

From Tim Tetzlaff, Director of Conservation and Communications

**News Release**      **Contact:** Tim L. Tetzlaff, Director of Conservation & Communications  
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## Newly Enhanced Ocelot Habitat Opens at Zoo

### Window Provides Clear Views of Naples Zoo's Endangered Cats

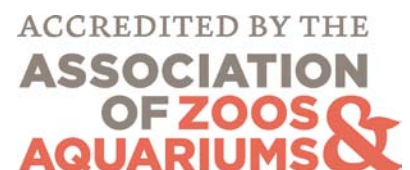
**Naples, FL** – Many people have heard of an ocelot, but many have never seen one in person. With barely over 100 of these endangered cats in the nation's zoos, Naples Zoo is one of the few places where you can see these spotted felines. Now zoo guests can clearly appreciate the beauty of these spotted cats through a 12' wide window looking into their newly enhanced habitat. Naples Zoo wishes to honor Susan H. Earl for her support of ocelot conservation. In addition to her role as a member on the Naples Zoo Board of Directors, her assistance was vital in enhancing this exhibit which is expected to be home to new purebred Brazilian ocelots in 2010.

Ocelots are listed on both the U.S. Endangered Species list and on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and are considered threatened with extinction throughout their range in the United States, Central and South America. The two now at the zoo are there for education, not breeding. Naples Zoo Director David Tetzlaff explains, "Their genetic line is well represented in zoos and is not recommended for breeding by the Species Survival Plan®." And educate they have. In addition to being seen in presentations by hundreds of thousands of guests at Naples Zoo, these rare cats have also made four trips to Texas where ocelots live in the wild in and around Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. The ocelots toured area schools and were the feature of the Refuge's annual Ocelot Festival.

In addition to current education efforts, ocelot breeding is in the near future. Naples Zoo is one of the 10 members of the **Brazilian Ocelot Consortium** (BOC). Ocelot conservation requires concerted efforts both in the United States and other range countries to most effectively manage populations outside the wild while conserving remaining habitat and populations in the wild. Caring for ocelots in zoos can serve as insurance against species extinction. As many ocelots in U.S. zoos have been classified as of unknown or mixed subspecies origin, they are not genetically representative of any wild ocelot population. In contrast, Brazilian zoos possess populations of purebred ocelots. These facilities are in need of assistance in developing and supporting effective conservation programs which is what the BOC has done. Efforts also include reforestation work in ocelot habitat in coastal Atlantic rainforest.



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In addition, part of the participation in the BOC is accepting responsibility for caring for purebred Brazilian ocelots here in North America. Moving endangered species from one country to another is a laborious process taking years -- even for conservation purposes. Part of the issue is regulation to prevent the illegal wildlife trade, a problem second only to drug and weapons trafficking. Recent information indicated that it was likely the cats may arrive sometime during 2010. Because of this, Naples Zoo prepared this exhibit for the incoming Brazilian ocelots from Brazil.

The Brazilian Ocelot Consortium was formed as a conservation partnership under the auspices of the Association of Zoos and Aquarium's Felid Taxon Advisory Group, Brazil Conservation Action Partnership, and Ocelot Species Survival Plan in cooperation with Brazil's Special Working Group for Small Brazilian Cats and the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Renewable Resources.

Naples Zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization cooperating in conservation programs both in and outside the wild for endangered species. Daily presentations include the hand-feeding of giant reptiles at Alligator Bay, Meet the Keeper Series, Snake Sunbathing, along with two premiere presentations: Planet Predator and Serpents: Fangs & Fiction. Both of these feature shows take place in the Safari Canyon Theater where guests see live animals from feline predators to venomous snakes along with exciting video footage. And one of the zoo's most popular activities is the Primate Expedition Cruise where guests embark on a guided cruise through islands inhabited by monkeys, lemurs, and apes.

The all day pay-one-price ticket includes admission to both the nationally accredited zoo and historic tropical garden along with all shows, botanical tours (offered on Sundays), exhibits, and the boat ride. (\$19.95 adults age 13+/ \$11.95 children 3 to 12, under 3 free. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age). **Zoo memberships and discount tickets are also available online at [www.napleszoo.org](http://www.napleszoo.org).** Visitors enjoy healthy meals at Wynn's at the Zoo and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. Naples Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:00 to 5:00 with the last ticket sold at 4:00 and is located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road across from the Coastland Center mall in the heart of Naples. To learn more, click [www.napleszoo.org](http://www.napleszoo.org) or call (239) 262-5409 or **follow the Zoo at [www.twitter.com/NaplesZoo](https://www.twitter.com/NaplesZoo).**

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**Print Quality Images of Ocelots in New Habitat at [www.napleszoo.org/press](http://www.napleszoo.org/press)**



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