

priority areas. Future research and mitigation actions should focus on potential threats that could negatively impact Central American clouded oncat populations and habitat use, including the role of mesopredators and feral species.

From archaeological evidence to social readiness: an integrated One Conservation framework for small wild cat reintroduction on Santa Catarina Island, Brazil

Camila Rezende Ayroza¹, Maurício Eduardo Graipel², Jorge José Cherem³, Barbara Lima-Silva², Brisa Marciniak⁴, Raiane dos Santos Guidi¹, Vanessa Tavares Kanaan¹

¹Instituto Fauna Brasil,

²Projeto Fauna Floripa, Departamento de Ecologia e Zoologia, Centro de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Rua João Pio Duarte Silva 241, 88037-000 Florianópolis, SC, Brazil

³Instituto Tabuleiro, Rua Desembargador Vitor Lima 260/908, Trindade, 88040-400 Florianópolis, SC, Brazil

⁴Coordenação de Manejo de Espécies Exóticas Invasoras - CMEEI/ICMBio
Email: cayroza@gmail.com

Reintroduction of small wild cats in human-dominated landscapes requires ecological feasibility, historical validation, and social acceptance. On Santa Catarina Island, southern Brazil, Instituto Fauna Brasil and partners developed an integrated planning framework to assess the potential reintroduction of the southern tiger cat (*Leopardus guttulus*) and the margay (*L. wiedii*), combining archaeological investigation, ecological assessments, expert consultation, and public perception analyses within a One Conservation perspective. To clarify the historical presence of *Leopardus* species on the island, osteological material previously identified as *Felis* spp. from the Praia da Tapera shell mound (sambaqui), curated at the Museu do Homem do Sambaqui, was re-examined. Morphological comparison with reference specimens from the Federal University of Santa Catarina confirmed the material as *L. guttulus*. This represents the first archaeological record of *L. guttulus* on Santa Catarina Island and strengthens the evidentiary basis for species selection in reintroduction planning. Ecological and institutional feasibility were assessed through habitat suitability analyses in two candidate release areas, prey availability assessments, and structured consultation with 11 small cat specialists. These components were integrated into a participatory decision-making process that resulted in the prioritization of *L. guttulus* over *L. wiedii* and the selection of a primary release area for the species, while strengthening local capacity for small cat monitoring and management. Social readiness was evaluated through an ethics-approved perception survey conducted with 70 residents and visitors near the Meiembipe Municipal Wildlife Refuge (REVIS Meiembipe), a potential release site. Support for reintroduction was high (66% fully supportive; 30% conditionally supportive). Perceived benefits included ecosystem recovery and environmental education, while concerns focused on animal safety and interactions with domestic pets. Knowledge gaps were also identified, including a lack of awareness of local extinctions and misidentification of species. By integrating historical evidence, ecological assessments, expert knowledge, and community perspectives into a single framework, this case demonstrates how reintroduction planning can align scientific feasibility with participatory processes to mitigate implementation risks, strengthen conservation governance, providing a clear roadmap for future translocation efforts and a

replicable model for small felid reintroduction in human-dominated Atlantic Forest landscapes.

Small felids beyond Protected Area: Insights from the community forest of Seinthuk, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Suranjita Roy^{*1}, Vivek Menon^{2,1}, Samir Kumar Sinha¹, Amrit Menon¹, Dechen Lham^{3,4}, Valentin Moser^{3,5}, Sunil Kyarong¹, Lobsang Tashi Thungon⁶, Sandeep Kumar Tiwari¹

¹Wildlife Trust of India, F13, Sector 8, Noida 201301, India

²IUCN SSC Chair, F13, Sector 8, Noida 201301, India

³Felis, Leiserenweg 12, 3122 Kehrsatz, Switzerland

⁴Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, Überlandstrasse 133, 8600 Dübendorf, Switzerland

⁵Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research, Zürcherstrasse 111, 8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland

⁶Garung Thuk, Shergaon, West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh 790003, India

Email: suranjita.r22oy@gmail.com

Small felids are among the least studied yet ecologically important carnivores in tropical forest ecosystems. Situated within the Indo-Burma and Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot complex, North-Eastern India supports a diverse assemblage of small felids and here, community-managed forests constitute a critical habitat that facilitates small felid conservation outside formally protected areas. Despite increasing anthropogenic pressures, these forests continue to persist due to long-standing community stewardship, customary laws, and conservation-oriented cultural practices. This study was carried out in the community forests of Shergaon, which lies near key protected areas like Eaglenest WLS, Sessa WLS, and Pakke TR, and together, they form one of the largest continuous forest tracts in Arunachal Pradesh. The study was carried out in partnership with the Sherdukpen community, who are the stewards of these forests. The aim is to develop a practical and science-based Conservation Action Plan for these elusive felids, which will also incorporate local community participation, policy linkages, and alternative livelihoods. Based on an exploratory camera trap survey, we report the presence of four wild felids - clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, marbled cat *Pardofelis marmorata*, Asian golden cat *Catopuma temminckii*, and leopard cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* from the Seinthuk community forests. These findings extend the known range distribution of all four felids but also reiterate the conservation potential of community forests as an important refuge for small felid diversity in north-eastern India. Following these findings, the local community collectively agreed to designate sections of the community forest exclusively for wild felid conservation. The findings also emphasize the role of community-led conservation initiatives in sustaining small cat populations. Local institutions actively regulate and manage forest use, and maintain habitat connectivity through traditional governance systems. Community awareness programs, informal monitoring by the community, and increasing interest in conservation-linked livelihoods such as eco-tourism further strengthen conservation outcomes.

From scent to sequence: Harnessing canine-assisted genetic sampling to bridge knowledge gaps in black-footed cats, *Felis nigripes*