

Wild Cats :--Past & Present

Author Becker, John

Review

Source Booklist™ - 03-15-2008

Grades 5-8. With an eye-catching jacket, spacious page design, and plenty of color photos, this large-format book will draw browsers who just want to look at the pictures; but the well-researched text has plenty to offer. Becker provides an informative introduction to wild cats, including an account of their ancient ancestors, an overview of the family Felidae and its subdivisions, accounts of wild cats alive in the world today, and, woven throughout, discussions of the endangered status of many species. The last chapter includes detailed information on the work of several wild-cat conservation groups and at the Cincinnati Zoo. Clearly written and well organized, the text is enhanced by many sidebars, maps, photos, and paintings. Hallett, an artist specializing in prehistoric subjects, contributes a number of fine pictures of extinct animals. Lengthy lists of books, articles, interviews, and Web sites are appended. Useful for students researching specific wild cats and rewarding for children intrigued by wildlife.

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Review

Source VOYA™ - 04-01-2008

4Q · 2P · J · S

Entertaining and informative, this slim, oversized volume traces the cat from the ancestor it shares with the dog to the thirty-six feline varieties that populate today's world. Pictures, illustrations, sidebars, and inserts depict the extinct breeds that failed to adapt; the plentiful species, such as the American lion, that successfully multiplied; and the endangered cats now nurtured by environmental groups and zoos. Becker clarifies his explanation of scientific and common names with a two-page chart that, when possible, includes a picture of each cat breed. Pictures and names are repeated at the beginning of the chapters that discuss the cats in relation to their geographical location. He explains seven cat conservation projects and includes contact information. Becker's extensive bibliography and Web sources offer print and nonprint suggestions for more information. The final chapter discusses man's fascination with cats that led to worship, domestication, out-of-control feral populations, and inappropriate pets. By flipping through the pictures or reading the text, one will glean information about saber teeth, repopulation, the interdependence of predator and prey, as well as the smallest, largest, loudest, and most reticent, ferocious felines.

Animal lovers, whether avid or reluctant readers, from middle school through high school, will love to pour over the pages. Those who are not as enthusiastic about felines will find this book to be a painless springboard for researching a cat-related topic.-Lucy Schall.