

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.



Chipembele's Mobile Education Unit