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PANTHERA NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to Panthera's Newsletter!

Panthera is an international conservation nonprofit whose sole mission is the conservation of the world's 36 species of wild cats. Bringing together the knowledge and expertise of the world's top cat biologists, and working in partnership with local and international NGOs, scientific institutions, universities and government agencies, Panthera develops and implements range-wide species conservation strategies for the world's most imperiled wild cats.

Snow Leopards Smile for the Camera

The South Gobi research camp in Mongolia is in full swing for the summer field season. On June 30th the Panthera/Snow Leopard Trust team recaptured Azati, the first cat collared in the study. The team targeted this leopard because his collar was set to drop off in September but was not functioning well, so he was recaptured and his collar was replaced.

Our field teams recently placed 40 camera sets across a 200 square kilometer study area. Camera traps tell us volumes about these hard to find species, and one camera has already captured several images of a female leopard with 3 cubs!

[Visit our YouTube channel to view the cubs in action!](#)

Panthera Video on The Huffington Post

Steve Winter, Panthera's Director of Media, has a new blog on The Huffington Post which features a video clip and description of how he captured incredible images of the elusive and endangered Snow Leopard - one of which won the BBC photograph of the year.

To watch the video, see the photos, and read the interview please visit [The Huffington Post](#).

For Cats, No Passports Required



Jaguars, like many large cats, move through landscapes and regularly cross national borders. For animals that travel freely across national boundaries, protecting their habitat presents a unique challenge. International conservation requires collaboration between countries that may or may not always work well together. Panthera has been working diligently, and at all levels, to expand our Jaguar Corridor Initiative and ensure that jaguar habitat remains intact across a multitude of nations throughout Latin America, from northern Mexico to southern Brazil.

In our last newsletter, we reported on Panthera's recent partnership with the Colombian government and endorsement by Colombia's Vice President for our jaguar conservation initiative. This month, we are pleased to announce that we have expanded the corridor to include the northernmost nation in jaguar range, Mexico. Panthera grantee Joe Figel is in the final weeks of completing a survey to determine the presence of jaguars in the western Mexican states of Sinaloa, Nayarit, Michoacán and Guerrero.

The survey will allow for critical steps in securing the western corridors of Mexico. In just the past month, three female jaguars and one male jaguar have been photographed in the region! The photos are a sign that this is an important region for jaguars and that their protection in Mexico impacts the jaguar's long-term future throughout Latin America.

Coming Together to Save Tigers in Sumatra

Tigers on the Indonesian island of Sumatra are in a precarious state - habitat loss and fragmentation is happening at an alarming rate, and persecution due to human-tiger conflict is all too common. But many groups are working together to combat these issues and to ensure a future for tigers on the island. Since 2006, one of the most ambitious surveys of tiger distribution ever attempted has been running on Sumatra. National and international NGOs have been working with the Indonesian Department of Forestry (PHKA) to determine where tigers are distributed across the island. It is critical to understand where tigers are so effective conservation measures can be taken and threats mitigated.

With most of the priority sites completed in May, Panthera provided funding and support for a data analysis and training workshop

convened by the Sumatran tiger conservation forum, HarimauKita. More than 30 delegates from government and non-government agencies and representatives from each of Sumatra's national parks attended training in the techniques that underpin these field surveys.

Field teams worked across more than 100,000km² of tiger habitat and walked some 11,000 km in the rugged forest habitats that dominate the western edge of the island. These mountainous areas have a low tiger population but may represent the best locations for the long-term survival of the Sumatran tiger.

A core-working group has been established with representatives from Panthera, Wildlife Conservation Society, Flora and Fauna International, and the World Wildlife Fund to ensure that the highest priority questions are addressed and that interventions occur in key landscapes. Panthera will lead the analyses of these data for the design and implementation of the Tiger Corridor Initiative throughout the island.

Tiger Presence Confirmed but Alarmingly Low in Hukaung Valley



The Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, located in Northern Myanmar, was established in 2001 with the help of Panthera's President, Dr. Alan Rabinowitz. As one of the last strongholds for tigers in Myanmar, the sanctuary occupies an area the size of Vermont and is the largest tiger reserve in the world. It is often celebrated as a conservation success story where both local livelihoods and wildlife coexist and flourish. After almost one year without any sign of tigers in the core area of the sanctuary, researchers from our partner organization, the Wildlife Conservation Society, finally found evidence of tigers in a remote section of the reserve known as the Naga Hills. The fresh footprints of a male and female traveling together were discovered in early May.

Although this sighting is of great relief to our staff, it is also a cause for alarm. In previous years we had photographed numerous individual tigers in the core of Hukaung using automated camera traps. In the next few months we will ramp up our anti-poaching efforts and investigate the local poaching network that may be responsible for the tiger decline. Tiger poaching for the Chinese Traditional Medicine trade is an ongoing and widespread threat throughout most of the tigers current range. Panthera will repeat the tiger survey in the core

area to determine if we are losing tigers throughout Hukaung or if the tigers are moving to more remote parts of the sanctuary in order to escape the threat of poaching and conflict with local communities.

For more information on Panthera's tiger work, please visit http://www.panthera.org/tiger_programs_projects.html

Alan Rabinowitz Meets Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair



Alan Rabinowitz had the honor of meeting former Prime Minister Tony Blair at New York City's 92 Street Y during Mr. Blair's most recent visit to NYC. He spoke to Mr. Blair about Panthera and wild cat conservation, and presented him with an original photograph of a snow leopard in Ladakh India, taken by the BBC Photographer of the Year and Panthera Director of Media, Steve Winter.

Introducing Phil Henschel: Up Close and Personal with Panthera's New Resident Lion Expert

Panthera is pleased to introduce Philipp Henschel, our latest recruit to lead Panthera's lion conservation efforts in some of the most rugged and wild landscapes in West and Central Africa.

Tell us a bit about the places you have worked:

I got my first job in conservation in Central Africa in 1998 and have been working and living in the region ever since. The area is dominated by the vast rainforests of the Congo Basin, and most of my work has been focused on leopards, a species rarely studied in this habitat.



Since late 2001, I have conducted a number of surveys on lions in

Gabon, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The results of these surveys were alarming as lions had been wiped out of many protected areas I visited. As a result I shifted my research focus to try to understand what was happening to Africa's lions and how we can save them.

What would you say are the most critical issues facing lions in West and Central Africa?

Larger carnivores do not exist outside of protected areas in many parts of West and Central Africa, and lions in particular are relentlessly persecuted by people. No reliable population estimates exist for this region so the decline in lion numbers, and why it's happening, remains poorly documented.

But we do know that in Central Africa, lions are suffering from starvation because unregulated hunting by local communities has led to a severe decline in prey. Also, the ever-increasing human population and widespread introduction of firearms have left entire landscapes void of wildlife.

In West Africa, uncontrolled hunting is also widespread, but the main threat to lion populations here appears to be illegal killing by herdsman. Human-lion conflict is common around protected area boundaries, and initiatives to mitigate conflict are generally lacking. Pastoralists have been increasingly taking matters into their own hands poisoning lions with readily available pesticides.

How do you hope your work will address these issues?

Very little research has been conducted on lions in West and Central Africa, so information on lion numbers is often unreliable and it's hard to know what's really happening to lions if we don't have baseline data. One of my priorities will be to determine if lions are still living in areas where we only have unreliable or outdated information. At sites where lions are known to exist, I plan to conduct surveys to estimate the population size and establish a baseline for monitoring of lion numbers in the future. I will also work with local researchers to teach them how to monitor and protect the lion populations in the countries where they live. All research results and conservation recommendations will be made available to the local and international conservation community, and local and national decision makers to raise awareness for the plight of the lion in this region.

What are you looking forward to in the upcoming months?

I am itching to get back into the field and get started in my new role on a full-time basis. I see this job as an immense and new challenge; I have always liked challenges and I am eager to start working and getting to know more of the key sites and the key players for lion conservation in the region - then I can begin the real work of trying to help save these magnificent species.

To learn more about Panthera and how you can help save the world's wild cats, visit:

www.panthera.org

To see more 'Panthera in the News', please visit:

http://www.panthera.org/news_and_events.html

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