



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

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

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SUMMER 2002

CAT UPDATE:

Three Sand Cats arrived here on the 17th of March. They were all born at Pat Quillen's SOS Care near Escondido. They are of the subspecies *Harrisoni*, found on the Arabian Peninsula. There are 2 males and one female. The female is named Windie and was born in 1994. The older male is Tuku, who was born in 2000. He has been introduced to Windie for breeding. The other male is Shah, who was born in April 2001. These cats are in an off-exhibit area while they get used to our facility. We put a thick layer of sand in their cages, and small "dogloos" on the ground for them to hide in. After Project Tiger is complete we'd like to build more small cat exhibit/breeding cages, so someday these tiny cats will be in the public exhibit area. There's more information on this species in this issue's "Feature Cat" article.

We also welcomed another little bobcat to our facility in April. This kitten was, like Willow, born in the wild but taken from her mother by a hiker. In this case the person actually thought they had found a domestic kitten, until they brought her to a vet and were told it was a bobcat! The vet contacted out vet, Dr. Scott Weldy, who brought her out here. We've named her Aspen. She's a lot darker than Willow, the bobcat we acquired under similar circumstances in 2000. Willow was found near Willow Springs, while Aspen was found in Orange County. Bobcats are common in many parts of the United States and exhibit a wide range of coloration. We hope that when Aspen is older we can put her in with Willow for companionship. Please remember not to disturb wild animals when out hiking!

Diedra, the margay that we introduced last issue, is doing well. She resides in the public exhibit area, and sometimes can be observed late in the afternoon hiding in the ivy. Margay are very nocturnal animals.

Cesar the tiger we acquired in early 2001 continues to grow - he's only 18 months old and already bigger than Jasmine, our 8 year old female. Tigers aren't really full-grown until they're 5 years old, so who knows how big Cesar will get! He probably has a lot of the Siberian subspecies in him, while Jasmine has a lot of Bengal bloodlines. Both of these tigers are of unknown background, so they will not be bred. We still plan to bring in Sumatran tigers for breeding when Project Tiger is finished.

PROJECT TIGER

We raised funds for the pools and Alan Jackson Pools, Lancaster, CA. put them in. Alan also donated more than \$9,000 of the cost and lost a lot of sleep doing research to learn how to build a tiger-proof pool. We still need about \$25,000 to finish everything (landscaping, walls, fencing, etc.).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Our first Twilight Tour of the year was a big success, with almost \$10,000 raised. Special thanks to the Lancaster Rotary for coming out and cooking hamburgers and hotdogs.

The Summer Twilight Tour is on June 22nd (Father's Day weekend), and we'd like to once again invite Adoptive Parents of our cats to be our guests - just please call (661.256.3793) or email (cathouse@qnet.com) that you're coming so we can put you on the guest list. If you're interested in becoming an adoptive parent, you can call or check our web site for availability. The last Twilight Tour of the year will be September 21st.

Feline Follies is also fast approaching - save Saturday, August 24th to spend that evening having dinner with your favorite big cats. Members will get information mailed to them next month. Donations of items for the auction are always appreciated!

DONATIONS

We would like to again thank David Lewis and Adrienne Ayres, Lake Charles, LA. for keeping our computer equipment up to date. They upgraded again and sent us their "old" 880 MHZ and 1.2 MHZ. Computers. Thanks David and Adrienne!!

Andy and Bill Meyer of American Data Plates in Lancaster, CA. donated a display counter and glass display case to help us remodel the gift shop. They also continue to donate printing our newsletters on film and our informational signs at each exhibit. Thanks Andy and Bill!!!

Kit Rodwell of Escondido, CA. donated a Sony Vaio laptop computer. This makes it much easier to work at meetings we attend. Thanks Kit!!!

Brent Prindle and Vicki Haneckow of Shoreline WA. Donated a 1999 Nissan Frontier pickup truck. It's a great little truck and will be an asset to us. Thanks Brent and Vicki!!!

Daniel Zielke of Ridgecrest, CA. also donated some computer equipment. Thanks Daniel!!!

INTERNSHIPS

Students from colleges both in the United States and abroad continue to show interest in earning college credit while working as an intern at our facility. We're happy to have the extra help, though we're always sad to see them leave! We currently have with us Tim Snodgrass of Warren, Michigan.

Tim attends Michigan State University and will be a senior this fall. He majors in zoology with a concentration in zoo and aquarium science. After graduating he'd like to work in the United States at a non-traditional zoo specializing in conservation research and breeding. He loves tigers, lynxes, and big cats in general, which is why he choose us after searching the Internet for internship positions. This is his first time ever in California and he loves it, but isn't too sure about the desert. His favorite store in Rosamond is "Ma and Pa's Redneck Market" but he's not quite sure if the name is meant as a joke or not!

GIFTSHOP REMODEL

Joe Maynard and Sandy Masek have been busy spending their days off painting and remodeling the giftshop. While we have a new display case for the T-shirts we are still looking for a new standalone rack to enlarge our capacity and add some exciting new items. Call or email us if you have a rack available!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sad news: One of our founding directors, Steve Rendes, passed away. Steve had been with us since 1983, the very beginning. He helped us get where we are today. He will be dearly missed.

The board also elected three new directors. Each have been long-time volunteers and have demonstrated their commitment to EFBC/FCC. They are Dr. Jeff Conrad, D.V.M.; Camille Valenzuela; and Nancy Vandermey. Welcome!

CAT NEWS

The Sportsman Review, March 26, 2002

The Forest Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game get calls occasionally from people who believe they've spotted lynx in Idaho. In most cases, the identity of the animal can't be proved beyond doubt. There's little question about the animal Forest Service biologist Dan Davis spotted from his car on March 18. Davis was on U.S. Highway 12, about 30 miles west of Lolo Pass. The cat was across the Lochsa River, on the snow. Dawson said Davis put his digital camera to the eyepiece of a spotting scope to get

pictures of the animal. He noted that its tail had more black than a bobcat's, its paws were larger and its ear tufts were longer. Lynx were added to the federal endangered species list in 2000. Logging, snowmobiling and other activities can be restricted anywhere they're found. But the Clearwater National Forest already was considered prime lynx habitat, offering the solitude and snowshoe hares that the cats need to survive. So it was already counted as lynx habitat, despite the lack of rock-solid proof that the cats were there.

London Times, April 15, 2002

A unique community of savage, man-eating lions may share a bond with bald men, scientists have found. The infamous Tsavo lions in eastern Kenya killed more than 130 people during a reign of terror in the 19th century. One unique characteristic of the lions, which still inhabit Tsavo East National Park, is that the males have no manes. Scientists have now confirmed for the first time that this is a genetic trait and suspect that high levels of the male hormone testosterone may account both for the lack of manes and the lions' unusual aggression. Testosterone is known to cause male-pattern baldness in human beings, and heightens aggression and territoriality. It also helps to explain the peculiar social system of the Tsavo lions, which is shared by no other lion population in Africa. Whereas other lion prides consist of a few females and two to four males,

Tsavo lions live in groups of seven or more females ruled by a single, highly dominant male.

The Observer, April 21, 2002

Latest estimates put the total population of the Iberian lynx, which lives in scattered pockets in southern Spain and Portugal, at just 150. The conservation group SOS Lynx warned that if the species died out, it would be the first feline extinction since prehistoric times. (The Iberian lynx is a separate species from Eurasian and Canadian lynxes, not a subspecies.) The Jerez Zoo in Spain is building new enclosures and creating a network of lynx reserves. Only three females were in captivity before this year, two of them quite old, and no males. A decision has been made to capture several wild animals for an emergency captive breeding program. Two young females were captured in April, although one appears to be a half-sister of one already in captivity. The mortality rate of cubs born in the wild is as high as 85 per cent each year thanks mainly to poaching and road kills. Starvation through disease and habitat destruction continues to be the main cause of the animal's alarming decline.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service News, May 1, 2002

Six suburban Chicago residents, a Wisconsin man and a Lockport, Ill., exotic meat store have been indicted on federal charges for allegedly violating various wildlife protection laws by trading and killing endangered species, primarily tigers and leopards, and trafficking their skulls, hides and other parts. Two of the indictments involve a total of 19 tigers, seven leopards, a snow leopard, and a barasingha (Asian swamp deer), four species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. During the investigation, federal agents purchased and rescued at least six tigers and leopards, which otherwise were about to be killed. The defendants include exotic animal exhibitors, taxidermists, "trophy" collectors and an exotic meat dealer, who allegedly bought tiger meat, mislabeled it as lion meat and sold it at his store in Lockport, Ill. The indictments are the results of a lengthy investigation by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents into the illegal trade of protected tigers, leopards and other animals in the

WISH LIST

Wireless P.A. System

Display rack for gift shop (call for details)

X-ray processor

Landscape Materials

Golf Carts

Electrical and Plumbing Materials
(conduit, wire, pipe, pipe fittings)

Construction equipment and supplies (8x8x16
concrete block, rebar - backhoe, dozer, loader)

Midwest. In one 28-count indictment, six individuals, including the owner of the Lockport meat business, and the business itself were charged with various misdemeanor violations of the Endangered Species Act — which makes it unlawful to harass, harm, hunt, shoot, wound and kill, any endangered species, and felony and misdemeanor violations of the Lacey Act — which makes unlawful to transport, sell, receive, acquire or purchase wildlife, including parts or products, that were taken, transported or sold in violation of federal law. The indictment alleges that Kapp and Galecki conspired between Aug. 7 and 21, 1997, to purchase live endangered animals, shoot and kill them or cause them to be shot and killed by others, and to sell the hides for mounts and trophies and the meat for human consumption. On Aug. 7, 1997, Kapp and Galecki, together with Ramsey and Martinez, shot and killed an endangered leopard that was confined to a cage at the Funky Monkey Animal Park in Crete, Ill., which was owned and operated by Galecki. On Aug. 21, Kapp and Galecki caused two endangered tigers to be shot and killed at the animal park while they were in a trailer, according to the indictment. The hides and skulls of these animals were then sold to others, including Martinez and Woldman, and the carcasses and meat were sold Czimer and his business with the understanding they would be processed and re-sold to the public for human consumption. The indictment also alleges that various defendants engaged in the killing or trafficking of 15 additional tigers, four other leopards and an endangered barasingha, or their parts, through 1998. If convicted, the conspiracy count against Kapp and Galecki, and the felony Lacey Act violations against them and other defendants, each carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine; the misdemeanor Lacey Act and Endangered Species Act counts each carry a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Rocky Mountain News, May 8, 2002

Up to 186 more (Canadian) lynx should be released in the wild over six years to give Colorado's reintroduction program the best chance to succeed, state wildlife biologists said. The recommendation is part of a report presented last week to the Colorado Wildlife Commission, which

is expected to consider the plan in the next two months. The state released a total of 96 lynx from Canada in 1999 and 2000 to re-establish the long haired, tuft-eared cat in Colorado. Trapping, poisoning and development had wiped out the state's lynx population, with the last confirmed sighting before reintroduction coming in 1973 near Vail. As of April, 39 of the lynx are accounted for. Some of the first animals released starved to death. Some were hit by cars and one was shot. But biologists said their belief that the rugged San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado are good lynx habitat has been borne out. The key to long-term success - reproduction - is still missing. There's no evidence the animals are breeding. Biologists believe there aren't enough of the cats in close enough proximity. They also believe it's difficult to fairly judge the reintroduction program until it's clear there are enough animals. If they don't reproduce then, something else, such as the habitat, isn't a good fit. "We still think our original premise is correct, that we can sustain lynx down there over the long term," said Rick Kahn, head of the Wildlife Division's terrestrial research program. Kahn and his staff have suggested releasing 50 lynx a year over three years and 10 to 12 for three more years to increase the likelihood that the animals, loners except during mating season, will reproduce. Finances and politics are also factors, a wildlife advocate said. "I think the recommendations are very good. What they've outlined in there is exactly what needs to happen," said Mike Smith, wildlife chairman of the Colorado chapter of the Sierra Club. "Then there's the political side." Some ranchers and outfitters oppose lynx reintroduction. They unsuccessfully sued to stop the program because they fear lynx habitat would be closed to them. Funding for the program might be a struggle with the state's multimillion-dollar budget shortfall. Reintroduction has cost about \$1.7 million, which includes staff time. All but \$39,000 of that came from Colorado Lottery revenue through the Great Outdoors Colorado program, along with grants and a wildlife checkoff on state income tax refunds.

The Observer May 12, 2002

An illegal trade in leopard parts for sale in Asian medicinal stores in London has been uncovered

by police. The leopard is endangered, with some of its species already thought to be down to just a handful. The most common product seized is derived from leopard bones and is used to treat arthritis. Last week the Metropolitan Police found 25 packets of medicated plasters made of ground leopard bones in an Asian supermarket in Hackney, east London, which is becoming notorious as a centre for the illegal international trade in endangered animals. 'We only catch a small amount of the trade that is here, but it's part of a trend we have noticed in the last two or three years,' said Andy Fisher, head of wildlife crime at the Met. 'We used to find more tiger than leopard, but now we find more leopard than tiger. It ties in with people we speak to in India who tell us there are increasing levels of leopard poaching.' It is illegal in Britain to sell or buy products in endangered animals, with the maximum penalty a two-year prison sentence or £5,000 fine. But the maximum sentences are hardly ever imposed. Conservation groups have repeatedly claimed that the courts and the Government take too lenient an attitude to wildlife crimes.

FEATURE CAT: SAND CAT

As its name implies, the sand cat is commonly found in sandy desert areas in the arid countries of Northern Africa, Arabia and parts of Central Asia and Pakistan. Sand cats indigenous to each of these areas are categorized as subspecies. The sand cat's body is well adapted to cope with the extremes of its environment - its thick fur is of medium length and acts as insulation against the extreme cold of the desert nights and its feet and pads are covered with long hair which protect them from the heat of the desert surface and give it extra support needed in moving across the soft, shifting sands. The distinctive triangular ears of the sand cat, which are large in proportion to the rest of the cat's head are particularly sensitive. The sand cat is solitary and nocturnal in its hunting. During the extreme heat of the day the cat will often sleep under rough scrub vegetation or more commonly in a shallow burrow dug into the sand or in a hollow in between rocks or sandy boulders. At sunset the cat will become active, moving away from its den in search of prey at the onset of darkness. The extent of the sand cat's prey species is uncertain, however it is known to include small rodents such as gerbil and jerboas,

insects, reptiles, including venomous desert snakes and birds. Interestingly, and again by way of adapting to its environment the sand cat can live without drinking water, instead obtaining all the fluid it requires from its prey. In the wild it has been observed that the young sand cat develops rapidly and become independent at a relatively early age. Due to the remoteness of much of the sand cat's habitat, there are conflicting reports as to the exact population status of the animal.

Thanks to Big Cats Online, <http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/agarman/bco/home.htm>, for this information.