

# Cats in the news

## First-ever footage of Amur tigress with five cubs

In a historic moment for the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, camera traps captured a wild Amur tigress accompanied by five cubs. Scientists believe the mother is around nine years old, and the cubs are roughly 6–8 months old. This is the first time a litter of five has been filmed in China, where the tiger population has grown from 20 in 2010 to an estimated 70 today.

Source: WWF <https://t1p.de/u351a>

## Tiger trafficking worsening

A November 2025 report from TRAFFIC highlights a worsening global tiger trafficking crisis, with law enforcement seizing an average of nine tigers monthly and over 2,300 since 2000. Data indicates nearly 30% of these seizures originate from captive breeding facilities, particularly in Thailand, Vietnam, and China, suggesting "tiger farms" are increasingly laundering illicit products into the black market, outpacing conservation efforts for the fewer than 6,000 remaining wild tigers. Read the full report at TRAFFIC.

Source: TRAFFIC <https://t1p.de/nl9d0>

## Rediscovery of caracal population in Jaisalmer, India

A survey in the Ramgarh region of Jaisalmer near the India-Pakistan border has produced a preliminary estimate of approximately 10 breeding pairs of caracals. With only about 50 individuals remaining in the country, this finding identifies the Rajasthan desert as a priority area for conservation of the locally near-extinct species.

Source: The Times of India <https://t1p.de/x929w>

## Uganda elevated six reserves to full National Park status

The government of Uganda has provided a critical lifeline for the African golden cat by securing its fragile forest habitat across several sites in Uganda. This upgrade triggers stricter anti-poaching enforcement to combat the silent threat of wire snares, which often kill these cats as accidental bycatch.

Source: Mongabay <https://t1p.de/ku8hj>

## First sale of Certified Wildlife Friendly™ beef

In early 2026, Wilderness Botswana and the CLAWS Conservancy celebrated the first sale of Certified Wildlife Friendly™ beef in the Okavango Delta. This programme pays farmers a premium for using predator-proof bomas and communal herders instead of retaliatory killing, a shift that has helped the local African lion population increase by 50%. By fostering coexistence, the initiative also secures safer migratory corridors for other wide-ranging cats like leopards and cheetahs.

Source: Mongabay <https://t1p.de/rbrpt>

## West Coast National Park records first leopard in 170 years

For the first time in 170 years, a camera trap has recorded a leopard in South Africa's West Coast National Park, signaling natural recolonisation and a major success for regional conservation efforts. This return highlights the effectiveness of landscape-level connectivity initiatives and improved tolerance from local communities, facilitated by collaborative efforts to secure wildlife corridors.

Source: SANParks <https://t1p.de/n8tvh>

## Genetic mixing of formerly isolated Iberian lynx populations

In an encouraging development for the Iberian lynx, once-isolated populations in Spain and Portugal are now naturally interbreeding. Tracking data confirmed that young dispersers are successfully moving through corridors of oak forest and scrub to link the two countries, effectively turning what were symbolic national units into a single, reconnecting binational population.

Source: OKDario <https://t1p.de/vdu1p> (Spanish)

## European wildcats expand range into Tuscany

The presence of European wildcats in the Pistoia Apennine mountains indicates a significant northward expansion, with monitoring confirming at least three individuals in an area previously outside their known range. This recolonisation of the Northern Apennines is likely driven by reforestation and the abandonment of high-altitude agricultural land, suggesting the species is expanding beyond its traditional habitats in the Casentino Forests.

Source: The Florentine <https://t1p.de/t7qtb>

## Major seizure of poached ocelots and small wild cats

A silent poaching crisis is ongoing in Colombia, where authorities have processed over 700 small wild cats between 2015 and 2021. The vast majority were ocelots, alongside oncillas, jaguarundis, and margays. Many of them were designated for the exotic pet trade and were seized alive. While big cats often dominate the headlines, this news underscores the increasing pressure on South America's smaller felines from illegal trafficking.

Source: Mongabay <https://t1p.de/zxj0b>

## Mountain lions gain new state protection

In mid-February 2026, California enacted a landmark law granting enhanced state protections to approximately 1,400 mountain lions across six isolated genetic populations. The legislation designates these cougars as threatened or endangered to halt an "extinction vortex" caused by urban sprawl and highway fragmentation. The law mandates the creation of wildlife crossings and restricts lethal rodenticides, providing a vital legal shield for vulnerable cats in the Santa Monica and Santa Ana mountains currently trapped by high-speed motorways.

Source: Los Angeles Times <https://t1p.de/r4pf0>

## Mpumalanga bans captive lion breeding

On February 24, 2026, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) officially stopped issuing permits for captive lion breeding and commercial tourism like cub-petting. This move initiates a provincial phase-out of the industry, shifting focus toward ethical, wild-based safaris. The policy mandates the sterilisation of existing captive lions and prohibits new facilities from opening.

Source: Daily Maverick <https://t1p.de/l8rei>

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<https://t1p.de/08v8e>

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