



*One of the zoo's mother snow leopards assumes a stately pose as her youngster snuggles nearby to escape the biting Oklahoma wind chill.*

(Photo by George Walters)

---

## The Winter Pussycat

---

by Vik Camp  
Zoological Curator

Dreaming of a White Christmas was probably foremost in the mind of our June-born snow leopard Tangla, provided mama snow leopard told her about the "Snowflake Fairy". Unfortunately a family Christmas was not in order for this little lady. Tangla— a mother-reared cub— was separated from her mother before Christmas so her mother and father could be reintroduced for the breeding season.

The snow leopard breeding season is very short and introduction prior to January allows the Zoo staff time to evaluate the pair's compatibility and determine what can be done to eliminate problems before the actual January breeding season.

Tangla is the only one of our eight

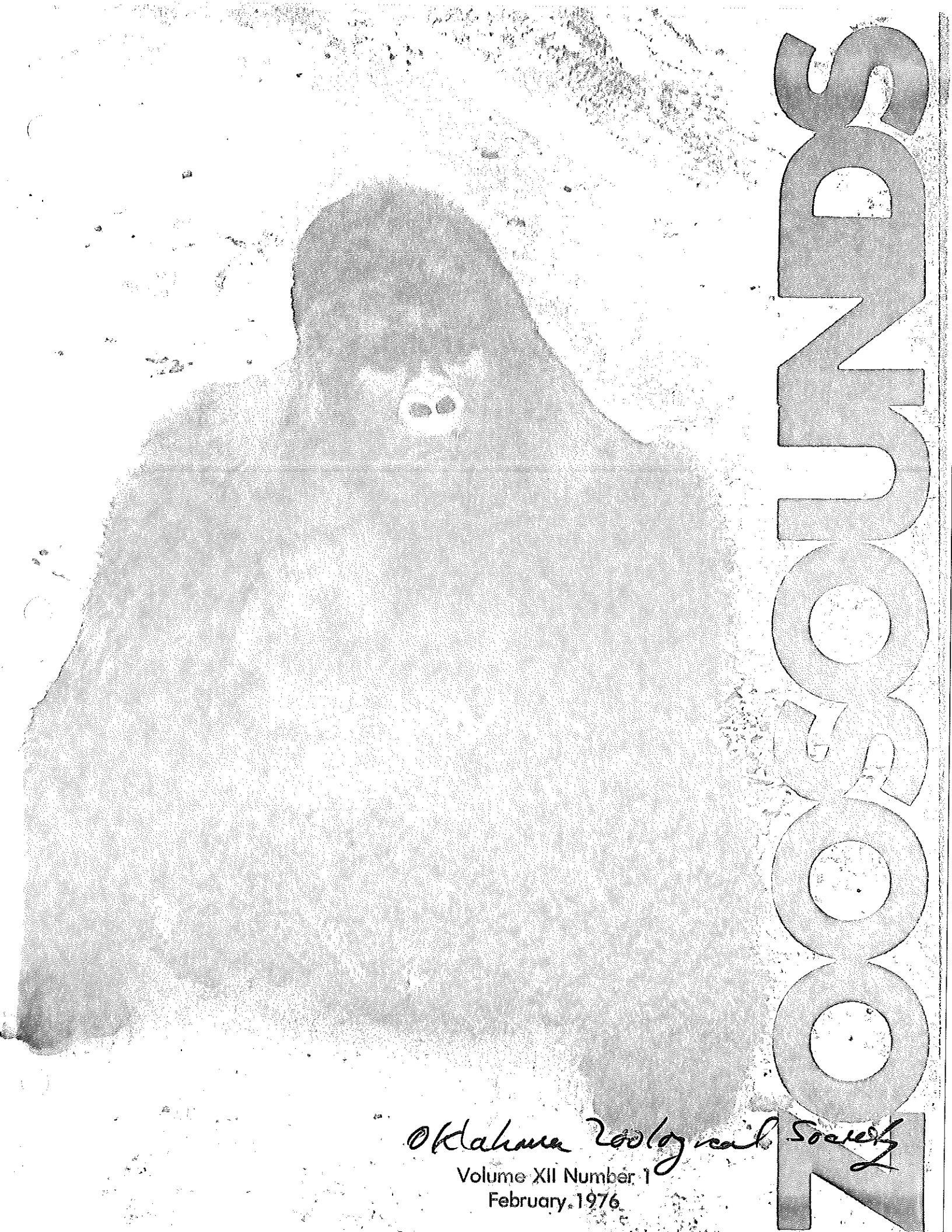
snow leopards which has not experienced the meager winter snow and icy prairie wind which brings the chill factor down and these rare felines out to enjoy the cold.

Well adapted to the chilly Oklahoma wind, with the warmest coat in the cat family, this leopard of the snow-covered slopes of the Himalayas is capable of withstanding cold which will send less protected animals scurrying to the lee of a rocky outcrop or down to the confines of a subterranean burrow. The long tail, used as a balancing aid as these leopards leap from rock to rock in pursuit of their prey, serves the animal in another way during the cold weather. Drawn close to their curled body, the long fluffy tail helps protect the underside of the body and the face from the stinging cold. Mother snow leopard gathers her youngsters close to her

stomach and wraps the tail around them providing a blanket unsurpassed in the animal world.

All of the characteristics which adapt this rare leopard to the cold— its long, densely haired coat, heavily furred foot pads, small ears, and the long, heavily furred tail functioning as a balancing organ and a heat conserving device— surely classify this feline as the "Winter Pussycat".

Those of us who brave the chilly Oklahoma winds of February can spend an enjoyable visit with our snow leopards on Cat Row. Although Tangla will not be with her mother Cleo, her father Chumbi will be shifted between Cleo and her grandmother Tanya during the breeding season. Hopefully, the day we choose to visit our snow leopards the winter snow blanket will cover their enclosure.



# SASQUATCHES

*Oklahoma Zoological Society*

Volume XII Number 1

February, 1976