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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release, March 2, 2009

Collared Arizona jaguar euthanized

PHOENIX — A collared jaguar from southern Arizona that was recaptured today for medical intervention has been euthanized after veterinarians determined the cat was in severe and unrecoverable kidney failure.

The decision was made in consultations between the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Phoenix Zoo.

The jaguar was brought to the Phoenix Zoo earlier today after a team from the department recaptured it. Zoo veterinarians conducted lab work and physical exams to evaluate the animal and discover the source of the cat's deteriorating condition.

While early data indicated that the animal was doing well in the days following the capture and collaring, careful monitoring of recent data revealed a decreased level of activity over the weekend that warranted further investigation.

"This is an unfortunate and disappointing situation," said Gary Hovatter, deputy director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "We were looking forward to using the data acquired from Macho B to learn more about the species use of the borderland habitats in order to further conserve the species as a whole."

Macho B was believed to be the oldest known jaguar in the wild. His age was estimated at two to three years old in photographs taken in 1996, making him 15-16 years old now. Previously the oldest known jaguar in the wild was 13 years old.

Kidney failure is a common ailment in older cats.

"It is a sad, but appropriate course of action to euthanize this animal given the hopelessly terminal nature of his condition," said Steve Spangle, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Arizona field supervisor.

A necropsy will be performed to learn more about the jaguar's condition and to possibly provide clues into how long the animal had been sick.

The jaguar's initial capture was guided by protocols developed in case a jaguar was inadvertently captured in the course of other wildlife management activities. The plan, which was created in consultation with leading jaguar experts, includes a protocol for capture, sedation and handling.

Note to media: More information on jaguar conservation is available by calling Public Information Officer Lynda Lambert at (623) 236-7203.

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