



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

<http://www.cathouse-fcc.org>

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SUMMER 2000

Cat Updates:

OOPS! We reported that our new Amur leopard cub was a boy a bit prematurely - "he" is a "she". Good thing we picked an androgynous name! Sasha is doing great, and entertained all the visitors at our Spring Twilight Tour in *her* first public appearance.

Our Amur leopard breeding program is quite successful, with 8 surviving cubs born here in the last 4 years. The Amur leopard has been chosen by the American Zoo Association as the focus of America's zoo-based leopard breeding program, which of course means our genetically diverse colony of 10 cats here is a very important contributor to that program. Unfortunately this means all the cubs born here can't stay here, they need to go to other zoos to be matched up with the perfect partner(s). On that note, we must to say good-bye to Sergei, born here in August 1998. In May 2000 he moved to the Fort Wayne Zoo in Indiana to be paired up with a female. Our female cub Katia, born here in 1997, just gave birth to a cub of her own at the Philadelphia Zoo.

Summer Twilight Tour - 17 June

We'd like to once again invite all of our cat's adoptive parents to attend the Summer Twilight Tour as our guests. It's Father's Day that weekend, come see the kids! Our adoption program is an important part of how we operate. The monthly adoption fee offsets our cat's food bills, and ranges from \$25 to \$180 a month. If you're interested in becoming an adoptive parent, contact us, we keep an updated availability list on our web site. We go through about 150 pounds of food a day, all raw meat! We fast the cats on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The smaller cats

aren't fasted in cold weather. In the wild, cats only eat when they make a kill, which isn't every day. Twilight Tours are the perfect time to visit, especially since it's the only way to enter the back breeding areas closed to the public during normal operating hours. In addition to the Summer Twilight Tour on 17 June, we'll also have a Fall Twilight Tour on 23 September. In between, the annual Fabulous Feline Follies will be held on 19 August. A catered dinner and silent auction will enhance your evening at the Cat House, all for only \$50 a person. For sponsorship details call or visit our web site. Donations of silent auction items are as always appreciated!

50/50 Raffle

As a reminder, our 50/50 Raffle drawing will be held 17 June at the Twilight Tour - winner need not be present. Tickets were mailed with the last newsletter, and will be available up through the night of the drawing.

Donations

Michael & Holly Mcknight, Brea, CA donated a 1984 Ford van. Thanks Michael & Holly!!

Eddie Lehrman, Lancaster, CA donated chain-link fence and a small utility trailer. Thanks Eddie!!

Helena Borg and Peter Gordon from Sea Country Homes, a new housing tract in Ladera Ranch, CA donated some surplus building materials for Project Tiger. Thanks Helena & Peter!!

"The Picture People" studio of Foster City, CA passed along a \$301 donation. Thank You!!

Randy Fitzpatrick of Market Fixtures, Downey CA provided a walk-in freezer/cooler. Thanks Randy & Market Fixtures!!

Paul Benz of Rosamond Disposal, Rosamond, CA sponsored a color ad on our behalf in the Bakersfield Magazine. Thanks Paul!!

Betty Platero of California City, CA donated two rose bushes in memory of Peaches the ocelot. Thanks Betty, we all miss Peaches a lot!!

Joyce Anderlik of Palmdale, CA provided a roll of chain-link fence, always a needed item!!

Nancy Vandermeij of Altadena, CA sponsored a membership drive and designed a new color flyer. Thanks Nancy!!

Project Tiger

Construction continues on our large new Natural Habitat enclosures - in this aerial view of the compound (above), you can see the Project Tiger construction site in the lower left.

Cat News From Around the World

From: Times of India, 7 March 2000

Nearly 90 endangered Gir lions have died in last five years. In 1995 only 300 lions were counted in the Gir Forest reserve. Deaths were due to old age, fighting, and falling in wells. These are the only lions remaining in the wild outside of Africa.

Various Sources, 21 March 2000

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Canadian lynx as threatened in the lower 48 states, one step below an endangered listing. They require undeveloped forests with deep winter snow, and a high population of snowshoe hares, their primary prey. Logging roads and other development in forests allows other carnivores like coyotes and bobcats to enter lynx territory and kill them or compete with them for food. Listing the lynx as threatened will allow for limitations on recreational development of national forests.

Rediff.com, 28 March 2000

Bandhavgarh National park, Madhya Pradesh State, India- State officials are embarrassed by a photograph of smiling hunters - two Forest Department employees and a police officer - posing with a dead tiger. A former official estimated poachers kill an average of one tiger a week and one leopard a day in the state. Thirty percent of India's tigers, which is 20 percent of the world's wild tigers, live in Madhya Pradesh State.

BBC, 29 March 2000

A recent WWF survey in Indonesia found that at least 66 Sumatran tigers had been killed in the last two years alone. This represents almost 20% of the wild Sumatran tiger population. Of the total lost, 37 animals were killed in national

WISH LIST

Electric Golf Carts

4/0 THHN copper wire

75kw transformer 480-240/120

Landscape materials

Roofing materials

8x8x16 concrete block

Small pickup for yard use

parks. Shops in Jakarta openly sell tiger parts and even live cubs.

Denver Post, April 2000

33 Canadian lynx were freed on April 2nd along the Continental Divide near Pagosa Springs, the same area where 41 lynx were released last year. Of those, 17 died. Three were shot, two were struck by vehicles, one was attacked by a bobcat, six starved, and five died of unknown causes. "We specifically want to get some males

into locations down there where females from last year have set up home ranges. The breeding season is coming on, and one of the things we'd like to see this year is reproduction," said Todd Malmsbury, spokesman for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Several males released last year wandered into New Mexico, up to Wyoming and as far as Nebraska, but the presence of females in the release area should keep the males from straying..

Outdoor Photographer, April 2000

The Sierra Madre organization has radio collared 8 jaguars in Mexico's Yucatan near Guatemala. It also reimburses local ranchers for cattle killed by jaguars.

Xinhua News Agency 04/26/2000

Experts confirmed that leopards are still living in the forest in the Weibei Plateau in northwest China's Shaanxi Province. On March 24, forestry bureau officers of the county confiscated a complete set of bones and skin of a leopard from a local farmer. Sources from the wild animal protection station said that no traces of leopards have been reported in the area over the past decade. (Eds. note - this would be a Northern Chinese leopard (*Panthera pardus japonensis*), a subspecies we maintain here).

Boston Daily News, 9 May 2000

Defenders of Wildlife and other conservation organizations sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others for failure to protect the critically imperiled Florida panther (a subspecies of puma). The lawsuit charges that the federal agencies have negligently allowed permitting and planning to infringe upon essential panther habitat. Twenty-six specific projects in key panther areas are singled out in the suit.

Africam's LeopardCam

We often tell visitors that male leopards don't have anything to do with raising their cubs - we might have to change that! A very interesting website is africam.com, which has various webcams set up

in South African parks such as Kruger. There's a link there to the LeopardCam, which is the story of two men as they follow a wild male leopard ("Tjololo") around for 18 months making a documentary. They have a diary online telling about their adventures following this leopard around, and his encounters with the other leopards and animals in his territory. I've included the entire diary entry from May 9th below, it was so fascinating to read - a wild male leopard interacting with his own cub!

9th May 2000 What a night! With Tjololo back home and hunting we found him strangling an adult male impala. Dead, he dragged it into some long grass and fed, and then in a half-hearted attempt he covered the carcass with grass and went to lie a way off. Out of the blue, or rather black, 3 hyenas came charging in running straight over the carcass, the one even tripping over it. Realizing they'd overshot the mark in their excited frenzy, they hurriedly sniffed the breeze and located the carcass tearing into it with no manners and no mercy. With only the head and ribcage remaining one hyena dragged off the carcass. We thought Tjololo had lost out completely, but following up on him we found he'd secured the remains of the kill in a tree. What a dude! As if this wasn't enough, having just stashed the carcass, he saw a male duiker close by and leaving the tree he charged through the donga and caught it on the other side. The duiker was possibly ill as it responded very late and slowly to his approach. This carcass he again stashed in the same tree laying it on top of the remains of the impala carcass. With his larder now fully stocked he rested in the donga. A while later the Kapen female arrived and climbed the tree. She was nervous at first sniffing around all the branches where Tjololo had been. Then she fed. Moving the duiker carcass she dislodged the impala carcass. The thud brought Tjololo running in, but interestingly he was quite happy to leave her feeding on the duiker. With the approach of the same 3 hyenas, Tjololo dashed up the tree with the impala, stashed it and went back to his donga. The Kapen female had a good feed on the duiker, then headed off northeast calling her cub. The 2 returned about an hour later and both fed. Tjololo still quite happy to leave them feeding. At dawn Tjololo fed and a short while later the Kapen

female and cub fed too. The Kapen female didn't pay Tjololo much attention, and vice versa. But lying down Tjololo was calling softly and the cub went to visit her daddy. She doesn't see him often and was cautious with her approach. He was totally relaxed as she gently pawed at his face and then lay up next to him.

Below are excerpts from a CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) report on the current status of the tiger population in India. Our mission here at EFBC/FCC is not only to breed endangered felines in captivity, but also to help save them in the wild, through public education of the importance of habitat conservation and enforcement of protection laws. When the Project Tiger enclosure is complete we may acquire Sumatran Tigers for breeding.

The CITES Tiger Political Mission to India (22-29 January 2000)

2. On arrival, the team learned of two recent actions which led to the seizure of 120 leopard skins, 7 tiger skins, 185 kg of tiger bones, over a hundred tiger claws and 18,000 leopard claws. Officials had been surprised at the scale of the seizures, which clearly indicated an organized wildlife crime network. It also demonstrated a reemergence of the large cat skin trade that had previously been thought to have been eliminated during the early and mid-1990s.

8. Madhya Pradesh prides itself as being India's Tiger State but the mission found the responsible officials to be, in the main, evasive when questioned about what work was actually taking place at field level. In a presentation to the mission, an official deliberately sped past figures that showed a decrease in poaching detection and seizure cases. Officials had to be pressed before admitting that the allocation of funds from Central and State government are routinely under spent. Even Project Tiger's budget, which has recently been doubled, annually faces an underspend and funds do not reach field level, where they are needed. Officials explained that this was primarily due to bureaucracy that creates blockages in the disbursement of money.

10. Central government officials intend to address this by allocating budgets directly to field

managers. It was apparent to the mission, however, that considerable tension exists between Central and State officials.

11. It appears that statistics relating to tiger and leopard mortality and enforcement actions are either not available or are not made available. Many NGOs and tiger conservationists believe that official figures regarding tiger populations are inflated. State administrations appear to deliberately conceal the loss of tigers to poachers.

12. A graphic illustration of this culture of cover-up was a recent incident that began when a leading member of the Project Tiger committee learned from his own sources that a tiger had been poached in a well known northern tiger reserve. He sought confirmation of the report from a series of state conservation officials at different levels, all of whom denied the report. Unconvinced, he traveled several hundred miles to the reserve, and after making inquiries among local villagers, confronted the local forest officers with incontrovertible evidence that not only had a tiger been shot by poachers on the reserve but its remains had been buried 100 metres from the forest office after poachers had been disturbed in the act by forest guards. Although the authorities finally admitted the incident had taken place, they claimed that the tiger had been killed by a wild boar, despite the fact that two bullets were recovered from the carcass. Several similar incidents of deliberate concealment of tiger losses are reported to have occurred elsewhere in the same State over the previous twelve months.

14. The mission was concerned that WWF India, as the largest national wildlife NGO, with the most access to external funds, has apparently been so absorbed in recent years with its internal problems that it has failed to motivate stronger action from public authorities in India.

15. Tiger reserves that attract considerable numbers of visitors, particularly foreign tourists, appear to be something of showcases and their promotional material contains photographs of well armed, well-equipped Forest Guards, using new off-road vehicles. By comparison, the mission visited Panna Tiger Reserve, which does

not attract many visitors. Indeed, the mission could not obtain a map or guide for the reserve in its hotel in the nearby town of Khajuraho.

16. Pannas Forest Guards do not have ready access to vehicles or weapons. Many staff appeared elderly and were seen patrolling alone, without radio communication, deep into the reserve. The mission was firmly of the opinion that such personnel could not properly protect themselves, let alone protect the tigers in the Reserve.

18. The mission heard, as had the Technical Team, of vehicles that had been presented by foreign NGOs for anti-poaching work being diverted to other uses.

19. Kanha Tiger Reserve covers almost 1,000 sq. km and has route guides, visitor centres, rest houses and elephant rides for visitors. Villages within the core area have been relocated and a 1,000 sq. km buffer zone has been created. The reserve is estimated to contain 86 leopards and 114 tigers.

20. Panna Tiger Reserve covers almost 550 sq. km. There are villages within the reserve and no buffer zone. It has few visitor facilities. The reserve is estimated to contain 31 leopards and 22 tigers. A radio-tracking research project that is monitoring the tiger population shows that more breeding pairs are required if the population is to remain viable. Any relocation of villagers would have to be carefully managed, though, since livestock now accounts for over 30 per cent of the tigers diet.

21. Enforcement operations in Madhya Pradesh do not seem professionally focused. Tiger poaching and trading in skin or bone have to take their place alongside minor cases in an already overburdened court system. The mission was concerned that enforcement activities, if not properly targeted, are simply alienating local residents. There was no indication that local communities are encouraged to value wildlife or contribute to its protection.

22. The mission noted considerable livestock grazing within reserves and sanctuaries, to the detriment of the habitat and tiger and leopard prey species.

23. The majority of tigers live outside the protected areas of reserves and sanctuaries. Few resources are devoted to anti-poaching efforts outside designated protected areas.

25. It was astonished to learn that Madhya Pradesh has a Lion Project that is researching the potential of reintroducing lions to parts of the State. Given that the State apparently cannot provide adequate levels of protection to existing large cat populations, this seems a waste of funds and resources. It does, however, reflect the image projected by some Central and State officials that everything is under control.

27. India has yet to establish any form of eco-tourism that contains an element to benefit local communities. There seems little incentive for local communities to value their wildlife and its terrain. Far more could be done to ensure, in the minority of tiger reserves that do attract significant tourist numbers, that revenue is recycled locally and that local staff, goods and produce are used wherever possible.

28. Another area of serious concern is the failure to engage local people in the fight against tiger poaching. This requires not only education and law enforcement but also measures to provide more economic as well as social incentives for very poor people living in or around tiger habitats. At present, such people are easy prey for the organized gangs who may pay them to poach tigers and supply the illegal trade from which the gangs make large profits.

35. The mission was highly impressed by the dedication and determination shown by some officials, particularly the head of the CITES Management Authority and the Director of Project Tiger. Elsewhere, however, varying levels of apathy, complacency and bureaucracy seem to stifle or frustrate good work and good intentions.

Feature Cat- Fishing Cat, *Prionailurus viverrinus*

Native to riverbanks from India through Southeast Asia, these cats love to fish. At Twilight Tours we put live goldfish in the ponds for them to practice their fishing skills, and they

get smelt as part of their dinner every day. They have partially webbed paws, and a double layer of fur so when they go in the water they don't get wet down to the skin. They don't have full claw sheaths (similar to the cheetah) so their claws are partially visible even when retracted. In the wild they are listed as Near Threatened. Although they have a substantial range in tropical Asia (over 1 million square kilometers), their actual area of occupancy is much smaller as they are strongly associated with wetlands. Water pollution and forest clearance for settlement threaten the species through much of their range. Deforestation rates in tropical Asia's wetlands are quite high, resulting in similar decline among the fishing cat populations. We are home to 10 fishing cats, of which 5 were born here. Many other cubs born here now reside at zoos around the U.S., including San Diego, Philadelphia, and Baton Rouge. Sassy (at right) was born here in 1997 and was used at the Spring 2000 Twilight Tour for photos with visitors (she was very friendly because she was in heat!)