Sanctuary Goes Under

Our federal government allows the private sector to trade in big cats, but when times get tough and the owners can’t feed the cats it isn’t the government bailing them out. When you hear the term, “too big to fail” they aren’t talking about 500 pound cats and too many of them, but maybe they should be. All over America there are back yard cages full of starving lions, tigers and leopards. How did they get there? Little to no oversight allows just about anyone to breed and discard big cats. They are only profitable as cubs when they are used for photo ops, petting sessions and entertainment. Where do the big cats go? Once they are a few months old they are too hard to handle and are discarded to unwitting pet owners, shot in canned hunts, slaughtered for their parts or relegated to tiny back yard, or “off exhibit”, cages. Because of the lack of oversight and no requirement to report the death or disposal of these endangered species, they quietly disappear. A few lucky ones end up at Big Cat Rescue. In December 2008 when the airwaves were all a-chatter about the government bailouts, Big Cat Rescue was bailing out a failed sanctuary formerly known as Cougar Haven. Driving away from the abandoned house, with its row upon row of now empty cages, ended a chapter in the 12 year history of David Mallory’s dream to be a big cat rescuer. Mallory’s story is repeated frequently across the nation. It happens so often that it barely makes the news any more and that alone is noteworthy.

In 1996 a big cat collector by the name of Catherine Gordon Twiss, who was convicted on 73 counts of cruelty, ended up with her 86 lions, tigers and bears selling at bankruptcy auction. Twiss had changed names and had fled from Indiana, to Arkansas, to Texas and finally to Mississippi. In each case Twiss would partner with some local who wanted a zoo or collection. But she would soon be thrown out for the wretched conditions in which she kept the animals. For example, an adult cougar was confined to a feces filled oil drum with barely enough room to turn around. As cubs continued to be born for fundraising purposes, like the photo ops mentioned above, the adults were crammed into tighter and tighter quarters. Lions and tigers were kept in small, urine soaked muddy cages with putrid buckets of drinking water. Many of her cats bore facial scars from fighting for their lives in these unnatural groupings of animals that are hard wired to be solitary. In Defense of Animals tried to help rescue some of the cats and, with the help of Mallory and a generous benefactor named Dr. Jim Cook, set up Cougar Haven in the backyard of a house in Mississippi. At its peak Cougar Haven was home to 38 big cats but there was never much local support for the sanctuary. It was seen as an eccentric’s private collection. A tunnel was built through the house so that guests could sit in the living room and watch cougars pace through. Mallory was in the lumber business and things were good during...
The food was the cheapest chicken cuts and given to the cats just often enough to keep them alive. The vet could no longer be employed. Cats began to die. By 2008 there were only 14 of the 38 cats left. One cougar bled for 12 days with no medical attention before suffering a cruel death. Mallory bought a bar 70 miles away and moved to be near it, leaving the remaining dozen big cats unsupervised most of the time. He quit paying Rita Montgomery, the cats’ caretaker, in May but she loved the cats too much to just walk away and leave them to die. Sometimes Mallory would send food, but when he didn’t, Montgomery did her best to scavenge what she could for the cats.

Rita put out a desperate plea in search of someone who could rescue these remaining cats. Lynn Cuny of a Texas based sanctuary rescued two of the lions in October of 2008. By the time Big Cat Rescue heard about the situation all but three of the remaining cats had died. Nine had passed away in just the past year. The last cats to remain were Freckles, a 15 year old liger, Cookie, a 14 year old tigeress and Alex, a 12 year old tiger. Big Cat Rescue asked for the help of its supporters and in turn received donations to cover initial costs. However if each of these cats lives to the age of 20 at $7,500 per cat per year in expenses that will add up to a whopping $142,000! In December Freckles, Cookie, and Alex were rescued. Freckles had a hole in her jaw that had gone untreated for a long time. All of her canine teeth were broken off from chewing at the chain link of her enclosure. Now, at Big Cat Rescue, she is finally getting the vet care she had been denied. Due to their advanced age, they may not have much time left, but their last days will be their best days ever.

**The Rescue**
Big Cat Rescuers drove all night, through a thick fog, and arrived at Cougar Haven the morning of December 18th. Scott Lope, Cathy Neumann, Chris Poole and Carole Baskin met up with Don & Rita Montgomery to assess the layout and prepare for the move. The cats’ vet, Dr. Abernathy, donated his services to issue the health certificates and to bring the tranquilization drugs in case the cats could not be coaxed into the transport cages. The transport team, Mike and Jamie, drove the Humane Train owned by Animal Sanctuary of the United States and arrived around 4 PM. Doll Stanley and Eric Phelps from In Defense of Animals came to see the cats off to their new home.

With only an hour to work before dark the team tried to coax Alex into the transport with a piece of meat. He was hungry and hopped into the cage, but when he spun to leave he leaped up and hit his head on the top of the wagon. Between hitting his head and the noise of trying to shut the transport door, which had jammed, Alex freaked out and ran from the cage. We would have to try it again later.

We moved on to Freckles the liger. The flimsy dog kennel styled door on her cage was barely containing her as mud slides washed away a hole at the bottom large enough for her to stick her head under. She had just watched Alex and was wary of the situation, but in true cat style seemed to believe she too could grab the meat and get out of there. Unseen to Big Cat Rescuers, David Mallory entered Freckles cage from the rear and as she was considering her big move, he nudged her forward and we shut the door. We know that entering a cage with a big cat is just an accident waiting to happen. People get away with it for years and then one day they get killed. We were horrified by Mallory’s reckless action but this was his yard and his rules.

We turned our attention in the waning light to secure Cookie the tigeress. The transport had been rolled almost into place when Mallory opened the door of her cage and body blocked the charging tigress. He moved aside and then pushed Cookie the last few inches into the transport. We stood there in stunned silence, shocked at the stupidity and thankful that the cat had not chosen to take advantage of it.

Several fruitless attempts were made to coax Alex into the wagon, but we had to try. Cats sometimes respond badly to sedation. It can kill them and it builds up in their system, taxing their kidneys. Another distressing factor was that the cages were deep with mud and pools of water. If Alex dropped in the wa-

**COLORING CONTEST WINNER**
The coloring contest announced in the last issue of the Big Cat Times concluded in January with some masterpieces presented for review. The Grand Prize Winner is Senika Ross age 13 of Nevada, whose favorite cat is the Lion. Runner’s up are James Massery and Paola Paredes both of Florida. Those placing with honorable mention are Shaniya Eppersol, Lydia Albert, Lauren McGhee, Kalyn Craig, Jena Huber, Emily Seltzer, Emily Mitchell, Cory Reilly, Christopher Hunter and Christine Potthas. Thanks to all of our young supporters for participating and a special thanks to Senior Partner Volunteer, Ann Canterbury for the difficult job of judging all the fine entries!
ter he could drown before we could get to him. There was a section of the cage in the back that was drier than the rest, so Alex was lured into this area and then sedated. The challenge to this smaller area was that we could not get the transport anywhere near the door. Once we were certain that Alex was sleeping we loaded him onto a stretcher and carried him to the transport wagon.

The cages were rolled up into the trailer and plywood was placed between them for privacy. Before hitting the road we had to wait for Alex to wake up. The vet forgot to bring the reversal agent and it was 2 hours before he was able to return to his clinic and back. The reversal worked and Alex was awake enough to travel by 9PM.

The crew decided to drive straight through the night back to Big Cat Rescue. Mike and Jamie drove the Humane Train carrying the cats and Big Cat Rescuers followed in two cars. We made good time until we pulled off for gas in Cottendale, FL where the Humane Train broke down. Prepared for the worse, Jamie and Mike hired a wrecker, at four in the morning, to tow the trailer to a motel where the generators kept the cats comfortable. They had the truck towed to the nearest Ford dealer.

Knowing that the dealer wouldn’t even be open until much later in the morning we opted to get a little shuteye so we could hit the road as soon as the truck was repaired.

By noon, with no progress made on the truck, we gave up and began looking for a truck that could pull a 40 foot goose neck trailer. In a town that only has 881 residents, there aren’t a lot of options.

We were told by the proprietor of a gas station about a man in nearby Marianna who hauled horses that might be able to help, so we looked up Greg Scott and pleaded for help. Much to our amazement Mr. Scott was on the scene within an hour and we were back on the road. By the time we reached Tampa it was dark again. We would have to wait for first light.

Dr. Wynn, our vet, and Senior Keeper Jarred Smalley took off from work to come out early and help. Freckles, the liger, was first off and couldn’t wait to step out into her big new enclosure. She settled down behind a log to watch her friends as they were wheeled in. Cookie was next and she chuffed nervously the entire wagon ride from the parking lot to “tiger row.” She immediately took to her new surroundings and has been right at home from the first minute off the truck. Alex was still mad and was determined to rip his way out of the transport wagon if we dared come near him. That wasn’t a possibility but he could break off teeth in the process and we decided the only way to keep him from inflicting severe injury to himself would be to sedate him for the move.

Of the group, Cookie was the first to start eating, the first to start hanging out with keepers as they cleaned and has proven to have a wonderful disposition. Alex and Freckles spent their first few days evaluating their new home from the safety of their big rock caves. They would only come out at dinner and after dark at first, but each day gave them a little more assurance. All three are also adjusting to their new and improved diets and have had the experience of getting whole prey for possibly the first time in their lives.

Rescuing Freckles, Alex and Cookie gives us and our supporters the instant gratification of knowing that we saved lives. It gives our lives meaning to know that we spend our time and resources so that cats like these can experience compassion. It makes our hearts well up with pride, but it is just a small drop in the bucket. In 2008 we had to turn away 85 big cats and there are so few decent sanctuaries out there who can take big cats that we know most of them ended up dying or in horrible, overcrowded conditions. Most people were opposed to the automotive industry bailout by our government. In large part it was because nothing was being required of the industry to change its ways. By the same token we do not accept animals from places that are just continuing to breed, sell, trade and exploit big cats. Laws to end the trade in big cats are the most effective means to end the suffering.

Each big cat that we rescue means an increase of $7,500 per year in expenses so your support is critical to each of our cats. In order to provide care for these three new cats we will need to raise $142,000. Even people who cannot afford to donate much in the way of money can still be a huge part of the solution by educating others. By telling others about the plight of captive big cats, writing your lawmakers, and sending letters to the editor when you read about big cats in the news you are saving thousands of big cats from being born into lives of confinement and deprivation. Our goal is a world where all big cats live free and with your help we can do it.

Photo at top far left opposite page shows the conditions at Cougar Haven. The rest of the photos are at Big Cat Rescue

"Purr-fect Wedding Couple"

Big Cat Rescue offers many ways to see and support the cats living at the sanctuary; Day Tours, Feeding Tours, Night Tours, Keeper Tours, and more. But did you know that Big Cat Rescue also offers wedding services?

Enjoy a taste of life less ordinary. Bring your wedding to Big Cat Rescue – nothing could be more unique! If typical wedding ceremonies are not for you, Big Cat Rescue can provide the perfect setting for the wedding ceremony of your dreams. A day everyone will remember and be talking about for years.

Big Cat Rescue provides a setting of sheer paradise for nature-loving couples seeking an exotic location for the wedding of their dreams. Imagine palm trees stirring in a light breeze, sunlight trickling through the canopy of trees overhead. Your guests are seated, anticipating the ceremony to begin. Then you hear the ROAR of several of our wild cats; announcing they too are witness to your special moment. There is nothing ordinary about a wedding at Big Cat Rescue; an unforgettable memory.

You and your guests will feel you have traveled to the ends of the earth, surrounded by 45 acres, home to over 100 exotic cats. But you haven’t. You’ve just had the wedding ceremony of your dreams at Big Cat Rescue.

Gale and Lee were married at Big Cat Rescue on December 1, 2008 “We could not have picked a better place for our wedding. Carole performed a beautiful ceremony for us. Our family was very taken with the sanctuary and the wonderful dedication of all the staff to the beautiful animals that helped make our day special. We enjoyed the tour but all walked away remembering why these creatures were here. Bless all of you for your loving, caring ways with some of God’s creatures.”

Visit our wedding page online at http://www.bigcatrescue.org/weddings.htm Call or email for details. (813) 426-5948 Weddings@BigCatRescue.org
BIG CAT RESCUE PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

The 2008 Big Cat Rescue Photo Contest brought in entries from all over the country. With so many beautiful images submitted, judging proved to be quite the challenge! We would like to thank everyone who entered and congratulate these talented people below on winning place in the contest.

Grand Prize Winner by Alan Wallace

神色不会变，安娜Marie Dyer of Dunedin, FL

Landscape 1st Place “Past Memories” by Jill Barrera of Odessa, FL

Landscape 2nd Place “Zen Garden” by niki Roberts of Medford, OR

Landscape 3rd Place “Water Lily Flower” by Helene M Cooper of Cherry Hill, NJ

TIGER RESCUE - FUNDING NEEDED

A tiger has been kept in a shed in a small concrete floored cage for more than 3 years. She interrupts her constant pacing only to stand up and look out the small window at the world who has forgotten about her. The owner is in the hospital and her volunteers are fearful that she will die there. If she does, she is the only permit holder for the cat and the state could come in and euthanize the cat, or send her to another awful facility where she will be treated just as badly or worse. There are no decent facilities in FL that are willing to take them and Big Cat Rescue doesn’t have room.

We have the space to build cages for this tiger, but the enclosure is $7500 to build and that is the least of the costs involved in a rescue. The big commitment is in caring for her for the rest of her life. This tiger is 8 years old now and could live into her twenties. If we are to rescue this tiger, we would have to know that we could provide $7500 per year in care in addition to our current expense of caring for our cats that runs nearly a million dollars annually.

What will you donate to rescue this tiger and are you willing to make that an annual commitment? Fill out the order form on page 10 and in the notes section let us know if you would be willing to donate the same amount each year. Big Cat Rescue can not afford to take in another big mouth to feed unless we can get enough commitments to care for this tiger for the rest of her life. If we are unsuccessful in raising enough funds, we will put donations made for this rescue towards the care of the other tigers at BCR.

PARRY THE BOBCAT FINDS SANCTUARY AT BIG CAT RESCUE

When Operations Manager Scott Lope and our Vet, Dr. Liz Wynn, arrived on the scene in Parish, FL they didn’t think the little female bobcat, who had been the victim of a hit and run, had much chance of surviving. Curled into the fetal position she was unconscious, in shock, scraped up from skidding across the highway and just barely breathing. They rushed her back to the sanctuary and were amazed to witness her journey back from the edge of death. She is lame in one front leg, but nothing is broken, so we hope that with a little time to heal she will be ready to go free soon. Watch this video of her arrival and keep watching for updates on Parry the Bobcat: http://www.bigcatrescue.org/video/00260.htm

Photo by Scott Lope

PANTHER INTERNATIONAL ADOPTS JUMANJI FOR LIFE

Panther International LLC is a custom software applications firm located in Clearwater, Florida. Chase Stockton, Panther’s CEO/President, recently brought his staff for a private tour and decided he wanted to help. As he put it, “I was motivated to support Big Cat Rescue after visiting the sanctuary and seeing the incredible work there. As I learned about the volunteers’ efforts to create a home for more than 100 large cats, many of whom were formerly neglected pets or part of the exotic pet trade, I could see the organization needed more resources to support the cats.” The company has “adopted” Jumanji, a beautiful and mischievous black leopard who just turned 13. The pledge of $20,000 is expected to provide food for Jumanji for the rest of his life. Below Chase and Panther’s Director of Marketing and Communications, Jill Reagan with the sign by Jumanji’s cage recognizing this generous donation and presenting the check. If you look carefully in the photo with the check you can see Jumanji looking intently at the proceedings from the top of his den. He is probably thinking “OK, so where is the first meal?”

Summer Camp Schedule Monday thru Thursday 9:30 am - 4:00 pm Daily

For ages 8-11
June 15-18    July 20-23
June 22-25    July 27-30
July 13-16    Aug 3-6

For ages 12-15
June 15-18
June 22-25
July 13-16

Summer’s Coming and the Early Birds Get the Best Deals! Registration for Big Cat Summer Camp 2009 is about to open as we once again prepare to welcome campers to a learning adventure to remember! Children between the ages of 8 and 15 are invited to discover our great outdoors with over 100 big cats of every size, color and personality. While participating in educational activities campers delight in meeting lions, tigers, leopards and other felines while enjoying outdoor exploration on the 45 acre campus at Big Cat Rescue. Interactive learning opportunities include diet preparation, scavenger hunts and keeper demonstrations of feedings and behavioral training with the cats. Class size is limited to ensure a quality experience for each camper, so register soon while space is available. Camps are designed and overseen by certified teachers. This summer camp opportunity is only $190.00 per camper for each 4-day session.

(early Bird registration completed by 5/29/09 is $175.00 per session)

Summer Camp is back and better than ever

Panther International designed and developed the BlackCat Grant Management System, a software solution utilized by government and nonprofit agencies. It manages over $6 billion in federal, state, and local grants annually. Many thanks to the management and staff of Panther International for this very generous support!
Cougar Gets Second Chance - Every Day Counts
By Carole Baskin

"Will anyone give me $200 for this fine breeding age puma?" the auctioneer's voice blasts over the loud speakers in the livestock barn during an animal auction in Louisiana. An abuser raises his number, thinking to himself that he can mount her head and that of the male cougar he just bought over the T. V. in his trailer. The gavel slams down and Sophia's life has just taken a perilous change for the worse. She and her mate had been ripped from their mothers when they were cubs, declawed and bottle raised to be used as props. When they were little they could be used for photo opportunities and could be walked about on leashes as mini trophies. Now they were too big for that and their owner had crated them into tiny cages and consigned them over to a live animal auction. These auctions are legal in the US and all manner of exotic animals, many of them endangered species, are sold to anyone who has the cash.

Sophia's new owner loads her and the male cougar into a truck and heads to a taxidermist he knows in Laronger, Louisiana named Joe. The story, as relayed to me by Joe, was that the owner pulled up and promptly shot the male cougar, announcing that he wanted the cat stuffed and mounted. Hearing the gun shot, Joe's wife Mary came running out of the house, just in time to see the gun leveled at the trembling female cougar in the tiny crate. Mary yelled out, "Don't shoot the cougar! Oh please! Don't kill the cat!" The man advises the couple that he paid good money for these cats so he could mount them on his wall. Joe startles the man by asking, "How much for her?" The gun's barrel drops earthward as the killer reckons that he paid $200 for her and it cost him $50 to get her here, or in other words, he wants a $50 profit. Mountain lions are cheap. He can buy another one.

Joe agrees and moves Sophia into a concrete floored cage that was made of chain link roughly 6' wide by 8' long by 8' high. That was 13 years ago.

Maria Davidson of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries called and asked Big Cat Rescue if we could rescue this cougar. The recent passing of some of our elderly cougars had left empty enclosures behind, so we agreed. Upon our arrival, Maria suggested that only a small crew go around the house to the cage so that the cougar would not be stressed by new faces. She took her vet, Dr. Lacour, and Rescuers Scott Lope and Chris Poole down to assess the situation. What they discovered was that the cat was in what appeared to be the final stages of renal failure and she could not walk. Seventeen is old for a mountain lion and renal failure is common in cats because their diet is high in protein. If Sophia could not stand, there was no way she could be coaxed into walking into the transport. These situations are never black and white and this one presented a dilemma as well. On the one hand, this cat had lived in this chicken coop for 13 years and we would be kinder to just let her live out her last few days here. On the other hand, she had only a tattered tarp tied to the west wall of her cage, probably more for shade than to break the cold, damp northern winds. She had a concrete floor and a low concrete bench because the owner said that made it easier to clean. We decided that even if Sophia only had a few days left to live, they should be in comfort and as much as we hate to tranquilize a cat, the only way she was going into her hay filled transport cage was if she were sound asleep.

While she was sleeping Dr. Lacour did an exam and drew blood so that our vet, Dr. Wynn, would have a good idea of how progressed her situation was so that we could treat her accordingly. Scott, Maria, Dr. Lacour and Guy the law enforcement officer made a sling from a blanket and used it to carry Sophia out of her tiny, barren prison cell and into the next stage of her pitiful life. We loaded her transport into the van; it would be a 12 hour ride back to Tampa. As long as the van was rhythmically rocking down the road she slept or laid quietly on the only softness she has known in more than a decade. Since it was cold in Tampa when we arrived at 1 AM we decided to move her transport into the cat hospital for the night. The next day she still was having a very hard time moving about, so we decided to keep her inside on her fluffy hay pallet until the weather breaks. It had been in the 60's during the day but has dropped into the high 30's at night. Meanwhile her new Cat-a-tat, which is 1,200 square feet of space, was modified a bit more to accommodate her disability.

Late on the 24th of January we hooked the hay filled transport cage to the front of Sophia's new enclosure. We set up her water near her as her eyesight is very limited. She ate well her that night and slept a lot. Just the quick move from the West Boensch Cat Hospital on site to her new home near the other cougars seemed to wear her out, even though she was just being carried like royalty in her cat version of a rickshaw. The volunteers had prepared her new digs by converting every step-over door into an ADA ramp. They also piled boughs of Christmas trees in her cave and about her enclosure so she could sniff her way along the scented path to all the best features of her new home. We don't know how long Sophia may have in this world, but thanks to all of our supporters, staff and volunteers, she will have the best life possible from now until then.

Chat Big Cats Online at www.ChatBigCats.com

People who love animals love to share their photos and stories. Now Big Cat Rescue has a Chat Big Cats community. Only animal lovers need apply. This site is for you and about you and it's free. You get unlimited storage space for your photos, videos and music. Post your own blogs, or join in our forums and contests. Check out this YouTube/MySpace styled community made up entirely of animal lovers. Watch some of the funny animal videos or maybe add a few of your own.
Here are a few simple ways to be more green:

1. Put your outdoor lights on motion sensors. You’ll save energy and money, too. And if you want to go a step beyond this, you can get LED lights—which are ultra-efficient or solar powered lights which are available at most home improvement stores.

2. Wash your laundry in cold water. Washing machines are major power hogs in our homes and using cold water is a great, easy way to reduce your energy use.

3. Take reusable grocery bags to the store. This one is so easy and it is amazing how few people do it! Reusable bags will cut down on the use of over 500 plastic bags per person per year.

4. Make sure when you replace your light bulbs to opt for energy-efficient models. Most people don’t realize that lighting accounts for 15-20% of a home’s energy use. Compact fluorescents use 1/4 of the energy and last up to 10 times as long as normal bulbs. And LED lights are 2-3 times as efficient as compact fluorescents.

5. Purchase green cleaners. Use non-toxic, organic dish soap, detergent and cleaners. They are healthier for your family, work as well as standard products, and are becoming more readily available.

6. Read your newspapers online. Or just convert to online for your weekday editions and keep your weekend papers to enjoy with your Sunday coffee. You’ll save trees, energy, and money! If only 10 million people in the US cancelled their Monday-Friday newspapers, we’d save almost 50,000 trees every year.

7. Install a programmable thermostat. These nifty devices allow you to micro-control your home’s heating and cooling. One of these can help you shave 15% off of your energy consumption.

8. Use a water filter to purify tap water instead of buying bottled water. Not only is bottled water expensive, but it generates large amounts of container waste.

9. Run full dishwasher loads. You’ll save up to 20 gallons of water per load, or 7,300 gallons a year. That’s as much water as the average person drinks in a lifetime.

10. Don’t run while you brush. Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth. You’ll conserve up to five gallons of water per day -- which could add up to 1.5 billion gallons that could be saved across the country each day.

NEW INK PROGRAM

New big cat recycle program in place - please discontinue using the USPS plastic bags - the cartridges will not arrive at the vendor. Over 2500 supporters like you have participated in the bag program, generating over $1,000/month, enough to care for two of our tigers for a year. Our ink recycle program will continue, but with cartridge prices down and postal rates up, it is no longer economical for our vendor to accept ink cartridges via the postage paid small bags we have been using. However, they can economically receive ink jet cartridges via prepaid FedEx labels if they receive at least 15 cartridges at a time. They will supply prepaid FedEx labels that can be put on any box and have a phone number to call for a free FedEx pick up. An up-to-date list of cartridges they accept is found at: http://www.empty4cash.com/cartridge-price-list.html If you are willing to help in this way by saving cartridges until you collect at least 15, please let Big Cat Rescuer Merrill Kramer know. We will have the vendor send three prepaid FedEx labels to your postal address.

We are hoping that the FedEx label program will continue the success we had with the USPS bags and appreciate your help in continuing the program if you can. The vendor only accepts inkjet cartridges, not laser toners and cell phones. We hope to have a NEW program in place shortly for the return of both cell phones and large toner cartridges. Please be patient with us during this unanticipated transition!

If you are willing to help by using the FedEx labels, please include your postal address in your email back to Ink@BigCatRescue.org to expedite getting your labels shipped to you.

THE BIG CATS SAY GOODBYE TO ONE OF THEIR LITTLE COUSINS

In memory of Tigger “the beast” who was a real big cat in a small body. We will miss your love and all the wonderful things you did; from your “true” knocking on windows to come in, traveling a mile to visit my sister Judy, running out the driveway to greet us faithfully every day, scratching a 3 inch indent in the telephone pole, and much more! You were the biggest BEAST of all. Joan Donahue & Michael Kantarges of Squan- tum, MA.
FREE TONY

For the last 15 years the number one complaint that comes to Big Cat Rescue is the story of Tony, a tiger held hostage at the Tiger Truck Stop in Grosse Tete, Louisiana. Sometimes it is because the caller has unwittingly pulled into this run down gas station and been horrified at what they saw. Sometimes it is because they were traveling down I-10 and saw the sign that reads: "Live Tiger Exhibit" at the Tiger Truck Stop. Sometimes it is because the caller has seen some mention of the place online. In all cases, most people exclaim, "How can that be legal?"

Turns out it isn't. Unfortunately, a lot of places allow this sort of disgraceful exhibit, but Iberville Parish, where the truck stop is located, has banned such displays since 1993. So why is there a live tiger in a tiny cage next to the gas pumps in this 24 hour truck stop? Because the Iberville Parish doesn't want to enforce their own rules against "one of their own."

Big Cat Rescuers visited the site and noted that the fumes were noxious and the sound of the dieseling trucks was deafening and unrelenting. There are flood lights on the tiger's cage so that he never has a minute of darkness and never gets a moment of peace from those who yell at him and throw things at him to make him move. We are trying to convince the Iberville Parish that the right thing to do is let the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries send Tony the tiger to Big Cat Rescue. They seem to be more inclined to amend their ban so that they can justify not enforcing it. They need to hear from you.

Iberville Parish Courthouse 2nd Floor,
58050 Meriam Street Plaquemine, LA 70764 Phone: 225-687-3257
Email: parishcouncil@eatel.net

HOPE THE BOBCAT

Over the past year we have told you the story of Hope the bobcat. Hope was just two weeks old when she was rescued. She had been found orphaned along the road just minutes from Big Cat Rescue. Rescuers took her in and began the long process of rehabilitation. It can be quite the challenge to rehabilitate a bobcat that is so young. She had not yet learned how to be a bobcat from her mom, so Rescuers would have to meet the task. First things first, Hope was still nursing, so Rescuers recruited a foster family of domestic cats. They readily accepted her and the group became quite close during their months together. Once Hope was weaned her real training began and her foster family was adopted out to friends of Big Cat Rescue. Hope was transitioned onto a diet of whole prey, meaning she was given whole dead animals like chicks and mice to eat. She developed a taste for this new food quickly and soon moved on to hunting her own food. There were many steps along the way that Rescuers took to teach her how to hunt while keeping their distance from the impressionable young bobcat. First there was controlled feedings. Live mice were put into an extra large dog carrier with the top cut off so that Hope could hop down into the carrier and catch her dinner at her leisure without it escaping from her. She became quite good at this game and so a new feeding system went into action. As she grew Hope’s appetite did as well. She moved up from eating small mice to large rats. These rats are fed to her by way of a tunnel system. The rat could be put into the tunnel and the keeper could leave. Then the rat would make it’s way through the tunnels eventually leading into the rehab enclosure. The best part about this feeding system is that Hope does not associate food with humans and since the rat can pop up anywhere in the enclosure it keeps her on her toes on constant lookout for her next meal. Rescuers have really gone the extra mile with Hope’s rehabilitation, but it will all be worth it in the end when she is released back into the wild. Her release is scheduled for this coming April. Stay tuned for the next issue to find out what happens!

Photos clockwise from top left; Hope at two weeks old, Hope at ten months old, dog carrier feeding station, tunnel feeding system with drop boxes for the rats

BIG CAT ENRICHMENT TIME

Joseph with Christmas tree by Julie Hanan
Gracie in cardboard box by Howard Baskin
Cheetaro with pumpkin by Julie Hanan
Pharaoh with pumpkin by Jamie Veronica

SWEET 16 & NEVER BEEN KISSED - SHOW YOUR SUPPORT TODAY AND “KISS” A BIG CAT

Big Cat Rescue was founded sixteen years ago in November and to celebrate our anniversary we are going to celebrate the sixteen species of wild cat that resides at the sanctuary. In our last issue we started this by spotlighting Windsong the bobcat in November. Then in our monthly eZine the spotlight was on Hercules the snow leopard in December, Genie the sand cat in January and Jade the leopard in February. The species spotlight for March is Nikita the tiger on page 12. Make a $10 donation and "kiss a big cat" and you will receive a glossy 8x10 of the species spotlight. "Kiss" your favorites or collect them all. Order on page 10.
**THE BIG CAT TRADING POST - SHOPPING GUIDE**

Gifts that keep on giving. By purchasing the gifts on these pages not only will you be giving a truly unique gift, but the proceeds help us care for all of the big cats living at Big Cat Rescue. Order these gift items using the order form on page 10. S & H within the United States as well as tax has already been included in the price. You can also upgrade your shipping to Priority for just $3 for your entire order.

### WILD GIFTS

- **Photo Magnets and Key Rings**
  - Choose Any Species at BCR
  - Magnet $5.68 or Key Ring $5.21

- **Metal Magnets** Choose Tiger, Cougar, Lioness, Lion, Snow Leopard, Black Leopard, Ocelot, Serval, or Bobcat
  - $5.14 each

- **Photo Magnets and Key Rings**
  - Choose Any Species at BCR
  - Magnet $5.68 or Key Ring $5.21

- **Beaded Figurine & Key Rings**
  - Key Rings - Rainbow or Natural Lion
  - $8.42
  - Figurine - 4” Lion or Tiger
  - $20.12 each

- **Bumper Sticker**
  - $5.21

### TOYS & GAMES

- **Themed Monopoly Board Games**
  - Choose Animalopoly, Earthopoly, or Catopoly
  - $28.54 Each

- **Armani the Leopard Journal with BCR Logo on Cover**
  - $13.70

- **Magnetic Clingers**
  - Choose Cougar, Lion, Lynx, or Tiger
  - $8.42

- **6” Flopsie Babies** Choose Leopard, Lioness, Tiger or Black Leopard
  - $13.70 each

- **Travel Around The World 10” travel case**
  - with world map, stickers, and either tiger or lion flopsie
  - $17.98

- **Lego**
  - $8.35

- **African Animal Action Figure Set**
  - Also Available: Asian or Rainforest
  - $15.84

- **Scramble Square Puzzle**
  - Easy to Play, but Hard to Solve.
  - Rocky Mtn Wildlife, Cats, or Squirrels
  - $10.63

- **6” *Bobcat* Flopsie**
  - $13.70

- **14” *Leonardo* Lion**
  - $13.70

- **12” Plush Tory Tiger or Lory Leopard**
  - $13.70

- **Beaded Figurine & Key Rings**
  - Key Rings - Rainbow or Natural Lion
  - $8.42
  - Figurine - 4” Lion or Tiger
  - $20.12 each

- **Safari Rescue Jeep & Helicopter**
  - $8.35

- **Jungle Rescue Jeep & Speedboat**
  - $8.35

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  - Also Available: Asian or Rainforest
  - $15.84

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  - $10.63

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  - $13.70
**NEW ITEM!**
Moisture Wicking Logo Tee with Cats of BCR Image on Back, Choose: Khan & China, Lynx, Cougars, Leopards, Cam & Zabu, or The Small Cats S, M, & L $35.10

--

**BCR Logo Hoodie**
Navy with Light Blue Tiger M, L, XL $31.89

**BCR Logo Mens Muscle Shirt**
Orange, Royal Blue, or Black S, M, L & XL $19.05

**BCR Savannah Silhouette Tee**
Chestnut, Tan, Leaf or Blue S, M, L, XL, XXL, & XXXL $24.40


**Where's The Pride Zabu White Tiger Tee** Black or White S-XL $31.89

**Adjustable Cap, Navy** $24.40
Flex-Fit Cap, Olive or Pink $24.40
Baseball Cap, Logo, Black $17.98
Visor, Logo, Adjustable, Khaki $15.84

**Gray Cinch Tote with Embroidered BCR Logo in Blue** $29.75

**Paws Off Kids Tee**
Rust w/ BCR on Front S, M, L & XL $16.91

**Leopard & Cub Kids Tee**, Blue Tie Dye w/ Logo on Back S, M, L & XL $16.91

**“I'm A Tiger” Kids Tee**
Gray w/ BCR on Front S, M & L $16.91
THE BIG CAT TIMES ORDER FORM  Spring 2009

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<th>Description</th>
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SPONSOR 1 FOOT OF PERIMETER WALL * $100.00

Liger/Tiger Marble Plaque *

Kiss All 5 Big Cats – 5 8x10 Glossy Photos * $50.00

Kiss Nikita the Tiger 8x10 Glossy Photo* $10.00

NOTE: * For personalizations fill out blue shaded box at bottom of form

Date: ______________________________

Billing Address
Name
Address
City           St          Zip
Day Time Phone
Evening Phone
Email

Recipient Address (If different than Billing)
Name
Address
City           St              Zip
Day Time Phone
Evening Phone
Email

This is a gift, please make card to: _________________________ from: _______________________

Special Comment, Request, or Question: _______________________________________________________________

This is a gift, please make card to: _________________________ from: _______________________

Brief message to say: _________________________________________________________________

YOUR TOUR ADMISSIONS ARE A MAJOR SOURCE OF REVENUE TO SUPPORT THE CATS. THANKS FOR VISITING AND CARING!

KIDS TOUR
Big Cat Rescue offers regularly scheduled, guided, kids tours. This is a complete guided tour where children of all ages, and their parents can get up close and learn about exotic cats and other animals. The tour is given on a child’s educational level. Reservations not required.

- Tour Time: 9:00 AM Saturday, 1 hr
- $15.00 per child under 10 years
- $25 per child 10 years & over and per adult

Children must be accompanied by adult guardian.

DAY TOURS
Monday - Friday 9 AM & at 3 PM, 1.5 hrs
Saturday 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM, & 1:30 PM, 1.5 hrs
Guided tour of the sanctuary. Admission is $25.00 per person. Reservations are not required. No children under 10 years of age.

FEEDING TOUR
Friday and Saturday at dusk. During this tour, you will follow along with two big cat keepers. As you observe the big cats being fed, you will also learn about the cats nutritional needs in captivity. Admission is $50.00 per person. No children under 10 years of age. For reservations 813-426-5948

BIG CAT KEEPER TOUR
This tour takes you behind the scenes where you will enjoy making enrichment (treats and food puzzles) for the animals. After which you will follow along and watch as the keepers hand out the enrichment you made to the cats. You will also observe special operant training sessions with the big cats. $100.00 per person. The 2 hour Keeper Tour is offered every Saturday as well as the last Friday of the month at 2 PM. No children under 10 years of age. For reservations 813-426-5948

WILD EYES AT NIGHT TOUR
Night Tours are the best way to see the animals come alive at night! As you journey through the sanctuary you will be stalked and pounced at from the shadows! No worries though, all the animals will be safely in their enclosures. This is an adventure that’s sure to please! $50.00 per person. No children under 10 years of age. For reservations 813-426-5948

BIG CAT RESCUE ALSO OFFERS - WEDDINGS, PRIVATE PARTIES, VOLUNTEER & INTERN AND GIFT CERTIFICATES are available for all of our programs and make the perfect gift for that person who has everything!

NOTICE: Prices and availability for all tours are subject to change.
BIG CAT RESCUE SUPPORTERS

Spurline Foundation $36,000
Little Family Foundation $8,000
Victor Cohen $5,000
Amy Davis $5,000
David & Cheryl Hawkins $5,000

Klingel Family Foundation $1,500
John S & JoAnn Nestor $1,250
Betty & Carl Schino $1,200
Pamela Olson Kaants $1,050

The Red Lion Foundation $1,025
Deborah Albert $1,000
Robert Carlson $1,000
Justin & Stacey Carpenter $1,000
Robert Cochran $1,000
Pamela Rodriguez $1,000

Lynn Russell $1,000
Syngenta $1,000
TankCat $1,000
Tracy Treadway $1,000

Lawrence Tissle $1,000
Mesirrow Financial $850
James Tyree $650
Jacqueline Doyle $525
C. L. Andrews $500

Dennis Covington $500
K. L. Simon $75
Jeffray Stair $50

Featured this month “Golden Leopard” Sponsorship Kit

SPONSORSHIP KIT $25 DONATION!
**TIGER - PANTHERA TIGRIS**

**Common Name:** Tiger  
**Class:** Mammalia  
**Order:** Carnivora  
**Family:** Felidae  
**Genus:** Pantherinae  
**Species:** tigris

**Size and Appearance:** The largest of all the living cats, the tiger is immediately recognizable by its unique reddish-orange coat with black stripes. Stripe patterns differ among individuals and are as unique to the animal as are fingerprints to humans. Males have a prominent ruff or collar, which is especially pronounced in the Sumatran tiger. White tigers would never survive in the wild as the white coat is only produced through severe inbreeding. White tigers have brown stripes and are fingerprints to humans. Males have a prominent ruff or collar, which is especially pronounced in the Sumatran tiger. White tigers would never survive in the wild as the white coat is only produced through severe inbreeding. White tigers have brown stripes and are as unique to the animal as are fingerprints to humans. Males have a prominent ruff or collar, which is especially pronounced in the Sumatran tiger.

**Distribution:** Indian subcontinent, Amur River region of Russia, China, and North Korea, South central China, Sumatra, Indonesia, and Continental Southeast Asia.

**Habitat:** Tigers occupy a wide variety of habitats including tropical evergreen forests, deciduous forests, coniferous woodlands, mangrove swamps, thorn forests and grass jungles. The common factors of all of the tiger’s habitats is some form of dense vegetative cover, sufficient large prey, and access to water. Tigers are extremely adept swimmers and readily take to water. The tiger spends much of its time during the heat of the day during hot seasons half submerged in lakes and ponds to keep cool. Indian tigers generally have a range of 8-60 square miles, based on availability of prey. Sumatran tigers have a range of about 150 square miles.

**Reproduction and Offspring:** Tigers will mate throughout the year, but most frequently between the end of November to early April. After a gestation of 103 days, a litter of up to 7 cubs, although averaging 3, is born. During the first year, mortality can be as high as 35% and, of that, the entire litter is lost 73% of the time. The main causes of infant mortality are fire, floods, and infanticide, with the latter being the leading cause. Females tend to reproduce around 3½ years and males just under 5 years. In captivity, females have produced through age 14.

**Social System and Communication:** Tigers, like most cats, are solitary, however, they are not anti-social. Males not only come together with females for breeding, but will feed with or rest with females and cubs. There have actually been reports of some tigers socializing and traveling in groups. Females with cubs have also been seen coming together to share meals. Most likely, in all of these cases, they are somehow related.

**Hunting and Diet:** Tigers hunt primarily between dusk and dawn. They stalk, chase, and attack, bringing down and killing the prey with usually a bite to the nape of the neck or the throat. Once killed, the tiger either drags or carries its meal into cover. The tiger’s enormous strength allows it to drag an animal that would require 13 adult men to move. Tigers consume anywhere from 35-90 pounds of meat at one sitting. If undisturbed, they will return to the carcass for 3-4 days, feeding until they have completely consumed their kill. Because tigers are not the most successful hunters, only killing 1 in every 10-20 attempts, it may be several days before one has its next meal. In the wild, cooperative hunting among tigers has also been observed where couples and families hunted like a pride of lions. This, however, is the exception not the rule. The most common prey items are various species of deer and pig, but they will also take crocodiles, young elephants and rhinos, monkeys, birds, fish, leopards, bears, and even their own kind. They have also been reported to eat carrion.

**Status:** CITES: Appendix I IUCN: Endangered

**How rare is this cat?** The largest wild population of tigers is in India. According to statistics released in 2007, there are 1,200-1,500 tigers left on 27 wildlife reserves in 11 states in India. Tigers are no longer “burning bright” in our world’s most famous tiger preserves. Tiger numbers in the wild are thought to have plunged from 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century to about 5,000 now. A century ago, India had some 40,000 tigers but now officials estimate they number about 1,200-1,500. The Bali, Javan, and Caspian subspecies have become extinct in the past 70 years. The South China tiger is on the verge of extinction, with just 20 to 30 remaining in the wild. There are around 500 Siberian tigers as of 2006. The International Species Information Service lists 1108 in captivity worldwide that are registered with accredited zoos and sanctuaries, 18 of which live at Big Cat Rescue. This does not include the thousands that are in unaccredited facilities or in private hands.

**NIKITA** Male Tiger  Born 8/20/95

Nikita was rescued in October of 2007 from a facility in Ohio where his canines and claws were removed so he could be used for photo ops and people could pay to pet him. He is a very large tiger, comparable in size to the massive Shere Khan. His best friend in the whole world is Joseph the lion and the two often lounge near one another always surveying their land. When Nikita first arrived, he was very elusive and would often hide in his den when keepers approached his enclosure. He has now warmed up a great deal and no longer sinks into his den when keepers walk by, but rather chuffs enthusiastically as he saunters over to greet his visitors.

**CHECK THIS OUT!** This month’s Kiss a Cat is Nikita and for a $10 donation you can get this beautiful 8x10 color photo of him. The bottom of the photo reads: “Your Name Kissed Nikita the Tiger”.

“Kiss” Nikita today with your $10 donation on page 10.