

*Celebrating 50 Years*



CAROLINA TIGER  
**RESCUE**

*Rescue 🐾 Education 🐾 Advocacy*

# *The Pawze Print*

— SPRING & SUMMER 2024 —

## Curator's Corner

**KATHRYN BERTOK**  
Assistant Director & Curator



Carolina Tiger Rescue has always valued education. Whether it be through tours, community presentations, social media posts, camps, and more, the belief that education is key to making changes for wild cats has been a driving force in many aspects of our work. One of the ways that we are able to impact both captive and wild cats is through our partnerships with researchers and other NGOs.

One of the factors that makes conducting research of wild cats difficult is the small numbers of animals normally found at a facility. When looking for ways to gather images of tiger pugmarks (footprints), SAS and WildTracks were excited to have more than 20 animals in one location, living in similar living conditions, where they were able to collect data

to fine tune their tracking software for wild tigers.

We've also had a longstanding partnership with Dr. Adam Hartstone-Rose, a professor of biology at NC State. You will learn more about his important research in this edition of the Paw Print.

The work that we do at Carolina Tiger Rescue will be felt for many years to come. Noninvasive research will not only impact the health and wellbeing of the animals in our care, but also generations of animals in the future, both in captivity and in the wild. We look forward to building relationships with those who are passionate about learning more about our incredible animals.

*Kathryn*

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP

**Volunteer - Adopt an Animal - Be a Monthly Sustainer**  
**Bring Friends for a Tour - Include the Cats in Your Estate Plan**  
**Become a Business Sponsor - Become a Big Cat Dinner Club Member**  
**Donate Items on our Amazon Wish List**



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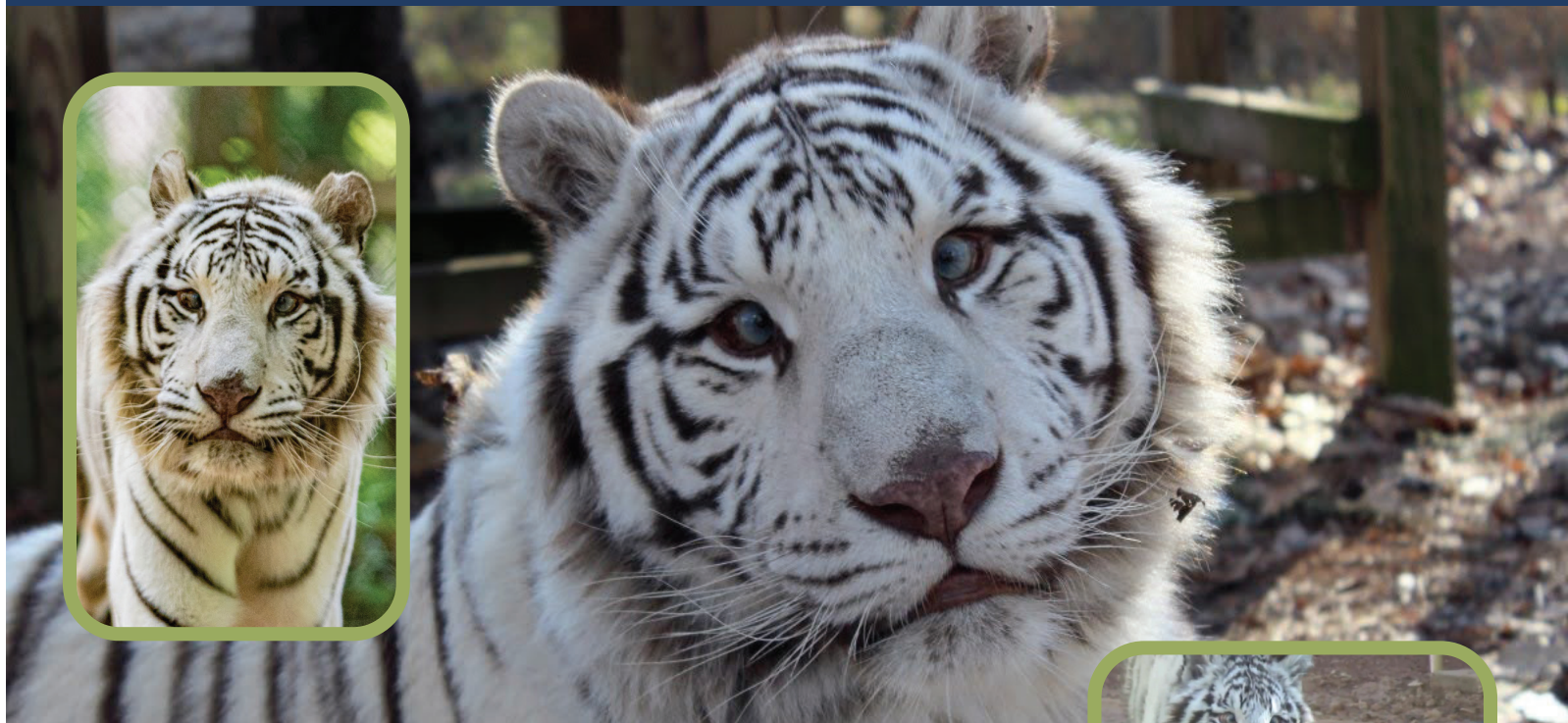
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**Cara Vitale** – Keeper  
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# MEET SABER TIGER

Age: 14-years-old  
Rescued: 2016



White tigers have long captivated our imagination with their stunning appearance, but there's a darker truth lurking beneath their beautiful coat.

These unique cats are the unfortunate result of extensive inbreeding practices. To produce white tiger cubs, breeders mate closely related individuals, such as siblings or parents and offspring. This inbreeding carries significant risks, including a higher likelihood of birth defects, reduced fertility, and a shorter lifespan. Moreover, it contributes to a loss of genetic diversity, essential for the long-term health and survival of any species.

Tragically, Saber's story exemplifies the suffering endured by white tigers bred for

entertainment. Used in a Las Vegas magic act, Saber was declawed and defanged, causing

needless pain in the pursuit of entertainment and with the intent to make him "safer" to work with. These cruel alterations are sadly common in the entertainment industry, perpetuating the exploitation of wild animals for commercial gain.

Despite his tragic backstory, Saber lives a happy and peaceful life at Carolina Tiger Rescue. Here, he has access to the best care possible, and we are ready at a moment's notice to provide treatment should he experience issues related to his declaw and defang. Saber has a goofy personality and enjoys greeting tour guests when they visit!

## GIVE A LITTLE TODAY

We strive to be strategic with our resources and act as good environmental stewards; to that end, we are including our Spring Appeal IN the newsletter.

*For more than 50 years, the generosity of our donors has been the backbone of Carolina Tiger Rescue. Please support Carolina Tiger's Spring Giving Campaign today and give wild cats like Saber a safe forever-home. You can set up a recurring donation using the enclosed envelope or through our website:*

[CarolinaTigerRescue.org/Spring](https://CarolinaTigerRescue.org/Spring)

SCAN ME



## A Commitment to Scientific Progress

At Carolina Tiger Rescue, our commitment to the welfare of wild cats is at the heart of everything we do. The sanctuary is not just a refuge; it is a beacon of hope for animals in need. In our journey to uphold this promise, we have found an invaluable ally in Dr. Adam Hartstone-Rose, a Professor at NC State University whose research on functional morphology and comparative anatomy aligns seamlessly with our mission.

Dr. Hartstone-Rose's specific expertise in animal skulls and teeth has captured the minds of summer campers for years. Our high school campers visit his lab on campus to learn about the importance of healthy teeth and the significance of a whole-carcass diet. His research has shown how this natural feeding regimen - not just nutrients, but also the physical properties animals are adapted to process - mirrors the diet of their wild counterparts, ensuring the holistic wellbeing of wild cats in captivity.

### FUNCTIONAL MORPHOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE ANATOMY

Functional morphology is the study of organism structure. Comparative anatomy is the study of the body structures of different species of animals in order to understand the adaptive changes they have undergone in the course of evolution.



Our partnership with Dr. Hartstone-Rose extends far beyond the bounds of summer camp. Together, we've delved into the realm of research, uncovering important truths about animal welfare. One such revelation



came to light through the diligent work of Lara Martens, former animal care intern and NC State student. Under the guidance of Dr. Hartstone-Rose, Lara's study illuminated the devastating effects of declawing big cats.

In this horrible practice of declawing, the entire bone holding the claw is removed, not just the claw itself. This is the equivalent of taking off your first knuckle. Declawing can cause many issues including arthritis or bone rubbing through an animal's paw pad. Using our rescued animals that experienced this cruel modification, Lara and Dr. Hartstone-Rose's team documented the effects of this surgery in the most objective and scientific terms possible.



Lara Martens (far right) and fellow Summer 2021 animal care interns.

This collaboration is a powerful tool for education, and further amplifies our voice in advocating for the ethical treatment of tigers, lions, and other wild cats experiencing exploitation and abuse.

As we continue to journey alongside Dr. Hartstone-Rose, we're reminded of the power of collaboration in the pursuit of animal welfare and conservation. Our partnership serves as a beacon of hope, and a testament to what can be achieved when passion meets purpose.



*Caprichio Tiger was a good example of the impact humans can have on the animals they exploit. Dr. Hartstone-Rose's research connects the dots, allowing us to better understand what we can do to improve the lives of our rescues, especially those with musculoskeletal issues.*



“Being a research partner of Carolina Tiger Rescue for two decades, I can attest that this organization is dedicated to not only providing outstanding life-long sanctuary to the animals in its care, but to advocating broadly for the humane treatment of these wonderful species and, as in the case of the kind of research that they work with us on, help document the effects of human mistreatment of these species in order to provide the kind of hard evidence that is needed to continue to argue for the societal change that we all hope to see. Carolina Tiger Rescue is truly dedicated to saving and protecting not just the animals lucky enough to make it to the sanctuary itself, but for all members of their species.”

- Dr. Adam Hartstone-Rose

***If you would like to learn more about Dr. Hartstone-Rose's research from his lab at N.C. State, please email him at: AdamHRose@ncsu.edu, or scan the QR code for his lab's website.***



## Keeper's Corner



We have been privileged to work with several researchers, universities, and companies on various research projects. All the research is non-invasive, so no animals were sedated solely to

collect data. Instead, we assist with data collection through bone collection from their meals, adding markers to their diets, fecal collection, and providing deceased animals for in-depth necropsies for musculature and osteology studies. These studies are important because they help us better understand the animals in our care, have an impact on future husbandry practices and can assist with conservation of their wild counterparts.

WildTrack Footprint Identification project was created through the SAS Institute. The project focuses on collecting images of animal's footprints and measuring the size and shape of the pugmarks to help identify the species, individual, sex and age-class. This becomes a helpful non-invasive tool for in-situ (on site) conservation by estimating population densities and identifying individual animals in the field. Keepers assisted data collection by placing a sand path in the animal's enclosure, then having them walk across the substrate which leave their footprints behind. Once the animal is shifted, the team can enter and take photographs of the prints to upload for later analysis.

Dr. Adam Hartstone-Rose runs the Comparative Anatomy & Functional Morphology Research Lab at NC State. We have worked with him on various studies involving the effects of declawing cats, gut transit times in frugivores, measuring bite force of present-day big cats and matching bite marks on bone to compare to extinct felids from the Pleistocene era.

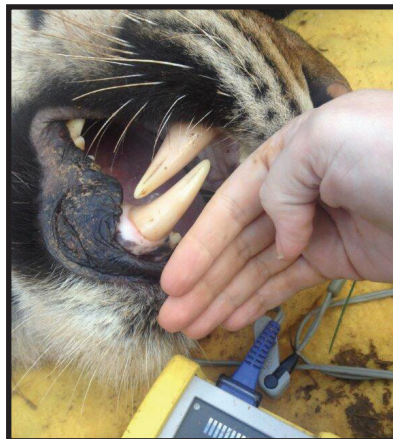
In order to determine gut transit time for our kinkajous and binturongs, we would cut up small pieces of a specialized material and hide it in their food. We would note the time of consumption and then note the time it was collected. Researchers were then able to complete a chemical analysis and measure methane, pH, and short chain fatty acid levels.

We have also worked with students conducting behavioral research studies, including a recent analysis comparing behavior on fasting vs. feeding days in our bobcats. The student rotated observation times and completed an ethogram to note behavior changes.

Data collection may require extra steps and time in our daily routines, but it is well worth the ability to assist with advancing research that can help better understand behavior and improve health for future generations of animals.



From Left to Right: Senior Keeper Lauren Humphries, Keepers Stephanie Story, Kalyn Walker, and Cara Vitale



*Lauren*

# CAROLINA TIGER RESCUE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF RESCUE, EDUCATION, & ADVOCACY

Amidst the elegant ambiance of the Washington Duke Inn, February 24th marked an evening of jubilation as Carolina Tiger Rescue's Black Tie & Tails Ball celebrating 50 years of unwavering dedication to rescue, education, and advocacy. With over 200 guests in attendance, the celebration was infused with the spirit of commemoration and compassion.

The milestone of 50 years was met with unparalleled enthusiasm, as guests reveled in the festivities. Elevated southern-inspired cuisine was served, a champagne toast was enjoyed, lighthearted games such as chicken chuckin, Predator Putt Putt and Rescue Recall were played. Amidst laughter and camaraderie, attendees came together to raise vital funds in support of the animals at Carolina Tiger Rescue.

The success of the Live and Silent Auctions, which collectively raised over \$35,000, showed the generosity of our supporters. Additionally, our Fund-A-Cause initiative achieved a remarkable milestone, raising a record-breaking \$30,350 dedicated to our food fund. These funds are instrumental in ensuring the health and well-being of the animals under our care.

As we reflect on the extraordinary success of the Black Tie & Tails Ball, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each individual whose contributions, whether through attendance, sponsorships, donations, or volunteerism, made this evening possible.

Here's to 50 years of remarkable achievements—and to the boundless possibilities that lie ahead as we continue our mission of compassion, advocacy, and rescue at Carolina Tiger Rescue.



We extend heartfelt appreciation to the individuals and businesses whose contributions were instrumental in making the Ball a resounding triumph:

- Maxie B's Café for their exquisite 50th-anniversary cake.
- Pam Earp, whose basketry added an artisanal touch to our event.
- Keepsakes Custom Framing and JW Image Co., - Canvas Creations
- Shana Perry and John Teague, whose photography skillfully captured the essence of the evening's magic.
- Nogui Aramburo of Triangle DJ and Matt Holiday of Holiday Auctions, whose talents kept the energy high and the bids soaring.
- Themeworks, for their unwavering dedication to ensuring the Ball's aesthetic splendor.

**Honorary Co-Chairs Dr. Mary Szymkowski and Mitch Haber**  
New board members Dr. Mary Szymkowski and Mitch Haber assumed the roles of Honorary Co-Chairs for this year's Ball. Each shared personal reflections on their journey with Carolina Tiger Rescue, underscoring the profound impact of our collective efforts over the years. Their dedication to Carolina Tiger Rescue serves as a strong indicator that we are embarking on a promising journey over the next few years!



#### ***A Remarkable Achievement***

As we reflect on the resounding success of the Black Tie & Tails Ball, we are filled with gratitude for each individual who contributed to its triumph. Thanks to the unwavering generosity of our supporters, the total funds raised to support our beloved cats reached an incredible \$130,000. Here's to fifty years of extraordinary accomplishments—and to the countless milestones yet to come.

## EVENT SPONSORS

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THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT!

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## CAROLINA TIGER RESCUE MINI-BITES

*Bite-sized stories to catch you up on what's happening at Carolina Tiger Rescue!*

### Looking Toward the Future: Capital Campaign Update



We are excited to share an update on our sanctuary expansion and renovation! Architectural plans for the education and visitors center are nearly complete. New educational offerings will consist of interior, exterior, and virtual experiences, and will include tactile exhibits and displays that tell our story. Installing Wi-Fi in the sanctuary will allow us to expand our educational efforts beyond the Triangle. Current efforts include identifying various community and business leaders to join the capital campaign leadership team.

### Rep. Reives & Mayor Shipp visit the Sanctuary



Representative Robert Reives II of District 54 visited the Sanctuary to explore ways to combat wild animal exploitation in North Carolina. It was an enriching exchange where the Sanctuary showcased its mission and operations. Additionally, Mayor Kyle Shipp of Pittsboro toured the Sanctuary, celebrating its 50-year contribution to the local community. We discussed future endeavors and how Carolina Tiger Rescue can continue serving Pittsboro effectively in the years ahead.



### Workplace Giving with EarthShareNC



For more than thirty years, EarthShare North Carolina's member nonprofits have worked together to do one thing: strengthen the capacity of the environmental movement. Now, more than ever, you can make an impact in your community by putting your skills to work for conservation. Through hands-on or virtual volunteering, learning about the issues, and taking part in the programs and solutions available through EarthShare NC nonprofits, you will make a difference.

**Carolina Tiger Rescue is a proud member of EarthShare NC – look for us in your workplace giving campaign: SECC #1104.**

## Your Plans Can Make a World of Difference for the Cats



Estate gifts are truly transformational at Carolina Tiger Rescue. These gifts have allowed us to build our veterinary facility, improve habitat fencing and sanctuary infrastructure, and purchase a new education building!

These generous and personal gifts allow Carolina Tiger Rescue to provide the best forever-home possible to the animals in the sanctuary and enable us to further our mission of saving and protecting wild cats in captivity and in the wild.

Supporters who have included Carolina Tiger Rescue in their estate plans are invited to join our Sanctuary Stewards group. By including you as a Sanctuary Steward, we gratefully acknowledge your thoughtful planning for the future of the animals that have found a forever home at Carolina Tiger Rescue. Thank you!

As a Sanctuary Steward, you will be invited to our special donor events, receive an annual gift, and get public recognition for your meaningful gift. You may remain anonymous if you wish.

*We are honored to recognize and thank seven new Sanctuary Stewards:*

**Chris and Susan Bush**

**Dawn and John Friedel**

**Janelle Smith-Haff**

**Two Anonymous Donors**



If you have included Carolina Tiger in your estate, please let us know so that we may thank you! Please contact Heidi Zangara, Donor Engagement Director:  
**[HeidiZangara@CarolinaTigerRescue.org](mailto:HeidiZangara@CarolinaTigerRescue.org)**.

For information on including Carolina Tiger Rescue as a beneficiary of your estate, contact Heidi or find information online:  
**[CarolinaTigerRescue.org/ways-to-give/estate-giving](https://CarolinaTigerRescue.org/ways-to-give/estate-giving)**

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS! NOVEMBER 2, 2024

Join us at Havoc Brewing in Pittsboro on November 2 for a community celebration of Carolina Tiger Rescue's 50 years! There will be games, food, educational activities, music, and of course, beer and other beverages. It wouldn't be a celebration without you, so stay tuned for more details.





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[www.CarolinaTigerRescue.org](http://www.CarolinaTigerRescue.org)

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## *Tour Information*

### **DAYTIME TOURS:**

*Year-round, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Get tickets online.*

*Holiday tours, private tours, specialty tours, virtual tours, field trips, and volunteer opportunities available.*

### **TWILIGHT TOURS:**

*Beginning in March and running through October. These sell out quickly! Please book in advance.*

Beau Cougar



**Twilight Tours are back! Now through October enjoy a quiet evening with the animals of Carolina Tiger Rescue. For tickets, visit our website:**

***[www.CarolinaTigerRescue.org](http://www.CarolinaTigerRescue.org)***