

Feline Conservation Federation

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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

The results of the 2014 FCF Board of Directors voting, which took place on the FCF forums online from Dec 1- Dec 15, 2014, is as follows: All candidates ran unopposed and were each elected with a total of 18 votes cast for each. Kevin Chambers, President; Mindy Stinner, Vice President; Debi Willoughby, Secretary; Lynn Culver, Treasurer; Pat Callahan, Director; Chris Tromborg, Director; and Robert Bean, Director. Though voter turnout was exceedingly low, we do wish to thank those who participated in the election.

One of the first things the Board will be doing is making appointments to the various committees and positions for the next coming two years. In order for the FCF to remain successful, we need everyone's support and help. If you are interested in serving on any of these committees listed below, please let me know as soon as possible at [president@felineconservation.org](mailto:president@felineconservation.org).

- **Journal Committee** - Oversees production of the bi-monthly FCF *Journal*.

- **Conservation Committee** - Awards grants from the FCF's conservation grants fund, oversees the FCF feline registration program, and works to promote conservation both in captivity and in the wild.

- **Education Committee** - Enhances educational opportunities provided by the FCF.

- **Public Relations Committee** - Writes press releases and works with the media for interviews, etc. Works on ways to improve the FCF's public relations aspect.

- **Marketing Committee** - Seeks out opportunities to advertise FCF and for other organizations and companies to advertise with the FCF and in our *Journal*.

- **Legislation Committee** - Keeps members abreast of introduced legislation and spearheads lobbying efforts.

- **Development Committee** - Applies for grants and explores other venues of fundraising to finance FCF projects.

- **Wildcat Safety Net Committee** - Promotes the Wildcat Safety Net Program, fundraises for relocation projects, and awards grants from the Safety Net Fund.

- **Professional Membership Review Committee** - Reviews online applications and approves professional members. This committee is restricted to professional members.

- **Accreditation Committee** - Reviews

applications and awards FCF accreditation to deserving facilities. This committee requires members with a very good knowledge base of husbandry and facility construction.

- **Feline Urgent Response Committee** (aka the FUR Team) - Develops materials and a website to aid owners and law enforcement agencies in dealing with the escape of an exotic feline.

Another very important project that I would like to see the FCF undertake this year is to do a follow-up to our big cat census that we did in 2011. It found there to be only about 2,800 tigers in captivity in the U.S. Animal rights groups use the estimated figure of 10-15,000 when trying to get anti-ownership legislation passed. I firmly believe that the captive population is in a steep decline right now, since the

cats born during the breeding boom of the 1990s are getting older and passing on. We need volunteers to help make phone calls and contact individuals and agencies to retrieve the most recent information. This will not only be for tigers, but for all species that we can get information on. Please contact me if you are interested in giving assistance in this most important project.

In concluding, I would like to thank Dr. Jim Sanderson for his service on the Board. He may not be on the Board now, but I am sure we can count on him for being our conservation advisor and supporting wildcats both in captivity and the wild.

Kevin Chambers

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## From the Executive Director

By Lynn Culver

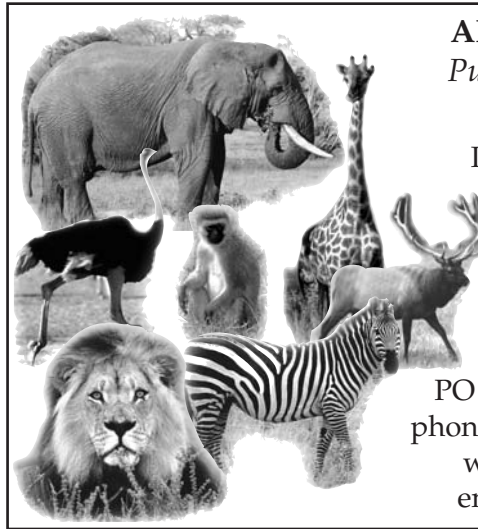
If you renewed by the October 1st deadline, you have already received your annual FCF membership card. If you renewed late, your card is still being mailed. This issue is a special double issue and it means the *FCF Journal* is officially back on schedule.

In this *Journal*, we are proud to publish a three-page color pictorial of felines in UK zoos. Professional photographer Jamie Lucas is a native of the area and he brings us images of feline species rarely seen in the U.S.

Plans are underway for the annual Convention in Wichita, Kansas, June 25 through 27, with the Husbandry Course and Wildlife Educator's Course offered Wednesday, June 24. We'll be lodging at La Quinta Inn and Suites, and all the hotel registration information is on page 24. We'll tour two great zoological parks. We cannot guarantee what kittens will be on hand this year, but I'm counting on some snow leopard or clouded leopard cubs. Make your vacation plans now so you don't miss out on all the fun and felines.

I am reminded of a quote from the *Mahabharata* (circa 400 BCE) that says:

*Do not cut down the forests with its tigers and do not banish the tigers from the forest. The tiger perishes without the forest, and the forest perishes without its tigers. Therefore the tigers should stand guard over the forests and the forest*



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*should protect all its tigers.*

In a perfect symbiosis, the tiger protects its domain from the worst danger it ever faced; arrogant, meddlesome, greedy humans. Could this realization happened in other times and places? Could unheralded Noahs have felt the call to repay the tiger for services rendered and shepherd it to safety? Those of us who have looked into the eyes of a tiger know that it certainly could happen.

In this issue of the *Journal*, we take a long look back at Caspian tigers, a subspecies of tiger that exists only in our history books. Caspian tigers were systematically killed by the Russian empire around the same time as the Amur tigers were

reduced to just an estimated 40 individuals. In the case of Caspian tigers, the species never recovered from this persecution, and it was officially declared extinct in 1970. Tigers were eliminated, not because of an Asian medicinal market or belief in their aphrodisiac properties, but because they were large predators that threatened the lives of humans and domestic animal stock and were interfering with a growing industrial society that failed to understand the importance of tigers to the forest.

To my knowledge, the FCF is the first to publish this account of the human-assisted relocation of Caspian tigers from the eastern side of the Caspian Sea into Kazakhstan and Russia. Author Irving Kornheiser has carefully described what life at the turn of the century was like in this region and how tigers were trapped, transported, and released using caravans called vardo. The efforts of one man, however, could not prevent the extinction of a species under relentless persecution. Take some time to discover this fascinating and unknown world by reading the story of Mo and his Caspian tigers, starting on page 33.

### **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.

**John David Wagner - Intermediate**

**Steven Sidden - Advanced  
Leah Aufill - 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



## We Had A Wild Time At The Animal Keepers' Safety Conference!

By Debi Willoughby

I attended the Animal Keepers' Safety Conference in Dade City, Florida, in November. It was held at FCF member Kathy Stearns's facility, Dade City's Wild Things. The morning I flew out of Boston, there was snow on the ground, so flying into sunny warm Florida was very welcoming! After arriving, it was wonderful to see so many FCF members attending. There were about 35-40 conference attendees and 11 of them were FCF members – thanks everyone for the FCF presence; it is much appreciated!

This was a three-day conference with numerous speakers and 11 topics being discussed. The topics ranged from OSHA to USDA to transporting animals. Every topic was professional and had keeper safety in mind. We received a wealth of knowledge jam packed into a three-day event. Kathy mentioned she will probably have another conference next year, so if you missed this one, plan on attending next time – you will not regret it.

Dade City's Wild Things is an animal facility that is open to the public. They offer a variety of educational encounters including interactive animal encounters,

guided tours and animal swims. Reservations are strongly recommended so that you can make the most out of your visit. They have a wide variety of animals, from tigers, to monkeys, to parrots. During the conference, we were treated to a guided tour of the facility to meet the animals. The animals all looked healthy and happy, their cages were nicely designed, and the grounds throughout the facility were kept clean and landscaped. The tour guide shared personal experiences about each animal we visited and gave valuable information on each species. Everyone attending the conference is in the animal industry and we all enjoyed the tour and extra tidbits about the cage building and diets.

Fellow FCF member John David Wagner was also at the conference and we decided to split up the topics discussed to write articles on them. I will cover a few of the topics here and please look for John David's article in this *Journal* for the topics he wrote about.

Two of Dade City's Wild Things employees, Randy Stearns and Kelsey Johnson, spoke to us about public handling, safety, and training. Randy is the president of Wild Things and Kelsey is an animal trainer at the facility. They spoke to us about public interaction with exotic animals, how to do it safely, and how to train both the trainer and animals. To have a safe interaction with the public, a written protocol is needed and one cannot waver from that protocol or an incident could happen.

They start training their ambassador animals at a young age, getting them used to being handled and desensitizing them to the public and surrounding noises. The public is allowed to




touch the animals under close supervision of an animal trainer. The public is not allowed to touch the animals' faces and the trainer keeps the animals' faces and claws faced towards the trainer to alleviate risk of bites and scratches to the public. They understand that public interaction creates a greater awareness about species, as well as increasing the respect the public has for animals. The more they respect and care about wild animals, the more willing they are to help them in the wild. Their public interactions are professional, fun, and educational, and people go away with an amazing experience that lasts a lifetime! The trainer has the ambassador animal in their control at all times and has the authority to end an interactive session if they feel it is necessary. The most important things to remember when it comes to public interaction are to stick to your protocol, do not let anyone persuade you into doing something outside of the protocol, and always keep your animals and the public safe.

Legislation is always a topic at the forefront of our industry nowadays, and Kathy Stearns's discussion about it was honest and straight to the point. She said if animal rights organizations are not directly after you right now, once they finish with someone else you may be next. And if



Debi Willoughby holds one of the Dade City Wild Things, a tiger cub.



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you are not next, they will push through banning laws that will directly affect you. Hiding is not the solution to this problem; we all need to ban together and go after them like they are going after us. We should also be proactive and submit legislation that will help protect us and our animals. In order for us to be strong, we need to collaborate with our legislators and explain to them how a majority of private owners practice safe animal husbandry and let them know that the private sector holds a more diverse bloodline than the AZA sector. Without this strong bloodline, the captive species will eventually fade out.

Also, inform them of how we are all educating the public and creating revenue.

Kenny Stearns, president of Stearns Peat & Trucking, has been involved in intrastate transportation for 40 years and has been transporting animals across the U.S. for 15 years. He spoke to us about transportation equipment safety and training. The most important tip he gave us was to check your equipment BEFORE you load up and go. Put the empty transport cages and accessories in the transport vehicle and go for a short ride. This will enlighten you as to unusual noises or cage shifting you may not have thought about. Both of these items can affect the animal's psychological well-being. Also, have a written protocol on all travel emergency procedures so you are prepared to handle just about anything. These procedures should include getting a flat tire and being stranded on the side of the road, to animal safety, animal comfort, delays, and traffic jams. Always have the correct equipment in case you are stuck on the side of the road; this equipment can include flashers, flares, and cones. It is the law that if you are stranded for more than ten minutes, you have to put these things out to warn oncoming traffic. Always secure your transport cages in a fashion that is secure, is out of your animal's grip, and is easily accessible to tighten and release when needed. Always act professional when working with the people you are transporting animals to or from and take control of the situation so you can ensure the transporting goes smoothly. One area that is commonly overlooked is the comfort of the animals being transported. Stop every three hours to check on them to make sure they are not too hot or too cold, offer them



**Cynthia Baird takes a swim in the pool with one of the tiger cubs.**

water, and make sure the area is not too drafty. Exotic animals can easily become stressed in these situations, so take the time to stop somewhere and let them eat while the vehicle is not moving. This will give the animal time to relax and eat comfortably. As a rule of thumb – if you would not be comfortable during the transportation process, the animals probably will not be either. Make the situation as stress-free as possible for the animals. This will help their transition into their new home.

The next speaker was Vernon Yates, founder of Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation, located in Florida. Vernon has been working with animals for almost 50 years, provides educational exhibits at FWC functions, and is a holding facility for native and non-native animals. He specializes in animal captures and holds animal evidence for the State of Florida. He spoke to us about his work capturing escaped or “nuisance” native wildlife. Vernon urged us to have the right equipment to handle escaped animals and know how to use the equipment properly. He also told us to be sure the holding and transport cages are adequate for the species that we are transporting. For example, deer should always be put in a transport vehicle/cage that does not allow them to move around freely, otherwise they will hurt themselves. His tip was to drive at night when it is not as

hot, so the comfort of the animal is better. Vernon pounded into our heads that if we would not be comfortable in the transport cage being used, do not put an animal in there. Lastly, before you transport anything, do your research and make sure you are transporting them correctly.

Fellow FCF member John David Wagner presented information on managing difficult people and the press. This is a new FCF workshop that we will be offering soon! John David has worked at the Conservators' Center in North Carolina, for seven years. He is an animal keeper and the Director of

Operations. He taught us how to identify and handle people who may disrupt the positive flow in our environment. It is always better to identify these types of people and “nip it in the bud” before things get out of hand. We also learned how to notice changes in a person's attitude that tells us their time working with us and our animals needs to come to a close sooner rather than later. The last part of his lecture was on how to speak to the press. The press can be very intimidating with the bombardment of questions they like to ask. Most importantly, have a game plan before you speak to the media and stay in control of the interview. The FCF will be offering four-hour workshops on this topic as well as many others in the near future, so stay tuned for more details!

To spice it up a little bit, the Stearns put on a luau one evening to let us unwind and enjoy ourselves. It was a much appreciated break from all of the learning. The trolley that brings people from the gift



**FCF Education director Debi Willoughby presents an advanced training seminar on Sunday as part of the Keeper Safety Conference.**



**To spice things up a bit, Kathy Stearns arranged for fire dancers to follow the authentic luau buffet.**

shop to the zoo dropped us off in the evening and we were greeted by staff that placed flower leis around our necks. They then brought us to a decorated area of their facility to make us feel like we were at a luau! There were decorations, lighting, festive food, and music for us to enjoy. They put on an enormous array of luau-themed foods all displayed on a long table for us to sample. The music put us in the luau-party mood and we all enjoyed talking with each other while we feasted on the delicious buffet. After we filled our bellies, we went into an area to watch



**Puma at Dade City's Wild Things. In addition to all the conference speakers was a tour of the zoo.**



**Plenty of FCF members attended the Keeper Safety Conference. Pictured in front row, from left to right: Debi Willoughby, Kathy Stearns, and Kenny Stearns. Back row, left to right: Mario Lawrence, Aashish Patel, Carl Nicholson, Liz Felton, John David Wagner, Cynthia Baird, Kim Wysong, and Randy Stearns.**

the fire dancers perform. It was amazing how the dancers entertained us with fire without being burned! It continued the "safety" theme of our conference! The dancers delighted us with their dancing and integration of fire into their routines. After the show, we sat around talking with everyone about animals, the things we had learned, and where the animal industry is going. We were also delightfully surprised by the presence of a few of their animal ambassadors that joined us. We were able to get pictures taken with them and learn about them.

As if meeting new people, learning about important animal topics, enjoying a luau with animal encounters, and fire dancers was not enough, there was also a raffle with lots of prizes! I think the most sought after prize was the swim with a tiger cub encounter!

For those who did not win the swim, they could purchase the encounter. Our very own FCF member, Cynthia Baird, did just that and the look on her face after her encounter was priceless! I could tell she really enjoyed herself and will remember that experience forever.

The topics presented at the conference were all geared around keeper safety and there were numerous valuable tidbits throughout the conference for us to learn about and share. I urge you to attend the next conference they put on, because those tidbits we learned will make a world of difference for us and the animal industry.

A special thank you goes out to all who attended and shared their stories, to the staff at Wild Things, the speakers, and the wonderful animals we all met and enjoyed. I cannot wait to do it all again next year!

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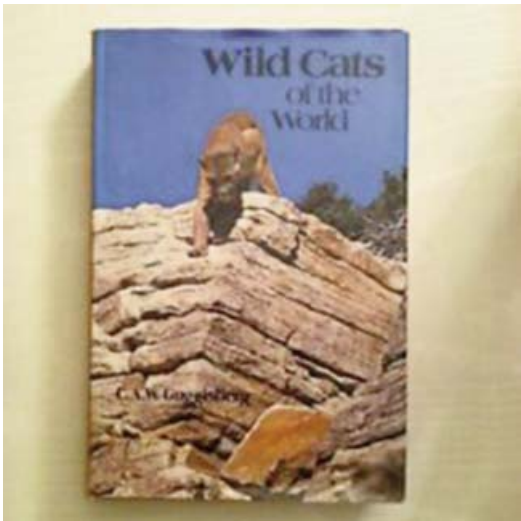


## Three Cat Book Reviews

By Pat Callahan

Collecting books about wild cats is a meaningful, rewarding, sometimes challenging pastime. It has been a while since I reviewed any books (I did some reviews of Alan Rabinowitz books.) and I hope these reviews are helpful to members choosing volumes to seek out. The titles this time range from informative yet folksy, to the cerebral and tedious/scientific. Availability of the books varies from very difficult out-of-print volumes to those easily found on the internet or in used booksellers' inventories.

My copy of C.A.W. Guggisberg's *Wild Cats of the World* (Taplinger Press) was obtained in a second-hand bookstore in



***Wild Cats of the World*, by C.A.W. Guggisberg (Taplinger Press).**

Chicago, circa 1990. This book, from 1975, is the oldest I'll review this time and is a favorite of mine. Written in a pleasant English naturalist style, it will appeal to any age group, young adults to older folks. In this book, you can learn the first scientific description of a cat or when the last wild specimen was seen/killed. All photos are black and white and, instead of range maps, the author carefully lists the range countries and regions where each cat is reportedly found. You may need to consult an atlas for some of the obscure regions; I know I did! Each cat species gets a chapter, and, of course, the taxonomy is out of date. It

is good reading for cat people, both large and small cat species. I have to mention, the margay photo appears to be an excellent taxidermy mount!

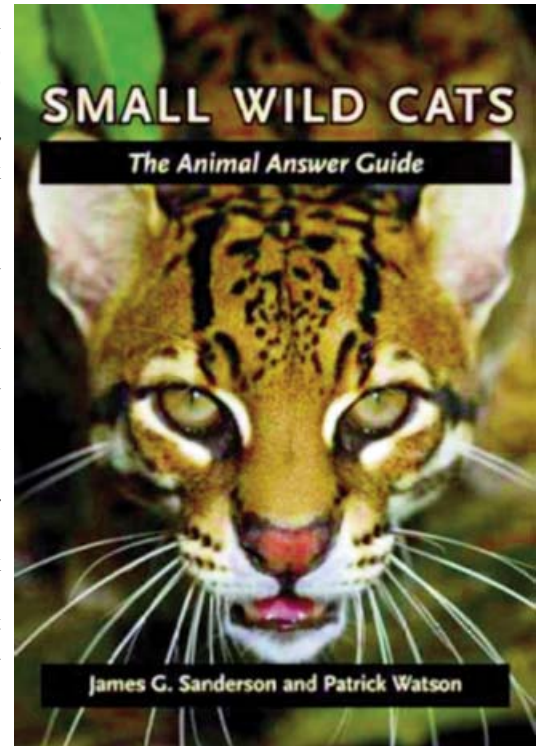
*Small Wild Cats: The Answer Guide* by Jim Sanderson and Patrick Watson (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 2011) is next and, yes, it is by FCF Science Advisor Jim Sanderson and is a book anyone can enjoy. I recommend it for members who need some way to explain to friends and family why small cats matter, fascinate, and generate such passion! This book is available via a link on Jim's Small Cat Conservation Alliance website ([www.smallcats.org](http://www.smallcats.org)) and other sources. (Note: if you are so moved, you can contribute to Jim's work from that site.)

The format of this book is not a small cat species guide, but a broad discussion of cat characteristics and biology. Included are plenty of photos, plus sections on cats in literature and in conflict with humans. And as well are the whys and hows of small cat biology and social function all in one book.

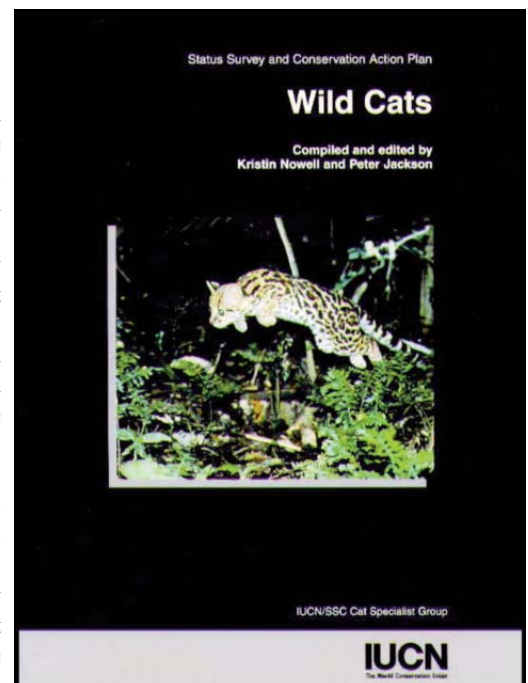
Next is a hard to find book, *Wild Cats: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan* by K. Nowell and P. Jackson (IUCN Cat Specialist Group Gland Switzerland 1996, although some copies are printed by Island Press). This book has been out of print for a while and will be hard to find.

The format is a species by species account with excellent maps and photos. There are also sections on trade-commerce in furs and body parts, cats in captivity, and prospects for reintroduction. The "Action Plan" section discusses priority projects and individual species projects for conservation. This book has extensive references. It is not a curl up with and read book.

The last time I tried to buy a copy of this book was circa 2005. I bought both copies available from a private seller. I re-sold the second copy for more than it cost me. Sometimes that's the way it goes in hunting books!



***Small Wild Cats: The Animal Answer Guide*, by James G. Sanderson and Patrick Watson (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 2011).**



***Wild Cats: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*, by Kristin Nowell and Peter Jackson.**

## Tales from a Tiger Groupie

By Irving Kornheiser

As I start this journey of childhood past, I am drawn back to my mother's wisdom and wit. I always get apprehensive at this time of year, because her birthday and her death date are the same, which I often think as a "blessing," but I still get very sad and miss her, my father, my brother, and my girlfriend very much.

As this article begins, I feel this little antidote will help the reader to fully understand the inherent nature of my deep feelings and concerns about animal welfare in captivity. These concerns have been my life-long pursuits even though I realize that animals and their welfare appear only as secondary characters in these stories. For me, it should be known, as well as understood, that my true favorites are, and always has been, the tigers themselves who learned to adapt, survive, and even conquer captivity in spite of human intervention and institutionalized cruelty.

I wish to speak about my own personal human feline heroes whom I encountered before I turned 18 years old; individuals of whom I write have long been gone. However, as I grew to that age when my memory has started to fail, I truly felt the need to get their stories onto paper so someday someone would find more than just numbers on the page.

### Mr. Ed and his "Wild Kingdom"

At my mother's funeral, one of her close friends told me this story which sort of explains why I have written this piece. The woman told me that my mother often referred to me as a "tiger groupie." When asked what she meant, mom related that at 13 she saw me encounter a man on the street walking a tiger with a chain leash. My mother's friend then asked her, "What did Irv do?" Mom, with only the pride of a mother, answered the following... Instead of running or moving away from the man and tiger, he went right up to them and began to pet and play with the tiger, and he started talking to the man.

Back in September 1964, the 1964 World's Fair was the hottest event of that day. I had moved to a new school and started the seventh grade. Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School was a huge building compared to my old school, sur-

rounded by many types of ball fields, a deep grove of trees with a stream running through it, and a large lake, all being located next to the Valley Stream State Park. Only a few houses were built by the school's property, and they were considered to be special in terms of their location adjacent to the school in a very small section of a neighborhood that was surrounded by VS State Park, and the senior high school, named Valley Stream Central High School. As the school year opened, I joined the JHS junior varsity football team, which had practice sessions after school.

After the practices were finished each day, the coach would send the JV squad on a mile run around the VS State Park lake which was next to the school's property, but you had to travel through a small section of the residential neighborhood to get there. Since I was heavy and out of shape for running, I often was well behind my teammates in the run, and many times for me it was just a long walk, followed by a cold shower if I was lucky. This routine and regiment was the basic form of sports conditioning back in those days and not viewed as a punishment.

I played sports all during junior and senior high school, and all I can remember were the many coaches at the end of the practice sessions yelling out my favorite phrase, "Once around the lake and home you go!" You see, I had a secret. During these runs when I fell behind my teammates, I made a detour. During one of these run/walk sessions back in the seventh grade during the winter of 1964, I first encountered a man who was walking a tiger with a steel chain leash in my path back to the school's locker room. This man was not a stranger to me, but a well-respected local celebrity who lived in my home town of Valley Stream, New York, and who was a well-known wild animal trainer and circus/fair performer. "Mr. Ed," as we would refer to him in the

neighborhood, was a very important citizen of VS, he was a WWI War hero and U.S. Air Force Flying ACE, as well as a keeper and trainer of wild animals that he allowed to live within the rooms of his house with his wife and two children. Mr. Ed would also be a regular on the TV variety shows such as *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, *The Merv Griffin Show*,



**Edwin J. Ferrar posed here with one of his lions that he could be seen with on various tv shows or riding around in his "Wild Cargo" wagon on the streets of Long Island, NY. In 1962, Ferrar was charged with harboring a wild animal in his home, a lion named Congo, but charges were suspended by the judge after he met the animal in the court's parking lot and Congo licked his hand.**

and many other local news and entertainment programs.

It all started for Mr. Ed after he had a guest appearance on the *I Got a Secret* game show. This appearance was a major story of the day in New York City and Long Island, as well as an event which led Mr. Ed to great levels of notoriety worldwide. In fact, I remember that it was the panel members of the *I Got a Secret* show that gave him the name "Mr. Ed" during the show's questioning on air.

Ed never had a secret while living in Valley Stream. Both prior to and after his appearances on TV, and even in the years that followed, he was routinely seen in the neighborhood driving his pet lion in the back seat of his vehicle that we all knew he called "Wild Cargo," or swimming in his backyard pool with his pet jaguar. His house was famous as well; in the small



Valley Stream community, everyone who walked and/or drove past the house saw Ed's signs, such as the large pair of mounted animal horns on his second floor outside flashing which he lit up at night year around, and the sign at the front door reading, "Welcome to Wild Kingdom, Enter at Your Own Risk." While I only meet Mr. Ed three times, of note here was that my mother's seeing me with Ed and his tiger walking was the second time I met Ed and his tiger in the street. I was the last one returning to the school locker room to be picked up that day, and Mom had started searching for me when she saw us in front of Ed's house playing on his lawn with the tiger.

I spent many hours of my high school sports recreation time traveling to Ed's backyard to visit with his big cats, who roam freely within his backyard enclosures next to the fences adjacent to the VS State Park. I simply got lost being around a massive male lion or a huge Bengal tiger parading around a Valley Stream backyard like he was at home in the jungle.

And, over the six years of my high school education, I must have viewed more than two dozen of Mr. Ed's exotic big cats, including lions, jaguars, leopards, servals, ocelots, and my beloved Bengal tiger. Some were there for many years, while others just visited for a day or two, but all of them were greatly appreciated and loved by all members of the Ferrari family. But Ed's external family were the children of Valley Stream who grew up to be adults like me, who learned from Ed that love, respect, and appreciation of big cats were the fruits which would allow the big cats to be accepted as honored members of the community and this neighborhood.

I truly wish to thank Ed Ferrar for bringing them into our lives, and, as I remember this tale, I find myself again lost in Mr. Ed's jungle, Valley Stream's own "Wild Kingdom."

Rest in peace, Edwin Ferrar. He died July 16, 2010, at the age of 90. Thank you for your service to the country, as well as the children of Valley Stream, New York, who grew up learning that big cats are creatures who may need love and respect from humans, not a jungle.

**Monika Meyer-Holzapfel, Ph.D., and  
Dr. Michael W. Fox**

The next individuals who greatly influ-

enced my teenage years, as well as my whole life, were an author of a chapter in a book (Chapter 25) concerning animal behavior, and Dr. Michael W. Fox, the noted vet and animal care expert of my generation, who was the editor of this classic text. If you do not know of Dr. Fox's work with animals, just pick your daily newspaper up and read his columns.

As the story goes, back in 1968, my family adopted a puppy who was, as we later learned, seriously sick. My family rushed the poor sick dog to my family's vet, who determined that an immediate operation was needed. So, he scheduled the surgery to be done during the night when the office was closed. My family and I stayed in the office section of the animal hospital during the procedure and the dog's recovery. During the night as my family members slept in office chairs and on the floor, I spent four to five hours talking to the brother of the vet who was doing the operation, who was also a vet who specialized in large and exotic animals, and who worked part-time at the Bronx Zoo. Dr. Baum and I started a long conversation about the big cats at the Bronx Zoo. In particular, the view that I had that the large carnivores seemed to be doing nothing in their exhibits but "pacing endlessly around the enclosures in the figure eight direction." A question which, throughout my life, I have asked of more than 100+ individual zoological professionals over the course of the past 45 years or so.

After many hours of debating this behavior with me as positive and a healthy situation for the animals while in captivity, because no known big cats in captivity had been removed from the wild and, thus, this behavior could be considered "normal" in captivity, Dr. Baum had a breakthrough of thought in that he remembered briefly seeing an article in a new book on animal behavior. He called out the name "Monica" and ran into his inner office and retrieved a new book from his pile of mail. The book was *Abnormal Behavior in Animals*, ed. Michael W. Fox, Saunders Company, 1968. And in this book was a

chapter by Monika Meyer-Holzapfel, Ph.D., a pioneering director of the Berne Zoo in Switzerland, whose article was entitled "Abnormal Behavior in Zoo Animals," (Chapter 25, pgs. 476-503).

As the vet turned pages in the book regarding this chapter, he then told me to read it and his attitude quickly changed. Obviously the title of the book gives away the situation and his change in demeanor. As I remember this incident some 45 years later, the look on the vet's face told the story. Dr. Baum, a professional veterinarian of many years in practice as a zoological vet, appeared somewhat embarrassed as to his view of the "pacing in captivity" issue as "positive and healthy for the animals." He then left to do his rounds in the clinic.

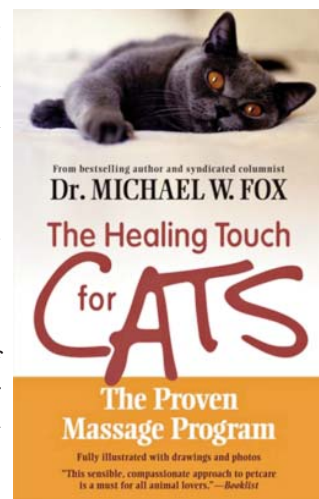
I read this chapter as a 16 year old teenager with poor reading skills could only comprehend, but it gave me a renewed sense of determination and dedication to the plight of big cats and other carnivores in captivity among the vast zoological settings. It also instilled in me the concept that pacing of animals in the zoos that I witnessed as a teenager was a pattern of abnormal behavior, and not that of a normal behavior pattern of territorial diligence that would be found among wild co-species as indicated in zoological circles at the time.

So here is one for Monika, a true pioneer of zoology and animal psychology. Also, kudos to Dr. Baum for teaching me an important part of being human. And I cannot forget here the other Dr. Baum, who saved the life of my dog, Lady.

I never knew Monika Meyer-Holzapfel. She was of German background and the body of her research and other writings are in that language. If you search out her works in the virtually unknown field of Animal

Psychology (circa 1930-1965), you will find a unique "giant" in the understanding of animal captivity and the role of zoos in establishing healthy environments for animals.

For many years into my own research on big cats in captivity, I was not able to locate this book or any listings on Dr. Meyer-Holzapfel's writings and research



**Just one of several publications by Dr. Michael W. Fox.**

because this book was long out-of-print. According to an email response from Dr. Fox himself, he believed that the book was ahead of its time and extremely “controversial,” especially in the veterinary and zoological communities. He believed the book’s distribution, marketing, and sales was suppressed for many years, by that only one edition was printed in a lim-

ited run without any follow-up editions. And at that time (circa 1968-1969), the public view of animal welfare, care, and cruelty was very limited at best.

Searches of many libraries proved fruitless over the years. It was only after my learning to search out reference materials on the computer in 2007, that I was able to locate his book online. Thank you,

Amazon, for finally providing me a copy of it, so I can finally finish reading Monika’s chapter that I started reading approximately 46 years ago, but never got to finish!

By the way, the rest of the book is cool as well, and very, very important to any person who cares about animal welfare in captivity.

## If You Are Not at the Table, You Are on the Table

By Mindy Stinner

To gain a better understanding of the many legislative concerns affecting the captive animal industry, my assistant director, Julia Wagner, and I attended the annual National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) conference, which was held this year in Orlando, Florida. After two full days of listening to incredible speakers, meeting new friends from all areas of the animal industry, and gaining new perspective on the challenges we are collectively confronting, we determined that NAIA is a critical group for helping anyone who is concerned about captive exotic felid ownership stay informed about legislative changes.

NAIA was founded in 1991, “to support and promote best practices in responsible animal ownership and use while providing a viable alternative to animal rights



become active with this group.

As the leading animal welfare lobbying group in the nation, NAIA is positioned to be a powerful voice for us all. This year’s conference was heavily focused on lobbying in order to counteract the activities of animal rights groups, making the topics widely applicable. The speakers represented a spectrum of views and backgrounds, and we were honored to have the opportunity to hear such powerful voices from across our industry.

Most pertinent to wildlife ownership was the illuminating presentation by attorneys John Simpson and Michelle Pardo, who represented Feld Entertainment, the parent company of Ringling Bros., in their more than decade-long battle against HSUS, ASPCA, and other claimants. Their landmark total \$25 million settlement has brought much-needed attention to the manner in which HSUS and other animal rights groups have been conducting themselves. Their fascinating presentation included a detailed view of the complex and arduous process of defending their client and then pursuing redress in the case, as well as specific examples of the compelling evidence that resulted in this verdict.

[This language is directly from page 1 of the NAIA booklet: “Our Conference”]

“The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) is a charitable 501(c)(3) educational organization of recreational, business, agricultural, and scientific interests founded in 1991, to support and promote best practices in responsible animal ownership and use while providing a viable alternative to animal rights extremism. NAIA’s membership consists of pet owners, dog and cat clubs, rescue groups, breeders, veterinarians, research scientists, farmers, fishermen, hunters, and wildlife biologists.

“NAIA is committed to preserving the human-animal bond, the special bond that exists when people live and work with animals, and supports everyone from beginners to professionals as they strive to learn more about animal care and husbandry.”

What does NAIA do?

“NAIA supports animal welfare and the rights of animal owners by:

Providing factual information to the public about animals and animal welfare issues,

Creating programs to improve the care and welfare of animals,

Helping local animal welfare groups achieve their mission,

Helping local authorities write laws that target irresponsible ownership practices and inhumane treatment of animals while safeguarding the rights of responsible animal owners, and

Supporting the enforcement of state and federal laws that mandate the proper treatment of animals and provide penalties for animal abuse.”

David Jentsch, a UCLA neuroscientist who endured and witnessed years of



extremism. NAIA’s membership consists of pet owners, dog and cat clubs, rescue groups, breeders, veterinarians, research scientists, farmers, fishermen, hunters, and wildlife biologists.” (See related sidebar.) It is time that wildlife owners

When the activists were informed that parts of their case were no longer considered valid by the courts, they attempted to reframe the case as a morally justified action. The response: “There is no ‘Robin Hood’ defense to illegal and wrongful conduct.”



harassment by activists attacking himself and his colleagues, gave a rousing presentation on the psychology of extremism, and he gave insight into the deleterious impact of the animal rights groups on the UCLA scientific community. Over the course of several years, Dr. Jentsch and his colleagues were confronted, harassed, and even physically attacked. On more than one occasion, attacks aimed at researchers' homes were accidentally misdirected to a neighbor's home, including activists setting fire to an elderly man's house. Eventually, Dr. Jentsch had his own car firebombed in his driveway, ironically also setting fire to the local hillside where endangered cougars reside. He helped rally support of the scientific and student community on campus into their own pro-science movement that resulted in turnouts outnumbering and overwhelming the opposition and reframing the discussion around the progress in medical care that has resulted from research with animals. His actions also helped compel the university itself to address these issues more directly, including providing security for his family and those of other high profile researchers.

Cindy Buckmaster, PhD and Director for the Center for Comparative Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, continued this theme by emphasizing that we need to be having this discussion, framing the argument, and defining the language. She indicated the concern that the language surrounding these issues has been effectively "hijacked" by people with a strong agenda in a way that is not helpful to our goals, and she is an advocate for us reframing the conversation using our own language. She had some excellent suggestions for replacing certain emotionally packed "trigger" words and phrases with others that will help the public perceive more accurately how we work with animals as an industry. Her focus on animals involved in research activities kept her suggestions in that realm; replacing "experiment" with "study," and "animal rights activist" with "animal rights extremist," can be extended to replacing "cage" with "habitat" or "enclosure," and "facility" with "park." The object is not to cloud the issue, but to use our own language that has not been shaped by extremists into harmful subtext.

Other speakers addressed diverse issues

relevant to the ownership and use of animals from carriage horses in NYC, to keeping farming of animals legal.




The last speaker was Robert Guyer, President of Engineering THE LAW (a training school for lobbying activity) and author of texts like *Guide to State Legislative Lobbying*. His comprehensive presentation included a broad overview of how the system really works, how interest groups can make the most impact, and how best to allot your time and effort if you wish to make an impact on the legal process. The overview was very comprehensive and well organized. Mr. Guyer's newest book is just off the press and his workshops come highly recommended by previous attendees. To learn more, visit his website at [www.learn-to-lobby.com/](http://www.learn-to-lobby.com/).

With a lineup of speakers like this, NAIA has demonstrated a commitment to protecting legal ownership of animals across the board, without a specific focus on just pet or agricultural interests. Their annual conference is held in the fall, and more information is available on their website at [www.naiaonline.org/](http://www.naiaonline.org/).

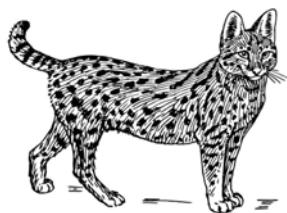


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# Speculation on a Symbiotic Relationship between African Lions and African Honey Badgers

By William H. Smith, Ph. D.

This paper seeks to show the nature and mutual benefit between two of Africa's most powerful and fearsome terrestrial predators. For thousands of years, lions and honey badgers have evolved together in a symbiotic relationship that is mutually beneficial. Lions kill or deter predators of young honey badgers, and honey badgers kill or control poisonous snakes, which may venomize adult lions and lion cubs, and eat very young lion cubs.

## African Lion

Many male lions will often exceed 250 kg in weight, making the lion the second largest feline in the world after the tiger. The lion (*Panthera leo*) has been subdivided into six recognized African sub-species, based on regional differences, with West and Central African lions more closely related to Asiatic lions than to the southern and East African lions. Recent genetic analysis (O'Brien et al. 1987, Dubach et al. 2005) has shown all African lions to be the same and only the Asiatic lion, *Panthera leo persica* (Meyer, 1826), is recognized separate from the African lion, *Panthera leo leo* (Linnaeus, 1758).

The lion was the most widespread large land mammal after humans, until the late Pleistocene. The largest lion known (400 kg) *Panthera leo atrox*, lived in North America, until its extinction at the end of the Pleistocene. Perfect skeletons of *atrox* and saber-toothed cats may be seen in the Page Museum at the site of the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, California. In

Europe, images of lions exist dated to the end of the Pleistocene epoch (also referred to as the Upper Paleolithic period, 40,000 - 10,000 years before present). Lascaux and Chauvet caves, located in southern France, are a few of the sites of this period containing lion drawings or images. One of the most famous and unusual examples of Upper Paleolithic "artwork" is the depiction of the lion "Lowenmensch" (also referred to as the Lion Man of Hohlenstein) statue that combines a lion and a human together. Found in a cave in Germany, the statue is 32,000-40,000 years old.

From about 200 years before Christ, until about 400 years after Christ, lions were the most popular animals to "perform" in the numerous Roman arenas (such as the Coliseum in Rome) stretching across the vast Roman Empire. Lions were primarily used to fight each other, gladiators, bears, tigers, leopards, and to execute criminals. Thousands of lions were killed during this long period of Roman domination.

In Europe, Africa, and Asia, lions have long been icons for humanity as symbols of nobility, strength, royalty, and bravery. The lion is the mascot for the MGM Movie Company and a symbol on national flags and coats of arms.

Throughout history, captive lions have been commonly held in zoos. One of the most famous modern European collections was the Tower of London Menagerie. More than 1,000 lions (represent-

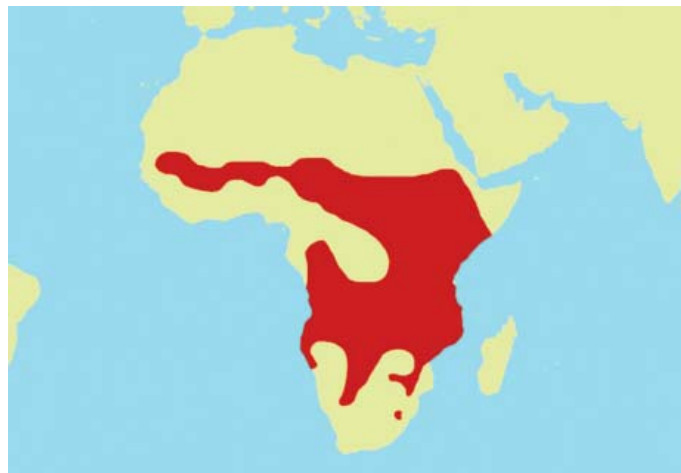


**The lion was the most widespread large land mammal after humans, until the late Pleistocene.**

ing all present living sub-species) are currently in wildlife parks and zoos throughout the world. Wild lions live 10-14 years, while in captivity they may live as long as 20 or more years. Males in the wild normally do not live more than ten years, primarily because of battles with other males. Apollo, a male lion which resided in the Honolulu Zoo, lived to be 22 years old.

Lions usually inhabit savannah and grasslands, but will sometimes find their way into forest and bush. Lions are normally nocturnal, but at times they become crepuscular. Lions are apex and keystone predators, although they are also scavengers. They may obtain over 50 percent of their food from scavenging. Lions' principle large prey includes herbivores such as wildebeest, zebra, and buffalo. Lions commonly use several hunting strategies, some of which incorporate several lions in the hunt and capture of prey. These cooperative lions are often genetically related females. Males may do a considerable amount of specialized hunting in some prides. In the majority of lion prides, females do all the hunting of prey.

Lions are unusually social compared to most other cats. The pride may consist of many females, young males and a small number of adult males. A pride's territory may be as large as 100 square miles. The majority of African lions survive only in sub-Saharan territory, usually referred to



**The present range of African lions.**



as the “savannah.” Because of its size and ferocity, which are seen as major threats to humans and their livestock, the wild lion appears to be a seriously threatened species. There has been a dramatic decline in its African range during the later half of the 20th century. In 1950, the population was estimated to be only half of the four hundred thousand African lions living wild at the turn of the century; today there are only about 20,000 wild African lions remaining. Before 1900, they were found in almost all of Africa, and from Southwest Asia to India. Two centuries ago, lions even populated Eastern Europe. In the Pleistocene epoch (0.34 million to 11,000 years ago), the New World lion eventually made its way north to the Canadian Yukon and south to Peru.

Wild lions are considered vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Habitat loss, conflicts with humans, poachers, big-game hunters, diseases such as tuberculosis and feline immune deficiency virus, and decreasing genetic diversity are the greatest threats. The present range of the greatest number of wild African lions stretches between sub-Saharan south central Africa, east to the Sudan. Presently they are most concentrated in Kruger National Park. Honey badgers also occupy this same savannah area. Honey badgers have had a long evolutionary co-history with African lions in this



**Leopards are a major enemy of both young lions and young honey badgers.**

region. The honey badger is a keystone African predator, but small by comparison to the largest keystone African predator - the lion.

#### **African Honey Badger**

The honey badger (*Mellivora capensis*) is locally known as “ratel” throughout southern Africa. Ratel is an Afrikaans word derived from the Middle Dutch word for honeycomb. The honey badger’s genus is *Mellivora*, which means honey eater. Unlike the other African predators, it is not considered fully endangered. Honey badgers are classified as “least concerned” or least endangered by several conservation organizations, probably because of its extreme range, small size, and adaptability.

The very earliest evidence of honey badgers is from Asian fossils dated to the mid-Pliocene. Despite its name, the honey badger is not closely related to other badgers such as the American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), but are most closely related to the martin family of mustelidae weasels. Twelve species of honey badgers are generally recognized. They are usually differentiated by geographic distribution, size, and the extent of grayness or whiteness on the

back or dorsal side. The scope of this paper is concerned with the following subspecies of African honey badgers: cape ratel, Ethiopian ratel, black ratel, and Lake Chad ratel.

Honey badgers have developed several distinctive and effective characteristics for survival. The honey badger can turn within its loosely connected skin. This is probably an adaptation for defense and fighting. Ears appear as low ridges on head skin, another adaptation for fighting and for digging tunnels. They have five toes on each foot, and have enormous claws (up to four inches long) on the front

feet. The honey badger’s dental formula is - 3131/3131. The teeth are remarkably thick, but the canines are relatively short for such a fierce predator. Males typically weigh 9-16 kilos, while the smaller females weigh 5-10 kilos. The females usually have two pairs of milk producing organs referred to as mammae.

Along with other distinctive specializations, the honey badger has a reversible anal pouch, with a specialized odor gland capable of producing a very irritating smell. This smell may be detected more than 40 yards away, and may help repel other predators. This noxious smell may also assist in calming bees when the honey badger raids hives.

Honey badger fur is generally less dense and shorter in the summer and thicker and longer in the winter. Unusually thick skin and dense hair make the badger difficult to kill. The honey badger is considered by many researchers to be one of the most ferocious and tenacious predators in the world. It took over one hour for a leopard to kill an old toothless, blind, honey badger female. Honey badgers are said to have endured repeated machete strikes to the back. They are usually solitary, but they may hunt in pairs during mating season.

Gestation of cubs lasts about seven to ten weeks, with two cubs usually being born. By 18 months, honey badgers are usually ready to fend for themselves and separate from their mothers, but may stay as long as two years. Honey badger males may occasionally kill young badgers, which hasten the females to go into estrus sooner. Honey badgers develop excellent



**The claws of a honey badger may be four inches long.**



tree climbing skills as they mature. The life span of the honey badger is around 24 years. They live alone in self-dug holes that are one to three meters long and use no bedding. Additionally, honey badgers may sometimes occupy abandoned warthog dens and old termite mounds. Scent markings indicating identity are left at common badger urinals. African honey badgers live in an environment inhabited by numerous, much larger predators, including lions, leopards, hyenas, and cape hunting dogs. These predators are the main threat to young honey badgers.

Honey badgers are one of the few animals to use tools. Other tool-using animals include various birds, sea otters, and chimps. In captivity, honey badgers may use sticks, rocks, heaps of mud, and stones to escape from their walled pit enclosures. If necessary, they move large pieces of wood on their backs with which to build a scaffold. They can easily endure beatings, porcupine quills, and snakebites. Most of these never puncture the skin. If herds of cattle or Cape buffalo intrude on a ratel's burrow, the badgers will usually attack the intruders.

There is speculation that the counter-shaded coats (the gray and white back stripes of the honey badger) evolved in cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) cub coloration as protective mimicry when the cubs are most vulnerable. Seeing this particular marking pattern, which some animals associate with the fearsome honey badger, may help to ward off or deter potential cheetah cub predators.



**Honey badgers are avid consumers of poisonous snakes, which may comprise 25% of the honey badger diet.**

Honey badgers eat insects, scorpions, frogs, tortoises, rodents, lizards, eggs, birds, snakes, and honey. Poisonous snakes comprise about 25 percent of the honey badger's diet. Honey badgers also have a fondness for bee larva incased in honeycombs. Honey badgers seem to recognize the distinctive call of the honeyeater bird, which helps it to locate bee-hives. Honey badgers are sometimes followed by jackals (*Canis simensis*) and birds of prey, which attempt to catch escaped honey badger prey. The honey badger can sometimes be a very wasteful predator and surplus killing is common. Male badgers can cover over 25 miles in a day as they forage. In an incident reported by one African farmer, in one evening a honey badger killed seven Muscovy ducks and 36 chickens.

#### **Symbiosis between African Lions and African Honey Badgers**

A healthy adult lion has almost no threat from other animals in its range except for poisonous snakes and other lions. Lions usually avoid snakes. Honey badgers do not avoid snakes, but avidly eat them. Badgers may reduce or eliminate snakes from a particular area (25 percent of the honey badger's diet is comprised of poisonous snakes). *This element of control of poisonous snake populations by honey badgers may benefit both lion cubs and adults.* Even an adult lion may die or become very ill if bitten by a



**Lions may be very reluctant to attack a healthy adult honey badger.**

cobra or mamba. Lion cubs have been killed or venomized by snakes in Africa, but they are not always eaten. This is known to have happened to every litter member when the mother and pride were hunting and absent. Lions have no physiologic protection from the venom of poisonous snakes. Honey badgers have a physiologic immunity or resistance that can negate very large amounts of snake venom. The skin of the honey badger is very thick and dense as to make venomization difficult. The dorsal hair is also specialized to be very coarse and thick, which is a first line of defense against the bites of poisonous snakes.

The honey badger is small enough to pursue animals such as venomous snakes through the thickest brush and thorns or in holes. Snakes typically hide their nests of eggs in areas of thick brush and thorns. These hidden nests are often accessible to the honey badger, which eats young snakes and perforates eggs, which reduces snake populations. They often pursue snakes through the trees in order to make them fall to the ground, where they are then dispatched by the honey badger. Lions usually do not climb trees, but they may occasionally lounge on larger, lower





**The black mamba may be very aggressive.**

trunk branches. They do not normally pursue snakes on the ground or in the trees. Lions are too large to pursue snakes or other prey through dense brush or thorn thickets. They are also too large to easily pursue honey badgers in earth dens or smaller rock caves. Lions may occasionally kill honey badgers that are young or weakened, but usually will not engage a healthy adult honey badger because the risk of bodily injury to the lion may be too great.

*Lions tend to repel or eliminate leopards, hyenas, and cape dogs from their local area. These predators are major enemies of both young lions and young honey badgers. By controlling these rival predators, the lion may help to diminish danger to young honey badgers and lion cubs.* Male lions have been known to relentlessly pursue the dominant female hyena and kill it by crushing its skull. This action disrupts the social structure of the hyena group. Leopards avoid lions because they are seen as chief competition and a great danger to leopard cubs and adults. If given any opportunity, lions will kill leopards. Leopards have been known to kill honey badgers - especially young or sick and weak individuals.

#### **African Venomous Snakes**

Africa is home to a variety of poisonous snakes. Most of these reptiles are categorized as lapedes, a type of venomous snake that have hollow fangs fixed to the upper jaw at the top of the mouth. The most numerous and dangerous African snakes are the black and green mambas, vipers, cobras, and rinkhals. The black mamba (*Dendroaspis polylepis*) is the largest poisonous snake in Africa, and the fastest

moving snake in the world. Excellent sense of smell and night vision make them some of the deadliest animals in Africa. Locally referred to as the “kiss of death,” humans have been known to die within 20 minutes after being bitten by a black mamba. Cobras are considered by many herpetologists to be the most intelligent snakes. The word cobra actually refers to a variety of hooded snakes. King cobras

(native to India) can reach over 18 feet in length and can lay 20 to 40 eggs at a time, which take 60-80 days to incubate. Cobras will remain near their eggs and defend them until they hatch.

Poisonous snakes are opportunists, hunting birds, small mammals and their young, lizards, and other snakes. Hunting is primarily done at night, but they sometimes go weeks without feeding. The amount of neurotoxin held by a king cobra can kill 20 people or one adult elephant with just one bite. Smaller cobras and mambas inhabiting the same African range as the lion and honey badger can produce enough venom at a time to kill six people, or several adult lions.

The honey badger has been known to survive more than one of these venomous bites. Snakebites may tend to happen at night when both lions and poisonous snakes are hunting.

The Egyptian mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*) is also an avid snake killer. The mongoose has a certain limited amount of immunity to snake venom. Mongooses avoid contact with honey badgers. Because of its small size (2-3.5 kg), the mongoose is a potential prey species for both honey badgers and lions.

#### **Conclusion**

Honey badgers have had a long evolutionary co-history with African lions within eastern sub-Saharan Africa. The honey badger is a keystone African predator, but small (which it uses to advantage) in comparison to the largest keystone African predator - the lion. Primarily because of the size differential, lions and honey badgers do not ordinarily compete for the same prey species. Honey badgers are not a usual prey species for lions.

*Lions tend to repel or eliminate leopards, hyenas, and cape dogs from their local area. These predators are major enemies of both young lions and young honey badgers. By controlling these rival predators the lion may help to diminish danger to young honey badgers and lion cubs.*

A healthy adult lion has almost no threat from other animals in its range except for poisonous snakes and other lions. Lions lack physiologic protection from the venom of poisonous snakes. Conversely, honey badgers have a physiologic immunity or resistance that can



**Adult female and male lions.**

negate very large amounts of snake venom. Twenty five percent of the honey badger's diet is comprised of poisonous snakes. Large snakes may prey upon very young lion cubs. Badgers may reduce or eliminate snakes from a particular area. *This element of control of poisonous snake populations by honey badgers may benefit both lion cubs and adults.*

## Blast from the Past: News From Around the Jungle

*Long Island Ocelot Club Newsletter*  
Volume 6 Number 5  
September 1962

### “SHE ALSO BITES”

Mrs. C. V. Chester  
Clinton, Tennessee

Conrad and I enjoy reading the *Newsletter*. More than once the information on feeding and medical care has been priceless. For example, when Kelda, our margay, was much younger and we were less “initiated,” Kelda ran into the thicket Conrad was clearing with a machete. The result was an ugly cut that did not quite sever the muzzle, but fortunately missed the eyes. Of course, our Dr. Robinson’s first reaction was to reach for the sodium pentothal. This might have been fatal, but, warned by the *Newsletter*, we asked him not to give the shot. In the interest of minimizing blood loss and trauma, we told Kelda to grit her teeth and Conrad and I held her down while Dr. Robinson stitched. Today, thanks to the *Newsletter*, Kelda is a healthy, happy margay with absolutely no trace of a scar.

Incidentally, the grit-your-teeth method works excellently once a cat trusts you. With my un-showable male Persians who are allowed to run freely, we get remarkable cooperation. We put in and take out stitches and lance and clean up wounds with little or no restraint. The animals seem to understand what we are doing.

Kelda is an ocelot we bought who grew up into a margay. Her only fault is that SHE BITES. She knows that she shouldn’t and, all things considered, she does remarkably well in controlling herself. We have been trying to buy a male margay so that Kelda might enjoy the company of a creature who won’t hold the biting against her.

Kelda is extremely devoted and is always at our heels. During the day, we tell her to go up to the woods like a good jungle bunny. In the evening, we have only to walk into the trees and call her name and there she is. A good romp with the Persians and she is ready for her cage. She would prefer the bed,



**Long Island Ocelot Club members would get together for chapter meetings and bring their jungle born ocelots and margays to share.**

but SHE BITES. We love her very much, even though SHE BITES.

### “MEXICAN EXOTICS”

Victoria and Tom MacBean  
Jalisco, Mexico

We live right on the edge of the jungle, so to speak, and what we have learned from experience with ocelots, margay, puma, jaguar, and many other exotics, I am sure can be of help to *Newsletter* readers. It has been our experience that these

cats are not as “fragile” as most people you’d have you believe. All our cats live outdoors in good weather and bad, and thrive.

In the March *Newsletter*, a reader had written that these cats are surely better off in their native habitat than in captivity. If she could see the way these cats are brought in to us (we are exporters), she would change her mind.

They are usually so thin, mangy, and flea-ridden that it is hard to describe their condition. Three weeks of care, vitamin shots, and good food renders a sleek and beautiful animal.

One margay arrived with a broken front leg that was rotting and gangrenous; it had to be amputated from the shoulder. Her chance of pulling through such an ordeal, considering her sorry plight and poor condition, was slight. But pull through she did, to the amazement of the veterinarian who felt that a well-cared for domestic cat would have had a problem. Today, she is one of our most beautiful cats and ready for breeding.

I believe our Mexican margays and ocelots are smaller than the South American varieties. From what I have seen of the South American ocelots in California, ours are definitely smaller. Our margays are no larger than a small Siamese.

We take orders for animals, requiring a small deposit on order, and ship them either from California or Arizona, to various parts of the U.S. We make the three-day trip to the States by car from here, making sure they are in good condition before shipping. Whenever possible, we ship direct so that the animal is not left

**Andrea “Critter Doc” Sobotka**

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overnight waiting for connections. All our animals are de-fleaed, de-wormed, and given shots before they leave us. We like to keep them two or three weeks after their arrival here to make certain they are healthy.

There seem to be many misconceptions concerning exotic cats running riot in the United States. The rumor that they HAVE to have chicken and rats in their diet (otherwise they won't breed, will die, etc.) is sheer nonsense. My cats have never tasted chicken and when given rats, which are certainly abundant here, they have done nothing more than to bat them around and have left them. They are as keenly interested in birds as any domestic cat. In an effort for a margay or ocelot to catch a chicken here, they have not only to come a long way from the jungle, but have to come dangerously close to man. Chickens are a prime food in Mexico, and are raised by people in their back yards.

I will be happy to answer any queries *Newsletter* readers might have concerning animals of the exotic variety.

#### "LOVER CAME BACK"

Since ocelots missing from home are so rarely later found, this rewarding little story which appeared in a Portland, Oregon, newspaper is reprinted here. The clipping on hand is not dated, nor is the name of the newspaper available. The item is captioned, "Ocelot Turns up in Henhouse."

Clyde Miller learned Monday that his long missing "Lover" had returned when a neighbor called and reported, "Your ocelot is in our chicken house." Lover's discovery, already bad news for several chickens, was good news to Miller, who has been frantically scouting the countryside around his home, at 9400 SE 151st Avenue, since Easter for his pet cat.

When Lover wandered off four weeks ago, he weighed a sleek 35 pounds and his nose was as pink as a new ink eraser. But Miller said when found in the chicken house near a pile of feathers the ocelot



**In the 1960s, margays such as this one were often imported from Mexico, to be raised as pets in America. Photo by Gerard Lacz.**

was down to 15 pounds and he was a blue-nosed cat.

Ocelots are tropical. He was pretty cold. "I never expected him to survive so long in this climate," Miller said. His neighbor shared his enthusiasm about Lover's return despite the loss of chickens. "That cat means more to you than a few lousy chickens, so forget about them," Miller said his neighbor told him.

#### "POKEY SWALLOWS MORE THAN HE CAN CHEW"

Margaret Carol Trevillian  
Charleston, WV

Five weeks ago, Pokey my ocelot, now nearly a year old, became sick. I took him to the veterinarian who couldn't find anything wrong with him. Pokey



**Ocelots, like most exotic felines, must be carefully watched if living in a home, as they have a tendency to eat inappropriate items, which can cause blockages in the intestines that may require surgery.**

became worse four days later -- he wouldn't eat, had a fever, and no bowel movements. I took him back to the vet. He was X-rayed. This revealed something in his small intestine. The veterinarian said he was just stopped up and to take him home. If he wasn't improved by evening, he would open him up. After we had been home about an hour, the ocelot began vomiting and choking. I ran into the den and could see he was choking to death. I ran my hand into his mouth and felt something. I started pulling and to my horror, out came a rope -- the foulest thing you ever saw. I took Pokey and the rope back to the hospital and he was given antibiotics to keep down infection as I had torn him a little. We measured this rope. It was 32 inches with a knot in it, all in one piece. Dr. Pfost said he would not have believed this had he not seen it.

Well, Pokey is fine now, but, believe me, there is nothing loose lying around this home!



*Jamie Lucas is a young, multi-award winning photographer based in London, England. He has worked on a variety of projects with landscape, lifestyle, and event photography, but also with wildlife photography both in the wild and in captivity.*

*He's been involved in projects in the UK, as well as abroad in Kenya, South Africa, and Canada. He's experienced with macro photography, telephoto photography, and wide angle photography, and has photographed insects, reptiles, birds, and various mammal species.*

*He's been commended for his work in such awards as the Marwell Photography Awards, and has been awarded as the photography competition winner for the Wildlife Heritage Foundation many times.*

*The FCF is honored to reproduce this sampling of his feline photography from various zoological parks in the United Kingdom.*

# Jamie Lucas Photography



currently hold are not present in any of the smallest species of cat in the world. They are found in five collections across the UK, both on and off-exhibit, many of which are in glass enclosures indoors, as well as outdoors. Port Lympe currently has fishing cats, clouded leopards,



Carpathian Lynx - Port Lympe Wild Animal Park, Kent, England

Port Lympe has one of the largest cat collections in the UK, currently holding 14 different species of both large and small cats. This photo was taken in one of their larger small cat enclosures, which holds two lynx, a male and a female, called Klementyna and Luca, who bred this year and now have kittens that are on exhibit, but still very shy. The enclosure is very large, with plenty of climbing opportunities for the lynx, and scattered logs and fairly dense vegetation for them to hide in, which also provides a lovely backdrop for photography.



Scottish Wildcat - Port Lympe Wild Animal Park, Kent, England

Scottish wildcats were once present across Britain, but now are listed as a critically endangered species, their numbers of wild individuals having dropped dramatically. In the UK, we currently have 21 captive facilities that currently hold this cat species. Port Lympe is home to eight individuals, most of which are kept off-exhibit from the public, mainly for breeding purposes. This individual, in the full-body photograph, shares a large and densely bushed enclosure with plenty of tall climbing opportunities with two other wildcats. The close-up shot was taken at one of their off-exhibit enclosures, which one of the keepers was very kind in taking me to.



Margay - Port Lympe Wild Animal Park, Kent, England

At the bottom of Port Lympe's "Territory" zone, they have an indoor and off exhibit to the public. They are difficult to spot, mainly because they are a shy species, but also because they are often hidden in the bushes. Port Lympe has, however, a viewing area showing the indoor facilities where you can see them live in there if you are lucky. I took this photo very early in the morning when the individual went back inside and I also then managed to take a photo just before closing time.

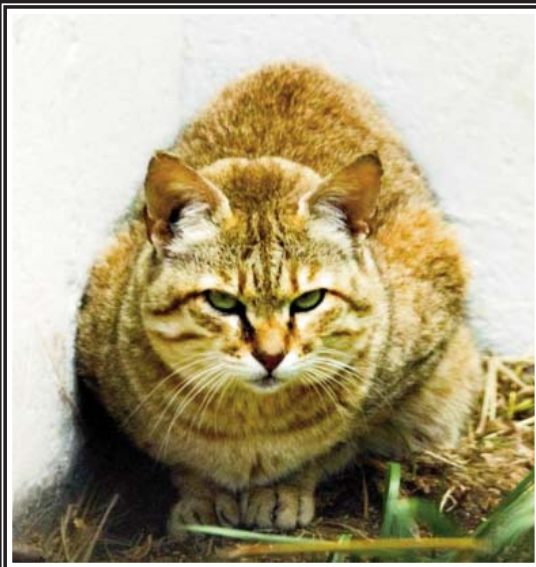




Rusty Spotted Cat - Rare Species Conservation Centre, Kent, England

The Rare Species Conservation Centre is a conservation breeding center open to the public between March and October. They aim to educate people about lesser-known rare and endangered species, and breed these species. Some of the species which they

other collections in Europe. This photograph is of the world, the rusty spotted cat. Currently, in the UK, they are the only country. The RSCC holds many pairs of this cat, which regularly breed. These cats are displayed in outdoor mesh exhibits. The collection also curates jaguars, and jaguarundis.



Gordon's Wildcat - Cat Survival Trust, Herts, England

The Cat Survival Trust is home to two Gordon's wildcats. I'd never seen them before on previous visits; they usually hide themselves in their indoor enclosure and rarely venture out. With warmer weather, I managed to get the right shot whilst they had a sunbath! They are currently the only two in the UK,

although in the rest of Europe there are a number of institutions that exhibit them.



Animal Park, Kent, England

! Margays, in the "Carnivore" enclosure, both on the ground and in the trees. Margays are particularly popular because they are a nocturnal species and the enclosures are densely wooded, providing many opportunities for the cats. I replaced a live TV stream for the margays, so you can see them in the morning, just before they are not outdoors. I can see another individual



Indo-Chinese Golden Cat - Cat Survival Trust, Herts, England

In the UK, we currently have five different institutions that hold Asian golden cats; the Chinese, Southeast Asian, Indo-Chinese, and Tibetan subspecies live here. This specific golden cat is a surplus male who, like the European wildcat, came over from the Parc des Félines. On previous visits, he was very hard to see, but now with time he has gotten much more used to his environment and is gradually becoming less shy about having his photo taken.



European Wildcat - Cat Survival Trust, Herts, England

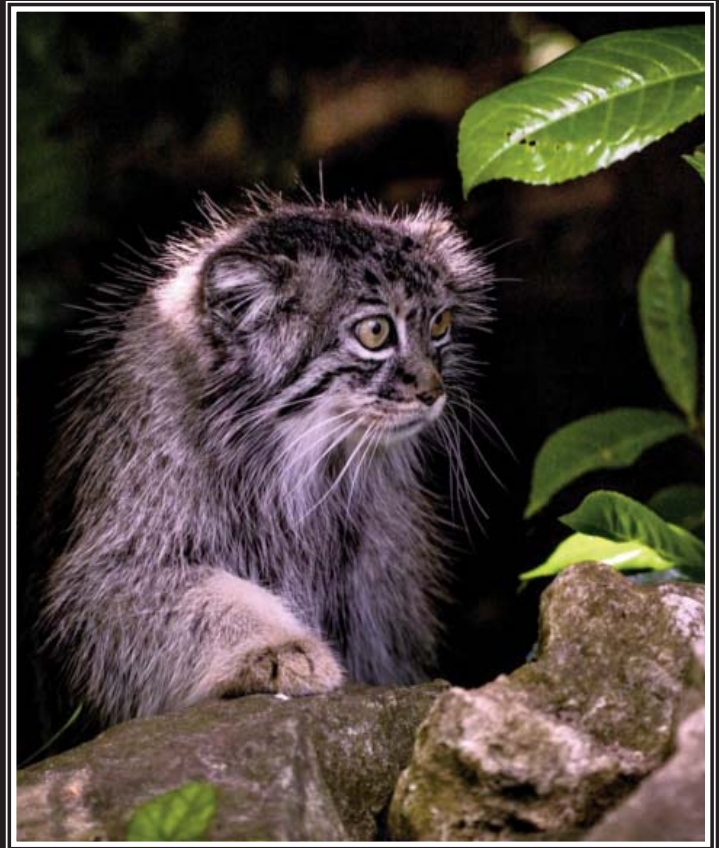
The Cat Survival Trust holds a small collection of cats that have come from a variety of backgrounds. They currently house 11 species of cat and have had a great year of breeding success, with new serval kittens, as well as three puma cubs. They have been featured on a seven-part documentary series called "Snow Leopards of Leafy London," which was released last year on Animal Planet. The Cat Survival Trust is a charity, but houses different species of wild cat for education as well as conservation purposes. They are not open to the general public; you can only visit as a member, but they also run various photography workshops as well. This image is of their male European wildcat, which arrived earlier in the year from France's Parc des Félines.





Oncilla - Hamerton Zoo Park, Hamerton, United Kingdom

The park hosts a collection of small cat species, including oncillas, jaguarundis, Canadian lynxes, and servals. This photograph is of one of their two oncillas, also known as little tiger cat or little spotted cat. These are the only two individuals kept in captivity in the UK, and just a handful of other collections in Europe currently have them. This individual was particularly difficult to photograph; it spent most of its day inside and when it appeared, it shot straight back inside. Finally, after much persistence, I managed to get the right shot. The enclosure was fairly small, but had climbing opportunities and plenty of vegetation for the cat to hide in.



Pallas's Cat - Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Kent, England

The Wildlife Heritage Foundation is a big cat sanctuary in Kent, closed to the public with exceptions of occasional open days, as well as photography and keeper workshops. They keep everything from tigers to rusty spotted cats, and last year they had great breeding successes with both Amur leopards and Amur tigers. This is a photo of a Pallas's cat, a fairly common small cat species in Europe, that I took at WHF on one of their photography days. In July 2014, they bred these Pallas's cats and had two kittens from the same mother who bred there previously in 2010. Both of WHF's Pallas's cat enclosures have lots of climbing opportunities, with fairly dense bushes although they tend to be relatively easy to see.



Jaguarundi - Rare Species Conservation Centre, Kent, England

The RSCC is home to a number of jaguarundis. The main exhibit in the indoor section of the center features climbing opportunities on large rocks, as well as a tree erected in the middle of the enclosure where the cats often spend time sleeping. They were relatively easy to get photos of through the glass when they were active, and they also positioned themselves well when they were climbing around up on the rocks. There is also a separate pair opposite the adult clouded leopards; these particular jaguarundis are incredibly feisty and skittish, and therefore much harder to photograph!



## Wild Cats on Postage Stamps

By Marci Jarvis and Jim Sanderson, Ph.D.

The world's postage stamps feature many subjects. Wildlife of all kinds is often depicted. North American wildfowl featured on U.S. stamps are particularly colorful, very accurately depicted, and are popular collectibles. Many countries have issued postage stamps featuring native wildlife. There is no rule, however, that says local wildlife is all that can be illustrated. For instance, Madagascar issued a snow leopard postage stamp. Pumas have appeared on postage stamps issued by several African nations.

Many people collect postage stamps of one kind or another. For the last two decades, we have been collecting postage stamps featuring wild cats. We get them from colleagues and friends all over the world. Whenever one of us is out of the country, we visit the local post office to inspect their offerings. It is almost impossible to collect all the wild cat postage stamps, but our collections are substantial. One of us (MJ) is the editor of *Cat Mews*, a biannual newsletter devoted to cats, including domestic cats, on postage stamps. Not surprisingly, there are far more postage

stamps depicting domestic cat breeds than wild cats. Moreover, and not unexpectedly, big cats have been featured on far more postage stamps than small cats.

Lions have been featured on more than 900 postage stamps, followed by tigers on more than 700, leopards more than 600, jaguars 220, and cheetahs more than 200. Only ocelots and Eurasian lynx separate pumas and snow leopards in the top nine. The critically endangered Iberian lynx is 21 on the list. Rather than go through the entire list of cat postage stamps, let's focus on those six wild cats that are IUCN Red List Endangered: Andean cat, bay cat, fishing cat, flat-headed cat, snow leopard, and tiger.

The two big cats, tiger and snow leopard, are depicted on more than 700 and 131 stamps, respectively. Far down on the list is the fishing cat, depicted on 14 stamps, flat-headed cat on eight stamps, Andean cat on six stamps, and the bay cat that stands alone as the only wild cat that has never appeared on a postage stamp. The bay cat holds a second dubious distinction: it was the last cat to be described and,

since its description in the late 1800s, no new cats have been discovered.

This lack of awareness also holds true for the scientific literature. There are far more publications on the big cats than on the small cats. The analysis of wild cats depicted on postage stamps tell us what we already know: the big cats are widely recognized and the small cats suffer from a lack of awareness. What else is new, right?



This is just a sample of postage stamps from around the world featuring wild cats of many different species.



## FCF Convention 2015 is Awaiting You in Wichita, Kansas!

**When:** Thursday, June 25, through  
Saturday, June 27, 2015

~~On Wednesday, June 24, 2015, both the Wild Feline Husbandry and Wildlife Educator's Courses will be taught.~~

**Where:** Wichita Airport La Quinta Inn and Suites,  
5500 West Kellogg Drive, Wichita, Kansas 67209

### About La Quinta:

La Quinta Inn and Suites provides free airport shuttle and transportation to local destinations within three miles. There's plenty of parking, high speed internet, the Flyers restaurant, a fitness center, indoor pool and Jacuzzi spa. We'll dine on the



**After a day of networking or field trips, take a dip in the indoor pool or take a relaxing soak in the hot tub.**



**La Quinta Inn and Suites is conveniently located near the Wichita airport and interstate.**

vention. Members planning to bring kittens will need to get with Lynn Culver for proper Wichita city permits.

### Speakers:

We'll be covering speakers in our next announcement, but you can count on updates from Dr. Jim Sanderson, as well as other authorities on husbandry and conservation of our beloved felids.



**Tanganyika has the largest breeding collection of clouded leopards in the world and has been a leader in breeding this species for several years.**

### Kittens on Exhibit:

Arrangements have been made with our hotel and the city of Wichita for exotic kittens to join us at Con-



### Field Trips:

We'll be visiting Tanganyika Wildlife Park, voted by *Wichita Family Magazine* as the #1 "Best Place for Family" in Wichita. The Park is home to over 300 animals, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and animals you can directly interact with. From black-footed penguins to red panda and black rhinoceros, the park boasts some of the most rare, endangered, and interactive animals in Kansas.

**Last year's Convention featured serval, bobcat, Geoffroy's cats, and this Eurasian lynx kitten on display during the Thursday ice breaker. Photo by Fred Hood.**





**Tanganyika has the largest population of snow leopards in captivity and has produced a number of cubs since they were added to the collection in 1989.**

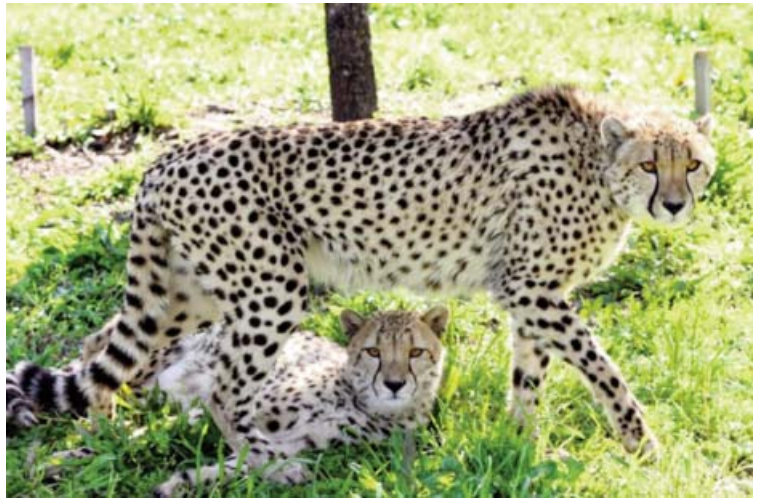
And there are plenty of feline species to satisfy the FCF, including snow leopards, clouded leopards, white tigers, Eurasian lynx, caracal, cheetah, serval, jaguars, and Amur leopards.

Home to 3,000 animals of 400 species, the Sedgwick County Zoo is a major attraction in Wichita, and we will be visiting it as well. Lions, Amur leopards, Amur tigers, cougar, and jaguar can be seen on exhibit. Other noteworthy mammals include red panda, African painted dogs, red river hogs, Sumatran orangutan, and African elephants. Sedgwick offers feeding and training demonstrations, and we will be learning from their keepers as well.

While you're in town, don't forget to visit some of the interesting sites and attractions in downtown Wichita, such as Exploration Place and the All-American Indian Center.



**The Keeper of the Plains, a 44-foot tall sculpture where the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers join together, is a Wichita icon that looks over the water cascading onto boulders into the river. This land is sacred ground to the Native American people and home to the All-American Indian Center.**



**Tanganyika's cheetahs are part of a joint conservation project undertaken by the Savannah Cheetah Foundation and the Species Survival Fund. Many of the cubs born at the park will be released into a large preserve in South Africa.**



**96% of travelers ranked Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, the #1 attraction. The zoo features exhibits that are the modern "habitat" style enclosures for its wildlife, such as these lions pictured.**



**Exploration Place is Sedgwick County's science and discovery center.**



## Bobcat Trail Camera Project

By Debi Willoughby

Almost three years ago, I wrote an article about using trail cameras, also known as camera traps. I want to give you an update on how our trail camera project has progressed. It has gone in a direction not even thought of when I first began.

It all started out as me being jealous of people in tropical places doing wild cat field research using trail cameras. Then I asked myself, "Why be jealous? Why not set up trail cameras in my own area to get images of our native wildlife, with the hopes of getting images of bobcats?" Well, it has been almost three years and now I can say, "Been there, done that, loved it, and still doing it!"

My last article was written after only having cameras in the woods for one or two months. I had beginner's luck with that area, getting pictures of a wide variety of wildlife, including images and video of bobcats. The article gave tidbits on how to set up a trail camera and the



**An apple orchard bordered by woods provides year-round food (apples) for bobcat prey to eat.**

do's and don'ts of the trade. This project has turned into so many things since then, all of which I am glad to have experienced.

Over the past three years, I have accumulated thousands of images of our local wildlife and have met many people who do the same thing with their cameras. Here are a few things that have come out of this project.

I incorporated the images into my educational conservation shows to the public. People, especially kids, really enjoy seeing pictures of animals that live in their own woods. I have also turned it into a sort of game, where the kids have to identify the species in the picture and figure out what it eats and how it survives. One of

their favorite pictures is of a mother moose with a baby moose walking behind her. While speaking about favorites, one of my favorite experiences so far is of walking through the woods collecting my cameras and looking up to find a baby porcupine sitting on a tree branch about ten feet above my head. It was adorable and I made sure not to startle it or disrupt its daily activities. I stayed quiet and low to the ground, watched it for a few minutes, and then moved on.

The first location chosen to put my cameras was my friend's apple orchard, which is surrounded by woods. Periodically, his crew goes through the orchard picking apples and trimming trees, but other than that, it is pretty much left for the wildlife to enjoy. It is a great location because there is year-round food (apples) for bobcat prey to eat. It also has easy walking trails in the form of tractor paths. Because of the good luck with getting bobcat images in that area, I have left a few cameras there over the years to keep up-to-date on what the resident bobcats are doing. In the first year, I got video of a mother and her two cubs bouncing through the tall grass. Later that year, I heard on the news that a male bobcat in that area had been put down due to rabies. I assume it was the father of the cubs in the video, but I cannot be sure. I wondered if there would be any more cubs in future years and what would become of the family of bobcats secretly being watched. During the second year, I learned about these bobcats' activities and lifestyle through various pictures. I felt like I *knew* these bobcats and began to grow fond of them. By the end of the second year, I was greeted with both good and bad news. I obtained video of a bobcat with a badly broken leg. It was video shot at night and it was hard to identify



**One of the images captured by Debi's camera traps was this bobcat stalking turkey.**



which bobcat it was. I felt helpless; the video had been taken two weeks before I got there to download it, so I had no idea if that bobcat was still alive. And if it was, too much time had passed for me to know where it was located in hopes of capturing it for rehabilitation. I was unpleasantly reminded that I was getting a glimpse into their secret world and I should not do anything to disrupt it. It was a sad day for me, but I kept on with the project and was happily surprised to see that the next two weeks of images were chock-full of bobcats! There was an image of a bobcat stalking turkey, a yearling spraying its territory, and numerous other bobcat images. They all looked very active and healthy, which always makes me happy.

Due to the excitement of catching glimpses into wild cat lives, I recruited a group of people to go to Belize last fall to learn about the wild cat conservation going on over there and to be directly involved with their trail camera project. It was a trip of a lifetime that has encouraged me to continue with Belize conservation efforts. There are five cats native to Belize; the puma, jaguar, ocelot, margay, and jaguarundi. The facility we stayed at has obtained many images of all five species on their trail cameras. I look back on that trip and remember the whole reason I started with trail cameras was because I was jealous of those who go to tropical places to do this type of research. Now, I realize one of those people is me! I do year-round trail camera research in my own state and periodically go to Belize to do the same. Three years ago I never would have guessed that my bobcat trail camera project would have taken me to this point. Amazing!



### **Debi's camera trapping efforts have been expanded into a Citizens' Bobcat Field Research Project.**

I live in the small state of Massachusetts, but have realized it is too big of a state for me to tackle on my own with just a few trail cameras. So my project has been expanded into a Citizens Bobcat Field Research Project. Currently, volunteers who live in Massachusetts are being recruited to work with me. A grid of the state helps me plot in which areas volunteers can set up their own trail cameras. The cameras will be set up for three-week periods and the data collected will be forwarded to me for logging and analysis. This will be a two-year project and volunteers will be given the tools necessary to

breeding population in our state. The last cougars seen here were in the late 1800s. Cougars are making a comeback and there are a few living among us, but most people have not been able to prove their existence because they do not have any images. I am currently researching any claimed sighting that comes my way to prove or disprove its validity. By keeping track of all of this data, at some point our state will have to accept their re-established presence here.

What started out as a simple, fun hobby has turned into more than expected. I am keeping track of everything we are finding so it can be used in future research within our state. And I am sharing this information with our local public to teach them about their native wildlife and how to co-exist with them. Using trail cameras is an affordable, fun, and rewarding hobby that we can turn into useful research information. Why not try it? You will be excited about what you see and enjoy getting a glimpse into the secret lives of your local wildlife!



**Debi shares images with the public in her presentations on how to coexist with native wildlife.**



## Happy to be in Cougar Country

By Peggy Jane Knight (writing for Mandy)

Hello, my name is Mandala (nickname "Mandy"). I am a 15 year old cougar (mountain lion or puma) and I live at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Wilkes County, North Carolina. This is just a few miles from the famous North Carolina Stone Mountain State Park and the Stone Mountain Golf Course. I happily made this neck of the woods my home when I came to live with the Steven Sidden family as an adorable kitten, at the age of about one year.

You may think I am not comfortable living in a compound, that I would rather roam the countryside, but I am truly a happy feline. The Sidden family provides me with a safe place of comfort to live. I have a spacious, two-acre enclosure of natural habitat to wander around in without being afraid of predators that would try to attack me, end my life, and decrease the number of my species. You might think my predators would be of the four-legged kind, such as dogs or bears. But my greatest predator is man. Hunters and farmers would be my greatest enemy in my natural 20 to 25 mile hunting range, which I could cover in one night of foraging. Within this range, there are many farmers that raise cattle and some who raise sheep. If I would be discovered stalking these calves or lambs, it could shorten my natural life span, which is about 12 years. The Sidden family's provisions have kept me safe from harm's way so that I have already outlived my wild cousins' expected lifespans by three years.

I would like to describe myself to you as being a sleek and graceful creature of about seven feet in length, with a long curving tail. I am about 24 inches tall and weigh about 100 pounds. I have a beautiful, fawn colored coat, which makes me hard to detect in the wild. By the way, my handler, Steven, brought an avid hunter to the compound the other day to see me. I could see this experienced hunter, but he could not see me. I was lying motionless in the brown, dried grass, watching the two men who were looking and searching for me. My



**Mandala has spent her whole life in an idyllic Cougar Country habitat.**

ability to blend in with the surroundings and to become the allusive hunter of the forest gave me the advantage at this time. My handler kept calling my name over and over to see if I would respond. That's right; I could be close enough to reach out, touch you, and you would never know that I was there. Finally, the hunter caught a glimpse of me as I started to swish my tail as he looked through the chain link fence, and you should have seen the surprised look on his face. Yes, mister hunter, you were right in my grasp and I only let you see me because I wanted you to know of my presence. But,

rather than stalk you, I prefer basking in the sun while I groom my coat with gentle strokes of my tongue, keeping myself clean and quite beautiful, even if I say so myself. This devoted hunter went home with a look of joy on his face because he had the pleasure of seeing a cougar up close, which is something few people experience.

Now, there are stories floating around that I and my kind are a force to be afraid of these days. The truth is, out in the wild my cousins are quite reclusive and usually avoid being around people. Yes, I know you heard about the jogger that got attacked by

a cougar. Did you ever stop to ask if the jogger was running in the wrong place? Would you like someone invading your land and taking over? Perhaps the jogger unknowingly came too close to the cougar's young? Fatal attacks are rare, but more and more people are encroaching in on our turf and sometimes my cousins just have to stand their ground and protect what belongs to them, their natural territory or hunting range. Fortunately, I do not have to worry about these kinds of intrusions, because the Sidden family provides me with a well-protected habitat that is enclosed by a 16 foot high



**Mandala hangs out by the corner of her compound, waiting for the Siddens to sit on the bench under the shade of the white oak tree and visit with her.**



chain link fence that keeps me safe. Even though on occasions a wild male cougar shows up outside my enclosure during mating season, I am safe, even from him.

My compound is luxurious. Now, you are probably wandering what makes my compound so special. I have an abundance of trees that shade me from the hot summer sun. There is a manmade cave to protect me from the freezing temperatures in the winter. I also have a small manmade water feature to cool my parched mouth whenever I need it. I have an area that is cleared of obstructions which gives me a very good view of the Sidden family's house and yard, which makes me feel like one of the family. I can sit under the canopy of a huge white oak tree just outside of my compound. From here I can observe the Siddens play and work in the yard. Under this white oak tree is a red wooden bench and some green yard chairs where the family comes to sit and take a break from their activities. This is their way of spending quality time with me.

My compound is attached to a security run, which has a covered shelter for protection from the elements. The security run is adjacent to a storage building where my food is stored and when I get hungry, I just come to the side of the compound and



**Mandala and Sable greet each other at the fence before they begin a game of chase.**

fine dining is served.

Now, I must not to forget to tell about my playmates. When I came to Cougar Country, there was a 14 year old male cougar already here by the name of Natchez. We were best of buddies for about three or four years when Natchez's passed over to the other side (died). I grieved and grieved for my friend. I missed him so much, until a lady, Peggy Knight, whom is now becoming an assistant handler, came to the compound to talk to me. She had heard of the distress I was in over losing my playmate. She sat outside of the compound and talked to me. I remember the conversation just as though it took place yesterday. She told me that she understood how I was feeling about losing my companion. She had been told

of how I was crying with such a blood curdling sound for days on end, and this was upsetting to the Sidden family. They missed Natchez, also. Peggy told me anytime that I started missing my playmate, all I had to do was call to him and his spirit would appear to me. I found comfort in what this lady was telling as she sat outside my compound along the fence on the ground. I stretched out in the grass along inside the fence and listened to all she had to say that day. I saw she was sincere in her belief and this eased my pain and I stopped

grieving.

Today, I have new playmates, two Great Dane dogs, who came into my life about a year ago. The female is named Sable, an 80-pound, fawn colored, energetic Dane, and a male named Harley, a 103-pound, black Dane with a white chest, who looks regal as if he was wearing a formal tuxedo. They love to run and I love to chase. They run along outside the compound fence and I run along on the inside. We run and run and run some more. We are safe from harm or mishap, but most of all we have such a good time.

Life is kept interesting for me because the Sidden family brings visitors to see me throughout the year. Church groups, scouts, and families who are cat lovers come on a regular basis. The other week, a family, friends who are moving out of town, came by to see me before they left. They could not help but admire my beauty, but most of all they loved watching me play ball with Steven, my handler. I'll let you in on a secret; I enjoyed putting on a show for them. Chasing the ball is a lot of fun, but it is more fun to watch the expressions on people's faces as they watch me play.

As you can see from my story and the pictures that are included, the Sidden family takes good care of me. I am safe and well fed. I have playmates to occupy my time. I have visitors that stop by to see me. I am truly a very happy feline living here with the Siddens at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Wilkes County, North Carolina.



**Great Danes Sable and Harley have become Mandy's best friends since they came to live at Cougar Country about a year ago.**



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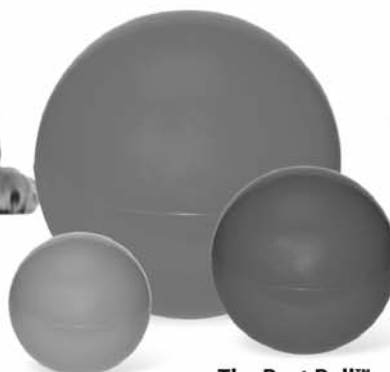
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## Wild Species Registry Update: Phase 2 of the Initial Release

By Wild Species Registry Development Team

The Wild Species Registry team has been busily coding, testing, integrating, documenting, and doing the wealth of work it takes to launch a project of this scope, and we are very pleased to report that the project continues to move forward as expected with the first phase of the initial release having been completed. The second phase is now well underway.

The WSR team would once again like to extend their thanks and gratitude for the support, financial and otherwise, which continues to make the work on this endeavor possible.

The Registry is pleased to announce its collaborating partnership with the American Captive Exotic Feline Repository ([www.acefr.org](http://www.acefr.org)). This group is comprised of individuals working across multiple labs, including Dr. Brian Davis at NIH, and Dr. Jan Janecka of Duquesne University.

Their goals include continuing to study felid genetics, and also storing genetic samples from any other species submitted for future study. Many of you may have met Dr. Janecka at a past FCF conference. Several FCF members have provided critical research materials in the form of your cats' DNA samples to both of these labs and another laboratory, Texas A&M, from which both of these researchers originate.

The Repository has been hampered from moving forward more quickly while seeking a way to contact animal owners who will donate samples, and to securely store data on the animals' ownership, location, and breeding history in a location separate from the actual samples. The Wild Species Registry can track this data securely and maintain it in perpetuity, with the stored DNA sample permanently linked to the Registry's unique identifier. In addition, our partnering organizations can help solicit participation in scientific studies.

We are delighted to be able to provide this service for scientific researchers whose work will benefit all wild cat species.

As with the previous update, this one will highlight the work completed and ongoing in the various high-level components of the project; ARTHUR (the management tool used by WSR operators and species coordinators for maintaining registry information); ROLAND (the reporting system for WSR operators and species coordinators); SAVIK (the underlying framework of the system); and WILLOW (the public-facing website for the WSR).

**ARTHUR:** The coding of the ARTHUR tool has been completed and testing/refinement is underway. As this is the management tool for entering and managing the data in the registry, extensive testing is critical to ensure the reliability of the tool, as well as the process of creating the data entered into the system. The integrity of the data is, of course, of paramount concern to all involved, and a large focus of the upcoming work will be on ensuring a robust, reliable system.

**ROLAND:** The reporting framework has been designed, implemented, and initial testing performed. The WSR team is pleased with the solution and will be working on writing the production reports in ROLAND during phase three of the project.

**SAVIK:** The WSR team has been pleased with the performance of the SAVIK underpinnings of the system. As work has progressed, small tweaks and changes to the data-model, web services, and security model have been needed, and SAVIK has proven to be very easy to change and adapt to any alterations in requirements or technology presented to it.

**WILLOW:** The framework of the WILLOW website has been created, and has been integrated with the SAVIK system (through which it sends/retrieves information from the registry's

database). The site is currently in a Spartan, no frills design as the components are being tested, but upcoming fairly immediately will be the production design work (the "look and feel" of the site), as well as the generation of the content which will fill each of the pages ("content" here meaning the informational text that will be provided by the customers who come to the site).

And last, but not least - lawyers. The WSR team is also in talks with lawyers to craft the legal documents to ensure that each and every individual and organization that chooses to do business with the Wild Species Registry is guaranteed complete transparency as to the processing and sharing of data within the registry, as well as making explicit the customers' control over their data, both personal and as related to the animals they own.



**Geoffroy's cat Renato will be entered into the Wild Species Registry so that the small population of this species can be more carefully managed for genetic diversity. Photo by Taylor Hattori.**





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# Caspian Tigers and a Man Called Mo

By Irving Kornheiser

In June of 1969, I graduated Valley Stream Central High School and enrolled as a freshman at Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana. In order to enroll, I was required to attend a freshman orientation program which started during the summer and consisted of two three-week terms during July and August 1969, with a three-week break between terms. The classes were remedial in nature for English and math low scorers, plus the orientation component of being away from home.

Vincennes University was a beautiful place to be! Situated adjacent to the Wabash River (As the sign said: NO FISHING ALLOWED --- NO FISH), the main campus is divided by railroad tracks, which allows daily freight traffic to block off some of the buildings on campus when long freight trains hit the tracks, thus dividing the campus. Located directly next to the railroad tracks and just off the main campus was the world famous Vincennes Stock Yards.

Oh, yes, stockyard means live animals arrive by trains and trucks, and then leave in pieces in refrigeration trucks. Living close to a Midwestern slaughter house just makes one develop a strong constitution for the smell and especially the noise when they start the giant band saws. The news of the day generally revolved around the Vietnam War, which was raging overseas, and issues of unrest spreading throughout the country as a whole. College students were rioting in the larger Midwest college campuses, and the Chicago Seven trial was the highlight of the evening news. And war protestors were on every street corner. Okay, you got me... men did land on the moon that summer; at least I think they did.

As the story goes, during the intersession break in mid July 1969, the campus closed down and the vast majority of the incoming freshmen students were able to return to their homes. Most of the student body members lived in Indiana (97%) so this was the norm for summer sessions at Vincennes University. I was allowed to stay on campus for the intersession in the dormitory, but they limited the schedule of the food services to two meals a day, breakfast and brunch, which ended at 3:30

pm. There were only 25-35 students living in the dorm at the time and most of them where out-of-state students like me.

A lot of us frequented the local pizza parlor in the evenings after dinner (brunch) in the dorm's food services. Mostly we went to the Italian Village Pizza Parlor, which was very close to the campus and around the corner from the dormitory, and, heck, they had a color TV, which you might remember to be very

cool at that time back in 1969.

During my almost daily visits to "Italian Village," I befriended the people who owned and worked at the restaurant enough to get a tab and student discount set up, because I had very little money; my parents limited me to an allowance of \$25 per week. Okay, okay, on with it. The owners of the Italian Village were not Italian, but of Turkish ethnic decent. Their pizza, however, was great and it was

## The Caspian Tiger

The Caspian tiger, (*Panthera tigris virgata*) also known as the Persian tiger, Turanian tiger, Mazandaran tiger, or Hyrcanian tiger, was found in Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Caspian tiger flourished in Central Asian riverine forest systems in a range separate from that of other tigers, and was driven to extinction by 1970. For over a century, naturalists puzzled over the taxonomic validity, placement, and biogeographic origin of this enigmatic animal.

Using DNA analysis from twenty wild Caspian tigers from throughout their historic range sampled from museum collections, it was discovered that Caspian tigers carry a major mtDNA haplotype differing by only a single nucleotide from the monomorphic haplotype found across all contemporary Amur tigers (*P. t. altaica*). Phylogeographic analysis with extant tiger subspecies suggests that less than 10,000 years ago the Caspian/Amur tiger ancestor colonized Central Asia via the Gansu Corridor (Silk Road) from eastern China, then subsequently traversed Siberia eastward to establish the Amur tiger in the Russian Far East. The Gansu Corridor is defined by mountainous and desert faunal habitats, providing ecological boundaries for a relatively narrow migration corridor.

Caspian tiger samples collected from 1877–1951, well before their extinction, would suggest that the genetic depletion occurred prior to the early 20th century anthropogenic demographic collapse of this group.

Russian records from the 19th and early 20th centuries indicate that tigers were sporadically present throughout the region between the core distribution of Caspian and Amur tigers and were only hunted out in the modern era. Thus, the actions of industrial-age humans may have been the critical factor in their final demise.

The Russian government had worked heavily to eradicate the Caspian tiger during planning a huge land reclamation program in the beginning of the 20th century. They considered there was no room for the tiger in their plans and so instructed the Russian army to exterminate all tigers found around the area of the Caspian Sea, a project that was carried out very efficiently. Once the extermination of the Caspian tiger was almost complete, the farmers cleared forests and planted crops like rice and cotton. Due to intensive hunting and deforestation, the Caspian tiger retreated first from the lush lowlands to the forested ranges, then to the marshes around some of the larger rivers, and, finally, deeper into the mountains, until it almost certainly became extinct.



as good as any pizza that I ate in New York. The owner and his wife ran the business with only a couple of employees; a cook, a counter woman, and an old man who boxed the orders. I came to learn that this “old man” was the owner’s wife’s father, who recently left Turkey to come to the United States, to live with them in rural Indiana. I also learned he was having a hard time adjusting to life in the Midwest because he lived in Turkey in a downtown section of a large city.

I never knew the true names of these individuals. I only knew the owner as “Pete,” who made all of the deliveries in his cream colored VW Beetle. His wife “Mary” was the counter woman. “Dorothy” was the cook, and the old man I named “Mo” because I was not able to comprehend his true ethnic name, or even his true nationality or the country in which he was born. These four individuals were of

ethnic Turkish/Persian nationalities who immigrated to the United States back in the 1950s, and settled in a downtown Chicago ethnic neighborhood with other individuals of their background. Historical tribal unrest and Old World social divisions, however, followed them to the U.S., and they choose to move south to rural Indiana to start a new life.

Apparently, Mo and Dorothy (the cook) were relatives (cousins), and Dorothy became his adopted daughter and caretaker at the time. Mo’s wife, also Mary’s mother, appeared to have died while living in Chicago, of some serious disease which Mo blamed on environmental factors of living in a highly industrial city. He would only say, “It was the air that got her sick, and the water killed her.” He indicated that the chemical treatment of the water caused his wife’s illness to progress and ended up killing her.

I called him “Mo” in the early stages of

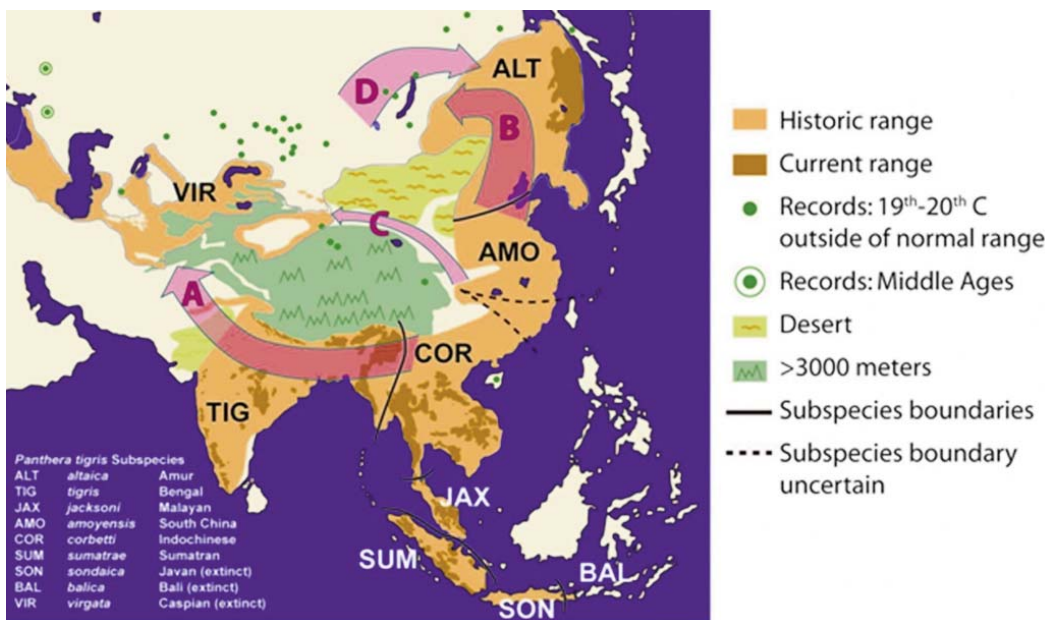
our friendship, because my father’s nickname was “Moe,” as shortened from his true name of Murray, and when Mo’s daughter spoke to him in English, the name she would refer to him as sounded to me a lot like my own father’s name, Murray. Additionally, Mo himself liked being called Mo. He said a few times to different people I knew that he was very proud to be “an American Mo,” always followed by his big, hearty, loud laugh that shook the building from floor to ceil-

working at a table next to the TV, during the July Fourth weekend in 1969. The restaurant only had two or three customers inside, because most of the people were off-campus for the weekend. This was very a common occurrence, because everybody left campus on weekends to go home or to work somewhere else. Mo was a loner, like me; he would not speak to anybody in the pizza parlor except his daughter. To customers, he would fake not to understand English, retreating to his own dialect. But he was able to speak and understand English well, and sometimes he would call out a customer’s order directly to the cook in perfect English.

As was my routine, I would arrive at the pizza parlor around 6:30-7:00 pm, to watch the national news and ordered my two slices and a diet coke and sit down very close to Mo and

the TV, so I could watch the news. I became friends with Mo in just a few days and he would, at this time, start to speak to me about current events on the news and about New York City. He appeared to be fascinated with the New York City Subway and he had a lot of questions about how far one could travel on the subway, and so on.

One night, during the time that men landed on the moon and the news coverage was focused on space and science issues, Mo was sitting at his station by the TV, folding boxes for the night’s deliveries, doing his routine job when on the network news, a story segment came on about the death of the last Caspian tiger, and that the Caspian tiger species were now considered to be extinct. Mo became irate and extremely emotionally distressed by the news, and he ran out of the restaurant in a rage of Turkish language which only his daughter understood. Mary fol-



**Map showing historic and current range of the nine tiger species. Genetic analysis suggests that South China tigers migrated west using Route C, the famed Silk Road route, and evolved into the Caspian tiger.**

ing. At the time I met these four individuals, I was just 17, and this was my first trip away from home and my parents.

Mo, in turn, was over 80 at this time (remember this was July 1969) and he was born in the late 1880s. I never understood these individuals’ ethnic background and/or religious upbringing. The only ethnic identification that I understood him to say was “Kazakh.” I simply liked the way they made their pizza and other dishes in the restaurant, and, frankly, there was no other place to go without crossing the railroad tracks and risk getting stuck on the other side of the tracks if a freight train rode through the town. This was a major issue, because the dorm doors would be locked at 1 am, and if you were locked out after curfew, you needed to have the campus police come over to let you in. Wow, remember the days when cities and towns had curfews?

I first observed Mo in the restaurant,



lowed him out of the restaurant, and I sat for hours waiting for her return to explain to me what the problem was with Mo.

Mo went missing for three days, and nobody would speak about his issues with the story on the news report about the death of the last Caspian tiger and the extinction of this species. After three days had passed, I confronted Mary, Mo's daughter, and told her that I needed to know what was wrong with Mo. She spoke of Mo's childhood growing up in ethnic Turkey/Persia, and his childhood and adolescent job as a "herder" of the tribal community's wildlife, which were cows, oxen, horses, camels, and other herded animals of the time frame (circa 1900-1925). Mary related that Mo's function in the community was to protect the herd animals from attacks from the tigers living around the region of the Caspian Sea. She tried to stop telling the story with that statement, but I persisted and convinced her that I needed to know more of the story. I remember telling her at the time that I was a "tiger groupie" and any story about tigers was a great interest of mine. Hell, I told her that I would not leave the restaurant at closing time until she told me the full story of Mo and his tigers. Mary finally gave in and told me to go and speak with Mo at his apartment, but Mary warned me that Mo was not ready to talk, so I should speak to Dorothy.

It was a Sunday morning that I went to the basement ground floor apartment in Pete and Mary's house behind the pizza parlor building, and visited with Mo and Dorothy. Mo would not speak; he sat on the porch in a rocking chair smoking a pipe, in the backyard garden which was full of traveling birds of all colors. He would call out the name of the bird as it arrived, but he would not say a word to me, even if I asked a direct question. So Dorothy sat me down at the kitchen table inside the apartment just off of the porch, which had a very large window that allowed all sound from inside to be heard on the porch.

Dorothy began the story thus. Mo and she grew up in a "nomadic tribal community," as she referred to it, of cultural Persian/Iranian refugees who were outcasts from different social and religious ideologies of the region. They began to travel the Caspian Sea countryside herding animals for profit. Their tribal community would contract their services to mer-

chants, other tribal communities, wealthy aristocratic English traders, or anyone else willing to barter their services to move animals from location to location as part of commerce and trading agreements between different parties.

After more than a decade, their skills in animal herding were well established and well known among the Caspian Sea region of Turkey/Persia. They used their mobility and nomadic lifestyle as a functional unit, thus creating a "village on wheels," much like we had in the American West with Indian tribes moving around the countryside while living in mobile teepees.

Since protection and movement of herd animals were in fact their livelihood, the community of some 2,000 individuals moved around the region in covered wagon caravans, which they called "Vardo," which somewhat resembled covered wagons of our America West, with the exception that the wagons were constructed with eight wheels connecting two separate sections. The front section was the family's living quarters, while the back section carried the freight and/or animals being transported.

The front wagons were constructed in a high vertical plane. Sometimes a second floor was built that had a pull-down ceiling door that had stairs built into the door for easy access to the second floor and the roof of the wagon. Water tanks were most commonly built into the second floor areas and were constructed to catch rainwater from vents on the roofs.

The roofs were basically flat and were used for storage of the wagon owner's cargo nets and other outdoor equipment. Some of the wagon roofs were used for the growing of vegetables and other food items. The front wagons for passengers were also equipped with pot belly stoves for heating and cooking alike.

Many of the wagons in the caravans were connected to one and another, and, in fact, they were being towed by the heavy ropes salvaged from the British

shipwrecks. When the caravan was at rest and camped in one location, the cargo nets were pulled over and across the ropes in between the individual wagons, making a very large corral for the herd animals and



**Mo's "community" traveled by vardo, a horse-drawn "living wagon," equipped with cooking stoves, seats, cabinets, and wardrobes. Some of Mo's vardos carried Caspian tigers.**

a practical safety net appearing to be a fence surrounding the caravan.

Dorothy related that in Mo's childhood years, the community had as many as 500 covered wagon units, and thousands of imported British oxen and other cattle breeds which were cultivated to pull the wagons. The initial wood and wheels for their covered wagons and, for that matter, the herd of oxen and cattle, were all salvaged from British trading ships that hit the rocks back in the 1890s, along the Caspian Sea coast, just below where the community was camped, and remained hung up on the rocky shoreline for many years.

After the British traders and their crews who survived the shipwrecks got settled on the shore of the Caspian Sea, the members of the community came down from the cliffs above to help them fix one of the ships (three ships in all went down), so they could sail back across the Caspian Sea from where they had come. The community members themselves being traders, they negotiated with the British sailors to take control of the animals while the repairs to the ships were being done. The job, however, was to be more than temporary in nature, because the lives and welfare of the animals needed to be addressed. The community members con-

vinced the British that they were the best at doing this because of their long history of herding animals in this region of the world. So, ownership of the animals and livestock was officially transferred from the British Trading Company to the members of the community in return for their survival help and labor during the rebuilding of the ship.

In addition, the British traders and crew gave the community members salvage rights to the two ships and taught them woodworking skills and the use of heavy-duty cargo lifts and roller equipment which were also salvaged from the ships. The salvage rights to the two wrecked ships included all the undeliverable goods that the community members could remove from the wrecked ships and much of the following individual items: rare clothing materials, including silk, waterproof leather tarps, and wearable clothing; food stocks for the humans and hay for the animals aboard the ships; seeds for planting vegetables, rice, grains, and other food items to be farmed; and woodcarving tools and woodworking equipment, such as massive-sized cutting saws for use if needed during the voyages to repair the ships should they be needed. The actual salvaged materials themselves from the two remaining ships, however, yielded resources beyond belief, with hundreds of yards of canvas from the sails; miles of heavy-duty ropes and massive cargo nets; round, wheel-like devices, turnstiles, and pulleys used throughout the ships as rigging, which would be turned into thousands of wagon wheels; wooden rails and all kinds of reusable lumber; animal pens which were movable and transportable; and, of special interest, the lifeboats from the ships that the sailors used to ferry the survivors, cargo, and animals to the shore just after the wrecks. These lifeboats were described to be “huge” boats which within their own right were larger than normal-sized rowboats. The community salvaged more than 20 of these vessels, which could hold as many as 100 men or 50 oxen each, and they quickly learned to mount wheels onto them to make the boats into land-rolling, moving vehicles, a lot like the flatbed wagon-style, only with the boat's oval shape.

According to Dorothy's tale, the community stayed on the beaches and shorelines constructing their wagon homes, growing food stocks, and tending to their herds of oxen and cattle for more than

eight years after the British traders left.

At the turn of the century (1900), however, the community members started their mobile caravans with the help of a contract by the British Trading Company to transport their cargo to businesses in the region that were depending on these deliveries. This was the start of the community's “Covered Wagon Transport and Herding Company,” of which Mo's father was an elder leader. During the years which followed, Mo and his family, extended family, and friends developed a business lifestyle as cargo and animal transporters. They traveled the region herding, moving, and transporting both animals and hard goods from village to village in the covered wagon caravan.

Okay, I am getting to the good part! Dorothy told me that the caravans and the community's campsites were often the targets of the local Caspian tiger population which Dorothy indicated was more than a thousand at the time (1900-1920). The community developed a self-protection plan from the attacking tigers, in which they would capture the tigers before or after they attacked the caravans by digging large holes and trapping pits baited with meat and surrounded by the large cargo nets they inherited from the British sailors. The initial plan was to sell off the captive tigers and their cubs which would be born during the transport of the caravans.

According to Dorothy, the community had more than enough equipment to catch tigers in great quantities using their massive cargo nets and then care for the animals in their caravans by the use of meat that was the natural result of the deaths of animals in the herds which made up the caravan mobility. Simply put, animals were born on the trail, they died on the trail, there were accidents which killed the animals, and the dead animals became resources to feed to the tigers. Remember, the members of the community were vegetarians and would not eat the meat of their animals. Additionally, many animals did die during the community's long travels, including some of the captive tigers.

As Dorothy started to speak specifically about the capture of the tigers, she explained that the first night that they set traps for tigers around the herd, they cap-

tured five Caspian tigers in a total of eight set traps.

Mo's father was assigned the capture of tigers detailed by the elders. The elders wanted the tigers to be killed at first, but Mo's father convinced them that tiger cubs could be sold. So it was decided to trans-



**Caspian tigers disappeared by 1970 and very few photos exist. This zoo tiger is thought to be from Tierpark Hagenbeck in Hamburg, Germany.**

port the tigers, either dead or alive, to villages along the trail and routes that the community's wagon caravan traveled, and sell them off as they found buyers on the way.

Mo's father assigned the job of “caretaker” for the captive tigers to Mo, who was the oldest of six siblings, and Mo created a tiger care and breeding program involving his siblings and cousins, which amounted to 28 teenage boys, and some girls, who would become the overseers and keepers of captive tigers.

To stick with the elders' and his father's initial plan, however, was not in the cards. Mo refused the idea of killing the tigers and selling off the tiger cubs, so he devised a plan to release individual pairs of tigers, including mature cubs old enough to be away from their mothers, in small groups along the route with enough food for their stay in the new territory when the caravan left. Mo quickly found out that when you move tigers, both captive and free-ranging tigers alike, they could follow each other's movements via scent marking and smell. He also learned that tigers evolved into family-like units on their own, so he and his crews allowed his cared-for tigers to join up in their own groupings after being released, often comingling with wild tigers which followed the caravan at a considerable distance.

Mo learned further to make up artificial scent and marking devices that could be



used in forests surrounding the trade routes that the caravans were following, to keep the tigers away from future attacks on the herd animals. He developed a method of seeding the forest with dead carcasses so the tigers would stay in territories away from human contact and find adequate prey sources on their own. Dorothy remembered that she once oversaw a situation when an ox pulling a wagon tripped on a hole in the ground and broke its leg. The members choose to leave the injured animal right there on the side of the road for the wild tigers seen following the caravan. The result being that the wild tigers stopped following the caravan, and, for weeks, wild tigers were not seen or heard from. Thus, Mo and his crew were successfully able to relocate some 23 Caspian tigers and cubs to the northernmost parts of their historical home range in the first year that this program began with little or no problems.

No tigers were killed; however, Mo did lie to his father and the elders that the tigers were killed and that he and the crew skinned the tigers and sold their skins to the local traders that they came across on the road. And throughout the years to come, Mo continued to lie about the killing and skinning of tigers, and he chose not to tell the elders or his father that he simply released the tigers back into the wild in different territories.

The community's elders were happy with this progress, and Mo became a hero of his community. Mo and his crew continued to capture tigers for the next 20 years or so. Dorothy believed that they had driven about 80 Caspian tiger adults and 27 cubs along the mountain trails and the fabled Silk Road into the Russian territories and beyond. She believed only six tigers died in transit, three adults and three cubs, in the 20 years of their involvement. As the years passed on the road, fewer and fewer tigers came upon the community's caravans. Mo would say that the tigers took his lead and little by little the population of Caspian tigers were relocating to the Russian territories, which Mo felt to be a good sign in that he believed that he taught the captured tigers and their wild counterparts to move north and east to deep forests of Russian/Siberian

countryside where they would be safe, and where human populations were scarce and prey was plentiful.

Dorothy stopped at this point, and we agreed to continue on another day. Mo himself then came into the kitchen and told me in no uncertain words that his life and his tigers were not to be looked upon as a fable or tale. He agreed to speak to me, one on one, the next day. Dorothy would be cooking all day in the pizza parlor and Mo would be home all afternoon in the house.

So the next day I went to talk to him in his living room. Mo's living room was decorated with all kinds of materials related to the tiger trade of the 1930-1940s, and one wall of the room was reserved for pictures of circus performances involving tigers in some Russian circus in the 1930s. Mo, however, did not want to reminisce; he wanted to talk about his Caspian tigers being moved from the Caspian Sea region to the northeast and into the barren region of the Russian Empire. He indicated first that he did move the tigers for their safety, and he and his crew did not make any money or trade value from any tiger. He continued to relate that fur trappers were living and working throughout the Caspian Sea region and many types of wild animals were being trapped and killed for their fur. Tigers were considered to be menace animals to be killed on sight to protect the people and crops. They had, according to Mo, no financial value in this region of the world, because there apparently was a large population back in the early 1900s. Mo became hesitant about speaking any more about the capture and movement of the tigers, because he believed that the news story about the extinction of the Caspian tiger subspecies

had been *his fault* and his shame had shaken him up emotionally, even some 60 years later. He expressed that his deep emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being had been challenged beyond belief. His pain, both emotional and physical, was too much for me to endure, so I changed the subject.

I then asked Mo about the circus pictures on the wall in the living room of the house. He was crying deeply at the time. However, after thinking about the question I just asked him, he stopped crying, smiled, and started his booming laugh. He stated, "That's me. I worked in the circus in Russia as a big cat trainer." I asked, "When?" He said, "For about four years in the early 1930s." When I asked how that came about, he explained that after approximately 25 years on the road in the caravans of the community, Mo was given an opportunity to trade off all of his collection of Caspian tigers to a Russian traveling circus.

He did not want to stay in Russia with the circus, but the circus performers and keepers were not educated on tiger care and welfare, so Mo was hired by the Russian Circus Company to be in charge of the animals. He initially worked behind the scenes, but then moved into the ring with his tigers. As we both walked to the wall of circus photos, he pointed to the tiger trainer in the picture wearing a big turban on his head, no shirt, balloon-like baggy pants, and large pointy shoes, and I asked him what the title of this picture said. He responded with a hearty laugh and said his own name in Russian and "The Kazakhstan Tiger Cowboy."

Mo's style of performance was basically known to be as an Arabian cowboy having the tigers perform tricks while he guided them by using his rope and lasso, which became his trademark as a big cat trainer. American-style cowboy music would be played by the circus band, and parts of Mo's act included the tigers on hind legs "dancing" to the music. In addition, there were pictures of his act with five Persian leopards and other big cats, including some Arabian lions. I find I am mad at myself now, because when Mo offered to give me some of these circus pictures of him, I did not take them.

My friendship with Mo continued into the September 1969 school session. But our talks about tigers had stopped. Mo, in turn, wanted to talk with me about the New York subways and trains in particu-



Artwork depiction of early mixed feline species circus act.

lar, and traveling by rail. Later, he wanted to know about flying in airplanes and traveling to different parts of the world and different airports. He started to talk about traveling for himself around the time of Thanksgiving. So I asked Mary, his daughter, what was up. Mary told me that the whole family was traveling back to their homeland in Europe because of a relative's wedding and to take care of family business issues. They were planning on the trip during the holiday season of December 1969, and the trip would be a month long so they could visit many family members that they had not seen in more than 30 years, according to Mary.

It was during the time that the 1969 holiday break/vacation session at the Vincennes campus was taking place, so I headed home to Valley Stream, New York, for a three-week break. Before leaving Vincennes, I stopped by the pizza parlor to wish them a happy holiday, say goodbye, and that they should have a great trip home to Europe. Mo was not available at the time, because he needed to upgrade his medical records for international travel. So I left him a note. The next day I flew back to New York, and joined my own family.

After the holidays, I returned to Vincennes University in Indiana, and my first stop was the pizza parlor, but it was still closed for the holidays. I grew restless

and went to their house and found a note on the door for me. It was from Mo, and it was written on the back of the note I left for him.

He wrote the following message:

*Dear Tiger Groupie,*

*I hope your vacation was happy and healthy!! We are going home to visit relations and friends in Europe and we plan to travel by plane and train. I also want to go back along my old trading routes, and maybe to the circus.*

*Kept your mind about my tigers.*

*Best Wishes,*

*Mo, The Kazakhstan Tiger Cowboy*

Mo died on December 19, 1969, while traveling by chartered van along the Silk Road in Central Europe. According to Dorothy, he asked the van driver to stop and that he wanted to do some walking in the area. Dorothy said she found him later, dead at the grave of one of his own tigers.

And following his wishes, his family and friends buried him at this location next to the grave of his beloved tigers.

When I finally caught up to the family at the pizza parlor a few weeks later, Dorothy took me aside and handed me a



**Russian circus tiger act.**

small piece of paper. The note was very old and the paper was about to fall apart, and all it had were groups of numbers on it. Dorothy told me that Mo would want me to have this note and the information that the numbers conveyed. She then told me that she found this note in Mo's hands after she found his body. She continued to explain that Mo had shown the note to the van driver and told him to take them to this location.

I still did not understand the significance of the numbers, so I asked Mary what the numbers meant. She briefly smiled and looked to the heavens, then said they were the way that Mo kept his personal records, in longitudes and latitudes.

Mary then told me Mo would want me to know where he was going.

## Addendum

By Irving Kornheiser

As I wrote my article, I wanted tell the story of a man who was on a mission. Mo was an individual who believed deeply in faith, goodwill, and the welfare for captive animals that were removed from their wild homes and surroundings by the will of humankind and forced to live out their lives behind bars, or as in this case, heavy wooden logs. Mo and his "community" had motive and direction in their travels and their deeds. However, I, being a dumb 17 year old student at the time of hearing Mo's story, failed to comprehend his true ideology and the cultural motivations.

Mo's parents grew up in region of the world known as Armenia within the Ottoman Empire. As historians have written, prior to the Armenian people's life under Ottoman rule, they lived under the

control and dominance of many different empires throughout history, including the Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Parthians, Byzantines, Arabs, and Turks. According to statements printed in *Armenian Issues* newsletter:

*Until the end of the 19th century, the Armenians lived their golden age under the Ottoman rule, also with the vast tolerance of the Turkish people. Having been exempted from military service and of most taxes, they excelled in trade, agriculture, artistry, and rose to major posts in the administration. For the services that they rendered to the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians were allowed to settle in the regions vacated after the Greek rebellion and were given the prestigious title of "The Faithful Nation."*

In approximately 1890, the Armenian people came under fire and war broke out. The long run of historical disputes,

revolts, and massacres all led to total social and ethnic chaos against the Armenian people by the Ottoman rulers. History indicated that the Turco-Armenian "Violence and Terrorism" movements were reaching the level of "genocide by the Turks against the Armenians," which was a true outcome of events. The Ottomans created the so-called "Law of Relocation," which ordered Armenians out of the county and out of the Empire.

Mo and his family's travel was motivated based on the above listed historical events in their background that created the method of travel, the motivation behind the movement, the direction to the Russian Empire border and safety issues, and, finally, Mo's father was citizen supply administrator working for the Russian army in the colonization of the Russian southeast Caspian Sea region. More specifically, Mo's father was supplying



goods and services in the building of the Trans-Caspian Railway and development of settlements, and marketplaces for the workers brought in to provide the labor source for the railway construction. Mo's father was a gifted wood worker and house builder and he was a well-respected administrator working for the Russian army, setting up logistics and movement of tons of supplies throughout this region. Mo would say to me, "Ah, Cossacks," because he hated that his father worked for the Russian soldiers. It was the Cossack leadership who convinced Mo's father to develop the "community caravan" and move his family group to Russian territory on the east side of the Caspian Sea.

Thus, the community left the Persian Empire of Iran, and started their travel caravan on the east side of the Caspian, stopping at the many forts and outposts manned by the Cossack soldiers who were feeding information about the region and supplying needed goods to continue the travels. Mo and his brothers and sisters were born of the road. Mo was born in the Persian Empire, while his siblings were born in the Russian Empire surrounding the Caspian and Aral Seas, along the route of the railway which was being laid out and planned for heavy construction at the time.

As Mo grew up at his father's side as a traveler of the region, he quickly developed his own personal interests. At approximately ten years old, Mo was confronted by a female tiger that planned to attack him. As the tiger charged him, Mo heard a gun shot and the running tiger dropped to the ground. Someone on the wagon did the shooting. A few minutes passed, and out of the underbrush a small cub appeared and waddled to its dead mother, looking for milk. Mo retrieved the cub and nursed it, and kept this cub many years as his pet. This was Mo's beginning as animal caretaker and conservator of animal resources. More tigers appeared after the community left the sight of the ship wrecks, and Mo's father instructed him to develop a plan of action to stop the tigers from attacking the caravans, as well as all of the many other locations and job sites that Mo's father had been involved with. Hence, Mo, now about 13 years old, was considered to be a businessman hired to stop tigers from attacking members of the community, their animals, and livestock, as well as

others. He created his crew and was given wagons and wheeled lifeboats by his father-- being a community elder-- and Mo's new business model had begun.

In his first year of travel along the Caspian Depression railway route in the northeast corner of the Caspian Sea, he and his crew captured some 23 Caspian tigers in cargo nets and pits. His father needed to send "lifeboat wagons" up the Volga River to pick up a large supply of roofing materials and bring them back down the Volga River to the outpost being built in the Volga River Valley along the northern route of the Silk Road and adjacent to the railway station. Mo and his crew loaded up the tigers on the boats on the Volga River and released the tigers along the river shoreline. Mo seeded the shoreline with carcasses of meat they brought along on the journey.

The community caravan in the early years, around 1913-1915, was made up of three different components. A woodworking crew of more than 200 men and their families traveled to the work site and provided long term labor and skills in construction, building houses, barns, stables, train stations, etc. These members of the community inherited much of the heavy woodworking equipment and power saws needed for trimming round logs and making them square, and the heavy ropes and lifting equipment, and the expertise to use said equipment, which was learned from the British sailors and traders. The second unit was the scouting unit, in which Mo's father was the elder leader of a group of some 50 men and families, and he led them in seeking business deals and trades along the way. This unit was known for its negotiating skills. This relationship was protected by the Cossack soldiers, for whom they worked as trusted field agents and informers of enemies of the Russian rulers for which the Cossacks served as the special privileged class of soldiers, as well as private enterprisers and businessmen looking to make money and/or favor. The third unit was made up of the laborers, train track mechanics, construction workers, agriculture workers, and animal keepers for the herds and working animals, etc. Most of the time, the three different units were hundreds and hundreds of miles apart, in different parts of the region. They communicated by short-wave radios and telegraphs. One of their many jobs for the Cossacks was to string telegraph wires along the railway route

between the forts and outposts of the soldiers.

Mo separated from unit three when he was 17 years old. He and his crew were given eight to ten mobile vehicles from the stock of the caravan. Mo's vehicles were horse-drawn, and three or four were the mobile boat vehicles which traveled in water by use of outboard motors. Mo's group had the task of capture and relocation of nuisance tigers from the Aral-Caspian Depression and all points east and west along this corridor. Mo's crew traveled at a fast pace and quickly captured nuisance tigers which approached workers, farmers, and/or any person or animals at a worksite that the Cossacks got a complaint about. His crew members used radios and telegraph to report sightings of tigers, and they were told by Cossacks which low population areas could be used as release points. The Cossacks initially employed Mo and crew to move out tigers which the Cossacks would normally have to kill.

Apparently, even the Cossacks themselves lied to their superiors about killing tigers in the region. According to Mo, he believed that the Cossacks themselves relocated Caspian tigers to the northeast section of modern-day Kazakhstan, and released them into the deep mountains at the modern Kazakhstan/Russian border, close to Mongolia. Mo, however, did not believe that the Cossacks' motivation was for conservation of the tiger species.

Mo once told me that the Cossacks came with a big truck to his campsite just north of Astana, and picked up ten captive tigers. Mo explained that the Cossacks had slaughtered a village full of people and a herd of cows. They collected all the meat they wanted from the dead cows, but their plan was to bring the tigers into the village and set them loose to clean up the carcasses of both humans and animals alike, thus blaming the tigers for the massacre.

*Ah, Cossacks!*

For approximately ten years, from 1917 to 1928, Mo and his crew traveled along the Russian southern territories using the different railway routes and trade routes, trapping and relocating nuisance Caspian tigers at the mandate and instruction of the Russian army soldiers which his father had a business relationship with, and who apparently took the credit for doing the work themselves.

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## Animal Keepers' Safety Conference, Dade City Wild Things

By John David Wagner

I am the Director of Operations at the Conservators' Center, a wildlife conservancy in Burlington, North Carolina, that is home to more than 80 exotic animals, including lions, tigers, leopards, servals, caracals, bobcats, Geoffroy's cats, and many other fascinating species.

I discovered the Conservators' Center in 2007, when I was a student at North Carolina State University. I soon started volunteering in animal care and construction at the conservancy, and became even more involved in the Center's day-to-day operations during an internship. In 2008, I graduated from NCSU with a BS degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management and a minor in Outdoor Leadership. While at NCSU, I assisted with studies of various wild animal populations, including black bear, white tail deer, and bobcats. The Conservators' Center

hired me as an animal keeper soon after I graduated. Since then, I have held a number of positions that led to my current role, which includes oversight of three departments: Animal Care, Construction and Maintenance, and Finance. I also lead the Center's Emergency Response Team.

Dade City Wild Things, in Dade City,

hands-on training with an extinguisher to put out a controlled fire.

Later that day, representatives from the Florida Wildlife Commission explained the upcoming review process for captive wildlife. Although many of the participants were not from Florida, this discussion was still relevant to everyone



John David Wagner presents "Managing Difficult People and the Press" as part of the Animal Keepers' Safety Conference.

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Florida, hosted the Animal Keepers' Safety Conference. The main focus of this three-day conference was how to protect your facility. The diverse range of topics included training techniques to firearm safety, preventing injuries to staff or visitors, new legislation, and how OSHA regulations may affect the industry as a whole.

The conference kicked off with a local fire department teaching the proper use of fire extinguishers. Everyone participating had the opportunity to get

involved, because many states have similar captive wildlife models. This presentation included ways for individuals to submit proposed rule changes to the current regulations. These proposed changes can be submitted by anyone, including individuals not residing in the state of Florida.

The first day wrapped up with an NRA course that focused on safely handling and maintaining firearms. Although this course did not include live fire, and some participants had very little prior experience with firearms, everyone gained an understanding of how to safely handle firearms, and everyone walked away with literature advising them on how to take the next steps in their firearm training.

On the second day of the conference, Keith Brown, Safety Team Leader and Supervisor with the University of South Florida SafetyFlorida Consultation Program, spoke. This was the most beneficial presentation to me personally. The most important thing that Mr. Brown spoke about was free resources that are available in every state which are in place to help small businesses and non-profits ensure they are operating within OSHA regulations. More information about these free

programs is available on OSHA's website, [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

On the final day of the conference, Dr. Don Woodman of the Animal Hospital of Northwood in Safety Harbor, Florida, spoke about ways to mitigate risks around zoonotic disease transmission. This talk focused on preventive transmission, but also included a section on identifying symptoms of certain diseases.

I led a session called "Managing Difficult People and the Press." My presentation focused on strategies for managing difficult people—including staff, volunteers, the public, and other agencies—and how to prevent and manage the difficult situations these people can create. It also discussed strategies for dealing with social media and with traditional media.

The conference concluded with Debi Willoughby of

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The FCF Board of Directors thanks the following individuals and corporations who have made donations to FCF projects since the last published *Journal*, providing additional funding for educational materials for members and legislators, supporting conservation, and improving captive feline welfare.

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

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The FCF appreciates your generosity & continued support.

Jungle Encounters presenting ideas for training techniques with animals. While the discussion focused primarily on training in a way that would be beneficial for presentations, she also discussed how to incorporate training and enrichment to enhance the quality of life for the animals in our care.

The Animal Keepers' Safety Conference covered a wide range of topics. One of the biggest benefits to the participants was the opportunity to meet with other people from around the country to discuss shared challenges and learn about solutions that worked for others.

Thanks to the Dade City Wild Things staff for being such wonderful hosts, and for taking the time to provide everyone with so much useful information!



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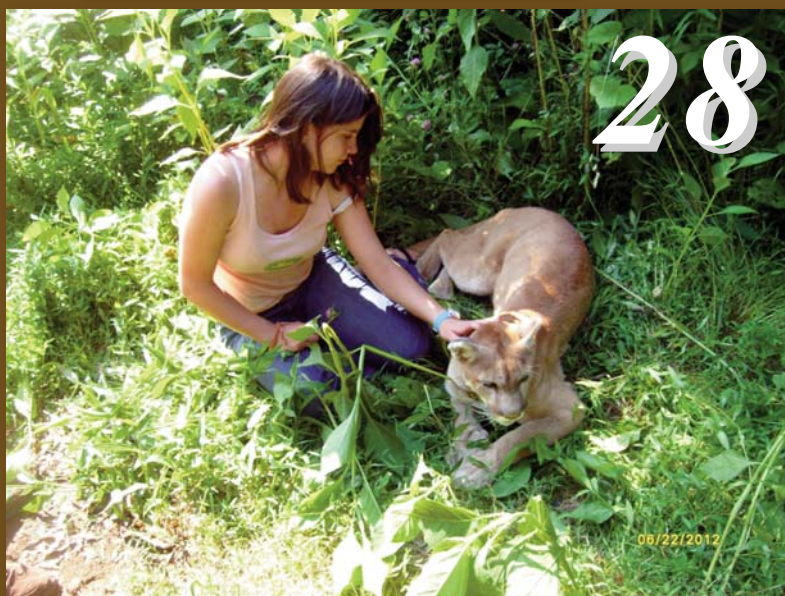
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Feline Conservation Federation

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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:** Jack Hurault photographed this young snow leopard at the Parc des Félines, outside Paris, France. Park curator Gregory Breton spoke to the FCF at its 2013 Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Back Cover:** Pallas's cat portrait taken at Howletts Wild Animal Park, taken by Jamie Lucas. Howletts, near Canterbury, Kent, England, is the sister park to Port Lympne, and holds a similar collection. Unlike Port Lympne's new Pallas's cat complex, which features a moat-styled viewing area, Howletts offers the more traditional stand-off barrier. This individual cat was easy to see, particularly at the end of the day, when we saw him being fed alongside the neighboring clouded leopards. This photo was incredibly hard to capture, however, as the sun was shining directly on the cage, so focusing was hard, but in the end he got the shot that he wanted.

