

Zoo Line

Volume 45 Edition 3

November, 2015

President's Message

By: Ron Gray, President

Fellow Docents,

We are almost in to winter as it's a gloomy, rainy, cool day. But, we have some great things happening here the last week of October. New elephants settling in to the herd, new lions wowing guests and us alike, Tapirs really enjoying their enclosure, and our recruiters doing a super job of signing up trainees for the next session of school. Patsy McAteer arranged a very successful set of CEC's about the changes to our basic tours and safaris. A sub-committee of hard working docents scrubbed our Coats and Colors, African Rift Valley and Amazing Mammals tours and safaris against the Colorado standards. They then worked with the Zoo staff to update our web page to more accurately represent how we meet the standards. We've already seen reactions from teachers and increased requests for our tours. Thank to those who labored over the summer on this task to keep us relevant to our schools and the kids we get excited about coming to the zoo. Zoopeteers have already filled their dance card for this Fall season and have started working on the Spring schedule.. I'm convinced that they enjoy putting on these puppet shows as much as the kids enjoy them (disclaimer: I'm one of them). I hope everyone is looking forward to our Holiday Party at Marie Poyzer's home on Dec. 5th. It will be a great capper for our Fall season. Start bugging Pat DeGeorge about opportunities to

work Electric Safari in December. Winter is coming.

Cheers, Ron



HAPPY HOLIDAY PARTY

**COME ONE COME ALL AND YOUR
SIGNIFICANT OTHER
OUR ANNUAL DOCENT HOLIDAY
PARTY**

**IT WILL BE HELD AT MARIE POYZ-
ER'S HOUSE
541 VISTA GRANDE DRIVE
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
ON
DECEMBER 5, 2015 - 3 PM to 6 PM**

**TO BE CATERED BY SPRINGS
RESCUE MISSION
COST IS \$10.50 PER PERSON
PLEASE BYOB, WATER,
COFFEE & TEA TO BE
SUPPLIED BY US
MONEY TO BE
COLLECTED 11/11/15 AT
THE TE MEETING AND
11/14/15 AT THE IE
MEETING**

**Please contact
Suzanne Twohig @
stwohig215@comcast.net
Or 719 338-5616**

2015-2016 CMZ Auxiliary Calendar

Meeting Times are 9:30 AM
Education Committee Meetings are held the fourth
Wednesday of the month at 9:30 AM in the Safari
Lodge.

**** Mandatory meetings *Date Change**

November 2015

4	Board Meeting	Safari Lodge
11	TE Meeting	Safari Lodge
14	IE Meeting	Safari Lodge

1 Lodge at Moose Lake

December 2015

No meetings

5	Holiday Party	Marie Poyzer's
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January 2016

6	Board Meeting	Safari Lodge
9	IE Meeting	Safari Lodge
13	TE Meeting	Safari Lodge

Artwork Needs New Home

Mary S. Humphreys (zoo docent class of 1986) collected hand-carved wood zoo animals, most were carved in Africa.

We collected these at the Zoos we visited all over the U.S. Ben (docent class of 1988) and I always enjoyed them. Now I would be glad to give the collection to any current Docent who could wish to give them a "home". If interested, please call 719-393-0490.

If you need to know more about me, check with long time docents I worked with: Glenn Carson or Gretchen Lloyd

Thank you.
Mary S Humphreys

Directory Update

If you have not been able to pick up this year's directory, you will now find them in the DRC with your name written in the top right hand corner. I have also left the remaining directories (no names listed on them) in the DRC for those of you that are interested in getting a second or back up copy.

Jody Schmitz
Corresponding Secretary

The Friendship Lane Great Horned Owl Saga

By Lovice Riffe

I am writing this the first week of October as we are all watching fall migration of so many birds, and also watching those bears doing the original version of carbo-loading. But in the last few days of April this year, when the migration was going the other direction, a young Great Horned

Owlet, fell or was pushed from the only home it had ever known. It landed beneath mature Ponderosa Pine on the street my neighbors and I



drive up and down on daily. There was a scrape on a leg. A sibling was still in the nest about 25 to thirty feet above. Parents were still attentive to both. BUT, this was the end of April, so this little one couldn't even walk yet. I gave my advice to the new human parents, who had warned us all about the circumstances. There are shrubs providing ground cover at the foot of those trees as well. So it was a potentially, sort of, maybe, safe place. I told the homeowners that the parents would continue to feed this youngster, but decided to call Ellicott Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, too. They were concerned that this very young owl was in too much danger – a back yard was one thing, right by a street where cars, people, dogs, cats and others travel daily signaled doom. So, they asked us to round up this child, contain it, and they would be by to pick it up within a couple of hours. We did as told and sure enough a volunteer from the Center arrived just as promised. Some of the photos I am sending with this article reflect this part of the journey.

The next part of the neighborhood's involvement began on September 27. As I was getting ready to leave for a short trip to enjoy elk and Estes

Park, I received a message (via FB), that they planned to release our youngster the very next



evening and could I please provide more information about the habitat. I promptly complied describing the mature evergreens and cottonwood, the proximity to Garden of the Gods, Beidleman Nature center, the open space behind the homes, the nearby park, my numerous nights being awakened from sleep because the Great Horned Owls were talking to each other, and even attached a photo of an owl that had spent a lazy day one winter in a tree across the street. It must have been the correct answer since they chose to not only bring back our little owl but 3 of his new best friends. Because my neighbors who were the original savior of the owlet were unavailable that night,



the release took place at my home. Many friends and neighbors and Fox News 21 came.

(There is a video you can look up at the Fox 21 website). Donna Ralph, from the Rehab Center answered questions and provided much information about the entire process. We all learned that they possess Hootie, a Great Horned Owl, about 15 years of age, who cannot be released to the wild, but is an eager foster mother to every owlet they introduce her to – feeding them, raising them, and teaching them hunting. They know it works because leftovers are often things not being fed by humans to these owls - critters that wandered into the enclosure, and never got to leave. Four of us got to release an owl – now so much larger than last April. What a thrill for us all. I hope they all make it. But these birds, one from my neighborhood, one from Mountain Shadows, and 2 from – are you ready? - Lowes Garden Center on North Nevada, were once certain to die this summer, and they all now have a chance to do their jobs (one of which is eating the huge population of field mice I have observed this year).

Lovice Riffe

Why Dozens of India's Asiatic Lions are Dying¹

By Ankur Jain

BBC Hindi, Ahmedabad

7 September 2014

From the section India

Is the last abode of the Asiatic lion turning into a death trap for the big cat?

Gir in India's Gujarat state is home to Asiatic lions and has seen 256 lions dying in the past five years.

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-29009234>

Experts say their population is at risk with the big cats making new homes in human settlements.

Once widespread in Gujarat, the lion population shrank to a mere dozen in the early 20th Century, mainly due to hunting and drought.

But Nawab Mahabat Khanji of then Junagadh state, an animal lover who kept 300 dogs as pets, banned lion hunting, and was able to preserve the big cat.

However, in the last century as the lion population started soaring, the 1,400 sq km (540



Gujarat government's last lion census in 2010 pegs their numbers at 411

sq miles) Gir sanctuary in Junagadh state began to be too small for the animals.

Today, lions are found across the 20,000 sq km area of the Saurashtra region - which includes Junagadh and 10 other districts - and are routinely spotted on private farms and near village homes.

Environmentalist Takhubhai Sansur says in the last three months alone, about 20 lions have been run over by speeding trucks and trains.

"Lion numbers have increased, but the challenge is their safety. About 40% of the total lion population now lives outside the forest area. Open wells and live wires on farms, poachers and passing trains and trucks have turned this

region into a death field for the Asiatic lion," he says.

'Under control'

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had in 2000 added the Asiatic lion to the list of critically endangered species.

In 2005, when the lion population started swelling and crossed 250, it was removed from the list. Gujarat government's last lion census in 2010 pegs their numbers at 411.

Gir forest official Sandeep Kumar does not see the many deaths as a major threat to the species.

"Only 20% are accidental deaths, which is a cause for concern but the situation is under control. Lions are territorial animals and they live in prides. They are moving out as a male needs an area of 50 sq km and a female needs 26 sq km."

A lion strays in Liliadhar village, 125km from Gir forest

Increasingly, big cats are found straying outside of the forest area, appearing on farms and near homes

Mr Kumar says the government is now creating alternative habitats in Saurashtra to give more space to the big cat. Officials have also asked the railways to reduce train speed in lion-dominated areas to avoid running them over.

The Gujarat government annually spends 500m rupees (\$8.3m; £5m) on wildlife - half of it on the big cat.

But critics say the amount is less than 5% of what is spent on promoting tourism, for which lions are the biggest draw. They also accuse the government of not being honest about the reason behind the lions' deaths.

"The deaths are alarming and that's the reason the government continues to hide the autopsy reports. Life of big cats outside of Gir is at great risk," says wildlife activist Harish Joshi.

Wildlife scientist Ravi Chellam, who has been working with lions for the past three decades, believes India's lion population is now at risk.

'Playing politics'

In the 1990s, in a study for the Wildlife Institute of India he suggested that a few lions should be shifted outside Gujarat to save the species.

"An epidemic in Serengeti National Park in Tanzania in 1994 killed over 1,000 lions in a few days. Something of that sort can't be ruled out in Saurashtra, as a sizeable population lives outside the forest and is exposed to infections.

"Indian courts and other experts have agreed on translocation, but Gujarat government is not comfortable with the idea," says Mr Chellam, who is part of a panel appointed after a Supreme Court order to oversee the translocation.

Activists accuse the state government of "playing politics" over lions.

The Gujarat government, under then chief minister Narendra Modi who is now prime minister, fought long court battles to prevent the lions being moved to the Kuno Palpur Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh in central India.

Open wells on farms which turn death traps for lions often falling inside

Open wells on farms often turn into death traps for lions who fall into them

For people of Saurashtra, lions are a symbol of pride and many have adopted second names like Sinh and Savaj, which mean lion in Gujarati.

"Mr Modi exploited the translocation issue for votes in Gujarat. But those who love lions want

it to be safe and would never object to translocation. After all, they are not state property," says wildlife activist Bhikhabhai Jethava.

"The rampant illegal sand and limestone mining in the region have dried the rivers and that's the reason lions are migrating to coastal areas as far as 300km [186 miles] from the forest area," he adds.

Activists are also worried over the increasing man-animal conflict in the region - in the past two years, lions have killed 14 people and wounded 114 others. And two farmers have been arrested for killing lions who strayed into their fields.



Open wells on farms often turn into death traps for lions who fall into them.

The bulk of the government budget for the big cat today is spent on compensating farmers whose cattle have been killed by lions and on removing the big cats from farms. Last year, lions killed 600 cattle and 500 operations were carried out to relocate the big cats.

Gir forest official Anshuman Sharma says they now have to provide security to farmers to harvest crops as they fear prowling lions and leopards.

"Wildlife management has now become more of human management. We have to work round the clock to ensure human life doesn't get affected

as it's only due to the local people here that the lion population has survived," Mr Sharma says.

State forest officials say lions can be safe only in Gujarat, a view the state government has been pushing.

RL Meena, chief conservator of forests, rubbishes suggestions that the lion may become extinct in Gir.

"There has been no incident ever when a local has knowingly killed a lion," he says.

"People are mostly vegetarian here so there is no dearth of bush meat for the big cat."

The big question, however, still remains - are India's lions really safe?

Elusive Andean Mountain Cat Caught On Camera In Chile²

Jells Castrodale
Petcha.com

Researchers have waited 25 years for confirmation that Andean cats lived in Chile's Los Flamencos National Reserve.

Elvis. Aliens. Bigfoot. People who do Crossfit but don't talk about Crossfit all the time. There are so many things that are supposedly out there in this great, wide world of ours, but there isn't any photographic or video evidence to prove it. The Andean mountain cat used to fit into this same category because — although they were rumored to live within the boundaries of Chile's Los Flamencos National Reserve — the secretive species had never been seen in that territory.



Andean Mountain Cat

The secretive cat was caught by a motion-sensing camera. Via Alianza Gato Andino/ Facebook

For 25 years, researchers believed that the cats lived on those rocky slopes, but they were never able to capture the mysterious felines on camera, according to Earth Touch News Network. (In fact, they are rarely captured on camera anywhere in the wild.) That all changed earlier this month when a motion sensor camera trap captured a mother Andean mountain cat and her



Like many house cats, the Andean Mountain Cat and her baby like to lounge in the sun. Via

YouTube, filming them as they played for more than two hours.

² http://petcha.com/pet_care/elusive-andean-mountain-cat-caught-on-camera-in-chile-trending/?utm_source=petcha.com&utm_medium=medium&utm_campaign=elusiveandeanmountaincatcaughtoncamerain-chile-trending

The elusive cats are (obviously) one of the least researched species of feline, although it is believed that there are less than 2,500 of them in the wild. That makes this sighting extremely significant, for a number of reasons.

“This is one of the five most endangered cats worldwide, but we have to know where it is present so we can protect it,” CONAF (Chile’s National Forest Corporation) biologist Mariano de la Maza told Earth Touch. “With this sighting, we can now form a new conservation plan for them based on the information we have.”

Now if only they could set a trap camera for those long-rumored Crossfitters...



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