



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

<http://www.wildcatzoo.org>

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SPRING 2007

Historical facts about the Cathouse:

This year marks thirty years of dedication to the protection and preservation of endangered felines!

The EFBC-FCC began with 7 cats. Those cats' names were: Amere, Misty, Shadow, Cheech, Priscilla, Ricky, and Solomon. We are now home to over 70 felines. The names are too many to list here!!! Check the website, or ask at the gift shop.

The land that was purchased back in 1977 was a 7.32 acre lot. That area has now grown to over 80 acres. Most of the acreage has been bought to provide a buffer zone, to limit encroaching development of the desert surrounding the EFBC-FCC. The area that surrounds our cats' enclosures is teeming with native wildlife, and volunteers routinely see a roadrunner that lives up on the hill near Caesar.



Road runner

Cathouse News:

Winter came in like a lion this year, freezing pipes, patrons, and volunteers. Our public restrooms were out of order for a little while. Thanks to all that visited for your patience on this matter.



The cats did quite well through the cold snap, and even enjoyed the ice the staff pulled out of the water containers.

We also had two of the trailers pipes break in the cold.

In addition to the breaking of pipes, the cold was so severe that we had to replace many water buckets because the seams split! The lows were in single digits for a few days in mid January 2007.

Severe cold weather like this reinforces our drive to provide a better public restroom facility. There is always something that needs improving, but with your understanding we will continue juggling the maintenance with the new construction. We value the people who visit us as well as the cats!

You might notice the trees that provide such a great wind break around the property suffered as well. They should bounce back, but the dead wood will need to be removed.

We are happy to report the new dietary preparation center (DPC) had no problems. Thank you again for helping us make this new building a reality. The staff and volunteers truly needed this building, and although very few of the public/members have seen it, it is thousands of times better than the old DPC, which used to be housed in a trailer.

The new admission price has been accepted easily, and it may have sparked an upswing in memberships. If you have friends that are interested in visiting, mention that the price of admission can be subtracted from a membership if they join the same day.

With a family of four spending \$16 in admission, it will only require \$14 more to become family members. This entitles them to come back all year, at no cost. It also will allow them free admission to 7 other facilities in California alone! These memberships practically sell themselves.

Volunteer of the quarter: Mark McConnell



*"This isn't for everybody, but if you love cats - volunteer."
Mark McConnell with Poncho, Jaguar cub*

With this year marking an anniversary for the cathouse, it seemed fitting to give Mark the volunteer spotlight. In August he will be celebrating his ten year anniversary as a volunteer, and his twenty fifth as a husband to his

wife Elaine. His first love and inspiration to begin volunteering was the ocelot Peaches, and he not only misses that cat but the people that helped him learn to handle these exotic cats. He misses the Kay's both Mr. Munsey, and Ms. Hopkins. Mark is very pleased with the new DPC, and the other improvements around the place. He loves to tell people of his experiences at the cathouse, and is always pleased with the disbelief people have when he tells them he works with leopards. Roby is his favorite cat, and every birth brings him joy. Mark volunteers on Sundays, and is often found helping do the dirty work around the compound. He has helped to repair some of the A/C problems and minor plumbing repairs around the place, and he enjoys talking with visitors and giving tours. He also enjoys NASCAR, boating, bowling, and square dancing.

Volunteer news:

Our family of volunteers has added a few new faces! We welcome them and hope they can remain with us for the long haul. Some of these new faces are: Megan Smith, Carola Benassi, Christy Cregut, and if you have been saying you live too far away to volunteer, check this out - we have/had a pair of volunteers from Peru, named Renzo De La Pena Lavander, and Jesus Zumaran. While their time with us was limited, we do thank them for the effort and energy they instilled by pitching in and helping out.

Work Day 2007 MAY 26

We are asking for your help on this day to do some of the painting on Project Tiger and our main exhibit area. This will be our first try at this, so please come as prepared as you can to paint. If you can supply your own brushes, tarp's, and gloves, it would help out greatly. We would like to have everyone here early (7 am) so that work can begin before it gets too hot. If you are going to participate, and would like to buy paint, or have special skills in this area, please check our website, or call closer to the date.

If you would like to volunteer, but cannot make it out to physically help with the cats care, don't despair! You can still help out by showing off this newsletter and informing people about what is happening in this community you belong to. If you are skilled in Internet use, advertise to others

about us in your chat groups. If you are involved in a club, see if they would like to sponsor a fund raiser or purchase a brick in our Walk of Honor (\$150).

Project Tiger update:

A frequently asked question: When will we start to breed tigers? The answer is complex. The decision to make a state-of-the-art enclosure for these fine animals has proved time consuming, and expensive. Here is where we stand.

Total Project Budget \$125,000. Total funds received as restricted donations to "Project Tiger" = \$82,220. - This is the amount contributed directly toward this project. Thank you.

Funds utilized from general operating account = \$22,971. This is the money that was added from unspecified donations, gift shop sales, etc. etc.

Expenditures to date = \$89,874.

Thus far the holding/den building has been completed. The pools have been constructed except for the top coating and surrounding curtains which cannot be completed until after the landscaping is done. Pump and filter systems for the pools are installed. Material for the outside caging has been purchased and is currently being installed.

What's left? We still need to purchase and construct the rock facing on the walls, and complete walkways around the project.

At the beginning of this project we had great response however donations have slowed down dramatically. Costs of building materials continue to increase. Juggling the new construction with the upkeep and maintenance of our felines, we can not give a definite answer to the top question. We thank you for your support, your understanding, and your patience.

Having said all that, we are pleased to say that in the last quarter two very large donations have come in. One is from the Healey foundation for \$10,300 to do the landscaping and safety railings, and the other is from the M.Piuzze Foundation in the amount of \$5,000. It is truly inspiring to receive

such support, and we cannot say thank you enough.

Cat Update:

In January we added a Persian leopard to our educational facility. This allows visitors to view from one spot three sub-species of leopard! Shapur is housed between Cisco and Angara. Shapur was born in October of 1993 at the San Diego zoo.



Persian leopards are said to be the largest of all the subspecies. If you are lucky enough to come out and see Shapur, I think you will agree. In the wild this

sub-species thrives in Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and northwestern Afghanistan. Habitat varies from mountain steppe to grasslands, or anywhere having a reasonable amount of cover and a supply of prey.

While it is taking some time for Shapur to feel comfortable, we are hopeful that he will enjoy his time with us. There are no plans to breed him.

My Lai had 2 kittens born February 27. Both are males. The father is Bandit. We have had many requests for fishing cats lately so these two will go to other zoos shortly.

Did You Know:

The EFBC-FCC has an internship program? The listing in Peterson's Internships - 2005 edition touts the benefits as: On-the-job training, willing to act as a professional reference, willing to complete paperwork for educational credit, and willing to provide letters of recommendation.

Many international students have taken advantage of this program, but it seems few local students have. Some of the international interns have found local work in the field due to the contacts they made through interning here. Do you have a desire to learn? Are you or someone you know majoring in this field? Contact us for more information. We desire a letter of interest, resume, and a letter of recommendation.



In February we hosted two interns from Sweden! Emily Jaederberg and Johanna Konig.

While studying to be animal keepers, they had the choice to go anywhere for a three week internship. They chose the cathouse because of their love of felines. After one week at the EFBC, they were thrilled to find themselves cleaning the cages of jaguars and leopards (Of course the cats were locked in.). The ability to make eye contact was an emotional experience for them as they learned how to act around these animals better than they had previously known. When the vet came out to do some health check ups, they got hands on experience with some tranquilized cats. They helped carry the cats, which gained them valuable first hand information on how much these cats weigh, and how big they really are. All of this in the first week! They found the employees and volunteers to be helpful and nice, getting them out for shopping adventures and culinary delights as well. In their words: "Things are ten times bigger here than home in Sweden! And we like it. If we could we would stay here for a much longer time. Our choice of this park was the best thing we have ever done!"

Twilight Tour - 28 April, 16 June, 15 September 2007

These are special evening open houses held three times a year on special Saturday evenings. This is the only time the compound is open in the evening when the cats are more active. Visitors can explore parts of the compound that are not normally open to visitors. **Twilight Tours are restricted to adults only (18 and over).** There is an admission fee of \$15 per person.

Our cat's "adoptive parents" are invited to attend the Summer tour (June 16) as our special guests.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. (5 if prepaid) until it's dark out.

There is a bake sale sponsored by FCC's American Association of Zookeeper's (AAZK) chapter, grilled fare donated by the local rotary club, a raffle, and other surprises - goldfish in the fishing cat ponds, watermelons for the tigers, cubs out on leashes, great people to mingle with - there's something different every time, and of course lots of beautiful cats to see, hear, and photograph. Call (661) 256-3793, 10 am-4 pm except Wednesdays.

Big Cat Bazaar:

May 19 and 20th

Please donate clean saleable items now! Please no clothing. Then in May remember to come out and rummage through our selection of various goodies on the 19th or 20th. We already have great items such as: A roll top desk, micro suede sleeper sofa, basketball hoop, and many other large items in great condition. We also have lots of smaller items such as video tapes, artwork, and everything else you might hope to find. We hope to see you then!

Other important dates:

The Annual Poker Run will be in June

Feline Follies - August 18th

Kid's day - November 17th

Jaguars still at risk:

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Monday February 5, 2007
By Henri Paget
In Manaus, Brazil

The stench of death worsened as the sun poked out from behind the clouds, casting shadows of looming vultures as the gruesome and corrupt trade-off was completed.

A lone officer filled out papers as he chatted with the locals on the river bank. Once the skin was removed, the body was gutted and the carne de onça — described by locals as delicious — was shared around. The policeman took a large chunk of the meat for himself, and he watched as the precious spotted skin was placed into a cardboard box destined for the black market.

The magnificent 3m beast, one of only a few hundred jaguars believed to be left in the Brazilian Amazon, had made a fatal mistake the day before — coming back for seconds.

I came to see the carcass after word of the killing reached the jungle guides at the lodge where I was spending my holiday. Although deforestation is increasing the rate at which these animals are encountering humans and subsequently being killed, a dead jaguar is still big enough news to get locals talking.

When I arrived, blood was dripping from the jaguar's mouth as villagers crudely propped it up with a few sticks on the grass. A small group of locals and tourists gathered to take a look at the beast while it still had its skin on.

The killer, 53-year-old Jose Inacio Ferrea, said he had no choice but to shoot the animal.

"She killed a cow," Ferrea explained to me. It was obvious he wasn't proud of what he had done. "I waited for her at the farm yesterday afternoon, and she came back again to kill another."

"I had to do it. If I didn't kill her she would keep on eating our animals."

After talking to him, I'm fairly certain the animal wasn't killed for its skin — although it probably was a nice bonus. Standing there with the magnificent dead feline and the sheepish killer, I realised both the beast and the man were just doing what they needed to do to survive.

With the government here too corrupt to care about preserving wildlife, the only thing that can save this animal from extinction is outside help.

Jungle tour guide and conservationist Edson Sarmento, 24, has lived in the area his entire life and seen only five jaguars.

"In the Amazon no one can say with confidence how many still exist," Sarmento said, clearly upset by the killing. "Deforestation has forced jaguars to enter our farms and kill livestock to survive."

"It's even becoming dangerous for us humans because there are many kids walking from place to place in the jungle. Due to lack of food they are getting frustrated and will attack us" Sarmento said.

"We need somebody to help us tranquilise these animals instead of killing them. They can be moved deep into the jungle where they can live unaffected by us."

After the meat, skin and onlookers went their separate ways, the vultures descended and stood silently on the blood-soaked grass.

The sky darkened as we returned back to the lodge. I could see the lights of Manaus, the biggest city in the Amazon, casting an eerie artificial glow from 100km away on an impressively large corner of the jungle sky.

Unable to take my mind off the jaguar and how it could avoid extinction with humans in its habitat, I found myself wondering — is it already too late?



New sprinklers and pipes have been repaired.

Amur Leopard news:

AFP News brief

Russia, China track endangered leopard population

Russian and Chinese scientists are to start counting leopards in far eastern Russia amid signs that the number of these endangered animals may be increasing.

Eight groups of scientists from the two countries will cover some 5,000 square kilometers (3,100 square miles) over two weeks in the first such project organized by WWF and the US-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

Campaigners from WWF Russia said they hoped the count would confirm signs of an increase in the



Keepers Marie and Melanie walk North Chinese leopards Yanna and Li Ming on the back hill. While these cats are gentle with their keepers, no public contact is allowed.

leopard population from 30 to at least 40 animals after years of declining numbers.

"There are signs of at least four births.... For the first time in five years we are happy about such a big increase in the leopard population," said Yury Darman, head of the Far East section of WWF Russia.

The leopard population is concentrated in the Primorsky province in far eastern Russia in forests close to the border with China and North Korea, where the leopards go to hunt, scientists said.

WISH LIST

Landscape materials, plants and trees
(8x8x16 concrete block, re-bar, cement)

New electrical supplies

Golf carts (electric)



Bang Tang looks through the remnants of her drinking water which froze almost clean through. With hoses frozen a priority was given over to keeping the cats watered.

Tiger trade: Conservation experts lash out at China.

Beijing, Feb. 6 (PTI): Flaying China for the proposed lifting of a 1993 ban on trade in tiger parts, Indian conservation experts have warned that it would lead to the extinction of the species.

In a note submitted to China's State Forestry Administration (SFA) here, the experts said "if the 1993 ban is lifted, it will affect not only the reintroduced tigers but also the wild tigers in China, India and Russia and other range countries leading to the extinction of the species."

The SFA, which is under global pressure not to revoke the ban, had invited a nine-member

international group of experts to recommend alternative conservation plans for South China tiger.

Experts from SFA told the delegation that they are considering if and how a revival in trade in tiger parts from the tiger breeding centres in China, could reduce the pressure on wild tigers in the world.

To this, the Indian experts pointed out that the motivation for opening up tiger products trade is "not conservation."

"We cannot be a party to China's plan to lift the ban on tiger products trade," Chief scientist, WWF-India, A J T John Singh told PTI here after visiting proposed South China tiger reintroduction sites in Jiangxi and Hunan Provinces.

The notion that legal trade will save the species has little logic and is not supported by other examples comparable to the situation of the tiger today, the Indian experts said.

"Tiger should not be equated to chicken," John Singh said, adding that there is little evidence that opening up trade saves critically endangered species.

Lifting of the ban would tarnish the image of the People's Republic of China in the eyes of the conservation community all over the globe forever," the Indian experts, including Singh, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Madhya Pradesh AdJ J Dutta, Member of Uttarkhand Wildlife Advisory Board Dilip Khatau and Vice Chairman of the Corbett Foundation Rina Khatau, said in a note to the SFA.

Tiger organs, teeth, bones and penises fetch high prices on the black market, where they are used in traditional Chinese medicines to treat ailments like rheumatism. In other parts of Asia, the bones are considered an aphrodisiac.

China had banned domestic trade in all tigers and tiger parts in 1993, but is considering re-opening the business based on farm-bred,

captive animals in a bid to meet growing market demand.

"It is to satisfy demand, appease consumers and create viability for vested human interests, mainly of tiger farms," the Indian experts said.

Singh said reintroduction of South China tiger can only be successful if the ban on tiger trade in bones and other derivatives continues.



Li Ming enjoys being a curious cat. Here she investigates the tire pile.



Trapper sits atop the bench that was recently donated for his enclosure. Trapper is a Canadian Lynx that is a favorite among the staff and volunteers. Trapper will turn six this August.

Enclosed in this newsletter is one ticket for our 50/50 raffle. Tickets are \$20.00 each and the winner receives half of the net profits of the raffle. The drawing will be held at our Summer Twilight Tour on June 16th and the winner need not be present. Last year's winner received a check for \$1667.00 and we hope for an even bigger participation this year. EFBC's earnings from the fund raiser will be used to complete upgrades to our educational/tour staging area. You can request more tickets by phone, fax, snail mail or email