

Cat Tales

Volume 13

Summer 2002

TIGERS FOR SALE \$25.00

Imagine being torn from your mother at three months old and sold to strangers at an auction for \$25.00 each. From there you are taken to three different homes within a month. This is the story of three sisters that arrived at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center on December 1, 2001 hissing and spitting in response to the cold world.

Having a history of multiple relocations is common among the cat population at EFRC. While we know nothing about the first two owners we assume the second owner was expecting handleable pets. The third owner took them in hopes of using them for a traveling classroom program. They quickly realized the animals were completely non-handleable and began searching for a new home. They were referred to EFRC and arrangements were made for the fourth and final transfer.

On December 1, 2001 all three were locked into a small dog crate, loaded into the back of a pickup truck and driven at top speed for several hours while tarps flapped and banged against their cage. They arrived at their new home with eyes wild with fear. Terrified of people they were quickly nicknamed "The Shy Girls" and work began to try to make their lives better. With no medical history and not wanting to traumatize them further they were placed in an indoor room away from other cats. Here they received close attention and multiple feedings on a daily basis while their permanent area was being constructed. The next several weeks passed with little progress

in their socialization.. They eventually would take chicken from our hands then retreat to a far corner to eat – hissing all the time.

By March their enclosure was finished and plans were made for spaying and complete physicals before being introduced to two young tigers that would share their permanent area. After recovering from their surgical procedures they were transferred to a holding area next to their two new friends. Within hours it was apparent they were eager for new feline companions. Three months have passed and most traces of the shy girls have disappeared, but they still watch in amazement as the other tigers receive attention from their keepers.

They run, tumble, tackle each other and chase their new friends that share their huge enclosure. Fresh air, water, room to roam and playmates have helped to improve their condition. They have a climbing tower, a huge tree, three water tanks and a big hill to climb. This is what they will be doing the rest of their lives. They will not be relocated or confined in tight places. They will not go hungry again. For these three "Shy Girls" those days are a distant memory.



(Photo of new enclosure)

ABBY

Seized by Pennsylvania authorities, we first saw Abby when she was four weeks old and weighed 7 pounds 10 ounces. We were her fourth home in four weeks. She had bloody diarrhea, burned paws (probably from bleach or urine), and missing fur on her frail body.



(Abby a few days after arriving at EFRC)

The following six weeks were filled with frequent bottles, numerous trips to the vet, sleeping with her human parents, and a lot of special care trying to help her become a healthy vigorous cub. She gained nearly twenty pounds, and just when we thought her nightmare was over a call came telling us Abby was part of an ongoing federal investigation and needed to be sent to Baltimore, Maryland. There she would be reunited with her two brothers who had been seized during an investigation of alleged violations of the Endangered Species Act. Feeling we had no choice and wanting to cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service we reluctantly agreed to the transfer. Refusing to send her by air we loaded her into the van and drove her 650 miles to Baltimore.



(Abby just before leaving for Baltimore)

Even though she was thriving at the time, we were very concerned about her health. Another relocation, changes in her diet, and being alone in a quarantine cage while waiting to meet her brothers would be very stressful on this young tiger.

In talks with USF&W and the Baltimore Zoo concerning the fate of Abby's brothers it was decided they should stay together. We agreed to take all three tigers. On April 3 we set out again for Baltimore, this time to get Abby and her two brothers (Rajah and Tigger). We were relieved and overjoyed to have Abby back and to provide a permanent home for the three sibling cubs.

Upon arrival we housed them in a temporary enclosure near the house while we got reacquainted with Abby and acquainted with Tigger and Rajah. Within a few weeks they were moved into their new habitat where they were introduced to "The Shy Girls" (story p. 1) and two other young cubs where they immediately became fast friends.



(Abby and one of the Shy Girls)



We want to assure all of our supporters that we do NOT share our mailing list including our membership/sponsorship information with any other organizations.

EFRC FACTS

- We feed about 2,000 pounds of meat per day. We buy 2,500 pounds of chicken each week. Last year we spent almost \$15,000 on poultry.
- Ten percent of the cats that come here are blind from cataracts. They have all had surgery to restore their sight.
- Veterinary bills for 2001 were \$16,000.
- Ivermectin, a medicine given monthly for parasites including heartworm, costs about \$3,000 per year.
- For the last 4 1/2 years we have averaged taking in two cats per month.
- The average cost of a permanent enclosure for a lion or tiger is about \$25,000.
- The average cost of a permanent enclosure for a cougar or leopard is about \$15,000.
- We house 127 cats on site from 8 different species.

LOUISVILLE ZOO

Two of our cougars have received a beautiful new habitat at the Louisville Zoo where they have gone on a permanent exhibition loan. Visitors to the zoo will be able to see Emet and Sable in their new home.

DIRECTIONS:

FROM I-70:

4 1/2 miles south of I-70, exit 23 (Brazil/Linton) on State Road 59. Turn left at the Ashboro Church and go 2 1/2 miles east on Ashboro Road.

FROM BLOOMINGTON:

Take State Road 46 west about 35 miles. Three miles past Bowling Green turn right onto 200 E. Go 1/2 mile and turn right onto Ashboro Road.

NEWEST ARRIVALS

Our two newest arrivals are also two new species of cats to the center.

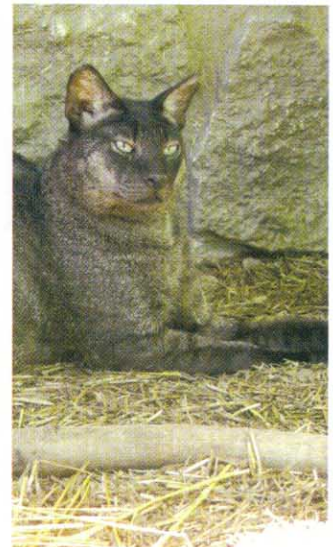
In early May we were notified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that a jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) had been discovered abandoned in a house. Extremely underweight at 12.7 pounds he was brought to the center to begin his road to recovery.

We were called by the Bloomington Humane Society in early June. They had just received an escaped serval that was found on someone's porch. Feeling they were not qualified to house and care for an exotic, they asked us to take the cat.

This increases the number of small cats the center houses to six including three bobcats and one caracal.



Majae (Serval)



Zeus (Jungle Cat)



SPECIAL THANK YOU

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