



Audubon Zoo  
6500 Magazine Street  
New Orleans, LA 70118  
<http://audubonnatureinstitute.org/zoo>

## Audubon Zoo Welcomes Brazilian Ocelots

Audubon Zoo welcomes two sleek, eye-catching new additions: a pair of Brazilian ocelots. The wild cat species about twice the size of the average domestic feline is known for its striking, dappled coat.

Milagre (“miracle” in Portuguese), a female; and Joaquin, a male, came to Audubon on October 6 from the Dallas Zoo. The ocelots – both nine years old - are a proven breeding pair and Audubon’s animal staff is hopeful that once they are comfortable in their new home, kittens could be on the way.

“Brazilian ocelots are a new species for Audubon and we are thrilled to be working with them,” said Dominique Fleitas, assistant curator of Audubon Zoo’s Louisiana Swamp & Jaguar Jungle. “Joaquin is the more outgoing of the two and loves anything he can bat around. Milagre is a bit more reserved and is intrigued by new smells.”

Native to the southwestern United States, Mexico and Central and South America, the ocelot was nearly driven to extinction in the 20th Century by hunters who saw great profit in its lustrous fur coat.

With regulatory measures now in place, the ocelot has recovered and is no longer considered endangered. Some populations, however, are small and unstable – particularly in Texas – and numbers are decreasing due to deforestation, habitat destruction and poaching.

Audubon Zoo visitors can see Milagre and Joaquin in their new Jaguar Jungle home located on the hill directly across from the spider monkey habitat.

### Ocelot Facts

- These largely nocturnal cats are territorial and solitary. They use keen sight and hearing to hunt rabbits, rodents, iguanas, fish, and frogs and take to trees to stalk monkeys and birds.

- Unlike many cats, they do not fear water and are excellent swimmers.
- They are carnivores, using pointed fangs used to deliver a killing bite, and sharp back teeth that can tear food like scissors. Their raspy tongues can clean a bone of every morsel.
- They communicate with one another using soft meows which can turn into loud yowls when looking for a mate.
- They live under leafy canopies of South American rain forests, mountain forests at altitudes of up to 12,500 feet, grassland and mangroves. They also can adapt to human habitats and often are found near villages.
- Their fine fur has made them a target of hunters. Their coats are usually tawny, yellow or brown-grayish, covered with black rosettes and distinctive markings in a variety of patterns.
- Abstract artist Salvador Dali kept an ocelot as a pet and was known to travel frequently with his domesticated companion.
- Ocelot comes from the Aztec word tlalocelot, which means "field tiger."

Click here for images: <http://newsroom.audubonnatureinstitute.org/audubon-zoo-welcomes-brazilian-ocelots>

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Audubon Nature Institute operates a family of museums, parks and research facilities dedicated to celebrating the wonders of nature. Through innovative live animal exhibits, education programs, and scientific discovery, Audubon makes a meaningful contribution to preserving wildlife for the future. Audubon Nature Institute flagships include Audubon Park, Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy Giant Screen Theater, Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium, Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Woldenberg Riverfront Park and Audubon Wilderness Park. Ron Forman is President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute.

