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## EDITORIAL

### FOREWORD TO THE SECOND SPECIAL ISSUE ON SMALL WILD CATS

Angie Appel & Shomita Mukherjee

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### SMALL WILD CATS SPECIAL ISSUE



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## Foreword to the second special issue on small wild cats

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We are delighted to present the second special issue on small wild cats that covers seven species with important updates on their distribution, tenacity and adaptability. Obtaining such information is now possible because of camera trapping becoming affordable and popular. The enthusiasm of the authors who contributed to this issue will hopefully inspire you.

Two contributions focus on the Iberian Lynx *Lynx pardalis*, one of the most endangered wild cat species in the world (Simón 2011). One accounts of a population that benefits from a long-term conservation program in southern Spain, where reintroduced Iberian Lynx have been settling in agricultural land since 2011. The other contribution sheds light on the trophic niche of an isolated population in central Spain. It shows that molecular methods are gaining prominence when studying cryptic taxa.

The European Wildcat *Felis silvestris* is the only Wildcat population living on a volcanic island (Anile et al. 2009). In 2009, camera traps set up around Mount Etna in Sicily detected an individual that was again photographed in 2018 at the very same spot!

The Jungle Cat *Felis chaus*, however, was recorded for the first time in a landscape where nobody would have expected it: in a remote valley above 3,000m in the Annapurna Himalaya. On the other hand, in northern

Pakistan, it was detected amidst factory buildings.

The Asiatic Golden Cat *Catopuma temminckii* was first reported in 1831 to inhabit the Himalayan foothills in Nepal (Hodgson 1831). In 176 years, it was photographed only twice in Nepal, viz, in May 2009 by Ghimirey & Pal (2009) and in November 2017 by Rai et al. (2019) in the country's eastern part. Farther west, it remained elusive until a team of researchers ventured into the central Himalaya. It was also photographed in far eastern Bhutan – an account that again reveals its many costumes.

The Flat-headed Cat *Prionailurus planiceps* is perhaps the most cryptic small wild cat, as it lives in almost impenetrable landscapes. Incidental observations in peat swamp forests in northern Borneo provide insight into its secretive lifestyle.

The Pampas Cat *Leopardus colocolo* is widely distributed in South America but was recorded in northwestern Peru only in 2016 (Garcia-Olaechea & Hurtado 2016). Both authors have been working in this area ever since and now share their findings about the Pampas Cat and another little known carnivore.

The Andean Cat *Leopardus jacobita* is endemic to the highlands of the Andes, where a skin turned up in an unexpected location in northwestern Argentina. This finding bridges a gap between two evolutionarily significant units of this little known species.

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**WILD CAT  
NETWORK**



The authors of the first and second special issues covered work on 16 small wild cats living in 15 countries. These special issues are a good platform for sharing information that is crucial for planning conservation measures.

We thank the following people for reviewing the submitted manuscripts for this special issue: Pedro Monterroso, Aitor Gastón, Carl Traeholt, Andrew Hearn, Azlan Mohamed, Jennifer McCarthy, Tashi Dhendup, Jimmy Borah, André da Pinto Silva, Sriyanie Miththapala, Zaheer Khan, Flavia Tirelli, Susan Walker, Matthias Waltert, Jorge Lozano, Galo Zapata-Ríos, Claudia Kanda, Juan Ignacio Reppucci, Arash Ghoddousi, Carlos Fernandes, Tawqir Bashir, Wyatt Petersen, Priya Singh, Babu Ram Lamicchane, and Yadav Ghimirey.

We look forward to your experiences and endeavors in the world of small wild cats. Stay fascinated !!

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