sheer terror, knowing that state officials may arrive on their doorstep any day. The Calvary Group was not in existence to lobby against the animal rightist legislature when Ohio debated this law, but the Group stands ready to protect these owners in Ohio and throughout the country from unlawful government overreach. Read more about this collective force in an article on page 36 of this *Journal*. The FCF members can join the Calvary Group for a very reasonable amount, ranging from \$150 for individuals to \$250 for most sized businesses. A club discount code has been created to receive a 10% discount on this rate. Simply input 222121 at the end of the online application.

Calvary Group members have 24/7 access to legal representation. When the local authorities or humane society representatives show up at your property gate, an attorney is just a phone call away and this immediate representation can make the difference between whether these adversaries push forward with their agenda or back off and leave.

Animal people carry insurance for many possible tragedies. Adding legal insurance to protect our constitutional rights and private property is certainly an excellent idea.

## Geoffroy's Cat – Sweet or Ornery?

By Debi Willoughby

I have written articles about my Geoffroy's cat, Spirit, in the past, so some of you may be a little familiar with him. He is now five years old and his personality has changed over the years.

A quick background on how Spirit came to be... I am a wildlife educator located in Massachusetts, and wanted to add a small cat to my shows. No one in New England had a Geoffroy's cat that was used in public education, neither traveling educators like myself nor any zoos. That is why I decided to get this particular species. I am sure less than a handful of people in the general public throughout the New England area even knew that this species existed, let alone had ever seen one in person. So I contacted Lynn Culver and waited for a baby to be born.

The day of his arrival could not have come quick enough; I was so excited! When I picked him up at the airport, he looked like a tiny spotted, cuddly kitten. Boy was I wrong! When I got him home, he lunged at me, spitting in my face. He was letting me know he was full of piss and vinegar, and he wanted nothing to do with me! This was a long day for this little guy, leaving the only mom he knew up to that point, taking a plane ride, and then being brought into a new home to meet a stranger, his new mom. I am sure he would have been overjoyed to see Lynn sitting in my house so he could be comforted with someone familiar. But that was not possible. I knew he had had a tough day, so I did not overwhelm him by forcing myself on him. I put him in a cage in my living room and let him slowly get used to all the new smells and sounds. He had lots of toys to play with and nice warm blankets for snuggling. But to his disliking, I could not leave him alone for long, since he was still on a bottle and needed to be fed. His attitude toward a bottle reminded me of bottle feeding leopard cubs. The leopard cubs were very hungry when it was time to feed, but would not give you the satisfaction of let-



**Cute little Spirit shortly after arriving at Jungle Encounters in Massachusetts.**

ting you fill their bellies. They had to struggle with you, fight the bottle, gnaw on the nipple, and only give in when THEY decided it was time to eat. Little tiny Spirit was the same way. Everything had to be on his terms (with a little guidance and encouragement from me, of course).

Within a couple of days he gave in and accepted me as his new mom, but bottle feeding was always an argument. Luckily, he was old enough to start introducing him to meat. Once he tasted it, he had no use for the bottle anymore. He looked at the bottle like it was too beneath him.

Over the next couple of years, Spirit grew up to be a healthy, beautiful cat. Our bond grew very strong, but he still did not like others in his enclosure. He made sure my staff knew he was tolerating them for a short time and, once he had enough, he let them know it was time for them to leave. The stare he gives easily intimidates people; it is like he is looking right through you. By the time he was three years old, I think the combination of moving to a bigger enclosure and maturity setting in mellowed him a little. The larger outdoor enclosure with a cat door into his house made him feel more secure and he could escape the area if one of the staff

was in there. He knew people could not fit through his cat door or quickly get from his outside pen to his inside pen like he could. He loved his new enclosure; it gave him more choices to make and gave him a stronger sense of security. All considered and him getting a little bit older, you get a more mellow cat. He now allows staff in his area without too much resistance. I do not think his personality will ever allow people to feel completely relaxed in his space; he still has that intimidating stare.

I have always been able to handle him, and he stopped testing me at about age two. He listens well and will even

listen to me when I am not in his enclosure. I can be 50 feet away from him, tell him to stop doing something, and he will listen and react positively. Every morning I get a few seconds of cuddle time, a few kisses, and some grumbles to tell me how he is doing. I train him every other day, and, at age five, he still goes to educational shows with me. The instinct, once mature, to not leave his territory is overruled by his yearning to have me near him as his safety blanket. Am I saying when he sees the travel crate coming he jumps up and down for joy? No, but when I open the crate he runs right in. I may not always get him harnessed before he goes in the crate because his attitude may take over, but that is okay. I can harness him once we arrive at a show before the show starts.

I have learned to be very patient and creative when it comes to working with a Geoffroy's cat. They are small and adorable looking, but, like most South American cats, he has a stubborn attitude and a "strong" personality. It is much nicer to say he has a strong or full personality than to say he can be impossible at times. When he walks, the way he holds his body screams attitude. He gives off a vibe of – do not mess with me; I may be



little, but I will mess you up!

Many people have drilled me with questions about how to successfully use a Geoffroy's cat as an animal ambassador and I usually chuckle when asked these types of questions; it is amazing that such a tiny cat can give people such a hard time! There is no simple answer for them; it is many things combined. I'm not an expert on Geoffroy's, since I have had only one. But I am one of the few who have a mature working Geoffroy's cat that will work off-premise.

Here is my advice for people who want to improve their relationship with their Geoffroy's:

**BONDING:** Having a strong bond with your Geoffroy's is essential and it's best to start when they are still on the bottle. If you get one that is a little older, you will need to work harder to obtain that bond. The key is to make the cat want to be with you. This can usually be accomplished by bringing fun, interactive toys with you into its enclosure. Once it sees you always bring fun things to do, the cat will enjoy your company. When you tire the cat out by playing with it, it is too tired to bother keeping the tough-guy personality going! Your cat will start napping on or near you. Do not leave the enclosure at this time; stay there to strengthen that bond. If a cat is relaxed enough to let his guard down and sleep near you, he trusts you. You will need to strengthen your bond on a daily basis throughout your cat's life.

**PATIENCE:** Do not ever expect to go into a training session with your cat and assume he will do everything perfectly, even if he has already perfected that training command. Geoffroy's get bored easily and it is more interesting for them to quickly try to figure out what you want them to do and then discover a way around it to still get the treat (reward). In almost all of my training sessions, Spirit loves to try to figure out a way around what I want him to do and steal the treat. This species is cunning and takes pride in out-maneuvering people! Because of this attitude, I try to challenge Spirit when training him to do something new. At the same time, you cannot train him to do something beyond his capability. Try to walk that fine line of something that your cat feels is challenging, but not discouraging. There will also be days when a Geoffroy's does not want to train at all. Or the cat will start a training session enthusiastically

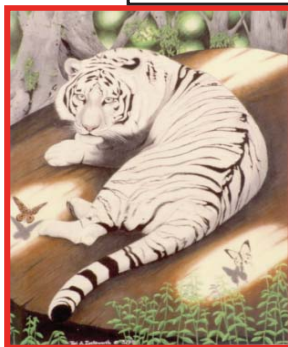
and then walk away. Do not get discouraged; just shrug it off, keep a positive attitude with the cat, and move on.

**TRAINING:** Training is a good tool to use to stimulate your cat's mind, strengthen your bond, and give your cat something new to do. Training has to be something fun for the cat; otherwise they will not be interested in doing it. One of the keys to training this species is training using a regular schedule. Do not train only when it is convenient for you. Find a way to train each time you are in its enclosure, even if



**Spirit has been raised as an educational ambassador and goes with Debi to cat shows where he demonstrates some natural behaviors for the audiences.**

## FCF NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT



### Meet the Wildcat Safety Net Challenge!

FCF granted funds to  
transport 28 tigers to  
Turpentine Creek

Wildlife Refuge where these big cats have a secure retirement home to live out their golden years.

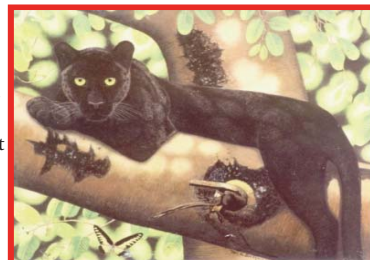
Now we need to refresh our funding so FCF can help transport more cats when emergencies arise.

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 at 479-394-5235 to use your credit card and support this worthy cause.

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





**Spirit reaches into a plastic tube to recover a food treat at the bottom.**

it is for just a few seconds. For me, every morning after I feed the cats, I sit with them and relax. This allows them time to be themselves without any expectations from me. This is usually when they want affection, after a full belly. The only training I do in the morning is to reinforce training commands. For example, if the cat is starting to jump up onto a bunk, I will say the command word “jump,” and then praise him for doing it. I am not asking him to do anything he was not already going to do; I just reinforce the command words as he meanders around his cage doing his own thing. Then in the evenings when their bellies are half empty and would like to get a treat, I train with meat as a reward. Playtime happens whenever the cat is in a playful mood, and this could be after its meal or it could be in the evening. I am flexible and use different training techniques depending on their attitude each time I am with them. Flexibility and patience goes a long way.

**ENRICHMENT:** Daily enrichment helps keep Spirit happy. Even though felines like their days to be scheduled somewhat the same each day, they always enjoy something new. Enrichment can be anything from a new toy with which to play, to a new scent, to a new favorite bunk to hang out on. By combining constant enrichment and training, the result is a stronger bond and a tired cat at the end of it all. A tired cat will not show as many unwanted behaviors as a bored cat will.

**VARIETY and CREATIVITY:** Variety is the spice of life and is a great tool for keeping things fresh, which in turn may keep your cat working as an animal ambassador. I have found after using Spirit in traveling shows to schools, libraries, etc., that variety and creativity are the keys to keeping him relaxed and on display on a table while I talk about him at a show. Geoffroy's are wound-up, nervous animals by nature, and bringing them into a strange place with new noises,

sounds, and people can be very overwhelming to them. Try to give them things on the display table to keep their minds busy, which will in turn keep them more relaxed. Things that work well are a scratching post with scents sprayed on it, a tree branch with scents sprayed on it, a clear acrylic box that they can “hide” in but still be seen by the public, treats (if yours eats treats while at a show; mine does not), a favorite blanket, etc. And do not get excited once you finally find the perfect combination, because you will need to change it within a couple of months. Spirit gets bored with the same old setup after a while. Boredom turns into nervousness, which equals less time on display.

So are all of these table display items working? It can be hard to tell, because Spirit is usually looking at the audience or something on the table, and I cannot always see his eyes to see if he is nervous or not. A simple way to figure this out is to occasionally pet him along his back. This does two things: it allows you to feel

## **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.

**Keith Gault - Basic**  
**Lenard Hughes - Basic**  
**Chiara Lombardi - Basic**

**Kelly Rose - Basic**  
**Bill Robbins - Advanced**  
**Gerhea Robbins - 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



his muscles and to see how tight they are and petting relaxes the cat. Instead of switching everything up periodically, could I just keep his crate on the table for him to go in to calm down and then reemerge when curiosity takes over? For some that works, but for Spirit it does not. Once he goes in his crate, he is done and wants nothing else to do with the show.

**EXTRA TIPS:** Each cat has its own personality and you may not have to do all of the above things I have to do with Spirit to keep him as a traveling ambassador. Some personalities are much easier to work with. Spirit can be a challenge and, after speaking with other Geoffroy's cat owners, I know I am not alone. So, for those of you who have a "full-personality" Geoffroy's cat (or any other species of cat for that matter), here are a number of things to try to find out what works positively with your cat versus what he does not care about:

- Try different herbal scents to see which your cat prefers. Spirit enjoys catnip oil and mint.
- Try other scents, like animal scents. Spirit has always wanted to eat my marmoset monkeys, so I either bring a blanket the marmosets have used for Spirit to rub on and play with or, if I bring the marmoset to the show, I let the marmoset climb Spirit's scratching post while it is being displayed, then I bring Spirit out to smell the fresh scent on his scratching post. The easiest and safest way to see

which other animal scents your Geoffroy's likes is to place small blankets or wash clothes in each cage, let the animals play with them, then give it to your Geoffroy's cat and see what it does. Please use health safety precautions if you try this.

- Give your Geoffroy's a safe haven while on display. Spirit likes his clear acrylic box that he can hide in but still be seen by the public.

• Use a command word or signal while your cat is being displayed that you only use during cuddle time. That will make the cat think of how he relaxed he feels during cuddle time and will help calm him down.

- Bring a favorite toy for your cat to



**Geoffroy's cats have dense fur and small ears; both adaptations protect them from cold weather. Spirit frolics in the New England winter snow.**

play with at a show, which it only gets when at a show.

- Your cat is always watching your body language, so observe your cat while at a show to see what calms him down. Maybe it is calmer when you sit while he is out, or maybe he calms down when you pet him, or maybe he calms down if you lean on the table near him. You are his safety blanket and he will respond positively to your closeness.

Many of you who have exotic cats may not have to ever use any of this advice. If that is the case, enjoy! Maybe some of this has to do with your training techniques and you need to reevaluate how you train. At some point you will have a cat that is more challenging to work with. Do not get discouraged and label that animal as a bad show animal. Instead, observe its personality and figure out what works to keep the cat engaged and relaxed. I truly believe a cat with a strong personality is more rewarding because it does not come easily, but when the reward comes to you, it is highly valued!

## HAVE YOUR MORNING COFFEE WITH THE FCF!

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# Ruffwear Review

By Maxine Price

Since the day we picked up our serval kitten, Vega, we have wanted him to safely play outside. Several types of harness were purchased during the past two years, and every type seemed to have a flaw. Conventional dog harnesses have neck openings that are too large, and if you find a harness to fit your serval's neck, it is always too small for their body. This led us to try some very creative ways of containing our precious pet while allowing him to experience the outdoors. Vega was fitted with two harnesses at once, and up to three leashes were used. We connected collars to harnesses. We even tried to modify existing vest harnesses with my rudimentary sewing skills. But all options left us with a feeling of unease.

Then we came across the Ruffwear Company. They design and manufacture specialty dog products, including harnesses. We decided to try their DoubleBack Harness. The product description explains its use for safely lifting and lowering dogs in exposed areas. Essentially, it is a rock climbing harness for dogs. We thought it was a little bizarre at first, but went ahead and purchased one. Apart from his enclosure, it is the best investment we have made for our cat.

The harness has a small metal breast plate that centers in the front on our cat's body and secures the adjustable neck opening. His front legs fit through two separate openings, and there are straps in the back for his lower legs that we use occasionally for extra security. There is a small zipper pouch that the back leg straps pack into when not in use. There are two waist straps: one wraps around his torso behind the cat's shoulders, and the second one wraps around in front of the cat's hips. It is this dou-



**With the current climate of exotic animal legislation in the United States, we cannot afford any mistakes.**

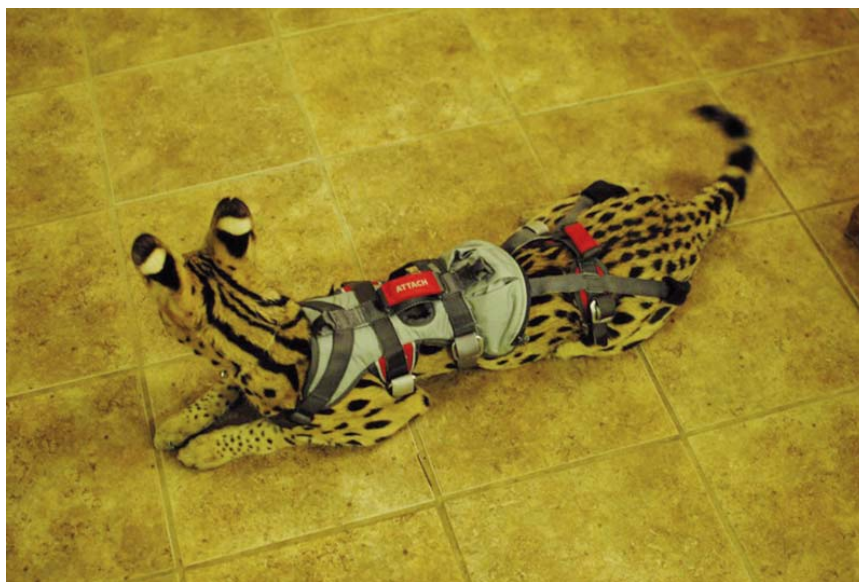
ble-band design that makes it impossible for the cat to raise its arms and wiggle free.

The harness is a high quality, American-made product. All the straps use manual, stainless steel fasteners rather than the usual plastic buckles, which eliminates the possibility of plastic snaps cracking. They keep their placement,

even with rigorous movement. The fabric is a thick, but breathable canvas which is highly tear resistant. It is comfortable and does not cause chafing. The seams are tight without any unraveling after months of continuous use. When properly worn, our serval cannot chew any part of the harness. A thick fabric handle is positioned on the middle of the back. It distributes the cat's weight evenly and comfortably in the event we have the need to lift or carry our serval.

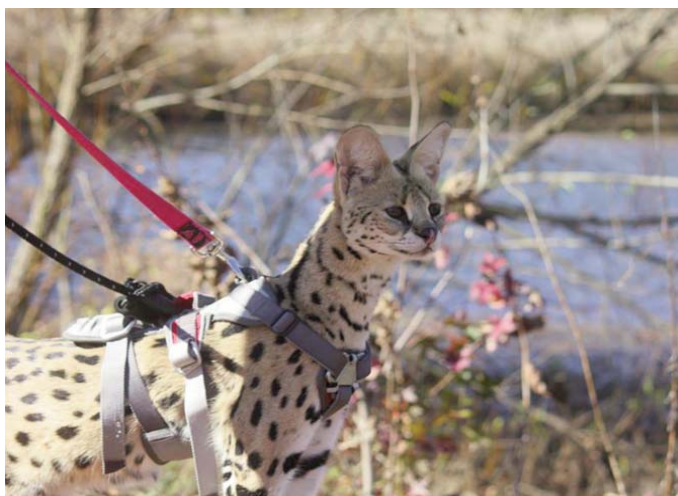
The DoubleBack Harness averages around \$125 USD. We ordered ours through Amazon.com, which offered free shipping and a longer return policy than the Ruffwear website. We only wish we had found this product sooner before wasting our money on insufficient pet store products.

We ordered ours in size XS. I believe this size will work for all adult servals. With the use of



**Vega wearing the Double Back Harness by Ruffwear.**





**With the use of two waist straps, a full grown serval cannot raise its front legs and back out of the harness.**



**With the Ruffwear harness securely on Vega, Maxine can take him for walks and enjoy some time parked on a bench.**

two waist straps, the usual method servals use to escape their harnesses (raising their front legs and backing out of them) becomes impossible for a full grown serval. Vega averages at 28 pounds. We tighten his harness straps nearly all the way, and he has never been able to disentangle himself. A smaller or young serval can have proportions that would allow them to slide a single leg out, but they still cannot quickly or entirely escape the harness. A friend and fellow serval owner, Elizabeth Felton, purchased one for Buddy, who at eight months is 23 pounds and was able to pull one leg out of the front. Yet it is still the safest harness in our opinion - even for juvenile cats.

Otherwise, Elizabeth found the harness fit Buddy well and allows room for growth. Her only complaint was that the back leg straps sometimes shifted the weight of the harness to one side, so she removed those straps completely. We both find our cats prefer the harness without the back leg straps. We fit a GPS device into the zipper compartment, but it could also be used to hold poopie bags or treats.

It may take time to have your cat become completely used to the harness. If

you have a cat who has a hard time sitting still, the harness is fairly difficult to put on. We prefer to put the harness on while our serval is eating or very sleepy. The first time we put the harness on our cat, he acted as if he were paralyzed. When he was put on his feet, he promptly fell over as if helpless. This continued for about half an hour. After going outside, he discontinued his act and walked with a fairly normal gait, occasionally slumping his butt as if walking in crouch mode. After a

few days, Vega walked just as fluidly as if he were wearing nothing at all. When walking, we attach two leashes to the harness; the first through the center hoisting handle which we hook onto our belt, and the second onto the front loop to lead him.

With the current climate of exotic animal legislation in the United States, we cannot afford any mistakes. We feel that using this harness not only helps our cat to be safe, but helps to protect us from incidents that could affect the entire exotic community. When properly worn, even the most determined small wild cat would not be able to escape this harness.

If you are looking for a safe way to walk or transport your serval, I cannot speak more highly of Ruffwear's DoubleBack harness and the peace of mind it gives us when we take Vega out of his enclosure.

For more information about Vega the serval, please visit Sunshine Exotics on Facebook. We are an exotic animal education center located in South Carolina.

## 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.

### Conservation Grants:

Susan Tabas Tepper

### General Fund:

Chris Tromborg

Lynn Culver

The FCF appreciates your generosity & continued support.



## FCF Donation Benefits the Bengal Tiger

The Feline Conservation Federation Conservation Grants fund donated \$500 to Dr. Ullas Karanth, Director for Science-Asia, Wildlife Conservation Society, India. This non-profit, non-commercial portal facilitates wildlife and nature conservation by providing reliable information and the tools needed to meet the ecological needs of wildlife populations in decline, and to the recovery and expansion of their habitats.

Dr. Ullas Karanth is a pioneer in long-term research on the ecology of tigers, sympatric predators, and other large mammals. He has also studied predator-prey population ecology, including mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts in the Indian wildlife reserves of Pench, Kanha, Panna, Kaziranga, Namdapha, Sundarbans, Ranthambhore, Melghat, Tadoba, Kudremukh, Nagarhole, Bhadra, Bandipur, and Dandeli-Anshi.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ullas Karanth, the FCF donation will be funding WCS India's work cooperating with the government of India to counter the threats of poaching through strong anti-poaching efforts. The WCS investigation teams reveal poachers and assist the government with the operations needed for arrests. Over the past year, dozens of poachers of tigers, tiger prey, and other wildlife have been captured thanks to WCS's efforts.

To counteract habitat loss, WCS helps

the government to implement voluntary resettlement projects in over a dozen critical protected areas for tigers. Under these programs, families that resettle receive significant benefits, including free agricultural land, education, good health care, job placement assistance, and a range of other benefits. In the past year, hundreds of households have taken the first steps to relocate and dozens of households have fully resettled. After families move out of critical territory, the lands they once occupied are incorporated into the protected area and become excellent habitat for tigers and prey.

Tiger and prey surveys using the most up-to-date science are an integral component of the WCS India program, as they reveal the extent to which efforts are proving successful. Wildlife Conservation Society reports that data for the entire tiger population in the Western Ghats region documents over 700 tigers. There are healthy breeding populations at nearly maximum carrying capacity in Nagarhole, Bandipur, and the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple tiger reserves, and populations are recovering in Bhadra and Dandeli-Anshi.

The FCF is proud to con-

tribute to the protection and recovery of the Bengal tiger sub-species in India. FCF members hold these rare genes in a captive population through managed breeding of recessive white Bengal tiger genes. This rare color mutation is only known to happen in the Bengal tiger, and white tigers are a favorite with the visiting American public and an extremely important flagship animal in captive populations where public appeal and their generous financial support play a critical role in survival of wild populations of Indian tigers, totally dependent upon global protection programs.



Visitors at Ranthambhore National Park, Rajasthan, India. Photo by Eden Tran.

## Tiger Creek Wildlife Refuge – Safety Protocols and Feed Slots

By Terri Werner, Co-Founder/Director

With a few incidents lately with people getting hurt or killed by big cats, it always brings to mind, is there something that could have been done to prevent such a



Woven mesh for indoor housing/feed area. Square tubing for gates.

tragedy? We all know that if someone breaks protocol, then the chances of an accident increase and probably cannot be avoided. We can't control people's mindset, but we can put into place certain steps of prevention. No matter if you are a zoo, sanctuary, or private owner, having exotic cats is a big responsibility that should be taken seriously, to protect both the animals we love and the public so they feel safe and will continue to support the keeping of exotic cats in captivity.

At Tiger Creek, we have an internship program, and since we are dealing with mostly young, inexperienced people, this is, in my opinion, one of our biggest threats of accidents happening, which is why we have rules that must be abided by.

For interns, they must work in a buddy system until we feel they are well

trained to do things on their own. At no time is an intern allowed to shift cats, lock or unlock animal gates, etc. When cleaning an enclosure, an employed keeper will shift the cats and lock them out. A second person will verify the lockdown is secure, and then an intern or another keeper can enter to clean. Interns are not allowed to carry cell phones. We have found they are too much of a distraction and therefore can lead to carelessness. Employees are allowed to carry cell phones, but animal care employees cannot use them while working around the cats. Everyone carries two-way radios.

Even though only animal care employees secure gates and move cats, we do know that routine procedures can be done improperly just because it is routine and the employee may not be paying attention. That is why any time a cat is shifted,



**Pan being put in feed slot. Lid stays in place while tray slides inside slot.**

someone else will double check the locks and chains and we also have that person announce on the radio which cat they are moving and if everything has been double checked.

Another thing we implemented from the very beginning was color-coded locks. We found that a visual color coding system is great for new interns to understand the boundaries. We have green locks for public barriers (areas that should not have animals), yellow locks for lockouts (where a cat may be accessible), and red locks for the cats' primary enclosures (this states that there is an animal here!). At first, we were not sure if this was overkill, but at the end of an intern's term, we have them rate us on how we are doing and what they liked and did not like and how safe they felt. Several times we have gotten comments on how they liked the color-coded locks. We get the American Locks and you can have all the colors keyed alike and then a master key for all of them.

No one, employee or intern, is allowed



**Tiger/Lion Enclosure is constructed of 12-foot vinyl-coated chain link with 4-foot recurve. Rub rail keeps chain link from bowing out when cats rub along the fence.**

to shift cats or go into enclosures without another employee with them. Employees cannot come to work on a day off or after hours and move cats. For emergencies, we have our emergency protocol in place and we do run drills so everyone from maintenance to employees and interns know what to do.

Accidents are caused by human error. Being in a routine can make you forget what you just did or if you did everything correctly. Being new to a protocol can also lead to mistakes, that is why we think it is imperative to have a buddy system to double check locks.

When building enclosures and public areas, we try to keep gates to a minimum. It may be a little inconvenient to walk a little further to get to an area and one could be tempted to put in more gates, but with more gates, there is more of a risk of a gate being left unlocked. We also try to make sure gates to enclosures are in view of the lock downs, so that the keeper can do a visual check to make sure it is secure. A lot of zoos have tunnels that cats enter and multiple gates that are not easily seen. This can lead to accidents if protocols are not strictly followed by trained staff.

For our public barriers, we use four-foot chain link. We like a "solid" structure, so the public is not tempted to slip under any railing and get close to the cats or have children get away from the parents. With having a solid fence, if a cat was to get out, this would help him stay contained a bit longer and allow more time to move people and get the animal back into its enclosure. Most big cats do not look up and look for a way to get over the fencing. They will follow the line of the fence.

Another concern when designing enclosures is the gaps by gates or around feed slots, where a cat could possibly grab a person. For gates, we try to use square tubing as much as possible to close those gaps more tightly. A lot of places use the 4x4 panels,

which are strong but do have drawbacks as far as safety is concerned. People have been grabbed by big cats (and smaller cats) because they have large openings to put their paws and claws through. We use black vinyl-coated chain link for large cats, and black coated chain link with a one-inch diameter hole for smaller cats (leopards, cougars, bobcats, etc.). Chain link has its drawbacks, too. It can bow out from the cats rubbing on it, so rub rails are suggested to help keep the fence tight. Occasionally, a cat can break the chain link by biting on it or, if there is a weak spot from rust, it can snap. Since this type of fencing unravels, you then have a major security breach in your enclosures.

In our indoor feeding area, we use woven wire mesh that is too small for the cats to bite or put paws through. Since



**After tray is put inside feed slot, lid is then pulled out and placed vertically. The cat cannot reach the keeper.**

feeding can be a dangerous time, cats are excited or aggressive, and new staff can be scared and intimidated and not paying attention, we try to make sure that if someone accidentally backed up to the fencing, the mesh is not going to move and allow a cat to grab anyone with claws or teeth. There are also no openings at the bottom where cats can reach under and grab. Our feed slots are also designed with lids that do not allow the cats access to the food until the keeper takes it off and then it is placed vertically so the pan of food cannot be pushed back out. The cat cannot grab the keeper, as she is protected by the lid. This is also the cleanest way we have found to feed the cats. Rarely does the meat get pushed out of the pan, so all that has to be cleaned is the pan itself and not the whole feed slot.



# Leopards of Arabia

By Balazs Buzas (balazsbuzas.com)  
Al Mayya Breeding Centre (AMBC),  
Al Mayya Sanctuary, Fujairah, UAE

*The Arabian Peninsula evokes images of enormous skyscrapers towering over the desert, and a world of exuberant luxury in nearly everyone's mind, although it also has some unique flora and fauna to offer. For instance, it gives home to one of the rarest forms of big cat—a wonderful creature surviving in much lower numbers than the iconic giant panda.*



**Hadi Al Hikmani, a young Omani field biologist, and Balazs are checking pictures of the camera trap that was set up to monitor leopards in the Dhofar Region. Hadi was one of the first cat specialists studying Arabian leopards in the wild.**

In earlier times, the Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*) might have occurred throughout most of the Middle East and the Sinai, as well as the Arabian Peninsula. However, its present distribution range is restricted to isolated specks of land within the latter. While the strongest populations are reportedly found in Yemen and Oman, the future of this subspecies is nowhere as secure as in the Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve, Dhofar Mountains, southern Oman—in part as a result of the kharif (monsoon) that regu-

larly sweeps in from the Indian Ocean. Due to this additional source of water, the area is green oasis in an otherwise dry and, for most life forms, inhospitable landscape as if it was in tropical Africa, and provides ample opportunities for grazing for prey animals and hiding for female leopards tending their cubs.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, researchers from the National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) and King Saud University are busily monitoring the local leopard population. According to their estimates, leopards currently number less than one hundred, even though they were once widespread in mountainous regions of this huge country.

Unfortunately, the rapidly developing economy and tourism industry all over the Arabian Peninsula may cause the remaining leopard populations to collapse soon. The building of roads traversing hills and further fragmenting habitats, the increase of vehicle traffic, and poaching make the work of conservationist ever more difficult. Similarly to the situation observed at Musandam Peninsula, northern Oman, the greatest problem is the almost total absence of natural prey. The near-complete disappearance of Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*) and Ara-



**The captive breeding of the species started more than ten years ago, but the captive population is still under one hundred specimens.**

bian thar (*Arabitragus jayakari*) formerly living higher up in the hills, as well as of mountain gazelles (*Gazella cora*) occupying lower altitude wadis (dry riverbeds), forces leopards to seek alternative food sources. However, the available quarry consists of a few free-ranging Bedouin goats, camels, or feral donkeys only, which are insufficient in themselves to sustain a viable population of big cats. Although leopards hunting domestic mammals might relatively easily be (re)accustomed to take natural prey, the



**The Dhofar Mountains benefit from kharif (monsoon) that regularly sweep in from the Indian Ocean, supplying water that turns this area into a green oasis and provides ample opportunities for grazing for prey animals and hiding for female leopards tending their cubs.**



reintroduction of gazelles, thar, etc., would require the eradication of livestock first and, in this case, leopards would need to survive without food for years—a virtuous circle, with no sight of an easy solution.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the last wild Arabian leopard was spotted in the 1990s, and the observation was even reported in local newspapers. The biggest mountainous sheikhdom, Fujairah lies south of Oman's exclave of Musandam. In 2009, the Government of Fujairah declared one of the most important leopard habitats, Wadi Wurayah, the first mountain national park in the country. Now the protected area is under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi the Crown Prince of Fujairah and extends over 129 square kilometers, with a surrounding buffer zone of 92 square kilometers around its periphery. It is an excellent site for reintroducing native ungulates, as well as studying any reappearing small carnivores and felids.

As the effective population size of Arabian leopards living in the wild is, even by most optimistic guess-work, below 250 mature individuals, the subspecies is listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN and



**Offspring from the wild Yemen population have been placed in different institutions to establish a secure breeding population.**

is likely to remain in that category for a long time to come.

In order to save this taxon from extinction, a conservation breeding program was initiated over a decade ago, based on specimens live-caught in Yemen. The original stock and their descendants have mostly been placed in the zoos of Sanaa and Taiz in Yemen, as well as in the collection of the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW), Sharjah, UAE. Recently, two major institutions in the UAE, Al Ain Zoo and Al Bustan Zoological Centre, signed an agreement and exchanged specimens

for reproduction purposes. Also, the breeding units in the NWRC produce more and more cubs, whereas the participation of Omani and Bahrain breeding centers is another equally encouraging development.

Unfortunately, the number of institutions involved in the breeding program and of leopards maintained by them is still very low, so in the near future new partners must be found and the results improved.

*To those who wish to know more about the research on Arabian leopards, I highly recommend a three-part documentary, "Wild Arabia," made by the BBC.*

The pictures of the captive Arabian leopards were taken in the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW), Sharjah, UAE.



**The Arabian leopard is one of the smallest of all the leopard subspecies.**

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# Making the Most of Your Trip to Arizona

By Fred Hood

As an FCF member located in Tucson, Arizona, I am excited that the 2014 convention is coming to my state. This will be my first convention. I thought I would offer a few tips for out-of-state visitors. When the plane lands in Phoenix, and you are setting your watch, keep in mind that Arizona does NOT observe Daylight Savings Time. That is one of the things I like about living here, as I have never understood the purpose of arbitrarily changing time every six months.



June in the desert is a scorcher, with daytime highs well over one hundred and overnight lows in the eighties. Our meetings will be in air-conditioned rooms, but if you are planning to fit your five-mile run between the morning and afternoon sessions, think again. Save your exercise for the pool or evening walks and be sure to drink lots of water, even if you are not exercising.

Thankfully, the wildlife park we are visiting on Friday (Out Of Africa) is set in a valley in the mountains. Temperatures in scenic Camp Verde, where the park is located, should be at least ten degrees cooler than in the Phoenix basin. Expect a high in the nineties with intense sunshine. A hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses are essential. Consider this advice a commandment, not a suggestion! As I recall, the drinking fountains are also few and far

between, so you will need to carry a water bottle.

If you are staying for the Sunday trip to Wildlife World Zoo, drink lots of water and take it easy. Visit the outdoor exhibits during the first hour or two and then head inside. There are four indoor aquarium buildings, plus a small indoor reptile house, a small indoor mammal building, and a very small indoor nursery. I visited in March, and was pleased to see a pair of three-week-old jaguar cubs in the nursery – one yellow and one black. A new outdoor expansion to the zoo includes a lion habitat with the region's only white lion. In the older part of the zoo, a new, improved jaguar exhibit was under construction and should be done by the time of our visit.

If you plan to extend your vacation time in Arizona, the obvious choice is the Grand Canyon. If you have never seen it in person, you owe it to yourself to make the trip. No matter how many pictures you have seen, words cannot express the feeling of wonder when you are standing there in person. The village at the South Rim is set in a pine forest, so temperatures are very pleasant in summer. If the lodges in the national park village are booked, you can likely reserve a room in the small town of Tusayan, just outside the park entrance. After seeing the view from the village, head east on Highway 64 for additional viewpoints and stop to take a photo of yourself next to the mountain lion crossing sign. Additional sights on the route from Phoenix, to the Grand Canyon include the red rocks of Sedona, Montezuma's Castle cliff dwelling, Flagstaff's Route 66, and Bearizona Wildlife Park.

I look forward to meeting many of you and welcoming you to Arizona. Here is to some real fun in the sun in 2014.

## 2014 Convention Info

Nearest Airport – Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX).

Transportation to the Resort - SuperShuttle (800) BLUE-VAN (800-258-3826) Reserve online [www.supershuttle.com](http://www.supershuttle.com) - \$17 each way.

Hotel – Scottsdale Cottonwoods Resort and Suites, 12 miles from the airport. Reserve your FCF Tucson Suite for \$82 a night, rate good three days before and three days after Convention. Breakfast for two included. FCF price is good until June 5th. Call 480-991-1414 to reserve.

Convention Registration Adults - \$200 before June 5th, \$225 after that. Children 12 – 18 - \$125, under 12 – free. Single Day Registration – Thursday - \$60, Friday - \$100, Saturday - \$90.

### Schedule of Events:

Wednesday, June 18th – 8:00am to 6:00pm - Both the FCF Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course and the Wildlife Conservation Educator's Course taught are taught at the Scottsdale Cottonwoods Resort. These classes are \$110 each. 7:00 – 7:30pm - Watch an educational Wild Cat Show.

Thursday, June 19th – 9:00am - FCF Board meeting. 2:00pm - FCF Hospitality Suite opens. Socialize with members, interact with kittens. 6:00pm - Cash bar and Southwest Fajita Buffet dinner. 7:30pm - FCF General Membership Meeting.

Friday, June 20th – 9:00am - Bus leaves for Out of Africa Wildlife Park. 6:30pm – Barbeque buffet dinner at Rock Springs Café. 8:30 arrive back at Cottonwoods, Hospitality Suite reopens. Saturday, June 20th – 9:00am - 1:00pm - Speaker presentations. Lunch on your own, afternoon free. 6:00pm – cocktails. 7:00pm - Banquet dinner. 8:00pm - Live auction.

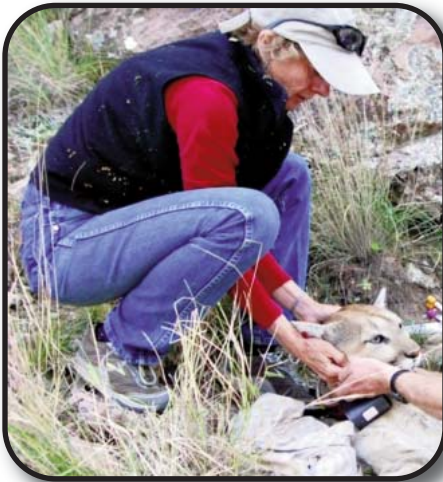
Sunday, June 22nd – 9:00am - Van leaves for Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium. Transportation by van is \$30.00 a person. Zoo entry and rides are complimentary to FCF. Take in lunch at the Dillon's Restaurant inside the Shark Café. When it gets too hot outside, visit four air-conditioned aquarium buildings. Return to Cottonwoods Resort at 2:00pm.





## Come Join Us on Wednesday for a Wild Cat Show!

We are offering one more treat for convention goers! On Wednesday, June 18th, at 7pm, after the FCF Basic Husbandry and Wildlife Conservation Educator's Courses conclude, we will be performing a half-hour wild cat show for FCF members, hotel guests, and visitors. This show will go over the basics of wild cats, cover some interesting wild feline facts, give you a chance to understand how a cat views the world, and learn about (and see) some of our little furry felines that will be at this year's convention. It's a great way for FCF students to wrap up their learnings from the day's classes. Everyone is invited to this wonderful way to end your day – learning about and hanging out with some furry friends!



**Lisa Haynes**

ciously waving the admission fee for FCF Convention attendees and all rides are complimentary to us on Sunday, June 22.

View a great assortment of wildlife, including ocelots, white lion, white and orange Bengal tigers, and jaguars and their cubs living in super habitats. Enjoy animal shows and lots of rides, including the sky ride, train ride, flume ride, boat ride, and tram ride. There is even a merry-go-round ride for the kids. Tour the zoo and ride the rides in the morning, stop for lunch at one of their restaurants, and then, when it heats up, head into the air-conditioned comfort of the four incredible aquarium buildings.

## Thursday is official Convention Kick-Off

Don't forget to donate an item for the fundraiser auction and be sure to bring a few extra dollars, or better yet, your credit card, so you can bid on the silent auction and play a few rounds of FCF Feline BINGO to possibly win some goodies. Thursday is the day to interact with your fellow FCF members, both two-legged and four. We never know what kind of exotic kittens will be on display at the hospitality suite. Find out what's new in the cat world. Open cash bar and fajita buffet dinner will be served.



**FCF's exciting auction!**



## Stay an extra day and take advantage of Sunday's optional trip to the Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium

If you have your own transportation and want to leave and return at your own pace, you can. For those without a car, we have transportation lined up to leave the Cottonwoods Resort at 9:00 am, and return at 2:00 pm. The fee is just \$30.00 round trip per person. Zoo owner Mickey Ollson is graciously waving the admission fee for FCF Convention attendees and all rides are complimentary to us on Sunday, June 22.



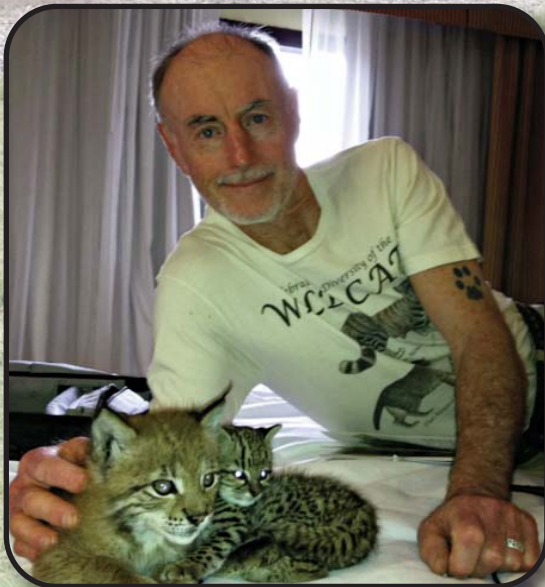
**Wildlife World Zoo**

## Here's just a few of the speakers lined up for Saturday:

### From the University of Arizona - Lisa Haynes

Lisa coordinates the University of Arizona's Wild Cat Research and Conservation Center. She specializes in the study and conservation of the world's wild cat species, both locally and internationally. She has long had the vision of University of Arizona as a hub for these efforts, especially since the University's mascot is the "Wildcat!" She has worked for the U.S. Forest Service in Wyoming, and for the Arizona Game and Fish Department as a research scientist conducting mountain lion studies. She now focuses solely on wild cat research, conservation,





**Guest speaker Jim Sanderson.**

and public outreach and education. The UA Wild Cat Center is committed to conserving and studying the 36 species of wild cats worldwide.

**From Small Cat Conservation Foundation - Dr. Jim Sanderson**

FCF's own director will update us on feline conservation developments around the world and his work being accomplished using the \$15,000 donation granted by the FCF-managed Rare Species Fund at last year's annual convention.

**From the Phoenix Zoo - Hilda Tresz**

As the Behavioral Enrichment and International Animal Welfare Coordinator at the Phoenix Zoo, Hilda is responsible for developing and overseeing the Phoenix Zoo's Behavioral Enrichment Program to include the behavioral enrichment philosophy, application across the collection, and techniques for its application. Additionally, this position travels as an ambassador of the Phoenix Zoo, consulting on animal welfare issues internationally. In 2007, Hilda became a mentor for the Jane Goodall Institute. Since then, she has been holding workshops, lectures at conferences, and has worked with zoos all over the world to enhance the psychological well-being of chimpanzees and other species.

**From the Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium - Jamie Maurer and Ashley Bordelon**

Jamie graduated from the University of Wyoming with a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology and Management. She started at Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium as relief keeper in Ponds and Carnivores, but quickly became lead keeper of that area. In 2005, she was promoted to Senior Keeper at the zoo. Jamie has always been interested in training for basic husbandry behaviors, especially in the carnivores. Ashley attended Arizona State University and graduated with a Bachelor's in Biology. While at the University, she started an internship at Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium and continued volunteering until she was hired as a keeper in Ponds and Carnivores. She has played a huge role in helping Jamie start the carnivore training program.

Friday we're going to the zoo, where we'll meet Out of Africa Wildlife Park's newest big cat arrivals!

In January, the Arizona Game and Fish Department received several tips from neighbors complaining of the tigers being kept in plain sight. One of the cubs was a juvenile orange tiger tied up in a Phoenix backyard, and the second was a white tiger that had been kept in a dog kennel in Queen Creek. Though they were kept in different places, Arizona Game and Fish officials believe they belonged to the same person, who was not licensed to possess the big cats. Arizona Game and Fish officials brought them to Out of Africa Wildlife Park in Camp Verde.

The white cub was named Gabriel and the orange cub named Journey. The two rescue cubs are doing well and they are being introduced to adult tigers so the elders can teach the cubs how to behave, so that trainers do not have to degrade their relationships with them by being the disciplinarians. This is a tactic park founders Dean and Prayeri Harrison have used many times before and sometimes with different species like leopards or even dogs.

Tiger trainer Jeff Harwell says, "They are very lucky little tigers. Though their life could have been much, much worse, now they'll grow up playing in big enclosures and hunting inflatable orcas."

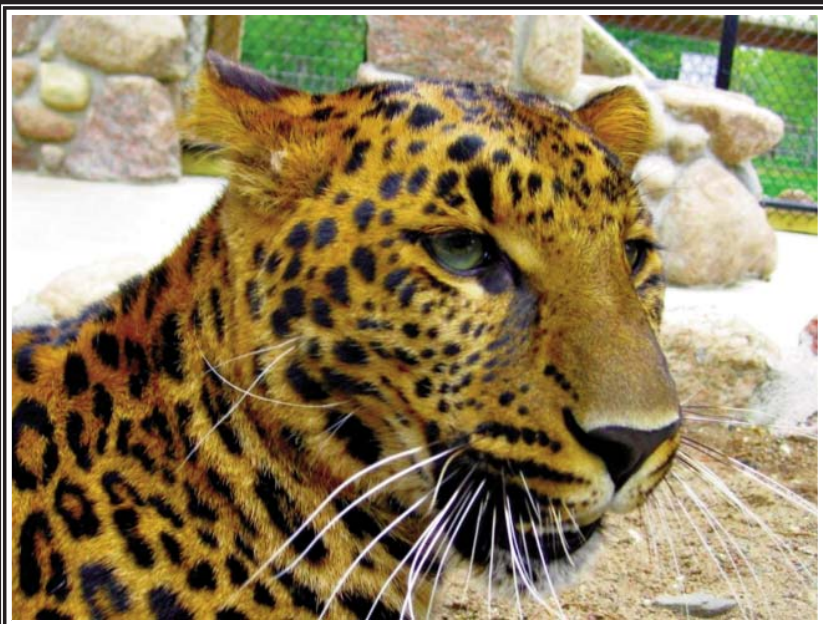


**Gabriel with his bottle.**



**Hunter the tiger.**





Leopard Tenzin is a 7-year-old female who has called Wildwood Wildlife Park, Wisconsin, home for the past six years. Photo by Judy Domaszek.

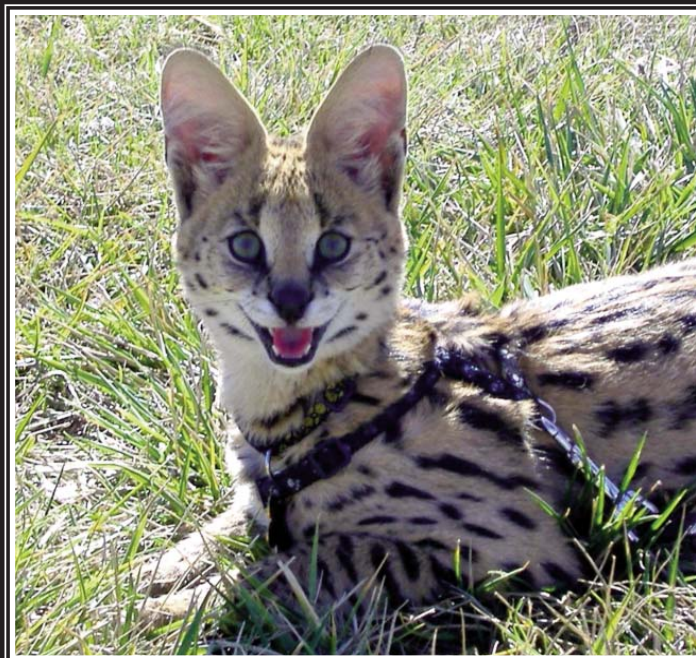


Jolie Connely-Poe, volunteer at Wild Fe  
cy Center of Washington, shot this pho  
tiger in the tub.

## Your Best Shots!



Bastille is a 5-week-old leopard cat born at CJ Epperson's. Joel Sartore captured this image for use in his Photo Ark project.

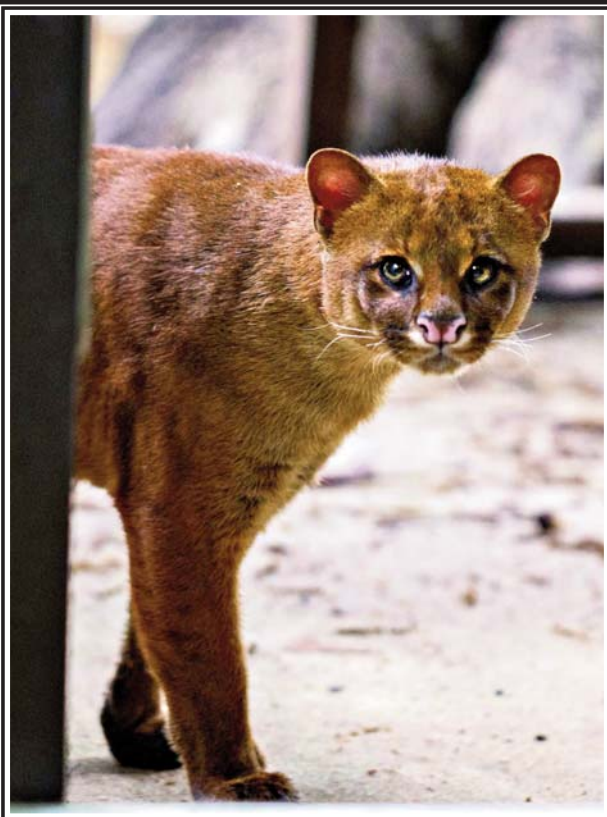


Christie Lewis's serval, Captain Jack, as  
What a cutie!

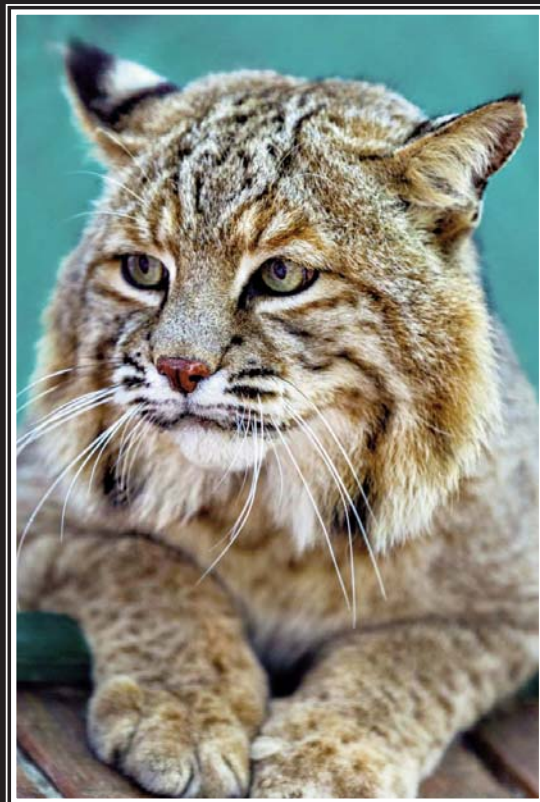




elid Advoca-  
oto of Tabbi



**Yoda, born at Bear Creek Feline Center, is a hand-raised jaguarundi, one of only a few born in the U.S. in the past few decades. This special feline is posing for visiting Russian photographer Galina Simanovskaya.**



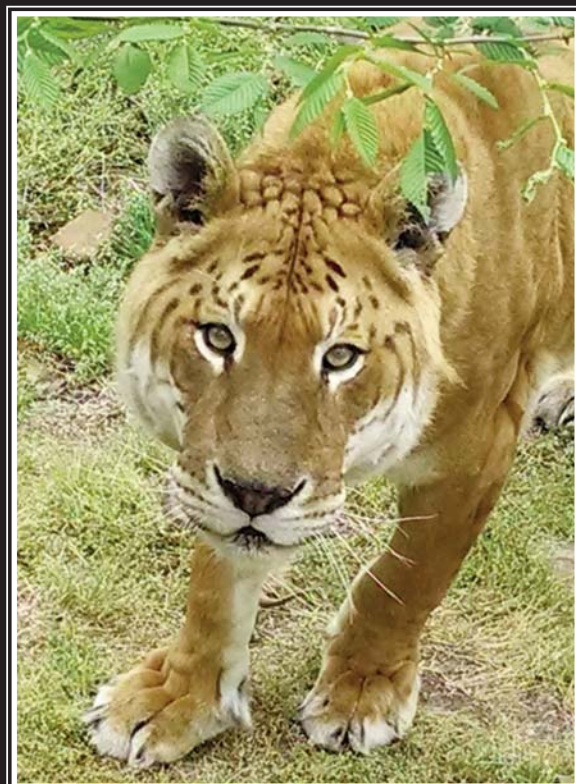
**Crockett arrived at Bear Creek in 2004, as a kitten. Photo by Galina Simanovskaya.**



a kitten.



**Tundra, the Siberian lynx, is completely at home in the snow at Hawk Creek Wildlife Center in New York. Photo by Tanya Lowe.**



**Tina Bayer captured the beauty of Rocky, a rare combination of both lion and tiger, at Safari Sanctuary in Oklahoma.**



## Distemper, a Plague on Our Cats

By Vicki Keahey

The summer of 2013 is a summer that I will never forget; it is also one that I would do anything to help someone else from ever having to go through. First, I want to introduce you to Tacoma, a male tiger I rescued at the age of eight months old, in the summer of 2000. He is the love of my life and my reason for living, breathing, and getting up every day. In November 2012, Tacoma developed pretty severe hip problems that restricted his mobility. I contacted doctors in Canada, who had experienced some success with a denervation procedure that could take his pain away and make it easier for him to get around. With the surgery, he had a good chance of getting back some of the

because of our training program. After blood and swabs were taken, we started Kiro on antibiotics (Amoxicillin). About a week later, Kiro did not want to eat; he was being a little lazy and just was not acting like himself. I thought maybe the Amoxicillin was making him sick to his stomach, so asked our vet if I could switch to another antibiotic that could be injected. We chose Baytril, and for three days I gave him the injections. The problem with this was that Kiro had a very bad



**Vicki and tiger Tacoma, the love of her life and her reason for living, before his passing in 2013, from canine distemper virus.**

muscle mass he had lost, and that renewed muscle would then help strengthen his joints and help him to be stronger again.

On March 15, 2013, Tacoma went through the surgery without complications, so all we needed to do was wait for him to get stronger. Six weeks later, he seemed to get better for a while, but it did not last very long. Around mid-May, he seemed to get worse again. On May 5, I noticed his brother and cage mate, Kiro, had a runny nose. When the symptoms were still present five days later, I called our vet. Kiro did not need to be knocked out for us to draw blood or take swabs

reaction to the injectable Baytril. On day three, which was May 27, Kiro had a seizure. By the time Kiro had this seizure, Tacoma was no longer getting up at all. He would try as much as he could, but he just could not stay up for long. Considering Tacoma's regression and Kiro's seizure, I looked at the vet and asked him, "What about canine distemper?" He agreed that it was a possi-



**Apollo appeared normal until July 6th, when Vicki noticed that his whiskers and ears began twitching. Within minutes, he experienced an extremely violent seizure, raising his body temperature to 108 degrees.**



**Harley was the third cat to experience seizures from the CDV. He seized all around the enclosure for six and a half minutes. Even with sedation, he would experience small seizures affecting his facial movements and whiskers.**



bility. Had Kiro not had this reaction, I may have never thought of distemper as an explanation for both Kiro's symptoms and Tacoma's inability to walk.

On May 31, results came back on Kiro and Tacoma; both tested POSITIVE for the canine distemper virus (CDV)! At the time, we had 32 "big" cats that were susceptible to the virus. June 1 was spent looking for the ferret version of the distemper vaccine, so that we could give it to all the cats that seemed like they were not sick and were acting fine. We were able to round up about 30 shots. On June 3, we walked around and took note of every cat that seemed to be off food, had nasty stools, or did not seem to be feeling well. We gave out 23 shots that day. At this time, there were nine cats that did not get a shot. On June 4, we called in a vet who was experienced in dealing with distemper in dogs. We agreed on a payment of \$12,000 and a course of treatment that included 15 kinds of vitamins and antibiotics. He also came by twice a week to do laser treatments on some of the cats. These treatments could be done through the fence and would not hurt the cats. We started our new routine of giving vitamins and medications to every cat twice a day. From the very first day, it would take us up to five hours to get all the cats to take the meds they needed to have, primarily because they were uninterested in eating. At feeding time, we would often start at 8pm and not get finished until 2am. On June 22, we went out to do round two of the "booster" shots. Almost everyone that got the first shot seemed okay and did get their second shot. It was not until later that evening that all hell broke loose. On the night of June 22, Kshama, a female tiger, had the first CDV-related seizure. Just as she started seizing, another female tiger named Lucca started a myoclonus jerking in her tummy. Lucca did not seem to feel bad at all. She took all her meds and always ate most of her dinner. I was really hoping that everything was going to be okay, since we had made it through almost four

weeks without things getting bad. One of the worst nights was the very next night, June 23. As we all dived onto Kshama again, trying to hold her down and keep her from hurting herself during yet another seizure, I heard someone outside the enclosure scream out, "Harley, it's Harley! He's having a seizure!" Harley was a male tiger, the brother of Tacoma and Kiro. While half of us stayed with Kshama, the other half went running to Harley, whose enclosure was nearby.

By this time, some of the best people in the world had raised up their hands to help our cats fight this horrible virus. Our volunteers really stepped up and did everything they possibly could to help. Most days, we had no less than 20 people here at all times. People stayed all night long, and some completely left their jobs to be here; they did it to help keep the cats safe

and to make sure they all took their meds. Because most of us had previously been in the enclosure with Kshama, diving onto her while she was having a seizure was not that alarming. On the other hand, going in the enclosure with Harley was never an option. Somehow though, during this nightmare, it did not seem to matter. Harley's seizure started while he was on top of his den. He fell from his den and hit his concrete steps on the way down. As he seized all around his enclosure, he became wedged under his large metal tub and the question of whether or not to go in went out the window. Four of us ran in to pull Harley out from under his tub and continued to lay on him and use any strength we could find to keep him from hurting himself. The seizure lasted for six and a half minutes; we finally used Valium inserted into the rectum to help calm him down. When Harley woke from the seizure, he was pretty much back to his old self. The next morning at 9am, Harley had another seizure and, as the day went on, he had three more seizures.

We kept Kshama on Valium, but she continued to have seizures for the next six days. We then started giving her Midazolam, which kept her fairly quiet. Once the seizures stopped, we stopped the Midazolam. When the seizures stopped, she was generally "out of it," and we just thought of her as being asleep; she stayed this way for nine more days. In the meantime, Harley's seizures were getting much more violent. We had to use more extreme measures for him. For Harley, by the second day of his seizures, we started using Midazolam. During one of Harley's seizures, he developed a myoclonic twitch in his right back leg. Even though we kept Harley sedated, he would still have small seizures that one could see in facial movements and whiskers. On July 2, Layla, one of our female lions, had her first seizure. Her seizures were very different. She would basically fall to the ground, moving just her front feet and her mouth, much like she was chewing gum. Her first four or



**Tigress Kshama had the first CDV-related seizure. Midazolam controlled her seizures, but left her generally "out of it," appearing to be in a state of perpetual sleep.**



five seizures were like this, so we tried initially to control them with the Valium. Because her seizures came more frequently, even though they were still small, we ultimately felt the best thing was to start the Midazolam on her as well. The Midazolam worked the best to keep all of them quiet and lessen the frequency of seizures. We could give the Valium every couple of hours, but the Midazolam could only be given every six hours. We tried not to give either of them unless it was necessary.



**Abrams, brother to Harley, Kazuri, and Stryker, succumbed to breathing difficulties brought on by the CDV.**

July 5 was another very difficult day for me. Another one of Kiro and Tacoma's brothers, Abrams, went into his first seizure. Abrams was bigger than life to me. He was 510 pounds of pure tiger sweetness. When he had his first seizure, all I could think was, "How does a dog disease take down a 500 pound tiger?" I just could not get a grip on what was happening to him and so many of my cats. I did not waste any time going in with Abrams to try to talk him through this horrible, mind-boggling, emotional period. Abrams and Harley both lived in an area we call Chuffin Park. Chuffin Park held five tigers: Abrams, Harley, Kazuri, and Stryker (all brothers), as well as my dear, sweet Apollo. Abrams's seizures were

more like Kshama's and, again, we could not control them with Valium. Giving Abrams a full 5cc of Midazolam seemed like giving him a death sentence at this point. I just kept thinking that most people probably did not go through this, choosing instead to euthanize their infected animals. But I also told myself that no one really knows what the outcome might be if we could just get them through this phase; maybe they would all be okay. Even our specialist in CDV could not advise us on what to do or what to expect next.

On July 6, after getting everyone fed, I let Apollo out to the playground for the night. I walked around to see him playing with his blue barrel, one of his favorite toys. As I stood there watching him and being thankful that he had not seemed sick like the others, I saw his whiskers start twitching, and then I watched his ears twitching. My heart sank as low as I thought it could get and I started screaming, "I need help! I need the jab stick, bring me the Midazolam! Hurry!" Apollo was getting ready to have a seizure and I knew it. We had to get him back into the den area right away. By the time we got him back into his enclosure and had the jab stick loaded, he fell to the ground and had an extremely violent seizure. I took the syringe from the jab stick and ran in to inject him directly and we lay across him to hold him down. The whole thing seemed to last longer than any other seizure, but in reality it lasted exactly three minutes and 35 seconds. One of the things we had previously noticed was that body temperatures seemed to be higher than normal. Each of the cats that were having problems started having their temperatures taken at least every two hours. After Apollo's seizure subsided, I took his temperature and found that it was 108 degrees. We quickly surrounded him with ice bags and hosed him down for two hours while giving him subcutaneous fluids. At 5am, we finally felt comfortable leaving him with a watcher so the remainder of us could get a little bit of rest. When we returned at 8am, we saw that Apollo still hadn't moved, but now his tummy looked a bit bloated. I called the vet to come look at him and, at 9am, when the vet arrived, his tummy was even more distended. We decided at that time Apollo needed emergency surgery. We loaded

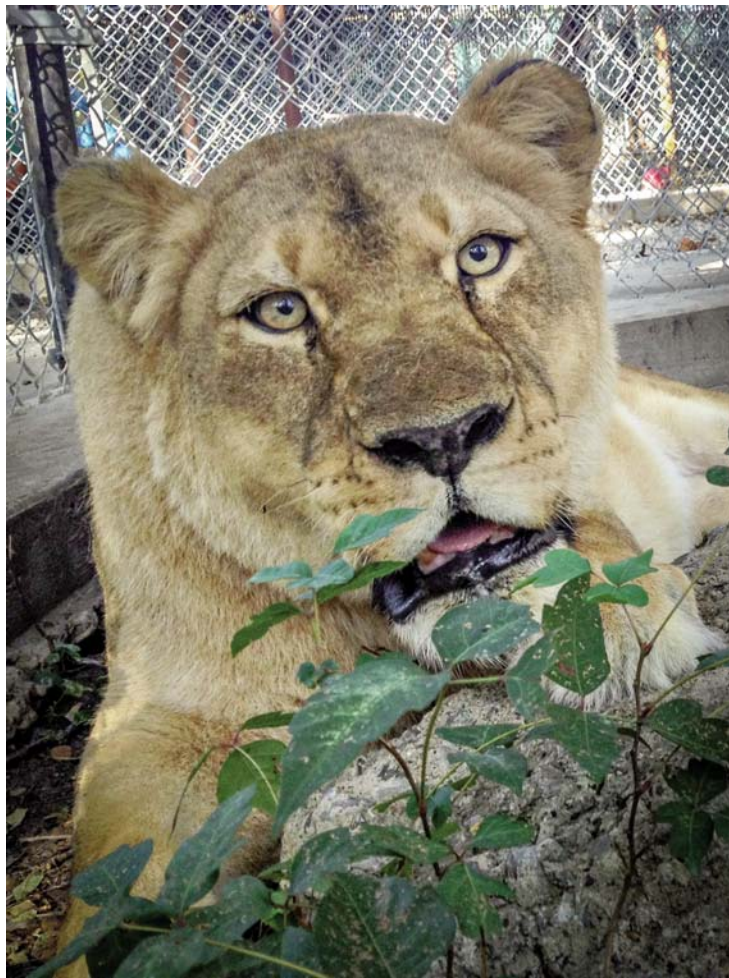
him up and took him to the clinic. During surgery, the vet found that Apollo had a small twist in his intestines. The surgical team straightened out the twist, closed him up, and stabilized him for transport home, which is roughly five miles away. One mile before we got home, Apollo showed signs of having trouble breathing. I called our vet again and continued the trip home. We had just enough time to unload Apollo onto his air bed when the vet came in right behind us and Apollo stopped breathing. On July 7, my sweet Apollo was gone. Again, Apollo had never really seemed sick during the first five weeks of this hell, and yet he was the first one to pass away. I was grief stricken and frustrated. What the heck was this crap that would take away my sweet Apollo when all he ever did was try to have a happy life? I spent every day of the first year we had Apollo just trying to get him to go out to the playground so he could enjoy running and playing on the grass and in the pool. It was not until this last year that he had begun to really enjoy his life.

All I wanted to do was trade places with my cats, to take all their pain away and put it on myself. I wanted anything other than what we had. I could not stop thinking about Tacoma; could he not walk because of his hips or was it the distemper that kept him from getting up? I just knew I could not leave his side; I had to be there for him in case he needed anything. To help Tacoma, we devised a harness similar to the ones used on horses that need exercise in a pool. Tacoma already had a pool; we just needed to figure out how to get him in there so he could exercise. We had the harness custom made to fit him tightly enough to give him support, light enough that he could wear it without carrying extra weight and easy enough to put it on and take it off without making a tiger angry. We put a winch above his enclosure that would travel with him from the inside of his enclosure to the playground where his pool is located. The harness only weighed seven pounds and had clips and rings where the winch could be clipped. Once everything was put on and hooked together, we could lift Tacoma up and allow him to walk to the pool with very little help. Once he reached the pool, we could gently lower him into the pool for his exercise to begin. Before we even had the chance to try it out, we woke up one morning at 7am to find Tacoma in the pool. I had no idea how he got to the



pool; I just knew that he did not walk there and I was pretty sure he could not get out. I had left him at 3am, and a volunteer had checked on him at 5am. He was not having seizures, so he did not have a full 24/7 watch on him. I grabbed his harness and jumped into the pool with him. I attached the harness to him and then to the winch. It was the most amazing thing that he let us hook him up and lift him from the pool to the safety of the ground. As soon as we lowered him to the ground, he let out a huge sigh of relief. His temperature had dropped to 97 degrees, so I am pretty sure he had been there for quite some time. Soon, he started to love his daily pool time and would even get into a sitting position so that we could easily put the harness on him. Along with all the meds for distemper, he was also getting cold laser treatments and acupuncture twice a week. I just felt that if I could get him through the distemper, we could get him to walk again. There was nothing I would not do for Tacoma.

On July 9, after we had finished feeding and passing out meds for the night, we started making our nightly rounds of turning the cats that could not turn themselves. For five hours, they would lay on their right sides, then we would sit them sternum, then five hours later we would turn them to their left sides. This went on all night long every night for three weeks. On this particular night, one of the feeders had left a bowl in the walkway of Layla's enclosure. She went back to retrieve it and over the radio she said, "I do not think Layla is breathing." Five of us ran out to her enclosure and Layla was gone. We had just left her not even five minutes before, and now she was gone. This was the first time I truly thought we were not going to win. I feared I was putting them through all this for no reason. Perhaps they were all going to die. Where do you draw the line? When do you stop? What good will ever come of this? All hope was completely lost.



**Layla lioness expressed her CDV seizures in a different manner. She would fall to the ground, moving just her front feet and her mouth, much like she was chewing gum.**

Two days later, feeling beaten and depressed while taking care of the other cats, I looked up and saw Kshama walking. She was awake and walking around. Maybe we did have a chance! Maybe we could still help Lucca, Abrams, and Harley. By this time, Abrams and Harley were now "asleep" like Kshama had been. If we could continue pouring the meds into them, maybe they too would wake up. The antibiotics, vitamins, and supplements we gave were: Interferon, Enzo Biotic, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, Doxycycline, Amoxicillin, Glutamine, Dismutase, Rutin, Acemannin shots, Acemannin grey and yellow powders, something called IB oil, AGCL water, GI support meds, and Staphage Lysate. All these meds could be mixed together, put into a liquid slurry, and dropped into the mouth.

Even though Harley and Abrams were

sleeping, they could still swallow. Lucca was still eating her regular dinner just fine. When we could not get Abrams and Harley to eat after four days, we started them on IV drips to help keep their sugar levels and hydration up. There is no real treatment for distemper. The only things we could do were to give them the vitamins to help the immune symptoms and antibiotics to help prevent secondary infections. I knew things were going to be rough for Harley from the very beginning. A year ago, he had been diagnosed with a bone infection in his lower right jaw. We had to remove all the bottom teeth on that side and keep him on antibiotics from that point on. I knew his immune system was already compromised. Abrams, on the other hand, was healthy. Before he got sick, he was a very active tiger that loved attention. On July 15, one of the watchers who was sitting with and monitoring the two cats noticed that Abrams was having trouble breathing and quickly called for help. As soon as I saw him, I yelled out for more help. He was doing the same thing Apollo had done. We tried everything to help him breathe and, in a matter of five minutes, he was gone. Two days later, on July 17, Harley gave up his fight and passed away, even as it looked like he was trying to wake up. At this point, all the cats that had been "asleep" except for Kshama had passed away.

I again consulted with our vets on what our next step should or would be. Unfortunately, there was simply not enough data or research out there for us to have a clear course of treatment. The general feeling out there was that the cats could be lost at any point in the disease, but they could also recover at any point.

Although she never suffered from a full-blown seizure, on July 20, Iona, a female tiger, began having some sort of quiet seizure. She would just sit and look like she was staring into the air. She did this only a few times before she started her myoclonus twitching. Iona never seemed like she felt bad; she just did not



### What is Canine Distemper?

By Lynn Culver

Canine distemper is a virus that affects a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous systems, as well as the conjunctival membranes of the eye. In dogs, neurological symptoms of distemper may not develop at all or develop later in the disease, sometimes even after several weeks. When neurological symptoms of distemper develop, they include muscle twitching, weakness or paralysis, uncoordinated movements, and increased sensitivity to touch or pain, and seizures of any part of the body, but seizures that look as if the dog is chewing gum are unique to distemper.

There is no treatment specific to the distemper virus, so treatment involves managing the various symptoms and secondary infections. Fluids combat dehydration, antiemetics reduce vomiting, antibiotics treat pneumonia and secondary infections, and anticonvulsants treat seizures.

Animals usually become infected by direct contact with virus particles from the secretions of other infected animals. Indirect transmission is not common because the virus does not survive for long in the environment. But the virus can be shed by infected animals for several weeks after recovery.

This virus can also infect several other species, including ferrets and wild animals such as coyotes, foxes, wolves, skunks, and raccoons, and it has been found in the *Panthera* genus of the cat family.

When canine distemper virus jumps to felines, the symptoms include respiratory disease, similar to a pneumonia, diarrhea, and muscular incoordination. Neurological disease develops which alters the animal's behavior. Wild tigers appear fearless of man. In most cases, the tigers suffer seizures and death.

Canine distemper virus was first brought to the attention of the U.S. veterinary community in 1991 and 1992, after (CDV) infection occurred at three facilities, where leopards, tigers, lions, and a jaguar died. All four species contracted the virus at the Wildlife Waystation, San Fernando, California, with 17 mortalities. Two black leopards died at the Naibi Zoo, Coal Valley, Illinois. Two tigers died at the Shambala Preserve, Acton, California. Initial clinical signs were anorexia with gastrointestinal and/or respiratory disease, followed by seizures. Raccoons were considered the source of the virus in two cases and dogs were the source in one case. The isolated viruses were indistinguishable from the naturally occurring type of the virus isolated from dogs and other species.

In 1994, CDV wiped out a third of Africa's Serengeti lion population after an outbreak in feral dogs. Lion numbers only recovered when conservationists embarked on a massive dog inoculation program.

In recent years, at least three wild Amur tigers in Russia have died after contracting canine distemper. Studies of both the Amur tiger and the Amur leopard confirm that many more have been exposed to the virus. Abnormal tiger behavior, where the felines walk into villages, apparently unfazed by their surroundings, has forced police to shoot these endangered cats.

The virus has killed at least four tigers in 2013, and several other animals across northern and eastern India. The CDV lab tests were conducted at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, where head scientist, Dr. A.K. Sharma said, "These are very disturbing finds." "The cases were quite distant from each other and the latest was an area where there are no dogs. So it appears the virus is spreading."

During the summer of 2013, Dr. Lewis, director of Wildlife Vets International, said conversations with local Sumatran wildlife vets seemed to indicate that CDV could already be present in the population of the critically endangered Sumatran tiger. They told him that they had seen strange behavior displays by tigers, such as the big cats coming into villages and losing their fear of people.

"To me, that suggests that distemper is already beginning to have an impact on tigers in Sumatra," Lewis warned, "but, before you say 'yes, that is definitely the result of CDV,' you need diagnostic testing of brain tissue."

The big threats facing tigers are habitat loss and degradation and poaching, but now disease, particularly canine distemper virus, poses a growing and troubling third threat.

want to eat. She still played and talked to us like nothing was wrong. The twitching that Iona had was limited to her front right foot. By July 27, Lucca was having more problems with the twitching and it was getting more and more difficult for her to walk. The distemper vet told us that she might still turn around and get better. We continued to give meds, exercise her, and pray a lot! In the meantime, we also tried other methods of treatment. We tried a new treatment involving the Newcastle vaccine. This treatment is fairly new, but some vets think it helps. In order to administer this treatment, Lucca would have to be knocked out and a needle inserted into her spine. The vaccine needed to go directly into the nervous system in order to work. After two doctors made six attempts while skyping with a third vet, they were unable to get the vaccine into the spine. We had no other choice but to wake her up. On August 8, we made the decision to let Lucca have peace. Even if the chance was still there for her to get better, we just could not continue to count on that happening.

With the exception of Tacoma, all of the cats which had seemed to be the most affected had now passed and Tacoma had not changed. He was not any worse or any better. I still had hope that, since his symptoms had not progressed, Tacoma was going to make it. We kept all the cats on meds even though everyone else seemed to be okay. They were starting to eat again and looked just a little bit more like they felt better. On the morning of August 11, we had gone to Chuffin Park to move cats from their inside area to the play area, something we did every day. Kazuri, another brother to those mentioned earlier, came to the fence and gave us a big chuff and then went out to the pool; he walked around sniffing the ground and giving us stinky faces. Thirty minutes later, we went back to Chuffin Park to start that day's medication routine. The first thing we saw was Kazuri lying in his enclosure and he was not moving. We still do not know to this day what caused his death.

Throughout this whole ordeal, we have worked with researchers who are trying to find answers and some kind of help for other tigers, both those in captivity and in the wild. With distemper also killing tigers in the wild, we started hoping that at least some good could come from this nightmare. Maybe answers could be

found in our cats that could not be found in a wild tiger. When Kazuri passed away, we took samples from all tissues and sent them in for the project. All of us were just devastated from the sudden and unexpected loss of Kazuri; I was not even sure that I would recover from this one. I made myself come in every day, made myself continue to help collect data for research, and made myself check each cat, praying they were all okay. Then it hit me. Even if they did look and act okay, what did that mean? Kazuri seemed fine. He was having a good morning, but that did not seem to matter. I stayed by Tacoma day in and day out and remained convinced that he was going to make it. Deep down, though, I knew he probably would not.

On August 23, during an exercise session with Tacoma and his rehab vet, Tacoma had a seizure. I completely lost control. We pulled him from the pool and I held him as he seized. Quickly the seizure was over. I called the vet and had him checked out thoroughly. The next day was a Friday, and he seemed back to himself, like nothing had happened. On Saturday, his rehab vet came out and checked on him. She felt like he was doing well enough to do a short session of exercise and acupuncture. He took his treatments well, and I stayed with him until 2am, just to make sure. On Sunday, Tacoma was very active. He took himself to the pool at least twice and was able to get out of



**On July 7th, Apollo underwent emergency surgery to correct a twisted intestine. On the trip home, he experienced breathing problems brought on by the CDV and passed away.**

the pool with minimal help. At dinner-time, I gave him all his dinner and meds; everything seemed okay. At 9:30pm, however, Tacoma started acting very strange and restless. I called the vet out, and while the vet was here, he had another seizure. At that time, I had to make the worst decision I have ever had to make, to let Tacoma go. It was like someone had reached in and pulled my heart completely out of my chest. As the vet was at his

truck getting the concoction ready for Tacoma, he started having trouble breathing. I yelled at the vet to hurry, because Tacoma could not breathe. Sixty seconds later, Tacoma saved me from having to go through with my decision. Tacoma knew I could not live knowing that I gave up on him, so he did it for me.

Iona spent the next three months doing pretty well, and all of her tests came back negative for distemper. In late February, she seemed to start getting worse. She was still moving around and chasing her sister through the playground. Mentally, Iona was great. By mid-March, the twitching had completely consumed her right side. We again looked to the researchers for any kind of hope. We had even gone outside of the country and looked all over the globe for anything. On March 20, we took her in for an MRI, just to make sure there was not something else going on that could have caused her to get worse since all the tests were negative. What we found was that the myelin had been completely stripped from her nerves. This is what distemper apparently likes to do. It strips all the myelin, causing the nerves to twitch. Myelin cannot be rebuilt. This is the same thing that happens with multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's patients. On March 24, we decided to let Iona have peace with the other cats that fought this nightmare so hard. In the beginning, we were told that even though



**On the morning of August 11th, Kazuri appeared normal, walking around Chuffin Park, making "stinky faces." Thirty minutes later, Vicki returned to find Kazuri dead.**



some of the cats could survive distemper, there was always going to be that possibility that it could come back and cause them more problems. In September, we heard of new tests that were being done which could tell us if the distemper was completely out of their systems. This being the case, the distemper would not come back. Even though new research believes that once gone it's always gone, it doesn't mean that problems the distemper had caused during the active virus period could not continue to cause problems and progress. So some survivors may be left with a twitch that never gets worse, but in others it can get worse. A case in point is Iona.

This experience taught me more than I ever wanted to know about canine distemper, like the different kind of tests that can be done. Urine PCR (short for Polymerase Chain Reaction, a tool that copies a segment of DNA billions of times to diagnose diseases, identify bacteria and viruses, and match criminals to crime scenes) can determine if the distemper could be in the central nervous system.

Intestinal PCR of feces or blood work does not always show distemper unless in the early stages. Ocular or nasal PCR is needed with blood work to confirm a diagnosis. All these tests are put through 40 different scans, so a positive could still show up with a high number like 38, but at that number the virus is almost gone and there should not be any more problems. When Kazuri passed, everything pointed to the fact that he no longer had distemper. Then we remembered we had urine at IDEX, so we had it tested and it came back positive. That meant the virus was still in his central nervous system.

In no way do we want to minimize or trivialize what our men and women in uniform go through every day, but we certainly feel like we have fought our own kind of war here in Wylie, Texas. Dozens of staff and volunteers were walking around in a fog, torn between grief, fear, and exhaustion. These same people then put on a "happy" face to take care of the cats which were not sick, knowing that the cats can intuitively pick up on our moods. We cussed, screamed, prayed, and wept,

but mostly we tried to treasure every second we had with our cherished cats. This awful situation helped us appreciate life and made us a stronger team, but it came at a very high price. We lost seven of our beloved cats in the span of only eight weeks, then we had the emotional scab ripped off with the loss of an eighth cat seven months later. There is no word in the English language to describe that kind of collective grief. My greatest hope is that the fear and pain our cats went through can provide insight on how to fight this wretched distemper. We do not want any sanctuary, zoo, or private owner of exotic cats to ever go through what we did. We also hope that we can in some way help protect their wild counterparts.

The current situation at ISE is much brighter. All cats have been testing negative for the virus for months, and with a large rescue of 11 tigers and three cougars earlier this year, the enclosures are once again full. For more information, please visit [www.insyncexotics.org](http://www.insyncexotics.org).

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## Blast From the Past: Alternatives for Animals

LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc.  
Volume 39 Issue 2, March/April 1995

By Sue Zak

With my own kennel, goats, cats and birds, whenever possible I prefer to use a form of treatment that includes no synthetic chemicals and has no side effects. "Side effects," in my opinion, are just a polite way of saying "poisoning." This active form of treatment, called homeopathy, reinforces the animal's own healing powers rather than merely masking its symptoms. There are a few things to keep in mind when using homeopathics. They are:

1. Generally use a low potency at frequent intervals (such as one dose every one-half to two hours, depending on the progress of the animal). Chronic conditions generally call for a relatively high potency given once or twice a day until symptoms vanish. In an acute condition, however, any potency will be helpful.

2. Never continue a remedy once symptoms are gone.

3. Size and weight of the animal are of no bearing. The dosage is the same for a parrot as it would be for a wolfhound. One hundred tablets will have no greater or lesser effect than one tablet. You do not need to worry about poisoning your animal, even if he manages to eat an entire bottle of a homeopathic remedy. If he manages to crunch up and swallow the glass bottle along with it, however, you do have a problem.

4. Suggested doses are: 1 tablet, a few pellets, a little less than 1/2 teaspoon of a powder, or five to ten drops.

In November of last year, I adopted a F2 Asian leopard cat hybrid I called Lydia, the Queen of Tattoos. The very next day, while playing "kick and bite" with her, I noticed some round, bald patches on her belly. By the end of the week, poor Lydia was what could best be described as threadbare. I gave her the most common homeopathics for ringworm, such as sepia, sulphur, lycopodium, and dulcamera. Lydia responded by passing a few patches of it on to me. We then tried the ointment that the vet gave her. It

really burned. A few doses of Sepia worked for me, but Lydia was looking "well loved," like the velveteen rabbit in the children's story.

I then decided to try a comparatively new line manufactured by HVS Laboratories in Florida. (Editor's note: At the time this article was first published, the company was Hobon, but has been renamed HVS Laboratories, [www.hvslabs.com](http://www.hvslabs.com).) From the HVS veterinary line, called Homeovetix, I used Theratox, Supportasode, and R&R (for stress). From the human line, I used Detoxosode: Fungi/Yeast. Within four days of starting the Fungi/Yeast, Lydia had peach fuzz on her bald spots. She has not had a recurrence of ringworm.



**Many fresh and prepared herbal remedies can be administered for a variety of feline issues.**

In the Homeovetix line, there are some brilliant formulas for clearing parasite toxins, chemical toxins, viral toxins, and antigenic substances such as flea-bite allergies. HVS formulas are tasteless and can be added to drinking water. I enjoy HVS's claim that their Homeovetix formulas have been "human-tested" for over ten years. Your vet can order HVS Formulas by calling HVS Laboratories at 800-521-7722. I personally would try using Homeovetix's Theratox, Supportasode, and R&R for 24 days, followed by Viratox, Supportasode, and R&R for another 24 days for a cat with FIP, Feline leukemia, Feline Aids, or some other nasty virus, before I would eliminate him. The cost would be minimal. It is not recommended to use Viratox within 30 days of completing a rescue remedy. It can negate active immunity.

After the burning ringworm applica-

tions, Lydia became very reclusive. I would go for days without seeing her. She became little more than a tail disappearing under the bed. When I saw that this was more than just a passing phase, I decided to use some Bach flowers on her. I used Mimulus for concrete fears and Rock Rose for fear bordering on sheer terror. Within five weeks, she became a highly visible and very demanding member of the household. It is great to have her back.

Bach flower remedies are similar in application to homeopathics. They act on the spiritual level. An underlying philosophy in the Bach system is that there is no true healing except that which comes from the spirit. Edward Bach was a very prominent bacteriologist and homeopathic physician. In 1930, he left a thriving medical practice to devote the last six years of his life to finding a simpler, more natural form of treatment. It was his desire that this system would be used by both physicians and laypeople everywhere. Bach share the view of so many great physicians and philosophers that there are no diseases, only sick people.

There are 38 Bach flower remedies in all. They relate to many personality types, such as the martyr type, those that live in the past, domineering mothers, and workaholics, to those who truly live lives of "quiet desperation." They often cause a profound change in personality resulting in what appears to be a miraculous physical cure. Do not expect immediate results with Bach flowers. They can be very slow acting.

You can purchase Bach flower remedies at many health food stores. It is a good idea to always have on hand the most common Bach flower remedy, which is rescue remedy. It is truly worth its weight in gold in shock and near-death situations -stabilizing the animal until emergency medical help can be obtained. The Bach flower, Holly, is wonderful for settling down extremely hostile, hateful, and vindictive animals, the kind that hiss and growl and lash out at the least provocation or act of kindness. Grumpy old men can benefit from Holly as well.

This July, Lydia had her kittens. Several hours after giving birth she became



aggressive towards them. I looked in on her alarmed by all the “jungle noises” and she hissed at me, grabbed a kitten, and began to chew on him, glaring and yowling the whole time. I got the message, levitated, retreated, and dashed downstairs to grab a bottle of Sepia 200, something I had used successfully on a particularly black-hearted dog in a similar situation. So as not to disturb her, I tossed the Sepia from the doorway into her water dish (at several hundred pellets to a bottle, the odds were pretty good) and went downstairs to have a good cry.

The next morning when I went upstairs to feed the little cannibal, she met me at the door, chirped a few times, and led me over to the kitten box. All of the kittens were there. No limbs were missing. I wondered what sort of perverse cat joke this had been. She let me look at them while she went off to eat her breakfast.



**Dulcamara is a plant that can be used to treat pain and skin conditions.**

Several days later, Lydia began to growl and hiss at the kittens again. Some she tossed out of the box and did not feed. If I got too close, she grabbed the nearest kitten and began chewing while it screamed. I re-dosed her and called a biochemist. He suggested that I check her chromium level.

He explained that sometimes the stress and hormonal change of giving birth will cause drastic blood-sugar fluctuations. This can cause extreme anxiety, as well as hunger. The new mother will often view her young as the cause of her discomfort and eliminate them. At his suggestion, I added a small amount of chromium picolinate (it can help level blood sugar) to her food. There have been no further episodes.

Some other remedies that I have used successfully on the subject of breeding are:

- Pulsatilla 30x three times a day for false preg-

nancy.

- Acidum Phosphate 30x for a month has worked for infertile males.

- Acidum Phosphate 6x and Damiana 1x three times a day will sometimes work on a male that shows no interest in breeding. The trick here is to give it on an empty stomach.

- Sepia 6x three times a day for three weeks before breeding can be given to a female who is reluctant to breed. It will also save wear and tear on the male.

Homeopathy can bridge many of the curative gaps in traditional healing arts. I have personally witnessed many miracles in animals that seemed doomed to a life of pain or even death. The great homeopathic physician Hahnemann himself said in a lecture given at Leipzig, “In a word, animals can be cured just as safely and surely as human beings can.”

There are many fine books on the subject of homeopathy and animals. An increasing number of vets are using homeopathy in their practices. Do your research, as homeopathy can play an important role in preserving the health, happiness, and well-being of your animals.



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## New Lynxes at Wildlife Prairie Park



**Shelby and 'Lil Miss have successfully transitioned from cages into the vast expanse of a fenced-in natural habitat at Wildlife Prairie Park in Illinois.**

By Brenda Herron

Wildlife Prairie Park primarily houses animals that are native to Illinois, and our goal is to provide education, conservation, and recreation for the public. However, while looking for new animals to put into an exhibit that has been empty for years, we came across two lynx, Shelby and 'Lil Miss. Although the Canadian lynx are not native to Illinois, the park has been looking to expand the species of animals that live here.

Adding a pair of Canadian lynx, another North American feline, enables us to expand our educational talks on America's natural heritage. We did not want more cougar or bobcat as we already have these felines on exhibit. The animals that previously lived in the empty habitat were cougars, so some changes had to be made to accommodate the lynx. Inside the den area, platforms made of wood were constructed to make sure the lynx always have a dry spot to sleep. Wooden holders for the food

pans were also placed inside. A fenced off area was also added to the outside of the den area so that if the lynx had to be closed in for an amount of time (like overnight, for example) they can still have access to a small area outside, just not the whole yard. Upgrades to the existing habitat included clearing of some brush, a few fence repairs, and flashing put on the trees closest to the fence. The habitat encloses approximately a half acre of land, and the fencing is made of 11-gauge

chain link, 16 feet tall with a turned in recurve for the top three feet. The fence is not buried, but there is a ground skirt extending three feet into the compound to

deter digging. So far, the lynx have not dug any holes, or climbed any of the trees, but do seem to thoroughly enjoy their environment.

The trip to NOAH Feline Conservation Center in Arkansas was made by the brother of Dave Brugger who works in the maintenance department of the park. Dennis Brugger and his wife were able to rent a small U-Haul that enclosed the lynx to keep them out of the bitter wind during the trip. Inside the U-Haul the lynx were each in their own smaller cage which the park already owned from retrieving other animals from a different zoo. The pair was insulated with bales of fresh hay for their travel north. The trip took about 10-12 hours to Arkansas and about the same amount back to central Illinois. Once here, the lynx were promptly let into their den area. The two girls had access to their dens and smaller enclosed yard for about a month before they were able to explore the rest of their enclosure. Confining the pair initially was done to make sure the lynx acclimated to the new area. Also, should any illness be noticed, we would be able to treat them faster if they were already in quarantine.

We are happy to report that the introduction to their large habitat was accomplished without any problems. The lynx are free to explore and enjoy their yard. As you can see in the pictures, it is a really big area to check out. At first they were very cautious and hesitant as they ventured out of their smaller lock downs, but it only took them a couple of days to find their favorite spots and to start napping in the sun. The park visitors we have encountered are very excited to see them!

Their diet currently consists of feline beef, rats, mice, and sometimes deer and duck meat. So far their favorite things to eat are the rats and mice (and they sometimes like to play with their food!).

Thanks again to NOAH Feline Conservation Center for the opportunity to add these beautiful animals to our park!

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## Raja's Rescue

By Deb Johnson

Being a serval owner and understanding this exotic cat species, I received a telephone call from a couple in despair. They explained, "We purchased a serval kitten, she has had an accident that will cost us hundreds of dollars in veterinary care, and we do not know what to do."

With this in mind, I drove to their house, reviewed the veterinary record which indicated that the left rear femur had been fractured, and decided to take on the responsibility of care for this unfortunate feline. I did not want to see this kitten put to sleep and, in my heart, I knew it had a chance.

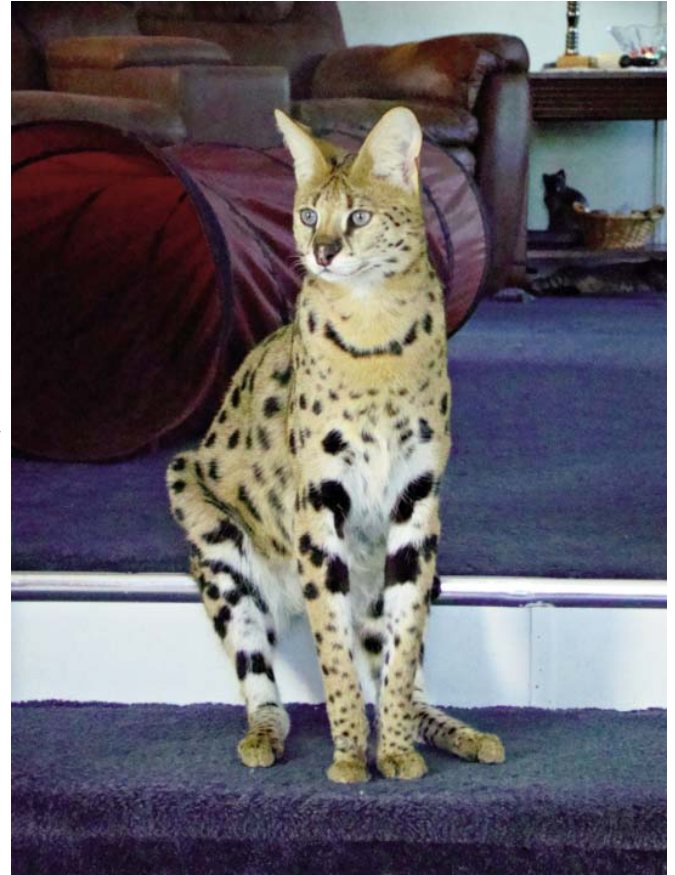
After a few days to let the kitten get to know me, I contacted my veterinarians and set up an appointment to have them install pins and casts so the femur could heal properly.

I understood that the nature of the injury would require that this kitten go under anesthesia many times and there would be therapy after that. Keeping a splint or cast on a serval kitten is very interesting, considering they grow so fast in the first year.

Going under anesthesia roughly every 12 to 14 days for two months was quite nerve racking and risky. My veterinarians always had everything ready, and if she went into a hypoglycemic attack, I had

corn syrup with me. I carried that with me at all times. After only two visits, the stress of the vet visit triggered her to go into one. If you have never seen extreme low blood sugar in an animal, it causes disorientation and clouded thinking, which leads to fear, something you can plainly see in the feline's eyes. When this happened, we administered three cc's of corn syrup and waited about 15 minutes, when if she still did not recover, a second dose, or even more, was given until she was acting normal again. Once she was stabilized, we had to wait for her to settle down and check all her vitals before putting her under anesthesia to do more X-rays and a cast refitting.

We needed to do this to make sure the rod and pins were calcifying around the fracture in her femur. On her fifth visit, she experienced her worst



**Raja has recovered from her broken femur and grown into a healthy feline who loves to go for walks and play in the tall grass.**



**Raja enjoys the company of other felines in the Johnson household.**

hypoglycemic attack and was disoriented and then comatose for quite a while. At that point, her recovery was not looking good. Her breathing became shallow and I knew she was at risk, but I still had hope. After almost two hours, we brought the blood glucose back to a normal range and she recovered. At the end of that whole

ordeal, we were hoping she could go at least three weeks without a change, but unfortunately this was not so. Finally, the good news came that it was time to remove the cast. After that it took weeks of therapy, restricting her to a small area and limiting what she could do.

She is now two years old and loves to go for her walks and frolic in the tall prairie grasses, trying to catch crickets, frogs, or whatever she finds exciting. She is a wonderful companion to my other serval and cats. I am hoping for her to do well for many more years. I am so grateful to the veterinarians who worked on her and did not give up.

In closing, I encourage people to familiarize themselves with the species they are considering purchasing and to be sure to understand and accept the responsibility of lifetime care before adopting any animal.



## PlanetUrine Shares Some Good News on Inappropriate Urination in the Home

By Chance Rynearson

When the cat is an exotic or wild cat, the challenge to keep potty habits acceptable is even greater than with a domestic cat. When exotic cats co-exist in the home with family members and they begin house soiling, owners get frustrated! Let's take a look at some simple solutions to help with this problem.

First off, exotic and wild cats need to be spayed and neutered before they reach sexual maturity. Spraying is a normal behavior driven by hormones made in the reproductive tracts. Female cats will not cycle, and therefore do not need to spray to attract a male. Male cats have their testosterone levels greatly reduced when they are neutered, and so the need to announce sexual readiness is gone.

When a cat begins spraying or voiding in an inappropriate area, it could be happening because of a medical problem. You need to have your veterinarian check for any urinary tract infections, or even bladder stones. These ailments can cause pain to a cat when they urinate. Then they associate the pain with the litter box, and avoid using it. Cats then go around finding places where they can pee, with an attempt to "avoid" the pain. It is a major problem for them.

Cats possess a certain subtlety and purpose in everything they do. They are territorial animals. Marking behavior in cats is normal and is an important part of communication between cats. It helps to establish boundaries and reassures the cat that the area is familiar. Marking territory involves the spraying of urine and depositing pheromones from glands located on the cat's body. Another common form of territorial marking, urine spraying, is often stimulated by anything new in your cat's surroundings. If your cat can see or smell another cat outside the house, or, if you have added a piece of new furniture or a new pet or person in the house, these changes could be enough for your cat to "spray" in an attempt to define boundaries.

If your exotic pet has soiled your floors, walls, personal items, or furniture, all is not lost; the smell and stains can be removed. But the only way to completely clean the areas is to use a dry powder

cleaning process - a process that "sponges" it up and absorbs it, thereby removing the source of the stains and odors - permanently! Lightly use a urine release pre-spray, then cover with Urine-Out Powder. Brush into the soiled area and allow powder to dry overnight, then vacuum up.

Also, did you know that the plastic in a litter box actually absorbs the urine odors into the plastic? This can cause a cat to avoid using the litter box too. No matter how hard you try to clean it, you can never remove all of the "scents" that will linger in the litter box. Cats are very sensitive to this.

It is highly recommended that you replace the litter box with a brand new litter box. Most veterinarians recommend replacing it every four to six months. People who have tried this are surprised at how well it has worked to get a cat using the litter box again.

In addition, it is critical that you use a type of litter specially designed to attract your cat to the litter box. PlanetUrine sells Dr. Elsey's Cat Attract litter, a scoopable litter blended with a natural herb attractant.

*DISCOURAGE URINATING IN THE SAME AREA:*

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allows you to remove the urine.

2) Give the areas an unpleasant smell by spraying them with No-P! Housebreaking Aid. When sprayed on the soiled area, No-P! Housebreaking Aid will eliminate the urine "scent" to prevent repeat urination in that area.

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## Who's Protecting Your Animals and Your Animal Enterprise?

By Mindy Patterson

For centuries, those who raise, breed, and work with animals have been revered and lauded for what they do. Today, across America, our rights to own and raise animals are under attack by animal rights activists and their increased influence on government and non-government agencies overseeing issues pertaining to animal welfare. This onslaught regularly violates protection from illegal search and seizure, and a citizen's right to due process of the law, all of which are outlined specifically in the U.S. Constitution.

The rule of law provides that Americans are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law based upon facts and evidence, not emotion and conjecture. Unfortunately for animal owners today, the opposite is prevalent. Animal rights activists use false claims of animal abuse and anonymous tip lines to convince overzealous prosecutors and sympathetic judges to issue warrants when, in most cases, no facts or actual witnessed evidence is provided to obtain the warrant.

As a result, animal owners and animal related businesses live with the daily terror that fraudulent claims, anonymous tips, or an animal rights activist's internet campaign could result in law enforcement arriving at their door and their animals



being seized without due process. Coupled with this real fear, animal owners are then exposed to extravagant animal care bonds and charges for temporary animal care, possible sterilization of high value breeding stock, or euthanization of their animals.

These instances become a big payday for animal rights activists and their organizations, as they raise big money from these circumstances and oftentimes confiscate and sell, or in their words, "rescue and adopt out," the private property of the accused who have not yet been adjudicated in a court of law.

These are real possibilities before the property owner has their day in court. In many actual instances, the rush to judgment fueled by the animal rights activists results in destroyed property, bankrupt businesses, and reputations that are dam-

aged whether they are found guilty or not.

At the end of the court proceeding, if the accused is found not guilty, the activists, prosecutors, state or local government, and the judges all get to walk away with no legal or financial ramifications. The property owner, even if found innocent, is liable for the cost to house his animals for months or years in some cases. The accusers or the municipalities which brought forth the charges often walk

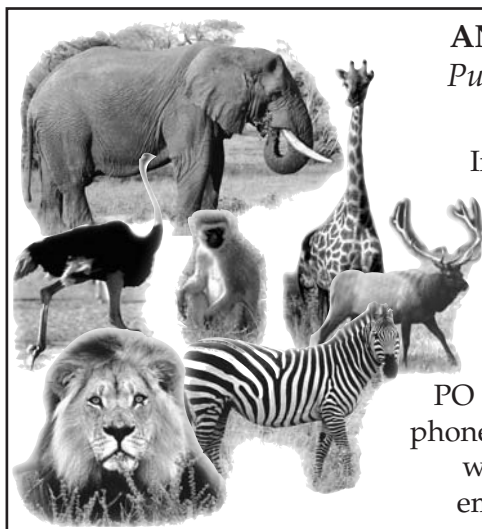
away.

The severity and the regular occurrence of this kind of abuse of our Constitutional rights is underscored by story after story of animal owners and animal businesses who have had their livelihoods and animals threatened by the very real hazard of illegal search and seizure.

It is because of these circumstances that The Cavalry Group was founded. The Cavalry Group is a member-based, private company that advocates for animal owners and animal related businesses while defending our members against illegal search and seizure and false claims of animal abuse.

In addition to legal protection, The Cavalry Group aggressively defends and promotes the interests of our members via legislation and media at the state and federal levels, and leads the fight in lobbying against ALL anti-animal ownership legislative actions promoted by the Humane Society of the U.S. on Capitol Hill. The Cavalry Group has also been featured on major TV and radio news programs, and has had many articles published in national publications such as The New York Times, Breitbart, and American Thinker.

*Mindy Patterson is president and co-founder of The Cavalry Group, a member-based company protecting and defending the Constitutional and private property rights of law abiding animal owners, animal-related businesses, sportsmen, and agriculture concerns nationwide. <http://www.thecavalrygroup.com>.*



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## First Quarter 2014 Board Meeting Report

First quarter Board of Directors Meeting was held on the FCF forum from February 21-March 2, 2014. Board members present were: President Kevin Chambers, Vice President Mindy Stinner, Treasurer Lynn Culver, Secretary Debi Willoughby, and Director Pat Callahan. Director Jim Sanderson and Director Chris Tromborg were not present.

### MOTIONS AND VOTING RESULTS

2014 Budget: approved by consent.

2014 election: moved by Pat Callahan, seconded by Kevin chambers for the voting to be done by the Borda Count method. 5 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed. The board will find someone to count the votes during the board meeting in June.

Executive Director compensation: was moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Pat Callahan, to compensate Lynn Culver \$5,000 for her time doing executive direc-

tor tasks during 2013. 4 Yes votes, 0 No votes, motion passed.

### OTHER MATTERS


In an Executive Session, it was voted to rescind Karl and Kayla Mitchell's memberships due to inappropriate actions working with animals on their behalf. A letter was sent to them informing them of this.

Accreditation Benefit was discussed and tabled until convention. The Board will gather information and discuss options of improving on or ending this benefit.

Website upgrade was discussed as to

when and how we should do this because the existing website is old and needs to be revamped. Lynn and Debi volunteered to take on this task, as well as recruit others to help, with Kim Barker being a potential candidate. More discussion on this at the next board meeting.

Debi Willoughby



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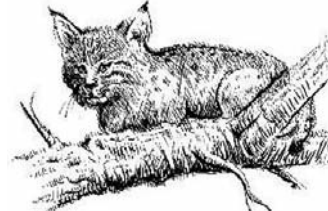
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Feline Conservation Federation

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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.

**Front Cover:** One of the male leopards at the Arabia's Wildlife Centre in Sharjah, UAE. The facility was started by the Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, and now is under the Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA). Balazs worked at the facility, which is drawing attention to all endangered species of the Arabian Peninsula. Since April, Balazs has moved to another breeding facility and now resides in Fujairah, as a breeding manager of the local Crown Prince's own collection.

**Back Cover:** Vicki Keahey, founder of InSync Exotics, photographs one of her favorite tigers, Tacoma, taking a swim. He was born in the summer of 2000, and lived most of his life at InSync Exotics, before passing away August 26, 20013, after losing a nearly three month long battle with canine distemper virus.

