



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

<http://www.wildcatzoo.org>

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SUMMER 2006

## Cat Update:

For those of you that have been with us for many years, you may remember that the first leopard subspecies we started working with was the North Chinese leopard (*Panthera pardus japonensis*).



*Li Ming, North Chinese leopard cub*

This subspecies' former range is from Chengdu in south-central China, north and then east between Beijing and Mongolia to around Harbin. Its historic range probably extended much wider and recent



*Yanna, North Chinese leopard cub*

genetic research by Steve O'Brien at the National Cancer Institute suggests that the Amur leopard (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) originated from this subspecies.

We were able to acquire good genetically diverse animals from a few zoos in North America and Europe and started breeding them. We were quite successful and bred our group out to the fourth generation here at EFBC/FCC. At this point we started running into a problem in that to continue our colony we would need to find new genetic stock or we would start to see problems with inbreeding. We had genetic representation from every captive animal in the world outside of China and that left us no place else to go except China to try to import new stock off wild caught animals.

We won't bore you with the details of what that would entail but suffice to say that it would be extremely difficult to accomplish. As previously mentioned, continued inbreeding enhances the risk of mortality in newborn cubs and we were

seeing this while trying to breed Kim Lee and Kangdi. Every cub born to them was having problems with development and Kim Lee kept losing her litters. We tried to do a C-section on her, but timing the procedure to her natural time of labor was difficult and we were not successful.



*Li Ming & Yanna at 3 months*

On February 26, 2006 our luck changed and Kim Lee gave birth to 2 cubs. We were still quite paranoid about the health of the cubs and Kim's ability to care for them, so we made the decision to pull them and hand raise the litter. We are happy to report that the 2 cubs survived and are quite healthy. They will be available for viewing at this month's Twilight Tour. These are 5th generation cats and we are going to attempt to import new blood lines in from China within a couple of years so these girls will have good mates when they reach adulthood.



*A few lucky people were able to have their photo taken with Li Ming and Yanna at the April Twilight Tour.*



*Dimitri, Amur leopard cub at 4 months*

The Amur leopard cub born on January 3rd is doing well. He has been named "Dimitri" and he is still being raised by his mother Aijka. He is quite shy and mostly hides during the day but maybe he will be bolder for the June tour and visitors will be able to see him.

Olga gave birth to a litter of Pallas's Cat kittens on March 17th but unfortunately they did not survive. They all succumbed to Toxoplasmosis which came from Olga who tested positive for it. This parasite is rare to non-existent in the cat's home range which seems to make them more susceptible to it than other cats. Our plan next year is to pull the kittens immediately and see if hand raising along with antibiotics will help them survive. The three kittens from last year's litter are still doing well. They were the only kittens of that species born last year in captivity in North America that survived.

#### **CAT MOVES:**

By the time you receive this our 2 fishing cat kittens, Yellow & Blue, will be at the Columbus Zoo in Ohio.

Remus, one of the male Pallas' cats born last year will be going to a facility in Langley, B.C. Canada.

And lastly there are plans to send Sevastian and Ktusha to Canada to help them start an Amur leopard program.

## Special Events:

Our 2nd annual Big Cat Bazaar was held on 6 and 7 May. It was a huge success and we raised over \$2700. The response from people donating items to the event was overwhelming and we thank each and every one of you. Our Director Camille Gadwood did a wonderful job organizing the event, and our staff and volunteers were not only generous with their time, but also lending their backs to the hard labor of setting everything up for sale, and then cleaning up afterwards. **THANK YOU EVERYONE!!** Save up your yard sale-type items as we hope to hold this event again next year.

Twilight Tours - June 17 and September 16. As usual, if you pay in advance you can enter at 5 PM, otherwise you can pay at the door and enter at 5:30 PM. The admission is still \$15 each and you must be 18 or older. Adoptive parents receive free admission to the June 17 event. This is your only chance to spend time in the back areas not open to the public during the day. At the Spring event, 29 lucky guests had the opportunity of a lifetime - they got their picture taken with our



*Jaguar family, Annie (mom) left, Rosa center, and Poncho right.*

young leopard cubs Yanna & Li Ming. Feline Follies - Plan ahead, reserve August 19 and get ready for a fabulous evening of big cats, good food, and great auction items! We are currently accepting donations for the silent auction and looking for sponsors for this event.

Poker Run - this is on for the 3rd year, on Saturday August 5. Special edition T-shirts will be provided to advance registrants only! You can call the gift shop (661.256.3793) to register, or we also have a form online.

## DONATIONS:

The following people have made cash donations to our general operating fund;

Sandra Price, Cecile Morgan, Dan Jenkins - U.S. Crane Company, Erin Lamphere, Roger Baker, Jeff & Charlotte Riechmann, Melissa Breeding, and Mr. & Mrs. Harry Roesner. Their generosity helps us with the ever increasing day-to-day expenses of operating our facility.

Special thank you's go out to the following people that have donated items for our everyday use;

Jason Wells, Gail Lyon, and Val Gannon for donation of much needed cleaning supplies. Rebecca Morse for donating medical supplies on behalf of Arleen Howland.

Pam Rose and Gene Boman for donating a new Epson printer.

To all the gang at the Newhall office of the California Department of Motor Vehicles for donating a Hitachi Television Monitor.

### WISH LIST

Landscape materials, plants and trees

Construction & equipment supplies

(8x8x16 concrete block, re-bar, cement)

New electrical supplies

Pete Gnerlich of Lancaster for donating a Whirlpool upright freezer for our DPC.

And - directly from our cats, a special thank you to Joe Estrada and Tina Rohl for donation of several buckets of live fish for their enjoyment. Joe & Tina will also be bringing live fish for our June Twilight Tour.

Project Tiger is still under construction and we thank the following people for their contributions to its building fund;

Mr. & Mrs. James Renhult, Linda Braun, Tina Zeigler, Bonnie Clark, and Lucille Bower.

## CAT NEWS:

Daily Telegraph UK, May 2006

The chance of seeing an Indian tiger in the wild has almost disappeared, according to a nationwide wildlife survey which reveals that the country's tiger population has halved in four years. The survey estimates current numbers to be about 1,500 - down from 3,642 counted during the last census in 2002. It predicts that the tiger could have disappeared from India within 15 years. It is the most serious crisis yet to face the world's most charismatic carnivore. However, the Indian government is reluctant to acknowledge the extent of the danger. The findings of the survey - the first rigorous monitoring to be conducted by independent experts, under the auspices of the Wildlife Institute of India - have yet to be recognised by Project Tiger, the official government body set up to protect the species. The issue was due to be raised last month raised at a meeting of the National Board for Wildlife, chaired by the prime minister, Manmohan Singh,



*Roby, Asian leopard*

but conservationists allege it was canceled under pressure from the ministry of environment and forests. From every tiger reserve across the country comes evidence that the population is in freefall. Simlipal, in Orissa, was one of the first reserves to be established by Project Tiger in the 1970s. Four years ago, according to the 2002 census, it could boast of 99 tigers. Today, no more than eight survive. Increasing demands upon the tiger's habitat have undoubtedly contributed to the decline, but the biggest threats come from poaching and the illegal trade of tiger skins, and the lack of political will at the highest level to stamp them out. Yet even as the true extent of the crisis emerges, the Indian government is under pressure from industrial and mining lobbies that are eyeing up construction projects in prime tiger country. Meanwhile, the poaching continues unabated. Earlier this year, four tigresses were killed in Jim Corbett National Park, Utturanchal, and last week two tiger skins were seized on the Nepalese border.

iol.co.za, May 2006

This week Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the minister of environmental affairs and tourism, published a draft set of standards aimed at improving the tattered image of the South African hunting industry. While the standards recommend that the captive breeding of predators and all "canned hunting" be outlawed, they also call for a general improvement of hunting standards and more efficient monitoring of the industry. They also recommend that the minister himself must approve all hunting that takes place in areas adjoining national parks where fences have been removed. Umbabat, Timbavati and Klaserie, which along with the Balule Private Nature Reserve form the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), annually allow a number of elephant, lion and buffalo hunts as a means of raising revenue. The fences between the APNR and the Kruger have been removed and elephants and other animals move freely between these areas. The APNR reported last year that permits were granted for the hunting of two lions, two elephants and 18 buffaloes. Conservation staff and property owners in the APNR say that late on the afternoon of March 10 this year a professional hunter shot and wounded one of the Sohebele lions in the Umbabat Private Nature Reserve, but was unable to kill the animal because its brother refused to leave the scene and prevented any further clear shots. International guests and game rangers boarding vehicles for an evening game drive at a nearby

lodge reported hearing five shots but were unaware that they were aimed at a lion that many guides regarded as one of their best "sightings". The hunter later repeatedly drove a tractor at the lions in attempt to separate them but, when this failed, contacted APNR authorities to arrange a follow-up the next morning. The next morning rangers followed the lion's blood trail and eventually killed the wounded animal. Rangers later reported that the remaining male had become so afraid that in one instance it had swum across a river to avoid game-viewing 4x4s. The incident has sparked a flurry of heated communications.

"Where are the protocols and ethics? And why do we need to shoot lions when it is clear that their populations have taken a drastic decline in the APNR?" one lodge manager wrote in a letter to Paul de Luca, the chairperson of the Umbabat reserve. "We are devastated by this reckless ecological mismanagement within our reserves and hope this debacle will not occur again." De Luca said that an inquiry into the incident was under way. He said that while the "sustainable utilisation of natural resources" (ie hunting) is widely accepted in conservation circles, the Umbabat reserve would do everything possible to ensure that hunting protocols were adhered to in future. He confirmed that two weeks later, on March 24, a large, one-tusked male elephant was shot and wounded by a Spanish hunter in the Umbabat reserve. Rangers believe that three shots hit the elephant in the head. The wounded beast fled into thick bush and could not be found, despite an extended ground and air search with the assistance of a helicopter.

Daily Telegraph UK, May 2006

The fight to save the last remaining Indian tigers has suffered a fresh blow after it emerged that news readers on a Chinese state television channel have been ordered to wear costumes fringed with tiger-fur. The ruling, issued by a Communist Party propaganda unit in Qinghai province, north-west China, dismayed environmentalists who have been campaigning against the wearing of the Tibetan ceremonial robes - or chuba. Demand for the fur-trimmed chubas among a new class of wealthy Tibetans has fueled an unprecedented rise in poaching over the past decade. This year campaigners scored a major coup when the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, said that Tibetans should be "ashamed" to wear animal furs and called on his followers to stop wearing tiger and leopard skins. Conservationists were jubilant when hundreds of Tibetans took to the streets to burn tiger, leopard

and sea-otter skins in a public display of loyalty to the Dalai Lama. However that campaign now looks to have back-fired as Chinese officials appeared to take political revenge on the Dalai Lama, even offering grants to presenters who could not afford to buy new costumes. Local sources in Tibet said that two senior party officials visited Qinghai television station last month and ordered members of its



*Trapper, Canadian lynx, plays in a big bag*

Amdo-language Tibetan channel to wear the chubas. Radio Free Asia reported that Che Xizhen, head of Qinghai's provincial propaganda department, had issued the order, adding that wearing furs was now "a matter of politics". The existence of the order was later confirmed by Qinghai Television's station chief, Bai Jubi, in an interview with Radio Free Asia's Tibetan service. However he said the decision to wear the chubas was aesthetically - not politically - motivated as the station's presenters' existing robes had become old and frayed and needed replacing. The Dalai Lama's decision to back the campaign came after officials in Tibet intercepted 32 tiger, 579 leopard and 665 otter skins in a single shipment last year.

Canada National Post May 2006

So far, it's been a heartwarming story about binational co-operation, cuddly kittens and the rebirth of a species extinct in the southwestern United States. About 200 lynx from B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and the Yukon — trapped and transported to Colorado since 1999 in one of the most successful wildlife reintroduction programs in U.S. history — have thrived so well in their new habitat that U.S. Biologists, environmentalists and politicians have seized upon the project as a symbolic triumph for nature. But the Canadian cats are proving to

have poor knowledge of U.S. geography. And their wanderings beyond the Colorado state line into Utah, Wyoming, Kansas and, most unfortunately, New Mexico — where the tuft-eared rabbit eaters



*Fuzz, playing in his bag.*

can be shot on sight, and state officials are resisting protection efforts — have landed the lovable lynx in U.S. federal court. A coalition of six wildlife groups has sued the New Mexico branch of the U.S. Forest Service over its refusal to consider the fate of the lynx — oblivious to the Colorado-New Mexico border that runs through their Southern Rockies range — in its wilderness conservation strategy. At an appeal hearing this week in Denver, a lawyer for the environmentalists argued that the agency's stand means the lynx — so painstakingly nurtured back into existence in Colorado — will be "hunted, shot, killed as soon as they cross an invisible line" and make dens or prowl for prey in New Mexico.

EurekaAlert.org, April 2006

If you were a male lion and could read the latest scientific research, you would want to move to a warmer climate, where your mane would be more impressive. That is, until it started getting smaller, to fit you to your new warmer climate! It's long been known that lions with long, full manes get the girls. Now, an innovative study based on zoo animals all across America shows for the first time that cold temperatures help the king of the beast grow his mane long and thick - and more appealing to potential mates. In fact, up to one-half of the length and density of a zoo lion's mane can be attributed to temperature, rather than nutrition, social factors, individual history, or genes. Like a

buck's antlers or a peacock's tail feathers, the lion's mane primarily serves to attract females and intimidate male competitors. But it comes with a cost: a full mane takes energy to grow and maintain; gives away location to prey; makes maneuvering through bramble difficult; harbors parasites, and retains heat. While a big mane impresses everybody, even a small mane can be imposing in hot dry climates, where the costs of overheating are great and most male lions have little or no mane. This is the case in Tsavo, Kenya, where "most lions are maneless," said Bruce D. Patterson, PhD, the curator of mammals at The Field Museum and lead author

of the research. The new study examined mane variation for 19 lions in 17 zoos across the United States, from as far north as Chicago to as far south as Houston. Dr. Patterson visited these and other zoos last spring to inspect lions and photograph their manes for later analysis and comparison. Over the years, scientists have ascribed lions to various species and subspecies based largely on their outward appearance, especially the length and density of their manes. In fact, 23 different names have been proposed for African *Panthera leo*. But the new research suggests this number may be exaggerated, an idea that is supported by recent genetic studies.

### **Volunteer of the Quarter**

Volunteer since 1996, Camille has the most fun playing "auntie" to many of the center's hand-reared cubs, even if it means a few minor scratches, claw marks and bites. Although



*Camille & Poncho*

volunteering is very hard work, it's better than a workout at the gym. After a day sweating and cleaning out cages, and walking all over the center a few times a day, the gym has nothing on this kind of exercise.

Camille Says: In all my time at the EFBC, I'm still amazed that I can be a part of such a special experience. In 10 years I have seen the center grow from 56 to over 80 cats, all of them with their individual personalities and temperaments. Back then, my biggest concern was how in the world I was going to remember all the cats' names and where they were all located. Now, I see family resemblances among the generations of cats, and the uniqueness of the EFBC still leaves me awestruck. I also enjoy sharing my experiences and everything about the EFBC with anyone who'll listen. People are always interested in learning more about the center, the cats, and what's involved in their care and upkeep. To be a volunteer at the EFBC gets into your system. It becomes a very personal commitment, almost an addiction. I mean, there's really a small circle of



*Pandora, Jungle cat also in her bag*

people who can claim, "yeah, I played with a baby Jaguar today," and I count myself lucky to be in such good company. This is perhaps one of the most demanding, and for me, the most rewarding of any volunteer experience. I count

my blessings that the EFBC exists and that I am allowed to be part of something which has brought me so much joy, and I look forward to many more volunteer years ahead.

### **Enrichment time!**

There are several photos in this newsletter showing the cats with various enrichment items. We try to keep the cats happy and active with a variety of safe things they can play with and/or destroy - dry spices, boxes, melons, gourds, herbs like lavender and rosemary, food frozen in ice, large paper bags, sturdy plastic balls, live fish, and even the occasional mouse or bird they catch for themselves. A happy cat is a healthy cat!



*Doc with a chicken neck popsicle*