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First camera trap records of jaguars in the San Juan River Basin, Colombia

By J. H. Castaño, B. A. Cárdenas, R. D. Murillo, C. Orrego and S. Quintero

Colombia occupies a strategic position for jaguar *Panthera onca* conservation, serving as a link between Central American and South American core populations. Here, we present the first camera trap records of jaguars in the upper San Juan River basin, located at the interface between the Chocó and Andean regions in the Risaralda Department, Colombia. We identified two individuals from three video recordings and three sets of tracks out of six different study locations. These records expand the limited jaguar data available for the area and suggest potential jaguar movement from the Chocó into the inter-Andean valleys.

Saving wildcats in Scotland: first releases of captive-bred European wildcats

By K. Langridge, K. Kilshaw, A. Bacon, D. Barclay, L. Hughes, A. Scurrah-Price, L. Semple, J. Sneddon, J. MacPherson, R Campbell, M. Wilson, M. Gaywood, D. Hetherington, K. Kortland, J. Howard-McCombe and H. Senn

Anthropogenic threats have pushed the European wildcat *Felis silvestris* population in Scotland to the brink of extinction. Unlike wildcat populations in western-central Europe, reinforcement through immigration is impossible, leaving conservation translocation the only viable option. The Saving Wildcats (SWAforLIFE, LIFE18 NAT/UK/000995) partnership was launched in 2020 to restore wildcat populations in Scotland through captive breeding/release and threat mitigation. Nineteen wildcats were soft-released into the Cairngorms National Park in Summer 2023. Post-release monitoring revealed high survival and reproduction during the first year. However, genetic testing confirmed interbreeding with wildcat-domestic cat hybrids in one litter and human-wildlife conflict remains a significant challenge to long-term recovery. The prevalence of suitable wildcat habitat in human-occupied areas increases the relative risks from hybrids/domestic cats and land management practices.

Occurrence of a rusty-spotted cat in Jassore Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, India

By R. Vyas & V. Mistry

The rusty-spotted cat *Prionailurus rubiginosus* is a nocturnal and secretive species that is widely distributed in moist deciduous to dry arid areas of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Records exist of its presence across Gujarat State, including various protected areas. Here, we present the first confirmed record of an adult rusty-spotted cat found road-killed in the Jassore Wildlife Sanctuary, North Gujarat, India.

First camera trap record of a fishing cat in Tripura, India

By O. Patil, S. Pavagada, A. Joshi and A. Parkar

The fishing cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* is a wetland-dependent small felid with a globally declining population, threatened by wetland loss, poaching, retaliatory killings and illegal trade. It is found both within and outside of protected areas (PAs) in India. We report its confirmed presence in Tripura through camera trap images from Bison National Park in the Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary. Seven images from two locations revealed three identifiable individuals. This record extends the species' known range, highlighting the need for further conservation of this vulnerable species in this area.

Assessing Bornean wild cat use of a high-elevation landscape in western Sabah

By A. J. Hearn, M. A. b Jaini, P. M. S. b. Salam, A. Martin and D. W. Macdonald

High-elevation forests in Borneo remain under-surveyed compared to lowland and mid-elevation areas, limiting understanding of montane habitat use by wildlife, including the island's five wild cat species. These upland forests are predicted to offer highly suitable habitat for felids, yet empirical data remain scarce. Here, we present results from camera trap surveys conducted across ten highland sites in western Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. We recorded four wild cat species and documented new upper elevation records for the Sunda clouded leopard *Neofelis diardi* (2,467 m) and Borneo bay cat *Catopuma badia* (1,503 m). We also report high-

elevation detections of marbled cat *Pardofelis marmorata* (2,196 m) and Sunda leopard cat *Prionailurus javanensis* (1,503 m), which likely represent new Bornean and Sabah records, respectively. Our study provides the first confirmation of the bay cat in Nuluhon-Trusmadi Forest Reserve and evidence of its continued presence in Kinabalu Park. These findings highlight the ecological and conservation value of Sabah's highland forests, with Nuluhon-Trusmadi and Kinabalu emerging as important refuges for Borneo's rarest felids.

New range distribution record of Pallas's cat in Ladakh, India

By S. Yangjor, P. Gyalpo and I. A. Khan

Although significant advancements have been made in the study of carnivore ecology, our understanding of small cats remains incomplete. The distribution of certain species is still largely uncertain. We report two new confirmed records of the manul or Pallas's cat *Otocolobus manul* from previously undocumented locations in the Union Territory of Ladakh, India. Independent photographic evidence was obtained from Sakti Village in the Indus Valley and Lastyang Village in the Aryan Valley on 25 October 2022 and 10 March 2025, respectively. The latter observation represents the westernmost record of the species' distribution in India and the lowest altitudinal occurrence within Ladakh. We present these findings in the context of the current knowledge on the species' distribution in the Trans-Himalayan region.

First photographic record of melanistic jungle cat in Odisha, Eastern India

By N. C. Palei, D. D. Hanumant, H. S. Palei and A. K. Mishra

Melanism, a genetic condition causing dark coat coloration due to increased melanin, occurs in various felid species but is rare in jungle cats *Felis chaus*. We present the first photographic evidence of a melanistic jungle cat in Keonjhar Forest Division, Odisha, India. Over 12,150 trap nights at 53 camera stations in Atei Reserve Forest, 246 jungle cat images were captured, including two of a melanistic individual.

Breeding record of mainland clouded leopard in Lamjung, Nepal

By J. Rai, N. Limbu, B. Adhikary, S. P. Suwal and N. Kunwar

We report a breeding record of the mainland clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* in Lamjung District, Nepal. During a camera trap survey from 19 April to 16 July 2024 in spring and monsoon season, we documented an adult female with two cubs near cardamom plantations and livestock corrals, demonstrating reproductive success in human-modified mid-hill forests.

Elusive and unprotected: fishing cat occurrence and conservation challenges in India

By Khadija, S. Chauhan and K Ahmed

The fishing cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* is a flagship species with a strong preference for wetland habitats. It is found in both protected and unprotected habitats of India's Terai Arc Landscape, particularly in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. However, limited knowledge of its distribution outside protected areas has created a gap in conservation efforts. To address this, we analysed media reports on fishing cats from newspapers over the past decade (2015–2024). Our findings confirm the presence of fishing cats in 22 districts in Uttar Pradesh and 5 districts of Bihar. We identified three conservation priority zones: 1) Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary – Bijnor Social Forestry, 2) Dudhwa Landscape and 3) Suhelwa-Sohagi Barwa Landscape. We also assessed the major threats the species faces outside protected areas. Road mortality and mistaken identity with other large carnivores emerged as the most significant conservation challenges. We recommend exploratory surveys be conducted in the identified conservation priority zones to assess fishing cat distribution. Furthermore, targeted conservation education programs should be implemented in these districts to raise awareness and ensure the species' long-term survival in these landscapes.

Endemic Chinese Mountain cats are threatened by domestic dogs

By C-Y. Wei, H-Q. Chen, Z-Y. Dong, X. Zhao, X-Y. Li, Zhi Lu, X-Y. Shi and X-S. Han

The Chinese Mountain cat *Felis bieti*, endemic to the eastern Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in China, is one of the most elusive and endangered felid species worldwide and is currently Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Threats include large-scale poisoning of one of their main prey (pikas *Ochotona spp.*), illegal hunting and hybridisation with domestic cats *Felis catus*. During our monitoring of a breeding family discovered in the Sanjiangyuan Region, two individuals were found dead. Carcass examinations and local interviews suggest that predation by free-ranging dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* was the likely cause of death—a previously overlooked but potentially significant threat. Additionally, we have published genomic data of the two deceased individuals to support related conservation genomic research. These findings underscore the complex and evolving challenges faced by the Chinese mountain cat in a human-dominated landscape, calling for renewed conservation attention.

Ex-situ propagation, wilding and reintroduction of ocelots in South Texas, USA

By W. F. Swanson, L. Carpenter, J. V. Lombardi, L. Petracca, R. W. Deyoung, T A. Bostwick, A Reeves and L. A. Martinez

The ocelot *Leopardus pardalis* is the most imperilled wild cat species native to the United States, with as few as 100–120 individuals residing in two isolated populations in South Texas. Recent genetic analysis confirmed that both populations have low genetic diversity and high levels of inbreeding relative to U.S. zoo-based ocelots. To support ocelot recovery efforts in the United States, a coalition of private landowners, academic institutions, state and federal governments, and zoological entities established a program (Recover Texas Ocelots; www.RecoverTexasOcelots.org) in 2021 to reintroduce a wild population of ocelots to a part of their historic range in southern Texas. An initial ocelot reintroduction site, comprising 350 km^2 of private Texas ranch land, was identified and a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement was established between private landowners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An Ocelot Conservation Facility, composed of a veterinary science building, breeding enclosures and wilding enclosures, is currently under construction at Texas A&M University-Kingsville to enable ocelot propagation, behavioural development and monitoring prior to in-situ release. Ocelots from U.S. zoos will serve as the source population for introgression with wild Texas ocelots through natural breeding and/or assisted reproduction to ensure increased genetic diversity in the reintroduced population. Over the next 10 to 20 years, our goal is to establish a new, sustainable and ecologically viable ocelot population to support Texas ocelot recovery.

Lion subspecies introgression: insights and implications for policy and management

By L. D. Bertola, S. K. Nicholson, H. Bauer, C. Masembe, M. Chege, T. Asfaw and U. Breitenmoser

Hybridisation is increasingly recognised as a common process across taxa, with genomic tools providing more detailed insights into its role in shaping species and subspecies boundaries. In lions *Panthera leo*, hybridisation occurs naturally within a zone in Ethiopia and neighbouring countries, where the ranges of the northern *P. l. leo* and southern *P. l. melanochaita* subspecies overlap. This zone spans a vast geographic area and contains a substantial number of individuals. We review current knowledge of this hybridisation zone, its historical and ecological context, and its implications for conservation policy and management. Evidence shows that the observed admixture is a natural phenomenon, shaped by past climatic fluctuations and subsequent secondary contact, rather than by anthropogenic interventions such as translocations. However, how such admixed populations are treated in conservation assessments remains unresolved. While the IUCN Red List provides guidance against evaluating hybrid taxa, it does not exclude naturally admixed populations, creating ambiguity in their assessments. Given ongoing declines of lions in West and Central Africa, populations in the hybridisation zone may hold particular conservation importance, representing reservoirs of genetic diversity. We argue that interventions to halt introgression are neither justified nor desirable; instead, conservation strategies should aim to assess, monitor, and incorporate admixed populations appropriately. Recognising the potential genetic value of these populations is essential to avoid the inadvertent loss of unique diversity in Red List and Green Status processes.