

Geriatric ocelot euthanized at Woodland Park Zoo

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo veterinarians humanely euthanized a 20-year-old, male ocelot due to age-related physical decline and immobility. The small spotted cat, named Brazil, lived in the award-winning Tropical Rain Forest exhibit.

See video of Brazil celebrating his 20th birthday last August by going after the Gold Medal in the fishing Olympics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hqwj2Oe95eo>.

Ocelots can live 10 to 13 years in the wild and up to 20 years in zoos due to excellent animal care, preventive medicine programs and specialized geriatric care provided by accredited zoos.

According to Dr. Darin Collins, Woodland Park Zoo's director of animal health, Brazil had been under a prescribed program to help manage his geriatric osteoarthritis including medications to help maintain his mobility, and vitamin and mineral supplements for overall health. Just days before his death, he experienced a significant decline in his mobility. "He did not respond to pain relievers and the quality of his life would have been compromised. We made the difficult and humane decision to euthanize him," said Collins.

As a standard procedure, the zoo's animal health team performed a necropsy (an animal autopsy). The final cause of death is pending histology and other tests.

"Brazil lived a long, enriched life at Woodland Park Zoo, thanks to the expertise and dedication of our animal care staff and veterinary team. He was a handsome cat who will be missed," said Mark Myers, an animal curator at Woodland Park Zoo.

Arriving at Woodland Park Zoo in 2008 from The Living Desert (Palm Desert, Calif.), Brazil sired three offspring during his years at the zoo. A 5-year-old male, Salvador, is the sole remaining ocelot at the zoo. In the near future, the zoo hopes to acquire a genetically and socially compatible mate for Salvador through the Ocelot Species Survival Plan (SSP), a cooperative breeding program to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of ocelots in North American zoos. Woodland Park Zoo currently participates in 108 SSPs, overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, its accrediting organization.

"Like Brazil, many animals in accredited zoos are living longer because of evolving husbandry and health care practices and treatment programs for age-related changes," explained Collins. "To address the longer life expectancies, we have a formal process to evaluate quality of life daily, sometimes multiple times daily, over the course of weeks or months once there is a specific concern for an individual's well-being. The decision to euthanize an animal is a very difficult one and is made after consultation between veterinary and animal care staff."

Ocelots are small spotted cats that range throughout Mexico, Central and South America to northern Argentina, with remnant populations in the southwestern United States. These secretive, nocturnal cats are three to four times the size of an average domestic house cat, weighing on average 24-35 pounds and averaging 2½-5 feet in length. They may be found in several different kinds of habitats, from jungle areas and tropical rain forests to dry scrub and chaparral zones. In the wild, these endangered cats continue to lose ground with their ever-shrinking habitat and black market pet trade. Today, only 100 or so are thought to remain in the U.S.



Woodland Park Zoo supports the Northern Jaguar Project's "Viviendo con Felinos" project. The project compensates participating ranchers for photographs of live jaguars, ocelots, mountain lions and bobcats on their land, equal to the long-stand bounty offered for dead cats. "Viviendo con Felinos" succeeds at addressing the highest priorities of the program: to immediately reduce wild cat mortality, to develop trusting relationships and encourage a conservation ethic among rural landowners and to gain better scientific understanding of the jaguar population.

For more information about Woodland Park Zoo or to become a member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, award-winning Woodland Park Zoo is famed for pioneering naturalistic exhibits and setting international standards for zoos in animal care, conservation and education programs. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to care and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet's future. For more information, visit www.zoo.org

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