

WILDNET NEWS

A publication of the Wildlife Conservation Network

Autumn 2004



The 2004 Wildlife Conservation Expo Raises over \$300,000 for Conservation

As Greg lay badly injured for two days in Zimbabwe, undiscovered in the wreckage of his plane, his survival was far from certain. But after several surgeries and months of intensive therapy, Greg was back on the job, and the survival of Zimbabwe's painted dogs was again in his hands.

Gregory Rasmussen, founder of Painted Dog Conservation in Zimbabwe and WCN's newest partner, described to Expo guests how the dog population had fallen from 500,000 animals in 39 countries to only 3,000 animals in four countries.



PETER BLUNSTON

Greg Rasmussen attaches a reflective radio collar to a Painted Dog in Hwange National Park.

But through his conservation efforts the number of dogs in Zimbabwe has now almost doubled.

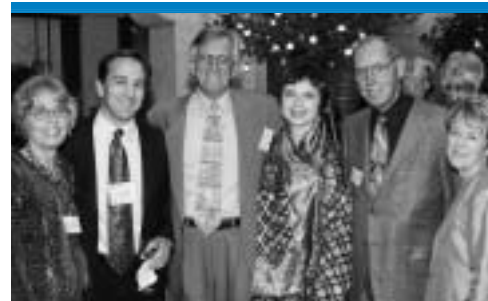
This is one of the many moving stories offered up at Wildlife Conservation Network's 3rd Annual Wildlife Conservation Expo, October 15-17 in Los Altos, California. The event drew more than 1,000 people from around the country and raised more than \$300,000 for endangered species conservation.

The Expo brought together 18 leading conservationists from 14 different countries, as well as an additional 28 local and national conservation organizations. It is the only conference of its kind in the world. Unlike other conservation gatherings that are geared toward scientific exchanges, the Expo invites the general public to socialize with the conservationists in a personal, relaxed environment, and to share their stories from the field.

Conservationist Rebecca Klein told attendees of her crusade to save endangered cheetahs in Botswana. As a result of her team's community outreach programs, farmers who were routinely killing cheetahs to protect

their livestock have now set aside part of their land for cheetahs to roam safely.

Actress and WCN Board member, Isabella Rossellini, also mingled with attendees and explained her commitment to WCN: "I've always been attracted to working with individuals who are trying to break from an old model, to find new and vital solutions to problems." WCN has created just such a model as

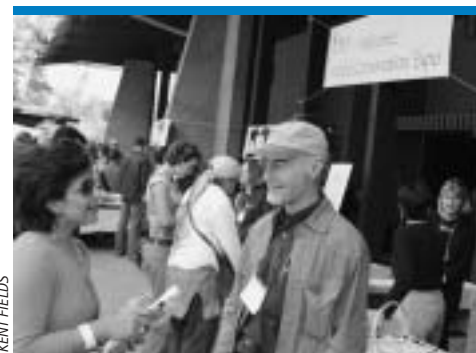


KENT FIELDS

Isabella Rossellini, center, and Charlie Knowles, second from left, mingle with WCN supporters before the Expo weekend.

the only wildlife conservation organization that supports conservation entrepreneurs and sends 100% of all designated donor contributions directly to the field to support the animals.

"The Expo provides an opportunity for the public to meet and learn from some extraordinary people who



KENT FIELDS

Jim Sanderson, Director of the Small Cat Conservation Alliance, has some one-on-one time with an interested guest at the Expo.

are leading grassroots efforts to save endangered wildlife in key habitats around the globe" said Charlie Knowles, WCN Executive Director.

For a list of all the Expo participants, and more

information, visit www.WildNet.org. Next year's Expo will be held October 7-9, 2005, with Dr. Jane Goodall as the keynote speaker.

NOTES from the FIELD

First Nature Guides Trained in the Pamir Mountains

by Rodney Jackson

The Snow Leopard Conservancy's assistance was requested by the French NGO, ACTED, in developing



RON KIMBALL

The snow leopard is sparsely distributed throughout 12 countries.

small-scale community-based ecotourism in the Pamir mountains of Tajikistan. Here are found the world's largest wild sheep, the Marco Polo sheep and the endangered snow leopard along with a wealth of ancient archeological sites,

petroglyphs and Zoroastrian sites, hot springs, and a distinctive Tajik culture.

Last year I traveled to the frontier district of Murghab, in remote far eastern Tajikistan, to assess the area's wildlife, identify underlying threats to conservation, and explore ways in which local people could be encouraged to protect wildlife.

Tajikistan is emerging from a civil war, undergoing a difficult economic transition from centralized socialism under the Soviets to a free-market economy. The people's hardships were underscored for me by the distressing discovery of Marco Polo sheep being machine-gunned near the roads by local residents and border guards, for the sale of their meat. If this trend continues, these magnificent wild creatures could easily disappear forever. Yet this situation represents an opportunity for training in wildlife guardianship by local communities to control the wasteful poaching.

I had the privilege of training the first nature guides - local Tajik and Kyrgyz herders - in basic wildlife survey and monitoring techniques, to improve their livelihoods in this windswept, frigidly cold montane area.

Building upon these efforts, this year SLC also provided natural history information for the first tourist map of the Pamirs, a multi-disciplinary effort under famed cartographer Marcus Hauser. The map's educational focus serves as a guide for both tourists and local residents on the roof of the world.



RODNEY JACKSON

Rodney working with the Pamirs' first nature guides.

High-tech in Remote Corners

Field-based conservationists depend on technology for data collection, analysis and storage, but they don't always have the equipment or support that they need.



STACEY IVERSON

Anteneh Shimelis learns about the newly set-up network with Keith Iverson of WildTec.

WildTec, an organization founded by Keith (Kip) Iverson and India Sanjuan, is addressing many of the computer and technology needs of WCN conservationists in the field. WildTec's first assignment was to implement a computer

network and backup system for the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program. After an initial site assessment at the Bale Mountain headquarters, WCN helped to secure funding to provide the necessary equipment for EWCP.

WildTec worked alongside EWCP staff to set up and install the network, and helped to plan for future expansion of the systems. Building internal expertise, as well as providing opportunities for acquiring needed equipment, will help to keep the conservationists in the field, doing what they do best.

CCF-USA Headquarters Moves to Cincinnati Zoo

2004 has been an exciting year of change for the Cheetah Conservation Fund. In July of this year, the headquarters for CCF-USA was officially transferred from Ojai,

CA to the Cincinnati Zoo in Ohio. With the resources and support of countless people, the transition has been smooth. All of the CCF chapters worldwide, which are run by volunteers, will be managed from this new office.

This move positions CCF for an excellent opportunity for growth, as CCF has had a long and collaborative relationship with the Cincinnati Zoo.

Gregg Hudson, President and CEO of the Cincinnati Zoo and a CCF board member, is very involved in this important transition. "We are pleased to play a role in helping define CCF's future. This is a great example of how innovative partnerships can lead to effective worldwide conservation."



DAVE JENIKE

A cheetah in Namibia.

Spotlight on The Andean Cat Alliance

Scientists, educators and local communities join forces to save the endangered Andean mountain cat

High in the Andean deserts of Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina a little known felid stalks its prey on a steep, rocky hillside while the spike grasses thrash in the unrelenting wind. This is the habitat of the Andean mountain cat (*Oreailurus jacobita*), the most endangered felid in the Americas and one of the most endangered cats in the world. Some researchers have speculated that there may be fewer than 1000 individuals in the wild and there are none known in captivity. Interviews with local inhabitants tell of a sustained and drastic decline in the Andean cat population over the last 50 years. This decline may be due to reduction of prey, hunting by indigenous people for traditional ceremonies and to bring good luck, habitat fragmentation caused by human population growth, or persecution as vermin. In this remote, harsh environment it is difficult to collect information on such a rare and elusive carnivore. Further research is needed to understand the cat's biology and ecology and to determine the current distribution so that conservation initiatives can be identified, prioritized and implemented.

In October 2003 South American biologists created Alianza Gato Andino (AGA), or the Andean Cat Alliance, to work together to conserve the Andean mountain cat throughout its range. The first AGA meeting was held in April 2004 in Arica, Chile where

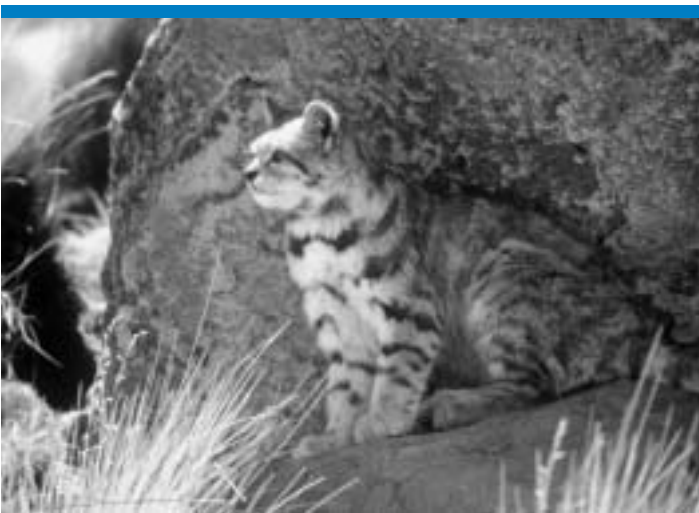
thirteen participants representing seven countries gathered to review current threats and collaborate on future conservation efforts. During the meeting, AGA members drafted the Andean Cat Conservation Action Plan to save this rare and endangered species. The Action Plan was published in October 2004 and is now being used as the foundation for all future conservation initiatives.



After searching for six years, Mauro Lucherini finally came face to face with his first Andean cat in Argentina

The Andean Cat Conservation Action Plan includes specific objectives directly linked to the current known threats. The specific objectives are:

1. Determine the current distribution and relative abundance of Andean cat populations, and the threats that affect the species and natural ecosystems
2. Carry out scientific research to produce basic information on Andean cat biology and ecology
3. Mitigate impacts of human activities on the Andean cat and natural ecosystems through community participation and education
4. Strengthen the management of protected areas where the Andean cat is present, promote the establishment of new areas or corridors and encourage the development of conservation initiatives in the region
5. Promote the implementation and adequacy of conservation legislation and policies regarding the Andean cat and natural ecosystems
6. Continuously evaluate the actions developed during the implementation of this plan.



The sighting of this adult male Andean cat in Chile in 1998 was the catalyst that sparked local and international interest in this rare species

Spotlight on The Andean Cat Alliance



M. LUCHERINI - GECM

Mauro Lucherini gently pulls hairs from a hair trap for DNA analysis

Individual projects to protect the Andean cat may use a variety of methods to reach their goals including field surveys, camera trapping, DNA analysis, radio-telemetry studies, community-based conservation programs, promotion and management of protected areas, educational programs and materials, and legislative lobbying. Basic field surveys will be conducted in areas where no surveys have been done. More detailed surveys and biological and ecological studies will be concentrated in the tri-border areas of the central portion of the range where the cats are known to occur based on recent sightings and records. Conservation initiatives will be carried out at the local, regional, and national levels in all four range countries. These conservation efforts have been



M. LUCHERINI - GECM

Local children and adults enjoy a puppet show performed by the Andean cat team in Argentina. This is one educational tool the team uses to teach about the Andean cat and other Andean fauna.

generously supported by Christine Hemrick and Bosack & Kruger Foundation.

Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) sponsored the meeting in Arica and facilitated the development of the Conservation Action Plan. WCN is actively fundraising to provide the resources to implement the Action Plan and is committed to assisting AGA in its effort to ensure the survival of one of the world's most elusive cats.

Collaboration leads to successful capture and release for radio-telemetry study

Lilian Villalba, AGA Coordinator, has been working with park guards from the Eduardo Avaroa

Andean Fauna Reserve in Bolivia since 2001 in an effort to establish a permanent study area to gather basic ecological information on the Andean cat. During 2003 and early 2004, camera-trapping was used to identify possible locations for future live-capture and radio-telemetry studies.



E. DELGADO, D. BERNA, L. VILLALBA

This camera trap photo from Bolivia "captures" an Andean cat taking the bait from a non-active box trap

Their efforts were rewarded in April 2004 when the Bolivian Andean Cat Project team successfully captured an adult female Andean cat. She was named "Sombrita" (little shadow) and released three hours after being fitted with a radio-collar. Eliseo Delgado, one of the park guards, has been monitoring her

movements and activity patterns over the last several months. This important data will contribute to a better understanding of this endangered species.



BOLIVIAN ANDEAN CAT PROJECT

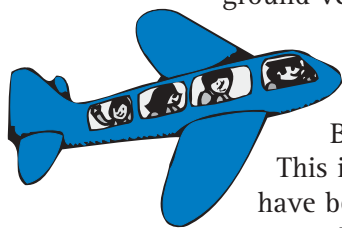
The Bolivian Andean Cat Team examines "Sombrita" and fits a collar for radio tracking





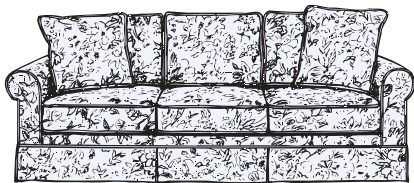
WildNet Notes

Cheetah Conservation Botswana has wings! Many thanks to all the WCN supporters, in particular Howard Buffett, who gave generously to help Rebecca Klein and CCB purchase a microlight airplane (Cheetah/Rotex 912) for tracking and monitoring cheetahs. Botswana's cheetah roam far and wide, making tracking from the ground very difficult and expensive. This



new plane will give CCB the perspective they need to manage and monitor Botswana's remaining cheetahs. This important addition would not have been possible without your support. Thank you!

Expo Conservationists in your own home!



Relive the exciting stories and fascinating conservation work of the 2004 Wildlife Conservation Expo from the comfort of your own couch. DVD's of all the WCN conservationists' presentations will be available for rental this December. If you're interested in renting a set of DVD's, please contact Elaine Iverson at elaine@wildnet.org

Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) is dedicated to supporting independent conservation entrepreneurs who have active field programs working with local people to save endangered wildlife and habitats. These pioneering conservationists maximize the value of every dollar invested in conservation. WCN's financial, technical and administrative support makes their work even more effective.

WildNet News brings you their stories, from the frontlines of field conservation in remote corners of the world.

For more information, please visit www.WildNet.org



Wildlife Conservation Network ~ the perfect gift!

Stuck for a gift for the holiday party at work?



Tired of fighting holiday traffic to the mall? Instead of exchanging gifts that people can't use or don't want, please consider giving a gift for the future of our endangered species. A donation can be made for a friend, relative, co-worker, etc. and a card will be mailed to them, acknowledging your generous support in their honor.



IAN DOUGLAS-HAMILTON

Please help us!

Your support is crucial to the success of the exceptional conservation programs that WCN supports. By joining WCN, you are helping to create a network of resources that is invaluable to the conservationists working in the field.

Please consider support at one of the levels listed below (an envelope is enclosed):

- \$25 – Supporter
- \$50 – Contributor
- \$100 – Friend
- \$500 – Sponsor
- \$1000 – Benefactor
- \$5000 – Patron
- \$_____ Other

Your gift can be designated for a specific project of your choosing. 100% of designated gifts will be directed to the specified project (a list of these projects is on the enclosed envelope and on our web

site at www.WildNet.org). Or, you can make a general donation and WCN will choose where it is needed most.

Please make checks out to "WCN" and mail to:

Wildlife Conservation Network
25745 Bassett Lane
Los Altos, CA 94022

Thank you for your support of wildlife conservation. Every dollar and every effort make a difference to our wildlife and our planet.

Dates to remember in 2005!



Saturday, February 5

Tales of Triumph and Tragedy with Greg Rasmussen of Painted Dog Conservation
Event details available soon at www.WildNet.org

Wednesday, March 23 at 6:30pm

Laurie Marker (Cheetah Conservation Fund) at the San Francisco Zoo
For more information, please contact the Zoo at 415-753-7073



PETER BLINSTON

October 7-9, 2005

Wildlife Conservation Expo and Gala Dinner – the Premier wildlife event!
Jane Goodall returns as keynote speaker

If you are not already on WCN's mailing list, and would like to receive invitations to these fabulous events, please contact Stacey Iverson at stacey@wildnet.org or 650-949-3533.

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