



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

<http://www.wildcatzoo.org>

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SUMMER 2005

## CAT UPDATE

We have a few births and a new arrival to announce! On February 27, fishing cat My lai gave birth to 4 kittens. We were hoping she would raise them herself, but as a young first-time mother she didn't quite know what to do and didn't keep them warm enough. When we pulled them that night they were very chilled, and only 1 survived. We named her "Tori". The father is Bandit, who was born here back in 1996. In fact Tori's grandmother Precious, and great-grandmother Shada, are all still with us - our first 4th generation birth! Fishing cats are small 20 to 30 pound cats native from northern India through southeast Asia. My lai is one of the cats we imported from Cambodia in 2003. As a new bloodline in this country she is very valuable to the fishing cat breeding program. Tori will likely be paired with one of our young males, brothers Bullet or Nemo. Tori appeared on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno on May 18.

Another exciting event occurred on March 28. Pallas' cat Sonya gave birth, and had no problems taking care of all 3 kittens! Pallas' cats are also known as manul's, and are native to the steppes of Mongolia and similar nearby regions. They are very small (5-10 pounds) but look larger due to their long fur. We had to put up fine-mesh wire on Sonya's cage as the kittens will be small enough to slip through chain link until they are several months old! They are still sticking very close to Mom but we hope they will come out and play more as they get older.

Our frequent visitors know we have been without a cougar since Sandy died at 19 years of age last year. Since the cougar (a.k.a. mountain lion, panther, catamount, and puma) is native to our

area we like to have one on display, even though we do not breed them as they are not an endangered species. One of our main missions is educating the public, and having native cats on display really helps make a personal connection with our visitors. A local rescue facility needed to find a home for a young male cougar so we took him in. His name is Teddy and he has settled into his habitat cage very well. He has even swam in the pond - guess no one told him cougars aren't supposed to like water!

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**THANKS** to everyone who donated and/or purchased items at our first-ever Big Cat Bazaar on 7 and 8 May! Our volunteers, members, and supporters pulled together to make the event a big hit, raising over \$3700 over the 2 day period. Our crew learned a lot from the experience and things we can do differently to make next year's Bazaar an even bigger success.

Special thanks needs to go to our Bazaar committee; Camille Gadwood, Calais Redfern, and Shirley Schmidt; with a special thank you to Eric Barkalow, who spent many hours organizing and inventorying donations, giving up time spent with the cats! To all our volunteers that weekend - Melany Marotta, Brian Gehrisch, Ryan White, Lisa Davis, Nancy Vandermeij, Jeff Conrad, Noel Smith, Kim Bacquera, Faith Scheinstrom, Carol Christianson, Stacey & Ryan McCusaland, Lauren Hunt, Debbie Roberts, and Meagan Saucher - a huge **THANKS!**

We had over 400 people attend our April Twilight tour and everyone had a great time. Our Summer Twilight Tour will be held on June 18th

at 5:30 PM. Tickets are \$15.00 per person and you must be over 18 years or older to attend. Those prepaying ahead of time can enter early at 5:00 PM and our adoptive parents are welcome to attend as our special guests.

We will be featuring a bake sale sponsored by EFBC's chapter of AAZK, a BBQ hosted by the Lancaster Rotary, a raffle, the 50/50 drawing, special enrichments for our feline family, and much more. To purchase tickets in advance, call 661-256-3793 between 10:00 am and 4:00 PM any day except Wednesday. Our last Twilight Tour for 2005 will be held on September 17th.

Harley Davidson of Lancaster will be sponsoring the 2nd annual Poker Run benefitting EFBC on Saturday, June 25th. This year's event is open to both bikes and cars and children are welcome to participate. Registration is from 9-10:30 am at Harley Davidson, 1759 W. Ave. J-12, Lancaster, CA. For more information on this fun event, contact Starr at 661-944-4167. Of course, one of the stops you will be making is here at EFBC's Feline Conservation Center.

### **Fabulous Feline Follies**

We warmly extend to you an invitation to our grandest event of the year. Saturday 20 August, EFBC will host its 16th annual Feline Follies. Our theme this year is "Extinction is Forever," and we will celebrate EFBC's successes and cooperative efforts towards preserving the World's endangered felines.

The evening includes dinner, a no-host cocktail bar, a live animal show, silent auction with one-of-a-kind items for your bids, and our Follies raffle with a \$1000 cash first prize. Donations of auction items are accepted year-round.

Tickets are \$50 per person, and must be reserved by August 13th. Sponsorships help make this grand event a success, and we hope you will consider this avenue as a means of continuing your support. Sponsorship and ticket information will be mailed separately to all our members. Additional packages can be obtained by calling (661) 256-3793 or emailing [cathouse@qnet.com](mailto:cathouse@qnet.com).

## **CAT NEWS**

Earthwatch Institute 19-May-2005

Snow leopards are losing ground in many parts of their range across the mountains of Central Asia, such as in China, Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan. There are only an estimated 300 to 500 left in Nepal. It was therefore heartening news when Som Ale, a doctoral candidate at University of Illinois, photographed the rare cats on the southern slopes of Mount Everest and saw tracks of two more, **the first confirmed sightings of the elusive cats on the Nepal side of Mount Everest since the 1960s**. The young biologist, who is originally from Nepal, was investigating whether the national park established here in 1976 to protect habitat for snow leopards is having the desired effect. Apparently it is. Ale has spent the last 15 years looking for snow leopards in the wild expanses of Nepal, without sighting one until now. He managed to photograph these individuals by rising early, at 4:30 am, and observing the behavior of their principal prey in the region, a wild goat called the Himalayan tahr. When Ale heard tahr repeatedly whistling and found them exhibiting vigilant behavior, with their heads raised and ears upright, he suspected that a snow leopard was near. A creature of borderlands and hinterlands, snow leopards are distributed across 12 countries and 2 million square kilometers, making their populations difficult to study. Snow leopards are nowhere considered common, and there are an estimated 4,500 to 7,000 left in the wild. Despite being protected in parts of their range, they are still hunted for their pelts, for body parts used in traditional medicine, and to protect livestock. It's good that snow leopards are dispersing and expanding their range on the top of the world, in contrast to other places where they are disappearing, said Ale. His sightings on the south slope of Everest are solid evidence that this elusive species can repopulate suitable habitat, so efforts to stem their decline are not in vain.

[telegraphindia.com](http://telegraphindia.com) 18 May 2005

**Tigers in India are in trouble: 411 of the big cats have disappeared from Indian forests in five years.** As many as 352 of the tigers that went missing from 1999 to 2003 had fallen prey to

poachers. The Prime Minister had ordered a probe in March following reports of poaching at Sariska. "An independent agency was commissioned to compile and analyse the available country-level tiger poaching data over a period of five years (1999 to 2003). Only 59 tigers died of natural causes. But while a nil tiger count at Sariska was reported - suggesting that about 16-18 had gone missing since last summer - the ministry said only two tigers were killed by poachers in the five-year period. The affidavit has given an "international twist" to the poaching problem, saying: "The international border of India with Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar is relatively porous, which facilitates illegal transfer of contraband, including wildlife items, across these borders." The Project Tiger steering committee has recommended putting several tiger reserves across the country on the poaching watch list.

May 7 2005, BBC News

Climate change is a bigger threat to elephants, tigers and the rhinoceroses than poaching, a wildlife expert says. Dr Richard Leakey told BBC News global warming, combined with decreasing ranges, could make the animals extinct. Millions of dollars are spent each year to keep iconic species such as the elephant, the tiger and the rhinoceros safe from poachers, principally inside protected areas such as national parks. Dr Leakey believes this could be money wasted. "We can spend money trying to stop poaching, but there's no point in doing that if the stuff in there is going anyway," he told the BBC News website. Predicting the regional impacts of global climate change is not an exact science; but in Africa, computer models predict that overall, areas which are currently dry will become even dryer as well as warmer. In pre-industrial times, animals threatened by these changes could simply have migrated, but human development means that option has largely disappeared. **"Protected areas are now islands," said Dr Leakey.** "The wildlife and fauna and flora are pretty well tied in by boundaries which aren't oceans, in the sense of islands, but development. "Paleontologically, island faunas become extinct."

As mentioned last issue, an oil pipeline was proposed to be built through the last remaining Amur leopard habitat in Russia. An update on that, from an opposition group named Phoenix-

On Tuesday 12 April 2005 representatives of the Primorsky Krai administration visited the proposed oil terminal site at Perevoznaya on the Amur Bay, with a delegation of Japanese investors. However, a few days before the delegation's arrival the Primorsky Krai Prosecutor's Office had acted on a complaint from a conservation group and ordered a halt to the illegal building activities at the site. By the time the Japanese delegation arrived, the companies involved had packed their equipment and left. All that remained for inspection was a windy coast and a protest group! The protestors included the staff of Phoenix and other conservation NGO's and of the nearby Kedrovaya Pad reserve (home to the remaining population of 30 Amur leopards), schoolchildren, and local villagers. Primorsky Krai authorities paid a visit to the local school director. The authorities demanded a letter from her explaining why she had permitted schoolchildren to participate in the protest. The Krai administration was also angry at the Khasan administration for not providing sufficient police 'protection' (the traffic police accompanying the delegation had not acted against the protestors).

The Japanese delegation visiting the proposed terminal site included representatives of the public Japanese bank JBIC. Japan has pledged to provide the majority of the 11 - 18 billion US dollars needed to build the pipeline. The social and environmental requirements of public banks, such as JBIC, may seem strict on paper but are not always strictly applied, especially when the economic and political stakes are high. However, public banks in democratic countries can hardly afford to turn a blind eye to the environmental damage caused by controversial projects that are major topics in the media. Eventually the negative media attention resulting from the proposed pipeline route will also diminish the project's attractiveness to private western banks. These banks need to consider their reputation and cannot afford criticism as a result of loans to companies and projects that damage the environment. This is especially true when the survival of animals popular with the conservation-minded western public, such as grey whales or Amur leopards, is at stake. Eventually Transneft will have no other option than to re-route the pipeline. The new route will need to be designed, and will require a new EIA.

This will substantially increase the time and money involved in the project's preparation. It is becoming clear that Transneft would have been much better off if it had given serious consideration to the environment from the start.

March 30, 2005

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service orders its biologists to approve all development projects in south Florida regardless of the consequences to wildlife, according to a letter by 20 current and former agency scientists. The letter from 20 former co-workers of Andrew Eller, the FWS panther biologist who was fired one week after the November 2004 election, maintains that a key FWS supervisor refers to the panther as a 'zoo species' that has no hope of recovery in the wild; Biologists were forbidden from issuing an objection about the effects development projects would have on the Florida panther or any of the 68 federally listed species in south Florida; and FWS targeted Andrew Eller for refusing to incorporate non-factual information into biological opinions. Last week, the outgoing FWS Director, Steve Williams, upheld a challenge that the agency's panther science was grossly slanted toward developers. Despite finding that Eller is correct on the science, FWS has not reversed his termination. The legality of Eller's termination will be heard before a federal judge in April. The letter by Eller's colleagues is not signed but contains the following explanation: 'We feel a need to voice our collective concerns anonymously over this atrocity [Eller's firing] and others we witness within the Service for fear of similar retribution. In short, we feel that it is not safe to speak out individually. **The atmosphere where government employees are afraid to use science, question management, and do their jobs must end.**'

BBC News, 30 March 2005

The birth of three Iberian lynx cubs in Spain has given hope to the future of a species on the brink of disappearing. The Iberian lynx, found only in Spain and Portugal, is **the world's most endangered feline**. Conservation group WWF warned that the Iberian lynx could become the first big cat since the saber-toothed tiger to die out. The critically endangered animal **could become extinct within five years** unless swift action is taken. The mother of the cubs, Saliega, was

captured in 2002 in the Sierra Morena region. The environment ministry says there are only 13 Iberian lynx in captivity. Lynx numbers have declined from 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th Century to around just 100-120 in the wild today. Dam building, road deaths, hunting and a decline in wild rabbits have led to the cat's downfall. The WWF is also calling for lynx habitat to be covered by the EU's Natura 2000 Programme, which offers the strongest level of protection in Europe. Currently, the areas proposed by Spain for Natura 2000 designation do not cover the biological corridor that could be used to connect the remaining breeding population in Donana National Park with the one in Sierra Morena.

A Special Thank You to:

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The excessive amount of rain received this winter caused a decline in visitation and revenue. These grants are greatly appreciated and will help us with our yearly maintenance expenses. Each spring our Cat's den boxes need repairs, and painting is a never ending chore

### WISH LIST

Landscape materials, plants and trees

Construction equipment supplies

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

New electrical supplies