



EFBC/Feline Conservation Center

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

DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED FELINES

SPRING 2001

CAT UPDATES

Welcome Back Sergei!! This is a male Amur leopard born here in August 1998. In May 2000 he moved to the Fort Wayne Zoo in Indiana, but he didn't get along with the female they paired him with. So he's back home again, a prospective future mate for Sasha, born here in 1999. Two cats not getting along is fairly common - we tried to mate our male Amur leopard Freddi with Aijka, but she said "No!" so he's back with Tanya, and they were very happy to see each other. There's a short video of them mating on our web site. Also incoming are two more male Amur leopards. One is from the Novosibirsk Zoo in Russia, and he is another cat unrelated to any currently in the United States. The other is a young cub born in Canada; he will be placed with Lana so they can grow up together.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Scott and Nicole Pearson's 3rd Cocktail Party fund-raiser was February 24, 2001. Angara made her public debut there greeting the guests. Coming up soon are the 2001 Events - Twilight Tours will be 21 April, 16 June, and 22 September. Feline Follies will be 25 August. Mark your calendars now! Once again, we'll be doing a 50/50 raffle, with the grand prize drawing at our Summer Twilight Tour.

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

DANA FREDSTI

An itinerant writer/ former actress (she gave it up and focused on the writing when size 4 jeans and 36D became the norm for actresses in Hollywood) Dana discovered EFBC/FCC when a

friend sent her their webpage address. Dana has been volunteering at EFBC for two and a half years now and experiences withdrawal symptoms not unlike chocolate deprivation when she has to miss a week with the cats. She and her husband, Brian (also a volunteer) have seven cats at home, all of them strays who followed the feline hobo signs leading to their front door. They also feed a feral colony living in their side yard and are doing their best to get them all fixed to avoid adding to their indoor numbers. (Anyone want a kitten?) In addition to cats of all shapes, sizes and temperaments, Dana also enjoys rollerblading, flamenco dancing, reading, more reading, and most music. No, she does not consider rap to be music.

Dana has published short stories in Automatism Press, CATFANTASTIC IV, and MONDO ZOMBIE, the third book in the BOOK OF THE DEAD anthologies. She wrote and acted in a feature-length video about vampires running a film company, a rather morbid experience in itself. She recently finished a mystery novel after five years of procrastination and sold an article to ENDANGERED SPECIES magazine.

DONATIONS

Jasmine the tiger (above) finally broke her big Boomer ball, but we had another one ready for her, thanks to Pete & Connie Bradish of Texas, who sent a large number of new cat toys again this year. Here's Natasha with her new spool.

Adrienne Ayres and David Lewis sent more computer equipment. Thanks Again!

John & Danica Matthew also sent computer equipment, along with phones & other goodies.

Mark Purcell donated a stereo, and Pam Rose donated a lot of great items for upcoming raffles and the silent auction.

Zeal.com sent a check from their charity drive, and we appreciate everyone who keeps us in mind as they surf and shop on the net - remember our affiliation with Amazon and igit.com.

NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Enclosed with this newsletter is a list of zoos across the United States that have entered into a reciprocal agreement with us. Bring your EFBC/FCC membership card with you, and receive the listed benefit at that zoo - free admission, or a gift shop discount, or both. If you are a member of one of these zoos, show us your card for free admission here! Remember, we now charge admission of \$3 adults, \$1.50 age 3-18 to non-members.

CAT NEWS

Portland, Maine Sunday Telegram Jan 2001

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has radio collars on 15 lynx as part of a research study. They've found that a lynx's home range covers up to 30 square miles and they've seen that lynx thrive in areas where young trees are growing. Earlier western studies indicated that lynx needed old-growth forests for denning sites. In January two adult females and a cub were found dead of bite wounds, but had not been fed on. The wounds were inconsistent with coyote or attacks from other cats. The leading suspect is that fishers, a relative of weasels, are the lynx-killers.

Postnet.com, Feb. 2001

A cave once believed to be the den of two lions that killed and ate 135 railway workers in Kenya in 1898 may instead have been a secondary interment site for natives who lived in the area, scientists now believe. The burial customs of the Taita people of the Tsavo region may have been behind the bones discovered by the British Lt. Col. John H. Patterson, who killed both lions, and wrote a book in 1907, "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo." Over a nine-month period, workers building the

railway bridge over the Tsavo River were dragged off and eaten by the lions, which are now stuffed and on display at the Field Museum in Chicago. A study of the lions' jaws showed they suffered from problems such as broken teeth and abscesses that could have made it difficult to take down large animals. The story of the Kenya attacks was made into a 1996 movie, "The Ghost and the Darkness."

Tigris Foundation - Status Report 2000

(The Tigris Foundation works to save the few remaining wild Amur leopards. There's a link to their web site from ours.)

Field report by Michiel Hütte

From 20 to 23 October I participated in an international conservation meeting in Harbin, China. The meeting was organized under the banner of Siberian tiger conservation, although conservation in China is even more important for the future of the Amur leopard. The future of the Siberian tiger does not depend on China, as more than 90% of Siberian tiger habitat is situated in Russia. The Amur leopard, however, is confined to a small area in Russia that borders on China. This population of approximately 40 leopards is cut off from potentially suitable habitat in other parts of the Russian Far East by human populations, agriculture and other human activities. In the long-term, the Amur leopard can only survive if it can repopulate parts of its former range in China. There are still large tracts of suitable habitat left in China, but the prey base in these forests is insufficient to sustain populations of leopards and tigers. Prey populations will recover if the use of the forests by the local population is regulated and if measures are taken to limit the poaching of ungulates.

The 100 participants, from China, Russia, the United States and Europe, spent three days drafting proposals for an Action Plan to save the wild population of tigers and leopards in Northeast China. These proposals will be used by the Chinese to develop a final Action Plan. The workshop participants recommended, as a matter of the greatest urgency, to establish protected areas in China that connect with remaining tiger and leopard populations in

Russia. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) was instrumental in organizing the meeting. WCS will follow up by stimulating and facilitating the process of planning and establishing protected areas in China. Tigris Foundation, as a first step, offered to assist WCS financially in this process. When protected areas have been established, Tigris Foundation will offer its assistance in implementing conservation projects, such as anti-poaching teams.

After the meeting in Harbin, I traveled by bus to the forests near the Russian border to have a look myself at the remaining habitat in China. This area is seldom visited by westerners, and most Chinese looked surprised when they saw my white face. In a large provincial town I even had a hard time changing dollars, because nobody recognized my dollar notes! The Chinese with whom I shared a bus were obviously curious about what I was up to. They acted bewildered when I, at a point between two villages, asked the driver to stop and walked off into the forested hills. The area close to the Russian border seemed sparsely populated. Most of the valleys that I visited, even the smaller ones, are used for agricultural purposes, but the hills are still covered with forests. In these forests there are many tracks used by tractors to remove trees that are cut for fire wood and building and even up on the higher slopes cattle are being grazed. However, large tracts of forests still exist and they have the potential, if better managed, to hold tiger and leopard populations.

The Amur leopard conservation projects in Russia (Khasan district) are progressing well. I met with the managers of one of the deer farms for the second time. The deer farms in Khasan raise sika deer for their antlers which are used by the Chinese as ingredients for traditional medicines. Last year, when we met for the first time, they talked about tigers and leopards as a great burden and they asserted that the best tiger was a dead one. They were skeptical about the compensation payments that we offered for livestock kills and it was clear that they didn't believe that compensation payments would in fact be made. Now that they receive compensation payments, their attitude had changed. They told me enthusiastically about their close encounters with tigers and leopards while checking the grounds of the farm on horseback, as if they had really

enjoyed seeing the large predators! The anti-poaching team is still working very hard and not without success. During my stay with the team the inspectors received a phone call from a judge. The judge told them the exact spot where a group of poachers often hid their car in the forest. Judges, prosecutors and elected representatives of districts and provinces are immune and cannot be prosecuted when they are caught poaching. This explains why poachers often try to become friends with these officials. The poachers like to hide illegal guns and poached animals in the car of such an official, because the inspectors of the anti-poaching team have no authority to search it. A group of poachers had become friendly with this particular judge, and the judge had joined them on a number of poaching outings. However, they had quarreled and the poachers decided to go out poaching without the judge. The angry judge, subsequently, informed the anti-poaching team about their activities. The inspectors found the car, and waited until the poachers returned after a few hours with a sika deer that they had shot. It turned out that the poachers had the proper hunting licenses and licenses for their rifles. They operated inside a hunting area, and during the hunting season, but they didn't have a license to shoot a deer. In a case like this the deer is confiscated, but the poacher may keep his rifle if he pays a fine of only US \$50,-. The offense is registered and as a result a poacher supposedly can't renew his licenses. The sika deer, and a roe deer that was confiscated the day before, were donated to the local orphanage. The team also confiscated 270 dried frogs from 3 Chinese. Chinese extract oil from the dried frogs which is, as so many other animal products, used as an ingredient in traditional medicines. The Chinese paid a hefty fine of US \$400,

First snow in Khasan fell early this year, by the end of November. The team purchased skis with funds provided by the Japanese Wildlife Conservation Society (JWCS) and the inspectors are now practicing the using them. The team members plan to track down poachers in the forests on skis when there is a thick snow cover that makes it difficult to walk. The bad news is that the team needs a new jeep. Their Japanese jeep has traveled 100,000 kilometers, mainly on dirt roads, since it was bought 2 years ago. It is

now slowly falling apart and needs constant repairs. The second jeep, an old Russian one, is still in reasonably good shape, but it is too slow to be a match for the fast jeeps that are used by many poachers.

I met with the 4 members of the newly established fire-fighting team which has been working in Khasan since January 2000. They use air blowers and an old army truck that has been fitted with a water tank. The air blowers are used to blow away dried leaves on the forest floor. When there is nothing to burn on the forest floor a fire cannot spread. The team extinguished 2 fires during my stay in Khasan, but unfortunately, I didn't see them in action. The first fire started when I was out on a faraway patrol with the anti-poaching team. A second fire burned at night at a spot that was hard to reach in the dark. I met with the team early next morning when they were preparing a cup of tea on a stove near their truck. They were pitch-black and exhausted after working all night long, but they were in good spirits, because the fire had been extinguished. Independent sources in Khasan have assured me that the team is doing a good job. The number of fires has not diminished, but the fires don't burn as long as they used to do, and the areas that burn have become much smaller.

The Khasan Wildlife Festival was held for the second time. During this annual festival children participate in art competitions with nature, conservation and forest-fire control as topics. In addition, an essay competition was held this year. A female teacher is continuing to visit the schools of Khasan to give presentations about the Amur leopard and its conservation. In summer, presentations are given in the modest summer resorts along the coast where many local people and visitors from Vladivostok spend their vacation. Until recently, copies of the educational leopard book that was printed 2 years ago were handed out during the presentations. Unfortunately, we have run out of copies, but we hope to make a second print run in 2001. We also plan to start a new education project named "Green Rangers" in which children from Khasan can become actively involved in nature conservation. This project has not yet started because we lack sufficient funds.

Positive news is that WWF donated a large speedboat motor to the anti-poaching team in

Khasan. The team's speedboat is now a match for even the fastest speedboat that is used by sea-cucumber poachers. Large numbers of sea cucumbers are poached in Khasan and sold to Chinese for use in traditional medicines (as you could have guessed!). The anti-poaching team tries to catch poachers at sea mostly in summer, when they don't need to spend so much time in the forests. In summer the animals in the forest are relatively safe, because they are not visible when the trees have leaves and they cannot be tracked down when there is no snow. WWF intends to become more involved in leopard conservation in Khasan. WWF plans to support the local reserve Bars (Bars is a Russian word for leopard) with US\$ 20,000 to be spent on new equipment and financial bonuses for the staff. The equipment will be provided before the end of this year and will include a new jeep and a video camera to collect evidence of poaching activities. The bonuses will be based on results, such as the amounts of fines and confiscated goods.

FEATURE FELINE - OCELOT

The fur of the Ocelot, with its dark brown irregular shaped spots and stripes, edged with black on a yellow/tawny background, give this medium size cat a most distinctive appearance. It is grouped, along with the Margay and Tigrina, into the sub-genus *Leopardus*. The ocelot's coloration varies with its habitat, with the base color of its fur being a light gray/cream in more arid areas to a darker yellow/brown in forested habitats. The ocelot's prey includes small deer, rabbits, rodents, reptiles and when available, fish. The ocelot swims well and although not as adept in climbing as the Margay, will hunt for birds and also sleep in the lower branches of trees in its forest habitat. Male and female cats often share territories, which can be up to 3 square miles in area.

As far back as the ancient Aztecs, the ocelot has been hunted and prized for its fur and today, along with deforestation in much of its habitat, has led to their virtual extinction in some of its range. Once found in many areas of southern North America, Central America and much of South America, today the animal has almost disappeared from its range in the southern states of North America - it is reported that as few as 120 ocelot survive in Texas today. The pet trade

in these animals in the U.S. in the 1960's
decimated the U.S. population, as wild mothers
were killed to raid their dens for cubs.

WISH LIST

Electric Golf Carts

4/0 THHN copper wire

Landscape materials

8x8x16 concrete block

Small refrigerator

Small microwave