

Cooper's Rock Mountain Lion Sanctuary


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Montana enjoying his new enclosure.

Montana Moves Home

After many months of preparation and building, the enclosure across the creek beside Mariah is finally a permanent home for a growing Montana. He was finally able to stretch his legs in the new enclosure November 23rd. Before Montana could enjoy his new home, Mark and his father Ben Jenkins had the task of carrying the 200 pound cat. Transporting a cougar is no easy task. A specially designed crate was placed in the small emergency cage with Montana, with meat inside. When he crawled in, the door closed and poles were inserted as carrying holds. The actual move was difficult because Montana was shifting his weight by walking back and forth. When he was released into the 50'x60' pen, he methodically walked its perimeter, sniffing and marking his new territory.

He now enjoys the new area by stalking visitors from behind trees, and of course, a 10 foot fence with a wire mesh roof. The emergency enclosure where Montana grew up will be refurbished, and possibly a new home for an unwanted cat such as a lynx, bobcat, or exotic species such as a cervil.

Spring Tracking:

Jackson's Release

Jackson, an young adult bobcat raised in captivity, will have his freedom. Brought to the sanctuary by The Virginia Wildlife Center, he never adjusted well to captive life. Any time visitors would go near his enclosure, he would begin frantically pacing. His long-lasting fear of humans is his ticket back into the wild. His release is tentatively scheduled in March 2005. Leah Merritt, sanctuary volunteer, is working hard on a grant proposal for Jackson's release. If it is approved, he will be micro-chipped and his movement will be tracked via GPS by volunteer and WVU graduate Brent Siskel. Brent has a degree in biology, and has tracked other animals such as deer, bats, and grouse. If the grant fails, CRMLS will need to raise funding to track him by radio collar. Jackson will be released in Cooper's Rock State Forest, which encompasses over 12,000 acres, and is set aside as a wildlife preserve.

Cougar Links

Newsletters will now feature different sites to visit such as:

www.easterncougar.org

www.easterncougarnet.org

www.tdscats.com

www.wildanimal.org

Fall 2004



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Updates



Burton poses with his ball.

- * CRMLS is dedicating the perimeter fencing newly erected around the creekside enclosures to Robert L. Stover Jr. He passed away August 5, 2003. His love of all things wild truly inspired us all.
- * Mariah surprised the caretakers by killing a black weasel that wandered into her enclosure. Dewclawed by her former owners and minus one fang, Mariah illustrated she can still make a successful kill.

Cougar Facts

Common Names:	Mountain Lion, Puma, Panther
Latin name:	Felidae Felis concolor
Body Length:	5-9 feet long
Tail Length:	26-32 inches long
Weight (Female):	70-170 pounds
(Male):	150-200 pounds
Jumping Distance:	Up to 15 feet in the air
Speed:	Up to 40 mph
Food:	5-7 pounds raw meat daily
Lifespan (In wild):	10+ years
(In captivity):	20+ years
Mating:	Year-round
Ownership:	Illegal to own in 19 states
Natural Enemies:	None, except man

Thank You's

As always, we have several volunteers to thank for all their hard work, dedication, and donations. The sanctuary could function without their help.

Mike Stover	Erin Schenck
Connie Harward	Tom Kreamer
Bernard Schreurs	Elvadore Everly & Family
Ray & Michael Wilson	Jerry Coleman
Michelle Yingst	



Cougars in the News



* **LINCOLN, Neb.** - A young male mountain lion perched in a tree in a residential neighborhood at the northwest edge of South Sioux City was shot and killed by police. The young cat was estimated to weigh between 100 pounds and 120 pounds. The incident marks the 17th confirmed sighting in Nebraska since 1992. The cats are expanding their range due to human encroachments along the front range of the Rocky Mountains and the Black Hills of South Dakota. ***The Cougar Fund of JACKSON, Wyoming reports:** On November 17th, the Colorado Wildlife

Commission met and unanimously approved a significant reduction of cougar hunting licenses from 790 to 567, but rejected a request to establish a female sub-quota. The new quota will take effect on January 1, 2005. While lowering the quota was a very positive step, the CO Wildlife Commission failed to recognize the importance of setting a female sub-quota. The Commission said they rejected the petition put forward by conservation groups because the season is already set from late November through the end of March to ensure that mothers with

kittens are not killed. These steps are commendable, however they will not prevent kittens from being orphaned. Without policies in place limiting the number of females that can be shot, there will be individuals who continue to legally hunt them. Even experienced hunters cannot always accurately sex a cat. Mothers often leave their kittens at the den site while looking for food, a hunter may not realize she has dependent offspring awaiting her return. Female cougars are pregnant or with dependent young over 70% of their lives. Without their mothers, kittens rarely survive. They typically starve, freeze to death, or are preyed upon by other carnivores.

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A Hard Lesson Learned

The following article was written by CRMLS volunteer, Tom Kraemer. He discovers first-hand why owning exotic pets is ill-advised.

To the right, Rubio enjoys a few sun rays after a romp with his toys



I'd like to have thought that I knew better than to raise exotic pets, and I did - as far as raising an actual cougar goes. Enter a relatively "new" breed of feline: Felis Chaus, or the CHAUSIE. Basically, it is a breed in which a wild African Jungle Cat is bred with the domestic Abyssinian. Basically, what you get has been described as "twice the cat in one package" - a large (up to 35 pounds), wild-looking, wild-acting, intelligent feline that eats commercially-available food (and, by the way, uses the litter box). They generally have "cougar"-type markings (tan, black-tipped fur with lighter bellies and white chins; brown nose leather), or all black. They're tall - male height is commonly 17" at the shoulder, highly active, and extremely intelligent. All the research I did on these guys indicated that it was the perfect cat for me - since I could not raise a cougar in my home, a Chausie was the next best thing. Spring of this year, I placed an order with a Chausie breeder in LA that my sister knew, and in early July, she flew into Pittsburgh carrying Prince Rubio - my 2-pound Chausie kitten. I learned very quickly he was not an ordinary cat...exotics are VERY different. I had rescued and raised many domestic cats over the years...bring 'em home, give 'em some food, show 'em some love - that's all it took. They were tough, and all grew up to be big lunks that lived the good life. I tried the same with Rubio. Big mistake. The change in environment, the introduction to new foods, the introduction to new molds and airborne contaminants, the water, the temperature, the introduction to all the facets of my other cats...who knows...but this Chausie simply did not adapt. After a week or so, he developed bowel problems, and eventually became severely dehydrated. His energy level was depleted. I continued to watch him closely. I would bottle-feed him, about once every couple of hours, only to have the fluid pass right through him. His situation was critical, and it was time to get to the vet immediately. The vet gave him a quick once-over. He weighed 1.6 pounds. "He's OK, he just has worms or something. You're overreacting," were his words. He pumped him full of bulk worm medicine, and gave me a dietary supplement to put on his food. He also told me to give him ~~human~~ Pepto-Bismol four times a day and sent us home. The worm medicine had no effect what-so-ever. When I was home, he laid on my lap and slept for hours as I kept a towel over him and provided him warmth and his bottle. The Pepto-Bismol idea was silly - the harsh taste probably caused more harm than good to the little guy. By Monday morning, I returned to the vet, and requested a different doctor. She took a look at the now 1.2-pound kitten. "My God!" she looked at his wrinkled paw pads, white gums, and non-elastic skin.. "This cat's severely dehydrated! He needs fluids immediately!" They performed a battery of tests. I was to call the following morning. I called from the train (I'm a railroad engineer) on my cell phone. How is he?" The silence that followed said more than did the doctor. "I would strongly suggest you put him to sleep. He will not make it through this. He will never improve." The doctor's words were like a kick to the chest. The next morning he was still alive. I still could not make the decision at that point to put him to sleep if he was still on this earth by his own will. I would give him 24 more hours, and unless a miracle improvement was clear, I would have to make the call. In my desire to find peace, I drove west to Cooper's Rock. I felt that I had done all that I could do for Prince Rubio, and if I could not help him, I would at least help build a home for one of his distant brothers at the sanctuary. I pulled into Mark's driveway, and joined him in having lunch on his back deck with his family. I told him the story of what I was going through...and thus began the miracle I was hoping for. Mark dropped everything he was doing. We did not work for his cats that day - we worked for Rubio. We made phone calls, we discussed facts and truths. It was known that Rubio was still eating. It proved his desire to live. It was known that Rubio fought the vet when she tried to take his temperature. It proved his desire not to have harm done to his body. It was realized, that no matter what all the "scientific" tests indicated, the basic principles of life were not being respected or considered. Rubio had the desire to live. I was in my truck heading east again, to save my pal...and to realize a miracle. Mark and Sheila Jenkins opened their home and their hearts for Rubio and myself. They knew I had to work, and cared for Rubio while I was away. When I was home, THEIR home was my home. I slept there, ate there, and cared for my kitten there. The shopping bag full of drugs and supplements provided by the vet were tossed - Rubio would be revived by the medicine of love and care. It was working. Rubio spent a couple of weeks with the Jenkins. He regained his strength, began to eat dry food, played, explored...he returned to his "regular" self. I took him home, and re-introduced him to his life. Today Rubio is over 6 months old. He's growing bigger every day, and is happy and healthy. Whether this is a lesson of "why NOT to have an exotic pet" or not, it simply shows that taking on such a responsibility can be a lot more than one expects. Personally, if I had not had the support of Mark and Sheila Jenkins, Rubio might not be alive today - but I am thankful that he is. of course, and enjoy every moment spent with my wonderful, healthy cat.

FALL 2004

Cat Tracks



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The Cooper's Rock Mountain Lion Sanctuary (CRMLS) is a 503(c)(3) non-profit organization licensed by the USDA and West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. We provide a safe haven for cougars in need and educate the public about their plight.

We are always grateful for monetary donations of all sizes, as well as building materials and other supplies. If you feel that you can contribute money or supplies at this time, please contact us. If not, please keep us in mind for the future.
Thank You!



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