

TRUE WILD SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



Fig 1. There's a new kid in town...P39's latest kitten born on the 12th August 2024

NEW LITTERS FOR P33 AND P39

While we were in Africa leading safaris, there was a constant concern whether the remaining 3 female mountain lions we were tracking would survive till we got back, considering the significant mortalities experienced up until the end of April. On our return Quinton was delighted to find that not only had all three cats survived but that two of them had in fact given birth to new litters of kitten(s). When Quinton managed to access these dens it was evident that each female (P33 & P39) had only one kitten. It is possible that more were born, but we have seen just one kitten born previously in our study. More commonly they have 2 or 3 kittens per litter. As for the significant mountain lion die-off earlier in the year - we are still waiting to be updated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife on any new findings and hope that the underlying issue is no longer prevalent in our mountain lion population. New kittens certainly give us hope!

P39

Since first coloring P39 (aka. Hillcrest) in August 2022 this new litter would be her 4th that we have been able to document. She has had the misfortune of losing 10 kittens in the previous three litters over that period of time with no kittens surviving beyond the age of 6 months. I found this new kitten on the 14th of August, 33 days after it was born, and named it 'Hetty' after my late mother, who's 81st birthday would have been that day.

Some Interesting P39 facts:

- Hillcrest is blind in her right eye from an unknown injury prior to capture. Despite this she is an excellent hunter.
- At the time of her first capture she had three kittens of about 3 to four months old with her – none survived beyond 6 months; causes of death unknown;
- Her second litter was discovered in April 2023 when she had four kittens who were killed by an unknown predator a month later
- A third litter of 3 was then born in August, the final kitten succumbing to pneumonia in February of this year.
- We will keep monitoring mom and cub and hope that Hetty survives to breeding age, despite the tough times that mountain lions living in the wild experience, particularly in such human-dominated landscapes with so many additional challenges and threats.

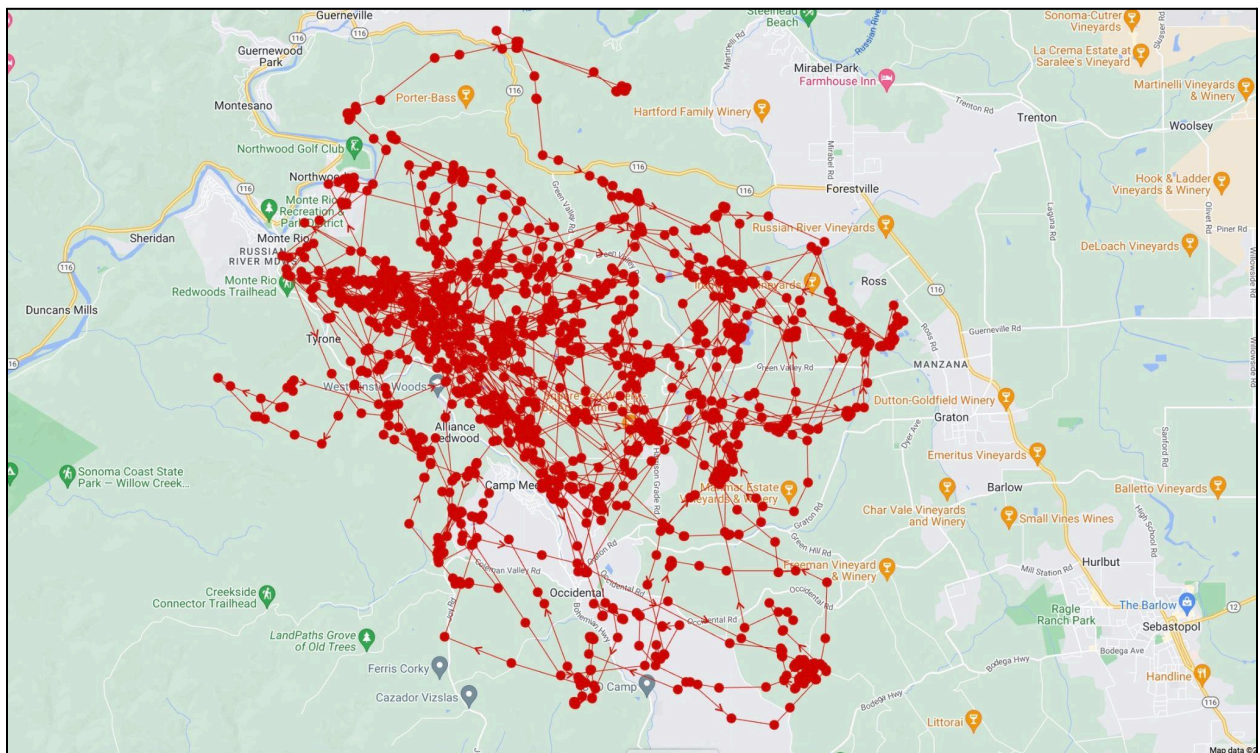


Fig 2. P39 GPS locations for 2023.

COMMUNITY ALERT!!

We want to send out a warning to drivers out there - it is the deer rutting season and this is the period where most accidents due to deer-strikes occur. It is incredibly dangerous to hit a deer at high speed, particularly in a smaller vehicle, so please watch your speed over the next 6 weeks and be particularly vigilant driving at night. At the same time, Caltrans and the Sheriff's Department call me when a fresh roadkill deer has been located as we freeze and use these for mountain lion baits. If you happen to see a fresh looking roadkill deer please call or text me the location. I am only collecting deer East of HWY101 in Sonoma County south of Santa Rosa.

DINE OUT FOR WILDLIFE - A BENEFIT BY GOATLANDIA

We want to thank Goatlandia who are generously hosting an enchanting evening to benefit True Wild on October 5, 2024 at the picturesque Goatlandia Sanctuary in Sebastopol. This special Long Table Barn Dinner aims to benefit True Wild's mountain lion coexistence work in the North Bay.

In Sonoma County, the intersection of animal advocacy spans both the protection of wildlife and the care of farm animals, reflecting a deep commitment to compassion and conservation. This dual focus recognizes that safeguarding our local ecosystems and supporting farm animal welfare are intertwined aspects of a holistic approach to animal advocacy.

Protecting our wildlife community involves preserving the delicate balance of natural habitats, ensuring that species like mountain lions, foxes, and native birds can thrive amidst a landscape increasingly shaped by human activity. True Wild works with a number of Sonoma County organizations, State and academic institutions who work tirelessly to monitor wildlife health, maintain crucial habitats, and educate the public on coexisting with these magnificent creatures.

Simultaneously, caring for farm animals addresses the plight of animals who face neglect in agricultural settings. By providing sanctuary, medical care, and rehabilitation, Goatlandia gives these animals a second chance at life and promotes humane farming practices. Our fiscal partner, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, provides similar services for injured wildlife.

We look forward to enjoying the culinary creations of Goatlandia Kitchen's Chef Deb Blum accompanied by a mountain lion presentation by Quinton. Unfortunately (or fortunately) the event sold out before we even had a chance to advertise it! If you wish to participate, you can take part in the silent auction [HERE](#) or reach out directly to support the work we do. Your support keeps us out there in the community, working for you and your wild neighbors.



BACK FROM SAFARI

Our annual summer migration to Africa, where Liz and Quinton both led some sensational safaris, was a huge success. Our travels took us to Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe where we were immersed in some of the most exclusive and profound safari experiences imaginable. Zambia has continued to overwhelm us with incredible wildlife viewing and wonderful hospitality, in this, one of the safest countries in the world.



We were also incredibly fortunate to experience the new Wilderness Mokete camp in Botswana - a camp that opened recently in the Mababe area bordering Savuti (Chobe National Park). Our visit coincided with the dry season where some of the biggest herds of buffalo in Africa congregate, which of course keeps the large associated predators engaged. We were astonished to see a line of buffalo and dust that stretched to the horizon! Besides huge buffalo herds, there

was a plethora of elephants, tsessebe, roan and sable antelopes, zebra in large herds, as well as special cheetah and serval sightings. The photo below was one example on a single game drive where these lions (to our relief, unsuccessfully) tried to hunt a female elephant's calf. The mom gave the lions a good beating! An unimaginable sighting followed a few minutes later by the younger lions stalking a lone hippo bull - again, unsuccessfully. But wow! What action!



Our safaris are a key way of supporting our conservation initiatives here in California, as we use proceeds of this for our work here, as well as contributing to Conservation projects in Africa.

Contact us if you have any interest in traveling on safari in 2025 as we would love to help set up a unique experience that will suit your needs and budget. Availability for 2025 in Zambia is becoming scarce, so get in touch with us soon if you want to get in for the June - September 2025 season. For special group trips coming up next year, we have space on some exciting safaris: we have 2 Big Cats Safaris - in November and December 2025 - one led by Quinton, the other by conservation leaders and biologists Beth Pratt and Jeff Sikich. All these safaris are small group safaris in order to maintain the intimacy and quality of the experience. For more information on these awesome opportunities, contact quinton@truwild.org