

FELID TAG TIMES

A quarterly publication of the Felid Taxon Advisory Group of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums

IN THIS ISSUE

Calendar	1
Felid TAG News	1
Other Felid News	2
Conservation Program Updates	
Puma PMP	4
Jaguarundi Phase-in	4
Ocelot SSP	4
In Memory of Dr. Linda Munson	5
Steering Committee Members	6
Conservation Program Coordinators	6



August 2010
Felids of the Americas

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS

Calendar

September 12

- Felid TAG Meeting, AZA Conference, Houston Zoo, 8:00am—10:00am

Felid TAG News

Amur Leopard List Serv

The Amur Leopard SSP has started an AZA list-serve for Amur leopards. All Institutional Representatives were automatically added to the list-serv. If for some reason you were not added, please e-mail Laura Arriaga at lariaga@southbendin.gov.

Amur Leopard Triplets Born

As luck would have it, Amur leopard triplets (all females) were born on St. Patrick's Day at the Potawatomi Zoo. (see photo below)



Amur leopard cub - Laura Arriaga,
Potawatomi Zoo



Cheetah cubs - Mary Jo Stearns,
Fossil Rim Wildlife Center

Spring Cheetah Cubs

Fossil Rim Wildlife Center is proud to announce the birth of four cheetah cubs. The 2.2 were born April 16 to a 10 year old male belonging to White Oak Conservation Center and a 5 year old female owned by Wildlife Safari. The dam is taking excellent care of the litter in an off-exhibit enclosure. (see photo above)

Small Cat Animal Care Manual

The Felid TAG is working hard to complete the Small Felid Animal Care Manual (ACM) by the end of 2010. Individuals responsible for specific ACM chapters (as assigned at the Felid TAG Conference) are reminded to email those as soon as possible to Bill Swanson for compilation and initial editing.

Borneo Carnivore Symposium

The 1st Borneo Carnivore Symposium: Road Towards Conservation Action Plans is scheduled to take place in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia from June 18 to 24, 2011. They are actively seeking financial support. To pre-register and learn more about the symposium, go to www.fwrc.msstate.edu/borneocarnivoresymposium/.

Other Felid News

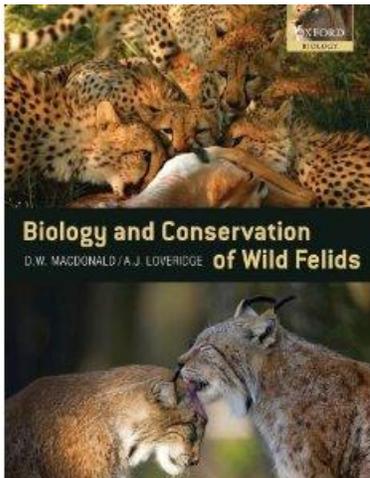
New Book: Biology and Conservation of Wild Felids

You may be interested in a new book titled Biology and Conservation of Wild Felids. It comes highly endorsed by Bill Swanson who, of course, co-authored one of the chapters. It is available on Amazon.com for \$120 (hard cover) and \$70 (paperback).

Book description:

The editors utilize their 50 years of combined experience in professional engagement with the behaviour and ecology of wild felids to draw together a unique network of the world's most respected and knowledgeable experts. For the first time, this inter-disciplinary research programme is brought together within a single volume.

Beginning with a complete account of all 36 felid species, there follow 8 comprehensive review chapters that span all the topics most relevant to felid conservation science, including evolution and systematics, felid form and function, genetic applications, behavioural ecology, management of species that come into conflict with people and control of international trade in felid species, conservation tools/techniques, ex situ management, and felid diseases. 19 detailed case studies then delve deeply into syntheses of the very best species investigations worldwide, written by all the leading figures in the field. These chapters portray the unique attributes of the wild felids, describe their fascinating (and conflicting) relationship with humans, and create an unparalleled platform for future research and conservation measures. A final chapter analyses the requirements of, and inter-disciplinary approaches to, practical conservation with cutting-edge examples of conservation science and action that go far beyond the cat family.



Take Action: Great Cats and Rare Canids Conservation Act

First introduced in July 2004, the Great Cats and Rare Canids Conservation Act would provide wild cats and canids conservation assistance through the Multinational Species Conservation Funds, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Passed by the House over a year ago, the bill is set to expire this year unless the Senate takes action,

Let Congress know you support this bill. Write a letter or simply fill out a template on the Wildlife Conservation Society web site. Go to www.wcs.org, click on Take Action, and then click on Great Cats and Rare Canids Need Your Help.

Refuge Tract Adds the Ocelot to its Species List

By Chris Perez, Wildlife Biologist, Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Great News! The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has photographed a male ocelot on a property where they were never documented before. The photograph below is the best of the six photographs for quality, although several showed the hind end and it is obviously a male ocelot.



Biology interns, Sam Loscalzo and Ellie Wisely, working under the direction of Wildlife Biologist Chris Perez, have been running numerous wildlife cameras on Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge tracts for several weeks now. This camera-trapping effort is planned to continue indefinitely and provide an opportunity to capture photographs of wildlife use of the various tracts.

The photograph comes from a tract previously suspected of having ocelots, but an ocelot had never been observed in that area. The tract is located in between the two known ocelot populations at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and the San Francisco Ranch (Yturria easements) in Willacy County.

This finding is important as it provides a defensible location of ocelot habitat use in an area between these populations and it provides further evidence that ocelots may move between these populations or that there may be other populations in Willacy County that are unknown. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to work with partners to develop strategies to protect these rare dense woodland communities for the benefit of the ocelot and the other species that rely upon them so that this vital corridor can be maintained and increased in size.

Biology interns and Wildlife Biologist Jody Mays are continuing to try and identify if this male ocelot may be completely new or if he is possibly one of the ocelots that received a temporarily-attached radio-collar at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge that has since fallen off. We do know that he is not the same male ocelot Y11 that was documented moving between the San Francisco Ranch and the Arroyo Colorado Unit of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Salisbury Zookeepers Support Andean Cats

By Amy Petersen, Zookeeper, Salisbury Zoo

After reading the February Felid TAG Times article about the increasing number of endangered cat species on the IUCN red list, I did some exploring and was amazed by how many cats were on there that I had never heard of. I was drawn to the Andean cat because the Salisbury Zoo (where I work) focuses on North and South American species. I was surprised to learn that one of the world's five most threatened cats was practically in my backyard, yet I had never heard about it.

The Andean cat is one of the many small cats of the Americas. The Andean cat (to me) has the looks of a mini-snow leopard, with its ash gray fur, brown/yellow blotches all over its body, and its uncharacteristically long, fluffy tail (66-75% of its body length). It lives in the highest elevations of the Andes Mountains, in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru. The Andean cat has adapted to the extreme environment of its habitat which includes: severe climate, mean annual temperatures that vary between 0° and 4°C, frequent freezes, intense solar radiation, low precipitation, sparse vegetation, and few prey options. The Andean cat is mostly nocturnal in its habits, probably related to the habits of its main prey, mountain vizcachas. It is thought that breeding season is from July to December and births occur October to April.

The main reasons behind the Andean Cat's declining population are its naturally fragmented habitat (which creates low genetic diversity), loss of prey species and habitat, and poaching for ceremonial use by some of the Andean cultures, as the cat is considered sacred in many tribes. The Andean Cat Alliance, or Alianza Gato Andino (AGA), is the main organization behind the conservation of this small cat. After researching and finding this great organization, I presented a proposal to my AAZK chapter to support AGA and their efforts to conserve the Andean Cat. My fellow keepers agreed that something needed to be done so a donation was made. If you would like to help or for more information about one of the world's most unknown and endangered cats; please visit www.gatoandino.org.



Unique Jaguar Crosses Border To See Dentist

Lucero, a wild-born jaguar from Mexico – one of very few wild-born jaguars in captivity – made his public debut at the Phoenix Zoo on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009. Illegally captured in Mexico by a rancher, Lucero (loo-SAIR-oh) suffered extensive damage to his canine teeth due to inadequate confinement. He was confiscated by the authorities and transferred to Centro Ecologico de Sonora, a large zoo located in Hermosillo. The Mexican government authorized a one-year loan of Lucero to the Phoenix Zoo, with a possibility of an additional year, so that critical dental surgery could be performed. His stay was extended to March 23, 2010, at which time he was transported back to his native homeland.



The loan of the cat was coordinated in partnership with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Mexican government, the Centro Ecologico de Sonora, and the Phoenix Zoo. During the joint venture, a strong partnership was developed between the two zoos that Lucero has called home. This connection will undoubtedly, lead to collaboration on future projects.

A team lead by Dr. Chris Visser, a board-certified veterinary dental specialist, volunteered their time to perform the dental surgeries, which occurred in November 2008 and January 2009 at the Zoo's Animal Care Center. Four root canals and three extractions were performed to repair Lucero's life-threatening dental damage.

"Having this animal in captivity provides an exciting opportunity for jaguar conservation," said Bill Van Pelt, the jaguar conservation program manager for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "DNA studies done during his stay will help us learn more about the little-studied population segment that uses southern Arizona and New Mexico as the northern extent of its range." This study is being conducted in collaboration with University of Arizona geneticist Melanie Culver.

The entire project of making Lucero's transport possible was made possible through support from Arizona's Heritage Fund. The Heritage Fund was established by Arizona voters to further conservation efforts in the state including protecting endangered species, helping urban residents to better coexist with wildlife and creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The Phoenix Zoo has supported jaguar field conservation efforts in the Southwest for nearly a decade. Among other contributions, the zoo has provided camera traps for the Borderlands Jaguar Detection Program and for The Sky Island Alliance. These allow researchers to "capture" jaguars on film, and provide a means to assess where jaguars are present in an area.

- Submitted by Tammy Sundquist, Phoenix Zoo

Conservation Program Updates

Puma PMP

Captive Population

The captive puma population as always is in a state of flux. We have a large stable population of cats that have come to us over the past 10 years as orphaned cubs. There are also many aging cats over the 15 year mark! And then there are always new exhibits coming on line and ancient kitties passing on.

Importation

Currently, we are hard at work on the importation of two young orphans from British Columbia bound for the Dallas Zoo. This has proved to be no easy task with the summer flight restrictions and quarantine space juggling. The Oregon Zoo has stepped up and offered its holding space for these cats for the summer if necessary.

Placing Confiscated Cats

I have also been working with the USDA on placing some confiscations and with the Exotic Feline Rescue Center in placing some of their pumas. Many thanks to Norah Fletchall and the Indianapolis Zoo, the Sedgewick County Zoo, Alameda Zoo, Calgary Zoo, Northern Lights Wildlife Society, and Central Florida Zoo for stepping up to assist with these projects.

Taking in Orphaned Cats

Here in the states, Northwest Trek took on an orphan that Washington State Fish & Game needed to place and the Oregon Zoo has adopted an Idaho orphan from their Dept of Fish and Game. And the Caldwell and New Bedford Zoos have accepted orphans from Oregon Department of Fish and Game after they spent some time at the Oregon Zoo. Thank you again OZ for your assistance with short term holding of these cubs.

Loss at Central Florida Zoo

My sympathies to the Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Garden at the loss of Baby, one of the oldest females in our population. Baby's excellent health throughout her long life is a credit to her caregivers. I look forward to placing other lucky pumas with them in the future.

- Michelle Schireman, Puma PMP Coordinator



Jaguarundi Phase-in

Subspecies and Sources

After much discussion during the Felid TAG 2010 meeting, it was decided to try and pursue acquiring cats at the subspecies level as opposed to generic. Currently, several individuals are attempting to make contacts through Paraguay to try and establish a source for the subspecies, *Puma jaguarondi eyra*. The cats in Europe are managed generically so, unless there are some institutions with the known subspecies, Europe is not a source.

Advisors on Board

Cheryl Dikeman, PhD, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo volunteered for the position of Nutrition Advisor and Dr. Kristi Krause volunteered as the Veterinary Advisor. Thank you ladies!

- Ann Konopik, Jaguarundi Phase-in Coordinator

Ocelot SSP

Ocelot Importation

Due to a strike at the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), the importation of four ocelots (2.2) from Brazil scheduled for May was put on hold and now the IBAMA export permit has expired. When the strike concludes, we will have to apply to renew the export permit and make new arrangements for shipment. We are still confident that the import will happen by the end of the year (the first ocelot imports since 2006).

Ocelot Translocation

The Translocation Team held a conference call on June 7, 2010, to discuss next steps in the translocation project, such as pen construction.

Ocelot Recovery Plan Update

The Draft Ocelot Recovery Plan is still making its way through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's internal review process. Once the draft recovery plan completes the internal review, it will be made available for public comment through an announcement that will publish in the Federal Register, hopefully by the end of August 2010.



In Memory of Dr. Linda Munson, DMV, PhD 1948—2010

Linda's Legacy

By Karen Terio, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVP Zoological Pathology Program University of Illinois

On May 13, 2010, the Felid TAG lost a remarkable colleague and good friend, Dr. Linda Munson. Linda was the pathology advisor to the TAG, several felid SSPs, and the AZA Contraceptive Advisory Group. Although she had not been able to make meetings in recent years, she was often there in spirit. She never lost her passion for her work and managed to continue her research on felids until her death. For those who are newer to the TAG and may not have met her, I am certain that you are familiar with her work. Much of what we know about diseases of captive cheetahs, the adverse affects of contraceptives like MGA in felids, and the impact of Canine Distemper virus on lion populations in the Serengeti is due to her work. In addition to her involvement with veterinary organizations, she was also an active member of the Canid TAG, CBSG, and served on AZA committees over the years.



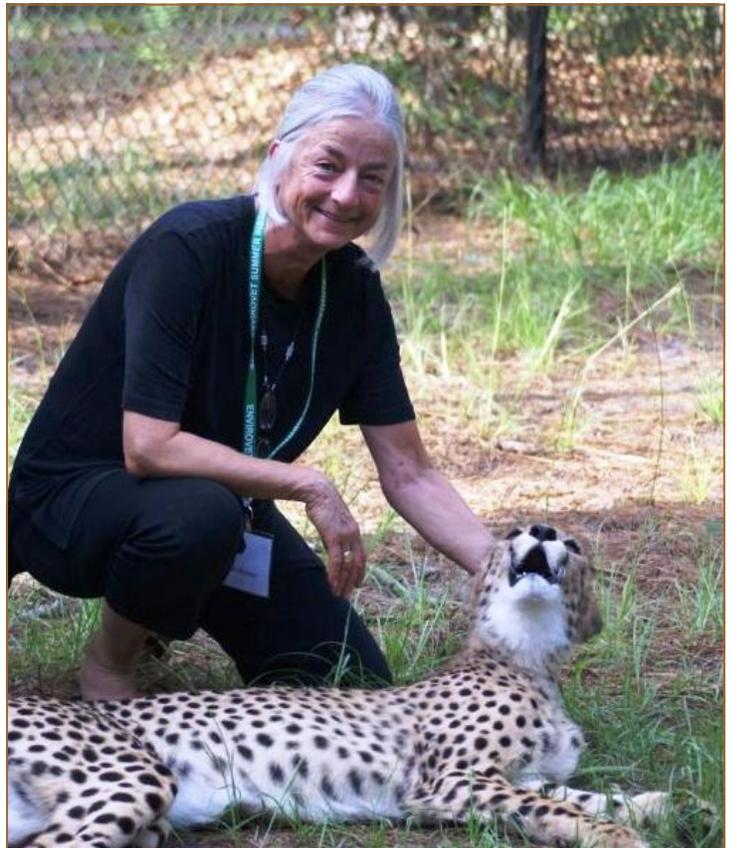
The Felid TAG is known for pairing science with the “art” of management to improve the well-being of the animals in our care and ensure the success of our managed programs. Linda’s contributions were one of the key reasons for this distinction. Her work as pathology advisor for the Cheetah SSP has become the model of how SSPs can benefit from disease surveillance and research programs.

Linda was passionate about teaching and training the next generation of veterinarians and scientists. She was the coordinator for several successful veterinary pathology training programs, gave lectures around the world, and inspired many veterinarians to pursue wildlife medicine. She encouraged students, like me, to attend meetings, learn, and get involved. She was always proud of graduate students that presented at meetings like the TAG because, as she once said to me, “we can replace ourselves and go hang out in the desert.” There will be no replacing Linda. Her legacy will live on in all of us as long as we follow her example—pursue answers to tough questions with passion, integrity, and through collaboration.

The Felid TAG is making a donation in Linda's memory to the Munson Memorial Fellowship through the American College of Veterinary Pathologists. This fellowship will provide funds to train future wildlife pathologists.

A Celebration of Linda's Life

The UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine will host a "Celebration of Life" event to honor Dr. Linda Munson on Thursday, September 16, 2010 from 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at the Putah Creek Lodge on the UC Davis campus. This will be an informal potluck and social event to reminisce, share stories, and toast Linda. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Becky Griffey at rmgriffey@ucdavis.edu.



Dr. Linda Munson
Photo: Dr. Scott Citino, White Oak Conservation Center

Service and Awards

- UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine Professor
- Chief of Anatomic Pathology service, VMTH
- President: of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP)
- Pathology Advisor for the Cheetah, Red Wolf, Lion, and Jaguar Species Survival Plans
- Member of Contraceptive Advisory Group
- Member of Canid and Felid TAGs
- 2001 Emil Dolensek Award from the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians
- 2003 UC Davis Faculty Development Award
- 2007 Presidential Award from the American College of Veterinary Pathologists



Jackson Zoo Tigers Enjoy a New Exhibit

The Jackson Zoo recently opened a new tiger exhibit and holding barn for our 3.0 Sumatran tigers. The exhibit encompasses approximately 8,600 square feet and the barn is 1,800 square feet. Heavily planted, the exhibit provides a pool, dead falls, and other items for enrichment. The barn has five interior stalls, a squeeze cage with built in scales, and an off exhibit outdoor holding space. This facility replaces their former holding area, which had a total square footage of 900 square feet.

At left: Kipling, a Sumatran tiger, takes a dip in his new pool
- Dave Wetzell, Jackson Zoo

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Jaguarundi Phase-in
Caracal PMP
Serval PMP
Fishing cat SSP
Amur leopard SSP
Canada lynx PMP
Lion SSP
Cheetah SSP
Snow leopard SSP
Sand cat SSP
Ocelot SSP
Pallas' cat PMP
Puma PMP
Clouded leopard SSP
Tiger SSP
Jaguar SSP
Black-footed cat SSP

Submissions

Felid TAG Times is edited by Shasta Bray, Felid TAG Education Co-Liaison. Please send comments, suggestions, and submissions to Shasta.bray@cincinnati-zoo.org. Submission deadline for the November 2010 issue, highlighting Felids of Africa, is October 1.