

# ORPHANED KITTENS IN WASHINGTON RESULT IN A DECADE OF NATIONWIDE COUGAR EDUCATION

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Acknowledgements: WDFW Field Staff



Between 2002 and 2012, 26 orphan cougar cubs have been reported to WDFW, captured by staff, and placed with facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) throughout the country. In addition to over 15 million visitors per year at these facilities, innumerable television and newsprint media stories have covered the capture, transport, and arrival of these animals; reaching out to countless millions more people. This has not only resulted in education programs of the highest quality benefiting people who may never have the chance to see these animals in the wild, but has also brought prominent national attention to WDFW. These captures were a collaboration of WDFW wildlife biologists and officers statewide.

A primary goal of AZA institutions is "to achieve the highest standard of welfare for the animals in our care. Standards are constantly being raised, ensuring that animals in AZA institutions are receiving the best possible care from highly qualified staff, in modern facilities that represent best practice in our profession. 21<sup>st</sup> century AZA-accredited institutions and certified related facilities are expected to be leaders in the field and to embrace the highest quality facilities, programs, and staff available. Animals must be well cared for and housed in appropriate settings that provide an educational experience for visitors, and meet the animals' physical, psychological, and social needs".



## CAPTURE

In addition to using several trap types, kittens have been captured using WDFW's Karelian Bear Dogs, and also by hand on several occasions



## VETERINARY CARE

All kittens are given a thorough examination, care is administered if needed, and health certificates are issued to facilitate transfer. Biological measurements are also gathered and recorded.



## TRANSPORT

Many times, kittens need to travel by aircraft. Regulations require crate windows and doors be covered with breathable burlap and doors remain locked. Flights are almost always direct to the destination.



## PEOPLE

Including and updating the people that reported the orphaned animals to WDFW has resulted in respect, credibility, and much appreciation.



Date	# Kittens	Sex	Age	Origin	AZA Accredited Facility	Annual Visitation
May 8, 2002	1	M	Unknown	Unknown	Zoo New England, Boston, MA	570,000
August 21, 2004	3	1M, 2F	16 weeks	Duvall	Memphis Zoo, Memphis, TN	1 million
May 11, 2006	1	F	Unknown	Sequim	Oregon Zoo, Portland, OR	1.5 million
October 15, 2006	1	F	5 weeks	Walla Walla	San Diego Safari Park, San Diego, CA	1.8 million
February 1, 2007	1	M	8 weeks	Ellensburg	Dakota Zoo, Bismarck, ND	100,000
February 6, 2007	1	F	6 weeks	Ellensburg	San Diego Zoo, San Diego, CA	4 million
December 5, 2007	1	F	5 weeks	Swauk Creek	Topeka Zoo, Topeka, KS	150,000
December 14, 2007	3	2M, 1F	14 weeks	Cle Elum	Henry Dorly Zoo, NE	1 million
January 12, 2008	2	2F	16 weeks	Orondo	Dakota Zoo, Bismarck, ND	100,000
January 18, 2008	1	M	16 weeks	Orondo	Orlando Zoo, Orlando, FL	died in captivity
April 8, 2008	2	1M, 1F	13 weeks	Teanaway	Audubon Zoo, New Orleans, LA	2 million
March 13, 2010	1	F	14 weeks	Twisp	Northwest Trek, Eatonville, WA	185,000
October 8, 2010	1	M	12 weeks	Orondo	Alameda Zoo, Alamogordo, NM	60,000
May 16, 2011	1	F	8 weeks	Twisp	New York State Zoo, New York, NY	died in captivity
October 30, 2011	2	2M	6 weeks	Shelton	Nashville, Zoo, Nashville, TN	550,000
November 7, 2011	1	F	7 weeks	Shelton	Houston Zoo, Houston, TX	1.6 million
March 23, 2012	1	M	12 weeks	Twisp	Palm Beach Zoo at Dreher Park, Palm Beach, FL	300,000
May 30, 2012	2	1M, 1F	18 weeks	Lake Chelan	Henson Robinson Zoo, Springfield, IL	90,000
	26	12M, 14F				VISITATION = 15 MILLION+ PER YEAR

The process of responding, capturing, providing care until the arrangement are finalized, and transporting requires organization, commitment, and communication. In almost all cases, the animals are reported to WDFW by a member of the public, concerned that the animals will not survive on their own. In many cases, the reports come without the reporting party knowing the specifics; only that the kittens have been seen for some time without an adult. If it's the first sighting, we ask that they leave the animals alone and keep us posted to avoid removing kittens that are not orphaned. Usually, after a few days, we are more certain that the adult is no longer present and a response is initiated.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS ©™ FOR THEIR COLLABORATION WITH WDFW:

