

Establishment of the Andean Cat Conservation Center

Salar de Surire, Chile

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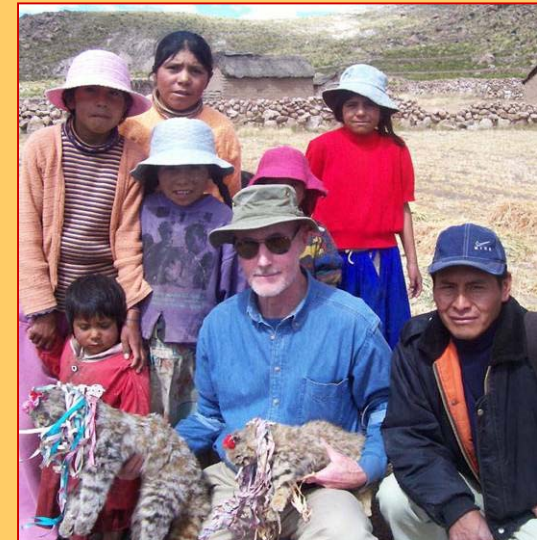
Why now?

The Andean cat is the only endangered cat in the Americas. Estimates are that fewer than 2000 individuals exist. During the past decade the Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation (SWCCF) and Andean Cat Alliance*, enabled by generous assistance, have significantly improved our understanding of the threats faced by the Andean cat (geographic range below in red). Armed with this hard-won information SWCCF is now able to identify two areas where the population of Andean cats is significant, as well as where local communities are supportive of conservation actions (below in yellow). Salar de Surire has been recognized by RAMSAR as a wetland of global significance where three species of flamingos breed. *Andean Cat Alliance is a WCN partner organization of over 40 people working in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru.



What threats must be addressed?

Conservation actions must address five threats. First, many indigenous people attribute supernatural powers to wild cats; furthermore, they believe these powers can be harnessed by killing, decorating, and displaying the dead cat. Because Andean cats show no fear of people, they are easily killed. Second, in some areas people eat mountain viscachas, the principal prey of the Andean cat. Third, mining activities threaten valuable habitat. Fourth, introduced exotic species are an emerging threat. Fifth, global warming is causing rapid loss of glaciers whose waters maintain the only feeding areas of mountain viscachas. Engaging the local people, working with mining companies to mitigate impacts, and monitoring introduced species and global warming are essential to ensuring the survival of the Andean cat.



Securing a future for the Andean cat

Working with the local indigenous people and monitoring the impacts of global warming on the Andean cat and its prey are the only ways to ensure that the Andean cat will continue to exist in the wild. The logical next step is to have a permanent physical presence in the area.

We do not need to purchase land. The Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation (SWCCF) and WildCats Chile have agreements with the local Native American community and CONAF, the government agency responsible for managing national parks and production forests. Our agreement allows us to build a new building adjacent to the CONAF headquarters on land owned by the local community. **This is an unprecedented opportunity to create the first Andean cat conservation center.**

Conservation Center

SWCCF and WildCats Chile are working with a local architect to design a center. Our new building will replace the present portable building known as the "Ice Box" (far right). Electricity and hot water will be supplied with solar panels. A 4WD vehicle is also required.



What will it cost to become operational?

4WD vehicle (used)	14,000
Building (design, materials, labor, transportation)	95,000
Furnishings	7,000
Shipping solar arrays from California to Chile	8,000
Total cost	\$124,000

Grant - Mohamed bin Zayed Species Cons Fund 22,000

How much is needed now? \$102,000

What has been donated already?

WCN partner Steve Gold has already received solar equipment that will be ready for shipment in the fall

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What about operating costs?

Operating costs will be supported by the Small Wild Cat Endowment Fund that is currently generating about \$11,000 annually. By having our own building, SWCCF will have a site



where scientists and students can visit, study, and work. All who use the facility will be required to employ local people to help with their work, thereby gaining needed assistance while furthering SWCCF's good relationship with the local community. By creating a direct connection between a better living and the presence of local wildlife our project will serve as a model that can be replicated to secure a future for the Andean cat.