



CURSO: SEPTIEMBRE 2006

MATERIA: INGLÉS

South American Wild Cats Find Hope in a Test Tube

Since time immemorial felines have been venerated in American, North and South. Their shapes appear engraved on ancient artifacts and in the form of modern statues. But in the last century, jaguars, pumas and other American felines have declined alarmingly in number. So much so, that they may become extinct. As a result, researchers in Spain and Argentina have embarked on a project for the preservation of ten feline species in Latin American. For the next three years, they will be working on the creation of two genetic banks, one in Madrid and the other in Buenos Aires, to keep away the threat that looms over these animals.

This threat comes from human activity. Since 1920, the population of Latin America has tripled to 480 million people. A quarter of the forest area has disappeared, and activities such a hunting, fishing, mining and farming intensify human impact on the environment, so that the natural habitat of these species has been hugely reduced. The reduction of the habitat reduces the population.

So far, the problem has been addressed by introducing new animals into each region with problems of transport and adaptation leading to poor chances of success. Now, the plan is to apply assisted reproduction techniques, fertilizing females with semen from males from other regions, including various zoos in Argentina and Spain. Scientists hope that, a few decades into the future, the words jaguar or puma may be more names and memories.

QUESTIONS

1. Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Copy the evidence from the text. No marks are given for only TRUE or FALSE.

- Some types of wild animals were important in Latin American cultures.
- The assisted reproduction project in the attempt to save felines in Latin America.

2. In your own words and based on the ideas in the text, answer the following questions.

- Why has the number of felines in South American fallen recently?
- How do Spanish and Argentine scientists plan to help endangered feline?

3. Find the words in the text that mean:

- decreased (paragraph 1)
- possible danger (paragraph 1)
- agriculture (paragraph 2)
- until now (paragraph 3)

4. Complete the following sentences. Used appropriate form of the word in brackets when given.

- If we want wild cats _____ reproduce, we _____ protect their environment.
- We _____ better stop using the world's natural resources _____ (careless).
- The populations of many animal species are _____ them _____ to survive: soon they will become extinct.
- Complete the following sentence to report what a journalist asked researchers about the project:** "When did you begin your new wild eat project? → The journalist asked ...

5. Write about 100 or 150 words on ONE of the following topics.

- Describe what you can do at home and in your town to protect the environment.
- After this text on South American wild cats was published, many readers wrote to the editor of the paper, defending with spending money on saving animals in the region. Give your opinion on the topic.