

Cats in the news

Indianapolis Prize Emerging Conservationist Award for work on African golden cat

The Indianapolis Prize Emerging Conservationist Award is worth 50,000 USD and given to a conservationist under 40 who made a significant impact in saving an animal species. It has been awarded for the second time and has honoured this year Mwezi “Badru” Mugerwa for his work on the African golden cat. Mwezi is founder of the African Golden Cat Conservation Alliance and a member of the IUCN SSC Cat SG. We congratulate him!

Source: Indianapolis Zoo <https://t1p.de/2yp2v>

Improvements to conservation of Canada lynx in lower 48 states, U.S.A

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed revisions to the designated critical habitat for the species, based on current science. The Service has also published the finalised recovery plan for the Canada lynx for its conservation in the lower 48 states. The species is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act since 2000.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service <https://t1p.de/p3d6s>

Jaguar project among first winners of GEF Innovation Window funds

In December 2024, the Global Environment Facility GEF announced the winners of its first Innovation Window, rewarding initiatives that test and pilot new solutions to stubborn challenges. Among the seven winning Initiatives is “Jaguar Corridors in the Face of Rapid Environmental Change: A Dynamic Monitoring and Assessment System for Prioritizing Conservation Investments”, aiming to use remote sensing and cloud computing to monitor changes in the environment and identify spatial priorities for conservation action (terradapt.org).

Source: Global Environment Facility <https://t1p.de/jb7u5>

Largest-scale snow leopard population estimate, China

China has performed its first large-scale snow leopard population estimate from 2015–2021. The survey was the largest-scale one for snow leopards published globally, covering some 360,000 km² of the Sanjiangyuan area. Using camera traps, the population was estimated at 1,002 animals.

Source: Global Times <https://t1p.de/eydte>

Strong increase in tiger populations in India

Over the past two decades, India's tiger population increased by 30%. They occur in an area with more than 66 million people. Protected areas harbour some 85% of breeding populations, acting as a source for dispersal and expansion into multi-use forests. To allow the success to continue, protected areas and habitat corridors need expansion, and law enforcement must be improved and conflicts mitigated.

Source: The Hindu <https://t1p.de/lbvmn>

Regional stops to Iberian lynx reintroductions

Plans to reintroduce Iberian lynx into some areas had to be halted. After pressure from farming and hunting lobbies claiming that Iberian lynx predate on sheep, regional governments of Aragón and Cataluña blocked the releases. Cataluña recently saw a strong increase in its rabbit population. Rabbits make up 90% of Iberian lynx' diet. The rab-

bit population will instead be controlled with aluminium phosphide.

Source: The Guardian <https://t1p.de/igq5a>

International Big Cat Alliance comes into force

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) in 2023 and it has now come into force on 25 January 2025 as a treaty-based inter-governmental international organisation and legal entity. Five countries have ratified IBCA and a total of 27 countries have consented to join the IBCA. The IBCA aims to conserve the Panthera species plus cheetah and puma by facilitating collaboration and synergies between stakeholders, and consolidating successful conservation practices and expertise.

Source: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India <https://t1p.de/hi7k2>

Kazakhstan publishes updated Red Book

The previous edition of Kazakhstan's National Red Book was published in 2008. With its update, 19 species (2 molluscs and 17 insects) were excluded, but 11 rare species were newly included. Among them is the jungle cat. The delay in the update was due to challenging economic conditions affecting the funding of science in the country. Over the last 15 years, science funding was increased by approximately 10 times from 0.12% of GDP to 1% of GDP.

Source: The Astana Times <https://t1p.de/krm78>

Genome of Arabian leopard decoded

The King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), Saudi Arabia, has for the first time mapped the Arabian leopard Genome. The genome was deposited in the global National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) database allowing access for researchers and supporting future studies.

Source: KACST <https://t1p.de/vzpnk>

Only 17 Asiatic cheetahs left in Iran

During the signing of an MoU with the traffic police, the head of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization announced that there are only 17 Asiatic cheetahs left in the world – all of them in Iran. The MoU was signed to improve collaborative action and highlight the necessity of inter-agency cooperation. An important issue is the enforcement of speed limits to avoid vehicle collisions with cheetahs. Road accidents are responsible for 52% of cheetah deaths.

Source: Iran International <https://t1p.de/u9tq1>

First sighting of Chinese mountain cat in Jiuzhaigou, China

Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve lies in Sichuan Province, Southwest China. During biodiversity monitoring, camera traps detected for the first time a Chinese mountain cat in the area.

Source: China Daily <https://t1p.de/vadno>

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