



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

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

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES

SPRING 2000

### **Cat Updates:**

Sasha's a boy! The cute new Amur leopard cub we introduced last newsletter is doing well - mom Tanya has taught him how to be a tough little guy - here he is at 9 weeks old. These cats, as do most of our Amur leopards, reside in a breeding area of the compound that is not open to visitors during the day. The first chance for the public to get a close-up look at Sasha is at our first Twilight Tour for the year 2000, on Saturday April 29, when Sasha will be 5 months old.

A new fishing cat arrived from the Point Defiance Zoo in Washington. "Frisbee" is a 10 month old female. She is hand-raised and was used in an educational program up there, but at 6 months of age decided she had had enough of that! Our hand-raised fishing cats also undergo a personality change as they mature. What else can you expect, they are wild animals! Frisbee will be introduced to our male Java.

### **Important Y2K Dates**

Remember, our first two Twilight Tours of the year are 29 April and 17 June. At the spring tour we'll be celebrating Tao's 6th birthday (Chinese leopard), and the jaguar cubs will be 2. At the summer tour we once again welcome all adoptive parents to celebrate Father's Day with us and their (big, furry) kids. For our Fabulous Feline Follies, we're trying something new this year. The date is the 19th of August (a Saturday as usual). Having Follies in August instead of September, we plan to not set up a tent - instead, tables will be on the grass in the main compound area. Mark your calendars now! Follies sponsorship levels will remain the same as last year - \$150 through

\$1000. For more details call or visit our web site. Our final Twilight Tour will then be the 23rd of September. Plan ahead to join us at one or more of these fun fund-raisers!

**Web Site Updates:** We've added new sections to our web site! There is now a Virtual Tour, where you can walk around and see the cages and cats as if you were actually here. In addition, the "photos" page has been expanded into separate pages for each species that give more information and photos about each individual cat here. Did you ever wonder how old a cat was? You can look it up on the Internet now!

Another item is a navigation bar that will allow you to get to familiar areas a little more quickly.

We are also posting our newsletters online. They are posted 3-4 weeks after our members receive theirs in the mail and also does not include the photos included in the hard copy version.

There is also a short video clip of Sasha and his mother Tanya.

Remember to check the site often as it is always updated. [Http://www.cathouse-fcc.org](http://www.cathouse-fcc.org)

### **Peaches**

We are sad to announce the death of Peaches the ocelot, at 20 years 11 months of age (about 105 years in human terms). We have established the Peaches Memorial Fund in her honor, and are collecting donations.

Peaches came to live at EFBC/FCC in 1985, two years after the compound opened its doors to the public. She was then only 5 years old. Unlike most of our other residents, Peaches had an exceptionally affectionate and loving disposition, making it possible to introduce her to the public both one-on-one and in group situations.

As the facility's ambassador to the public for much of her life, Peaches would often go off-site through our Outreach Program, meeting many children and adults at schools, the Antelope Valley Fair, and other assemblies to promote the preservation of endangered felines and EFBC/FCC. One of her favorite duties was to be available for photographs with visitors at our Twilight Tours and Feline Follies.

If anyone has special memories or experiences with Peaches, please write them down and send them to us. We plan to compile these remembrances into a commemorative collection.

### **Volunteer of the Quarter - Karen S. James**

Karen first visited EFBC/FCC in 1988 and later that year moved to the Antelope Valley. Over the years she visited the compound annually and vowed to volunteer one day. After starting her own medical transcription business in 1998, Karen has been volunteering at the compound on a regular basis since January 1990.

Karen's favorite cats are NayLee, Maggie, Masha, Annie, and Hobbes (who recently was sent to Japan).

Karen says, "It has been a very rewarding experience to learn about all the different species of cats and to share this information with the visitors who come to EFBC."

### **Behind the Scenes...**

In past issues we've met our facilities supervisor and general manager. Today we focus on Tammy MacInnes, who works in the gift shop Thursday through Saturday. She's the first person visitors to the compound see when they're signing in, so she has a very important job! She informs visitors of

our safety rules and policies, and lets them know how to behave when visiting.

Tammy's been working here for 2 years. She likes working here because of the animals, and she enjoys teaching others why we need to protect endangered species. Education of the visitors is what she feels is our most important work. She has a love for all animals - at home she has 5 domestic cats, 2 dogs, 5 birds, a rat, and fish. Her four year old daughter and husband enjoy visiting the compound. Her daughter knows most of the cats by name, which amazes visitors who think "all the leopards look alike."

### **Project Tiger Construction site**

Project Tiger construction continues! In January we started building the den area out of concrete block, 110 feet long by 26 feet wide. This will contain 2 den areas with 3 holding cages in each. This setup will allow for safe and easy cat transfers when we have moms with cubs back there. We've added a walkway out towards the new cage area, so visitors can watch construction progress. We are now collecting donations of plants and trees for landscaping the cage and surrounding area. Right now we plan to use half the cage for tigers, and half for jaguars.

### **Donations:**

Michael Smith, Lancaster, CA. donated a Panasonic laser printer. Thanks Michael, we can always use printers!!

Sav-On Fence Company, Lancaster, CA. Donated fencing materials and installation around the walkway to the new Project Tiger area. Thanks Larry & Laura at Sav-On!!

### **Cat News from Around the World**

#### **Los Angeles Times, 28 Nov. 99**

A five-year study of bobcats, coyotes, and gray foxes in the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills found that 40-60% of animal deaths are due to being hit by cars or eating poisoned animals (mice, rats, squirrels). This high human-caused mortality rate is further compounded by urban

sprawl, causing inbred populations in isolated pockets.

**Africa News/PANA, 11 Dec 99:**

A second bloody fight between lions and hyenas broke out in eastern Ethiopia, nine months after a previous fight in the Gobeles desert; however, this time, two humans were reported killed by the animals during the fight. In this round, lions came out victorious again; 2 lions and 30 hyenas were killed.

**Many sources, Dec 99:**

A house cat gave birth to an African wildcat at the Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species. The embryo had been frozen before implantation. Some researchers hope to establish a "frozen zoo" that could help species near extinction in the wild.

**Denver Tribune, 12 Jan 00**

Biologists plan to release up to 50 more lynx this year in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado, after releasing 41 last year. Of those 41, 15 are known to be dead and 15 are still being tracked - the fate of the other 11 is unknown.

**Newsday, 17 Jan 00**

A Bengal tigress featured on the cover of National Geographic Magazine may have been killed by poachers. The tigress, Sita, was at least 18 years old, much longer than most wild tigers survive. About 7 of her 18 cubs are still living.

**Mercury Center, 8 Feb. 00**

A cougar, possibly fighting with its own reflection, crashed through a window of a Lake Tahoe home and then exited the same way. The house's owner found the cat in a tree outside the home the next morning; it was tranquilized and released in a local mountain range.

**Xinhua News Agency, 18 Feb. 00**

South China Tigers, one of the most endangered species in the world, have been spotted in the mountainous regions of Zhejiang, a coastal province in east China. Wildlife experts say that less than 50 South China tigers live in the wild today. There are 33 female tigers and 18 male tigers in zoos across China.

**Naples (Florida) News, 18 Feb. 00:**

The National Wildlife Federation intends to sue the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if the agencies don't prevent destructive new development in areas where the Florida panther lives.

**AP, 24 Feb. 00**

Wildlife officials in Russia's Far East killed two rare Siberian tigers this week after the animals lost their fear of people and began frequenting villages. One was tranquilized, but was found to be sick and put down. The other was killed after eating domestic animals from a village for several weeks.

**AMUR LEOPARD UPDATE:**

The following is part of a report from Michiel Hoitte of the Tigris Foundation. The full report can be viewed on our web site. The Tigris Foundation is part of the Siberian Tiger Support Coalition (STSC), which is an international coalition of wildlife organizations which pool their resources to support tiger, leopard, bear, forest and other wildlife conservation in the Russian Far East through anti-poaching, education, science, habitat protection and community outreach.

The STSC is coordinated internationally by Wildaid (formally Global Survival Network). Wildaid can be reached by e-mail at [wildaid1@bkk2.loxinfo.co.th](mailto:wildaid1@bkk2.loxinfo.co.th), the contact person is Steven Galster. The Tigris Foundation can be reached by e-mail at [mhotte@inter.nl.net](mailto:mhotte@inter.nl.net), contact person is Michiel Hotte.

## 2 Amur leopard skins confiscated!

In November Andrei Yurchenko, the leader of the Khasan anti-poaching team, received word from an informant that somebody was trying to sell 2 leopard skins in the village of Barabash, not far from the reservation Kedrovaja Pad. Because most of the local rangers are known by the village people it was decided to use rangers from the newly established inter-regional team, who are unknown in the area. The rangers managed to establish contact and gained the trust of the traders. On the 14th of December 1999 they arrested the traders when they showed them the skins of a female and a male leopard and offered them for sale for \$500 and \$1000 respectively (in comparison: many people in Khasan earn no more than \$50 per month). The traders are in custody and awaiting trial.

## Update on the leopard anti-poaching team!

In 1999 one ranger was added to the leopard anti-poaching team which operates in Khasan, the last stronghold of the Amur leopard in the Russian Far East. The team now consists of 4 rangers. The team has had a very successful second year of operations. Large amounts of rifles and illegally harvested wildlife products have been confiscated. The team also assisted in raids outside Khasan. During those raids large truckloads of illegally logged timber have been confiscated.

Anti-poaching and fighting illegal wildlife trade is not the only activity of the team. It is also involved in fire-fighting projects, educational activities, and making compensation payments to farmers who lose livestock to leopards and tigers.

## Leopard count!

A new leopard count will be conducted during the winter of 1999-2000 providing there is enough snow cover. The last count was held 2 years ago and resulted in an estimated 40-44 Amur leopards

## WISH LIST

Electric Golf Carts

4/0 THHN copper wire

Walk-in freezer

Landscape materials

Roofing materials

8x8x16 concrete block

Small pickup for yard use

in Russia. Recent surveys in China indicate the presence of no more than 10 individuals, mostly animals that disperse occasionally from nearby Russia. No less than 120 people will be involved in the count. Each person will follow a specific route while looking out for tracks of leopards and tigers.

From this point on, a survey is planned for each winter. Trends in the results of these standardized counts will provide indications of the effectiveness of the Amur leopard conservation program.

## Feature Cat - Amur Leopard Cat

The Asian leopard cat is one of the most common small cats in China, but the subspecies euptilura is more rare. They're from northwest Asia, such as the borders between Russia, China, and North Korea. They're more gray and red than the Asian leopard cats, and resemble a fishing cat in some ways. Other subspecies are found in Indonesia, Borneo, Sumatra, India, and even Japan (the Iriomote Cat). Leopard cats weigh less than 15 pounds. Their preferred habitat is tropical rain-forest to coniferous forests; they avoid deep snow and arid areas. Their primary prey includes hares, rodents, fish, and young deer. They are not endangered but are threatened by excessive hunting for the fur trade.

The Asian leopard cat has been bred with domestics to produce the Bengal house cat breed. Our two leopard cats arrived here from the San Diego Zoo in 1996. They're 10 years old now.

#### **50/50 RAFFLE:**

It's that time of year again. In this issue you will find a raffle ticket for our annual 50/50 raffle. It is another way many of you have chosen to help support our important work here at EFBC/FCC.

The last two 50/50 raffles have netted the winners over \$2,000.00 each. This year's drawing will be held during our June Twilight Tour. For those of you that are new members and are not familiar with this annual raffle, the total amount collected for tickets sold is put into a pot. The lucky winner of the drawing will receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the total amount collected. Mail your ticket in early and good luck!

Meet Agn s Bernis. Agn s (pronounced 'on yes') is a young French student here on an internship. She will be with us for the next 6 months. Aside from learning basic animal husbandry, Agn s has initiated a behavioral project with our fishing cats. Since we have so many, including 3 breeding pairs, it should yield good baseline data on behavioral changes influenced by food presentation and other enrichment actions utilized during the observation period.