

# Exotic Feline Rescue Center

## Cat Tales

Volume 10

December 2000

### **EIGHTEEN NEW CATS**

Between August 21 and Labor Day weekend the Exotic Feline Rescue Center opened its doors to 17 new cats. In the following week one more was added making this the largest number of cats we have ever taken in at one time.

### **ABUSE AT ITS WORSE**

We left for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on August 21 intending to rescue two or three lions to be introduced to a group of 14 month olds already living here. What we found was neglect and abuse beyond belief. In a dark basement with no food, no water, and the strong stench of urine and feces were four cages about 5' x 5'. In one cage were three lions, in a second cage were three tigers, and there was one tiger each in the other two cages. Seven of the eight cats were severely malnourished, dehydrated, and apparently left to die. They weighed 50 to 80 pounds instead of the 200 to 250 pounds a healthy lion or tiger should weigh at this age. The eighth cat, Raja, while suffering from the same problems was nearer normal size but substantially underweight. Fearing that none of these cats would survive we loaded all of them into the truck and headed for Indiana.

At dawn the next morning with the cats safely unloaded into larger outdoor areas and the arrival of the USDA investigator it was apparent that not only were the cats severely lethargic from lack of nourishment but four of

the five tigers were blind. Raja, the fifth tiger, suffered from a rotted tooth.

Appointments were immediately made at the University of Illinois Veterinary School for all of the cats. Examinations confirmed extreme

malnourishment including suppression of the growth hormone, blindness in both eyes of four of the tigers, several dental needs, and cellulites in Petey the lion.. Appointments were made to begin the surgeries to hopefully restore eyesight and repair dental problems.



The road to recovery. (Cats from the first group)

## **HUNTER**

In less than one week we were again on the road. Having made a commitment to take this tiger before Pittsburgh we headed for Illinois to rescue a privately owned cat in dire need. Originally one of three cats he was the only survivor. A cougar locked in an adjoining cage had been killed by the tigers. Officials killed the other tiger after it escaped from the same area where Hunter was found. Locked in a small area, knee deep in mud, with no shelter we saw Hunter for the first time. Despite claims that he was being fed 20 pounds of meat a day we find it doubtful that he was being fed 20 pounds per week. We loaded him into the truck and headed for U of I in route to the Center. There it was confirmed that he was malnourished, at least 100 pounds underweight, and suffering from parasites.

## **USDA TAKES ACTION**

Labor Day 7:30 P.M. the USDA personnel arrived here in a semi full of lions and tigers seized from Water Wheel Exotics. After years of citations for violations of the Animal Welfare Act, fines in 1997 and 1998 totaling \$32,000.00, and loss of his license this facility for abuse and neglect was finally closed.

Eight more lions and tigers were unloaded during the next several hours to begin life in their new home including three two week old tiger cubs.

## **FELIX – ONE LAST CAT**

Felix, another tiger from Pennsylvania, was initially placed at a facility in Mississippi. There he became extremely aggressive, damaging his cage and posing a threat to the safety of his cage mate and human staff. He was transferred to our facility September 9. He has

adjusted quite well since his arrival. Far from being aggressive, he has rapidly become a favorite with visitors.



Photo of Felix

## **THE VETERINARY SAGA**

The veterinary-medical needs of these cats has been unbelievable. Nine of the eighteen cats needed immediate medical and/or surgical care.

Seven of the first eight suffered from such extreme malnutrition that their survival was questionable.

Four of the tigers from the first group, blinded because of inadequate nutrition, were suffering from severe cataracts in both eyes. On October 3 two of the tigers, Rolo and Tabatha, successfully had cataract surgery and on October 17 the two other tigers, Isabella

and Sabrina successfully had their cataracts removed.

Petey the lion, also part of the first group, suffered from severe cellulites of his abdomen and genital area. His condition improved, but it did not totally resolve, requiring surgery on November 18 to remove scar tissue from his penile sheath.

Two tigers, Raja and Sierra, had to have dental surgery. Raja had a rotted tooth that had to be extracted. Sierra suffered from a broken canine. A failed root canal resulted in extraction of the tooth.

Goldie the lion, while scheduled for a vasectomy, also had an extremely infected toe as a result of a poor declawing. Surgery was required to remove nail and bone from the infected area.

Montana, father of the baby tigers , also had a vasectomy.

Even the three baby tigers are not without problems. Although they are growing and developing at a normal rate, their teeth have dark areas from an unknown cause. We hope this is a problem that will not affect their permanent teeth.

### ***THE CONSTRUCTION STORY***

Construction of temporary enclosures began immediately. Eight cats were able to be housed in existing areas recently vacated by Kashka, Olaf, and Zavata (tigers) who were moved into new larger permanent habitats. Over the next eight weeks five new enclosures were built to house these animals on a temporary basis. While these areas are not the spacious areas we like to house our cats in, these areas are substantially larger than anything these cats had previously lived in. With emphasis on environmental enrichment all of the animals appear quite pleased with their new living arrangements. While the cats seem pleased by their new homes, work has already begun on large permanent enclosures.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

The cost of moving these animals, cataract surgery, other medical/surgical care, and construction of temporary habitats has been financially devastating. We desperately need your help to continue caring for these animals and the other 89. New enclosures, continued veterinary care and food are needed.



Photo of Cuddles (one of the baby tigers)

### ***SPECIAL THANK YOU***

**We want to thank everyone who has given time, money, and materials to help care for these deserving cats. Without your help providing for them would not be possible.**

### ***SINCE LAST TIME.....***

#### **NEW ARRIVALS:**

Since July 18 new cats have arrived.

- Seventeen from the Pittsburgh area
- One from Illinois

#### **MEDICAL PROCEDURES:**

- The new arrivals
- Neuter...  
Cougar: Ben

- Vasectomy...  
Cougar: Boomer
- Dental Surgery...  
Cougar: Boomer – two teeth  
Suma: Tiger – two surgeries
- Tumors...  
Lions:  
Stubby – two lesions on her face  
Babe – back  
Black Leopard:  
Princie – neck

**ENCLOSURES:**

- Kashka and Olaf (former circus tigers) were moved into their new wooded habitat including a swimming tank and climbing tower.
- The eighteen new cats.

- Several enclosures have been improved

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***DIRECTIONS:***

**FROM I-70:**

4 ½ miles south of I-70 Exit 23, Brazil/Linton on State Road 59 and 2 ½ miles east of State Road 59. (Turn left at the Ashboro Methodist Church.)

**FROM BLOOMINGTON:**

Take State Road 46 west through Spencer, three miles past Bowling Green. Turn right onto 200 E. Then turn right onto Ashboro Road

*The Exotic Feline  
Rescue Center*

- Is a nonprofit corporation that:
- Neither buys or sells cats
- Gives animals a home for life
- Provides stable social groups
- Provides enhanced environments
- Provides the best veterinary care

**Cat Tales**

Cat Tales is published by Exotic Feline Rescue Center, a nonprofit sanctuary for exotic cats.

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**Exotic Feline Rescue Center**

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[www.exoticfelinerescuecenter.org](http://www.exoticfelinerescuecenter.org)

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*Come Visit Us*

Visitors Always Welcome

**Open:**

Tuesday – Sunday  
10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**CLOSED MONDAYS**