

CAT

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news





CATnews is the newsletter of the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, a component of the Species Survival Commission SSC of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is published three times a year, in spring, summer, and late fall. It features original articles and short communications relevant to the conservation of the free living wild cats, including news on the IUCN Red List and Green Status of Species assessments, important ex situ conservation breeding programmes, and form Species Working Groups affiliated with the Cat SG.

الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا
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For joining the Friends of the Cat Group please contact Christine Breitenmoser at ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch

Original contributions and short notes about wild cats are welcome
Send contributions and observations to ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch.

Guidelines for authors are available at www.catsg.org/catnews

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Editors: Christine & Urs Breitenmoser
Co-chairs IUCN/SSC
Cat Specialist Group
KORA, Talgut-Centrum 5, 3063 Ittigen
Switzerland
Mobile ++41(79) 789 84 65 (C)
Mobile ++41(79) 410 14 39 (U)
<u.breitenmoser@kora.ch>
<ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch>

Associate Editors: Juan Reppucci
Sugoto Roy
Giridhar Malla
Maximilian Allen
Roland Bürki

Technical Editor: Eline Brouwer

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Pendjari National Park, Benin
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Cats in the news

Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference held in Pangbisa, Paro, Bhutan

The Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference brought together representatives of range countries, private and public sector donors, international development agencies, the Tiger Conservation Coalition and other conservation organisations. The conference resulted in the Paro Statement, inviting participants to join the shared commitment to mobilise an additional US\$ 1 billion to conserve tigers and tiger landscapes over the next ten years. Source: UNDP, <https://t1p.de/w724a>

Megaprojects threaten forest connectivity of Sumatra and Borneo

Three infrastructure projects are underway on Sumatra and Borneo: the Trans-Sumatra Highway, the Pan Borneo Highway, and the construction of Nusantara – Indonesia's future capital city in the jungles of eastern Borneo. Of the three projects, Nusantara is modelled to have the biggest impact on clouded leopards, but the others will also heavily impact connectivity in core areas for this species. Source: Mongabay, <https://t1p.de/v9c3y>

First sighting of mainland leopard cat in India's Pench Tiger Reserve

The Deputy Director of Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, India, announced the first record of a Mainland leopard cat not only within the reserve, but in Central India in general. The cat was captured by a camera trap near Narahar village by a seasonal stream. This record challenges the previously held belief that the species does not occur in Central India and may catalyse further research on felid distribution patterns. Source: Times of India, <https://t1p.de/y51rs>

Captive Arabian leopards contain distinct genes not found in the wild

A study performed across the breeding centres on the Arabian Peninsula found that the captive population of Arabian leopards contains distinct genes not found in the wild. This increases the value of the captive population of this Critically Endangered subspecies even more as reintroduction will not only contribute to the numerical increase of the population, but also increase its genetic diversity. Source: Times of Oman, <https://t1p.de/xv692>

New approach to gather data for jaguarundi Red List assessment

The jaguarundi is a very elusive species. A recent study managed to bring together 17 institutions from 13 countries to pool their camera trap data and produce a distribution model for the species. The currently ongoing IUCN Red List re-assessment is gathering even more data. The team sent out a Google Forms questionnaire to a wide network of people and organisations and produced social media posts for easy sharing. They received 69 answers covering 18 countries and 70% of the received data has so far not been published. Source: Mongabay, <https://t1p.de/tkqmh>

Conference on the Iberian lynx in Aragon, Spain

During March 2024, a conference on the Iberian lynx was held in Aragon, Spain. It is part of the participatory process prior to the reintroduction of the species that is expected to start in 2025. The conference was organised by the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo (UIIMP). The presentations can be viewed on the EPS YouTube Channel <https://t1p.de/f0dr7>. Source: UIIMP, <https://t1p.de/3arhn>

Sharp decline in leopards in Uttarakhand, India

Back in 2018, there were 3,115 leopards in Uttarakhand. This number decreased to 2,928 in 2022. According to the latest estimates, the population has now further declined by 652 individuals down to 2,276. This loss of more than a fifth of the population has probably been caused by an increase in forest fires, which has also led to a rise in human-wildlife conflicts. Leopards suffer more than tigers, because the latter is the dominant species and can suppress leopards in prime habitat, forcing them to move closer to settled areas. Source: The New Indian Express, <https://t1p.de/3gh72>

Saving Muñoa's Pampas cat

In the Pampas grasslands of southern Brazil, Uruguay and northeastern Argentina, fewer than 100 Muñoa's Pampas cats remain. Very little is known about them, but it is clear that they are threatened from habitat deterioration, human-wildlife conflict and road mortality. Much of the Pampas has been transformed into cropland. A return to extensive cattle ranching is among the proposed measures to improve the situation of the cat. However, as cropland yields up to 29% higher profits than cattle ranching, the process is a very difficult one. The possibility of captive breeding programmes is also explored. Currently, no Muñoa's Pampas cats are kept in captivity in Brazil, and breeding efforts in Uruguay have so far failed. Source: Mongabay, <https://t1p.de/iotho>

First wildcat kittens born in the wild after release in Scotland

Last year, 19 wildcats were released in Cairngorms National Park, Scotland. This was the first deliberate reintroduction of a predatory mammal in the UK after the species had been regarded as functionally extinct. Now only a year later, camera trap recordings show young kittens from at least two litters. The team cannot yet be 100% certain of the parentage without genetic analyses. However, as radio collars have shown that the females overlapped with a released male, it is probable, that both parents were part of the reintroduction and not feral domestic cats or hybrids. Source: The Guardian <https://t1p.de/r06am>

Launch of the National Cheetah Conservation Strategy in Saudi Arabia

Last year, Saudi Arabia launched the National Cheetah Reintroduction Program. Now, the National Center for Wildlife has launched the National Cheetah Conservation Strategy. The multi-step program will begin with the establishment of specialised breeding centers, and habitat conservation before implementing experimental releases and eventually widespread reintroduction. Cheetahs have been absent from the Arabian Peninsula for at least forty years. The launch of the Strategy coincided with the birth of four cubs at the National Center for Wildlife. Sources: Asharq Al-Awsat, <https://t1p.de/q4dnc> and Arab News <https://t1p.de/758qs>

See Supporting Online Material SOM for more news articles at www.catsg.org. Current news articles are also published on the IUCN SSC Cat SG Facebook page (<https://t1p.de/evuiq>).

Thank you to Juan Herrero for sending in news items. If you would like to contribute current news items from your area, please contact: r.buerki@kora.ch.