CAT NEWS is the newsletter of the Cat Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. It is published twice a year, and is available to subscribers to FRIENDS OF THE CAT GROUP. The current subscription is $20 p.a., payable to The Chairman, IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group, World Conservation Centre, 1196 Gland, Switzerland.

 Contributions, papers, press cuttings etc. about the wild cats are welcome.

Cover: Chuchhi, Princess of the Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal, who died last year, with David Smith when he radio-collared her in 1978 (see p.10)

Photo: Peter Jackson
A new IUCN triennium began with the General Assembly in Costa Rica last February. There is a new Director General, Dr Martin Holdgate, who was the British Government's Chief Environment Scientist and Deputy Secretary, Environment Protection in the Department of the Environment.

As provided in the Statutes, all commissions and specialist groups have to be reconstituted. Gren Lucas, Keeper of the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, England, was reelected Chairman of the Species Survival Commission, and I have accepted his request to continue as Chairman of the Cat Specialist Group. Gren will be inviting relevant experts to join the group.

It must be stressed that specialist groups are formed to advise IUCN and others concerned with conservation of nature on matters concerning species within their competence. Membership is not invited merely in recognition of expertise, but with the expectation of active involvement in the work of the group. It has been my pleasure to have had considerable cooperation from a high proportion of the members of the Cat Group. Unfortunately, there has been no communication whatsoever from some, even in response to specific requests concerning their expertise. I should like to urge all those who receive invitations for this triennium to consider, before replying, whether they will be able to contribute to our goal of advancing conservation of the wild cats. Some leading specialists have not become members of the group but are cooperating, and are included in the database of contacts. Such an association is welcome for those who have heavy responsibilities taking up their time.

For those who do become members of the Cat Group there is work to be done. We have been discussing the International Cat Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for several years, but have fallen behind some other specialist groups in producing this key document. Meanwhile, we all know that cat populations are declining because of loss of habitat and human predation. If these problems are to be tackled effectively, it is vital that IUCN has the
considered advice and recommendations of cat specialists, which can be coordinated with other activities relevant to these problems, such as those covering protected areas, tropical forests, international and domestic laws, wildlife trade, ecology and so on.

The Cat Group has produced a Manifesto on Cat Conservation, which outlines the role of cats in the earth’s ecology and in human culture; reviews the history of declines in cat populations; explains current problems threatening cat survival; and provides general recommendations for conservation action. Meanwhile, a great deal of data has been accumulated for the detailed strategy and action plan. Dr Paul Joslin, Deputy Chairman of the Cat Group, has taken responsibility for this task. The final document must be produced as a matter of urgency, and the active cooperation of cat specialists will be required. I hope everyone will donate time and effort to this very important task.

Survey of leopard in sub-Saharan Africa

A large number of orders have been received for the final version of the SURVEY OF LEOPARD IN SUBSAHARAN AFRICA, prepared by Rowan Martin and Tom de Meulenaer for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Many people must have wondered if their orders had gone astray in view of the delay in publication. This has been due to financial problems in CITES, but these have now been solved, thanks to the generosity of the Government of Canada, and the report is about to be printed. It is hoped that copies will be available within the next two months.

The report is of considerable importance for leopard conservation, since it argues that the leopard does not rightly belong on Appendix I of CITES, which bans international commerce, and that exploitation for skins and safari hunting could be considered in the light of the estimates of leopard populations in many African countries. At last July’s CITES Conference of the Parties in Ottawa, African delegates took a cautious line and declared that more study was necessary.

The draft report by Martin and de Meulenaer came under criticism involving the computer modelling from which leopard population estimates were derived, which are basic to the report and recommendations. It is essential that the views of leopard and other relevant specialists be made available to CITES and interested governments so that soundly-based decisions are made about the leopard’s future. It is proposed to establish a small task force in the Cat Group to review the report and make recommendations. When the report comes out, constructive comments would be welcome from anyone. They can be sent to me, and I shall pass them to the task force when it is set up.

If changes are to be made in the leopard’s status, the first opportunity would be at the next Conference of the Parties, which should be about October 1989. Proposals for changes have to be filed by governments party to the convention at least 90 days before the conference, i.e. about July 1989. Given the time it takes for governments to prepare proposals, there is no time to spare in preparing the Cat Specialist Group’s comments and recommendations.

PETER JACKSON
WORLD STATUS OF JAGUAR 1987

The jaguar is declining through loss of habitat to agriculture and other development, and although it may be holding its own in a relatively large area of South America and in some small areas of the Central American Core, it is not adequately protected by governments or the people in any area where it occurs.

This is the conclusion of Professor Wendell R. Swank of Texas A&I University and Dr James G. Teer, Director of the R and B Belding Foundation, in a report to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Washington DC.

Although they suggest that sport hunting could be a positive measure to protect the jaguar in the long term, provided sound management has been instituted in such areas, they conclude that the jaguar should remain, for the present, on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

"We found no enthusiasm on the part of wildlife organisations or scientists/biologists to change its status, i.e. to take it off the protected list and permit hunting," they declare.

Swank and Teer report on the status of jaguar in 22 countries in which it occurs, as well as reproducing interviews with 56 leading specialists and interested parties. The study was funded by Safari Club International. In their Conclusions and Recommendations they state:

"Although very little current scientific data are available and few substantive field studies of the jaguar's status and ecology have been conducted throughout its range, clearly the jaguar's range and numbers have shrunk dramatically since European settlement. The shrinkage was accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s when commercial exploitation of the species was practiced for world trade and when deforestation and development of natural habitats were increased to meet growing numbers of people and their needs.

"Nonetheless, considerable jaguar habitat remains, not all of it in tropical forests, and jaguar numbers have begun to sustain themselves and even increase in some areas of its range as a result of loss of markets for jaguar skins brought about by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Jaguars are still taken in considerable numbers, the dimension of which can only be guessed at the present time. Most are killed to protect domestic livestock and by mestizos and other rural peoples who take them opportunistically and primarily for sale at local levels. Commercial hunting for jaguar skins has all but ceased in Central and South America. Some sport hunting occurs and this on large ranches, but with little effect on the species' future.

"Deforestation and development of natural systems for agriculture and other uses has had the greatest impact on the jaguar and still poses a serious threat to it. By eliminating its habitat and its prey, the jaguar has safety only in the most remote areas and in parks and reserves that are given protection from incursions of people for various reasons. Development and losses of habitat are expected to continue, and with it, the jaguar.

"All countries in Latin America have institutionalized conservation and protection of natural resources in their governmental structures. Agencies charged with administering and managing parks and wildlife resources are in
place. Practically every nation has developed a list of scarce and threatened species, and all governments, except one, are signatory parties to CITES. Laws and regulations are in place, and these generally fit the situations at hand.

"Unfortunately, many conservation agencies of government are funded very poorly, their programs have the lowest priorities among other needs of the people, and field personnel to enforce regulations are practically non-existent. Laws and proclamations of government administrations are usually adequate to protect resources, but they are poorly, if at all, enforced in the outback, where resources are exploited. In some cases, illicit trade in contraband animal and plant products is overlooked by authorities.

"It is in this context that the jaguar's future must be decided. While the species may be holding its own in a relatively large area of South America and in some small areas of the Central American Core, it is not adequately protected by the governments or the people in any area where it occurs. Nor does the future of the species seem any brighter when the rates of losses of its major habitats are evaluated. Such areas as the Amazon Basin are protected by nature because of limited access, but this protection cannot persist in the face of rapid deforestation and development occurring there.

"Having reported the above, it is important and fair to state that the species could sustain some offtake in selected areas of Belize, Mexico and some regions of the Amazon Basin in Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia and, perhaps, Paraguay. As Tello (1986) stated in his survey of the species in Bolivia: 'jaguars will be protected on the majority of large ranches where they occur, and if the species comes under a sound management program e.g. hunting and photographic safaris, but mainly hunting, provided that farmers will receive a financial return that will pay for all of their domestic animals killed by jaguars. As a consequence of a sound management program for this species on the ranches, specific important habitats will also be saved and other animal species, such as marsh, pampas and brocket deer; peccaries; tapirs, etc will also receive protection. The increase of natural prey will decrease the predation by jaguars on the domestic livestock.' (underlined emphasis by Tello).

"Under existing conditions of administration and management of wildlife resources in the countries in which the species occurs, we conclude the jaguar should be retained on Appendix I of CITES. We found no enthusiasm on the part of wildlife organizations or scientist/biologists to change its status, i.e. to take it off the protected list and permit hunting, nor do we recommend that its status be changed under existing conditions.

"However, should sound management be instituted in selected areas of the jaguar's range, we view wise use of the species as a positive measure to protect its future in the long term. Loss of habitat will continue and this factor, not sport hunting, will likely deliver a telling blow to the species' persistence and survival in much of its present range. Given some economic worth, the species can likely be protected outside parks and reserves, many of which are presently the chief remaining bastions of protection for the species in certain countries.

"It is obvious to us that livestock owners will continue to protect their animals from predation by any wild animal. Thus some measures should be instituted to make the jaguar a positive rather than a negative force. To be sure, some few larger ranches will protect the species, but not for protecting its long-term future, but rather for its use as an object of sport hunting, illegal as it is in all countries. Attitudes are utilitarian among rural peoples and conservation presently is not a strong force in preserving wildlife for its own sake or for future use."
"Thus we conclude that management schemes with periodic evaluations should be initiated in selected areas where the species has maintained its numbers and where it presently is a factor in livestock management. Little organizational or financial support for such studies can be expected from in-country sources. Rather, a cooperative effort by in-country administrative authority and donor/scientific organizations will likely be necessary to develop any kind of management program".

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ASIATIC LION STUDIES PROGRESS

Ravi Chellam, Senior Research Fellow of the Wildlife Institute of India, has been following three radio-collared Asiatic lions in the Gir Forest in western India for over a year now. He reports that, despite the difficulties of tracking in the hilly terrain, rewarding information is being collected. Altogether he has collared four lions, two adult males and one subadult in the western part of the Gir and one adult male in the east. A collared female died after having provided useful data.

The study covers lion predation patterns, spatial requirements and movements; abundance and composition of the lion and ungulate populations; and preparation of management recommendations.

Preliminary results indicate that adult male lions occupy territories of about 200 km², in which there are two or more female units with sub-adults and cubs. If nomadic males pass through the territories there are violent clashes. The radio-collared female had a territory of only about 60 km². Mating goes on throughout the year with a seasonal peak in winter.

During last year’s severe drought, which coincided with a six-week strike by forest guards, thousands of livestock entered the park. This livestock became the major part of lion prey.

During studies of the lions in the 1960s Paul Joslin found that 75% of the lion prey consisted of domestic livestock. At that time the wild ungulate population was greatly reduced, but it recovered subsequently when the government moved a large part of the livestock from the park. Ravi has found during his current study that livestock is usually only taken when outside the thorn enclosures where they are normally kept at night. Scat analysis has indicated that livestock, largely buffaloes makes up 47% of prey. Of the wild prey, spotted deer Axis axis forms the overwhelming bulk.

Ravi says that last year’s severe drought has not seriously affected the lions and ungulates. However, the Maldhari (cattle breeders) in the Gir, and their cattle have suffered badly. Extensive lopping of trees to feed the cattle is affecting the vegetation.

A safari park has been commissioned, covering four km² in the western part of the 1,412 km² Gir Lion Sanctuary. Six lions from the nearby Junagadh Zoo have been released there and are being artificially fed. The Cat Specialist Group expressed its opposition to having a safari area in the Gir at its meeting in India in 1984. Ravi expresses concern that the fence is not lion-proof.
According to the 1984 census there are about 230 lions in the Gir. They are the sole survivors of the Asiatic lions which once ranged as far west as Greece. Only action by the ruler of Junagadh State, with the support of the British Indian Government, prevented the extinction of the lions in the early part of this century.

Veer, aged 6, was found dead recently with 52 pellets in his body—a victim of senseless violence inflicted by some unknown assailants. Veer was a resident of the Gir National Park, 'Gir National Park? 'Do you mean Veer was an animal?'

Yes, Veer was one of the few surviving lions in the Gir National Park which is the last refuge of the Asiatic lions. They were once widely distributed in Asia from Asia Minor and Arabia through Persia to India. The park was established to ensure, on one hand, the protection of the lion and its natural habitat and, on the other, improvement in the lot of the Malharis.

The current happenings in this sanctuary and National Park negate the first objective while unnecessarily reinforcing the second. The strike of the forest department staff of Gujarat allowed the rights of these lions to be violated by the Malharis and their cattle which entered the National Park unchecked. The news of the death of Veer, and that of two leopards and many deer prompted these writers to visit the Sasan Gir Sanctuary in September.

We had several meetings with a cross-section of forest department officials (both those on duty and on strike), Malharis and Jamial Khan and Ravi Chhetram, research scholars from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. This has reinforced our conviction that the ecological balance of this park is threatened with grave danger.

CATTLE CAMP?: The 41-day-old strike had made it difficult to distinguish this National Park from a cattle camp. No less than two lakshe cattle were grazing on the 160 sq. kms of the sanctuary area, said Jamial Khan. It is common knowledge that there is an acute shortage of fodder in drought-hit Gujarat. This has driven cattle to this protected area from distances of more than a hundred kilometres. Little is being done to prevent this, although according to a study, grazing of cattle is one of the main reasons for the retraction of Gir Forest into thorn scrub and now desert. Since 1880s, Gir Forest has shrunk from 3360 kms to 1300 kms ad wildlife here has been virtually eliminated.

During a 10-year period, (1968-1978), according to Jamial Khan, 12 percent of the Gir forest has disappeared. It is also imperative to recall that lions began killing livestock only when advancing desertification diminished the population of wild ungulates—their natural prey. Loss of cover, trampling and soil erosion are the general effects of overgrazing.

The siege within

Overgrazing has also meant that some noxious weeds like Lantana, Cassia Tora and Lucas, which are fed upon by neither cattle nor the herbivores, are becoming dominant. These weeds are spreading at the expense of other palatable grasses which are sought after by cattle as well as by wild ungulates. This spread of weeds is clearly a result of overgrazing of cattle. This affects species diversity, but may also have certain other effects on which much research has yet to be done.

HUMAN INSTITUTION: It is true that some Malharis can live inside the sanctuary—not the National Park—not with their cattle. But, they are clearly exceeding the constraints. Knowledgeable sources informed us that non-resident Malharis have to pay Rs. 100 per animal as 'overall expenses' and Rs. 60 per animal per month for the privilege of grazing them in the forest. It is believed that the receiver of these payments is the Malhari community resident in the Gir Sanctuary. Little wonder then, that some Malharis who originally had 40-50 buffaloes now possess more than 150 cattle.

A blind eye is obviously being turned towards the forest department rules which demand a fine in case of intrusion. Our attempt at attracting the attention of some Malharis resulted in their scurrying away and abandoning their cattle. Eyewitness reports have also provided us with evidence of illegal woodcutting, especially of teak trees. Man, when he sets his mind to callous destruction, can be quite ruthless.

Veer, the prime lion of the Western Gir was a popular attraction at the lion shows. A panther was also found killed in the Barada area with his nails missing—probably, a victim of poaching. Two spotted deer and a pregnant onemal were also killed. Another panther was found dead on the day of our arrival in Gir—next to the post-mortem report is still awaited. We were also made aware of the transportation of six fawns to the Junagadh zoo from this forest—it is likely that their mothers were either killed or had run away to save their lives.

Need must also be taken of a possible alteration in the predation behaviour of lions and panthers in the long run—four kills of domestic cattle by one lion in a day should ring alarm bells. The fear of a spread of the foot and mouth disease, first detected here last October, should also not be underestimated. A limited source of water may see its rapid diffusion from some of the cattle currently grazing in the forest to the herbivores—two Sambars have already been found to suffer from this disease. A complaint by the forest department to higher authorities met with inadequate response.

All, however, is not lost. In the first week of September, finally, the department started vaccinating a limited number of cattle of the nearby villages. Except the Hiran river, the remaining five rivers of Gujarat have dried up. Lack of water in the Kamleshwar Dam, due to the release of water by the irrigation department to the surrounding villages, also holds ominous portents for the survival of wildlife in the future.

Need of the hour: The forest officials' strike was thankfully called off after 41 days. The loss suffered by the Gir—the only home of the 299 Asiatic lions—is irreparable. The employees on strike actually took malicious pleasure in giving us information on wood-cutting and poaching. Are these the savages of our last declining natural heritage? It is time that we recall Indira Gandhi's words, 'the responsibility on the present generation is an ovenous one'. Drastic action is needed to restore the sanctity of the Gir National Park.

[CEC-NPS]
GUY SMITH III – A TRIBUTE

Guy Smith III, of Knoxville Zoo, Tennessee, and Asiatic Lion Studbook Keeper, died last year. The appearance of this tribute has been delayed, but is none the less sincere.

Paul Joslin, a close associate of Guy in the conservation of Asiatic lions, writes:

A champion of cat conservation and an active member of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group, Guy Smith III passed away after a long bout with cancer. During his many years as Director of Knoxville Zoological Park, Tennessee, he transformed it into a center for the captive breeding of many of the world's felids. He became particularly interested in Asiatic lions, and his zoo was the first to exhibit them in North America. Together with the Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago, he established the International Studbook of Asiatic Lions and became Studbook Keeper.

The captive breeding program grew to no fewer than 250 lions, equaling the population in the wild. Every effort was made to encourage participating zoos to minimize inbreeding coefficients through exchanges. The programme encountered a devastating setback when a team of scientists led by Dr Stephen O'Brien of the U.S. National Cancer Institute established by molecular cytogenetic techniques that one of the founding lines was not of pure Asiatic lion origin. Stock from this line, which came from Trivandrum zoo in southern India, had been mixed with most of the captive population, with the result that only five pure Asiatic lions were found to exist in European and North American zoos. One was a sterile male in Knoxville Zoo; a second was a 16-year-old female in Marwell Zoo in Britain; a third was a 16-year-old female with two eight-year-old female offspring in the Lincoln Park Zoo.

In order to salvage the programme Guy Smith made a special plea to the Government of India to contribute new founding stock. He had the support of Dr Ulysses S. Seal, Chairman of the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group and Peter Jackson, Chairman of the Cat Specialist Group. Sakkarbaug Zoo in Junagadh, near the Asiatic lion's last sanctuary in the Gir Forest, expressed willingness to contribute from its surplus lion stock to the collective conservation programme. The zoo has about 40 pure-bred Asiatic lions and is anxious to create more breeding space within its own facilities by distributing animals to other zoos. The matter still awaits the decision central government. In the meantime the unmated lionesses outside India are a year older and less able to breed, and one has died due to complications associated with age.

Let us hope that Guy's last request will be honoured before it is too late, and that a pure Asiatic lion population outside India will be a living memorial to him.

REPORT ON PROJECT TIGER, INDIA

Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary near India's frontier with southwestern Nepal, have been declared India's 16th tiger reserve, states the official report of the Ministry of Environment and Forests for 1987-88. Covering 811 km², the new reserve is also the site of reintroduction of great one-horned rhino Rhinoceros unicornis, which have been translocated from Assam in northeastern India and Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal, and has one of the largest surviving populations of swamp deer Cervus duvaucelli.
India, which launched Project Tiger on 1 April 1973, now has special tiger reserves in 12 states covering 26,000 km² of forest. The tiger population in 15 reserves was estimated to have increased to 1,141 in 1987 compared with 1,121 in 1984, when an all-India census put the tiger population at 4,005. It is stated that populations of endangered species, such as wild buffalo, swamp deer and elephant, have also increased.

Another reserve is to be declared soon at Mundanthurai, near the southern tip of India in Tamilnadu. The Central Government provides the State Governments with 50% of recurring expenditure and 100% of non-recurring expenditure on approved works in tiger reserves. Project Tiger is included in the government's five year plans for economic development.

The main works being carried out include construction of field research laboratories and interpretation centres; development of service roads to control poaching and forest fires; improvement of wireless communications and water facilities; eradication of weeds like lantana and eupatorium; improvement of pastureland; and translocation of villages and cattle camps from core areas to buffer areas. Apart from monitoring of fauna and flora, special attention is being given to improving veterinary services in and around tiger reserves.

Because of the ever-mounting pressure of tourism steps are being taken to regulate visitor numbers and Tourism Management Plans are being prepared.

**TIGER STUDBOOK 1987**

The International Tiger Studbook 1987 reports that on 31 December 1986 there were 623 (278,345) Siberian tigers, 139 (63,76) Sumatran tigers, 45 (22,23) Bengal tigers, and 52 (33.19) South China tigers registered in captivity.

The Studbook is kept by Dr Siegfried Seifert of Leipzig Zoo in the German Democratic Republic.

This is the first time South China tigers have been included in the Studbook. All are in Chinese zoos, with the largest group (12) in Chongqing, which has been proposed as the centre for a captive breeding programme. According to estimates by Chinese specialists, the wild population of South China tigers is not more than 50, and they are scattered over a wide area. Although nominally protected they are still hunted as pests and for bones and other parts for medicine.

**WHITE TIGERS**

Alan Shoemaker, zoologist at Riverbanks Zoological Park, Columbia, South Carolina, takes issue with the statement in CAT NEWS 8 that the legendary white tiger of Rewa, Mohan, was ancestor to all white tigers in zoos today.

"A pure-bred studbook-registered Siberian mated with a tiger of unknown ancestry in the Hawthorn Circus community and produced a white offspring. And it is from this animal that most of the white tigers in North America trace their ancestry. Also, a new white tiger has appeared in Florida at Center Hill, which is pure Siberian."
"In working to develop tiger propagation efforts in North America, the white tiger has been a stumbling block because some zoos have dropped pure-bred races in favour of crowd-pleasing white ones. If both types were present, it wouldn't be so bad, but, in most instances, Siberian tigers were dropped to make room for white ones. Worse yet, the story of Mohan is repeated again and again, despite facts to the contrary."

Alan, who is also Leopard Studbook Keeper, reports that a number of leopards have been exported from Colombo (Dehiwala) Zoo, Sri Lanka, to various locations in Europe.

"They were primarily nuisance animals, but I cannot believe the zoo community can absorb all of these animals and their future young. Data surrounding their relationship is also sketchy due to poor communication from that zoo."

According to records kept by the Dehiwala Zoo in Sri Lanka, leopards were exported in 1986/87 to the Sind Wildlife Management Board, Pakistan (2); Safari Park, Pakistan (4); Natura Artis Magistra, Amsterdam, Netherlands (1); Ogrod Zoologickxy, Warsaw, Poland (2); Onwehand Zoo, Utrecht, Netherlands (1); Krefeld Zoo, W. Germany (1). In addition blood samples and skin biopsies of 50 leopards in the zoo were sent to the National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

HONG KONG'S WILD TIGER CHASE

Hong Kong police mounted a tiger hunt in May after two construction workers reported seeing two striped animals more than one metre long in the New Territories, near the Chinese border. In a day's hunting the police bagged two stray dogs, reported the International Herald Tribune of 5 May 1988.

The newspaper said the last tiger shot in Hong Kong was in 1942.

Forest officials hounding world-famous tiger saviour

From Sonia Paul

National Park (NEI) May 13 - Tigers, the wild cats of Asia, - the tigers of Siberia, Indochina, India, which he sighted in Hong Kong, Billy spotted by accident and the TIGER CALF that he adopted, are the only species of tiger found in Hong Kong, near the Chinese border. In a day's hunting the police bagged two stray dogs, reported the International Herald Tribune of 5 May 1988.

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Forest officials hounding world-famous tiger saviour
MORE ABOUT CHUCHHI

In CAT NEWS 8 I recounted my memories of Chuchhi, a tigress in the Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal, who was found dead last year at the end of a life which had been monitored closely by scientists. One of them was John Seidensticker, now Associate Curator of Mammals at the National Zoo in Washington. He contributed a memoir to ZOOGOER, the journal of Friends of the National Zoo, which is reproduced here with no apologies for harping on Chuchhi - her story is so remarkable.

Life of a Tigress

John Seidensticker

Charles McDougal, a National Zoo Research Associate, has been watching the tigers of Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park for more than 15 years. His long-term observations are the most extensive ever made on tiger behavior and ecology. Over the years, as he tracked the rich details of their lives, Chuck also came to know many individual tigers intimately. He recently wrote to report the death of a tiger and a friend.

"On the afternoon of August 10, 1987, the still-warm remains of female tiger No. 115, 'Chuchhi,' were found beside the path between Dhaker Khola and Banth Khola Puchchar, just south of the Reu River in Chitwan. Her back was broken. A careful reading of tracks showed she was killed by a forensic blow from a 3-year-old male tiger, the son of female tiger No. 122. At the time of her death, Chuchhi was emaciated (98 kg or 215 pounds) and had badly torn canines. She was at least 15.5 years old."

From the time Chuck started watching tigers, Chuchhi (meaning "pointed tees," for her distinctive tracks) had been an obnoxious and vital force in Chitwan, where she lived and hunted and reared her cubs in the tall grass and riverine forest on the flood plain between the Reu and Reu rivers. She was a key figure in the scientific monographs and papers on tiger social organization and land-tenure system written by Chuck and by former Smithsonian Tiger Ecology Project scientists Mel Sunquist and Dave Smith.

I first met Chuchhi in 1974 when she was still working out the boundaries of her territory with No. 122's mother. When Chuck and I studied tiger predatory behavior, Chuchhi was one of our focal animals. She was also an important player in our study of interactions between tigers and leopards. We learned that female tigers defend territories from other females by watching and tracking Chuchhi and her neighbors. Chuck and Dave Smith learned how female tigers maintain exclusive territories without fighting by observing Chuchhi and female tiger No. 122 mark and inspect trees along their common boundary. Through radiotracking (she was first collared in 1976), careful reading of pug marks, and direct observation, Chuck and his Sherki assistants learned the details of Chuchhi's life.

Although Chuchhi lived on the same territory throughout her breeding life, in 15 years she had many different males in her life. The first male to occupy a territory that overlapped Chuchhi's was No. 102, in 1975-76. From 1976 to November of 1979 there was No. 105, followed by Sahila Bhale, whose tenure lasted until August of 1981. Then there was a 6-month period of upheaval. First to enter the vacant territory was a young male, No. 123, but he was soon joined by male No. 127. In the ensuing fight over possession No. 123 was killed. No. 127 was usurped in February of 1982 by Kanchha Bhale, who took over and stayed until 1985. He was then replaced by Bahadur Bhale, the last of Chuchhi's males. Some of these male tigers fathered her cubs; some probably killed her cubs; some undoubtedly did both.

Chuchhi's first litter was born in mid-1975, her last in mid-1985. In those 10 years she produced a total of 16 known cubs in five litters. Eight cubs survived at least until they dispersed at about two years of age, but Chuck doesn't think any of the cubs in her last litter survived.

Adult female tigers often remain near their mothers and some even acquire territories from their mothers. A female from Chuchhi's 1977 litter, known as the Panch Pandu Tigress, settled adjacent to her mother in 1979. In 1981-82, Chuchhi gave up about half of her territory to her daughter Jalarjasti, who was born in 1979. Kanchha Pothi, a daughter born in 1982, never left her mother's territory. In fact, she finally drove Chuchhi out at the end of 1986 before she produced her first two cubs in May of 1987.

In the last few months of her life, after Kanchhi Pothi displaced her, Chuchhi took a number of long, wandering trips to places she was never known to have visited before. But she kept returning to the Dhakre Khola area, where she had spent her life and where she finally met her death.

In his book, The Face of the Tiger, Chuck described an encounter with Chuchhi—a face-to-face meeting on a knife-edged Switalik ridge: "As I crested a rise on the ridge I saw a rapid movement and a flash of reddish-brown just on the near side of the next rise. It suddenly resolved itself into the tigress, who crouched facing me 15 yards away, her eyes locked into mine. I did not move. She did not move.... Then it struck me that perhaps the tigress was leaving the first move up to me. Quite slowly, as not to alarm her, I took a step backward. Then, as there was a sheer drop on either side, I turned around and retraced my steps back along the ridge the way I had come, resisting the impulse to look over my shoulder."

Sound conservation practice and policy is based on good natural history. The glimpses we had into Chuchhi's life were essential to our comprehensive understanding of tiger ecology and behavior. You could say she is the "stuff" of what we know about tigers. This information is the foundation of the enormous conservation effort mounted by His Majesty's Government of Nepal, which makes it possible for Chuchhi's daughters and granddaughters to still stalk their prey and raise their cubs in the tall grass of Chitwan Valley. But Chuchhi is gone. All of us who knew her feel a great loss.
LEOPARD ATTACKS IN NEPAL

A leopard killed a woman at Kaski in the middle hills of Nepal and has mauled several other people, Chuck MacDougall writes from Kathmandu.

But he says that up to April there had been no tiger or leopard attacks in the Chitwan area since the monsoon last year, not even during the grass cutting season when the activities of large numbers of people may clash with the cats.

SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION IN INDIA


The Wildlife Institute of India has launched a three-year study of snow leopard ecology and wildlife/man relationships in the Ladakh region of Kashmir. An earlier survey in Himalayan snow leopard range showed excessive collection of firewood and livestock grazing, as well as poaching of snow leopard. Ungulate populations were good in Ladakh, but reduced elsewhere by excessive hunting and competition with domestic stock.

Snow Leopard in China

by George B. Schaller
Wildlife Conservation International

Although much of the snow leopard’s total range lies in China, little has been reported about the status and distribution of the species in that country. As part of a collaborative project to assess China’s high-altitude wildlife resources, my Chinese colleagues and I have surveyed various parts of western China.

Snow leopard occur in the western Gansu and western Sichuan provinces, and throughout Qinghai Province and the Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions. We have not as yet surveyed Sichuan and the Tibet Autonomous Region. In western Gansu, snow leopard are rare, found mainly in parts of the Qilian Shan (shan means “mountain”). The cats still occur in all major ranges of Qinghai and Xinjiang, including the Altay Shan, Tian Shan, Karakoram, Kunlun Shan, Qilian Shan and its subsidiary ranges, Arjin Shan and Tanggula Shan, as well as in various isolated massifs and ranges. However, snow leopard occupy only about ten percent of the 2.3 million square kilometers of land area encompassed by Qinghai and Xinjiang.

Hunting, often in defense of livestock, has depressed snow leopard numbers in most areas and eliminated local populations. The cat’s principal prey (ibex in the Tian Shan and Altay Shan and mostly blue sheep elsewhere) occurs now generally at low densities (1 animal/km² or less); marmots, a main spring-to-autumn food, have also been decimated, being hunted for their skins and poisoned because they are said to compete with livestock for forage. The snow leopard has had complete legal protection since 1983 but there is little actual protection.

A number of reserves contain snow leopard: Yanchinwan in Gansu; Taxkorgan, Tomur Feng, and Arjin Shan in Xinjiang; and Qomolangma in Tibet. Although these reserves total almost 80,000 square kilometers, much of the terrain does not represent suitable snow leopard habitat and the cats have been or are still being hunted, making them generally rare.

It is not possible to estimate total snow leopard numbers in China, but I would guess that at least 2,000 survive in the country.
Snow Leopards in Northern Hunza

by David Mallon

In fall, 1987, an expedition from Operation Raleigh went to Hunza in Pakistan. In promoting expeditions for young people from many countries, the London-based organization aims to carry out scientific, community, and adventure projects all over the world. One objective of the 40-strong team based at Passu in northern India was a preliminary survey of the snow leopard and large ungulates in the area.

Situated at the western end of the Himalaya-Karakoram mountain complex, Hunza forms the northernmost tip of Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan and China. It is a spectacular area of high, rugged mountains, many of them over 7,500 meters in altitude, and it has an environment typical of arid, Trans-Himalayan mountain regions.

The weather during summer and autumn of 1987 was unusually wet, with a series of heavy rainstorms causing many landslides, blocking the strategic Karakoram highway, which is the only road through Hunza. Our program suffered many delays; however, we were able to carry out surveys in the Khunjerab National Park and in the valleys of the Passu and Batura glaciers, as well as in the main Hunza valley. We checked for snow leopard presence by searching for scrapes and other signs, a method which has been used successfully in other parts of the Himalaya. Other mammals were surveyed by observations and tracks.

We found a total of only sixteen snow leopard scrapes; and of these, three appeared to be fresh. This finding proved that snow leopards are still present in at least two areas of northern Hunza: but their population density must be very low when compared to ecologically similar areas, such as Ladkah in Kashmir or Rodney Jackson’s study area in west Nepal.

Four species of large ungulates have been recorded in Hunza. Marco Polo sheep occur only at two points along the border with China where their habitat of high rolling hills is found. We observed three of these sheep in late October at 4,700 meters near the Khunjerab Pass. The urial, a smaller species of mountain sheep which inhabits the lower hills along major river valleys, is no longer found in Hunza, having fallen victim to the many hunters. The bharal, like the Marco Polo sheep, has a very limited distribution in the area, and it is found in only one place in Hunza.

The only ungulate species which is widely distributed in Hunza and which could form an important prey species of the snow leopard is the ibex. It appears to be relatively common still, in places away from habitation, and we were encouraged to see parties of these animals and tracks at several points in the Khunjerab National Park and along the Batura glacier. Other possible snow leopard prey species—hares, marmots and Chukar partridges—were also present.

Unfortunately, the conservation situation is not very favorable. During summer, the people take their flocks of sheep and goats to graze in most of the mountain valleys, and hunting is a very popular activity, as it is throughout most of northern Pakistan. The availability of powerful modern weapons has increased the dangers to wildlife; hunters already having exterminated the urial population in Hunza. We saw hunters several times during our surveys but less often in the remoter places, away from the Karakoram highway. The snow leopard is fully protected by law in Pakistan but the problem of effective law enforcement in remote mountain areas remains.

The only protected area in Hunza is the Khunjerab National Park, established in 1975 at the instigation of George Schaller, and with the main purpose of protecting the only populations in Pakistan of Marco Polo sheep and bharal. Only five snow leopard scrapes were found here, of which one was fresh.

The decline of snow leopard populations in Pakistan was documented ten years ago by George Schaller and Tom Roberts, an expert on the wildlife of the country. A few snow leopards still survive in Hunza, and there are some remote valleys there where snow leopard and ibex can survive for some time yet. In the longer term, it seems inevitable that further damage will be done to wildlife unless stronger hunting controls are introduced.
ASIATIC CHEETAH

Helmut Hemmer has expressed serious concern about the report in CAT NEWS 8 about possible introduction of African cheetah in Turkmenistan in the USSR, where there have been cheetah sightings in recent years. He writes: "Both geographic populations, African and Asiatic, can be distinguished morphologically (see Heptner and Sludski's monograph of USSR mammals). We do not know enough about the differences in the ecology of these forms, nor of the differences in ethophyiology. In fact, we do not know anything about the possible existence of differently co-adapted gene complexes in both populations.

"As long as the existence of at least one breeding pair of Asiatic cheetah in the regions in question cannot be ruled out with certainty, any introduction of African cheetah must be considered as an act, not of nature conservation, but of nature destruction. It is also against basic IUCN principles. Each so-called 'conservationist' who takes part in an animal introduction that may finally result in a population crash and extinction by outcrossing depression due to the mixing of different co-adapted gene complexes, will have a much great responsibility for such destruction of the world's natural heritage than people who act without biological training and background and for purposes other than for conservation."

Hemmer says that African cheetah never lived in Turkmenistan, and there seems to be no real proof to support the suggestion that there were escapes of African cheetah imported for hunting purposes resulting in hybridisation with the Turkmenian population.

CHEETAH REMOVED FROM SOUTH AFRICAN RED DATA BOOK

The cheetah Acinonyx jubatus is no longer considered an endangered species in South Africa and has been removed from the South African Red Data Book.

The 1986 edition by the late Reay Smithers states that there is a small population in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park and they occur as vagrants along the Botswana border. There is also a resident population in the Kruger National Park, and individuals cross the border from Zimbabwe and Botswana.

The cheetah is a protected wild animal listed under Schedule 4 in the Transvaal; is specially protected in Natal; and is protected in Cape Province as an endangered wild animal. The Red Data Book recommends total protection; capture of problem individuals and translocation to game reserves, as carried out in Transvaal.

In the IUCN Red List 1988 the cheetah overall is still classed as "Vulnerable", while the Asiatic cheetah A. j. venaticus is "Endangered".

Clive Walker reports the discovery of cheetah in the Waterberg Mountains in North Western Transvaal, where he has a 21,000 ha reserve called Lapalala. A neighbour shot the animal under the impression that it was a leopard, for which he had a licence, and which is common in the area. The cheetah measured 225 cm. Local blacks said there were at least five cheetah in the area.

The area of flat tablelands and open woodland consists of private game sanctuaries, Tribal Trust Land and farming areas, mainly for cattle. Wildlife includes roan antelope Hippotragus equinus.
Les lynx indésirables

Les chasseurs et les moutonniers sont en colère. Réintroduits ces dernières années, les carnassiers ont tué l'an passé 1500 autres animaux Lynx have been successfully reintroduced to Switzerland after a long absence. But the reintroduction has been surrounded by controversy, provoked mainly by hunters, who complain of lynx predation on roe deer and chamois, and also by farmers, who blame the lynx for loss of sheep. The authorities in the Canton of Valais, where the controversy has been most intense, have now demanded the right to hunt lynx and expect the Federal authorities to agree.

Meanwhile, Swiss biologists Urs Breitenmoser and Heinrich Haller have been gathering data on lynx ecology using radio telemetry. Recently Breitenmoser had the excitement of catching four lynx in four weeks in the Jura mountains, on Switzerland's border with France, and another in the Canton of Valais in the Alps. The two have worked for several years in the Alps, but in the Jura they had had only one radio-collared animal - in 1987.

The lynx were caught in double-door traps placed where lynx scent-marked in the autumn and winter. No bait is used. Foot snares, which do not harm the lynx, are placed by roe deer and chamois kills.

The Jura captures were of two adult males and two females. One female and a male were in the same area, and so it is thought that they are a couple. The other female is the daughter of the adult female, and probably of the male. Breitenmoser was lucky enough to catch her while she was still with her mother. She remained in her mother's range for about three weeks and then moved along the Jura range. In less than two months she was about 110 km away.

The fourth lynx was caught in the Vallée de Joux, where a game ranger reported that he had found a roe deer killed by lynx.

"We put three foot snares around the carcass," Breitenmoser told me, "but there was a storm in the evening and the lynx did not return. We thought we were unlucky, but then, at one a.m. the alarm we had fixed to the snares sounded - and we had our lynx."

Even more, using heat sensing equipment he video-taped the lynx's cautious approach to the kill, its retreat and return, when it set off a snare without getting caught. Despite the experience it came back again and was held.

Breitenmoser and Haller have collared 20 lynx - 12 females and eight males. At present they have seven active radio collars - four in the Jura, and three in the Valais. Theirs is the only study involving the capture of wild lynx that has been going on, although in Austria and the French Vosges mountains collars have been put on released lynx. But a study started in Norway in the past winter and four lynx have been caught and radio-collared.

Breitenmoser says that roe deer Capreolus capreolus provide the main prey. But in higher areas, as in some valleys in the Alps, where roe deer are less common, the lynx kills mainly chamois Rupicapra rupicapra. The lynx also
takes brown hare *Lepus capensis*, blue hare *Lepus timidus* and marmot *Marmota marmota*. There have been cases of lynx taking ibex *Capra ibex* and red deer *Cervus elaphus*, but this seems very rare and roe deer and chamois form 95% of the prey.

According to official estimates there are about 100,000 roe deer, 68,000 chamois, 22,000 red deer, and 11,000 ibex in Switzerland. Breitenmoser estimates that an adult lynx kills about 60 chamois or roe deer a year. Given his estimate of the lynx population as about 50 to 100 adults the potential toll would be 3,000-6,000 of the estimated 168,000 roe deer and chamois.

PJ - "What about the complaints of shepherds that lynx take sheep?"

UB - "There are some problems with sheep. In Switzerland nowadays there is no tradition of living with big predators, which were eliminated over 100 years ago. Sheep owners put the flocks out in the Alps during the summer without guards. They may be checked once a week, but you cannot count them in this region. If there are losses you do not know whether it was the lynx or not. Sometimes there is proof, and in such cases good compensation is paid by the Swiss Government. The amount is agreed among the sheep-owners themselves."

The last of the original lynx population in Switzerland was seen in 1909, but according to Breitenmoser, the population in the Alps was really wiped out in the first part of the 19th century. In the Jura and the plains the lynx had already gone in the 18th century - in the plains even in the 17th century. Thus lynx are now reoccupying areas where they have not existed for two or three hundred years.

The reintroduction programme began with releases in 1971 in the Canton of Obwald in central Switzerland, where eight lynx were released in three years. In 1974-75 lynx were released in the Jura.

UB - "We know of the release of about 16 lynx in Switzerland, but there have been some unofficial releases too of which we not know numbers nor places, nor the exact origin of the animals. Lynx have now reoccupied about two-thirds of the Swiss Alps, and then there is the Jura population.

"There has been opposition to lynx reintroduction, especially from hunters, but also from sheep owners. These psychological problems come up everywhere the lynx reappears as the population spreads out. Where hunters and farmers have found that they can coexist with the lynx, the opposition has declined now. But there are problems at the fringes of the population, particularly in the Canton of Valais today, but I think it will come too in other regions when the lynx arrives there. There are also some problems in the Jura. But at present the bad situation is in the Valais. It is a matter of generations. You have hunters and farmers who have never had to live with the lynx, and have enjoyed a paradise for hunting and letting their sheep roam freely. People have to learn to live with this big predator."

PJ - "Is the impact of the lynx really so heavy on the hunters' prey - roe deer and chamois?"

UB - "There are places where the impact of lynx on these species is really heavy. There are regions which have been closed to hunting, and others which have been open. The protected areas have been a reservoir for the ungulates. In a country with small valleys enclosed by high mountains, you may have a large chamois or roe deer population in one of them. Then you can see how quickly it is reduced when the lynx arrives. The point is that such ungulate
populations are much higher than would have existed in natural conditions. It is not only mankind that is not used to having a big predator around, but also the chamois and, especially, roe deer.

"When lynx reintroduction started, these animals were not adapted to the presence of lynx. In the regions of the Bernese Oberland, where the lynx is found now, it was much easier to see roe deer and chamois a few years ago. The lynx had smaller home ranges, and often left a kill after eating a couple of haunches to kill again because the prey was so easy to catch. Then the prey base was reduced or spread out. We can see this phenomenon now in the Valais, which is the front of the advancing lynx population. We are quite sure that the situation there will change in a few years, as it has changed in Obwalden and the Bernese Oberland, where the lynx has been longest. Lynx density will decrease and home ranges will become larger. The impact of lynx cannot be judged in the first few years. Prey populations will surely readapt."

PJ - "Although the hunters complain of the lynx killing roe deer and chamois, a large number of these ungulates are killed by vehicles on the roads. I have heard a figure of 10,000 a year mentioned.

UB - "Yes, but for hunters that is no argument. They say that if 10,000 are already killed on the roads, you should not bring back the lynx to kill even more. The other problem is that the lynx is only in the mountains, where hunters think conditions are hard enough for roe deer without the lynx."

PJ - "Have hunters killed lynx illegally?"

UB - "There is evidence of this. We know of more than 50 lynx killed in Switzerland by hunters and cars, or found dead for unknown reasons. With a current population of not more than 100, that is not a small figure."

PJ - "But this does suggest that the lynx population is regenerating well."

UB - "We hope that is the case, but there has been a decrease in the lynx population in the regions that were first reoccupied. Our hypothesis has been that this is a natural adaptation, but we are not absolutely sure. We shall know only in 20, 30 or even 50 years how the lynx has settled in Switzerland, and the whole alpine area, which extends into neighbouring countries. There is also the problem that only a small number of lynx have been released, all from the Carpathians in Czechoslovakia, and we do not know at present what effect this narrow genetic base will have.

"The lynx in Switzerland are absolutely isolated, and are likely to remain so in the long term. There are two other populations in or near the Alps - one in Austria, and a very good one in Slovenia, in Yugoslavia, which might in 100 years link up because they are not far apart. I think we should strive for one alpine lynx population. The Swiss and Austrian populations might link up in 20-30 years time. But the lynx population is developing slowly in the eastern region, compared with the west, where we have evidence of lynx in the French Alps, even near Grenoble, that we are sure came from Switzerland. There are discussions about reintroducing lynx in alpine regions of Italy and Germany."

PJ - "The lynx in the Vosges seem to be isolated with little chance of linking up with the Swiss population."

UB - "There is one region, called Sundgau, where it might be possible for a link with our Jura lynx, but it is not very likely. We shall only know if a good, expanding population establishes itself in the Vosges. At present things are not going very well."
THE IBERIAN LYNX

Plans have been announced for programmes to save the Iberian lynx Lynx pardinus, also known as the Spanish and pardel lynx, which is one of the most endangered species in Europe. Only about 400 are believed to survive in widely fragmented populations, mainly in the southwestern quadrat of Spain and in two or three places in Portugal.

ADENA, the Spanish national organisation of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), has announced that it will devote a considerable part of its resources to conservation of the lynx, which it declares fits into the main objective of preserving biological diversity, as the project benefits other species in the lynx's range, including the Spanish Imperial eagle Aquila heliaca adalberti, black vulture Gyps monachus and mongoose Herpestes ichneumon.

The project envisages the protection of surviving lynx and their habitats, and rehabilitation and repopulation of areas from which it has disappeared. Both central and provincial authorities are to be made aware of the grave situation of the lynx as well as of the Mediterranean ecosystems and their living constituents, so that the international agreements that Spain has accepted are respected.

The Spanish National Nature Conservation Institute, ICONA, has published a management plan for the lynx in the Doñana National Park, near Cadiz in southwestern Spain. This is the centre for research on the lynx.

The 570 km² Doñana Park and surrounding areas, totalling of about 2,000 km², are estimated to have 40-50 lynx, which frequent Mediterranean maquis.

ICONA's management plan, prepared by Dr Miguel Delibes and ICONA staff, envisages improving the Doñana ecosystem where lynx are found to increase the rabbit population. Measures will include reducing the wild and domestic ungulates which compete with rabbits for pasture, and control of the competing fox population. In areas where there are no lynx, habitat will be made more suitable by eliminating eucalyptus plantations as soon as possible, and managing pine plantations so as to improve their capacity to support higher densities of prey species. A scientific study is proposed to monitor the effect of the management measures on the lynx population and to learn more of the lynx's way of life.

The authorities responsible for areas surrounding the Doñana will be urged to take measures to reduce the unnatural mortality of lynx. Most urgent measures are to control traffic on the main road to the coastal resort of Matalascañas; protection of open areas in the zone; total prohibition of traps for rabbits and carnivores; and improvement of all potential biotopes for lynx.

A booklet summarizing information about the Iberian lynx has been published by the Environmental Agency of the Province of Andalucia. The booklet, entitled "El Lince Ibérico" is by Dr Juan F. Beltrán, of the Doñana Biological Station.

This lynx is considerably smaller than the northern lynx Lynx lynx, with an average weight of males 12-13 kg (individuals twice that weight have been found) and is much more spotted. The main food is the rabbit Oryctolagus cuniculus, with which it is thought to have evolved. Diminution of rabbit numbers, due especially to mixomatosis, is considered one of the main factors in the decline of the lynx, which has also suffered from hunting and massive destruction of habitat. Although protected by law since 1966, lynx get caught in rabbit snares and are killed in road accidents, as well as being poisoned.
FISHING CATS NEAR CALCUTTA

Villagers killed two fishing cats Felis viverrina recently in a small wetland very near Calcutta after mistaking them for leopards, Pranabes Sanyal reports.

This is a new discovery of fishing cat habitat. Sanyal says that local conservation organisations have been successfully motivating local people not to kill fishing cats, and a research group is carrying out a fishing cat survey. The habitat also harbours smooth Indian otters Lutra perspicillata.

MYSTERIOUS CAT SIGHTED IN INDIA

M.K. Ranjitsinh, India's senior wildlife official, has reported seeing a strange felid in the Mishmi Hills of northeast India.

In a note in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society Vol. 83 No.3 he states that he twice saw an unknown felid species on the road between Hayuliang and Teju in the eastern Mishmi Hills of Arunachal Pradesh.

"Distinctly visible" in his jeep headlights was a "darkish, rusty-brown cat about the size of the domestic cat, but longer and with a long and prominent tail...It was marked with chocolate brown spots, but not very prominent, the size and the number of the spots increasing from the front portion of the body towards the hind portion, the tail being very prominently marked by rings of the same colour."

Ranjitsinh said that he had not seen such a cat before nor heard of one being reported, adding: "It was not a domestic cat because, firstly, the Mishmi tribes there do not keep domestic cats, and, in any case, the sighting was far from any habitation. What clinched the issue was the fact that two km further on I saw an identical specimen.

"The closest resemblance is the rusty-spotted cat, but it was a little different, especially in the matter of rings around the tail, and I am not aware of any rusty-spotted cat being reported anywhere in that region, or, for that matter, in eastern India."

ANIMAL ASSOCIATIONS

Associations between a tigress and a male leopard and between a leopard and a wild boar were observed some 50 years ago and recorded in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society. The accounts were reproduced recently in the Society's magazine, Hornbill.

Iftikhar Ali Khan, a prince of Malerkotla State, witnessed the tigress/leopard association when he put out a buffalo bait in the Vindhya Mountains in Central India. He first heard the leopard "sawing" and the tigress moaning. Then the leopard came from the bushes and killed the buffalo while the tigress watched. They then ate together. The episode was repeated a few days later. On the third occasion a bigger buffalo threw off the leopard when it attacked, and the tigress then jumped in and made the kill before they ate together.
It is sad to relate that the happy pair were then shot - but those were different days from the present. The leopard measured 7'10 1/2" (2.4 m) and the tigress 8'3 1/2" (2.52 m) between pegs. Both were in excellent condition.

The Journal editors speculated that sexual attraction might have been the explanation of the association, noting that interspecific matings among cats occurs in captivity, but that the opportunities must be rare in the wild.

Such an explanation can hardly exist for the apparent friendship of a pair of leopards and their half grown cub with three wild boars. J. Monteath, a member of the British Indian Civil Service, reported an account from a local hunter in the Gir forest of western India named Sequira. Sequira found the leopards and boars lying together on three consecutive days and they moved together. The male leopard and one of the boars was shot, but the female leopard allowed to go as she was heavily pregnant.

These accounts were in the Journal Vol.39, pp 153 et seq.

Incidentally, the Journal, which has been going for over 100 years, is a mine of interesting and amusing, as well as scientifically important material on cats and other wildlife. It has been put on microfiche and is available from Inter Documentation Company BV, Hogewoerd 151-153, 2311 HK Leiden, The Netherlands.

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CATS IN DJIBOUTI

Hundreds of leopard and cheetah skins smuggled from Somalia and Ethiopia are being sold annually in curio shops in Djibouti city, according to a reliable source.

Despite a ban on trade, peddlars in Djibouti offer baby cheetahs, and sometimes baby leopards, which must have been smuggled in from neighbouring countries. They are bought by local people and tourists. Most suffer from poor nutrition and ill treatment and soon die.

The source reports that a leopard has been observed in the mountains near Tadjourah, and half a dozen are living in the Moussa Ali mountains on the border with Ethiopia. Cheetah have almost complete disappeared from Djibouti, where they were still common 10 years ago. They are shot at sight or poisoned by nomads who accuse them of eating goats. Eight to 10 cheetah survive in northern areas, and may criss-cross the border with Ethiopia. Serval are seen especially at night. Very few caracal have been seen, and skins have not been noted in Djibouti shops.

The report says that poachers are using automatic weapons and are destroying an increasing number of cats, while forests are fast disappearing.
Thailand's Council of Economic Ministers decided on 4 April to suspend the project to build the Nam Choan dam on the Upper Kwae Yai River, which threatened to fragment the Huay Kha Khaeng and Thung Yai wildlife reserves, a complex forming one of Asia's most extensive and richest wildlife areas.

The Committee cited "lack of sufficient reliable data" as the reason for the suspension. Although the decision is not in itself a definitive rejection of the dam project, it has been assumed in Thailand that it will not be resurrected.

The Huay Kha Khaeng-Thung Yai complex is home to at least seven felid species - tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, leopard cat, marbled cat, fishing cat and golden cat.

The Committee noted that the dam would block the flow of nutrients to the reservoir of Sri Nakarin Dam; there would be a loss of at least 20,800 ha of forest; part of the Thung Yai Naresuan Game Reserve, which has been proposed as a World Heritage site would be lost; there would be destruction of plants and wildlife in the last large preserve of the country's low level forests; some species of flora and fauna would face extinction or reduction; at least 150 km of streams would be lost resulting in the extinction of some fish; mineral ores in the project area would be lost; historical and archaeological sites would be destroyed; and divisions in society had been caused.

The Nam Choan dam has hung like a Sword of Damocles over the Thung Yai/Huay Kha Khaeng complex for almost 10 years, and has provoked widespread protests in Thailand and from the international community. The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand argued that the dam would supply power economically and reliably.

BLACK-FOOTED CAT STUDBOOK

A Studbook is being established for the black-footed cat Felis nigripes.

The proposal by Dr Richard Faust, Director of the Frankfurt Zoo, stats that there has been no scientific research so far on the status of free-living black-footed cats, which was probably the reason the cat was not specified in the IUCN Red Data Book 1978. It is supposed to be rare in the wild and appears on Appendix I of CITES.

In 1986 there were 66 black-footed cats (35.31) held in 13 facilities. The population is descended from seven (2.5) founders and thus has a narrow genetic base. Dr Faust says that, in consequence, it is necessary to coordinate the worldwide breeding programme to reduce the over-representation of the existing founder population.

Dr Rüdiger Dmoch, a scientific assistant at Frankfurt Zoo, has been proposed as Studbook Keeper. He has been Studbook Keeper Bush Dogs (Speothos venaticus) since 1980.

The black-footed cat is found in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and possibly Angola.
CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANTS FOR BIG CATS

Michael Woodford, Chairman of the Veterinary Specialist Group, has proposed insertion of contraceptive implants beneath the skin of female tigers, lions and leopards as a wildlife management option for controlling populations.

He writes: "The implant, which is about the size of a human little finger, is placed subcutaneously beneath the skin of the back behind the scapula. The patient is, of course, anaesthetised for the operation, which takes about ten minutes. Sterilization can be expected to last for about five years, and can be reversed sooner if required by surgical removal of the implant.

"The technique may be useful for the control of small, isolated populations of big cat species, which may come into conflict with humans when they attempt to expand from their limited habitat. By rotating the sterilization of a segment of the female population of reproductive age, and systematically removing the implants in order to bring previously sterilized animals back into the breeding pool, genetic integrity can be maintained while reducing the number of cubs born over time."

FELIDAE STUDY GROUP IN ITALY

A National Group for the Study and Conservation of Felidae in Italy was founded at the Institute of Zoology, University of Perugia, on 17 October 1987. The coordinator is Dr Bernadino Ragni, who writes:

"The main scope of the group is knowledge of the biology of Italian felids - European wildcat Felis s. silvestris, Sardinian wildcat F.s. libyca, feral domestic cat F. s. catus and European lynx Lynx lynx, particularly aspects relating to population and habitat conservation of the wild species.

"One of the first initiatives of the group consists of the collection and critical analysis of observations and material or iconographic evidence concerning past and modern presence of Lynx lynx and F. silvestris in Italy in order to complete and bring up to date data on the evolution of the distribution of these species. Other more specific fields of activity will be the genetic and taxonomic situation of populations; behavioural ecology; reproduction and breeding in captivity; projects for conservation and reintroductory; and diffusion of information and arousing public awareness."

FELID BIBLIOGRAPHY AVAILABLE

The Felid Research and Conservation Interest Group, based at the Department of Zoology, Ohio State University, has prepared a 200-page felid bibliography. The volume, containing over 3,000 references, cross-referenced by species, geographic area and subject, is in soft cover, spiral bound. The price is $26.50 prepaid, and includes postage within the USA. Additional postage will be required for overseas shipments. Orders can be sent to Gail E. Foreman, Dept of Zoology, OSU, 1735 Neil Ave, Columbus, OH 43210, USA. Proceeds will benefit the Felid Research and Conservation Interest Group.
TAIWAN BANS TRADE IN THREATENED ANIMALS

The Government of Taiwan has imposed controls on the import, export, and re-export of all specimens of animals listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). All permits for trade need clearance from the Council of Agriculture.

Because of its peculiar situation over its relationship with the mainland, Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, and cannot formally become a Party to CITES.

The authorities first took action on 18 May 1985 to ban import of lion, tiger, leopard, bear and rhino, and extended the ban on 27 June 1987 to all CITES Appendix I species. There had been international protests at the public slaughtering of tigers for meat and medicine in Taiwan. Tigers were said to have been imported from Bangladesh, but the authorities there denied that any tigers had been exported.

According to Dr Ling Ling Lee of the National Taiwan University a Wildlife Conservation Act is pending before the legislature. She says it will give the Council of Agriculture better control, not only over international commerce in wildlife, but of hunting in Taiwan as well.

LAOS GAOLS THAI WILDLIFE DEALERS

The Laotian Supreme Court has sentenced two Thai wildlife dealers to gaol for falsifying documents to smuggle wildlife species to Taiwan, according to Traffic Bulletin Vol.9 Nos 23 quoting Bangkok Post, 2 October 1987).

The two traders, Preecha Waravichit and Kamporn Pisiapong were sentenced to three years and two years imprisonment respectively, and fined the equivalent of $112,400 and $45,000. They were found guilty of falsifying documents of the state-owned wildlife exporter Phu Doi.

The animals listed in the documents included 10 clouded leopards, 20 leopard cats, 20 tigers and 20 leopards.

The Government of Laos imposed a ban on trade in all species of wildlife with effect from 28 October 1986.

It seems likely that the animals were not necessarily from Laos, and that the Thai traders were trying to produce documents to cover shipments of animals obtained elsewhere, including in Thailand itself.

BRITISH CUSTOMS SEIZE LEOPARD SKINS

British Customs officers seized two leopard skins on a ship in Tees Dock, Middlesborough, which was bound for the Netherlands. A seaman had the skins, which are believed to have been ordered by someone in the Netherlands. The ship had been to Ethiopia, where leopard skins can reportedly be bought for about $80 dollars.

(Traffic Bulletin Vol.9 Nos 23 quoting Portcullis Vol VII (11), July 1987)
IUCN’S PROTECTED AREAS DATA UNIT

Paul Joslin, Deputy Chairman of the Cat Group, recently spent some time at the IUCN’s Protected Areas Data Unit (PADU) in Cambridge, England, and proclaims it to be an untapped source of information for cat specialists. Here is a note he wrote for CAT NEWS:

"PADU is responsible for gathering information about the world’s protected areas. It is part of IUCN’s Conservation Monitoring Centre (CMC) and complements the functions of the Species Conservation Monitoring Unit (SCMU), which gathers data on rare and endangered species, and the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit (WTMU), which monitors international commerce in wildlife and wildlife products.

"PADU has developed a database covering over 11,000 areas, the majority of which have been documented with respect to pertinent details, including size, location, physiography, flora and fauna, management classification, staffing, budget, causes for concern, and the address of the agency or person in charge. The information has been synthesized into about a page and a half for each reserve. As the data compilation is completed for each major region of the globe, it is circulated to the respective governmental agencies, experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations for comment, thus ensuring that the data has a high degree of accuracy. The information is about as up-to-date as it is possible to be, given that it is a product dependent upon a worldwide network of contacts.

The database is on computer and it is possible to search and print out information on just those reserves which contain a specific species, provided that the species has been noted among the fauna there. In this respect the database can be searched for large, charismatic or otherwise noteworthy species, such as snow leopard, whereas small common species, such as jungle cats, might not be found. If the range of a species is known, the database can be searched for all reserves falling within the parameters. The database can also be searched according to size of reserve, country, biogeographic province or altitude. The cost of such a search, in terms of computer time, is about £100 a day. Most requests involving species take about two days to complete.

Anyone wishing to contact PADU should write to Jeremy Harrison, Unit Leader, Protected Areas Data Unit, IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, England.

IUCN POSITION STATEMENTS ON TRANSLOCATION AND CAPTIVE BREEDING

IUCN position statements on "Translocation of Living Organisms: Introductions, Re-Introductions and Re-Stocking" and "Captive Breeding" have now been published following prolonged discussion by relevant specialists. The booklets are available free from the Species Survival Commission, IUCN, 1196 Gland, Switzerland. An international postal coupon to cover postage would be appreciated.
REVISION OF MAMMAL SPECIES OF THE WORLD

Mammal Species of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference, edited by Honacki, Kinman and Keppel (Allen Press Inc and The Association of Systematic Collections, Laurence, Kansas, USA, 1982) is being updated, corrected and revised by the American Society of Mammalogists. CITES and the IUCN Species Survival Commission were also sponsors of the book.

W. Chris Wozenclraft of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, writes: "The revised checklist is supposed to be the most recent compilation of the primary systematic literature concerning the systematics, classification and taxonomy of carnivore species. Where there appears to be a controversy in the recent literature, I will make every attempt to have all viewpoints referenced. Systematic decisions that are not based on primary data, that is, on statements made in secondary sources, may be referenced, but they will not be reflected in the classification. One can make suggestions at any level, that is, for a particular species, genus or family. Corrections of mistakes in Honacki et al. are especially welcome. At the present time, categories between family and order are not included. The easiest way to contribute would be to send me copies of, or references to, publications which one feels should be considered in the next edition.

"Information, inquiries, references and corrections concerning the Order Carnivora should be sent to"

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"GENER LYNX AND PANTHERA ARE NOT CLOSELY RELATED"

Vocalization data indicates that there is no close relationship between the genera Lynx and Panthera, and lynx show more affinities to species of the genus Felis s.l. according to Gustav Peters, who has studied acoustic signals in Lynx lynx and Lynx rufus.

Peters says that lynx possess 10-12 signal types, which agrees with other species of Felidae. The mew, spit, hiss and growl, he notes, are common to all Felidae, while the gurgle is common to all but six species. However, these species have an acoustic signal similar and equivalent to the gurgle - prusten in Neofelis nebula, Panthera onca, P. Tigris and P. uncia, and puffing in F. leo and F. pardus.

"In having the gurgle Lynx is clearly differentiated from the felid group including Neofelis and Panthera." Peters declares.

"Of the vocalizations in the genus Lynx not common to all Felidae, none is shared with Neofelis and/or Panthera. Moreover, acoustic signal types peculiar to species of the latter two genera are not present in Lynx.

"The vocalization data presented clearly show that Lynx and Panthera are not closely related, but the lynxes show more affinities to species of the genus Felis s.l."

The great Vryburg Bengal tiger hunt — AG to probe

By PETER GOOSEN

The shooting of what is believed to be a zoo or tame circus tiger by a wealthy American trophy hunter on a Northern Cape game farm is under investigation by the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation and the SPCA.

A second tiger is also believed to have been shot.

Secretary of the SPCA in Cape Town Mr Keith Goudie said documents in possession of the society showed there were three tigers on a Vryburg game farm. Two had been shot and the third confiscated.

Furore

The shooting of the tigers has caused a furore in international conservation circles. Although not native to Africa, the Bengal Tiger is listed as an endangered species and special permits are needed to buy, keep or kill one in this country.

CNDEC director Dr Johan Neethling confirmed yesterday that the killing of the tigers had been investigated by his department in terms of hunting regulations and regulations governing the keeping of wild animals.

The tig has been sent to the Attorney General for his decision.

Dr Neethling said the surviving tiger, which had been kept in a cage in Bloemfontein since being confiscated, was "on the road" yesterday to bigger and more comfortable premises.

Although the two tigers were shot in 1983, the incident was highlighted recently when American trophy hunter Mr Doc Jones Thurlston of Charlotte, North Carolina, applied for a permit to import into the United States the skin of the tiger he shot at Vryburg.

His application was spotted by the Humane Society of the United States which tipped off South African authorities.

In letters and a sworn affidavit obtained by South African Embassy officials in the United States, Mr Thurlston described the amazing hunt for the tiger and the scenario laid on by the organisers to make it appear the tiger was "wild".

He was told by a go-between in the United States that the tigers had been imported into South Africa "many years ago", had settled on the game farm and were producing progeny.

He and his son travelled to South Africa especially for the "hunt". After arriving in Johannesburg they were driven to the Fletcher's Game Ranch near Vryburg. Mr Thurlston described the "hunt":

"It was decided some scouts would be sent out on horses in the hope of locating a tiger.

"On the second day two of the scouts rode into camp with a third horse without a rider.

"... Doug Fletcher appeared and expressed fears his third scout had served as a hearty breakfast for a tiger.

"With appropriate fanfare we went to search for the missing scout.

"... I became suspicious of the operation. The horses showed no signs of hard riding and the remaining scouts did not seem too concerned about their 'devoured comrade'.

The tiger was found and Mr Thurlston shot it.

"By the time the tiger was killed I was sure in my own mind it was a fake.

"The whole hunt was a grand deception and grossly misrepresented from beginning to end."

Mr Goudie said the SPCA would allege that the tigers were circus animals or their progeny sold by Mr Brian Boswell of the Brian Boswell Circus based at Natal Zoological Gardens, Umlaas Road.

The SPCA has a copy of an application for an export permit for the skins of Mr Thurlston's tiger, as well as for a second, made to the Natal Parks Board by Mr Boswell.

The owner of the ranch, Mr Douglas Fletcher, has denied having met Mr Thurlston or taking him hunting.

He said he had three tigers on the ranch which he bought when the Vereeniging zoo closed down.

He had shot the two tigers himself because he could no longer afford to feed them.

Denied

Mr Brian Boswell denied selling tigers to Mr Douglas Fletcher and said he did not know where they could have come from.

He bred Bengal tigers and sold their skins, but was not party to the Fletcher hunt.

Explaining his name on Mr Thurlston's permit for exporting tiger skins to the United States, Mr Boswell said: "We sell skins to tourists from the curio shop at the Lion Park. If a skin goes overseas, it needs a document. These permits are made out in my name and we apply on behalf of the buyer to the Natal Parks Board."

He said the skins sold at his curio shop at Umlaas Road were not circus animals but tigers he obtained when the Cape game farm, High Noon, closed about eight years ago.
Safari, Texas-style

DALLAS

BWANA has a problem. He wants to enhance his macho image by toting his biggest gun and bagging the king of the jungle, the African lion, and mounting its head above the bar in the den. But the great white hunter works in Texas, cannot find $10,000 for an African safari, and has only an afternoon to spare from wage slavery. Two weeks in the bush in Botswana is out of the question. So what is he to do?

The Texan entrepreneurial spirit has the answer. BWana calls Mr Larry Wilburn in the Houston suburb of Dayton, who takes a pet lion to a secluded area, opens the cage and, for a fee, lets him shoot the king of beasts and go home for supper.

That, in essence, is what has caused a furor among Texas’s environmentalists and hunters, and some embarrassment to wildlife officials. “I was shocked,” said Mr Charles Craddock, the park ranger who oversees the Wallisville Reservoir where the big-game hunts have been taking place. “I thought African lions were protected species. But under state law, they have the same status as rabbits.”

The lion hunts have been attracting publicity since late April, when a fisherman enjoying the tranquility of the reservoir—a 20,000-acre, salt-water marsh run by the Army Corps of Engineers—was frightened by a report from a .375 magnum rifle. On a nearby island, the fisherman saw men skinning what appeared to be a lion. Since hunting is illegal on federal property, the fisherman reported it.

The first official to view the remains of the hunt smelled two African lion carcasses before he saw them. “I had 300 to 400 pounds of carcass lying on me, right out there in the open and taking severe heat,” he said. “The buzzards wouldn’t eat the stuff. The coyotes wouldn’t eat the stuff. It was bad.”

Throughout May the incident was investigated by the Corps of Engineers, which controls America’s dams and reservoirs, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Together they were able to put together a portrait of an industry in which canned hunts were staged for those who wanted to avoid work, sport and danger in their pursuit of exotic game.

Exotic, but hardly ferocious. Some of the animals had been raised as pets. One couple, for instance, raised 45 lions from infancy for a rancher. The couple gave the cubs biblical names, such as Rachel, Bathsheba and Matthew, and reared them by hand. When they were grown, the rancher took them away for hunts.

The cost of the hunts apparently ranged from $2,500 for an old lion without any teeth, to $3,500 for a younger lion with all his teeth intact. The toothless heads could presumably be taken to a taxidermist who would put in dentures to make them look more fierce.

The hunts are said by critics to be unsporting. They were also illegal. Mr Wilburn has pleaded guilty to running a commercial venture on government land without a permit (penalty $75) and to leaving litter when he abandoned the carcasses (a $50 fine). He also had to pay another $50 for breaking a law stipulating that a taxidermist should have a permit before stuffing migratory gamebirds.

The $175 fines were probably less than the cost of a set of false teeth for a gummy lion. And so long as Mr Wilburn organizes future hunts on private land, gets the necessary permits and obeys the litter laws, his safari business can go on.
Animal skins worth crores seized

Herald News Service
NEW DELHI, March 24 — The Delhi Police on Thursday seized skins of several animals which were being treated in a house in Jafargarh locality in the Seelampur area of East Delhi. The seizure is worth crores of rupees in the international market.

Three persons Maqbool, Abdul Rashid and Siddiqui of Kashmir, were arrested from the house.

Police said that the SHO of the Seelampur police station had been tipped off that the skins of various animals and reptiles were being treated in a house which had been taken on rent by Sansar Chand of Bara Tooti in the walled city area.

A party, led by the SHO, raided the house and found the three treating various skin with salt and chemicals.

Among the seized skins were 25,000 skins of snakes, 2,000 of jackals, 500 of jungle cats, 700 of fox and red fox, one of a tiger which was 12 feet long, six of leopards and one of a wolf.

The kingpin of the racket, Sansar Chand, is absconding and police said that he had been arrested on the same charge some time ago and was freed on the orders of the High Court where the case is being pursued.

The arrests were made under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Name of Paper : Patriot
Published : New Delhi
Date : 25 MAR 1988

Leopard skins seized during a raid by East Delhi Police in the Jafargarh locality being displayed at the Seelampur police post on Thursday. —Herald photo by Kishore Ramboj

Tigers: Poachers trading in prized animal skins have killed at least 50 JI Bengal tigers by poisoning, Bangladesh in the past year, a government-run newspaper said on Tuesday.

Forestry officials told the "Dainik Janata" newspaper that rangers found the skinned tigers deep in the Sundarbans forest.
Japanese cats risk AIDS from nights out

Sharon Kingman

The two viruses are quite distinct: Pedersen has shown that antibodies to the proteins of FIV do not recognise the proteins of HIV. Ishida believes that FIV has been present for a long time, although it has started to spread rapidly only recently. "A social factor which promotes this disease is the housing situation in Japan," he says. Outdoor cats have their own territories which should not overlap. "But in Tokyo, it is never possible for a cat to own its own territory, so all territories are very complex and overlap. I think this is mainly due to [human] overcrowding."

Vets in Tokyo, Ishida says, had never seen such a severe disease in cats as that caused by FIV. One of the most striking symptoms in infected cats is gum disease, but some cats also develop long-standing respiratory infections and, in advanced cases, emaciation and wasting. The researchers were also able to isolate an organism called cryptococcus from the ulcers that some cats developed, which suggests that some opportunistic infections occur, says Ishida. Cryptococcus is one of the opportunistic organisms that can infect people with AIDS.

Unlike infection with feline leukaemia virus, which tends to occur in older cats, FIV causes disease in cats aged mainly 5 to 10 years old. As with HIV, initial infection with FIV seems to cause few symptoms. Apparently healthy cats infected with FIV ranged in age between 2 months and 18 years, with most aged 4 to 5 years. Ishida says this suggests there is a lag of at least 4 years before development of disease. Ishida and his colleagues followed the progress of 700 cats with AIDS for 6 months. During that time, almost 15 per cent of them died.

Lock up your cats, the Japanese are being told. Bustling Tokyo is now no longer a safe place for cats.

Cat AIDS crosses the Atlantic

A VIRUS related to the AIDS virus but which affects cats, is reported to have surfaced in Britain. Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), was discovered last year in California. In the Veterinary Record (January 23) Tim Gruffydd-Jones and colleagues at Bristol University report the first case in Britain.

The team is keen to emphasise that the disease is not transmittable to humans, even though the feline disease shows similar effects and is almost certainly related.

The cat was a neutered female domestic shorthair aged 8 years. It was sent to the veterinary school after an 18-month illness. The symptoms included fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and a pronounced tendency to secondary infections. These were relieved by antibiotics, but after five months there was no improvement and the cat was destroyed.

Virus particles which resemble FIV were found in the blood. Tests to confirm this are being carried out at Glasgow Veterinary School, and a survey is under way to see how common the infection might be among cats. The disease has probably been around for some time. It may have accounted for some infections attributed to feline leukaemia or other disease. Feline leukaemia has been called "cat AIDS", although the agent that causes it is not related to the human virus.

The discovery of the virus could allow vets to make a more definite diagnosis in cat illnesses.
CAT SPECIALIST GROUP

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