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South American Wild Cats Find Hope in a Test Tube

Since time immemorial felines have been venerated in America, North and South. Their shapes appear engraved on ancient artifacts and in the form of modern statues. But in the last century, jaguars, pumas and other American felines have declined alarmingly in number. So much so, that they may become extinct. As a result, researchers in Spain and Argentina have embarked on a project for the preservation of ten feline species in Latin America. For the next three years, they will be working on the creation of two genetic banks one in Madrid and the other in Buenos Aires, to keep away the threat that looms over these animals.

This threat comes from human activity. Since 1920, the population of Latin America has tripled to 480 million people. A quarter of the forest area has disappeared, and activities such as hunting, fishing, mining and farming intensify human impact on the environment, so that the natural habitat of these species has been hugely reduced. The reduction of the habitat reduces the population.

So far, the problem has been addressed by introducing new animals into each region, with problems of transport and adaptation leading to poor chances of success. Now, the plan is to apply assisted reproduction techniques, fertilizing females with semen from males from other regions, including various zoos in Argentina and Spain. Scientists hope that, a few decades into the future, the words jaguar or puma may be more than mere names and memories.

Find the words in the text that mean: (?)

a) *decreased* : declined (descendió)

Ayuda: *Decreased* es un verbo en pasado (terminación -ed) por lo que su sinónimo será otro verbo también en pasado. Significa *disminuyó*.

b) *possible danger* : threat (amenaza)

Ayuda: *danger* es un sustantivo. Su sinónimo también debe ser uno. *Possible danger: posible peligro*.

c) *agriculture* : farming (cultivo)

Ayuda: *agriculture* es un sustantivo. *Farming* es uno de los muchos sustantivos que se forman a partir de un verbo (*farm*) añadiendo el sufijo -ing.

d) *until now* : So far (hasta ahora)

Ayuda: *until now* es un adverbio que indica una situación que ha existido hasta el presente.