

# Creature Chronicles

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Independent Information  
and News Service

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Our last edition of this publication was a year ago. I have been on an extended leave of absence and would like to apologize for the mail that I have not been able to respond to. I never intended this much of a time lapse. Hopefully, I can now rectify that situation and begin to publish again. To clarify the subscription rate for Chronicles, it should be noted that we now offer a free exchange. It would be beneficial, if you could send stamps, newsclips, or exchange publications. I will attempt a three per year rate.

Considering our lack of information flow from February to July, the reader should realize that our files are empty for this time frame. Take for instance, our newsclips on animal escapes. At the frequency of these instances, I am sure I missed some stories. I would appreciate any help in updating the case files. This issue contains some old news and comments in which the reader may already be aware of.

## CAT FEVER

The "Cat and Mouse" hunt for the Michigan panther is continuing into its second year. According to the Associated Press and the Cable News Network, wildlife officials believe the cat is someone's pet. Various methods of capture have been employed without success. Recently, the elusive panther has been accused of killing a horse. (For more information, see Creature Chronicles #8.)

## Searches for big cats continue

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich. — Wildlife officials set traps for a black panther that has killed a horse and terrified residents about 40 miles northwest of Detroit, while police lost the trail of an elusive tiger reportedly on the prowl all week in Gibson, Pa.

The panther was seen running from a field in Milford Township, where a \$3,000 palomino quarter horse was found clawed and bitten to death July 10.

In Pennsylvania, state police took over the investigation since the last report of a big cat on the loose came Tuesday from a nearby Jackson Township farm.

Meanwhile, in Pennsylvania, a tiger is report-

## Tiger hunt continues

KNIGHT NEWS SERVICE

NEWTON TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Tiger fever seized this thickly wooded part of the northeastern Pennsylvania on Monday as police, state troopers and armed citizens continued to search for what may be two tigers, one tiger or none.

A family here told of seeing a big cat Monday, one day after a report from Nicholson, 10 miles to the north, that a tiger had wandered into a nearby road.

But descriptions of the animal varied. And state police said they were not sure whether one of their own officers had actually confirmed the tiger sighting in Nicholson, as was initially reported Sunday.

Newton schoolteacher Gary Steier insisted that he and his wife and son had seen an enormous orange cat Monday on a trail that cuts along chest-high weeds.

"It was really big," Steier said. "Orange. Long. It ran like a tiger you see on TV, long and loping."

State police did their best to surround the forested area near Steier's house, and a police helicopter hovered for 90 minutes over the site, about 10 miles northwest of Scranton.

Neighbors, several of them armed, trained binoculars on the woods and fields.

But there was no sign of a tiger or any other large cat.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
7/31/86

Cincinnati Enquirer  
7/29/86

edly running amuck. Authorities there believe this cat is also a pet on the loose. There is also speculation that it may have escaped a traveling circus.

Reports of the so-called "Phantom Felines" continue to surface from time to time. In most instances, we are led to believe that these beasts are never apprehended; eluding the most experienced wildlife officials.

There are many theories of origin. They range from escaped from confinement to far-fetched explanations, such as dimensional displacements to psychic apparitions. The escape explanation holds some merit. Consider the newsclips on this page as examples. However, these animals were eventually captured, killed, or tranquilized.

Hoaxes and misinterpretations may explain a small percentage. Look what happened in Waukgan, Illinois recently. (see clip on page 3.) It appears that the populous is even observing these creatures in the suburbs, as in the Cincinnati cougar of December, 1984.

In Ohio, reports of "Sheep Killers" and cougars were believed to be synonymous. However, we have been able to trace many of these incidents and have concluded that coyotes were the culprits. During the early 1970's, the increase in the coyote population went quietly unnoticed by wildlife authorities. At present, there is a bounty on coyotes, so the Ohio Department of Natural Resources have many documented appearances of these canids.

At any rate, we need serious research for answers. Many of these stories can probably be explained by further investigation. Unfortunately, if these felines are escaping at this rate, then Wildlife officials should consider new approaches to research.

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Note: Please excuse the quality of the copier. It seems that my source for copying has changed to a less desirable model.

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### Tiger loose in Pa.

NICHOLSON, Pa. — State police

and a zookeeper armed with rifles, nets and a tranquilizer gun searched Sunday by land and air for a tiger on the loose and authorities advised residents to keep their children inside. Authorities did not know where the tiger came from, but were investigating whether it escaped from a nearby traveling circus.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
7/28/86

### Loose tiger believed pet

NICHOLSON, Pa. — Authorities said Tuesday they believe a big cat on the loose may be a pet Bengal tiger that escaped from its owner's apartment. Sunday and Monday, six rifle-toting troopers aided by a helicopter hunted for the tiger, but the search was called off Tuesday. A woman who called a humane society and refused to identify herself said the tiger belonged to a Nicholson resident.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
7/30/86

### Leopard attacks keeper

GREAT BEND, Kan.—A 16-year-old, 125-pound leopard that had been in a zoo since it was a cub was killed by a zoo employee after it leaped seven feet to the roof of its cage and attacked one of its keepers. Keeper Mike Brown had opened a ceiling hatch Tuesday to drop feed into the cage at the city-owned Brit Spaugh Zoo when the cat leaped from the floor and attacked him. Brown, 38, and the cat fell to the floor behind the cage, and keeper Doug B rt grabbed a rifle and killed the leopard.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
2/27/86

### Escaped Wounded Lion Felled By Tranquilizer

MIDDLETOWN, Ind.—A 200-pound wounded lion escaped from its owner's farm and wandered past homes in this rural community for nearly four hours before being recaptured Sunday by police using a tranquilizer gun.

Dennis Blankenship was moving his pet to a feeding area on his Henry County farm Saturday night when he tripped and fell on the animal, said Lopez.

That frightened the lion and it bolted. Blankenship decided to shoot it when he realized the pet would escape. The animal suffered a minor wound.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
12/2/85

### ROME

Two tigers and a lion escaped from a zoo here Saturday and terrorized an entire neighborhood for hours until police shot two of the animals and drugged one of the tigers with tranquilizer darts.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
11/17/85

### LOUISVILLE, Ky.

Two male wallabies got out of their pen at the Louisville Zoo Saturday, but one of the animals that resemble kangaroos was later captured, officials said. The escape was reported about 4 a.m. when a security guard at Our Lady of Peace Hospital, located near the zoo, spotted one of the animals.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
11/10/85

# Scientist to tackle Snowman mystery

BOULDER, Colo. (UPI) — If James Halfpenny can just get a look at a footprint in the snow when he gets to Tibet, he may solve the age-old mystery of the Abominable Snowman.

"If I can see some tracks," he said. "I can verify if they are perhaps ape prints that have been melted out in the snow, or otherwise shed some light on what's going on there."

When it comes to mammal tracks, Halfpenny wrote the book. "A Field Guide to Mammal Tracking" was published two months ago by Johnson Books of Boulder and has been accepted as a staff training manual at Yellowstone National Park.

Because of his expertise in the field, Halfpenny was invited to participate in an expedition formed through the American Ecological Union of Washington, D.C.

Six scientists from four U.S. ed-

ucational institutions will join eight Chinese.

"The major goal," Halfpenny said, "is really to look at threatened and endangered species such as the Argali sheep (similar to the Colorado bighorn) and make recommendations for wildlife management. And we also are doing museum collections of mammals."

"We'll be in the field 90 percent of the time," Halfpenny said. "It'll be tents and sleeping bags, riding yaks and horses."

Halfpenny, 39, has a Ph.D. in mammalogy and worked as a licensed guide in Wyoming. He began tracking animals in 1967 and for many years has researched animal tracks in national parks throughout the country.

He said one of his career highlights was proving, after three years of research, the existence of lynx in Colorado.

"It's on the Frying Pan River

between Vail and Aspen," he said. "It is the southernmost population of lynx in the United States."

Halfpenny believes he actually may find Abominable Snowmen or evidence of them and is excited at the possibility.

"If we could get the tracks and definitively say something," he said. "If it's bear tracks that have melted out, that's important to science."

"All the local tribes have stories about these animals. They believe they are monkeys or small apes from the dense lower forests that occasionally come over the high mountain passes."

That seems plausible to Halfpenny. But he says almost anything is plausible in an area that remote.

"There haven't been Caucasians there since the 1930's, and some areas may never have been visited by Caucasians," he said.

"During the Vietnam war era they discovered a species of cow in Cambodia that had never been recorded. So why couldn't we have a

species of ape that's never been discovered. We know those Tibetan tribes have stories. It seems very logical to me."

If Halfpenny does meet an Abominable Snowman, or come close, it won't be his first brush with a mythological creature.

He also does hair analysis, identifying animals from just a few of their hairs. It's important in legal cases where authorities need to determine whether someone killed a black bear or a grizzly.

"About eight years ago," he said, "I had a fellow approach me with hair samples he said came from a bigfoot incident. I feel I'm pretty familiar with all kinds of North American mammal hair. But what I had in my hand was like nothing I'd ever seen before. It was coarse, long and had an unusual microscopic structure."

So when he gets through with the Abominable Snowman, Halfpenny said he'd like to tackle the bigfoot mystery.

Auburn 'Evening Star' (Indiana) 7/30/86 Cr. T. Curry

**MOSCOW**  
A man came home from work in a small Soviet town near Kuibyshev on the Volga River to find a full-grown elk sitting on his living room sofa watching television, the Soviet newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported Wednesday. The animal apparently crashed through a window while trying to escape dogs.

Cincinnati Enquirer 11/21/85

## 'Big cat' search was a dog



AP  
HENNY: A dog, and he's not lion

WAUKEGAN, Ill. — A lion hunt was called off Monday when the "big cat" reported to police turned out to be a junkyard dog named Henny. "It has a mane and it has a shaved tail with a puff on the end," said Police Chief Ron Hauri. "And at a distance in the dark, it very well may have looked like a lion." Mike Hussey said he bought the German shepherd after his junkyard was burglarized and he shaved him to look like a lion for two reasons. "I wanted to keep him cool and at the same time deter thefts," Hussey said.

USA Today  
8/5/86

## Jaws drop as gigantic white shark is reeled in

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTAUK, N.Y. — Fishermen reeled in a 3,450-pound great white shark, with help from the shark hunter whose exploits inspired parts of the movie *Jaws*.

Hundreds of spectators gathered Thursday at a dock on the eastern tip of Long Island to see the 16-foot, 8-inch creature.

The shark was said to be 800 pounds heavier than the previous record for a great white shark that was caught, as listed in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

The fish was caught in the Atlantic, 30 miles south of here late Wednesday by five fishermen, including legendary shark fisherman Frank Mundus.

Mundus, whose exploits were the basis for parts of *Jaws*, harpooned a 4,500-pound shark in 1964, the largest ever on the East Coast. But harpooned sharks don't count in the record books.

There's a chance this catch might not qualify either, because of the weight of the line and the number of fishermen involved.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
8/8/86

## Spiders Force Office To Close

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORLANDO, Fla. — An infestation of brown recluse spiders, one of the world's most dangerous varieties, has forced 30 workers to abandon a local government office building.

"It looks like the spiders have won this battle," said Orange County Administrator Jim Harris. "We have been trying to get rid of the spiders for

three years now and we can't seem to do it."

The county commission voted unanimously Tuesday to have the 30 employees at the county Environmental Protection Department leave the building, as soon as other quarters can be leased.

The brown recluse spider's venom is considered far more toxic than that of the black widow spider.

Cincinnati Enquirer  
8/8/85

## Smart Alligator Eats Up Traps

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALEDO, Texas — Game wardens are starting to draw laughter in town, and a wily alligator that has evaded or simply chewed up their traps for weeks is becoming something of a local celebrity.

"I have developed a great deal of respect for him. He's intelligent," game warden Gary Tarpley said. "We've been keeping score. The score's seven to nothing in his favor."

The latest failure came Saturday when the 6-foot gator, known variously as Wally or George, swallowed a chicken used as bait and snapped off the 240-pound-test fishing line that was meant to reel the reptile in.

The hunt began after Chris and Fred Brenner discovered the alligator in a stock pond near their new country home near Aledo, west of Fort Worth.

That was six weeks ago. Since then, two to four game wardens have been setting make-shift traps in the one-acre pond week after week and are becoming more and more embarrassed at their failure, they say.

Despite all the attempts to catch the alligator, the Brennens don't seem to mind him too much.

"The kids think George is really neat. He's sort of a mascot," Brenner said. "We met all our neighbors. Everyone has driven by to visit the Aledo alligator."

Cincinnati Enquirer  
8/12/85

# Killer Bees Carry Killer Bee Mites

THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The "killer bees" found recently in California are not the first to reach the United States.

About a year ago a swarm was found on a Brazilian freighter that docked in Oswego, a Lake Ontario port in upstate New York. The swarm was destroyed on board, but not before a few escaped.

Researchers from Cornell University have been checking the surrounding area since then, but they say they are worried less about an invasion of the alien bees than the spread of a bee-killing parasite that the killer strain often carries.

The bees that escaped in Oswego are likely to have been sterile worker bees that, even if they joined a native honeybee colony, could not have mated. The queen of the shipboard swarm, the one most likely to establish a new colony, was among those killed.

If the escapees met native bees, they could have transmitted the parasite, called the Asian bee mite.

THE MITES do not seem to hurt the Africanized bees but can devastate domestic bees by feeding on their pupae and sucking blood from the adults.

So far, no escaped "killer bees," more properly known as Africanized bees, have been found in New York, and native bees show no sign of mite infestation.

Roger Morse, who is leading the search, said the real threat is the mite they carry.

"These mites have already caused extensive honey-bee-colony deaths in more than 35 nations, including countries in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. It is probably inevitable that they will make it to the U.S.," he said.

The rate at which Africanized bees are spreading northward suggests they will reach the United States in force around 1988 to 1990, entering most likely at the southern tip of Texas on the Gulf Coast.

Morse said there is evidence that when the bees enter temperate climates, their usually nasty disposition improves.

8/12/85

Cincinnati Enquirer

# Bad-Nosed Bear

## Chutist's Cocaine Provides Fatal High

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BLUE RIDGE, Ga.—Investigators searching for cocaine dropped by an airborne smuggler have found a ripped-up shipment of the sweet-smelling powder and the remains of a bear that apparently died of a multimillion-dollar high.

The cocaine was believed to be the last trace of the drug dropped from a small plane by a former Kentucky narcotics investigator who fell to his death in Tennessee because his reserve chute became entangled in drug-laden duffel bags, said Gary Garner, of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

"The bear got to it before we could, and he tore the duffel bag open, got him some cocaine and OD'd (overdosed)," Garner said.

Investigators said the black bear, weighing more than 150 pounds, had been dead about four weeks.

GBI agents found the bear's remains Friday in Fannin County in the mountains, about 80 miles

north of Atlanta and just south of the Tennessee line, near the duffel bag and 40 packages of cocaine that had been ripped open and scattered over a hillside.

The agents were searching for cocaine believed dropped by Andrew Thornton, 40, who was carrying 77 pounds of cocaine on Sept. 11 when he was killed.

Officials believe the bear, and maybe some others, ate several million dollars worth of the cocaine. Each of the 40 packages is believed to have contained one kilogram of cocaine, or about 88 pounds in all, and valued at as much as \$20 million.

The Georgia State Crime Lab will conduct an autopsy on the bear today.

Thornton fell in Knoxville an hour before an unmanned Cessna airplane crashed into a mountain in North Carolina.

GBI agents have not determined the identity of the intended recipient of Thornton's cocaine.

12/23/85

Cincinnati Enquirer

## Feline 'Pigeon Patrol' Scales New Heights

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky.—A Hardin County magistrate who came up with the idea of stationing cats on the roof of the county courthouse to chase pigeons away says he wishes he'd thought of merchandising the idea before a Florida real estate agent started selling T-shirts and caps.

G.C. Ray has been deluged with mail and telephone calls since his plan was put into effect and several cats were put on the roof. County jail prisoners are assigned the task of climbing to the roof daily to feed and care for the felines.

Since the cats began patrolling, there have been no more pigeons on the roof and eight pigeon carcasses have been found, Ray said.

The calls received by Ray include those from a Cincinnati cat fancier who has threatened legal action and an Indiana pigeon breeder who doesn't agree with the idea either.

Kenny Aaron thought Ray's plan was unique. He sketched a cartoon of the courthouse, complete with a pigeon swooping down near a cat and a sweater-clad cat at the door. The sketch became the basis for a T-shirt design.

1/2/86

Cincinnati Enquirer

## 'Pig Invasion' Threatens Farms In California

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN RAFAEL, Calif.—Marauding wild pigs are invading the normally placid Marin County countryside, threatening watersheds and wreaking havoc on farmland, officials say.

The emergency has prompted formation of the Marin Swine Task Force and may lead to the establishment of "pig-free zones."

"These are not cute little pink pig things," Fran Briggmann, director of Marin's Open Space District, told county supervisors on Tuesday. "Their numbers will expand to the extent the habitat will accommodate them."

According to Ms. Briggmann, the pigs, which now may number as many as 250, double in population every six months and "go through the ground like Rototillers . . . rooting for bulbs, acorns and plants. They also wallow in the bogs and creeks."

"They're invading Marin," she told the supervisors.

12/13/85

Cincinnati Enquirer