



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

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

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES FALL 2002

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

Hi! My name is Kaeli Evans (pictured with Kiowa, Eurasian Lynx) and I am thrilled to be EFBC/FCC's volunteer of the quarter. I am originally from Illinois, and arrived at Edwards Air Force Base in August of last year with my active duty Air Force spouse. What a great opportunity it is to be able to work with these extraordinary animals. Ever wonder what it's like in the day of a volunteer? Well, let me give you a little insight. It is a lot of hard work and one must always be aware of your surroundings. Plus you have to learn to trust your instincts. Our day begins by raking and cleaning cages. You learn the cats in progression, on your first few days you observe and then slowly you learn to clean certain cats. At 10 am we open to the public and must have volunteers in the yard to give tours, answer questions, and make sure that safety rules are being followed. On any given day one or both of the two keepers, Karla and Tammy, may ask you to assist with a special project such as adding dirt to a cage or cleaning a den box. After the public leaves it is then time to feed. This is the time that you can't let your nerves get the best of you. The cats are really wild at feeding time. Again it is a progression of learning to feed the cats. I can't list all the rewards of being a volunteer but for me the #1 reward is when a cat decides that you are pretty cool. Then that cat just becomes your favorite because of the bond the two of you share. I have bonds with two cats here. One is with Madison, a fishing cat. And the other is with Kangdi, a North Chinese leopard. Being a volunteer at EFBC/FCC has been a great adventure for me that I hope to continue as long as my husband is stationed at Edwards AFB. If you think that you might enjoy this great opportunity, stop by and see one of our many

volunteers so that they can help you get involved. Maybe you will be our next volunteer of the quarter!

INTERNS

We've had a busy summer of interns - they've really made the keeper's jobs easier with all the help they gave. Brian Gehrisch (photo left) was here for one month, from mid-July through mid-August. He is a senior at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio majoring in pre-veterinary medicine, zoology, Spanish, and French. Jennifer Pape was an intern here from mid-June through late August. She is in her final year at St. Cloud State University in central Minnesota. She plans to graduate with a degree in biology in December 2002. Nancy Gibson is a current intern a few days a week while attending classes at Cal State-Northridge. She plans to graduate in Spring of 2003 with a degree in biological sciences, and continue on to Veterinarian school.

FABULOUS FELINE FOLLIES

The 13th annual Fabulous Feline Follies has come and gone. A sellout crowd of almost 160 guests attended. We were entertained by Craig & Cindy Wagner and their cats from the Center for Endangered Species, an educational facility. Also, our vets Dr Scott Weldy and Dr Pat Morris and their band, LD-50 played the hits (LD-50 is a medical term meaning the dose of medicine which will cause death in 50% of patients - yep, that's vet humor for you!) Thanks to raffle prize winner Gerry Snyder for donating half of the \$1000 prize back to us. Pat Quillen, Founder and Director Of S.O.S. Care Inc., Valley Center, California is this year's Felitarian recipient. Pat

has been active in small cat conservation for over 30 years and has initiated numerous in-situ conservation programs in Asia and South America. Pat has been instrumental in establishing captive breeding techniques for the Oncilla, Margay, Gordon's Wildcat and Sand Cat. Pat also founded and continues to coordinate the International Small Felid workshops held in-situ as well as in the United States.

MORE SPECIAL EVENTS

Our last Twilight Tour of the year is September 21. If you missed our fun special events this year, mark your calendars now - here are next year's dates! Twilight Tours will be held April 26, June 21, and September 20. Feline Follies will be August 16. These are all Saturday evenings. Also, director Nicole Pearson is starting to plan our next Cocktail Party, possibly held in Pasadena this time - stay tuned for details! (Check our website too).

PROJECT TIGER

Work is ongoing on the outside pump/cage access area between two block walls, and President Joe Maynard's been busy welding together the panels for the inside holding pens. If anyone out there with construction experience wants to come spend a day volunteering, please contact Joe to set up a time! His email is cathouse@qnet.com or our phone number is (661) 256-3793.

CAT NEWS

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 14 June 2002

Two litters from two Florida panthers were simultaneously recorded at the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) near Naples, Florida. This year's births are a highlight for the refuge in the recovery of the imperiled subspecies of the mountain lion or cougar. Only 80 to 100 Florida panthers remain in the wild. "We're also pleasantly surprised about the size of the litters," said Sam D. Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service "The dens produced three kittens in one litter and four in the other." There are many reasons for the demise of the animal's population. Because of unfounded fears for livestock and human safety, bounties were placed on the cats from the late

1800's through the 1950's, greatly diminishing their numbers. However, today other factors threaten the species recovery. "Car collisions have killed over 44 panthers since 1972," said Ben Nottingham, Deputy Refuge Manager from the Florida Panther NWR. "Also, aggression among the male cats has caused other deaths. However, the biggest cause of diminished numbers is loss of habitat." The extensive development over the last few decades has greatly reduced the panther's preferred habitat of hardwood hammocks and pine flat woods as well as wet prairies, marshes and swamp forests. Adult males defend territories averaging 200 miles while females have territories of 75 square miles. Panthers prefer large animals such as deer and wild pigs but will eat smaller game such as raccoons, armadillos, rabbits and even alligators.

CNN, 5 July 2002

High in the mountains of Mongolia, the endangered snow leopard was once hunted for its fur and because it preyed on livestock. With an estimated 3,500 to 7,000 snow leopards left in the wild, the International Snow Leopard Trust has taken its effort to protect this species to cyberspace — at snowleopard.org. Herders use the site to sell goods made from the wool of their sheep and camels. Conservation director Tom McCarthy says that helps protect the snow leopard. "Every herder family who wants to participate signs a contract that agrees that in exchange for access to the markets they promise not to kill snow leopards or their food sources such as the wild ibex (goat) and bharal (blue sheep)." The trust provides training and equipment for villagers in Mongolia to make hand-made products.

AP Online, 2 August 2002

A 61-year-old man was seriously slashed in a battle with a cougar in British Columbia, but managed to kill the animal with his pocket knife. The 100-pound cat leaped on Dave Parker from behind as he walked down a road a mile south of Port Alice, a village on Vancouver Island. Despite extensive wounds, Parker managed to walk about a mile for help after slitting the cat's throat. Police found Parker's knife next to the dead

cougar. Vancouver Island has the highest concentration of cougars in British Columbia.

SOS Lynx, 14 August 2002

Another young lynx has lost it's life on the controversial new roads surrounding the Donana National Park in south-west Spain, home to the second largest population of Iberian lynxes. On July 30th a young male lynx was found dead just off the Huelva-Seville motorway. Donana is one of only two breeding areas for the species. Only 3 female lynxes are currently in captivity, all in Spanish zoos. However, they may now be joined by a young male lynx captured in the Sierra Morena mountains of northern Andalucia, where over half the remaining lynx population survives. Fermin, as he has been named, was captured after camera-trapping efforts in this area revealed this lynx to have facial injuries on July 3rd. These injuries are, however, not thought to be life threatening and it is believed he will soon be moved to Jerez. If this happens he will be the all-important first male for the captive breeding programme. Fermin is 14 months old. The latest road deaths bring the number of lynx casualties at Donana alone to 27 in the last few years - almost equal to the total current lynx population of the park of not more than 30. There have been claims in both Spain and Portugal that crucial lynx populations may have been overlooked where the conservation of their habitats conflicted with planned infrastructure projects including major dams and roads. SOS Lynx is raising funds to undertake a thorough survey in the Algarve mountains where the greatest numbers of Iberian lynx remain in Portugal.

FEATURE CAT - JAGUAR

With its massive head, broad shoulders and bowed legs, the jaguar (*Panthera onca*) has long been a cat of mystery and folklore in South and Central America. Known by Latin Americans as "El Tigre," the jaguar is one of the least studied big cats in the world. This, in part, is due to its wide range and large numbers, though those numbers are rapidly declining. Few realize the jaguar was once a North American cat, with sparse but sustaining populations found in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California. About 12,000 years ago, its range was from Oregon to

Pennsylvania. Remains have been found from Alaska to Mexico and 76 jaguar skeletons were found in the La Brea tar pits. In 1855, Grizzly Adams encountered a jaguar in the Tehachapi Mountains, not far from the compound. But about 50 years ago, hunting depleted their populations in the northern Americas. In recent years, jaguar sightings have been recorded in Arizona, Texas and New Mexico. Most recently in December 2001, a remote, motion-activated camera set up by the Arizona Department of Fish and Game captured a photograph of one male jaguar

WISH LIST

Wireless P.A. System

Landscape Materials

X-ray Processor

Golf Carts

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

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

believed to have established residence in the undisclosed location. Wildlife biologists hope to eventually capture the large male and radio collar him in order to track his movements. Fascination with the largest cat in the Western Hemisphere has gone on for thousands of years. Indigenous people erected elaborate monuments to the jaguar, such as the Olmecs who built massive 20-ton stone heads of the cat. The Aztec and Mayan civilizations adopted into their cultures and religions the Olmecs belief in a mystical half man, half jaguar. The cat's image can be found in ancient mosaics, figurines and textiles. Natives sought the jaguar for its teeth, hide, hair, bones and blood with the belief the properties were magical. Today, some Indian tribes, many of which are impressed by the jaguar's power and might, continue to practice "man-jaguar" rituals. One of the most common mistakes made by the general public is to call the jaguar a leopard. A jaguar is considered the "New World" cat, as

opposed to its “Old World” cousin the leopard, whose range spans from Africa to Russia. But apart from both being members of the big cat (Panthera) family, having spots and the ability to produce “black” offspring, the leopard and jaguar are completely different right down to their spots. Besides living on two different continents, their body structures and spot patterns are quite different. The jaguar has a larger head than the leopard. Its short, stocky, yet muscular body with its short tail differs from the leopard’s long leanness and equally long tail. Its spots stand out against a background color that can range from gold to a dark rust color. The rosettes enclose one or two smaller spots. Along the middle of the back, the spots may merge into one black line. Melanistic or black jaguars were once regarded as a separate species, but they are not. The black color is a recessive genetic trait, although many Indian tribes still believe they are two different cats and that the black jaguar is much larger and more ferocious than the spotted jaguars. Like other Panthera species, the jaguar uses stealth hunting tactics, keeping close to well-used trails and along stream beds, waiting for its encounters before stalking or rushing its prey. Sometimes, the jaguar will ambush its prey from a tree, but most hunting is done on the ground. The big cat will at times jump into trees to catch a monkey. Its canine teeth are stronger than those of its Panthera cousins. Lions, tigers and leopards usually kill their prey with a throat or neck bite. But the jaguar often bites through the temporal bones of the skull of its kill. Even animals with thick shells, including armadillos and turtles are unable to escape from the jaguar’s powerful jaws. Despite its power, the jaguar relies mostly on a diet of small animals, devouring whatever is available. The jaguar is also one of the few big cats that is not afraid of water and is an excellent swimmer. This ability is often displayed by jaguars in the lowlands of Venezuela and Brazil, where its main staple for food is the giant, semi aquatic rodent, the capybara. The cat also has excellent fishing skills. To establish its home range, which can extend as much as 500 square miles, and to communicate with other jaguars, the big cat often lets out a hoarse cough. The sound starts with short, guttural uhs, which increases in rapidity and volume. Researchers have determined that jaguars have lost 67 percent of their range in the United States, Mexico and Central America and about 38 percent within

South America. At present the cat is considered eradicated in the United States, El Salvador, Uruguay and Chile. They face a similar end in Argentina, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Panama. Its most northern established range is about 800 miles from the U.S. Border in the Mexican states of Tamaulipas and Sinaloa, although sporadic sightings have been documented in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The animal’s southern border has shrunk as well. Once found as far south as Argentina’s Rio Negro River, its range has receded about 1,400 miles to the northern part of that country. The most densely populated jaguar habitat in the world is the Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Preserve in Belize, the world’s first and only protected area specifically for jaguars. It averages one jaguar every five square miles. *(Thanks to Leslie Simmons for compiling this feature!)*