

Wild Tracks

southwest wildlife rehabilitation & educational foundation, inc.

Spring 2006

JAGUARS: Magnificence in the Southwest

by Jeff Egerton

In 1986, a large male jaguar was cornered by hounds and shot in the Dos Cabezas Mountains. Tragically, this was the last jaguar known to live in Arizona. The last female had been shot in 1963, so clearly there had been no breeding taking place. The obituaries were written and wildlife aficionados mourned the loss of another species. This, in an area that begs for wildlife diversity.

Well, something about southern Arizona must appeal to the most magnificent of all the large cats, because there have been recent sightings of jaguars north of the border. Either they're trying to move back into southern Arizona, or they never left.

In 1996, Warner Glenn, a rancher and hunting guide from Douglas, spotted a large cat in the Peloncillo Mountains, east of Douglas. Thinking it was a cougar, he grabbed his camera. After a closer look,

he said, "God almighty, that's a jaguar!" Glenn photographed the cat, then allowed it to go on its way. Six months later Tucson hunters Jack Childs and Matt Colvin treed another jaguar near the reservation of the Tohono O'Odham Nation. The one hundred and fifty pound cat was groggy from feeding, and allowed the men to videotape it at length.

Jack Childs became a jaguar researcher and traveled to Brazil's Pantanal wilderness to study the cats. In 1999, he began placing remote cameras in southern Arizona. In 2001 he saw his first jaguar photograph. The cat, which appeared healthy, well fed and heavily built, weighed in between 130 and 150 pounds. Childs named it Macho A. The cat appeared on film again in August 2003, and in September 2004. Since then, Childs has seen a second male, Macho B, and possibly a third.

Alan Rabinowitz, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Science and Exploration Program, believes the cats might be dispersing from a population known to exist in Sonora, Mexico, about one hundred and thirty miles south of Douglas. He believes the population in Sonora might be in serious trouble, and likens their wandering to a desperate attempt to survive in any way possible.

Other opinions differ, however, claiming that the yellow and worn teeth on Macho B indicate it is four to six years old. This is past the age when it would leave its home turf and search for a new habitat. If this is true, the cats that have been seen and photographed are permanent residents, rather than transients. There is also the hopeful prospect that the third cat in the photos is a female and breeding is taking place.

Jaguars, with a 1.5 million year history, were once an

Jaguars

continued on page 3

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Recent Rescue | 2 |
| Donations for Water System | 2 |
| Jaguar Facts | 4 |
| Mountain Lion Safety | 5 |
| Book Review | 6 |
| Donation Form | 7 |
| <i>Wild About Wildlife IX</i> | 7 |
| Tour Southwest Wildlife | 7 |
| <i>Wild About Wildlife X</i> | 7 |

A Recent Rescue

by Paul Diefenderfer

As a Southwest Wildlife volunteer trained to perform rescues, I got the call about a baby javelina that was tangled up in a rope or cord that the unfortunate little critter was dragging around. By the time I got to the scene, however, the baby and the rest of its herd was gone. A few days later, another resident in the same neighborhood called about that same baby javelina. I grabbed a pole net, knife, some scissors, and a big bag of baby carrots and headed to the callers' home.

A large herd was hanging around their patio. My game plan was to net the baby, take it inside the house through the sliding glass doors, cut the cord off, and put the baby back outside to rejoin the herd. I started throwing carrots on the patio to keep the older javelina occupied and to get them close enough so I could nab the baby. My plan was complicated by the fact that the baby was still nursing, so it never got very far from mom. I definitely did not want mom and baby in the net at the same time!

It took awhile, but finally everyone was spaced far enough apart and the baby was closest to the net. I was able to flip the net over the baby and scoop it up. And not a moment too soon, as I was starting to run low on carrots! Once I got the baby inside the house, the homeowner helped me cut the cord off. We cracked open the door and shoved the little one out to join the rest of the gang. I just love it when everything goes according to the plan!

The cord was actually a hand-made "harness" that someone had tied around the javelina's neck and abdomen. It was very tight and was pressed into the baby's fur. Had we not gotten the harness off, it would have caused tremendous pain and suffering as the baby outgrew it.

This baby javelina's story had a happy ending because these homeowners saw something that was "not right" and took the time to call Southwest Wildlife.



Well and Pumping System Improvements Donated

As we have continued to grow, we have pushed our well and pumping system beyond its limits, resulting in constant problems. Over the past several months, Chris Hock of North Valley Pump Service has been working diligently to keep our well system in good working order. He has also been working to upgrade our pumping system and, at the same time, keep our costs to do so down.

Chris recently installed 4 pressure tanks, along with the concrete pad they sit on, at no cost to us! The concrete for the pad and the galvanized fittings were donated by Tim Perfect of Cave Creek Building Supply, the two new tanks were donated by Eric Nelson of Karam Brothers, Inc., and the two like-new, used tanks were donated by Chris. Chris also poured the concrete pad and installed the tanks and associated water lines.

We would like to thank all of you for your generosity! Your donations will help to insure a constant supply of clean water for our residents.

Jaguars

continued from page 1

abundant part of American fauna. At one time they ranged as far north in this country as Washington State and were seen in California as late as the mid 50s. The last one hundred years have been especially hard on them. The technology and human population boom of the post World War II years, has obliterated more than half their habitat in the western hemisphere. Central America lost 65 percent of its forest cover and Brazil 58 percent. Demand for their pelts, and game hunting also played a major part in the reduction of their overall numbers. In 1969, 10,000 skins, valued at \$1.5 million dollars were imported into the U.S. Livestock farmers and jaguars have always been at odds, although recent studies indicate the big cats get blamed for more livestock deaths than they cause.

Fortunately, the entire jaguar population is getting help from some dedicated and resourceful advocates who are waging a battle, on several fronts, to assist in stemming the population decline.

In 1999, the Wildlife Conservation Society held a workshop that brought together more than two dozen experts from throughout the jaguar's range. The workshop spawned the WCS Jaguar Conservation Program. Using Global Information System technology, they developed maps of existing jaguar habitat. They also determined where good jaguar populations existed, and assessed the most significant threats to jaguars. They then devised a strategy to mitigate those threats and protect important populations through the cat's range. The group then set up Jaguar Conservation Units, which are areas of intact, though unprotected, jaguar habitat. In the next few years they carried out exploratory surveys, population estimates, and ecological research in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil.

The program also launched experimental projects with ranchers to resolve jaguar-livestock problems in the Brazilian Pantanal, the Venezuelan Llanos, the Belize rain forest and Mexico's Sonoran Desert. A jaguar education curriculum was developed in Spanish, and a grant program funded young nationals who wanted to help conserve their country's jaguars.

As the people in the program collected more data,

they made an amazing discovery—Jaguars are travelers, and journeys of 500 miles are not unusual. In 1993 reports surfaced of jaguars swimming across the Panama Canal. Tracks on Barro Colorado Island confirmed the reports. Then came Glenn's sighting in southern Arizona. This led to the discovery of the small population of jaguars in northern Sonora, Mexico. By now the wildlife experts are wondering—where are the nomadic cats going to turn up next?

The WCS Jaguar Conservation Program was renamed Paseo Tigre—The Path of the Jaguar. The program was also refocused to include study of the jaguar's routes between their populations, as well as established habitats.

The Center of Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife are taking legal approach to the jaguar's protection. They filed suit in federal court to ensure the return of North America's largest cat. The litigation, targeting Interior Secretary Gale Norton, and the Fish and Game Wildlife Service, seeks to jumpstart conservation actions through the timely creation of a recovery plan, six years after the jaguar was listed as an endangered species in the United States. In a recent settlement, the government agreed to decide by July, 3, 2006, on critical habitat areas considered important to a species recovery.

This is all encouraging news for the overall jaguar population. Unfortunately, from a local viewpoint, there's a large dose of vinegar with all the honey. One plan under consideration in an effort to fight the illegal immigration problem is to build an impenetrable fence along the international border. The jaguars, of course, don't know where the border lies. However, if that fence is built, they'll soon find out! Their range will be severely restricted, and we might be slamming the door on them. In the interim the increase in human, vehicular and airborne traffic around the border will certainly have an adverse effect on the cat's return to Arizona.

Then again, there's a chance that I'm not giving these incredible creatures enough credit. We gave up on them once—but nobody told the cats that they're not supposed to be here!

The absence of photos in this article is due to the fact that photos of jaguars are more rare than sightings of them!

The Jaguar

by Jeff Egerton

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*) are the largest cats in the Western Hemisphere. Larger and stockier than their cousins, they've been called a leopard on steroids.

The background of their coat is tawny-yellow, lightened to white on the throat and belly. They're marked with small spots on the head and neck, and dark open-ring rosettes on the sides and flanks. The rosettes on the jaguar and leopard are almost identical, but the jaguars have spots inside the rosettes, where the leopards have none. The spots along a jaguar's back often merge into a solid line. Melanistic jaguars have been observed in South America with heavily pigmented coats that are almost black. One albino cat, with pink eyes and white claws, has also been observed.

The jaguar's robust stature and legendary strength have given it the reputation of being a large cat, but in reality males rarely reach three hundred pounds and average 175 to 200 pounds. The largest are found in the Pantanal region of Brazil. Females are somewhat smaller, averaging 70 to 90 pounds.

Whereas most large cats kill their prey with a bite to the throat or neck, Jaguars kill their prey with a bite to the temporal bones of the skull resulting in instant death. The South American Indians coined the name *yaguara*, which means "a beast that kills with one bound."

The primary habitats of the jaguar include the dense tropical rain forests and swampy grasslands of Central and South America. They have occasionally been found above 8,000 feet. In the damp forest habitat, jaguars like to roam close to rivers, streams and lakes, and are strong swimmers. Like the leopard, it also frequents open country, especially in the most northerly and southerly parts of its range. Their distribution ranges from northern Mexico (and now southern Arizona!) to south central Argentina.

Since the early 1970's the jaguar has been on the list of totally protected animals in most South American countries. Belize has the world's only park, opened in 1984, dedicated to the preservation of the jaguar.

Throughout South and Central America, vast areas of wilderness are being cleared for agriculture and cattle ranching. Human encroachment permanently alters the eco-system by cutting down forests and disrupting the normal hunting and traveling patterns that resident cats have established.

As more areas open up for development, the jaguar continues in direct competition for its food. Turtles, tortoises, monkeys capybara and fish that they normally feed on, are captured and sold for their meat. The caiman population, also a jaguar staple, has been decimated to satisfy the skin trade. The competition for food and habitat looks as a larger threat to jaguars than the demand for their skins. Their numbers are diminishing, even though they're formidable predators, often taking animals as large as peccaries and tapirs.

Jaguars have no established breeding season, with reproduction taking place any time during the year. A series of roaring "calls" and urinary scent marking by both sexes help amorous males locate receptive females during estrous. After mating, the pair separates, with the female providing all parenting for the offspring.

Litters average one to four cubs, born blind, with each weighing two to two and a half pounds, after a gestation period of 95 to 105 days. The cubs generally remain in the den where they were born for up to six months. The coat of the cub is wooly with spots much like the adult pattern, although the background color on the adult is more subdued.

The cubs are weaned by the age of three months, when they begin to accompany their mother on hunts. They ultimately remain with her for up to two years, after which they leave to establish territories of their own. The average life expectancy for a jaguar in the wild is 15 to 20 years, with captive individuals often exceeding 25 years.

LIVING WITH ARIZONA MOUNTAIN LIONS

by Kevin Hansen

Generally, Arizona mountain lions are calm, quiet, and elusive. They tend to live in remote, primitive country. The big cats are most commonly found in areas with plentiful deer and adequate cover. Such conditions exist in mountain subdivisions, urban fringes, and open spaces. Consequently, the number of mountain lion/human interactions has increased. This increase is due to more people moving into mountain lion habitat, fluctuations in deer populations, more people using hiking and running trails in lion habitat, and a greater awareness of the presence of mountain lions.

We can live with these incredibly efficient predators if we respect mountain lions and their habitat. To reduce the risk of problems with mountain lions on or near your property, we urge you to follow a few simple precautions.

Living in Mountain Lion Country

- Make lots of noise if you come and go during the times mountain lions are most active—dusk to dawn.
- Closely supervise children whenever they play outdoors. Make sure children are inside before dusk and not outside before dawn. Talk with children about lions and teach them what to do if they meet one.
- Don't feed wildlife! Feeding deer, javelina or other wildlife in your yard may attract mountain lions, which prey on these animals. Avoid landscaping with plants that attract deer and rabbits, especially non-native shrubs and plants.

- Landscape for safety. Remove dense and/or low-lying vegetation that provides hiding places for mountain lions, bobcats, and coyotes—especially around children's play areas. Make it difficult for wild predators to move about or approach your yard unseen.
- Install outdoor lighting. Light areas where you walk so you could see a lion if one were present.
- Keep your pet under control. Roaming pets are easy prey and can attract lions. Bring pets in at night. If you leave your pet outside, keep it in a kennel with a secure top. Don't feed pets



outside; this can attract raccoons and other animals that are eaten by lions. Securely store all garbage.

- Place livestock in enclosed sheds or barns at night. Close doors to outbuildings to prevent inquisitive lions from entering.
- Encourage your neighbors to follow these simple precautions.

Prevention is far better than a possible lion encounter.

If You Encounter a Mountain Lion

People rarely get more than a brief glimpse of a mountain lion in the wild. Lion attacks on people are rare, with fewer than a dozen fatalities in North America in more than 100 years. Most of the attacks were by young lions, hunting on their own for the first time and not yet living in established home ranges. Young lions may focus on easy prey, such as pets and small children.

There has been little research on how to avoid mountain lion attacks. But mountain lion attacks that have occurred are being analyzed and patterns of behavior and response are beginning to emerge. The

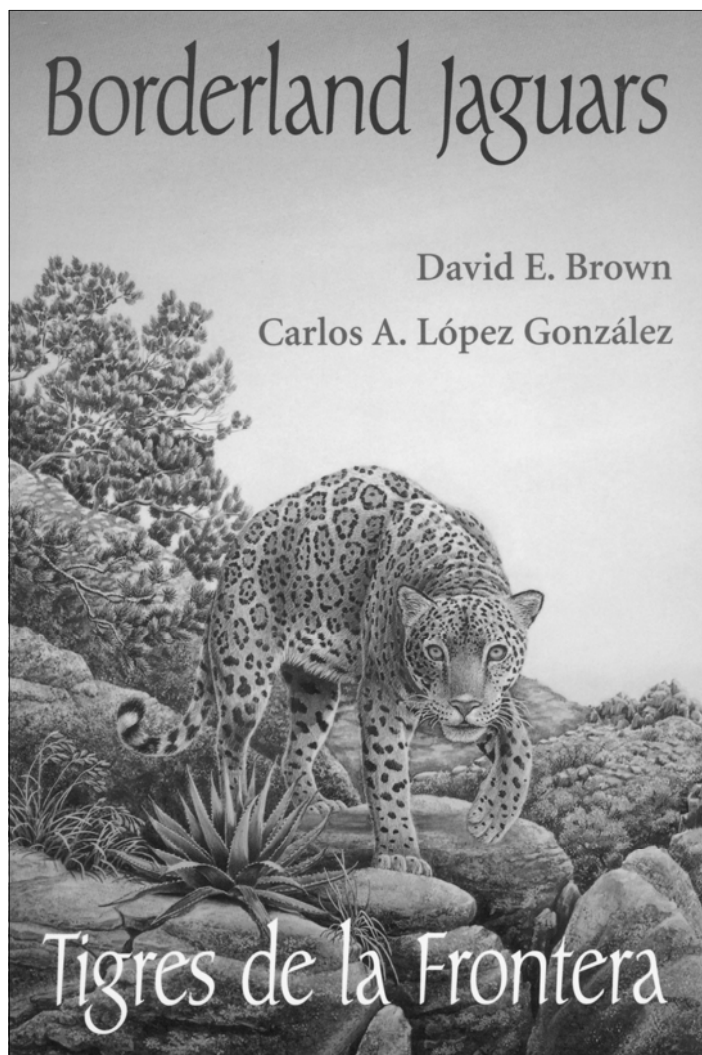
following suggestions may be helpful, however, remember that every situation is different with respect to the mountain lion, the terrain, the people, and their activity.

- Do not hike alone. Go in groups, with adults supervising children.
- Stay calm if you encounter a mountain lion. Stop or back away slowly, if you can do it safely.
- Keep children close to you. Observations of captured mountain lions reveal that the animals seem especially drawn to children. Keep children within your sight at all times.
- Do not approach a lion. Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.
- Do not run from a lion. Running may encourage a mountain lion to chase. Instead, stand and face the animal. Make eye contact. If you have small children with you, pick them up so they do not panic and run. Try to avoid turning away from the lion while picking up a child.
- Do not crouch down or bend over. A person squatting or bending over looks like a four-legged prey animal.
- Do all you can to appear larger. Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. If you have small children with you, protect them by picking them up so they won't panic and run.
- If the lion is aggressive, throw stones, branches or whatever you can get your hands on without crouching down or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice. The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you are not prey and that you may be a danger to it.
- Fight back if attacked! Lions have been driven off by prey that fights back. People have successfully fought back with rocks, sticks, caps or jackets, garden tools and their bare hands. Remain standing or try to get back up.

Mountain lions are not a significant threat to human safety. An encounter with this magnificent predator is a rare event that should be cherished. However, to report a mountain lion attack, please call the Arizona Game and Fish Department at (602) 942-3000 during business hours. In an emergency, call 911.

A Mountain Lion Safety flyer and a Bear Safety flyer may be downloaded from the Southwest Wildlife website: www.southwestwildlife.org.

BOOK REVIEW



Borderland Jaguars

by

David E. Brown

and

Carlos A. López González

Following several color photos of jaguars in native habitat, the authors examine the jaguar's natural history, including physical characteristics, historical distribution, habitat and prey preferences, and breeding and territorial information. They go on to document how people have viewed and interacted with the jaguar, from prehistoric cultures to the present day, including numerous photos. They close with information about the jaguar's current status and conservation measures.

Southwest Wildlife Donation Form

You may also make donations online at: www.southwestwildlife.org

Please help
Southwest
Wildlife
by making a
tax-deductible
donation.

Our 501(c)3 number
is 86-0765249.

I/we would like to
donate:

_____ \$25
_____ \$50
_____ \$100
_____ \$250
_____ Other

You may make your donation via Visa or
MasterCard by completing the following.

Name, as it appears on card:

Billing address for card:

Card number:

CVS # (usually located in signature strip on back of card):

Expiration Date:

Authorization Signature:

Name(s):

Address:

Thank You for your support!

Wild About Wildlife IX Exceeds Expectations

Our ninth annual fund raising dinner and auction, held at the Four Seasons Resort, was a tremendous success—we hosted more guests and had more auction items, better food, and more fun than ever! Most importantly, we raised much-needed funds for Southwest Wildlife.

One hundred percent of the proceeds of this event go directly to the feeding, housing, and medical care of our residents. With no financial assistance from any government sources, the dollars raised at this event are vital to Southwest Wildlife's continued operation.

Southwest Wildlife would like to thank those who contributed to the success of this event by donating products, services, and/or auction items. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Additional thanks to the event committee and to the volunteers who helped with set up, tear down, and/or during the event.

We at Southwest Wildlife could not fulfill our promise to the animals, whether they be short term guests or permanent residents, without YOU, our donors and volunteers.

To arrange a tour
of Southwest Wildlife,
please contact our educational director,
Kevin Hansen, at 480-471-3621 or
swkevin@extremezone.com.

You won't want to miss this...
***Wild About Wildlife X:
a Celebration
of the Bear***

Saturday
March 17, 2007

**Four Seasons Resort
Scottsdale
at Troon North**



Southwest Wildlife

PMB 115
8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255

www.southwestwildlife.org • swref@extremezone.com

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO. 815



**Southwest Wildlife wishes to thank all individuals and organizations
that have given so generously to enable us to help the many animals that come through
our doors—we couldn't do this without your help!**

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Dr. Steve Gilson & Dr. Mark Soderstrom of Sonora Veterinary Specialists Dr. Lilian Rizzo, Dr. O'Brien, Dr. Carol Samson, Dr. Leo Egar, Dr. Gorman and the veterinary interns and staff at Sonora Veterinary Specialists Dr. Chris Henrich Dr. Arch Robertson of Vet Med Consultants Dr. Ronald Sigler, Dr. Jennifer Urbanz, and Staff of Eye Care for Animals Dr. Visser, Dr. Kaufman, and Staff of Aid Animal Dental Clinic Dr. Barnes and staff of Del Lago Veterinary Hospital</p> | <p>Dr. Yael Bar-Shalom Mark Finke, Nutritionist BZ Rodents, Inc. AJ's Fine Foods for produce, meat Basha's in Carefree for produce Whole Foods Sprouts Safeway eScrip Program Bill Hood, Scottsdale Accounting Service Shalako Nut Farm Sunstate Equipment Nestle Purina Wes Patrick of Critter Control SRP California Pools for continuing to maintain the pump and filter for the bear pool</p> | <p>Chris Hock of North Valley Pump for continuing to keep our well in good working order, for donating two pressure tanks, and for installing the concrete pad and new pressure tanks Tim Perfect of Cave Creek Building Supply for concrete and well fittings Eric Nelson of Karam Brothers, Inc. for two new pressure tanks Arch Wireless for pagers Extreme Internet for the web site Tohono O'odham Farming Community The Eagle Scouts who continue to build houses, benches, signs, and food storage containers</p> |
| <p>A special "Thank You" to all who donated products, services, auction items, and/or time to <i>Wild About Wildlife IX</i>. Your donations made this fund raising event a huge success!</p> | | <p>Grants from: The Denver Foundation The Faure Foundation</p> |