

# Zoo works to save the world's smallest rabbits, now endangered

The Oregon Zoo has received \$57,000 in support from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to build a conservation center for the smallest known rabbit in the world, the endangered pygmy rabbit. The agreement with WDFW will also provide appropriate staff training and veterinary care for the pygmy rabbits.

1993. However, by 2001 this pygmy rabbit population, found only in Washington, had drastically plummeted to less than 40 individuals. The Oregon Zoo and the WDFW, in conjunction with Washington State University in Pullman, Wash. and Northwest Trek in Eatonville, Wash., removed 20 pygmy rabbits from the wild and began an

prove to be the most effective way to engage our visitors and constituents in conservation actions."

In 2003, the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits received federal endangered species status. In the winter the tiny rabbits' diet is almost exclusively sagebrush in the wild, but they also eat grasses and herbs in the spring. At the zoo they are given sagebrush and rabbit pellets, supplemented with timothy and alfalfa hay, as well as parsley, dandelion leaves and various other greens. Habitat destruction, predation, and brush fires have all contributed to the pygmy rabbits' dwindling numbers in the wild.

The new facilities have plastic tubing that allows the rabbits to hide underground as they do in the wild. However, there is no dirt or sand in the rabbits' immediate area. Researchers have been concerned about the bacteria that are frequently found in these commonly used substrates.

Disease transmission is high and reducing this can be a critical factor in keeping the pygmy rabbits healthy.

In 2004, the Oregon Zoo pygmy rabbits gave birth to 28 kits. Ten of these survived. Survival rate in the wild is 10 to 20 percent, with most of the mortality coming from predation once the kits reach maturity and disperse from the nest.

Web visitors can see video of the rare rabbits and learn more about the zoo's conservation efforts by visiting <<http://www.oregonzoo.org/Newsroom/video.htm#rabbit>>.

The zoo opens at 9:00 a.m. daily and is located just off Highway 26. The zoo is also accessible by MAX light rail line. Visitors who take the bus or MAX receive 50 cent off zoo admission.

General admission is \$9.50 (12-64), seniors \$8 (65+), children \$6.50 (3-11), and infants two and under are free. A parking fee of \$1 per car is also required. Additional information is available at <[www.oregonzoo.org](http://www.oregonzoo.org)> or by calling 503-226-1561.



The Metro-owned facility in Clackamas County allows for the rabbits to be reared in a quiet setting, which scientists hope will boost their reproductive success.

The new facility, located on the grounds of the Condor Creek Conservation Facility, currently houses 13 California condors, including the first condor hatched in Oregon in more than 100 years. Now 20 pygmy rabbits also live in the off-site holding facility.

The Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits were listed as critically endangered in Washington in

emergency captive breeding program. These organizations are working hard to ensure the survival of this elusive species.

In 2001, the Oregon Zoo became the first zoo in the country to successfully breed pygmy rabbits in captivity. Zoo Director Tony Vecchio stated, "In the past, zoos have spread their conservation efforts all over the world, particularly in tropical areas. While these efforts have been extremely important, there has been a tendency to ignore our own backyards. At the Oregon Zoo, we feel that efforts in our own region will

## Feral cat spay and neuter clinic will be held Sunday, February 13

The Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon (FCCO) will be coming to St. Helens for their annual feral cat spay and neuter clinic, a one-day spay and neuter event. Reservations are required. It is a multi-community clinic with volunteers and cats coming from Rainier, Scappoose, St. Helens and Warren.

as young as five months, so one unaltered female cat and all of her offspring can produce more than 250,000 kittens in just seven years.

During its 10-year existence, FCCO has altered more than 20,000 cats in Oregon. The Coalition is funded by private donation and staffed almost entirely by volunteers. All donations are appreciated, are tax deductible and can be directly sent to FCCO at P.O. Box 82734, Portland OR 97272. FCCO requests a \$25.00 fee per cat to cover the surgery and medical supplies.



So far, FCCO has spayed or neutered almost 400 cats in Columbia County and hopes to alter between 50-60 more cats in February.

This all-day event will take place on Sunday, February 13. The location of the clinic will be disclosed when reservations are confirmed.

Feral cats are cats that have been abandoned or lost, as well as the offspring of these cats. Only feral cats with dedicated caregivers who will feed and care for them will be treated.

A cat averages two litters each year and can reproduce



FCCO is a non-profit organization dedicated to humanely reducing the feral cat population through spaying and neutering.

For more information or to make donations or reservations, call Laura Snyder at 503-397-3333. For volunteer opportunities call Barbara Calnon at 503-397-0510.

Open to the Public!



All Types of  
Metal Roofing  
& Siding!!

Agricultural - Residential  
- Commercial - Industrial

◆ SALE ◆ SALE ◆

3' wide, 28-ga. GALVANIZED **\$1.25** per foot

3' wide, 28-ga. OFFWHITE **\$1.49** per foot

(500 ft. minimum while supplies last)

Competitive Prices - Superior Service - Premium Product  
Boom Truck Delivery ~ Oregon, Wash., Idaho, N. Calif.

NORTH AMERICAN METALS INC.

15869 NW SELLERS RD., BANKS, OR 97106

Sales (503) 844-8688 • Toll Free 1-800-470-4660 • Fax (503) 693-1547




VALLEY VETERINARY CLINIC



RABIES  
SPECIAL

\$8<sup>50</sup>

Thursdays 10 am - 5 pm

58376 Nehalem Hwy. S. Vernonia (Near Sunnyside Cafe)