



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

<http://www.wildcatzoo.org>

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES SPRING 2006

CATS UPDATE

Our newest resident is a male Amur leopard cub, born on January 3 to Aijka and Gigant. This cub is the 12th of this species born here since we began our breeding program of the most endangered leopard subspecies. Our other cubs have gone on to zoos across the United States and are instrumental in the success of the international captive breeding program. Check out www.amur-leopard.org for news on saving this species in the wild.

This cub's older brother Sevastian is quite jealous of the new arrival, stalking the new cub from an adjacent cage when Mom first let him out to play. Sevastian will have other things to worry about soon – we plan to introduce him to Ktusha, born here in 2003, and send them off to another facility to establish a new breeding dynasty. A previous pair of cubs born here, Sasha and Sergei, are doing well at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans despite Hurricane Katrina and have produced their first litter.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Twilight Tours – our first this year is on April 22. As usual if you pay in advance you can enter at 5 PM, otherwise you can pay at the door and enter at 5:30 PM. The admission is still \$15 each and you must be 18 or older. Other Twilight Tours will be held on June 17 and September 16. This is your only chance to spend time in the back areas not open to the public during the day. Our new leopard cub will be almost 4 months old and probably out playing all night! The jaguar cubs will be almost 11 months old and still adorable!

Big Cat Bazaar – May 6 & 7 - our second year for this event. We need donations! This is a yard sale held here at the compound where all proceeds go to the cats. You can donate any clean, sellable item but please, no clothing this

year. That was too difficult to display in the parking lot last year! Furniture, small appliances, artwork, books, exercise equipment, toys, games, household items – bring a carload by anytime we are open.

Feline Follies – Plan ahead, reserve August 19 and get ready for a fabulous evening of big cats, good food, and great auction items! We are currently accepting donations for the silent auction and looking for sponsors for this event.

Poker Run – this is on for the 3rd year, currently planned for Saturday August 5. More details to follow, or check our web site.

Project Tiger

Quite a bit of work has been done on Project Tiger in the past few months – welding of the outside cage, planting of trees, etc. The plan is to finish one side as soon as possible this year, and then work on the other side. We still need a few large trees and other landscape materials, and if anyone wants to spend a day painting the new cage fencing give us a call!

50/50 Raffle

Enclosed in this newsletter is one ticket for our 50/50 raffle. Tickets are \$20 each and the winner receives half the net profits of the raffle. The remaining portion will be utilized for landscaping expenses in Project Tiger. The drawing will be held during our Summer Twilight Tour on June 17, but the winner need not be present. This is a wonderful way to help support our building project so please send your ticket stub in. You can request more tickets by phone, fax, snailmail, or email.

Wedding bells!

Long-time volunteer and Board of Director's member Nancy Vandermey wed another volunteer, Eric Barkalow, in January. Several other EFBC/FCC volunteers and staff attended, and many guests made donations to the compound in the name of the happy couple. Thanks Everyone!

Jungle Adventure

Join an eco-tour to Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos located in Ecuador, South America, for an adventure of a lifetime in pristine rainforest. The Playa de Oro Reserve is locally owned and operated, and focuses on preserving the habitat, native wild felines and other wildlife, while providing low-impact ecotourism to help financially sustain the reserve. Playa de Oro is located in NW Ecuador, in the EL Choco region, a little known travel destination and hidden paradise. Ecuador is one of the most biodiverse and culturally rich countries on earth. Its capital is in the high Andes, surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes. From Quito, tours travel through stunning mountain scenery to Otavala to spend an afternoon in the world-famous artisans' market. Next morning travel by private mini-van into the Choco rainforest. Where the road ends, transfer to a hand crafted dugout boat for a trip up the swift Rio Santiago to the Afro-Ecuadorian village of Playa de Oro. Then beyond, into the rainforest reserve. During your week-long stay in the reserve's comfortable jungle lodge, you will follow trails through the rainforest, swim next to beautiful jungle waterfalls, boat and swim the river, enjoy viewing many species of birds and other wildlife, dance with the locals to Afro-Latino rhythms, eat delicious meals incorporating traditional foods such as plantains, and sleep to the sounds of the jungle. The cost for this 8 day adventure is just \$700 US excluding airfare. (Fly to Quito, Ecuador) This includes 2 nights at a bed & breakfast in Quito, 1 night at a B&B in Otavala), 5 nights at the Playa de Oro Reserve Lodge (all meals included), boat transportation, private van transportation from Quito, a knowledgeable tour guide, day visit to Otavala market, Playa de Oro village tour, village children dance performance, and jungle guide service. Your trip fee directly supports the Playa de Oro Reserve by bringing income to their village and providing them with work, and also assists with feline conservation projects being conducted at the reserve. Upcoming Playa de Oro Tour dates: May 19-26, 2006 & June 16-23, 2006. See touchthejungle.org for more info.

Some Scientists Say Florida Panther Subspecies Has Been Lost-Washington Post Feb 21 2006

The Florida panther, the carnivore that roams what's left of the state's cypress swamps and other wilds, enjoys almost mythic status in its home state. Its image adorns license plates. The National Hockey League franchise is named for the cat. And it is the Florida state animal. A draft plan would relocate some Florida panthers to other states. But the plan is reopening awkward questions for the animal's admirers: What, exactly, is a Florida panther? Scientists believe there are only about 80 left in Florida. And given the shortage of habitat in the rapidly developing state, the recovery plan proposes to export some of the predators. The Florida panther roamed those states long ago, biologists said, and reintroducing it there could enable it to establish populations large enough to ward off extinction. But the proposal to expand the range is being met warily from officials in other states, where farmers fear attacks on livestock. It is also restarting debates about whether the Florida panther, officially considered an endangered subspecies, is for all practical purposes identical to the cougar, a far more common animal that lives in much of western North America. Crossbreeding between Texas cougars and Florida panthers, combined with modern genetic testing showing fewer distinctions between the two than previously believed, has led many to question the unique identity of Florida's mascot. The estimated population of Florida panthers dropped to as low as 30 in the early 1990s, and symptoms of inbreeding were rife. It was then that wildlife officials introduced eight cougars from Texas. The new crossbred cats are different than the pure panthers, said Stephen J. O'Brien, a scientist at the National Institutes of Health. "They look like they're on steroids." Shortly after the cougars were introduced, a team of scientists began gathering genetic samples from more than 300 cats in North and South America. "There was nothing unique to the Florida panther's genetic markers" said Melanie Culver, a geneticist for the U.S. Geological Survey. "At a subspecies level they are no different from other North American cougars." Others say there is ample reason to retain the Florida panther as a distinct subspecies. Stephen L. Williams, founder of the Florida Panther Society, an advocacy group, said the Florida panther is distinguished from cougars by its reddish color, the shape of its nasal

passages, and its hair, which is shorter and rougher.

Oil terminal will not be built in the Amur leopard's range

This breaking news was published on Monday 6 February by the Russian agency supervising the oil pipeline project. The agency had appointed a 14-member expert committee to review the plan to build the terminal of the 4,118km pipeline on the Amur Bay near Vladivostok in the range of the Amur leopard. A sufficient majority of 11 members concluded that the controversial plan was unacceptable. The supervising agency has signed the committee's conclusion and this makes the decision official! This decision gives new hope for the critically endangered Amur leopard and the unique forest and marine ecosystems of Southwest Primorye in the Russian Far East. This decision comes after months of coordinated campaigning by Russian organizations and an international coalition including Zoological Society of London and Tigris Foundation.

Ranchers Give Refuge to Pantanal Jaguars 6 February 2006

In the world's largest wetland, space is becoming limited for large cats. The savannahs and forests they roam are growing smaller and more fragmented from commercial deforestation and agriculture. In the rainy season, floods shrink these areas even further. As their usual habitats and prey disappear, top predators are learning to share pasture with – and prey on – livestock. Such is the life of a jaguar in the decades-old conflict between cattle rancher and cattle predator in the Brazilian Pantanal. Conservation International (CI) and the Jaguar Conservation Fund (JCF) are turning this struggle over livelihoods on its head by creating a conservation program that benefits both rancher and cat. Since 2002, CI and JCF scientists involved in the Jaguar Conservation Program have been working directly with the pantaneiros – lifelong residents of the Pantanal – to address the effects of jaguar predation on their ranches and, at the same time, create the first private jaguar reserve in Brazil. Today the program protects about 667,000 acres, with plans to extend to more than 1.2 million. Ultimately, CI and JCF hope to combine the jaguar reserve with other public and private protected areas to consolidate a biodiversity corridor in the Pantanal. The program currently engages 11 ranches in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, where all but the smallest fraction of the wetland is privately owned. Because the jaguar requires vast tracts of habitat

to survive, the landowners' engagement is essential to jaguar conservation in the Pantanal. Participating ranchers commit to safeguarding jaguars on their land and are entitled to financial compensation for lost cattle. Compensation is awarded on proof of kill and evidence of jaguar predation – as opposed to disease or other causes of death – which JCF scientists verify. Pumas (mountain lions) also roam and prey in the Pantanal, and the program compensates ranchers for cattle lost by these predators, too. Additionally, the Jaguar Conservation Program provides free medical and dental services to ranchers, their families, and their employees. Thus it ensures benefits beyond the landowner and engages entire communities in jaguar conservation. The pantaneiros' geographical isolation makes basic health care a challenge to access and a luxury to have. During the dry season, the residents are a 7- to 10-hour truck drive along muddy roads to the nearest town of Aquidauana. In the rainy months, when the roads are flooded, their only option is to fly.

Jaguar conservation strategy draft available 31 January 2006

The working draft of the Borderlands Conservation Strategy for the Northern Jaguar is available from the Jaguar Conservation Team in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Reports of individual jaguars along the U.S./Mexican border and along the Arizona/New Mexico border have been confirmed with the most recent photographed in 2005. To date, the Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project has documented 47 jaguar events including 28 photographs, nine sets of tracks and 10 scat samples. Researchers believe that these events confirm the presence of two adult male jaguars and possibly a third unidentified individual. Similar to most large carnivores, jaguars have relatively large home ranges depending on topography, available prey, and cat population. The average home range size of radio-collared male jaguars in Venezuela was calculated to be between 19 and 30 square miles. Recent sighting in Arizona and New Mexico appear to be mostly of transient young males from Mexico. The conservation of the jaguar must address issues such as the jaguar's threat to livestock. Compensation issues for livestock must be adequately addressed. The conservation team will also need to address such issues as illegal trophy or pelt hunting, as well as loss or alteration of habitat. Border issues such as lighting, vehicle traffic and road development intended to facilitate law enforcement in remote

areas of the border may be potential issues in jaguar conservation.

Various sources, January 2006

Modern cats have their roots in Asia 11 million years ago, according to a DNA study of wild and domestic cats. The ancient ancestors of the 37 species alive today migrated across the globe, eventually settling in all continents except Antarctica, say scientists. Eight major lineages emerged, including lions, ocelots and domestic cats. The domestic cat is most closely related to the African and European wild cat and the Chinese desert cat, an international team reports in Science. Warren Johnson of the National Cancer Institute in Frederick, Maryland, US, led the study. He said they were able to trace the ancestry of all living cat species back to South East Asia some 11 million years ago. In a relatively small number of migrations, cats spread across the world, as land bridges sprang up between continents. "We now have a much better idea of where the domestic cat fits in with all of the 36 wild species and what ecological and geographical events led to the development of each one of these species," Dr Johnson told the BBC News website. The family history of the cat has been notoriously murky in the past, in part because the few discovered cat fossils are very difficult to tell apart. The international team took a different approach by sampling DNA from living cats. They looked at both mitochondrial DNA - the scrap of DNA within the parts of the cell that generate energy and are passed along the maternal line - and DNA from the X and Y sex chromosomes. The Panthera lineage, which includes the lion, jaguar, cloud leopard and tiger, emerged first. This was followed rapidly by a group of three Asian species - the bay cat, Asian golden cat and marbled cat, three African Species (caracal, African golden cat and serval) and the path that led to the New World ocelot. More recently, four further lines branched off - the pathways to the lynx, puma, leopard cat and domestic cat. The scientists believe the common ancestor of modern cats migrated to Africa from Asia six to eight million years ago, giving rise to the Caracal lineage. Cats then crossed the Bering land bridge to North America about eight million years ago, later moving into South America by the Panamanian land bridge.

ATTENTION RALPHS/CALA FOODS/BELL MARKET SHOPPERS!!

EFBC is now part of the Community Contribution program established by these markets. All you need to do is provide us with your club card number, name, address, and telephone number. Every time you make a purchase in these stores and use your Club Card, they will make a donation to EFBC. They will donate 4% on all monthly purchases, per enrolled card, up to \$500, and 5% on monthly purchases, per enrolled card, over \$500. Wow!!! What a great way to support our organization. All you need to do is supply us with the requested information, and then patronize these stores. You do not need to be a member of EFBC, so ask your family and friends if they would also help us and maximize the benefits from this program.

2006 RECIPROCAL ZOO LIST:

Please remove the Pueblo Zoo, Co from your reciprocal zoo list..

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER:

Our Volunteer of the Quarter is Jeff Conrad. Jeff started volunteering at the compound back in 1994 with his wife Ann. At the time he was an aerospace engineer but volunteering here helped him decide it was time for a change. After taking prep classes at the local community college he was accepted into the veterinary college at the University of Georgia in 1996. Upon graduating he chose to work in Palmdale rather than a more glamorous destination so he could return to his beloved big cats. He became a member of the Board of Directors in 2001 and is always on call to come help with veterinary procedures.

DONATIONS:

Joe Maynard and Sandy Masek attended the Rotary Club of Lancaster's monthly meeting and talked to the members about all the happenings here at EFBC. At the end of the presentation, the Rotary presented a check to EFBC for \$500. Thank you everyone at the Rotary Club of Lancaster, and thanks also for doing the barbecue at our Twilight Tours.

Dr. Tracy McFarland, D.V.M. For donating 47 50# bags of clay cat litter used by some of our smaller cats.

Lisa Edmondson & Janet Weaver for much needed cleaning supplies.

Sue Scudder - Thousand Oaks, CA for having another 25 turkeys delivered to us for the cat's Christmas.

Andy & Bill Meyer of American Data Plates, Lancaster, CA for their continuous donations of Plaques and signs for our exhibits.

Larry Purcell, Sav On Fence Company, Lancaster, CA for fencing and caging supplies.

Other general donations used for day-to-day maintenance, enrichments, special projects, and those ever reoccurring operating expenses. A special thanks goes to the following people;

Toni Chancellor-Adams, Sandra Price, David Forward, Randy Dodge, Linda Braun, Melissa Breeding, Richard Prendergast, Everett Munsey, Cynthia Allman, J. Mickey Manoram, Ph.D., Louise Fry, David Gregory, and last but not least - Gayle Palmer & James Patton.

A huge thanks to all of you for your continued donations

WISH LIST

Landscape materials, plants and trees

Construction equipment supplies

(8x8x16 concrete block, re-bar, cement)

New electrical supplies