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EXHIBIT 9
Senate passes big-cat bill

By J. Michael Kennedy

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With a spate of incidents involving not-quite-domesticated wild animals fresh in the news, including the mauling of tiger trainer and illusionist Roy Horn, the U.S. Senate has passed a bill cracking down on the burgeoning trade in exotic big cats.

The bill would ban interstate and foreign commerce in dangerous exotic animals, including lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars and cougars. The bill would not ban ownership of these animals, though some states already have prohibitions on certain species.

"These cats are ... capable of injuring or killing innocent people," said U.S. Sen. James Jeffords (I-Vt.), who helped introduce the bill.

— J. Michael Kennedy

Cave Rock ban permanent

It's official: The ban on climbing at the famed Cave Rock on the shore of Lake Tahoe has been ruled permanent. But this saga isn't over.

The ban comes after seven years of controversy over the 250-foot tower of volcanic andesite, a lure for rock climbers from around the world (Outdoors, Sept. 9). But it's also considered sacred ground by the indigenous Washoe tribe.

An order banning rock climbing was issued in July, and that decision was appealed to the U.S. Forest Service, which upheld the ruling.

But the Access Fund, a climbers' advocacy group, said it isn't going down without another fight or two. Executive Director Steve Matous said his organization has asked the Forest Service for a stay on the decision.

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Condor chick flies in Arizona

For the first time in perhaps a century, a California condor chick has taken flight in Arizona.
Biologists from Grand Canyon National Park and the Peregrine Fund witnessed the departure, which took place in a remote canyon. The bird dropped from its cliffside nest for more than 500 feet before it found its wings and landed safely.

"It was spectacular," said Sophie Osborn, field manager for the Peregrine Fund. "Minutes after the chick landed it started to explore its environment."

The biggest concern was how long it would take for the parents to find the chick, but the mother spotted it two hours later.

Three pairs of condors produced eggs this year in Arizona, but two of the eggs did not hatch — something not uncommon for condors in their early breeding years. "It is this chick and others like it in the future that ensure condor recovery in Arizona," said state Fish and Game Director Duane Shroufe.

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