

**TRUE WILD JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER**



*Keeping an eye on the cats...or is the other way around?*





*P33 giving us the eye! The deer she was feeding on is lying in the background. (Photo: Quinton Martins/True Wild/Audubon Canyon Ranch).*

A lot has happened since our last Newsletter in September - both on the mountain lion project as well as on our safaris. We hope you enjoy the update.

### **MOUNTAIN LION NEWS!**

Last year was a rough year for the lions, with the underlying cause of most mortalities being Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV). We do not know the extent of the issue in the general lion population, but we have at least not had more mortalities of our tracked mountain lions.

In October we followed up on how P33 was doing with her cub. We identified what looked to be a fresh kill from her GPS points, so Quinton and volunteer Benoit Goosens went out to investigate. We are always flummoxed by the extreme terrain we find in some parts of Sonoma County - needless to say, after traversing the NORTH FACE of Taylor Mountain, we tumbled upon a newly killed deer. We managed to get cameras set up and the results were fabulous - mom and the young cub looked to be doing really well feeding on a deer. We got some great video footage of them feeding [HERE](#). We have not been able to document the cub again since then, but hope that it is still traversing Taylor Mountain with mom.

Not to be outdone by her fellow tagged cat, Hillcrest (P39) surprised us all when a landowner sent us a photograph of a collared female lion with 3 cubs in tow. Quinton checked the GPS data to confirm

it was in fact Hillcrest and she had THREE not 1 cub with her as previously reported! Further analysis of her data provided the fascinating answer - while Quinton was digging around looking for the den site on the 14th of August, Hillcrest was in the process of moving her cubs to a new location a few hundred meters away. So when he found the cub, Hetty, on its own, vociferously making its presence known, it was because it had been left all alone after its siblings had been moved by mom and it was waiting impatiently for mom to come back for it. Quite extraordinary!

The good news does not end there. Another private landowner trail camera picked up signs of P39 with all 3 cubs on the 18th January. This is wonderful news to see the cubs born on the 12th July have made it to the 6 month mark. Wishing Hetty and her siblings all the lion luck there is!



*P39 with 3 cubs in tow.*

#### **HUGELY SUCCESSFUL - "DINE OUT FOR WILDLIFE - BENEFIT BY GOATLANDIA"**

We want to thank [Goatlandia](#) for so generously hosting an enchanting evening to benefit True Wild on October 5, 2024 at the picturesque Goatlandia Sanctuary in Sebastopol. This special fund raising dinner was aimed to benefit True Wild's mountain lion coexistence work in the North Bay. It was a tremendous success! A deep-dive presentation into the mountain lion and wildlife coexistence work by Quinton was well received. Even the goats in the neighboring stalls voiced their approval (or that's what we think they were bellowing out). Guests were incredibly generous and support from this event are being channeled directly into our local conservation and community work in the North Bay. The Goatlandia staff and volunteers were simply brilliant on the day. Thank You!

We feel so privileged to be able to work with such amazing partners as Goatlandia, our research partner [Audubon Canyon Ranch](#) and human-wildlife coexistence partner [Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue](#). In fact, looking around, we are surrounded by special organizations who we have been fortunate enough to work with - organizations like [Sonoma Land Trust](#), [Sonoma Ecology Center](#), [Landpaths](#), [Pepperwood Preserve](#), [California State Parks](#), [Sonoma Regional Parks](#), [California](#)



Department of Fish and Wildlife, and several others who are key resources for ensuring the integrity of our home here in the North Bay.



### **MORE GOOD LION NEWS**

In November and in January, Quinton was able to collar 2 new mountain lions, now being tracked in Sonoma's west county. P48 was a beautiful young adult male captured through baiting in the Occidental area. Despite only being about 3 years old, he is one of the larger cats caught on the project, weighing in at a solid 55.4kg. After returning from December safaris in Africa, Quinton was able to capture and collar a new young adult female, P49, on the 25th January. It's still early days to know, but thus far her data suggests she is P39's neighbor to the east. Time will tell!



*P49 - Sleeping off the drugs, latest female mountain lion to be collared and tracked*

## SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

True Wild has also had three more scientific publications come out since our last newsletter:

Dougherty, K.D., Dellinger, J. A., Cristescu, B., Gammons, D. J., Garcelon, D. K., Higley, J. M., **Martins, Q. E.**, Riley, S. P. D., Sikich, J. A., Stephenson, T. R., Vickers, T. W., Wengert, G. M., Wilmers, C. C., Wittmer, H. U., and Benson, J. F. 2025. [A Functional Response in Resource Selection Links Multiscale Responses of a Large Carnivore to Human Mortality Risk](#). *Ecology Letters*.

**Harvey, J. A., Martins, Q.**, Dougherty, K. D., Hettena, A. M., Garcelon, D. K., and Benson, J. F. 2025. [Functional Habitat Characteristics Influencing Spatial Variation in Mountain Lion Predation in a Human-dominated Landscape](#). *Biological Conservation* 302: 110975.

**Harvey, J. A., Martins, Q.**, Benson, J. F. 2024. [The Impact of Sublethal Injuries on Mountain Lion Predation and Spatial Ecology](#). *Canadian Wildlife Biology and Management* 13: 82-101.

## COEXISTENCE CONSERVATION

True Wild's work stems from our love for wild places. We are driven to find ways for people to appreciate and make an effort to protect wild places and the wildlife that shares the world with us. We believe that people can coexist with wildlife through practical and achievable methods and in doing so, serve people, domestic animals, wildlife and the environment we are all living in. Our safaris are a key way of supporting our conservation initiatives here in California, as well as contributing to Conservation projects in Africa.

One project we are particularly focused on promoting is an incredible conservation education organization called [Chipembele](#), based on the border of South Luangwa National Park in Zambia. They have extensive conservation education programs in schools and also work with adults in communities surrounding the Park. Working with communities in buffer zones around protected areas is extremely important for effective and ethical conservation. While wildlife is wonderful and vital, it can also damage livelihoods and in areas where people survive on subsistence agriculture and small scale farming, this can be particularly hard. Chipembele is teaming up with two other reputable organizations, Conservation South Luangwa and the Zambian Carnivore Project as well as working with traditional leaders from various chiefdoms to do a Human-Wildlife Coexistence Roadshow. They will travel to remote villages in Chipembele's Mobile Education Unit, and hold day-long educational community events. Each event costs Chipembele \$364 (amazing how far \$ go in Africa!) and True Wild would love to encourage you to sponsor an event. To do so, please contact [liz@truewild.org](mailto:liz@truewild.org).





*Chipembele's Mobile Education Unit*

### **BACK FROM SAFARI**

Late November and December are awesome times to visit certain parts of Africa to go on safari. Both Liz and Quinton led some sensational safaris this past December period. Our travels took us to Botswana and Zimbabwe where conditions are really ideal for this time of the year. Highlights of this time of the year - you get Low Season rates in camps that are usually very pricey in the Peak Season. That, and the fact that you get the joys of seeing the area when the first rains have come, it is baby season for many of the animals, the migrant birds have arrived, the bush is looking all fresh and green with spectacular skies to match.

*THANK YOU for the extraordinary trip - it will be imprinted on my heart forever. This trip, with your guidance, has given us a greater appreciation for life and nature no matter where it is in the world. -  
Kenny*



We are actively taking safari bookings for this year, 2026 and 2027. Contact us if you have any interest in traveling on safari as we would love to help set up a unique experience that will suit your needs and budget. These are some of our favorite destinations:

**Zambia:** A favorite destination of ours for June - September safaris! Camps are getting booked up fast for 2026!! So let us know if you want to get into one of these small, owner-run and overwhelmingly authentic safari camps for next year or 2027. A few of the awesome camps we love to include in our itineraries: [Old Mondoro](#), [Kaingo Camp](#); [Musekese Camp](#); [Chisa Busanga](#).

**Botswana:** An all-year safari destination, Botswana has so much to offer any safari enthusiast, including the Okavango Delta, Chobe, Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, and the Tuli region in the south. [Mashatu Game Reserve](#) is great value for money and fabulous game viewing all year. Mashatu can be paired well with the world renowned [MalaMala](#) in South Africa for a top wildlife photographic experience. [Chitabe](#) and [Kwara](#) are our top choices for the Okavango - pricing in November and December is significantly better than the Peak season from June - October.

**Zimbabwe:** The glorious Victoria Falls are ideal book-ends for any southern Africa safari. Not far off, the 5,600 sq.mile Hwange National Park awaits to provide a classic African safari with impactful community and conservation projects. Here [Linkwasha Camp](#) and [Imvelo Safaris' Camel Thorn Lodge](#) are camps we really like.

**Kenya & Tanzania:** We have had some wonderful East Africa specials available - so if you wish to embark on a classic Kenya safari topped off with a life-changing gorilla experience in Uganda, let us know. Our partners [Great Plains Conservation](#) have incredibly beautiful and well situated camps in Kenya, and is a company that focuses on conservation and communities.



*Lastly*, we have space for 1 couple on [Beth Pratt and Jeff Sikich's Big Cats Safari](#) in November 2025. This is a really special opportunity to join these leaders in the conservation world on this fabulous trip - the total group size would be 8 people when the last 2 spaces are filled. For more information on our safaris, contact [quinton@truewild.org](mailto:quinton@truewild.org)

More photographs in our [December Safaris 2024 Gallery](#)

