

EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

<http://www.wildcatzoo.org>

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SPRING 2008

Ranee sets record:

The oldest recorded Amur Leopard Cat is now living at your local cat house.

On April 22, Ranee will turn 18, which according to the International Species Inventory System (ISIS) is the oldest living member of that species.

Ranee came to us from the San Diego Zoo in 1996, where she was born in 1990.

Some of our long term members may remember that Ranee was in a display enclosure for many years, where she lived with Teli. That enclosure is now occupied by Jungle Cat, Pandora.

Although Teli passed on a few years ago, Ranee has taken some comfort from the caring staff and volunteers, allowing some close contact for grooming the hard to reach areas of her back.

Leopard cats are one of the most common small cats in Asia, but the Amur leopard cat subspecies is rarer. This subspecies lives in the Amur river valley, which is also home to the Amur Leopard, and the Amur Tiger.

Amur Leopard Cats are more gray and red than Asian Leopard cats, and resemble a Fishing Cat in some ways.

Other breeders have mixed the standard leopard cat with domestics to produce what is now known as the Bengal house cat breed.

While Ranee is no longer on display, it is the continued support of the membership that allows her golden years to continue in a peaceful state. This subspecies is rare to find anywhere anymore. Like many species, problems arise from habitat loss due to development and many

old growth forests being logged for trees like Cedar.

Conservation efforts are typically focused on the larger species, and so the available terrain for these smaller wild cats is often very limited.



Ranee is now housed in an off display enclosure, where she spends much of her time sleeping and enjoying the company of a large stuffed bear.

The fur of these felines is also still prized by some in that trade.

We are working toward getting in some young Amur Leopard cats, so look for them to arrive sometime this year.

Special dates for 2008:

Twilight Tours: April 26th, June 14th, and September 20th.

Have you ever wondered what the cats do after hours? Want to see what they are like when they are given a toy to play with? Interested in seeing a Fishing Cat fish? Many times these events

allow for all of that, and occasionally more. With the heat of the day dissipating, the cats often get active. If any cats are willing to pose for photos with guests, this is when it might happen.

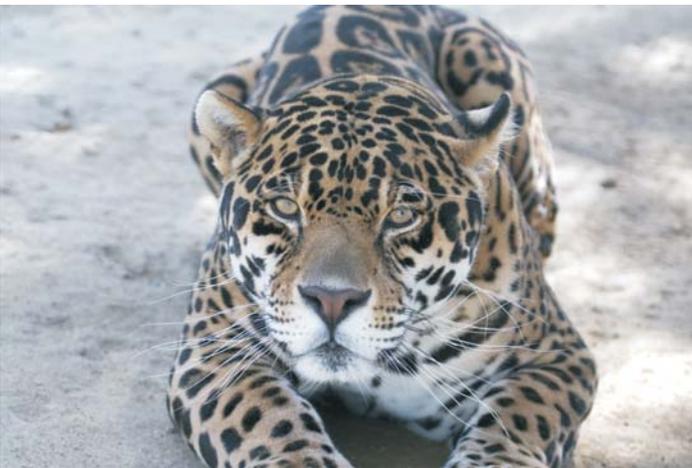
These adults only (18 and up) events all start at 5PM for those that pre-pay for their tickets, and 5:30 for those that come to the door. The admission price for everyone is \$15. These three dates are the only times the back areas are open for public display. Enrichments for all the cats offset the stress derived from having our breeding and off display felines share their homes, and the adults-only rule is strictly enforced to ensure safety for all that are involved.

We would like to recognize our adoptive parents by giving them free admission to our June 14 event.

At all of these events our American Association of Zookeeper's (AAZK) chapter raises money through a bake sale, and the local Rotary Club offers up burgers and hot dogs as refreshments at a reasonable price. With all of these great people to mingle with, a good time is virtually guaranteed.

Big Cat Bazaar: May 17 and 18

Please donate clean saleable items now (no clothing). Then in May remember to come out and rummage through our selection of various goodies! We already have many items such as: Large metal file cabinets, children's toys, artwork, books, and knickknacks to entice you.



Cisco (Jaguar) is always a crowd pleaser

Fabulous Feline Follies: August 16th

The date for the Follies this year has been set, and the planning stages are in process. If you would like to sponsor this event we are now accepting contributions.



Aztec and Maya (Jaguarundi) are often active during the day.

Kid's Day: November 22

This is not just a children's event, as many of the parents have found out in years past. Like our twilight tours the cats get toys to play with, and some of them are decorated and designed by the children in attendance!

With educational presentations that include a variety of animals the value of this day is immeasurable. The admission price is only \$7.00 an Adult and \$5.00 a Child. While we don't open up the back areas, we do have a train ride that takes visitors into the back where a volunteer gives an educational tour for those that partake of this optional adventure.

The center has always had an active interest in educating young people about its preservation programs, the importance of conservation efforts, and the benefits of housing species in a captive environment. Through the years, thousands of students have visited the center with their schools, youth-oriented organizations, family, and friends. Although many children want to help at the center or become a volunteer it is simply too dangerous for us to allow them. More than a few have come out shortly after their eighteenth birthday, and some have even been inspired enough to seek out a career in the fields of

conservation, in part due to this center. On this special day we allow children some hands on ways to help keep our felines happy. Although they still can't work directly with any of the felines, they can leave with a feeling they helped do something about a worldwide problem, locally. As always, we hope to see you at all of our events!



Oronda was orphaned in Washington state.

New Arrivals:

A puma cub from Washington state has arrived and is being housed off display at this time. She was found orphaned in a remote area north of Wenatchee, Washington. We offer assistance to many western states that find these orphaned cats, including California. We also work with the Puma Studbook Keeper who also gets many calls from these states. We try to find them good homes in zoos throughout the U.S. If you remember we were brought a cub found during



Xeno, Geoffroy's cat

the 2006 fires in Ojai, CA. She will be going to Zoo America in Hershey, PA in a month or so. Another new arrival is Xeno, a Geoffroy's cat. Geoffroy's cats are native to South America. Xeno was kept illegally as a pet and our understanding is that the owner was moving and could not keep him. He was abandoned at our gate with a note saying he was 5 years old, neutered and declawed on the front feet, and he "bites". The little guy has quite an attitude which is normal for small wild cats. After an adjustment time he will probably settle in and become comfortable here with our keepers and his surroundings.

Volunteer of the Quarter:



This could be you!

While we always want to place a photo of a volunteer here, we can't this issue since you have not made the leap, and come in to volunteer.

Volunteering time is difficult we know, but without a dedicated volunteer staff this facility would be difficult to operate.. We have had the pleasure of a few new faces recently, but we will always need more. Is this where you come in?

Anyone over 18 years of age and of sound mind can be of use. If you are a people person, perhaps being a tour guide would suit you better than cleaning up after the cats and doing kitchen duties. Not a people person? Come help in the kitchen and see just how much these carnivores eat!

Are you good with tools? Perhaps you can help us build den boxes. New designs to make these boxes easier to clean and maintain are being created, but the labor aspect is often daunting.

Nothing but time will allow an individual to understand any animal, and if it is your desire to understand these majestic felines better, only the sacrifice of your time can achieve that goal.

Volunteers typically begin the day at 8 am, and stay at least until closing at 4 PM. If you are not interested in working around the cats, docent help and yard monitoring is always helpful during our business hours of 10 AM to 4 PM.

All of you as members can assist us whenever you visit. The rules for visitors are simple, but often children and first time visitors don't understand that this is the cats home, and humans are being allowed to visit them. Without the cooperation of the public, up close viewing of these wonderful felines would not be possible. While we always take steps to ensure that everyone behaves responsibly, incidents like those that have happened elsewhere concern us.

There is no better security than a watchful human being. As members you all have a stake in the welfare of this feline community so don't hesitate to remind rule breakers that you care. Should the situation demand higher attention, please let our staff know immediately. While the vast majority of our visitors are respectful, it only takes one bad apple to hurt an animal. Some facilities (Thankfully not us) have had animals lose eyes to coins being thrown, and without someone in the yard physically watching it is difficult to ensure this will not happen here. Every little bit of help goes a long way.

Cat News: Times News 2008

Embryos implanted in zoo's Pallas' cats!

Sperm from Mongolia has been combined with eggs from the Cincinnati zoo in an effort to create life at the Erie zoo.

Three Pallas's cats were implanted with embryos at the Erie zoo. The embryos come from felines that live at the Cincinnati zoo, and a team from the Cincinnati zoo conducted the in vitro fertilizations and implantation surgeries. They believe this is a first for mammals in captivity.

Why? To create a diverse genetic line of captive Pallas's cats. The three sisters that live at the Erie zoo are over-represented genetically in the captive population, which makes them less desirable to mate. However, to serve as surrogates they may become very valuable in the effort to preserve this species of feline.

"They're perfect as surrogates," said Bill Swanson, director of the Cincinnati Zoo's Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife. "They aren't recommended for breeding, but they can still provide genetically valuable kittens."



Nikolai is one of the dozen Pallas's cats at the EFBC right now.

Since the sperm was taken from wild Pallas's cats in Mongolia, it should add to the variability of the captive line if this proves successful.

Pallas' cats are native to Central Asia and are named for Peter Pallas, a German naturalist who first described the species 200 years ago. Other names for this species are Manul, Rock, or Steppe cat. Swanson said there are only 45 Pallas' cats in 15 zoos in North America. (We don't believe he added the four born here at the EFBC-FCC in March of 2007.)

The success of the surgery could prove important not just for the future of Pallas' cats, but also for other threatened or endangered animals.

"It's important that the captive population maintain genetic variation," Swanson said. "That's hard to do when you have a limited captive population." In the past, zoos have captured wild animals when they needed to add to their genetic pool. Times are changing, and it is hoped that technology can help those animals that are vanishing, without impacting the wild populations.

"It's difficult to take animals from the wild from a philosophical standpoint," Swanson said. "It's also difficult from a regulatory standpoint — governments are very restrictive these days about movement of wildlife."

Swanson said veterinarians have impregnated captive mammals through artificial insemination, but he knows of no other case in which veterinarians have implanted captive mammals with embryos conceived through in vitro fertilization — in which fertilization occurs outside the womb, such as in a lab dish.

The Cincinnati Zoo is known for its ground breaking work and success in breeding animals. Swanson performed the implantations on February 27 at the Erie Zoo's surgical suite. Dr. Swanson collected semen in 2007 from wild Pallas' cats he and a team of researchers captured in Mongolia. Those animals were released back into the wild. Their sperm was frozen and transported to the United States. The eggs were harvested February 26 from Pallas' cats from the Cincinnati Zoo. The eggs were then fertilized with sperm from the Mongolian wild cats.

In about a month we will know if the surgeries were successful and the cats are pregnant. The gestation period for kittens is 68 to 72 days, or a little more than two months. If born, the kittens are expected to stay in Erie for a time. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums, which accredits zoos throughout the United States, will determine where they will end up. The three surrogate sisters at Erie first arrived there in 2007 from the San Diego zoo. Scott Mitchell, the president and chief executive officer of the Erie Zoo, said the implantations show a different side of the zoo's mission.

"Most people think of zoos as just a great place to bring their kids," Mitchell said. "But conservation is a very important thing that zoos do."

EFBC/FCC has had a few successes the old fashioned way with this species, and of the eight surviving kittens born in the USA in the last three years, seven were born here (The other one was in Cincinnati).

Interns return:

Last summer, Heidi Petit and Helen Sonnenberg, two interns from Germany, fell in love with the center and have returned for their spring break. Heidi & Helen said "Hard work and no money" were what we expected when we first came here last summer. And indeed, the work is hard but the payment we received was even better than any amount of money: to get the chance to work with these incredible animals and to (slowly?) earn their trust and friendship. We got to spend a lot of

time with the cats and were able to get to know them quite well. This made it very hard for us to



Helen and Shapur



Heidi and Willow

leave and we missed them very much when we were back in Germany. Only three weeks after we left it was clear for us that we had to come back as soon as possible. Fortunately, we were able to

come back for six weeks in our spring break and we are enjoying every day.



Lilliana, new intern from Mexico

My name is Liliiana Rodriguez, I'm 23 years old. I'm from Mexico. I'm in Veterinary School and about to graduate (senior). I go back in my country to the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes, in Aguascalientes City, near Mexico City. And I chose my intern based on wild fauna and zoo animals, because I'm interested in those species, more than anything else.

I decided to come here to EFBC because I thought it would be a different and really great experience by coming to a place where people all over the world know about it because of its outstanding objectives and procedures.

I have been aware of EFBC since I was a little girl and came once to visit, even though I don't remember how it was back then, I always kept in my mind I wanted to come back, and now that I'm here I don't want to miss the opportunity to learn as much possible.

What I do here is try to look, learn, and practice how every thing is done. Of course it takes time, but all the people here are great and always help out with questions I have. We have a lot of work to do here, and I like it; cleaning cages, helping with the food preparation, helping feed some animals, every thing is important.

Of all the cats here, I have a favorite one. He's called Poncho, he's a Jaguar. I find him very interesting in every single way, but that doesn't mean I don't like the rest. All I have to say is that

I'm very thankful to everyone here for helping me out in this project that means everything to me.

Easter Seals help out:

Easter Seals Southern California Adult Day and Community Access Service participants have been volunteering at EFBC/FCC for the past 15 months. The program offers individuals with developmental, physical, or multiple disabilities the opportunity to become active members of their community. Lynette Stankey has been bringing participants 1-2 times a week. They help keep our public areas nice and clean by sweeping the sidewalks and picnic areas and raking the lawns. Lynette says "volunteering helps our participants achieve skills that will help them gain a higher level of independence ." Thank you Easter Seals for your hard work and dedication.



Thank you's go out to the following people for their support of our general operation fund. This extra support is helping us replant some of our landscaping affected by the winter freeze and high winds: Brent Prindle & Vicki Haneckow, Susan Lozier & Ian MacLeod, Phil & Terry Hamory, Steve & Patti Shepherd, Roxanna Gerns, Sophie McIntosh, Vicki Collins, Tina Zeigler, Linda Braun, Mike & Ann Green, Art & Carol Hoadley Michael Franconi, Julita Jones, Bonnie Douglas, Garnet Frafues, David & Martha Gregory, Cathy Case, Iris Millbank, David Forward, Squire Brown and EFBC's AAZK Chapter.

You will be seeing a lot of progress on Project Tiger very soon. We wish to thank the following for their restricted donations to this project: The M. Puize Foundation, \$5000.00, Roberto Garcia \$300.00, and Pamela Heinzman \$30.00.

The Trapper Surgery Fund received \$1170.79 in response to our plea. Thank you to all who sent in donations toward this \$4467.00 expense. Our cats told us to make sure we mention our members Mike & Maryeann McMullen who donate two boxes of fresh meat bones each month for their enjoyment. They love their bones and Sandy & Joe can hear them banging around in the cat's boxes all night.

Special thank you's to Miaya-Symone May, Chatsworth, CA and her friend Brianna Schneidewind, West Hills, CA. In lieu of birthday gifts, Miaya-Symone and Brianna requested that their friends make donations to EFBC. The following were those that responded to their requests; Glorianna Anderson, Lisette Avila, Laura Horrell, Trent Schneidewind, Kristine Stimson, and John Kimball.

50/50 raffle:

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 proceeds received. The drawing will be held at our Summer Evening Twilight Tour on June 14th and the winner need

not be present. EFBC's proceeds from the raffle will help us replace some of our damaged landscaping so please send your ticket stub in. You can request more tickets by phone, fax, mail, or email.

Reciprocal list:

Please add The Pine Grove Zoo in Little Falls, Minnesota to your 2008 reciprocal list. Also remember to carry your card with you and show photo ID when requested.



Save The Date!
Fabulous Feline Follies 08
August 16

*safari theme * signature drinks*
animal entertainment
*silent auction * AND MORE!*

Sponsors Needed
More Details to Follow
in separate mailing

