



Feline Conservation Federation

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The FCF supports 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. Send \$35 annual dues (\$40 Canada, \$50 international) to FCF, 141 Polk Road 664, Mena, AR 71953.

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2019-2020 Term

The FCF is a non-profit (Federal ID#59-2048618), non-commercial society devoted to the welfare and conservation of exotic felines. The FCF publishes the *Journal* quarterly.

Members are encouraged to donate older copies of the *Journal*, with permission of the resident, to vet offices, dental or medical waiting rooms, or public libraries or public officials, to increase awareness of the FCF, its members, and mission.

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Display advertisement space is available at the following prices: \$10 business card, \$25 quarter page, \$50 half page, and \$100 full page ad.

Submit articles on husbandry, conservation, current events, editorials, and photos for publication to the managing editor, Lynn Culver, at lynnculver57@gmail.com.



Feline Conservation Federation

Presidents Letter

This year's conference is in Charlotte, NC at the Hilton Executive Park, hosted by Tiger World Endangered Wildlife Preserve. The hotel is freshly renovated, and conveniently located within shuttle service distance of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT). The hotel has a restaurant, bar, pool, gym, and is easy walking distance of restaurants. The hospitality suite opens Thursday afternoon, and has limited snacks and drinks, and will provide us a place to visit and mingle privately at the times convenient to our group.

On Wednesday, prior to the official start of the conference, the FCF is offering the Wild Feline Husbandry Course (all day), the FCF Educators Course (half day), and a Contingency Planning workshop (half day) with a focus on resources available to facilities and individuals establishing or updating their contingency plans, or seeking to network with others for contingency purposes.

Thursday morning the Board of Directors will meet. Members are invited to observe and consider becoming more involved. This year the nomination deadline to run for the board of directors is September 1st. Running for the board is your chance to participate in the process and step forward!

Registration begins Thursday afternoon. Drop off your donated items for the silent auction. The silent auction, which benefits all of the FCF's programs, will run until Saturday evening just before the banquet starts.

Thursday evening things really get rolling with our opening icebreaker. This is a great opportunity to meet new members and spend time with old friends.

Friday morning will be filled with speaker presentations. Our invited experts will cover an exceptional array of topics, including advocacy at local, state and federal levels, addressing welfare husbandry concerns, genetic management of collections, veterinary care topics, and new facility construction. Presenters have been invited to remain at the conference to mingle with the members and answer questions on a one-on-one basis during our social time. You can read some the highlights about our announced speakers in this issue on page 21.

Following the Friday morning speakers

will be our annual membership meeting. This is an election year so it is an especially important meeting. If you would like to suggest agenda items for this meeting, especially those with a focus on how we can make this a stronger organization, please submit them via email ahead of time to the secretary, or share them with the folks at registration when you arrive.

Friday afternoon will be spent at Tiger World. We will start our visit with lunch, provided by Tiger World, and will then have an opportunity to see the park. We have been invited to participate in some extraordinary learning experiences provided by the staff at Tiger World and visiting staff from the Charlotte Raptor Center. Read about these training opportunities starting on page 19.

Friday evening dinner is on your own. Spend time with friends old and new. The hospitality suite will be open, providing not just a chance to mingle, but an opportunity to visit with cubs of several small cat species that will be at the conference for training purposes.

Saturday morning and early afternoon we will have an opportunity to learn from other expert speakers. Late afternoon will be free for you to explore the area and spend time visiting.

Saturday evening is our traditional banquet; an opportunity to show off your wild side if you choose. Attendees dress in everything from evening gowns to shorts, and perhaps even tiger slippers. Enjoy the food and bar, and to stick around for the fundraising auction at the end of the meal. This memorable event includes our own auctioneer with a sense of humor, and gives you a chance to be part of supporting our organization in a fun and competitive way.

A post-conference tour is offered on Sunday at the Conservators Center. The Center is located two hours east of Charlotte, near the Raleigh Durham International Airport (RDU). The Center houses about 85 animals of more than 20 species, including tigers, leopards, caracals, servals, Eurasian lynx, jungle cats, Geoffroy's cats, bobcats, and a remarkable 14 lions. Visit the Conservators Center website link to register for this private FCF member tour www.conservatorscenter.org/visit/fcf/

Hotel rooms are booking well and regis-

trations are rolling in. We encourage you to register early and reserve your hotel room before August 1 to get the FCF prices.

I look forward to seeing you in Charlotte in August. The extraordinary lineup of speakers and the remarkable training opportunities being offered at Tiger World are unique to this conference. Come be a part of something truly special!

Mindy Stinner

Nominations Close September 1 for BOD 2019-2020 Term

Nominations close September 1, 2018. The election is in the fall and new board members take office on January 1, 2019.

You can help guide the FCF into the future. The FCF needs people willing to help keep the right to own animals alive and to help teach future generations the wonder of wildcats.

The offices up for election are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Director positions. The term lasts for two years. For details on what each office involves, visit the member's only website which contains the bylaws.

To be properly nominated for any of the offices, the nominee must have the signatures of two members on a document or documents nominating them for that office. The signatures must be mailed or emailed to the secretary before August 31. If emailed, the signatures must be scans of a physical signature. Electronic signatures are not acceptable, nor are emails that do not include a signature attached. A member may nominate themselves as long as they also have another member's signature nominating them.

All members properly nominated for office will be contacted by the secretary. Once the nominee has confirmed that they accept the nomination, their name will be added to the ballot.

A member may be nominated to multiple offices, but may only serve in one capacity if elected to more than one office.

Is it good luck or bad luck to have a jaguarundi cross your path???

Debi Willoughby

Wild cat field research is very rewarding yet has many challenges. In 2016 we started a 10-year-long field research study using trail cameras on the five species of wild cats native to Belize, the jaguar, puma, ocelot, margay and jaguarundi. The project has been moving forward at an even pace and we have been learning so much about the country and its challenges. It is an English speaking country which has an international airport and is relatively safe to travel in. The human population is contained in mainly three main cities and along its coast, leaving a vast majority of the interior sparsely populated. Belize is experiencing negative impact on their lands due to the local people slashing and burning the jungle so they can plant crops and make money to provide for their families. The lush jungles are being depleted and they are in desperate need of alternate plans where Belizeans can utilize better conservation practices while still maintaining an income to support their families. That is one of the main areas we are encompassing our project around, developing conservation methods that are mutually beneficial to Belize's wildlife and the local villages.

On one of our trips there, we decided to be brave and rent a vehicle to drive into BFREE, one of the research stations we have our trail cameras. We normally have BFREE pick us up, but we had been assured that the 6-mile-long driveway through the jungle into BFREE was dry and easy to drive through. As we made our way down the dirt path, we felt a little at ease that there was not any mud to get stuck in. The mud down there is like cement and sucks you in, making it very hard to dig your way out. About two miles down the path we were pleasantly surprised to see a jaguarundi run across the dirt road in front of us! The area we were driving through has always looked like prime jaguarundi habitat to me and I have been anxious to put some cameras out in that area.

Now we have proof that my suspicions were true! On a future visit, I want to meet with the ranger that patrols that territory and see if I can get permission to put some cameras there. The area is flat with lots of scrub brush and not many trees. This is the type of habitat that the local jaguarundis prefer. It is not as populated by other species of felines like the dense jungle is and houses a variety of prey for the jaguarundis to hunt.

We made it to the entrance of base camp pretty easily and we had just one hurdle



Cameras set on properties like this with scrub brush and not many trees will have a better chance of capturing images of jaguarundi.

left to cross. The Bladen River, which runs between the dirt path and the base camp. During the dry season it is fairly low but during the wet season it can turn into raging rapids. Luckily it was only about five inches deep and we could drive through it. Once at base camp, we were greeted by our field assistant and park ranger, Canti. He was very happy to see us because he loves doing camera research and is very excited to be a part of our project. To save time, he had pulled all of the cameras out of the jungle and had them ready for us to work on. I immediately got busy downloading the images onto my laptop and handed the cameras off to my husband and Canti to reset them, put new batteries in them and pro-

grammed them to be set out again. Canti caught us up to speed on what had been going on at BFREE and how our cameras had been performing. A couple of the cameras were dead due to the harsh tropical weather and some others were on the brink of dying. We fixed them the best we could and packed up our supplies into the vehicle. We had decided to drive the paths through the reserve with the vehicle instead of walking. We had a lot of territory to cover and the vehicle would make it go a lot faster. If we only knew what was ahead of us, we would have opted to walk!

Things started out smoothly, we were setting cameras up pretty quickly and were happy with our progress. The last time we were there we set the cameras up in remote jungle areas where there is not much human activity. This time we wanted to move the cameras along the northern edge of BFREE's land where it butts up against agricultural land. As we got closer to the farmlands, Canti told us about the issues he had been having with the farmers. Mennonites own the area and over the last few years they had started hiring people to slash and burn land outside of their property lines. This was an easy way for them to expand their farms without having to buy more land. Unfortunately, that means they were stealing land from other people. And this was beginning to happen along BFREE's property line. The area is very remote and they would slash and burn the jungle at night when no one was patrolling the area. Canti had spoken with them many times to no avail. So, he had stationed two guards to patrol the property line day and night. When we reached an opening where the Mennonites hired help had recently burned, we met with Canti's two guards who were armed and watching the hired help. They were a few hundred feet away and emotions were a little tense. In the past if the people who were slashing and burning illegally knew they

had been spotted, they would abandon the area and start up somewhere else. But this was different, they were not leaving; they were getting bolder. Because of this tense situation we did not stay in the area long, we retreated into the jungle where it was safer. Canti told us he was not sure why the Mennonites were not backing off; he felt it might be driven by greed and money. He had set up a meeting with the local officials and was going to plead his case to them to see what could be done. I told him if we could help to let us know. We could send down some cameras so that there would be a large surveillance in that area to discourage the illegal activity. I told him to find out what was behind the reason why the Mennonites were not backing down so we could brainstorm how to mitigate the issue.

Once all of our cameras were set up, we headed back to basecamp. This is where we ran into a little “issue” and wished we had walked instead of driven. There was an area on the path that dipped down about 20 feet and then back up. It looked like an area that may turn into a quick passing river during the heavy rains. Once we got to the bottom of the dip we got stuck in the mud. It was probably the only mud for miles around and we found it! Canti radioed back to basecamp and someone came out with a truck to try to pull us out. Unfortunately, that truck got stuck in the mud too! So we spent the next hour getting that truck out and sent it back to basecamp to get some shovels. They arrived back with a four wheeler and shovels. After about a half hour of digging mud out from around the tires we were able to get the vehicle out of the area. The whole ordeal took about three hours. When we initially got stuck my first reaction was to call someone with a four wheel drive truck to get us out, but I guess when you are miles deep into the jungle that is not an option. My second thought was to call a tow truck, but a tow truck never would have made it down the paths we took. It made me realize the many things we take for granted in the states.

Once back on dry land we headed back to basecamp and discussed what Canti would be doing with our cameras over the next few months. I was very excited to get back to my laptop to see what we had for images over the past few months on our cameras! I was happy to see that we had a few great

images that we can use for marketing purposes to further the project along. We also discovered there is a puma living in the area with an unusual hump on the bridge of his nose. It does not look like it was due to injury, it looks like he was born with it.

We also got a few images of an amazing beautifully marked ocelot. He has dots inside his rosette chains. Very striking looking! I hope he survives long enough to mate and carry on those genes.



All ocelots are beautiful, but this resident had striking rosette chains with dots inside.

When we put the cameras out in the beginning of the year, we wanted to determine if the resident cats would react to a scent lure. So we put the cameras up for a while without scent to establish a normal baseline, then we put a bobcat urine scent lure out at half of the camera sites. There was one site where there was a cut down



Looking over images recorded in the past months, Debi saw this puma with a distinct roman nose.

tree along the edge of the path that we put a lot of scent lure on because it was off the path so people walking the path would not step in it. I thought for sure we would have gotten a lot of animal activity at that spot and I was curious as to how the cats would react to bobcat urine. There are no bobcats in Belize so I wanted to see what they would do around an unusual smell. I was surprised that none of the cats even looked in the direction of the log for three months as they walked by the camera. Then, suddenly a jaguar started sniffing around the area a little. The next few images were of an ocelot who climbed up on the log and spent a great deal of time sniffing it. We did not capture any images of him rolling in the scent, but he did seem to spend a lot of time checking it out. I wonder what

they were thinking, if they recognized the scent as feline? The next time we find a good lure spot like that I will put one of the cameras on video so we can see exactly how they react. I will also experiment with other scents that are known to be attractive to captive felines. It will be interesting to see what happens.



Using bobcat urine as a lure did not attract any felines for months, but finally a jaguar and this ocelot were photographed sniffing the strange feline scent.

The images we gathered from the “less human impacted” areas were plentiful with all five species of wild cat, and as expected the margay and jaguarundi were the most elusive. It will be interesting to compare these images to the ones we will get from the illegal farming areas. The analysis that will be done between the images from little human activity and the illegal slash and burn activity will be crucial evidence of what is happening as the human population in Belize expands. This valuable data will be used to work with the government to determine the best action plan to protect Belize’s jungles and wildlife.

Wildlife research is not just working in the field gathering evidence of wildlife, it also includes learning from the local people, networking with other conservationists in the area and teaching people what you have learned. We have spent a lot of time meeting and networking with other animal-conscious organizations in Belize, including the Belize Zoo. After meeting the owner of the zoo, Sharon Matola, it is blatantly obvious that she has dedicated her life to the animals of Belize. The Belize Zoo only houses animals native to Belize and they are ones that have been injured, illegally taken from the wild as pets or labeled “problem” animals. Her resident jaguars

were all labeled “problem animals” because they were expected of killing or were actually killing livestock. Jaguars are blamed for killing livestock a lot in Belize and in a lot of cases they have been wrongly accused. But what we learned from Sharon was, in the cases that they were actually guilty of it, it is because they were injured or sick. That is one of the messages Sharon teaches to the children who visit her zoo, jaguars normally

will not go near livestock. But if they are injured or sick and cannot catch their normal prey, they do resort to catching easy prey like cattle or chickens. Most of the time when a problem jaguar arrives at the zoo, it is in very poor health and needs a lot of vet attention. They usually find that the animal has been shot by local people and have to tend to bullet wounds. Sharon and her team work around the clock to tend to these animals that come to her zoo until they are healthy again. She has even been able to form a good relationship with some of them. She is able to interact with them through the fence in front of groups of visitors. This allows the visitors to see jaguars up close and learn about their story. When Sharon finishes one of her stories, you cannot help but feel respect for the animal after knowing what they have been through. Sharon observes the jaguars when she interacts with them and uses some of their behaviors they offer in her shows. A few of the jaguars have even taken to entertaining the audience by rolling over or sitting up for treats. As I left Sharon and the zoo, I was amazed at how great a connection she has made with these wild jaguars, and all of the wild animals at her place. You can tell by the look in the jaguar’s eyes that they have been through a lot, but realize

they now have a safe place they can reside and they do not have to work to catch their meal. Jaguars are smart, they have figured out that captivity is a much easier life than the one they had in the wild. With that said, we all wish these animals could remain in the wild, but the harsh reality is that is not always the case.

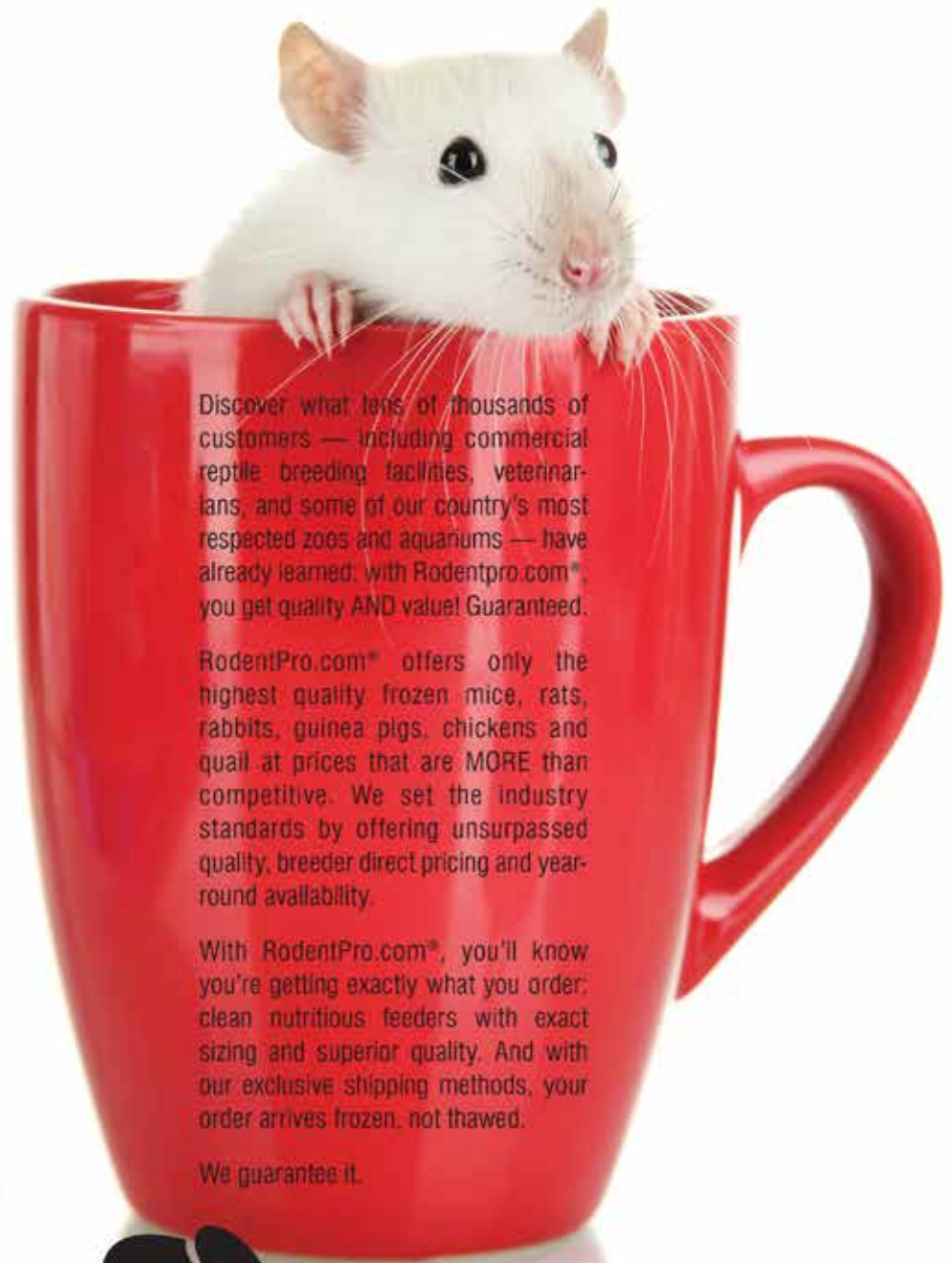
Research update – the biggest issue we have with keeping this project running smoothly is replacing trail cameras. It seems like we are always bringing more dead ones back to the states than new ones that we bring down. It is a constant battle to try to maintain the number of cameras we have down there. The super humid climate wreaks havoc on the electronics inside the cameras. This pushes us to work on raising donations while we are in the states. It costs about \$6,000 a year to keep this project running and we rely heavily on donations. It averages \$2,500 yearly to replace cameras and \$3,500 yearly to maintain the cameras (most of that expense is paying our field assistant a small salary to maintain the cameras each month). We are currently looking for venues where we can hold fundraisers, if you know of one or would like to open your doors to your own animal facility for us to hold a fundraiser, we would greatly appreciate it. You can email us at Debi@JungleEncounters.org.

We are also offering small group trips to Belize to help us do the field research. The trips are six days long and we spend most of that time at two different research centers located in central and southern Belize. You can learn more about these trips on our website: www.BelizeWildCats.com.

Field update – our field assistant, Canti, has been able to temporarily halt the illegal slash and burn tactics at the northern boundary of BFREE. We hope this temporary stop will become permanent. He has also turned in three people who were illegally harvesting wild mahogany trees on BFREE’s property. Mahogany trees bring in good money, so the locals resort to harvesting them at night when no one can see. We are very proud of Canti for his brave dedication to protecting the local wildlife.

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What's a Gigasensor?

Sephanie Dosch

Tigers for Tomorrow in Attalla: Alabama is home to over 160 animals the majority of which are large predators. In the fall of 2016 our facility was approached by the Fort Payne Middle School's robotics team the Gigawatts who were challenged to provide an innovative solution that helps enrich the lives of captive animals. They created the Gigasensor- a safe, durable, ecofriendly and multifunctioning sensor that goes on the outside of the animal's enclosure. The fully functioning prototype is triggered by the animal's movement releasing a shower of water in their habitat. The great thing is once completed the sensor is designed to be expandable for multiple sense engagement, including sight, taste, sound, and aroma. So far, Tigers for Tomorrow has successfully tested the device with two American Black Bears and two Ligers.

In helping Tigers for Tomorrow meet its environmental conscious goals, it was great to know the Gigasensor is ecofriendly using solar panels to recharge the two batteries that power the device. The components of the sensor are contained in a water-resistant plastic box that is easily placed outside an animal's enclosure. The device works by motion using a photo sensor able to be triggered by the animal as they pass by the box. As an added benefit, there are two adjustable timers inside the box that allow keepers to adjust how long the enrichment is released and how long before the sensor is reactivated. This allows for added mental stimulation as the animal will not always have the same experience



This is the inside of the gigasensor: all of the components are able to fit into this hard plastic box, making it easily portable.



Inside of the Liger habitat. They have a shower head suspended above their pool and the large flat rock to the right hand side of their pool was their mark, where if they step or walked by it the sensor would go off releasing the shower of water.

and keeps them coming back for more.

We thought using habitats that had multiple animals would be easiest because one could trigger the sensor while the other was able to experience the enrichment and vice versa allowing them to utilize teamwork for mutual benefit. From our facility, we used American Black Bears named Basil and Sage along with Liger's Aja and Oz. Knowing some adjustments would need to be made, we kept the enrichment the sensor would produce simple, using something the bears and ligers love, water! Our first test run involved Basil and Sage. The sensor was placed at ground level outside their enclosure, far enough from the fence so that they could not reach the box but allowing the photo sensor to clear the chain link. A pvc pipe was run along the outside fence pole of the habitat then up and over the roof so a section of the pipe was over their enclosure. In this section we drilled holes through the pvc so water could run out

like a shower. Aja & Oz's habitat was set up similarly, but we placed an actual shower head on the end of the pvc pipe and set up over their pool. For both enclosures, we used zip ties, a keeper favorite, to secure the pvc to the fencing and allowed for easy removal if needed.

The staff, students and animals sure learned a lot along the way, though we all found the project very exciting and the animals loved it. The black bears caught on the quickest; they started triggering the enrichment out of curiosity exploring the new device from inside their habitat. They soon realized when one was by the box the other got to enjoy a cold shower; in no time at all they were working the device like professionals. It was great to watch them engage all their senses while having fun with something new. The Ligers however, were a little differ-



Oz the Liger exploring the water that was just released from the sensor being set off from his sister Aja.

ent. The male liger OZ was uninterested in the new device even after watching us set it up from his holding area, while his sister Aja lay next to the device wanting to know what it was and how it worked. A couple weeks later we tried the enrichment again



Sage the black bear, playing in the water after successfully set off the sensor.

with the ligers and had a better result. They were more interested in the device and triggered the sensor allowing them to play

under the shower until the timer was up and the sensor re-set to be triggered again.

We did learn some lessons, in the case of the Black Bear habitat after the Gigasensor was turned off. We left the device and pvc pipes outside their enclosure so that we could work with them again in a couple days. However, by the end of the day, their inquisitive nature had gotten the best of them and they had started digging at the fencing by the device and reaching for the pvc pipes. We found by switching to a sonar sensor and putting the box behind their night house it turned into out of sight, out of mind. We reran the pvc pipe along the top of their enclosure to their pool hiding the pvc portions next to the metal support bars helping to further resolve our curious bear problem. We are looking for-

ward to moving the device around to other habitats, trying new animals and continuing

to work with the middle school as they further develop and expand on their project.

I do have some updated information on the robotics team that created the project; they won several awards around Alabama including winning 1st place in Inspiration at the First Lego league competition. They were invited to compete at the Arkansas Invitational picked from 36 states. At the 64 team international tournament, they won 1st place for their presentation. In addition, they submitted the Gigasensor to the Alabama State Technology Fair where they won 1st place at regionals and 1st place at the state tournament in robotics.

Acknowledgments

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Jamie and Reagan McClung Team Coaches



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The Jaguar: America's Rising Conservation Challenge

Chester Moore, Jr.

The spike whitetail buck did not have a chance.

It was killed with a bite through the skull that would have effectively snuffed out the deer's life in seconds. As far as I could tell from the days old carcass the neck was not broken. That puzzled me because I assumed what I had found was the kill of a cougar.



This large male cougar could easily have killed a spike deer, but the cougar would use a killing bite to the neck.

A landowner told me he found the largest set of cat tracks he had ever seen. They were on a levee overlooking a small lake and when I arrived to investigate that afternoon I was blown away.

The tracks made in the damp sand were over four inches wide and led down toward a small creek.

A bite through the skull seemed strange though as cougars typically hit the neck. I have found cougar kills on livestock and they were all neck bites.

east of the San Jacinto".

And due east of that great river is where I was standing.

But that was in the mid 1800s.

This was the 2000s.

Surely not.

Despite being the



Jaguars are the largest cat of the America's. Their range extends from South America, through Central America, all of Mexico and occasionally into the US border states.

This seemed jaguar-like and the tracks were certainly large enough, but I was in Texas.

Jaguars, the great cat known for inhabiting the South American rainforest have been captured on game cameras in New Mexico and Arizona in the last decade.

And yes, Texas is a part of their historic range.

In fact, General Sam Houston told naturalist John James Audubon there were "...many jaguars

namesake of an NFL franchise, a luxury car line and used for their beauty in various facets of commercial advertising, jaguars are relatively unknown to Americans.

Through my lectures and radio discussions I have found many general wildlife enthusiasts can tell you lions are on the decrease and tigers are being poached for their fur and bones, but few have any idea about the big cat of the Americas, much less the challenges they face.

And that lack of information could spell disaster for the species.

The result of few tigers left to

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fulfill a handful of wealthy Asian's appetite for traditional medicine, aphrodisiacs and status symbols has hit South America's shores.

A Feb. 23 2018 article at Nature reveals a disturbing new trend in jaguar poaching.

Between Aug. 2014 and Feb. 2015 numerous packages of jaguar fangs representing the lives of approximately 100 jaguars were confiscated by law enforcement officials.

"Seven had been sent by Chinese citizens living in Bolivia. Eight more were reportedly intercepted in 2016, and a package of 120 fangs was seized in China, says Angela Núñez, a Bolivian biologist who is researching the trade."

As a wildlife journalist of 25 years this rising trend disturbs me greatly as there is a force that will make conservation efforts not only challenging but extremely dangerous.

The vast majority of cocaine produced in the world comes from the jaguar's range. If demand gets high enough smuggling jaguar parts in tandem with drugs could make enforcement even more challenging putting cartel muscle behind protecting the trade. Dealing with poachers is one thing but dealing with poachers funded and backed up by cartels is another.

America needs to know this.

And they need to know about the increase in verified sightings in New Mexico and Arizona and how the world's most powerful cat is a resident of their hemisphere. To care about a species, people need to really know about it, so throughout 2018 through The Wildlife Journalist® media properties will be raising awareness through highlighting amazing facts about jaguars to the public.

The following are a few things I have found the public responds to when I discuss my favorite species.

Jaguar Range: The historical range of jaguars goes all the way into western Louisiana and bleeds over into California to the West. They are not simply rainforest animals but also able to survive in arid regions.

Rivers No Barrier: The jaguar is a wa-

ter-loving cat and is arguably more comfortable in the water than even the tiger which has been portrayed as the world's top water-loving large cat. Jaguars have been encountered swimming large stretches of the Amazon River and are regularly documented feeding on caimans the water with a bite to skull nonetheless!

Jaguars are "Black Panthers": The term "black panther" is thrown around indis-



Jaguars can be melanistic.

criminally and in my 25 years as a wildlife journalist I have found most Americans relate it to black cougars. The problem is black cougars do not exist. There is however an American cat that produces black (melanistic) offspring and that is the jaguar.

Size Matters: Jaguars are the world's third largest cat behind the tiger and lion. Their size varies greatly throughout their range with the largest specimens living in

parts of Brazil averaging 220 pounds. The largest on record was a male that weighed 326 pounds with an empty stomach. That is about the size of an average Bengal tiger.

Everyone who reads this publication has knowledge and passion of wild cats to share.

The purpose of this article is to share a few things I have seen that help raise the jaguar's profile among those with a general interest in wildlife.

I believe that once these people connect the dots that jaguars are an American cat and that their range has greatly depleted because of the action of man then some will take an interest.

And maybe a few people will want to find ways to support conservation efforts and help lead the charge against the growing threats against the species.

I left the deer kill that day years ago thinking I had probably uncovered the kill of a very large cougar like the cat killed and examined by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department officials in north-central Texas in 2018.

But is it possible there was a jaguar somehow surviving in its former range east of the San Jacinto River?

The chances were slim but in the world of the jaguar, the possibilities are virtually endless. There are sighting reports from this region but no photographic evidence.

For a cat that can kill 10-foot crocodilians with one bite and swim wide expanses of the current-laden Amazon with ease it seems like anything is possible.

Jaguars are the most enigmatic predator of the Americas and perhaps their habit of walking in the shadow of mystery is what will allow them to survive the growing threats they face.

It's our job to make sure they have a fighting chance and there are still some shadows left to hide in.

(Chester Moore, Jr. is an award-winning writer, photographer, radio host and conservationist from Orange, TX. He is author of 12 books, Editor-In-Chief of Texas Fish & Game magazine and author of The Wildlife Journalist® blog at thewildlifejournalist.com.)

The Mystery of the Mane

Briana Halliwell

“All the men in my family were bearded, and most of the women.” ~ W.C. Fields

Have you ever wondered why only male lions grow manes?

Well, so have we here at the Conservators Center, home to 15 African Lions and a wide variety of other exotic wildlife species. All seven of our male lions sport luxurious examples of the characteristic lion’s mane, ranging in color from sandy blonde to nearly black. Lions are the only Felid species who present such a dramatic example of sexual dimorphism in the form of the mane, which is typically only seen on male lions. Our female lionesses, most of which live with at least one male lion, tend to be slightly smaller in stature than our males and ordinarily lack the distinguishing feature of a mane – with one startling exception. The Legend of the Bearded Lady

Daisy, our oldest and most crotchety lioness, has in recent years become our very own bearded lady, confounding her beloved keepers and puzzling our resident veterinarian who had never encountered a maned lioness before. The presence of a mane on a female lion is a rare occurrence, mostly

documented as anecdotal anomalies, with minimal extant scientific research to explain such an unusual phenomenon. What is known is that males who are neutered lose their manes, and that high testosterone levels correlate with especially heavy and darker colored manes. We were curious about the cause of Daisy’s postmenopausal mane growth and decided to explore some other examples of female lions which had inexplicably sprouted manes in order to determine why our elderly lioness was suddenly presenting such a blatantly masculine feature.

Daisy’s Story

Daisy was an adult when she arrived at the Center in 2004 along with 7 other lions. Three of these 8 lions were pregnant, but interestingly, Daisy was not one of them. We have no record of Daisy’s breeding history, so we do not know whether our bearded lady ever produced offspring of her own. If she had been pregnant and reared cubs at her previous facility, then her development of a mane later in life would be all the more strange based on the research findings we uncovered regarding maned lionesses.

We first noticed Daisy’s unusual facial hair growth a few months after her decision to live the single life in one of the more spa-

completely futile, so Daisy had her way and has lived alone ever since.

Why do some female lions have manes?

Of the few studies that have been done on the secondary sex characteristics of lions, only one study to-date focused on mane growth in females, and the data collected was largely inconclusive. However, two years of vigilant observation of five maned lionesses living in the Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana’s Okavango delta led Geoffrey D. Gilfillan and his team of researchers from the University of Sussex to believe that pronounced mane growth in female lions may be concurrent with infertility.

Heterosexual copulation was observed in three of the maned lionesses, but no mating attempts proved to be successful throughout the duration of the study. Their findings, which were published in the *African Journal of Ecology* in 2016, suggest that female lions that develop manes may possess higher levels of androgens (male sex hormones) like testosterone than is normal for most reproductively successful lionesses. Other Cases of Maned Lionesses



For most of her life Daisy looked like any other lioness.

acious and verdant enclosures in the park, which happens to be rather far away from all the other lions from her original extended pride, and their offspring. We say it was her decision to live there because we had originally moved Daisy and her male companion temporarily while we made some structural changes to their other space, and when it came time to move the pair back, the male willingly loaded into the transport crate while Daisy stubbornly stood her ground and refused to budge, even when we tempted her with her favorite treat - turkey legs! After weeks of trying to get the old girl to move, we realized the effort was

Although we do not know whether Daisy’s unusual sprouting of facial hair has anything to do with her level of fertility, there have been a few fascinating reports in the news recently of other female lions developing manes as they age. The Oklahoma City Zoo just publicized their own account of unexpected mane growth in one of their older female lions, Bridget, and the story has gone viral. Apparently Bridget did give birth to a litter of cubs back in 2007, which adds a fascinating twist on the mystery of the mane.

One other lioness in captivity has been reported to have “sprouted a mane,” a female named Emma who had also success-

fully reproduced many years before the growth of her masculine whiskers. Emma's caretakers at the National Zoo in South Africa decided to run some tests on her and discovered she had elevated levels of testosterone in her blood, as would be expected based on her development of a typically male trait, the mane.

Our Theories

The Conservators Center has witnessed rudimentary mane growth in a few other elderly female lions over the years of our lion-housing history, but Daisy's voluminous locks have well outdone her minimally maned peers, thus giving rise to our burgeoning curiosity about why some female lions tend to sprout beards as they age. Our co-founder, Mindy Stinner, has theorized that the observed proliferation of mane growth in older lionesses in recent years may be due in part to the greater longevity of lions in captivity as a result of improved geriatric care, suggesting that perhaps hormonal imbalances leading to things like mane growth in senior female lions is a normal part of the aging process past productive hormonal activity. Of course, this theory is as yet unproven, but we think it would be a fascinating study for the scientific community to undertake as more captive lions are living into unprecedented seniority, giving rise to uncharted territory about what happens to lions as they age.

As iconic a species as the African Lion may be, and despite the universal symbolism of power and status attached to the image of the characteristic lion's mane, there exists a surprising dearth of scientific evidence for the evolution of the mane. In light of the vast and varied theories for why male lions have manes and, conversely, why female lionesses typically do not, we cannot provide any concrete answers to the question of why our sweet old Daisy (or Bridget or Emma or the five maned lionesses of Botswana) has unexpectedly grown a mane of her own. We can, however, speculate with educated guesses and continue to be

charmed by the rare spectacle of a bearded lady at the Conservators Center.

Ugmo, one of the original eight lions who came to us as an adult with Daisy in 2004, also presented some rudimentary mane growth later in life.

Daisy may have some extra testosterone, giving her a mane and the occasional attitude, but her quality of life and our love for her have not been diminished one bit since she became our bearded lady.



Ugmo, one of the original eight lions who came to CCI as an adult with Daisy in 2004, also presented some rudimentary mane growth later in life.



In her geriatric years, Daisy sprouted a mane, a sexual characteristic normally only associated with male lions.

Our Conclusions

Based on the knowledge that mane growth in males is a result of increased testosterone production during puberty, and considering Emma's heightened levels of testosterone in her bloodstream, it is likely that as Daisy has aged in isolation and advanced beyond the age of sexual maturity (think of her age transition as similar to menopause in humans), her levels of androgens-like testosterone may have incrementally increased over the years, giving rise to the production of typically male characteristics such as an underdeveloped mane and more aggressive behaviors, both of which have been witnessed in Daisy in recent history.

We cannot confirm nor deny that mane growth in female lions has anything to do with infertility, although with respect to the cases of Emma and Bridget, it seems more likely that excess hair growth in the form of a mane in female lions may be connected with age, and could also be related to a genetic predisposition for a hormonal imbalance in the form of increased levels of androgens in the bloodstream. Despite not knowing exactly why our handsome girl grew a mane, we love her perhaps all the more for being such an interesting and unique individual, and we are certain that a bit of extra hair and testosterone will have no significant impact on her quality of life for all the years remaining to her.



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Extend Your Conference Stay an Extra Day to Tour the Conservators Center in Mebane, NC on Sunday, August 26

Up for visiting a great facility full of cats and other species like binturong, ringtail lemur, wolves, foxes, kinkajou and more? Plan to spend another night so you can spend Sunday at the Conservators Center. The Conservators Center is pleased to offer a special post-conference tour. FCF Conference attendees may sign up for a private FCF-only tour with Conservators Center staff at 11 am on Sunday, August 26th. Sign up on the Conservators Center website to be part of this FCF private tour. Visit this site link: <https://www.conservatorscenter.org/visit/fcf/>. The cost of the tour is \$20 (plus tax).



Ra lion, having a bit of a yawn.

Photographer Kathy Patterson who provided these images, is a three year veteran staff-level volunteer at the Conservators Center. Patterson says, "There are over 20 exotic species at the Conservators Center, and for a long time I was equally fascinated by them all. With time, a love of the ruffs and tufts of the smaller cats has emerged, and the lynx, bobcats, and caracals are my favorites. I enjoy sharing our animals with other people on adopter visits, tours, or with my photography. A close-up visit or even a photo helps connect people with these animals, and fulfills our mission of connecting people with wildlife - we protect what



Savannah leopard being lazy.



Sash, the binturong, would love to be included as an "honorary" cat, since the nickname for this species is the bearcat.

we know. It never gets old to hear our lions calling back to us and each other, along with the wolves howling and the other sounds of the Center. My heart swells when I see the impact those sounds and experiences have on other people and I hope they never forget it either. Fortunately, many turn into supporters and return visitors. I'm sure the FCF members, who are already cat fans, will enjoy their visit after the upcoming conference."

The Conservators Center is located about 2 hours East of TigerWorld, near I-40 and I-85. The conference is not providing transportation to the Center, so you will need to arrange transportation. If flying, you may want to consider flying out of Raleigh-Durham (RDU) after your visit to the Center.



Liger lynx is of the European species.



Arya is a young female bobcat who lives with her companion Muraco.



Asher caracal is ready to strut his stuff for us.



Bella the Eurasian lynx hunts for dinner in the urban refrigerator jungle. Photo by Olivia Roberts.



Aires the Geoffroy's cat could double for Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer. Photo by Kylie Reynolds

Your Best Shots!



Beautiful head study of Athena, a serval resident of Bear Creek Feline Center. Photo by Chastin Mitchell.



Gizmo serval helps himself to refreshing mug of cool water on the dining room table. Photo by Leslie Lisdell.



Sarabi serval poses with a big smile for photographer and owner Michael Tovar.



This dancing bobcat was attempting to catch a bird flying around. Photo by Chester Moore.



**Thatcher cougar relocated to Bear Creek Feline Center where he enjoys the good life.
Photo by Chastin Mitchell,
photo shopped background by Missi Mitchell.**



Siberian lynx love. Radashja gives her mate Punjali a loving face wash. Photo by Jennifer Kasserman.



TIGER WORLD FCF ZOO FIELD TRIP

Friday August 24, 1pm

Written by Erin Carey and Lea Jaunakais

Don't miss the FCF Field Trip to Tiger World Endangered Wildlife Preserve which will offer professional advancement classes, up-close learning opportunities, and lunch in a wild setting. You will have the opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills in a wide variety of animal related topics and participate in several hands-on experiences.



Tiger World Founder Lea Jaunakais with Hercules

Operant Conditioning Training – Masters class

By Erin Carey, Director of Wildlife

A voluntary blood draw will be demonstrated at Xavier the leopard's habitat including several other voluntary husbandry behaviors. After the Xavier session Erin will be breaking down operant conditioning training techniques giving specific examples of how to utilize each method in unison to create a well-balanced training environment. For those individuals signed up for the Master's Class with our Lion Cubs, participants will be learning how to deliver a cue, bridge a behavior, reinforce wanted behaviors and deter unwanted behaviors before they become habits.



Kristin Dean with Cisco the Red-tailed Hawk

Raptor Husbandry and Handling

By Carolina Raptor Center - Kristin Dean, Husbandry and Acquisitions Manager, Colleen Roddick, Training Coordinator, and Jayna Saltrick, Husbandry Assistant

Watch as master falconers

Feline Nutrition and Veterinary Care

By Lea Jaunakais, President & Founder of Tiger World

Lea explains her research over the past decade on exotic feline husbandry including diet, vaccinations, birth control methods, voluntary veterinary procedures and much more. A voluntary blood draw demonstration will take place at Xavier the leopard's habitat.

Emergency Response, Preparedness and Handling

By Jessica Williams Donovan, Animal Control Officer, & Lea Jaunakais

Learn about safety equipment and proper handling techniques for responding to various emergency response situations. Discover the signs of a distressed animal and how to approach; gain knowledge about engineering and structural design of habitats for safe containment. All of this information and more will be provided when Officer Donovan discusses what it really takes to respond in an emergency situation.



Erin Carey training Hercules the Bengal

demonstrate safe and proper restraint of a female Eurasian Eagle Owl for her annual physical exam including administering medication and coping/clipping techniques for raptors. Trainers teach about proper equipment maintenance and application for birds large to small. Then have an opportunity to meet a Golden Eagle face to face.

Establishing Quarantine Protocols for Sensitive Species

By Liz Doiron, Animal Care & Vet Specialist, and Rachael Greer, Wildlife Behavior & Husbandry Specialist

Macropods are extremely sensitive to toxoplasmosis and coccidiosis; due to the high volume of felids residing within Tiger World it is imperative to establish strict quarantine protocols to avoid cross contamination. During this interactive opportunity you will learn about the spread of zoonotic disease and preventive measures.

In addition to these comprehensive educational classes that will expand your knowledge base, Tiger World is offering free admission to all FCF families during regular business hours August 20th - August 26th, however to better serve all FCF conference attendees Tiger World will be closed on Friday August 25th to anyone under the age of 18 or anyone not participating in the onsite classes. So apply your sunscreen, top off that reusable water bottle and get ready for a ROARING good time at the zoo.



Liz Doiron and Boomer the Red Kangaroo

2018 Conference Fast Fasts

Nearest Airport – Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT)

Conference Hotel – Hilton Charlotte Executive Park Hotel, 5624 Westpark Drive, Charlotte, NC 28217 phone (704) 527-8000 FCF Room Rate is \$129 double, \$139 triple, \$149 quadruple occupancy. Continental breakfast included. FCF room rates good August 21 to August 27. Special FCF Room rates end August 7. Reserve your room online by visiting the FCF website www.felineconservation.org under Upcoming Events, click on the link for FCF Conference Hotel.

Transportation from airport to the hotel – Free Airport Shuttle through Hilton Charlotte Executive Park Hotel.

Convention Registration Adults - \$215 before August 1, \$235 after. Children 13 – 18 - \$150. 12 and under – free. Single Day Registration – Thursday - \$65, Friday - \$125, Saturday - \$100.

Schedule of Events:

Wednesday, August 22 – 8:00 am to 6:00 pm – The FCF Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course. 8:00 am – 12:00 noon - The Wildlife Conservation Educators Course. 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Contingency Planning Workshop. All three classes are taught at the Hilton Charlotte Executive Park Hotel. Husbandry Course is \$110 FCF members, \$145 non-members. Wildlife Educators Course and Contingency Planning Workshop fees are both \$55 FCF members, \$80 non-FCF members.

Thursday, June 19 – 9:00 am - FCF Board meeting, members welcome to attend. 2:00 pm - FCF Hospitality Suite opens. Socialize and interact with kittens, drop off donated auction items. 5:30 pm - Cash bar and Buffet dinner in the Main FCF Meeting Room. Guest speakers are available during dinner and after for questions and discussion.

Friday, August 24 – 9:00 am – 10:00 am Speakers. 10:00 - 11:00 am General Membership Meeting. 11:30 am bus leaves for Tiger World. 1:00 pm Lunch at Tiger World. 1:30 pm – 5:00 pm Tour of Tiger World and presentations and demonstrations by keepers as well as educational training interactions. 5:00 pm bus leaves for hotel.

Saturday, August 25 – 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Speaker presentations. Noon – 1:00 pm, lunch break. 6:00 pm – cocktails. 7:00 pm - Banquet Dinner. 8:00 pm - live auction.

Sunday, August 26 – 11:00 am – Post Conference tour of Conservators Center in Mebane. \$20 fee. Sign up for this special FCF member's tour at www.conservatorscenter.org/visit/fcf/ CCI is located about two hours East of Tiger World, near I-40 and I-85. You must provide your transportation. If flying, you may want to consider flying out of Raleigh-Durham (RDU) after your visit to the Center.

2018 FCF Conference Speakers Line-up and More

Greetings from sunny North Carolina, where the 2018 FCF Conference will be held from August 23rd-25th. I hope you have already signed up to be a part of this amazing event. We are pleased to welcome an impressive lineup of speakers, who will not only present on their topics, but will be available at other times during the conference to individually answer questions and discuss related topics. Speakers will be presenting both Friday morning and Saturday morning.

Among our anticipated presenters include the following:

Dr. Suzanne Kennedy-Stoskopf, a veterinary specialist in zoological medicine at NCSU, on how best to select the right veterinarian for your animals and effectively communicate your concerns to them

Alan Smith, State Lobbyist for Zoological Association of America, on grassroots lobbying and working with legislators

David Kleven, Animal Care Software developer, demonstrating the capacity of his software package, which is an all in one cloud based animal record keeping system, including frontline communication for staff, Medical Records, Prescription Tracking and Treatment Reminders, Daily Reports, Tasks & Checklists, and Tagging and Notifications

Dawn Strasser, Cincinnati Zoo neonate specialist on pre-parturition dams and preparing for contingencies

Rachel Garner, freelance science educator and founder of WhyAnimals-DoTheThing.com

Keith Gault of BillieKatz Exotics, physicist and military contractor, on his insights about relocating their small cat facility, including planning and construction for living in a hurricane zone

Dr. Brian Davis, a geneticist from Texas A&M sharing a scientist's view of the current state of tiger genetics, his genetic banking project, and using genetics to identify the causes of some inherited diseases in felines

Kim Barker, the Conservators Center's own Serval Whisperer, discussing how to best provide for servals that have been rehomed and need help re-bonding with a new owner

Our zoo day host, Tiger World Endangered Wildlife Preserve, is preparing a first for FCF conference attendees. The entire site will be closed to all other visitors while our attendees engage in training activities throughout the park. This adults-only educational opportunity offers valuable insight into the daily routine of the park, operant conditioning training of the animals, and a backstage view of the facilities. Make sure you update your status as a registered handler or professional member through the FCF web site. Advanced handlers and professional members may have additional access to some learning opportunities at Tiger World not open to others. Read more about Tiger World's plans for hosting our event in their article in this journal.

If you have not been to an FCF conference in recent years, or if this is your first time, here are a few additional tips about what to expect.

Our annual membership meeting is the best time to bring up your interests, concerns and suggestions for the coming year.



Conference offers plenty of networking, a tour of Tiger World, a variety of interesting speakers, and concludes with the Saturday night banquet dinner followed by an important and fun, fund raiser auction.

While most donated items are put into a silent auction, a select group of prized items become the focus of humorous and competitive bidding wars.

Now is a great time to get involved in this organization! Submit an article to the journal, volunteer to help on a committee, or ask about other ways you can support the FCF's mission.

Our annual fundraiser auction for the cats will be ongoing throughout the conference, culminating in a short live auction after the Saturday night banquet. Please bring items you would like to contribute. The registration desk will be delighted to receive them. All auction profits benefit the mission of the FCF, including educational programs and conservation program support.

The Saturday night banquet is a chance to show off your wild side at a "come as you want to be seen" affair. Whether you prefer to attend the party in an evening gown, ears and a tail, or jeans, you will find others there with the same sense of adventure you have. Enjoy old friends and new alike while we share a final evening together.



When you arrive at the FCF Conference you may drop off your donated auction items and pick up your Conference Guide and name tag from our friendly registration hosts.

Non-Surgical Approach to Healing a Serious Wound on A Neonatal Bobcat

Lynn Culver

Breeding exotic felines in captivity for a life with humans usually means removing neonates from their mother so that they can be bottle fed and tamed. When kittens are first removed, they fear the caregiver and hiss and spit, but because they are so young, their memories fade quickly, usually in a matter of hours or days. The timing of removal is a balancing act, between the natural mother feline's nurturing skills, and the need to minimize stress to the neonate as it is suddenly switched from a warm, furry mother with living nipples and a raspy tongue, to a blanket over a heating pad, a stuffed animal, a latex or silicone nipple and a formula based on cow's milk and other ingredients. It is a shock, but fortunately, the baby brain seems to forget its natural mother quickly, and with every short nap, they wake up to a new reality and the memory of what they knew fades, and the association of human caress, voice, anal stimulation and bottle feeding becomes the new "mommy" for the neonate kitten.

For instance, a pregnant feline with a history of good mothering instincts can usually be left alone to deliver and nurse her kittens for at least 10 to 14 days. Kittens at this age will have their eyes open, but vision will still not be in focus until 17 days or more. The kittens will have had the benefits of mother's colostrum and her perfect milk. They should have plenty of body fat so they can undergo a short period of reduced caloric consumption as they transition to a manmade formula fed out of a bottle.

On the other hand, a mother with a

poor nurturing history should be monitored closely with a camera and caregivers should have contingency plans to remove the neonates much earlier if the mother does not spend enough time with the kittens, or begins carrying them around.

Then there are the unknown mothers, first time deliveries; a camera is also a great

tens that probably would not have survived if left with the mother longer, and it is a reminder that nature can be cruel to little lives and that hand rearing is a life saver for some cases.

This year we were anxiously awaiting the results of a new breeding trio. Two years ago, Ameeka, a 2-year-old bobcat had been successfully introduced to a pair of 6-month-olds, Silky and Fuzzy. Fuzzy was now old enough to breed, and he had mounted both ladies this spring. The estrus cycles were long, probably due to the learning curve. But finally both females were out of heat and not returning to estrus, though neither looked pregnant. However, two weeks before they were due, I was visiting with them and they both jumped into my lap and as I petted and hugged them I could feel their swollen and erect nipples and I knew they were pregnant.

We separated Ameeka into an enclosure by herself and rigged a house with a camera, but I also left another house inside the habitat to give her a choice. I would rather lose an opportunity to watch the birth and give her a choice. And sure enough, Ameeka chose the house without a camera. Fortunately, Ameeka was inside the house constantly, and exhibited extremely normal behaviors, even forgoing her evening meal for four days.

Silky was left in the main enclosure, which has two attached birthing cages and a house inside the main habitat. We planned to lock Silky up in one of the birthing enclosures a couple days before she was due to give her privacy, since Fuzzy was also living in the habitat with her.

One day I noticed that Silky was nowhere to be seen and I checked both birthing houses, and they were empty. That meant she must have picked the house inside the habitat. Fuzzy was lured over into one of



Photo taken 29 days after birth and the underarm injury is completely healed.

idea for close monitoring so that you know if the delivery is going well, if the mother is offering her belly to the newborns, or, heaven forbid, she is destroying them deliberately or accidentally.

My husband and I have over three decades of experience breeding several species of wild feline, including bobcats. There have been times we have pulled kit-



Three houses to choose from, and Silky bobcat decides to deliver her kittens in the dip of this plastic air conditioning tunnel.

the birthing cages and locked up. Suddenly I heard the distinctive sounds of bobcat kittens, and it was not coming from the house, it was coming from a plastic air conditioning tunnel wrapped around an oak tree in their enclosure. She had delivered before I expected and picked a place I never expected. The only thing we could do was cross our fingers.

Ten days later we decided to pull the kittens, it was hot, the tunnel was not insulated, and the situation was beginning to worry us. We undid the bungee cords that held the tunnel in a coil and then gently shook the babies down the slide and carried the little boy and girl inside.

Both babies were fat and beautiful. But the little boy had a serious tear under his right armpit that ex-



When I pulled the kittens at ten days I discovered this serious injury under the arm of the boy kitten.

posed his muscle and had no skin covering it. The wound was clean and did not appear to be infected. The kitten was noticeably warmer than its littermate and probably did have a bit of a fever. I put him on Clavamox drops.

There was nothing sharp in the tunnel, and so I suspect that Silky delivered in the dead of night and lacking any light, she accidentally sliced the kittens underarm with her carnassial teeth when she was severing the umbilical cord and eating the afterbirth. The wound was not fresh; it looked like it could be 10 days old. The kitten was too young to sedate for stitches, so I chose another route. I squirted some Novasan antiseptic on it and then sprayed the wound with Underwood horse medicine and then sprinkling baking powder on it.

Underwood can be purchased online at <https://www.underwoodhorsemedicine.com>. Underwood is a very effective treatment for open wounds well known to horse people. The product is made of Thymol, menthol, copper sulfate, iodine and worm-



wood and a few other ingredients. It is poisonous, and you would not want a cat to lick this off. But it is an amazing product that causes granulation and promotes healing. I have used it before on animals. One does not wash or clean out the area, just shake the bottle well, spray onto the cut, and sprinkle a light dusting of baking powder, which acts as a band aid over the wound. I treated the wound three or four times a day, after each bottle. I would put the kitten to bed with its littermate and after a couple hours nap; the brown liquid and white powder would have worn off onto the bedding. But over a period of 4 or 5 days, the fur around the open area began to get saturated with the liquid powder mix and formed a scab over the exposed tissue and muscle. Then I would have to squeeze it a bit to form a crack where I could take my syringe of Underwood and squirt about one mil into the hole and then sprinkle more baking powder into the crack.

The kitten never seemed to mind



Just four days of Underwood treatment had produced a protective bandage.

and after ten days there was significant healing. I spoke to my vet and showed him photos of the initial injury and its progress and he agreed that the kitten was doing well, however he felt it was time to end the Underwood and begin using Collasate spray, which is a hydrolysate of type I collagen for use in the management of acute wounds. Its benefits include a reduction in pain and itchi-



ness. Protection of the wound bed provides moistness for healing, promotes natural autolysis by rehydrating and softening necrotic tissue and provides a matrix for cellular colonization and tissue regeneration.

I took the spray home and gave the kitten its first warm, soaking bath to loosen up the fur and baking powder bandage which had formed a scab. I was able to cut the bandage off to reveal a much smaller roundish red wound. I sprayed the Collasate on the exposed tissue and the surrounding fur and did that several times a day for the next week. It was an amazing transformation and in just 48 hours the wound had a scab and each day the wound was smaller. In just 10 days it was completely healed and already covered in fur!



Collasate spray sped up the healing process and now after just two days of treatment, the injury was nearly closed.



Thirteen days after bringing the kittens into my home, the male's injury was barely noticeable. The use of Underwood to promote granulation and the sluffing off of necrotic tissue, followed by Collasate spray to provide the healing benefits of collagen was a total success.

A side note: Collagen spray contains bittrex, which is very, very bitter. In fact, The Guinness World Records lists Bitrex as 'the most bitter substance in the world.' Drop a thimble-full of Bitrex into an Olympic swimming pool and you can detect the bitterness in those two and a half million liters of water. But despite this bitterness, Bitrex is itself totally harmless. It won't make you sick or ill, it just tastes so bitter that you will want to spit it out – fast. And I can personally attest to this factoid!

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Pre-Conference Wednesday Offers Three Educational Classes

Take the Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course, or take either or both the Wildlife Conservation Educators Course and Contingency Planning Workshop.

The 8-hour **Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course** will be taught Wednesday, August 22 at the Hilton Charlotte Executive Park Hotel at the start of the FCF Convention. This eight hour class is \$110 FCF members, \$145 non-members. Broaden your horizons, keep up with the latest in feline healthcare and husbandry, and gain an understanding of the laws, regulations and government agencies that oversee private captive husbandry of wild felines. The instructor led, multi-media presentation, with student textbook, workshops, and final exam is suitable for both novices and “old hands” who want to improve their level of knowledge.

Topics Covered Include:

- Natural History of Wild Felines
- Regulatory Agencies & Permits
- Facility Design
- Handling Equipment
- Diet / Nutrition
- Health Care Basics
- Disposition & Handling
- Behavior Conditioning
- Contingency Planning

Take the 4-hour **Contingency Planning Workshop** taught Wednesday, August 22.

Disaster and preparedness were focal points during 2017, as hurricanes, wildfires, and many other incidents impacted individuals, businesses, and animals across the country. The exotic animal industry was not spared, and while the response and collaboration among facilities and owners was extraordinary, it is clear that there is much we still have to do at the facility and industry levels. Your level of preparedness ultimately determines how successful your response and recovery will be, so it is critical to have plans in place in advance of disaster.

The need to ensure contingency planning is especially timely, as the recently issued final rule from the USDA regarding de minimis exemptions for licensing was one of the few remaining obstacles for the current hold on the contingency plan final rule. This means that, soon, comprehensive contingency planning will be a requirement for USDA licensure. Even without this regulatory requirement, it is simply advisable

to know in advance what to do, and that you have the means to do it, before you are facing a disaster.

This FCF workshop is not intended to be



a “how to” on building contingency plans. Instead, the speakers will hold a fast-paced interactive working group designed so you walk out with:

- A list of resources on where to go to get help building a robust yet flexible contingency plan, and guidance on understanding how best to use those resources;
- A process to help you identify the risks your facility may face that require contingency plans;
- Information for you to take to your leadership, boards of directors, and

The 4-hour **Wildlife Conservation Educators Course** will be taught Wednesday, August 22 at the Hilton Charlotte Executive Park Hotel at the start of the FCF Convention. This four hour class is \$55 FCF members, \$80 non-members. Learn how to teach other people about wildlife & conservation. The Wildlife Conservation Educator Course gives you the tools necessary to become qualified as a professional wildlife educator of all wildlife but the course specializes in feline species.

Topics Covered Include:

- What it means to be a professional wildlife educator and how you will impact your community and the animal industry
- Permits and laws regulating exhibition of wildlife
- How to form a wildlife education business, establish a professional image and maintain credibility
- How to choose wildlife ambassadors and basic animal husbandry
- Animal training, enrichment and safety techniques
- How to develop educational shows that flow smoothly, capture your audience’s attention and raise conservation awareness
- How to market your business and shows
- Valuable tips to improve your show and set yourself apart from your competition
- How to speak with a variety of people in a professional manner, from the media to your audience
- How to maintain and grow a healthy business

key players that they will need to understand the contingency planning process, and their part in it;

- Guidance on how to identify and work with relevant governmental agencies, including local, county, state, and federal officials;
- An introduction to the Incident Command Structure (ICS), your role in it, and why it is vital you understand how it is used; and
- A line of communication to the instructors for help and advice after the workshop.

The goals of the workshop are to transfer knowledge that is not easily accessible through standard information channels, while maximizing what we can learn from one another within an interactive framework. Please contact us in advance if you would like specific issues, questions, or scenarios considered for inclusion:

Julia@Coalition-Solutions.com. We will try to accommodate as many requests as possible.



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The History of Bungalow Wild Felines *Conservationist breeding program and Tigrinus rescue in Brazil*

Cleber Ferreira Delázari
Bungalow Wild Felines, Brazil

“Bungalow” means a small house, shanty, cottage, thatched or tiled one-story house in India usually having a single story surrounded by a wide verandah and sometimes an additional attic story. They became the most popular and traditional homes and quickly became associated with romantic ambience in tropical locations, becoming a very pleasing place where you can live in a nice environment as one with nature. Formerly in India, they were where travelers on a dark route could be accommodated. I call my facilities by this name because I love simple, bucolic and rustic architecture habitation, jungle adventures and the wildlife.



Oncilla, Tigrina, tiger cat, little spotted cat, tigrillo and gato-do-mato-pequeno are all names for this tiny South American species.

Bungalow Wild Felines is located in a tropical paradise, in a beautiful cottage close to the mountains, surrounded by trees, huge evergreens, Bougainvilleas and

with a magnificent view of the lake, located in the noble area in the country side of our city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais State, Brazil. Here, the air is pure and enjoyable and no better place to live, rescue and breed our lovely animals!!!

Bungalow has been rescuing and breeding small Brazilian wild felines for several years. My first kittens, a lovely *Leopardus tigrinus* and a little *Leopardus pardali*, started my love of these species.

From that time on, I have been involved in the rescue and breeding of mainly *Tigrinus* and also working with some different South American bloodlines.

I always was interested in wildlife and first became interested in rescue and breeding wild felines after watching an animal show on television. The host of the show

was interviewing Mrs. Brigitte Jansohn (In Fond Memory / Ocelot Society), a fantastic German woman and conservationist breeder of Brazilian wild cats who lived in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais State, Brazil. She has turned into my best friend and mentor!

Having always been fascinated by wild animals and specially

being a lover of the intense beauty of the jungle, I have been actively involved in breeding, keeping and raising many different Brazilian wild species, such as parrots,

primates, small felines and toucans. It is very important to emphasize that I am a wildlife rescuer and conservation breeder, and have the official permission to raise wild species in Brazil and experience to do it. I do not trade these animals. We are licensed and inspected by IBAMA (Environment Brazilian Institute).

I am dedicated to bringing people and wildlife together to develop a community awareness of the value of the Brazil wildlife. My ultimate goal is to rescue, rehabilitate, and return recovered animals to their natural habitat. Many of these animals will never be released and will spend the rest of their lives with me. The care and hopeful return of these animals to the wild can become very expensive, difficult or even impossible.

The *Leopardus tigrinus* also are well known as oncillas, tiger cat, little spotted cat, tigrillo and gato-do-mato-pequeno (portuguese). The wild specimens are widely distributed in South America and Central America, in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. They are listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) which restricts trade, sale of its pelts, hunt and capturing the cat for the pet trade.

In Brazil, they have been found in subtropical forest highlands, early secondary forest but also in plantation fields, deforested areas and eucalyptus monoculture. The *Tigrinus* have preference for the montane cloud forest. These magnificent little felines are very agile, athletic and alert to their surroundings and they eat a great variety of small prey, including birds, insects, reptiles and rodents. They have a nocturnal and solitary routine, except for seasonal mating when the male approaches the female. Here in Brazil, I believe they are found in a few zoos and with conservation breeders.

Tigrinus are one of the smallest wild cats found in Central America and South America, shown a silhouette and foot-

print resembling a lot like a domestic cat. They weigh as little as 4.9 lbs. (2.2 kg), and usually do not exceed 6 lbs. (2.8 kg) with males slightly larger than females. It is observed that adult males can be very aggressive towards females. Their coats have a background color of light brown to rich ochre, yellowish or grayish, with dark brown or black spots, beautiful rosettes and blotches. The undersides are very light and sometimes are white, with black spots. The limbs can be spotted and the tail is long, thick and with spots developing into black rings.

They are fragile-built, with slight bones, a small narrow head, expressive golden eyes, large rounded ears and the backs of the ears are black with a white spot. The fur is short, thick and firm, and lies close to the skin. Some melanistic Tigrinus may be occasionally found, especially in southeast Brazil.

Reproduction in captivity has been very problematic for Tigrinus, due to the insufficient knowledge about this specie. They are very shy and reserved but, they can be very aggressive and much is unknown about their behavior, habitat requirements or ecology in the wild as no wild studies have ever been done. It is known that the males are usually fertile and sexually mature after 18 months of age, but females do not usually give birth to their first litter until they are 24 months old. The mating season for the Tigrinus is in the early spring and summer. It can have one or two litters per year and 1 to 2 kittens in a litter. At birth the kittens can weigh 50/80 grams and are very, very tiny. After mating, the males take no part in the care of the kittens. The females are pregnant for 70 to 78 days. The kittens open their eyes at 10 days and start eating solid food at 45 days. The kittens become independent after 4 months. Longevity is an average of 11 years in natural habitat, but they have lived 16 to 20 years of age in captivity.

My first Tigrinus was Vitória. She came to live at Bungalow at

only the age of two days, so she was brought to my home when she was just a very tiny thing. She quickly bonded with me, and is now a permanent part of my family. Her name is Vitória due to the fact that she was a great victory save this little girl, which is very difficult to do when the kittens are newborn. Because of her tiny age when she arrived, she needed much time, fondness and exclusive dedication. There were many days and nights devoted to the caring of this teeny creature, but today I am very happy for this reason! She has her nose in everything that goes on; she talks to us when she wants something!!!! I do not think there is a place in this house she has not been, because each day she finds a higher place to climb. She is my favorite female I rescued and bottle fed from Day

Article Credit by Jim Broaddus



Cleber holds Vitória his first tigrinia. She came into his care at only two days of age, and as you can see from this photo, she blossomed into a beautiful, loving adult feline.



Cleber constructed bungalow habitats with lots of tree trunks and branches to climb for his little jungle cats.

2!!! She is now healthy, independent and wild but really sweet and friendly What an AWESOME girl!!!

Another Tigrinus, named Thrider, came to me after having been confiscated from her previous owner. He was found living in an unheated room from a private owner. Her owner thought he would be a “good pet” until, even as small as he was; he began to demolish the house. He climbs on the curtains and threw down the adornments and much more. Now, he is happy and safe at my facility. Like all felines, my Tigrinus spends much of their time sleeping, but are always ready to check out guests and keep an eye on what the others in a nearby compound are eating or doing.

I have received many little kittens to take care of that were found orphaned after their mothers were hunted. My lovely Vitória is a good example of this and of my extreme dedication.

To increase the quality of life for Tigrinus, I tried to build habitats that were comfortable with the necessary space for the activities; lots of tree trunks and branches to climb, well ventilated and very illuminated, allowing them to receive the sunshine. As you can see in this photo, I chose the rustic style to build the habitats, as look like the Bungalow!

Some of these animals were born in captivity, others were born in the jungle, with many of them being orphans or cast-offs from breeder and private owners who could



**Tiny Tigrinia kitten born at Bungalow
Wild Felines Conservation Center.**

no longer care for them. Also, I received some from my best friend Brigitte Jansohn when she passed away in March 2002. All captive species depend upon humans for their needs and carefully planned diets, correct captive habitat with enrichments to play, expert veterinary care, constant attention and love. I try to provide a dignified life for these precious wild felines and I am dedicated to the pursuit of this goal.

Today I have 12 Tigrinus and they are five females and seven males. A new compound was built for them to offer more comfort and tranquility. Their names are Vitória, Salomé, Severina, Chitara, Felícia, Steve, Kimba, Kiko, Cameron, Thrider, Rubi and Onix. They make part of my

breeding program to try to save this magnificent species from extinction!

Some of my kittens are bottle raised in-house with lots of attention and affection, but sometimes their mother cares for them.

I feel blessed to help bring rescue, comfort and happiness to so many of God's creatures by sharing my home, my time and my life with them.




Deforestation is the biggest threat to Tigrinus and the most deadly known predator of these cats is man. Through hunting and traps, man often killed these wonderful felines for their fur to make coats. Also, they are captured to be sold as pets. It is one of the few predators in this natural habitat!

As I am a wildlife conservationist and preservative breeder, I think that preserving and protecting the wild species are responsibilities for all of us, because the extinction of a species is forever!!!



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LIVING ON THE AIR IN PANAMA CITY



Jim Broaddus with his young puma named Saint.

For those who feel the need to read..... with nineteen exotics, two hybrid, two domestics, two blue and gold Macaws and a bearded dragon.....why would Bear Creek Feline Center possibly want a radio station? Long time FCF members, Jim & Bertie Broaddus, shared with us, just how WYDD FM became licensed by the Federal Communications Commission as Panama City, Florida's Voice for the BIG CATS!

After the Broaddus family operated broadcast properties for decades, dating back to 1969, Jim said: "The Radio Gods finally let me out of that highly competitive business in 1996." At about that same time, Jim began the process to gain Florida's 1000 hour requirement to possess everything but a YETI, and with only two servals, he and his family built Bear Creek Feline Center, now TripAdvisor rated #1 as the best tourist attraction in Panama City!

After the FCC opened a filing window to accept new broadcast applications to serve Panama City in 2014, BCFC's board threw their hats into the ring, and after lengthy comparative hearings, the Center was granted WYDD LP, PC's first (and only) wildlife oriented FM broadcast facility, on 107.5 Mhz and now streaming globally at wyddlp.caster.fm. Jim said "After working

in Rock & Roll Radio and doing a short stint with MTV, you might say I left one wild business for another! Maybe my drive to work with animals is my atonement! Now, I work for free and I'm worth every penny of it! We are broadcasters and big cat exhibitors but our ultimate goal is to lock the gates to become a legitimate feline sanctuary. We currently make permanent homes to five cougars (one of which is most probably a Florida Panther), five servals, five bobcats, one Siberian Lynx and three jaguarundis, with a waiting list to take on more."

Not to chase rabbits, there is some support that the jaguarundi lives as the third wild felid in Florida, not indigenous, but most likely out there, possibly as out of place pets or failed back yard zoo attempts. BCFC contends that there is a thriving population of these little cats down in a place called Tate's Hell in Franklin County, Florida near coastal Carrabelle. Florida Fish & Wildlife officers have confirmed that there are positive sightings of rhesus macaque monkeys in this rurally isolated, State managed area. So, why not rare cats? Locals call it the Carrabelle cat, but with no positive proof of jaguarundis out there. Bear Creek interns continue to explore that area with drones, Flir thermal imaging field glasses and boots on the ground surveys to catalog their existence.

Most recently FCF'ers Craig DeRosa and Chester Moore, shown below, made an important move to share Craig's celebrity cougar, Takoda, with Bear Creek to exhibit this great at to tourist along the Gulf Coast.

Most recently FCF'ers Craig DeRosa and Chester Moore, shown below, made an important move to share Craig's celebrity cougar, Takoda, with Bear Creek to exhibit this great at to tourist along the Gulf Coast.



Yoda the jaguarundi was born at Bear Creek Feline Center to parents imported from European zoological

Craig's outstanding captive wildlife work in the Holmes, New York area at Ghost Cat Habitat will now be shared with the billion dollar tourist industry along the Emerald



Craig DeRosa and Chester Moore crouch next to Takoda as plans are made to release the big male cougar into his new enclosure at Bear Creek Feline Center.

Coast including Panama City Beach and Destin. "Craig is a 6th Degree Taekwondo Black Belt instructor and a 7th degree cat handler," Broaddus said.

The Wildlife Journalist®, Chester Moore, has partnered with Bear Creek Feline Center for several years in helping to raise awareness of their work through his various wildlife shows and publishings and more recently to create a program to bring



One of the guest speakers you can listen to on WYDD FM is Jim Fowler, known for his devotion to wildlife preservation and education.

children from his Wild Wishes program to encounter the animals at Bear Creek, to learn about wild cat conservation. "I have a weekly wildlife program I have done on AM 560 KLVI out of Beaumont, TX. I wanted to branch out and syndicate and I could think of no better place to start than the wildest station I know of and that is WYDD. By partnering with Bear Creek Feline Center we can help kids encounter amazing animals as they learn about the plight of all kinds of wildlife and how to get involved. When they see a jaguarundi or a Florida panther at Bear Creek, they just might get inspired to want to do something positive for cats," Moore added.

WYDD FM has become the good glue that holds everything together according to Broaddus. BCFC airs weekly programs featuring Chester and interviews with Jim's old friend Jim Fowler.

The program director is Jim and Bertie's son James, who picks a hybrid music mix at the crossroads of Country Pop and Southern Rock, with a sprinkling of "Get off the pavement and back to the Natural World"

programming segments. Broaddus wants to open the airwaves to wildlife shows and podcast, inviting FCF members who are encouraged to send him new programs in the mp3 format for airing in PC and globally!

He will help you with development if you need it.....all at NO CHARGE! If you always wanted to be a disc jockey and if you love cats, contact him at jim@bearcreekfelinecenter.org or call him at 850 722-9927 for more.

So now, BCFC can expect the FCC, USDA, FFWCC, FAA, local animal control officers and blistered beach fun seekers, who have strayed off the beaten path, to rattle their gates, unannounced! "Be careful what you wish for as broadcasting and cat work are a 24/7/365 commitment" Broaddus concluded!



Chester Moore has a weekly AM radio wildlife program in Texas and is also a wildlife writer and photographer. This photo may have captured him as he shot the photo FCF published on the back cover of this Journal issue.



Jim's son James, rounds out the radio programming with a hybrid mix of Country Pop and Southern Rock and a sprinkling of "Get off the pavement and back to the Natural world" programming segments.

Biker's death near Seattle is Washington's first cougar fatality in 94 years

Yelena Dzhanova

It was the first fatal cougar attack in Washington since 1924, when 13-year-old Jimmy Fehlhaber died trying to outrun a cougar.

A starving cougar mauled one cyclist to death and seriously injured another over the weekend in North Bend, Washing-

ton, about 30 miles east of Seattle, while the two mountain bikers were on an early morning ride through the woods, authorities said Monday.

It was the first fatal cougar attack in Washington in 94 years. State wildlife officials said the cougar, which weighed 100

pounds, was emaciated.

Bruce Botka of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife confirmed the bikers' identities on Monday as Isaac M. Sederbaum, 31, and Sonja J. Brooks, 32, both of Seattle.

The two were out for a ride Saturday when

they were startled by the cougar, which appeared to be stalking them, said Sgt. Ryan Abbott of the King County Sheriff's Office. They made noise to scare off the cougar, a strategy wildlife experts recommend, and it ran off, leaving them shaken but relieved.

But the cougar returned and jumped on Sederbaum, Abbott said. Brooks ran away — the wrong response, experts say — and the cougar turned around and gave chase. Sederbaum saw his friend being pulled away by the cougar and had time to escape on his bicycle and then call for help, Abbott said.

Sederbaum was hospitalized at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle with cuts and bites to his head, neck and face, requiring surgery, The Seattle Times reported. He was listed in satisfactory condition on Monday.

Authorities found the cougar on top of Brooks' body, and it appeared ready to drag the body to its den, the Times reported. Cougars are also referred to as pumas and mountain lions.

Wildlife agents euthanized the cougar hours later. It's unclear why the cougar attacked the two, but Mark Elbroch, lead puma program scientist for global wildcat conservation organization Panthera, said the wildlife agents who shot the cat told him that the cougar, a 3- or 4-year-old male, was severely underweight.

"He should have been establishing territory, coming into his prime. He should have 'made it,'" Elbroch said. "What was unusual was the mountain lion circled around and attacked rather than stalked and ambushed. A mountain lion that presents itself to prey — that's not a normal mountain lion."

"It was taking high risks in trying to stay alive."

Authorities plan to match DNA taken from the animal with DNA from the victims to be certain that wildlife agents killed the right cougar. They sent the animal's carcass to a veterinary lab at Washington State University for a necropsy to determine what might have been wrong with it, according to King5, the NBC affiliate in Seattle.

The last fatal cougar attack in Washington occurred in 1924, when Jimmy Fehlhaber, 13, died trying to outrun a cougar, according to the Quad City Herald archives.

Fehlhaber's was the first known cougar fatality in the United States, the Herald reported in 1925, a few weeks after the incident. But the Herald also reported, "There were a number of cases where children have disappeared and the supposition is that they were carried away and devoured by cougars, but they were never proven."

However, there are earlier accounts of mountain lions killing people throughout the country.

The Salt Lake Herald of Salt Lake City, for example, reported on Nov. 12, 1901, that a carpenter was eaten by a cougar in a cave. In Mount Sterling, Kentucky, the Topeka State Journal reported in March 1904 that two men on horseback tried to fight off a mountain lion by shooting and clubbing it, but one man died of his injuries.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the Eastern cougar from the list of endangered species in January, saying that its status was an anomaly because the species has been extinct for nearly 70 years, decades before the Endangered Species Act was even enacted.

Today, breeding cougar populations are found in 16 U.S. states, according to nonprofit conservationist group the Cougar Fund. Each state except Texas has established limitations on cougar hunting. California has given the most protection to the an-

imal, classifying it as a "specially protected mammal," which means it cannot be killed for sport.

Washington allows up to 250 cougars to be hunted and killed a year, but only in specific designated zones, the Times reported. The Mountain Lion Foundation says that the forested regions in the state — approximately half of Washington — are devoted to cougar habitat and territory. The bikers attacked on Saturday were biking near one of the forested areas.

But because of the human population boom, people have begun to move into the types of habitats that also host mountain lions, Elbroch said.

"It's logical that we're going to encounter mountain lions more often now," he said. "We have to make some common-sense decisions. If you have small children, for example, don't let them run on the trail beyond your view. Living in mountain lion country, that's something you don't do."

Elbroch said people are starting to recognize the ecological benefits predators bring. "People believe in predators, they understand their ecological value, and they want to live with them," he said. "But we need to look at the benefits they bring to our society and our ecosystem and truly participate in peaceful coexistence."

Reprinted from NBC News, May 21, 2018



The cougar that attacked the two bikers was shot by wildlife agents. Estimated to be only about three to four years old, the male was extremely underweight and probably preyed upon these humans in a desperate effort to stay alive.

Hart County grandmother kills rabid bobcat with bare hands

Wayne Ford

A rabid bobcat recently attacked a Hart County grandmother in her yard, spurring a furious battle that ended with the cat's strangulation death.



Bobcats normally avoid close encounters with humans, but the fatal Rabies virus causes inflammation in the brain and this deterioration tends to cause bizarre and often aggressive behavior.

"I thought, 'Not today.' There was no way I was going to die," DeDe Phillips said Thursday as she recalled the attack that occurred June 7 at her home off Liberty Church Road.

Phillips has begun a round of rabies shots at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. She also has a broken finger, and numerous bite and claw wounds to her hands, arms, chest and legs.

"I'm very lucky," the 46-year-old woman said.

The unprovoked attack occurred about 6 p.m. She had been working on her truck that afternoon and posted a bumper sticker that read: "Women who behave rarely make history." She planned to photograph the sticker and send it to her husband.

She walked out of the house with her cell phone.

"My neighbor's dog was barking and it

drew my attention," she said. "I saw the cat and I took a picture. The cat took two steps and was on top of me. ... It came for my face."

Phillips grew up in the country, where her father-in-law was once a trapper of bobcats. As a result, she knew something about the animal's behavior.

"They go for your jugular ... because when they can get the vein you're dead in a couple of minutes," she said.

This bobcat did go for her upper body.

"It caught me slightly on my face, but I got him before he could do much damage there," she said. "I took it straight to the ground and started inching my hands up to its throat. I knew that was the only way I was getting out of this."

With both hands around the bobcat's neck she began squeezing, but she never shouted for help because her 5-year-old granddaughter was in the house.

"I was scared if I screamed for help that my granddaughter would come out and I didn't want that to happen," she said.



DeDe's hands also suffered wounds as she strangled the rabid feline.



The bobcat attacked DeDe Phillips on the face.

"Once I got him where he wasn't moving I started screaming for my daughter-in-law to call 911," she said. Phillips' son was also called after the 911 call and he showed up with a gun.

But Phillips would not release her grip on the crazed animal as she feared it might not truly be dead.

She didn't want her son to fire the gun because she was so close, so he pulled a knife.

"My son stabbed it four or five times, but it never budged so I knew it was completely dead," she said.

After Hart County deputies and an ambulance arrived, Phillips drove herself to a hospital. She learned the next day the bobcat was rabid.

Phillips lives in a rural area near the Elbert County line and said she learned only recently a rabid skunk and rabid fox were found in the same area.

Phillips' cousin Amy Leann Mize has set up an account in Fundly.com to raise money for Phillips medical expenses as the first round of rabies shots already have cost her \$10,000. She also faces expenses for treatments to her wounds.

Reprinted from Athens news, June 15, 2018

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From Big Cat Country

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WYDD-FM

107.5

Panama City, Florida



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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: Spunky is a 16-year-old spotted male jaguar and Mallie is a 4-year-old melanistic female. The pair was recently introduced and has been getting along and is on display. Photographer Farrah Conti is the head keeper and assistant director at Great Cats World Park in Cave Junction, Oregon.

Back Cover: Chester Moore had the opportunity to photograph this baby jaguar at the Ellen Trout Zoo in Lufkin, Texas after it had been put on display for the first time. He got a few minutes behind the scenes to photograph the beautiful little cat for an article he was working on at the time. "It was a dream come true for me to photograph a baby jaguar. They have been my favorite animal on the planet since I worked with jaguars at a sanctuary while I was in college in the mid-1990s and to see that kind of beauty up close and personal through my lens was inspirational".



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