



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

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

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES

FALL 1999

Cat Updates:

On June 13th, fishing cats Shada and Rocky had another litter of cubs. Sometimes she takes care of them herself, but not this time. We pulled the cubs at 2 days old and two of the three survived. Two females, Nicky and Madison.

We recently finished 3 more welded wire, landscaped, small cat cages. Sassy the fishing cat and the Amur leopard cats Raneer and Teli are now on exhibit for visitors in this area. Peaches the ocelot is also in one of these new cages.

Another construction project is building 3 cement-floored quarantine cages behind the clinic. This is so cats can recover in peace & quiet after surgery while we keep an eye on them and for quarantine of new arrivals.

Work continues on Project Tiger as well; the den area is graded, and some building materials purchased. We are still raising funds to complete this large addition to the compound.

The jaguar cubs are now 17 months old. We've had to separate Annie from her brothers because they each outweigh her by about 30 pounds. Cisco weighs over 120 pounds already, on his way to 250+ full-grown. So the boys are in the habitat cage by themselves now, while Annie lives next to her mom & dad Twilight & Jesse.

50/50 RAFFLE

The drawing for this year's 50/50 raffle was held at the Summer Twilight Tour on June 19. The

winner was Ms. Patt Butterfield, Broomfield, Colorado. Congratulations Patt!

Fabulous Feline Follies

Our annual Feline Follies dinner/dance was Saturday, September 18. Thanks to all who attended. As usual, a great time was enjoyed by all. The theme this year was "Cats of South Asia". A list of sponsors can be found on our web site. Plan now to come to next year's Follies! The Winner of the \$1000.00 Follies Raffle was Ms. Marie Koonce, Onyx, California. Congratulations Marie!

Cocktail Party

We have one more special fund-raiser this year, our second annual Cocktail Party, held at the home of board member Nicole Pearson and her husband Scott. This year's event will be on Saturday, October 16th. Located just off the 10 freeway near UCLA, this is a chance for LA area supporters to avoid a drive to the desert and yet meet some cats and compound personnel. The fishing cat cubs will likely be there. There will also be a photo display of other FCC felines, and our website will be available for browsing and on-line tours. For more information see our website or call us at (661) 256-3793.

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER:

Ellen Fiol was chosen our Volunteer of the Quarter for Fall 99. Ellen has been with us for six years. She's one of our very dedicated volunteers who makes the drive up from "over

the hill" a few times a month. A transplant from New York, she lives in Pasadena with her 3 "big" cats - house cats, Anna, Tippi, and Lulu. She works in Glendale for Video Tape Products, and also works for Weight Watchers as a counselor.

Ellen's favorite feline at FCC is Sandy the cougar. She enjoys "talking" to her and the other cats by imitating the various noises they make.

Other Volunteer News

It's been a busy summer of comings and goings in the volunteer corps. We'd like to say Good-bye to volunteers Maya Wheelock, who moved to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Jonathon Mims, an Air Force member being transferred to Saudi Arabia; and Pamela Gray, who bought a house in Sebastopol after a few successful movies based on her screen plays. Congratulations Pam! Look for her name in the credits - "A Walk on the Moon" was a recent hit by her. Also, intern Melissa Breeding went back to college in Southampton after staying at the compound for nearly 3 months and working 5 days a week. Gautam Muralidharan ("Just call me Gotham, like Batman!") is currently volunteering 5 days a week until November while visiting from India - this enthusiastic 18 year old has a great future ahead of him. He hopes to work back in India saving the tiger and other native endangered cats. He found out about EFBC/FCC through the internet, and talked his dad into letting him come out here. We're glad he did!

BEHIND THE SCENES...

In addition to our volunteers, we have a few people who are here full-time who really keep the whole place running. In this newsletter we'd like to introduce Sandy Masek, our General Manager and new member of the Board of Directors.

Sandy oversees the day to day business of the compound, manages employees, keeps the gift shop stocked, organizes fund-raisers like the Feline Follies, fills in for the secretary when we don't have one (like right now), and if that doesn't

keep her busy enough, she also is primary "Mom" to the hand raised cubs, and still works on the compound one day a week so Karla can have a day off. All of her hand raised "babies" love to see Mom walking around the compound - cats like Tao, Roby, Masha, and the jaguar cubs are so happy to see her, it's amazing to watch the interaction between them.

She was just recently appointed to the Board of Directors. In her copious free time, Sandy enjoys water sports, classical music, and the musical "Phantom of the Opera", which she's seen 6 times.

DONATIONS:

11 July 99 - Mr. Brandt Bishop presented a \$1000 check from Boeing Company Employees Community Fund Program. Mr. Bishop, who works at Boeing-Long Beach, submitted our name to this program. Thanks Brandt!

CAT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

Johannesburg Mail & Guardian, April 1999:

Top officials of the Safari Club, and multimillionaire member Ken Behring, took part in an illegal hunt in South Africa which left five elephants, 3 lions, five buffalo, and 10 antelope dead, with more animals injured and left to die. A helicopter was used to locate and drive out animals, and then drop off the hunters.

Associated Press, 21 May 99

A camper was attacked by a bobcat along the Shenandoah River in Virginia. The cat was killed by the campers, and it turned out to have rabies. Several children had examined the dead cat. At least 11 people underwent rabies shots.

Sunday Times, Britain, 23 May 99:

Korean scientists plan to clone Siberian tigers and use Bengal tigers as surrogate parents. They hope to reintroduce the cats to the Korean

peninsula; tigers used to live there, but were wiped out by hunting.

Editor's note - we often get asked if we breed our cats for reintroduction into the wild. There's two main reasons why we don't, and can't. The main one is that there's nowhere safe to release animals right now - the cats still out there are threatened by hunting and habitat destruction, which continues to this day. The other reason is that it's very difficult to train a captive-born cat to survive in the wild, without it's mother teaching it how to hunt. Some cats have been successfully reintroduced, if the hunting training is done in such a way that neither humans nor livestock are associated with food to the cat.

Deseret News, 24 May 99

A variety of ancient bones found in a cave near Elko, Nevada include some from the extinct American cheetah. Scientists speculate that the American cheetah is one reason that native pronghorn antelopes run so fast. They are much faster than any current American predators.

Albuquerque Journal, 12 June 99

New Mexico game commissioners plan to kill dozens of cougars to protect bighorn sheep. They also plan to kill coyotes, to increase the deer population. Cougars are preying on sheep because the deer are depleted. Environmental groups blame overhunting, range decimation, and diseases from domestic livestock for the decline in deer and sheep.

Naples (Florida) News, 13 June 99

Texas cougars, released in Florida 4 years ago, have produced at least 15 offspring with the endangered Florida panther, a closely related subspecies.

Toronto Globe and Mail, 19 June 99

Ontario, Canada's last known cougar was shot in 1884. Since then over a thousand sightings have

been reported, but no hard proof until just recently. Fresh scat was found and confirmed to be that of a cougar.

Environmental News Service, 24 June 99

The World Bank is funding a \$10 million grant to protect the biodiversity of a mountainous area bordering Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic, home to the endangered snow leopard.

Environmental News Network, 29 June 99

A den of Canada lynx kittens has been found in Maine. Biologists radio collared the female in March, and in May noticed she had established a den. On June 18th they examined the den and found two kittens. Further study will be done on the Maine lynx population, adding to the study on whether to list the cat as threatened under the US Endangered Species Act.

Missouri Conservationist Magazine, July 99

A cougar killed in Texas County, Missouri is undergoing DNA analysis to determine its exact origins. Already determined is that its related to North American cougars, making it more likely to not be a released pet. The nearest wild populations are in Texas and Colorado.

Science News, 10 July 99

A researcher at UC-Davis is using the patterns on a carnivore's face to piece together an evolutionary family tree. She has found that white markings around the eyes go with nocturnal, forest-dwelling animals, while grassland, diurnal species are more likely to have dark muzzles.

Inside Denver, 19 July/Billings Gazette, 8 Aug. 99

One of the lynx released into Colorado's back country has been killed by a car on I-70. 10 of the 41 lynx have died - two by cars, one was

shot, 5 starved to death, and 2 died of unknown causes.

CANOE wire, 19 July 99

The Wildlife Conservation Society funded a series of camera traps in Cambodia's largest national park. A variety of small animals was captured on film, including two types of leopards, but no tigers, elephants, or large wild cattle. Poaching for the Asian black market is a likely reason for the absence of tigers.

Nando Times, 3 August 99

A Dallas Zoo research project tested a variety of scents for their attraction to captive ocelots, looking for the perfect aroma to lure wild ocelots for a study. While several items got a response from the cats, the favorite was a perfume, Calvin Klein's "Obsession", which caused one female ocelot to respond like a cat in heat.

Dallas Morning News, 8 August 99

The lack of state regulations in Texas means that up to 4,000, or 40 percent of privately owned exotic cats in the US, live in Texas. Humane societies, local animal control, and wildlife sanctuaries are full of cast-off pets, with one shelter alone getting 5 to 10 calls a month from owners looking to dump their unwanted big cats. As the price of cubs has dropped, more people are buying the cute cubs on an impulse, and abandoning them by 6 months of age.

EarthWeek, 11 August 99

In February, a truck crashed in Chile while transporting African lions to Bolivia. Six cats are still on the loose, adapting well to the semi-desert environment. They have killed several hundred llamas. Authorities plan to capture the cats alive.

Barbary lions: debate continues

The Barbary subspecies of lions, extinct since 1921, was distinguished by its large, black mane.

Several lions rescued from a bankrupt circus in Mozambique shared the trait. While some groups claim these are true Barbary lions, the discovery that many captive lions around the world share this trait has dimmed that hope. Nevertheless, a breeding center in South Africa plans to breed lions selectively to enhance the black manes, perhaps re-creating the look of the extinct subspecies.

A book to look for

"Riding the Tiger: Tiger Conservation in human-dominated landscapes", edited by Sarah Christie, John Seidensticker, and Peter Jackson. Hardcover or softcover.

FEATURE CAT: JAGUARUNDI

EFBC/FCC is home to 16 species of wild cats, out of 36 world wide. How many of them are you familiar with? Since we started with the margay last issue, let's continue in size order, smallest to largest. So, next up is the jaguarundi.

Jaguarundi are a very unusual looking cat, in several ways. They are small, long cats with flattened heads and small ears, looking more like weasels or otters than members of the cat family. They are solid colored, with no spots or stripes anywhere on their bodies (although cubs have spots for a short time). This includes the ears - they have solid colored ears with no white spot or bar on the back, as most cats have. Their fur color can range from reddish to near black, and is usually "ticked" in appearance. While not hunted for their fur, their numbers in the wild are in decline due to habitat destruction. They have never been extensively studied, and current wild population status is unknown.

They tend to be more active during the day in the wild (diurnal) than other cats. Jaguarundi don't mind water, and will enter it to catch fish or frogs. Other prey species include rabbits, rodents, insects, and birds - they have been observed leaping 6 feet in the air to knock down birds.

