Shalico, Canada Lynx
Mission: Provide natural sanctuary to wild cats in need and inspire change to end the captive wildlife crisis.

Vision: Help create a world where wild animal sanctuaries are no longer needed.

The Wildcat Sanctuary is a tax-exempt charity under the IRS code section 501c3, our federal tax ID number is 22-3857401.

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Sampson, caracal
Dealing with Loss

Writing to you usually comes easily to me. I feel like I know each of you and the conversations are natural. So, I couldn’t figure out why, when I decided to write an article about dealing with loss and grief, I couldn’t get started.

Good Grief

I sat down several times to write, only to find anything else to do. I set timelines that I kept missing. And then I realized, I am in the midst of grieving myself and in the avoidance phase. With so many losses the past few months, my head and heart hurt. I am so tired of being sad. I mean really tired — exhausted. But at the same time, I feel guilty if I don’t wallow in my feelings of loss for those animals I loved and miss so much.

Rationally, we know loss comes with the territory of rescue. Just as we know welcoming a furry friend into our family will eventually mean we have to one day say good-bye. It’s a cycle we as animal lovers face. It’s the price of loving so much. And even though we wouldn’t change it for the world, it can be quite a deep hole of despair when you’re in it.

So what is the right way to deal with the grief of losing our animal friends? I wish I had the answer.

The Emotional Roller Coaster

For me personally, it’s a range of emotion. I feel saddened that I won’t get to see their face once again as I walk through the sanctuary. I feel proud of who they were and that I was blessed to know them. I feel relieved that they no longer are in pain or have to live life in a cage.

But most of all, I often feel failure – like I let them down somehow. Intellectually, I know that’s not true. We have a dedicated and knowledgeable team observing them daily, providing first-rate care alongside our extended vet team. But as their protector, I wanted to guard them from ever being sick or vulnerable again. And that I couldn’t do, especially at the end of their life.

Our losses at the sanctuary come in waves. And lately — tidal waves. Some we were providing comfort care and knew their end may be near. But others are unexpected
and devastate us all. Each takes a piece of our heart.

Sometimes we don’t get a moment to grieve because another animal or new rescue needs our focus. And other times, we’re inconsolable. When we experience loss after loss, we sometimes question the work we do and if it’s all worth it.

Some people think it should be easier since we’ve been in rescue for over 20 years. We’ve had to say goodbye countless times. But let me tell you, it isn’t. In fact, it can even be harder because all of the losses flood in all at once. And you replay each in your head and heart, over and over.

As you all know from loving one of your own, you get extremely close at end of life. It’s when the critical care happens, the quiet moments, the tears of love and thanks, and the tears of knowing the end is near. You wrap your heart and soul around them ensuring you make the right decisions for them, while your own heart is breaking.

So as professionals, how do we deal with loss and grief? Just like you.

How do I cope?

I write memorials to provide some sense of closure. Caretakers are faced with cleaning out their rooms and habitats—sometimes this is cathartic and other times unbearable. We cremate our residents and hold a memorial ceremony twice a year. Their ashes are released as a symbol of finally being forever free.

You cry alongside us and show your love and support through their memorial plaques and rocks. We all feel the loss, and yet we all find strength to welcome another.

And loss is not only at the Sanctuary. Just like you, each of us also have furry ones at home. In the past few years alone, I have had to say good-bye to four geriatric dogs and my first ever Bengal cat. I lose my Executive Director hat with my family pets. And just like you, I am their mom/dad and guardian. And the losses cut a little deeper.

I wish I had an answer about how to make this all easier, but the truth is, I just can’t. I think it needs to be this hard, because we gave our entire hearts to them. And you know what? They deserved it.

So, if we can’t make it easier, how can we work through it to ensure we can provide another animal that same kind of love and compassion?

Seek Support

The first way is to remember, there’s no right way to grieve and everyone grieves differently. And I’ve learned from personal experience, I don’t always grieve the same for each loss. And that’s okay.

We all try to cope and, if we can’t, sometimes our physical body takes over to fill in the gaps. That may include sobbing or just the opposite, a feeling of numbness. And the roller coaster of emotion is normal—anger, sadness, denial.

But remember to be kind to yourself during this difficult time. Surround yourself with things you love—other animals, family, friends, nature. And reach out to
Your gift to our Memorial Fund helps cover end-of-life expenses for our residents such as medical costs, their memorial plaque and painted rock, as well as cremation.

You can donate at WildcatSanctuary.org

5 tips to help with loss:

1. Give yourself time to grieve.
2. We are WAY too hard on ourselves. Be kind and take care of yourself—really!
3. The animals would NEVER ask us to suffer on their behalf. They just wouldn’t.
4. The biggest antidote to compassion fatigue is gratitude.
5. Express your feelings in your own way – memorialize, a ceremony or even a letter to your pet.

Resources

• www.animalsheltering.org/blog/got-compassion-fatigue
• bestfriends.org/resources/pet-loss-and-grief-resources

Tammy Thies
Founder & Executive Director
Meet our cats who are over 18 years old at the Sanctuary this year and part of our Comfort Care program.
Carlo—The Soccer Playing Cougar
How do you tell the TWS cougars apart? Well, Carlo’s the easiest—he loves to play ball!

Carlo, and his siblings Noah and Langley, arrived in 2009 after being orphaned in Wyoming. A bow hunter unknowingly killed their mother. Later, they were merged with our other cougar orphans Andre and Donoma and formed their own family here at the Sanctuary.

As the other cougars trot along the fence line, Carlo dribbles his ball. As they swim in the pool, Carlo uses his ball as a flotation device. And as they climb to the top platforms, Carlo finds a way to bring his ball up with the group. And what’s Carlo’s favorite thing to do with his ball? Bring it into his building and plop it into his water bucket. If only there were cougar Olympics—I think we have a gold medalist on our hands.
Bobcat found during warrant search

Bobcat Found During Warrant Search Cannot Be Released Into Wild

Bobcat found during weapons warrant search in Orland Park storefront cannot be returned to the wild because it has been declawed, cops say.

By Lorraine Swanson, Orland Park Patch

ORLAND PARK, IL -- A live bobcat found in a shuttered Orland Park storefront during a weapons warrant search Feb. 28 was turned over to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Police also found two loaded handguns, 100 rounds of ammunition, drug paraphernalia and suspected narcotics.

The bobcat, named Lynxie, was found in a small office inside the building. The man who lived there, Philip Giese, 41, was charged with two felony counts of unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon. Giese was also cited for possession of a wild animal.

Cmdr. Tony Farrell, of the Orland Park Police Department, said officers had advance information that a bobcat was possibly living in the storefront. Officers found Lynxie in a small 6-by-6-foot office.

“There was another person living in the building who was not arrested,” Farrell said. “They lied and said its name was Simba so we didn’t know it was a wild animal. Eventually they told us the bobcat’s real name.”

The IDNR did not disclose where the bobcat was taken. Farrell said Lynxie cannot be released into the wild because he’s been declawed.

“I'm sure there are better places for a bobcat to be than locked in a small room with just one window. He's obviously a Bears fan,” Farrell added, referring to Lynxie's Chicago Bears doll.

Police are still researching the ownership of the property.

We were called to rescue another privately-owned wild cat that had been found during an unrelated police seizure. The 10-month-old bobcat, originally named Lynxie, made headlines across the country. But what the news did not focus on is the story behind the story. The one that fuels the captive wildlife crisis—the breeder.

This bobcat kitten was advertised in an obscure ad in Craigslist and sold to the owner on the side of the highway for a hefty price. It’s common practice in the buying, breeding and trafficking of illegal wildlife. The purchaser often loses custody of the animal, but the breeder is not prosecute and continues selling wild animals as a commodity for profit. It has to stop.

You can help future big cats by signing a letter to your Congressional representative asking they pass the Big Cat Safety Act at the bottom of the page here www.bit.ly/bigcatact

This little kitten has already been through so much. We felt he deserved a strong name, so we’ve renamed him Mondovi. We feel blessed to provide him a forever home where he will only know dignity, compassion and companionship of his own kind.

You can sponsor Mondovi at www.bit.ly/SponsorTWS
Mondovi, bobcat
Curious Facts About Cats!

- There are four big cats that can roar, but cannot purr: lion, tiger, leopard and jaguar.

- Big cats tend to respond to catnip in much the same way as a domestic housecat.

- Though leopards are the smallest of the big cat species, they are pound-for-pound the strongest.

- You shouldn’t use Calvin Klein’s “Obsession” perfume when you’re on a Safari. Cheetahs, tigers, jaguars and other wild cats are attracted to it. Scientists use it to count the population of these animals better.

- Tigers are the largest cat species in the world and the third-largest carnivore on land--only polar and brown bears are larger.

A lion’s roar can be heard as far as 5 miles away.

Cougars can leap up 18 feet high. This makes them one of the highest-jumping animals in the world.

Tigers are the only cat species that are completely striped. They even have stripes on their skin.

The lynx has large “snow-shoe-like” feet that enables it to walk on top of deep, soft snows.
This year, we had a very special guest at our Directors Forum event. Everyone was so excited to meet Cookie, our rescue dog!

It was so cute seeing Cookie dressed to represent the sanctuary with her very own logo t-shirt. She was such a good sport, soaking up all the love and attention from guests that evening.

During our panel discussion, she settled in and listened to the presentations. Then curled up for a well-deserved nap at her adoring fans’ feet.

We’re so proud of her and how she raises awareness about the benefits of rescuing animals. She’s a great ambassador for the sanctuary!
We’re always asked the question, “How can you tell them apart?”

Of course, for us it’s easy since they live in two separate areas of the sanctuary. Yes, they both enjoy draping themselves on logs, high up in their habitats, and settling in for a catnap. They look just like leopards you’d see in the wild. And they’re very close in age. Shadow’s 17 and Shazam’s 16.

But that’s where the similarities end. Shazam’s a male. Shadow’s a female. The shape of their faces is very different. Shazam’s much stockier than Shadow, as you’ll find with most males. The biggest difference, though, is in their personalities.

Shadow is very social. She loves all people, but really doesn’t care much for other cats. When caretakers approach, she loves rolling, belly up, showing off to keep your attention.

Shazam, on the other hand, will show up on his own terms. He definitely knows he’s a leopard. He’s fast, cunning, stalking, and never to be taken for granted! He prefers one person over another and makes that well known, too. For years, jaguar Diablo Guapo was his best friend. When he passed, Shazam struck up a new friendship with tigress Nikita. Unlike Shadow, he definitely prefers the company of other cats over people.
In Honor & In Memory

Gifts through March 14, 2018

In Honor

In honor of Audrey
Dael Chapman

In honor of Daisy
Cynthia McGrady

In honor of Susan Whitaker
Pierce Whitaker

In honor of Lizzy the Serval
Charles and Mary Ellen Lukavsky

In honor of Jay Hegstad
Steven Endres Jr

In honor of all cats around the world
Kathleen Callahan

In honor of Scarlet
Paul Saywell

In honor of Finnegan dog
Kate Hibben

In honor of my dogs
Liana and Valentin Stanton

In honor of Rachel Pillers
Renee Pillers

In honor of MB, you are my forever love
James Meyers

In honor of Cookie
Leona Krieg

In honor of Marcus
Jose Mario

In honor of John Walters
Allyson Marks

In honor of Barbara Christensen
David Christensen

In honor of Cookie
Leslie Dodd

In honor of Bob Baker’s birthday
Etta Hensler

In honor of Kris Parker
January Parker

In honor of David Anderson’s birthday
Caitlin Anderson

In honor of Jane Dewing’s birthday
Nancy Goblisch

In honor of Baby Jenga
Lorna Bjorkman

In honor of Serval Scarlet
Cayla Coburn, Karen Witwer

In honor of Tuvok, the fuzzy black
DLH panther
Leslie Cortes and Susan Penfield

In honor of Morrissey Vrabel
David Harrington

In honor of my Father, a wonderful soul
Lisa Isaacson

In honor of Scarlet’s Magnificent
Ears—and my house cat, Scarlet
Margaret Owen-Thorpe

In honor of Kokopelli, Pepin and Yummy
Janis Zeller

In honor of Romey
Karen Skaja

In honor of Tigress Nikita
Sue Ware

In honor of Eddy
Scott and Cindy Wetzel

In honor of Tonka
Victoria Kyle

In honor of Lucious the lion
Moumanti Podder

In honor of Solomon and Willow
Romola Madsen

In honor of Scarlet
Emily Daigrepont

In honor of Roz Annen’s birthday
Susan Howard, Carol E Johnson

In honor of Tyson and Romeo
Silke Kleinhenz

In honor of Shazam, all kitties, Cookie
and staff
Renee Palmer

In honor of all the Cats
Karen Quinn

In honor of Wilson
Lynn Solberg

In honor of all forgotten animals
Beth Hansen

In honor of Daisy and Cookie
Rowena Lachant

In honor of Raja, Tasha and Liberty
Scott Cowden

In honor of Max 2, Liberty and Raja
Leona Krieg

In honor of my Mom, the crazy cat
lady of LA
Pat Rose

In honor of April and Sheena, my kittens
Erika Toth

In honor of Ginzy
Suzanne Rausch

In honor of my mom and dad, Rachael
and George Bailor
John E Bailor

In honor of Bip!, Jerry and Julie
John E Bailor

In Memory

In memory of Trevor
Glenn Secor

In memory of Sheena Dawn
Phyllis J Marshall

In memory of Gabby and Sam
Donna Lusthoff

In memory of kelly, kiwi, brandy, indy,
maggie, thumper
Marylin Kelly

In memory of Toby
Rebecca Jewell

In memory of Rusty Joe
Nora Hunt

In memory of Brooklyn
Kimberly Coleman

In memory of Spot
Kathryn Thompson

In memory of Lenore Salaway
Etola and Philip Zinni

In memory of Max
Joan O’riain, Joanne Manning

In memory of Kandy Seaton Smith
Kathy Higgins

In memory of Tigg, Tripp, Sassy, Bear
Ann Bell

In memory of Charlene Hogan
Her friends at The Wildcat Sanctuary
In memory of Lucy, beloved cat of Jim and Lori Sunderman
   Nancy Nelson

In memory of Tiger Kitty
   Cynthia Coley

In memory of Elmer Imber
   Evan Imber-Black

In memory of my daughter, Kathi Detmering
   Mikki McBride

In memory of Kris Parker
   January Parker

For Sophia, my guardian angel in heaven and on earth
   Nancy Williams

In memory of Mildred and Russell Birch
   Linda Sullivan

In memory of Shadow
   Patricia Bishop

In memory of our beloved Ramses
   Mark and Marie Ippolito

In memory of Cole
   Carey Rich

In memory of Lily, Sally Thornton’s cat
   Tammy Thies, Julie Hanan, Ann and Steve Nelson

In memory of Driggs
   Teresa Morrow and Dale Pippin

In memory of Apollo, Inky, Simon and Angel
   Linda Muckerheide

In memory of the passing of the Simon-Merino Family cat
   Mary Simon

RIP Max and Zeus
   Paul and Michele Crecca

In memory of Buddy
   Ellen Carlson

In memory of Zeus
   Denise Neufelt

In memory of Abby
   Joan Oprian, Stephanie Wittenberg, Paula Landregan-Zeman, Ellen Barr, Everit Terhune

In memory of all the cats we loved
   Martin Schenck

In memory of Jules. My pumosito, my son
   John E Bailor

In memory of Matty
   Barb Rein, Cayla Coburn, Scott Cowden, Janet Johnson, Theresa Matthews, Bonnie Reiland, Stephanie Wittenberg, Ellen Barr, Joan Oprian, Joseph Orlando, Susan Dragieff

In memory of Don on Valentine’s Day
   Nancy Rexford

In memory of Lila Hayes
   Leona Van De Voort

In memory of Joshua Scarlett
   Delia Weitting

In memory of Max the Cougar
   Phillip Perri

In memory of Tikki
   Susan Roberts

In memory of Leo, The Maine Coon
   John O’Rourke

In memory of Ted Sodergren
   Joanne Saccomano, Stacey Donato, Marsha Walton, Ellen White, Helen Walton

In memory of Fluffy, Red and Isaac
   Dr. Linda Wolf

In memory of Buddy
   Ellen Carlson

In memory of Lindsey
   Joan Oprian, Jacques Cooperman, Phillip Perri, Lynne Alfieri, Grace Calderwood, Susan Dragieff, Teresina Schellinger, Daria Dzura

In memory of Calista Harrison
   Lorelei Bennett

In memory of BT, Natasha, Poppy, Fiona, Cricket and Polly
   Gena and John Connelly

In memory of Celie
   Carol Goin

In memory of River and Copper
   Nancy Bolin

In memory of Boris
   Fulvia Bowerman

In memory of Rapais and Nina
   Christina Dyer

In memory of Maureen's beloved Isaac
   Bonnie and Steven Goldsmith

In memory of Yvonne Wood
   Laura Hughes

In memory of Maggie
   Trish and Jeff Kuebelbeck

In memory of my friend, Jack Bonniface
   Wendy Mareau

In memory of Romeo and Simon
   Christine Sauer

In memory of Munchie, Midnight and Lokai
   Peggy Smith

In memory of Pete and Cally
   Carol Foss

In memory of Ciega
   Joan Oprian, Hooman Shahidi, Lynn Mahony, Jane Legere, Francine Parling, JoEllyn Martinson, Lynn Alfieri, Christine Bowling, Janet Davis, Daria Dzura, Deanna Gertz, Lisa Henderson, Andrea LaFontaine, Kim and Joel Meline, Margaret Owen Thorpe, Jocelyn Raquepau, Bonnie Reiland, Larry Schliessmann, Shirley Sinclaire, Dennis Stepanovich, Donna Windhorst

In memory of best kitty, Emma
   John and Maggie Tackman

In memory of Cece, Pixie and Minnie
   Gina Jarvi

In memory of Midnight, beloved kitty
   Maria Phipps

In memory of ALL
   Lisa Rousseau

In memory of Arthur
   Randi Thompson

In memory of Tracy Kozah
   Kari Bird, Scott and Geraldine Brown, Kirsten Cadot, Andrea Lamarsaude

In memory of Valerie Huey
   Donna Payne

In memory of Angie Wachowiak
   Linda Kiener

In memory of Mitty and Juno Hunt
   Nora Hunt

In memory of Baby, Tammy, Blue, Ellie, and Fuzzy
   Roxanne Davis

In memory of MAVI
   Zeynep Toros
Gone But Not Forgotten

Make a memorial or honorarium gift at WildcatSanctuary.org.

Ciega—Being blind, you made us learn to see not with our eyes, but with our heart and soul. Thank you! We’ll hold you in our hearts forever.

Matty—Thank you for always being such a happy and energetic presence here at the Sanctuary. The other side is very lucky to have you!

Abby—You are as big and bold as you want to be now. Please play nice and have fun! We love you and will miss you very much.

Lindsey—Heaven is as big as you make it. You can have as much space and freedom as you want. Thank you for teaching us the most important lesson of all—wild is wild.

Tractor—You finally get to free your wild spirit. Thank you for being the best friend to other bobcats that needed your support in sanctuary life.
At The Wildcat Sanctuary, we spend a great deal of time assessing personalities of the cats we rescue. For some, they want nothing to do with other cats of their kind. And we accommodate that by assuring they have habitats in areas they feel comfortable in.

But, for others, friendship in captivity is an important way to make their days more enjoyable. Surprisingly, it’s not always friends of the same species that develop lifelong friendships.

Enjoy some of our Miracle Matches!

Archer and Copper, bobcats
Francis, Autumn, Belvedere, bobcats
Logan and Caesar, tigers
Leo, savannah and Eddy, bengal
Leo, savannah and Eddy, bengal
Logan and Caesar, tigers
Archer and Copper, bobcats
Francis, Autumn, Belvedere, bobcats
Have your donation doubled now during Miracle Match at bit.ly/MiracleMatchTWS

Luna, bobcat and Sebastian, African serval

Raja and Liberty, cougars

Shalico, Canada lynx and Morgan, bobcat

Storm, Aspen, Blaze, and Snow, cougars

Rio, serval and Nikko, bobcat
Ways You Can Help

Time’s running out to have your donation doubled!

April 30th will be here before you know it. If you’ve ever considered giving a little something extra to support our rescue work, now’s the best time! Thanks to generous supporters who want to inspire you to give, they’ll match any gift up to $75,500...but it has to be given before the April 30th deadline to qualify.

If you just got a tax refund, why not give a little to the cats? And, your gift will be tax deductible for next year, too. Talk about doubling your return! There’s no greater feeling than seeing a wild cat happy after sometimes years of abuse or exploitation—especially knowing you play a part in their ‘wild at heart’ fun.

Thank you for knowing how important it is to give back. You make rescues possible!

WildcatSanctuary.org
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