

A photograph of a sloth clinging to a chain-link fence. The sloth is positioned on the right side of the frame, its body pressed against the metal links. The background is a blurred mix of green foliage and a light sky. The title 'A LIFE SENTENCE' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a bold, black, serif font.

# A LIFE SENTENCE



THE SAD AND  
DANGEROUS REALITIES  
OF EXOTIC ANIMALS  
IN PRIVATE HANDS  
IN THE U.S.

ANIMAL  
PROTECTION  
INSTITUTE



**2007 UPDATE:** *The following investigation was conducted in 2005. Using the evidence gathered as support, API was able to successfully pass legislation in Washington State in 2007 that prohibits the future possession and breeding of certain exotic animals such as large cats, bears, wolves, nonhuman primates, and dangerous reptiles. This report contains findings and conclusions from before the 2007 Washington law was put in place.*

*Additionally, the information on state laws has been updated as of September 2007.*



API has included in this report descriptions and photographs of instances in which individuals from the public had direct contact with dangerous exotic animals. API recognizes the dangers that these animals pose to the public; one of the purposes of this investigation was to highlight these dangers and to shine a spotlight on the exotic animal industry. API believes that there should be no direct public contact with dangerous exotic animals and discourages people from buying and profiting from dangerous exotic animals.

In order to protect the anonymity of the private exotic animal owners mentioned in this report, API refers to these owners using a coding system, rather than names.

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Heaven's Corner for Endangered Animals, Ohio

## Executive Summary

Across the United States, millions of exotic animals are kept captive in private homes and in roadside zoos and menageries. These animals — including, among other species, lions, tigers, cougars, wolves, bears, monkeys, and venomous snakes and other reptiles — pose grave dangers to human health and safety.

Every year, people are attacked and injured by exotic “pets” or exotic animals in roadside zoos; some of the attacks are fatal, and children have too often been the victims. In addition, the often-deplorable conditions in which privately-owned exotic animals are kept raise serious animal welfare concerns.

By their very nature, exotic animals are incapable of being domesticated or tamed. Not only are exotic animals inherently dangerous and unpredictable, but most people cannot provide the special care, housing, diet, and maintenance they require. That’s why groups as diverse as the American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Animal Control Association, and the American Zoo and Aquarium Association have all opposed the private ownership of certain exotic animals.

In response to the critical threats that the private ownership of exotic animals pose to animal welfare and public safety, API launched a groundbreaking investigation, the results of which are summarized in this report, along with recommendations on steps that lawmakers and communities must take to address this urgent issue.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2005, API investigated private homes and federally-licensed roadside zoos and menageries that housed exotic animals in North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington — three states that currently have no laws addressing the private ownership of such animals.

API’s investigators focused on the safety issues surrounding how these animals were kept; what contact, if any, the public and others were allowed to have with dangerous animals; and incidents involving attacks and injuries to persons (including the owners). We also examined how owners provided for the needs of exotic animals by analyzing, among other things, how the animals were housed, what type of enrichment was provided, and whether the individual had direct contact with animals.

Our investigation has revealed disturbing new evidence — evidence that demonstrates just how critical the issue of private exotic animal ownership is nationwide.

API uncovered the shocking conditions in which exotic animals are kept, the suffering they endure, and the inadequate and inappropriate care and treatment they receive, as well as the real threats that exotic animals pose to public safety. Especially troubling is the fact that the majority of instances of inadequate care and treatment did not violate any current federal law or respective state law.

Examples of the serious public safety and animal welfare problems we found



*At a roadside zoo in Ohio, this young girl was placed in grave danger by having a large boa constrictor placed around her. Snakes of this type have been known to suddenly coil and squeeze a person. This can lead to suffocation and death before the snake can be removed.*

include:

- **Dangerous Public Contact:** The offering of “close encounters” in which the public were allowed to have direct contact with dangerous animals; ineffective barriers to protect the public from having direct contact with the animals.
- **Child Endangerment:** Children placed at risk of attacks and injuries from dangerous exotic animals in homes and at facilities open to the public.
- **Reckless Behavior:** Owners placing the public and themselves at risk through irresponsible behavior with dangerous animals.
- **Animal Attacks:** Reports of attacks and injuries inflicted by exotic animals on owners and others.
- **Poor Conditions:** Animals kept in inadequate conditions, including pens that were too small and that failed to allow animals to express normal, species-specific behaviors; inadequate shelter.
- **Lack of Enrichment:** Pens that were barren or lacked appropriate structures and furnishings and did little, if anything, to provide a natural environment for the animals, resulting in dysfunctional and stereotypical behaviors.
- **Lack of Companionship:** Animals who were housed alone, denied contact with others of their kind.
- **Cruel and Inappropriate Treatment:** Animals handled roughly and inappropriately; animals who had teeth and claws surgically removed; nonhuman primates often treated like human children; animals left to roam inside houses.
- **Overbreeding:** The continual breeding of certain species to provide a constant supply of young animals for attractions and photo opportunities.

The lesson learned from this investigation is clear: the only way to put an end to the suffering and dangers that exotic animal ownership poses to humans and nonhumans alike is to stop the private possession, breeding, and trading and sale of these animals for personal profit and amusement.

Four things must follow from this investigation:

- States must act now to pass laws that ensure that the private possession of exotic animals is prohibited.
- The breeding, selling, and display of exotic animals at roadside zoos and menageries must end.
- The public must be educated about the animal welfare concerns and public safety threats associated with roadside zoos and exotic “pets,” and be shown that wild animals do not belong in private hands.
- Where exotic animals cannot be transferred to a genuine sanctuary, existing owners must, as a minimum, increase the standard of care being provided to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals and the public.

The time has come to end the private possession of exotic animals in the United States. API calls upon legislators and communities to act now to ensure that strong and effective laws are passed to address this critical issue before yet another tragedy occurs.



*At Noah's Ark in Ohio, this bear chewed the bars of his small pen. This is disturbed behavior resulting from extreme deprivation.*





## Olympic Game Farm, Washington

Animals, such as this bear at Olympic Game Farm, were often found living in poorly maintained pens with inadequate shelters.



## About API's Investigation

The Animal Protection Institute (API) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to protecting nonhuman animals from abuse and exploitation.

API campaigns against the private ownership of exotic animals, including the keeping of these animals as “pets” and at facilities such as roadside zoos and personal menageries, through legislation at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as through public education and the media.

Across the country, millions of exotic animals are privately owned. Animals kept as “pets” or in roadside zoos include lions, tigers, cougars, servals, wolves, bears, monkeys, venomous snakes and other reptiles, and many other species.

Their very nature makes these animals incapable of being domesticated or tamed. Not only are exotic animals inherently dangerous, but the average person cannot provide the special care, housing, diet, and maintenance they require.

The American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Animal Control Association, and the American Zoo and Aquarium Association have all opposed the private ownership of certain exotic animals.

The critical threats that the exotic “pet” trade poses to animal welfare and public safety were the impetus for API’s investigation. In 2005, API investigated a number of private homes and federally-licensed roadside zoos and menageries that housed exotic animals in North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington state. The investigation focused on how individual owners provided for the needs of these exotic animals by examining, among other things, how the animals were housed, what type of enrichment was provided, and whether the individual had direct contact with animals. API also looked at the safety issues surrounding how these animals were kept, such as risks to visitors and the public, attacks and injuries to persons (including owners) allowed contact with animals.

This groundbreaking investigation has revealed disturbing new evidence — evidence that demonstrates just how critical the issue of private exotic “pet” ownership is. API uncovered the shocking conditions in which exotic animals are kept, the suffering they endure, and the inadequate and inappropriate care and treatment they receive, as well as the real threats that exotic animals pose to public safety. Especially troubling is the fact that the majority of instances of inadequate care and treatment did not violate any current federal law or respective state law.

API believes that the only way to put an end to the suffering that exotic animal ownership poses to humans and nonhumans alike is to stop the private possession, breeding, and trading and sale of these animals for personal profit and amusement and to teach the public that wild animals do not belong in private hands. Given the problems involved with the private ownership of exotic animals, it is imperative that states address this issue and pass strong legislation *now*.

API also manages a primate sanctuary, and therefore has firsthand knowledge of and experience with what happens to animals who are kept in private hands. Many of the residents at the API Primate Sanctuary were once kept as “pets,” while others came from facilities that are commonly referred to as “roadside zoos” or “pseudo-sanctuaries.” These animals typically arrive at the API Primate Sanctuary with severe behavioral and psychological problems that stem from having been treated like children in human households, forced into unnatural lives in isolation from other nonhuman primates. They often have had their teeth extracted. Their attitude toward humans is at best ambivalent; many are extremely aggressive and dangerous.



*The commercial exploitation of exotic animals involves the breeding of infant animals, such as this tiger cub who was used in photo shoots at the Cherokee Bear Zoo in North Carolina.*



USDA-licensed facility, Ohio



## The Exotic Animal Trade

The trade in exotic animals is a multi-billion-dollar industry, and captive exotic animals are bred in large numbers.

Every year, thousands of animals enter the captive exotic animal trade from a variety of sources. These animals may be “surplus” from roadside zoos or captured from their native habitat; others are sold at auctions, pet stores, or over the Internet, or come from backyard breeders. These animals are then sold on the open market and moved freely via interstate commerce. A nonhuman primate bred in Arkansas can be shipped with ease to an individual in Washington state in a matter of days.

Exotic animals are being kept in a range of conditions throughout the country. The types of captive settings in which exotic animals are found include:

- Private ownership as “pets”
- Roadside zoo attractions
- Circuses and traveling shows
- Zoos accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association
- Research facilities
- Other venues such as canned hunts, photographic opportunities, school displays, etc.
- Genuine sanctuaries where animals are not bred, sold, or used for entertainment.

Because most states do not keep accurate records of exotic animals within their jurisdiction or have no laws governing captive exotic animals, it is nearly impossible to determine exactly how many exotic animals are in the United States.

The records kept pursuant to federal, state, and local laws often describe the individuals who own the animals rather than how many animals are in their possession; in general the laws do not require an inventory to be kept as to how many animals each person owns. What is known, however, is that the number of captive exotic animals in the U.S. is likely to be in the millions, based on the number of people who have licenses under the Animal Welfare Act and licenses pursuant to state law.

### Threats to Public Safety

The private ownership of exotic animals presents a real danger to families, neighbors, communities, and the public at large.

In many states, people are allowed to keep exotic animals in their homes and backyards without restrictions and with minimal oversight. Across the country, privately-owned exotic animals have attacked humans and other animals, with sometimes lethal results. In recent years, people have been mauled by tigers, attacked by monkeys, and bitten by snakes, just to name a few of the tragic incidents involving captive exotic animals.

It is especially common for captive exotic animals to attack their owners. For example, in May 2005, in Allen County, Ohio, a man was attacked by his three-year-old, 160-pound mountain lion. Such incidents often go unreported for fear that the animal will be viewed as dangerous by the public or lawmakers, be taken away by local or state officials, and/or be killed.



*At Charlotte Metro Zoo in North Carolina, lions and tigers were bred on-site to provide a regular supply of cubs to be used in photo shoots and taken to fairs.*



*Wild animals in captivity are dangerous and unpredictable. Time and again, people, including young children, have been attacked and even killed by privately owned exotic animals.*





*In North Carolina, the owner of one zoo gambled with this child's safety by rearing infant monkeys and tigers inside this house.*



*Many exotic animals, such as reptiles, are also carriers of organisms that may cause disease in humans.*

Children are all too frequently the victims of attacks by captive exotic animals. For example, in December 2003, a 10-year-old boy from Miller's Creek, North Carolina, was killed by his aunt's 400-pound "pet" tiger when the cat pulled the boy underneath and into the cage in which the animal was kept. Just one month later in the neighboring county of Surrey, a 14-year-old girl was attacked by her father's pet tiger (the girl has since recovered).

Exotic animal owners may claim that such attacks and escapes are rare — but in fact they occur with alarming regularity. In the last half of 2005, for example, there were numerous incidents involving injury and attack by exotic "pets" — including a monkey who bit and escaped from his owner in Noble County, Ohio, and a "pet" tiger cub who attacked a young boy in Lewis County, Washington. (Please see Appendix IV on page 82 for a more comprehensive list of incidents involving privately-owned exotic animals.)

Monkeys are one of the most common nonhuman animals to be privately kept. Often bought as cute infants, they tend to exhibit unpredictable behavior after the age of two. As they reach sexual maturity, they become larger and more aggressive, and will bite to defend themselves and to establish dominance. Of monkey bites reported since 1990, many resulted in serious injury to the owner, a neighbor, or a stranger on the street.

Non-domesticated felines, such as lions, tigers, and cougars, are commonly kept as "pets." These exotic animals may look cuddly when they are young, but they have the potential to seriously injure or kill people and other animals as they mature. As adults, exotic large felines may weigh between 300 to 500 pounds, depending on the species, and are incapable of being "domesticated." Incidents involving large exotic cats often result in fatalities.

With so many exotic animals kept in private hands, these incidents are not rare. By their very nature, exotic animals are dangerous, so it is no surprise that when they exhibit their natural instincts, it may be to the detriment of the community. In many ways, these animals are like time bombs waiting to explode.

## Threats to Public Health

Many exotic animals are carriers of diseases such as herpes B, salmonellosis, monkeypox, and rabies, many of which are communicable to — and can be fatal to — humans.

B-virus, or Simian B, infection is prevalent in 80 percent to 90 percent of adult macaques and may cause a potentially fatal meningoencephalitis in humans. A person who is bitten, scratched, sneezed on, or spat on by a macaque runs the risk of contracting the disease. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) asserts that the increase in macaque monkeys in the exotic animal trade may constitute an emerging infectious disease threat in the United States.

Ninety percent of all reptiles carry and shed *Salmonella* in their feces. There is no simple way to tell which reptiles play host to the microbe and which do not; reptiles that carry *Salmonella* do not show any signs, and even those that carry *Salmonella* do not constantly shed the bacterium. Individuals can become infected by ingesting *Salmonella* after handling a reptile or objects the reptile contaminated, and then failing to wash their hands properly. The CDC recommends that children, people with compromised immune systems, and the elderly avoid all contact with reptiles and not possess them as "pets." Salmonellosis associated with exotic "pets" has been described as an important public health issue, affecting more people and other animals than any other single disease.

There are no rabies vaccinations licensed for use on exotic animals. Any

exotic animals not completely excluded from all contact with rabies vectors can become infected. This means that animals kept outside in cages can be infected by wild animals in the area.

## Animal Welfare

In addition to posing dangers to humans, exotic animals themselves suffer when kept in private hands. Wild animals fare poorly in captivity, and require special care, housing, diet, and maintenance that the average person cannot provide. As a result, individuals who own exotic animals often attempt to change the nature of the animal rather than the nature of the care provided. Tactics used to control captive exotic animals may include confining the animal in a small, barren enclosure; chaining; or beating an animal “into submission.” Painful surgical mutilations are also common; monkeys may have their teeth removed and bears and big cats often have their teeth and/or claws removed. It is not uncommon for cats’ jaws to be broken during tooth removal surgery.

Exotic animals kept as “pets” are often kept in conditions that compromise their physical and psychological welfare. Unlike their non-captive counterparts, captive wild animals are forced into unnatural lives, and are unable to express their natural behaviors and meet their innate needs. Many monkeys, for example, are raised as if they were children in human households.

Eventually, animals who have become too difficult for their owners to care for, or who have outgrown their usefulness as “pets,” may end up languishing in small pens in backyards, doomed to live in deplorable conditions. Some are abandoned or killed. A very few lucky ones are placed in genuine sanctuaries to live out the rest of their lives.

Too often, at roadside zoos and menageries holding USDA exhibitor’s licenses, exotic animals are kept on display in inappropriate, barren, and unnatural conditions. Many owners make a profit from exotic animals by displaying them to the public as entertainment, and may compel the animals to perform unnatural tricks. Other animals may be hired out for parties, events, and television appearances or used as photo props. Still others are bred, and their offspring sold for added income. These exploited and mistreated animals are forced into lives far different from the ones nature intended.

## The Private Owner

Millions of people in the United States keep exotic animals in their homes, backyards, or on their property. The reasons people obtain exotic animals are varied.

Many exotic animal owners purchase their “pet” on a whim with no prior knowledge of the species’ needs.

Others may attempt to justify their ownership by claiming that they have rescued animals from awful situations. While this may be true in certain cases, if the person really had the best interests of the animal at heart, they would seek to place the animal in a genuine sanctuary, one that does not breed animals or treat animals as entertainment or as “pets.” They would not, as many do, mutilate the animals and keep them imprisoned and isolated in their home.

Still others simply want an animal that is unique — an animal far different from a dog or a cat, that they can tell others about. Some people purchase exotic animals to fill a void in their life; they desire to be needed, to have somebody to take care of. This tendency is illustrated by how often nonhuman primates are raised in human households as if they were children. Removed from their mothers at a very early age and deprived of the company of other primates,



*At the Charlotte Metro Zoo in North Carolina, this leopard was found in appalling conditions, kept in a small metal trailer covered in a blue tarpaulin sheet.*



*At a national gathering of primate owners in Illinois, called a "Primate Picnic," owners proudly showed off their dressed-up monkeys like parents at a children's party.*

they may be forced to wear clothing and diapers. They may be taken around on a leash. Some even have pierced ears and wear jewelry. Most will have their canine teeth removed. Deprived of companionship of others of their kind, these highly social, sensitive, and intelligent animals lead lonely and dysfunctional lives. They often develop abnormal, stereotypical behavior such as pacing, rocking, and self-mutilation.

Exotic animal owners freely discuss issues and share information surrounding the keeping of exotic animals in Internet chat rooms. It is common to read online postings inquiring about the care of a particular species and what animals are for sale, as well as about exotic animal incidents. Owners also have clubs and associations through which they regularly meet, often bringing their exotic "pets" to hotels where meetings are held.

## **A Brief Overview of Exotic Animal Law**

Federal oversight of exotic animal ownership in the United States is minimal. In fact, no federal law exists that regulates or prohibits the keeping of exotic animals as "pets."

The federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulates the keeping of warm-blooded animals for exhibition and breeding purposes. Any facility that is open to the public and/or that breeds an animal covered by the AWA and subsequently sells that animal must obtain a license, which is commonly referred to as a USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) license. The AWA's animal care standards are minimal, at best, and do not adequately protect animals from mistreatment, neglect, and improper housing and handling. (Please see "Captive Exotic Animals and the Law" on page 50 for an in-depth discussion of the federal laws governing exotic animal possession.)

State governments have taken the lead in regulating the sale, possession, and use of exotic animals in the United States. The laws differ from state to state on the type of regulation imposed; there may be a prohibition, a license requirement, or no regulation at all. In addition, the laws differ as to what specific animals are regulated. However, the majority of state laws merely address the physical possession of the animal(s) rather than providing specific care and treatment standards, such as caging standards, enrichment requirements, public contact, etc. Also, countless cities and counties have adopted prohibitions on the keeping of exotic animals that go beyond what the federal and state governments have done. (Please see Appendix III on page 72 for an in-depth discussion of state and local laws on this issue.)





### Private Home, Washington

Bought when they are infants, exotic animals grow up to become aggressive and unmanageable, and are often left to languish in cages in backyards. This unwanted “pet” cougar lived in a small, barren, unsuitable pen.



*For the most part, the poor care and conditions uncovered by API's investigation were all legal activities.*



*Animals are often confined to small and barren environments that fail to meet their physical and psychological needs. At Triangle Metro Zoo in North Carolina, this tiger displayed marked stereotypical behavior, pacing inside his small, concrete prison.*

## Investigation Results

API's investigation exposed the shocking conditions in which exotic animals in private hands are kept, the suffering they endure, and the inadequate and inappropriate care and treatment they receive, as well as the real threats that exist to public safety.

Our investigation into the exotic animal trade spanned three states — North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington. API examined ownership situations in private homes and at roadside zoos and menageries open to the public that held a USDA license. In addition, API investigated three other states, witnessing activities such as an exotic animal auction, a traveling roadside zoo, and a national gathering of primate owners called a “Primate Picnic.”

This important investigation has revealed the true picture of the state of exotic animals in the United States. The investigation also shines a spotlight on the disturbing lack of training and knowledge that many exotic animal owners have, which places them and anyone coming into contact with the animals in real danger.

Even more shocking, in the three states investigated by API, the keeping of exotic animals in private homes is perfectly legal. No state laws prohibit the possession or breeding of these animals nor do any laws govern how these animals are to be cared for, housed, or handled. The only applicable law might be a local ordinance, state anti-cruelty statutes, or the federal Animal Welfare Act, which only regulates facilities open to the public or people breeding and selling exotic warm-blooded animals.

For the most part, the poor care and conditions uncovered by API's investigation were all legal activities. This includes animals forced to live in solitary confinement and in small, barren conditions with no meaningful enrichment; displays of disturbed and dysfunctional behavior; poorly maintained and unsafe caging; and improper handling of animals by owners and the public.

The findings of this investigation should serve as a wake-up call to residents and lawmakers alike in these three states. API strongly urges communities and lawmakers to take action now by passing laws to prohibit the private ownership of dangerous exotic animals, which can help protect public safety and animal welfare.

### Locations Visited that Kept Exotic Animals as “Pets”

API investigated a number of locations where people kept exotic animals as “pets.” A wide range of exotic animals were found, such as tigers, cougars, bobcats, servals, bears, and a variety of primate species. Many of these animals were housed in wholly inappropriate conditions in barren cages or pens, often isolated from other animals, with no meaningful enrichment and with no opportunities to engage in the full range of natural behaviors unique to their species. These wild and potentially dangerous animals were living totally unnatural lives. Some showed signs of boredom and frustration, displayed stereotypical behavior indicative of psychological disturbance, and often acted out to the detriment of the owner or an innocent bystander.

Findings from API's investigation included:

- Poor and inappropriate conditions: pens that were too small to enable animals to express species-specific behaviors; enclosures made of inappropriate materials (such as concrete), and in various states of disrepair; inadequate shelter.

- Lack of enrichment: pens that were barren or lacked appropriate structures; animals displaying dysfunctional and stereotypical behavior; the psychological needs of the animals not being met; and furnishings that did little, if anything, to stimulate the animals' natural behavior.
- Lack of companionship: animals housed alone.
- Cruel and inappropriate treatment: teeth and claws surgically removed; nonhuman primates often dressed up like children and taken to public venues; animals left to roam inside houses.
- Lack of necessary knowledge: ignorance or misunderstanding of the complex needs of exotic animals by uninformed and misguided owners.
- Safety issues: owners placing themselves, their family, friends, and the community at risk of injury and death by reckless and irresponsible behavior, such as allowing people to have direct contact with dangerous animals, failure to have secure or locked enclosures, and permitting children to be near or interact with the animals.
- The failure of mutilations (such as removal of teeth) and/or the raising of young animals by humans to prevent future aggressive behavior.
- An alarming number of attacks and injuries inflicted by exotic pets on their owners and others.

## Facilities Visited that Had a USDA License

API investigated a number of roadside zoos and menageries that had a USDA exhibitor's license. A wide range of exotic animals was found, many of whom were being kept in inadequate conditions that failed to satisfy their physiological, behavioral, social, and psychological needs. Animals showed signs of boredom, frustration, and stereotypical behavior. Many of the USDA facilities API visited were little more than collections of people's personal "pets" or personal menageries. Sometimes owners had simply decided to open their land up to the public and charge a fee or exhibit their animals to the public in order to sidestep existing local laws on the keeping of exotic animals.

Findings included:

- Lack of space: pens that were too small to enable animals to express species-specific behaviors.
- Lack of enrichment: pens that were barren or lacked appropriate structures and furnishings and that did little, if anything, to stimulate the animals' natural behavior, resulting in stereotypical behavior.
- Inappropriate conditions: the use of concrete and wire floor surfaces; enclosures that were in various states of disrepair; failure to provide shelter that gave animals privacy and protection from the elements.
- Lack of companionship: animals housed alone.
- Overbreeding: the continual breeding of certain species to provide a constant supply of young animals for attractions and photo opportunities.
- Dangerous public contact: the offering of "close encounters" in which the public was allowed to have direct contact with dangerous animals; ineffective barriers to protect the public from direct contact with the animals.
- Recklessness: owners placing the public and themselves at risk through irresponsible behavior.
- An alarming number of attacks and injuries inflicted by exotic animals on



*Exotic wild animals are unpredictable and allowing visitors to have direct contact, as with this gibbon, is irresponsible and potentially very dangerous. This animal belonged to a private owner with a USDA exhibitor's license in Ohio.*



*At Cherokee Bear Zoo in North Carolina, bears were kept in small, barren, concrete pits and were forced to "beg" for the amusement of the public. Those bears who "performed" were rewarded by being thrown treats.*





**FIG. 1:** Primates are highly intelligent and social animals. Keeping them as “pets” in unnatural and solitary conditions produces disturbed behaviors, such as self-mutilation. (Private Owner, OH)



**FIG. 2:** Many owners are unable to cope with their exotic “pets” once they become adults, as was the case with the owner of this five-year-old cougar. (Private Owner, WA)

the facility owners and others.

## Misguided Owners and Inappropriate Treatment of Exotic Animals

Many exotic animal owners purchase their “pets” on a whim with no prior knowledge of the species. Forcibly removed from their mothers — sometimes within hours of birth — and deprived of the company of others of their kind, these animals lead lonely and dysfunctional lives in human households. As they grow older, they often become too big and aggressive for their owners to handle and are abandoned or sentenced to a life of boredom and frustration, languishing in cages in backyards and garages. The lucky few are surrendered to genuine sanctuaries.

Owners of exotic animals place not only themselves but entire communities at risk because they do not have enough knowledge of the needs of their captive “pet.”

### Investigation Results:



- In North Carolina, **Private Owner A** kept some of her spider monkeys loose in the house. The monkeys wore diapers and had leashes. When API investigators visited, one monkey spent most of the time sitting on the sofa. There were also hooks on the wall of the living room that the monkeys could be tied to.

- **Private Owner C** from Ohio showed her lack of knowledge on exotic animals by stating this about her monkeys:

*“They’re not wild. They were born in captivity.”*

She had two snow monkeys, a male and female singly housed. She claimed to have tried to introduce them but that it did not work out. Both monkeys displayed severe forms of stereotypical behavior, such as repetitive head and body turns. She believed that she was providing a good home for these animals, having apparently rescued them from a bad situation. However, both animals were clearly dysfunctional. Keeping them on their own in concrete pens and providing them with a television was not giving them the appropriate quality of life that these monkeys required. (See Fig. 1)

- In Washington, API investigators met **Private Owner G**, who no longer wanted his five-year-old pet cougar. He contacted an organization within the state that advocates the keeping of exotic animals in the hope that this organization would help him find the animal a new home. He had originally bought the cougar from a local pet shop.

The owner claimed that he could no longer care for the cat. The cougar’s expenses were too high, the family was moving, and the animal had started to show signs of aggression; apparently the owner had been attacked. The cougar was living in a small metal pen in the garden, which no one had entered or cleaned out for about a month. The owner gave additional reasons as to why he wanted to re-home his “pet” cougar:

*“I’ve always wanted a cat...I love all the years I’ve had with him.... It took a year to think about....It ain’t that I’m bored with him. It’s just I*

*know he deserves better than what I'm offering him and I can't offer him any more. And then the kids, y'know, and we're getting married, we're trying to start a life and I can't afford to fork out the money. Y'know, if I'd have known he was going to cost this much to raise, I wouldn't have got him but the lady told me \$3 worth of chicken a day. She lied to me because there's no damn way.... Yes, that's what they told me to get this cat. They were wrong. They tried to make a sale. They made the sale. To me that was wrong."*

This is a good example of what happens to exotic "pet" animals. Bought when they are infants, they grow up to become aggressive and unmanageable, and because they no longer fit into the person's lifestyle, they are then basically abandoned in a cage in the back yard. At least this owner, unlike many others, became aware that he could not properly care for his animal. (See Fig. 2 & p. 11)

- In various cities across the country **Primate Picnics** are held. At these national gatherings, owners of nonhuman primates come together to eat, talk, and socialize, while proudly displaying their monkeys in human baby clothes. API's investigators visited one such gathering in Centralia, Illinois. It is best described as a bizarre and grotesque spectacle. The nonhuman primates at the picnic were of various species, and many were clearly disturbed by what was happening around them. They displayed stereotypical behavior, rocking and circling inside their cages and traveling crates, some clutching soft toys. The animals were paraded around in strollers and harnesses. One spider monkey had on a frilly dress with matching underpants and a hat. She even had jewelry, including stud earrings through ears that had been pierced. Another monkey, who also had pierced ears, was dressed like a ballerina. Such events show a clear disrespect for the animals themselves. (See Figs. 3 & 4 & p. 10)

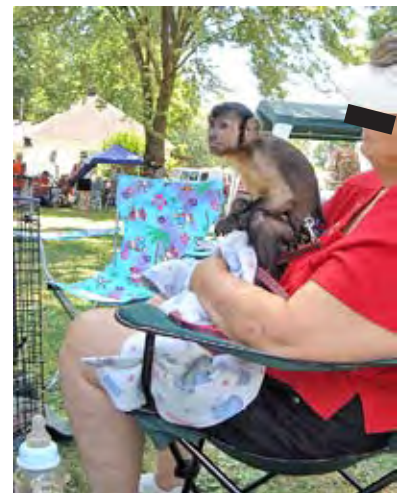
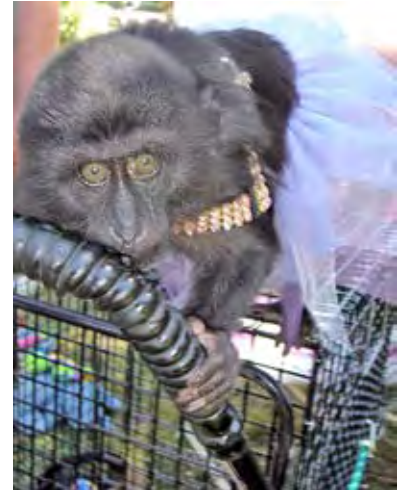
## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"I'm fortunate, I know. I'm blessed. And people that don't own monkeys, when they look at these monkeys, see pets. When I look at them, I see children with fur." (Private owner at a "Primate Picnic")*

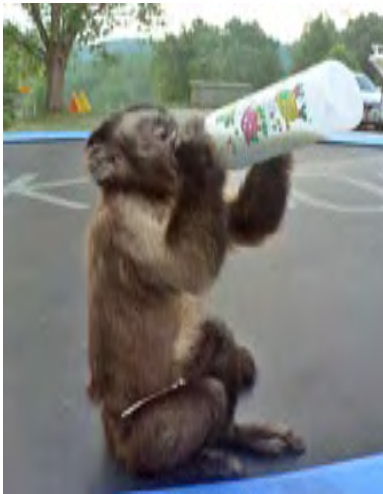
*"They're getting really popular so there's a lot of people who have them but obviously a lot of people don't know how to take care of them and they get loose and then people get all upset because there's a big wild cat running loose." (Private owner, Washington)*

*"People in the United States like to buy monkeys and then they don't know what to do with them, they don't know how to care for them right and all that." (Private owner at a "Primate Picnic")*

*"If I go to a bar with a monkey or a baby tiger every girl in the bar comes over.... It's a great ice-breaker." (Owner of a roadside zoo, North Carolina)*



**FIG. 3 & 4:** It is a pitiful sight to see these wild animals being treated like toys, forced to wear frilly dresses and earrings. ("Primate Picnic," IL)



**FIG. 5:** One of a group of monkeys hired out for events such as children's parties. The monkeys were allowed to run loose around the owner's property. They were treated like children, wore diapers, and drank from a baby bottle. (USDA license holder, OH)



### The Law:

The private ownership of exotic animals is legal in North Carolina and Ohio, now illegal in Washington.



This chimpanzee had no teeth. He was kept in solitary confinement with a chain hanging around his neck at Stump Hill Farm, a roadside zoo in Ohio. The zoo also hired out its animals for events.

## Investigation Results:



- **Private Owner J** from Ohio comments:

*"I was reading a newspaper and I read it and it says 'monkeys for sale.' So I called the newspaper. She came over to the hotel with Joe.... He was 10 days old, no bigger than a Coke can, and I bought him. He was my first one and she gave me a bottle, two diapers, and said, 'Have a nice life.' I didn't know what to do."*

This person also had an exhibitor's license and, for a fee, took her monkeys to events such as children's parties. (See Fig. 5)

- **Private Owner H**, who attended the "Primate Picnic" in Illinois, owned an aggressive rhesus macaque monkey called George. The owner was extremely proud of how "good" George was compared to when she first obtained him. Her implication was that she and her husband had rescued George by buying him from people who bought him from an exotic animal auction:

*"They didn't know how to care for him. He actually ate bird seed, never wore a diaper, never had a bath.... He was a little wild when we got him.... He was about five months, so we didn't get him as a little baby. But he's been great. We've worked with him and worked with him and he's so good."*

The woman suggested that somehow this monkey's life and behavior had improved because he now wears diapers and can be dressed up and taken around on a leash in public. The most appropriate act that this woman could have done for this monkey was to take him to a genuine sanctuary, where he could have lived a more natural life with other rhesus macaques.

- **An owner of a USDA-licensed facility** in Ohio and a representative of an outspoken organization that actively lobbies against the banning of the ownership of exotic cats stated:

*"He was my very first wild cat. I got him for all the wrong reasons, because he was cute."*

## Mutilations

API's investigation found that it was common for exotic animals to be de-clawed or de-fanged by their owners. These practices were carried out simply because the owners were attempting to limit the potential danger of the exotic animal to themselves as well as to other humans.

Both primates and big cats often have their canine teeth surgically removed and cats also have their claws removed. Big cats can suffer a broken jaw as a result of the de-fanging surgery. API investigators found animals in all three states who had either been de-clawed, de-fanged, or both.

The deliberate mutilation of exotic animals can be extremely painful and stressful. Owners of these animals underestimate the painful effects that these practices have on the animals.



## Investigation Results:



- **Private Owner A** in North Carolina stated the following about removing the teeth from her monkeys:

*"Mine don't have their teeth, no.... I hate that we did it. I really do."*

When asked if she thinks it is better to remove teeth, she shook her head "no." Moreover, when describing how she began fostering a monkey owned by someone else, she stated:

*"And when she brought him to me, he had canines and all I said to her... you need to have the canines pulled because he's hurting me, y'know. He sliced, he did that there [pointing to her wrist], y'know. He just laid it open and he wasn't even trying to do that. Well, she wound up pulling all of them."*

- **Private Owner B** from Ohio, a representative of an outspoken organization that actively lobbies against the banning of the ownership of exotic cats, had a six-year-old cougar who she apparently had obtained when he was two days old. The cougar did not have his canine teeth. The owner claimed that his jaw was broken, presumably when the teeth were removed.

- **The owner of a USDA-licensed facility** in Ohio and a representative of an outspoken organization that actively lobbies against the banning of the ownership of exotic cats said that the removal of claws from a young cat is not painful. However, according to many veterinarians, the removal of claws is painful for cats of any age and may cause long-term health effects such as arthritis. The owner went on to admit that despite the removal of the canine teeth, her bobcat was still able to attack her. She stated:

*"He bit me with his back teeth and that hurt just as bad so it was like, might as well keep the fangs too, what difference does it make? They can hurt you no matter, you know...the key is you don't piss them off."*

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"They pulled his teeth and then he still could bite....Teeth pulling is common for capuchins in the States. You see they are horrendous biters. I mean, they bite so bad that they can just rip tendons and...they go for your jugular."*  
(Private owner, Ohio)

*"He has everything but canines....He'll get you worse with his fingernails.... Now, he'll bruise you up real good if he gets you... but he has never ripped anyone open or anything like that. It's just bruises."*  
(Private owner at a "Primate Picnic")



### **The Law:**

The de-clawing and de-fanging of exotic animals in North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington is legal.



*This snow monkey's canine teeth had been removed. She was kept in a small pen in solitary confinement at Stump Hill Farm, a roadside zoo in Ohio.*



**FIG. 6:** This infant monkey and tiger cub, used in photo shoots, were taken from their mothers and lived inside an on-site private residence. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)

With nothing more than a credit card and a “ship-to” address, people can easily purchase a Bengal tiger for as little as \$500 — cheaper than many purebred dogs — and receive their new “pet” within a few days.



**FIG. 7:** A run-down petting zoo in Ohio also bred animals to sell. This serval cub was found living in poor conditions in an extremely small, dark, and barren pen in the attic of a barn. (Burnette’s Pet Farm, OH)

## Breeding and Sale

The trade in exotic animals is a multi-billion-dollar industry; people breed exotic animals in large numbers. Every year, millions of these animals enter the exotic animal trade and are bought and sold on the open market. While some states prohibit the ownership of certain animals, most do not have laws that address the breeding of these animals, which means that animals can be bought and sold without much regulatory attention. And so, with nothing more than a credit card and a “ship-to” address, a person can easily purchase a Bengal tiger for as little as \$500 — cheaper than many purebred dogs — and receive their new “pet” within a few days.

Infant animals, after being forcibly removed from their mothers at birth, are raised by humans in an effort to make them more “manageable” before being sold on the open market. However, this can interfere with the animal’s development and result in dysfunctional behavior.

Animals such as bears, tigers, monkeys, and reptiles are continuously bred to provide a constant supply of infant animals for the pet trade and to be used as attractions at roadside zoos and fairs. Many of the facilities API visited in its investigation were actively breeding their animals; some owners also tried to sell animals to people visiting their facility.

## Investigation Results:



- **Private Owner G** in Washington purchased his exotic animals for nominal fees from a local pet store that has subsequently gone out of business. The pet shop had purchased animals from Bear Cat Hollow, a well known breeder and dealer in Minnesota. Bear Cat Hollow has been shut down and the owners were charged with violating the Lacey Act.

The owner of Bear Cat Hollow was sentenced to 18 months in prison, 3 years probation, and a \$700 assessment fee for his role in the illegal trafficking of wild and endangered animals. In addition, the owner’s wife and seven other people were also charged. The judgment against the owner stemmed from charges that he and the others illegally bought and/or sold more than \$200,000 worth of endangered or threatened animals between 1999 and 2003, violating interstate provisions of the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act.

- At the **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, also known as the **Metrolina Wildlife Park**, tigers, lions, and monkeys were bred on-site and used in photo shoots and taken to fairs. From conversations held with the owner’s partner it appeared that some, if not all, of the tiger cubs and infant monkeys used as attractions were removed prematurely from their mothers — even within hours of birth — for commercial purposes. The animals were raised inside an on-site private residence. (See Fig. 6 & p.7)
- At **Burnette’s Pet Farm** in Ohio, the owner attempted to sell animals he had bred, including a serval cub and a ringtail lemur, to API investigators for \$2000. The owner admitted to being a breeder and stated that he made a living from breeding animals rather than exhibiting them:

*“We breed them. That’s the only thing here at the farm that really makes the money.” (See Fig. 7)*

- At **Stump Hill Farm** in Ohio, tiger cubs were being hand-reared. They were used as an “attraction” for visitors to handle and touch.
- The **Outback Kangaroo Farm** in Washington had an active breeding program for wallabies and kangaroos. The males were sold for \$1200 and the females for \$1500. The owner claimed to sell about seven or eight kangaroos a year. He stated:

*“They make a neat pet. They need to be outside. You can see the wallabies don’t mind the rain. They’ll lay flat out in rain like this. This is light. With the kangaroos, they like it a little drier. There’s no vaccinations, they don’t dig. They don’t make any noise. There’s no grooming or nail trimming.”*

The owner went on to say that once the babies reach about six months of age (when they are getting out of their mother’s pouch), they take them inside the house and that’s when they “bond with humans.” An infant wallaroo, who was for sale, was passed around and held by numerous people, including children. The infant likely suffered a great deal of stress from being handled by so many people. (See Fig. 8)

- At the **Lolli Brothers** exotic animal auction in Missouri, a number of infants were for sale, including primates and a bear cub. The conditions at the auction house were poor; some of the animals were kept in dog crates or other small containers while waiting to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. (See Fig. 9)

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*“Monkeys still in the United States, you don’t need a license for, so you could buy a monkey in the United States as a private person and buy it from someone who should never have sold it to you in the first place and nobody will ever know.” (Owner of a roadside zoo, North Carolina)*

*“People just sell these little monkeys everywhere and they don’t explain to people that they are wild animals, they bite, you know. No matter how much you try to domesticate them, they are still wild animals.” (Private owner, Ohio)*

## Private Owners Having a USDA License

In cities and states that do have bans, partial bans, or permitting and licensing requirements, individuals often sidestep the law by obtaining a USDA license. These individuals claim to be animal exhibitors or breeders, thereby circumventing state exotic “pet” laws, when the reality often is that the animals are kept as “pets.”

State laws on the possession of exotic “pets” usually exempt from the provisions of the law people who hold a USDA license. This is a huge loophole that allows individuals not to have to comply with the prohibition and/or regulations on the keeping of exotic animals in their locality or state. USDA



**FIG. 8:** Infant animals are continuously bred at many facilities not only as a source of extra income but also to be used as an attraction for visitors to pet and hold. (Outback Kangaroo Farm, WA)



## The Law:

The private ownership of exotic animals is legal in North Carolina and Ohio, now illegal in Washington.



**FIG. 9:** In Missouri, exotic animals exchange hands at one of the largest exotic animal auctions in the country. (Lolli Brothers, MO)





**FIG. 10:** This “pet” cougar was taken to schools by his owner, who obtained a USDA exhibitor’s license in order to avoid a local ban on the ownership of exotic “pets.” (Private Owner, WA)



**FIG. 11:** Many private owners keep their exotic “pets” in an unnatural environment. Primates are often raised in households as if they were human children and are forced to wear diapers and clothes. (Private Owner, NC)

licenses should not be exempted under state and local laws governing exotic animal issues.

## Investigation Results:



- **Private Owner E** in Washington readily admitted that he had sidestepped a recently-enacted city council ban on the keeping of exotic animal as “pets” by obtaining an exhibitor’s license from the USDA. He stated that he now took one of his animals to a school to display in order to qualify for the license. This person owned a bobcat and a cougar. He said:

*“They’ve passed a ban here on the island so you can’t own exotic cats or wolf hybrids here but they left one loophole, which I used. I’m a licensed exhibitor so I am federally licensed to show them to school groups.” (See Fig. 10)*

- **Private Owner A** in North Carolina, had also obtained a USDA license despite the fact that she kept the monkeys as “pets” and there was no state or local regulation regarding private ownership of exotic animals in her area. She asked API investigators to sign a book for her USDA inspector. She stated:

*“Any time I talk monkeys, somebody comes here they observe the monkeys, I have to keep a roster of who I talk with.... The chances are she won’t contact you but she likes to have an idea of how many people I talk monkeys to see if I qualify to keep my license. But she’s always happy. She’s like, ‘Wow, you’ve got a lot of signatures’.... By being USDA licensed, I’m licensed to exhibit but I don’t have to take them off my property to do it. That’s what I like about it.” (See Fig. 11)*

## Conditions in Which Animals Are Kept

Both in the private setting and at USDA-licensed facilities, API’s investigation found exotic animals kept in appalling, substandard conditions that were not conducive to their physical or psychological health. Many of the animals lived in inappropriate enclosures that lacked adequate shelter from the elements and appropriate enrichment for the species. Some animals exhibited stereotypical behavior. Yet for the most part, *no laws were being broken*.

### Enclosures

Enclosures should be designed in a manner that takes into consideration the individual species’ natural behaviors and physical and psychological needs. In addition, enclosures should be constructed in a manner that can hold the animal(s) and prevent escape. They should also be locked securely.

Many of the enclosures that API investigated at both private homes and at roadside zoos and menageries were inappropriate to meet the needs of the animals. They were often small, in various states of disrepair, insecure, and made with materials unsuitable for the animals they housed.

## **Shelter**

Shelter should be provided at all times for animals to retreat from inclement weather such as rain, snow, and intense heat. They should also provide privacy, which is a critical component of animals' needs. Animals should always have the opportunity to remove themselves from the public view or even from their enclosure mates.

Shelters can consist of various materials such as nesting boxes, ground-level vegetation, shaded trees, dens, etc. When animals are housed together, enough shelter must be provided to accommodate all the animals separately.

Many of the sites API investigated failed to provide the animals with any meaningful shelter from the elements. In fact, several of the animals seen had absolutely no shelter. This was surprising, given the climate conditions of the three states visited.

## **Environmental Enrichment**

Animals need specific environmental enrichment to facilitate engagement in normal and natural behaviors. The enrichment needs to be meaningful and appropriate for the species being kept. For example, large cats need at the very least climbing structures, water troughs, raised platforms, scratching posts, and objects with which to play.

In many locations API visited during the investigation, enrichment was either lacking or inappropriate for the species. Some animals were housed in pens with nothing more than a water bowl. A lack of even the most basic and affordable enrichment demonstrates clearly the lack of knowledge and/or compassion these owners have for their animals.

## **Stereotypical Behavior**

Animals develop dysfunctional behavior in response to a poor captive environment that is barren and un-stimulating, and that provides little or no opportunity for the animal to engage in meaningful activities. They will produce different coping mechanisms in an attempt to deal with the boredom and frustration they experience. Some will cut themselves off from their surroundings and become lethargic and inactive. Some will show an increase in behaviors directed at themselves, such as biting or hair-pulling, or at their surroundings, such as licking or chewing the bars of their cage. Others will develop stereotypical behavior, which is repetitive movement for no apparent purpose. Such behavior does not occur in the wild and includes pacing, rocking, and circling.

Many of the animals API saw during its investigation in both private homes and roadside zoos displayed stereotypical behavior, some of which was severe. People who own wild animals as "pets" or who operate roadside zoos and menageries lack the knowledge and expertise to properly meet the complex needs of these animals in captivity. They may believe that the pacing, rocking, and circling displayed by their animals is natural, when in fact such behavior does not occur in the wild.

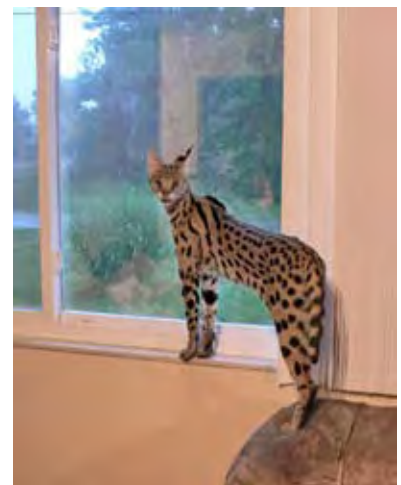
*State laws on the possession of exotic "pets" usually exempt from the provisions of the law people who hold a USDA license. This is a huge loophole that allows individuals not to have to comply with the prohibition and/or regulations on the keeping of exotic animals in their locality or state. USDA licenses should not be exempted under state and local laws governing exotic animal issues.*

## **Investigation Results:**



### **Sampling from Sites that Kept Exotic Animals as "Pets":**

- **Private Owner B** from Ohio housed a number of exotic animals in unsuitable conditions in the overcrowded living room of a small house.



**FIG. 12:** Some private owners even allow their exotic "pets" to roam freely inside their homes, like this serval. (Private Home, OH)

Four humans lived in this house along with two servals, a lemur, a bush baby, three birds, and at least two snakes. A baby raccoon was also present in the house. The ring-tailed lemur and bush baby were housed on their own in small cages on the floor. The ring-tailed lemur displayed severe stereotypical behavior, circling around the confines of his small cage. The servals ran loose in the house. Outside, a six-year-old cougar was kept on his own in a small pen attached to what appeared to be the garage. The pen was barren. (See Fig. 12)

- **Private Owner C** from Ohio had two snow monkeys, a male and a female. They were housed next to each other but separately in concrete pens with climbing frames and indoor access. Both monkeys were aggressive and displayed signs of abnormal, stereotypical behavior, circling within the confines of their pens. Despite the owner's good intentions, these monkeys were being kept in an artificial environment, deprived of meaningful social contact with others of their kind. Both monkeys could live for another 20 years, relegated to these barren, concrete pens. (See Fig. 1)

- **Private Owner D** from Washington, a leading representative of an organization that advocates the keeping of exotic animals as "pets," kept three cougars and a group of bobcats. The cats' pens lacked space and enrichment. Three pens, each housing one cougar, ran right through the wall of the house and into the living room. (See Fig. 13) The inside portions of these pens were very narrow. Each had a wooden platform. Gates opened out into the living room. These gates had no locks, just a clasp. (See Fig. 14) The outside parts of these pens were small and lacked climbing structures. The only added enrichment aside from a wooden platform and small shelters were plastic balls. The pen for the bobcats also lacked enrichment, containing only a few shelter boxes.



**FIG. 13 & 14:** Three cougars were kept in small, barren pens that ran right through the wall of a house and opened out into the living room. These are totally unnatural and unsuitable conditions for dangerous wild animals. (Private Owner, WA)

- **Private Owner F** from Washington kept at least four animals (a cougar, a tiger, and two bears) in deplorable conditions. The pens were small, barren, dirty, and muddy. The lives of these animals can only be described as utterly miserable. There was no attempt at environmental enrichment. The animals' physical and psychological welfare were severely compromised.

A five-year old tiger and five-year-old cougar were kept in separate small pens. The pens were topped with wire, creating a low roof. Both pens were extremely muddy and had pools of water. They each had a wooden shelter and a metal water trough but no other structures. There were no attempts at enrichment — no trees, branches, etc. The cats must have been exceedingly bored and frustrated. Except when being petted or fed, both cats displayed constant stereotypical behavior (pacing and head weaving). The private owner had kept one of these animals since he was between six to eight weeks old. Therefore, the stereotypical behavior displayed by this animal can be directly attributed to the environment that the owner has kept the animal in for the past five years.

Two bears existed in appalling conditions. They were kept separately in pens that were near each other but not attached, so no contact between the animals was possible. The pens were about 20-by-20 feet and were low and open-topped. When one of the bears stood on his hind legs, his head reached the top of the pen.

There was no enrichment in these pens. The bears lived on muddy ground



on which were strewn a few stones, old plastic eating containers, tin cans, and other debris. There were no shelters to protect them from the elements and no raised platforms to allow them to get respite from the wet and muddy ground that had pools of water. The bears must have suffered greatly from boredom and frustration. One of the bears had been digging a large hole under the fence, which had only been filled with a few stones and dirt. There was no safety area surrounding the bear pens or attached to the gates of the pens. An outer fence appeared to run around only part of the bear enclosures.

This location was lauded as an appropriate facility in which to place a needy exotic animal by a leading representative from an organization that advocates the keeping of exotic animals as “pets” and claims to be the “responsible” face of private ownership. (See Fig. 15)

- **Private Owner G** from Washington kept a cougar in an enclosure that was too small and apparently not constructed of material that would stand up to the elements. Concern was expressed by Private Owner D about whether the roof would collapse when it started to snow. There was no perimeter fence or safety area attached to the pen. It had a low roof and lacked enrichment. The cougar displayed stereotypical behavior, pacing inside the pen. (See Fig. 2 & p. 11)

- At a **Primate Picnic**, some of the privately-owned primates, who were confined inside crates and pens, displayed abnormal behavior such as rocking backwards and forwards, often clutching a soft toy. When a private owner from Ohio was asked why his “pet” did this, the owner stated:

*“She [the monkey] always does that. It’s just her way of passing time, I think. A lot of them do that.”*

Such dysfunctional behavior is common for wild animals kept as “pets,” confined in abnormal and inappropriate housing. This owner’s response demonstrates a serious lack of knowledge — all too common among exotic “pet” owners — about the complex behavioral and psychological needs of wild animals and the fact that it is the owner’s actions that are producing dysfunctional and disturbed behaviors in the animals.

#### Sampling from Facilities Holding an Exhibitor’s License Under the United States Department of Agriculture:

- At the **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, many of the animals were kept in totally inadequate conditions. The facility had been cited by the USDA on a number of occasions over the years for failing to provide minimal standards of care for its animals, including failure to provide environmental enrichment for primates kept in solitary confinement, failure to provide shelter from inclement weather to a variety of animals, failure to erect a perimeter fence, inadequate feeding of adult cats (a USDA inspector noted “adult cats are currently being fasted every other day”), and more.

Animals housed here were a number of big cats, including tigers, lions and leopards; bears; and various species of primates, including a chimpanzee, baboons, macaques, patas monkeys, and lemurs. Some pens were small, barren, and lacked meaningful enrichment. Some animals displayed stereotypical behavior. (See Fig. 16)



**FIG. 15:** These squalid conditions were home to two “pet” bears. There was no shelter, platform, or enrichment; the ground was covered in mud and debris. (Private owner, WA)



**FIG. 16:** Many animals display signs of stereotypical behavior in response to the barren, poor conditions in which they are forced to live. This tiger paced continuously inside the confines of his pen. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)



**FIG. 17:** Animals were often kept in poor conditions that lacked appropriate structures and enrichment for the species. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)

**FIG. 18:** This chimpanzee was kept in solitary confinement in a small pen that contained unsuitable and inappropriate objects, such as an old sofa and plastic containers. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)

The adult large cats lived in enclosures with either earthen or concrete floors. Items commonly seen in these pens were a wooden cable spool, a plastic oil drum, and a plastic ball — none of which are appropriate enrichment items. Three tigers were kept in a small pen with an earthen floor. A small indoor area also had an earthen floor. On the day API's investigators visited, it was raining. The entire pen was very wet and muddy. There were no raised platforms that would allow the cats to be off the ground. The only items in the pen were a small pile of branches, a plastic ball, a plastic oil drum, and a cable spool. The cable spool was the only object that had a surface off the ground. One of the tigers stood on his hind legs to use the surface to eat meat. (See Fig. 17) Another showed signs of stereotypical behavior, pacing inside the pen. One tiger was kept in a larger and taller pen with an earthen floor. The pen contained a low wooden platform and some branches, as well as a wooden cable spool, plastic oil drum, and plastic ball. However, a shelter attached to the side of the pen was not enclosed. At least one side was made of wire and therefore failed to provide the tiger with privacy and adequate shelter from the elements.

Two leopards were housed together in a small wood-and-wire pen with a concrete floor. The roof was low, despite the fact that leopards are climbing animals. Rain water had formed a large pool at one end of the pen. Enrichment consisted of some branches, wooden posts, and a plastic oil drum. The leopards were pacing inside the pen. Another leopard was found on his own in a small metal trailer. The trailer was covered by a blue tarpaulin sheet. A female member of the staff claimed that the leopard had only three legs after being injured by other leopards. (See p. 9) A black leopard was kept in an enclosed metal pen under the porch of an on-site private residence. The pen was very small, with an earthen floor. The only item in the cage was what looked to be a wooden wardrobe or cupboard placed on its side to serve as a shelter. Otherwise, the ground was bare; not even a water bowl was visible.

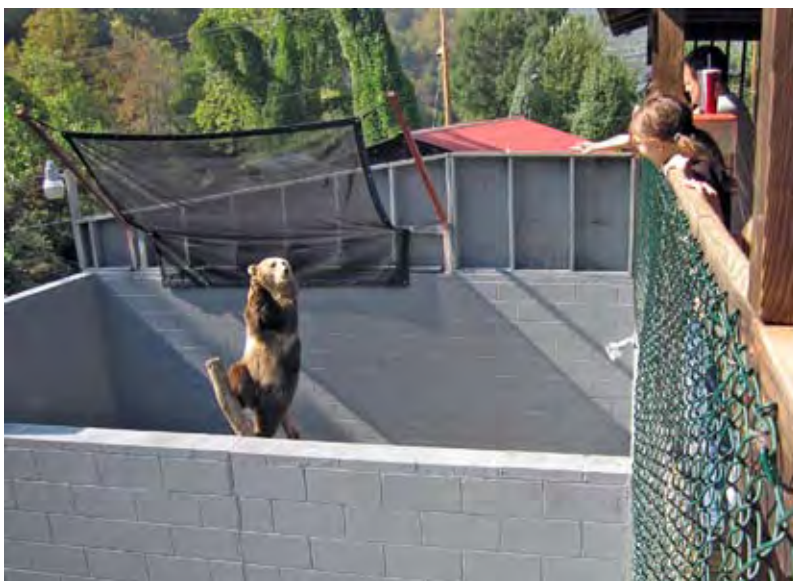
Some of the primates were housed in pairs, but others were kept singly, with no opportunity to socialize. Enrichment methods were not substantive and appeared to depend heavily on plastic children's toys. Such toys do not provide much stimulation and animals get bored with them very quickly. Some monkeys were held in small pens with concrete floors and closed tops. These pens were situated under a roof structure and were dark, as they did not receive a great deal of natural light. They lacked sufficient space and height (they were estimated to be around eight feet tall). A number of species (hamadryas baboons, long-tailed macaque, rhesus and patas monkeys) were housed in similar pens without consideration for the species' different requirements (for example, whether they were primarily a tree-living or ground-dwelling animal).

A chimpanzee was housed on his own in a small pen. There was no attempt at meaningful enrichment. The ground was cluttered with various inappropriate items, such as a shabby old sofa. Empty plastic milk crates were on the sofa and the ground. The only structure in the pen apart from the sofa was a short tree trunk. Some large plastic tubes and oil drums hung from the roof. The chimpanzee displayed stereotypical behavior (swaying and head bobbing). He also repeatedly slammed his fist on the metal door to his indoor pen. (See Fig. 18)

A number of the other monkeys also displayed stereotypical behavior. For example, the male baboon frantically jumped up and down and the female rocked. One long-tailed macaque, housed on his own, paced back and forth or went in circles.

Two bears had a pen that was narrow and barren, devoid of any meaningful structures or enrichment. The ground was concrete. A shelter was attached to one end. There were no raised platforms or a water trough large enough for bathing and playing. The only “enrichment” items were a plastic oil drum and a few branches on the ground. The bears showed stereotypical behavior, pacing inside their pen. (See Fig. 19)

- The **Cherokee Bear Zoo** in North Carolina contained a number of bears, primates, and tigers. The animals were kept in extremely poor conditions and music blared constantly throughout the zoo. The bears were kept in concrete pits with a visitors “gallery” above them so that people could look down and throw food at them. There were a number of these pits, all in a row, containing either two or four bears. The pits were made entirely of concrete. There were no shelters visible. The bears had no privacy, but were forced to be on display the whole time and were literally “performing” for their food. Some pits had a tall wooden stump in the center on which the bears could climb. This was not for the benefit of the bears but rather to allow them to be closer to the platform for people to see them and easily throw food to them. The only other structure in the pen was a water feature with water pouring in from a pipe. (See photo below & p. 13)



The conditions for the primates and a tiger failed to meet the physical and psychological needs of these animals. Most of the primates were kept in circular cages with concrete floors and a roof. These cages were small and barren. The baboons in particular suffered in such a confined space. The only structures inside these cages were wooden planks used as a platform, a rope, and a small plastic shelter. The shelters afforded the animals little privacy or protection from the elements. The plastic shelter looked unlikely to hold even one baboon, let alone both of them at the same time. There were no meaningful attempts at enrichment. (See Fig. 20) In the tiger enclosure, a depression in the ground was used as a water area. Otherwise, the pen was barren. There were no trees or branches. What appeared to be a door to a shelter or lock-out area was closed, thereby depriving the tiger of shelter and privacy.

- At the **Faircloth Zoo** in North Carolina, a tiger cub was kept on her own in a small pen just inside the entrance to the zoo. The pen contained a



**FIG. 19:** These two bears lived in a barren concrete environment that lacked structures and enrichment. They paced endlessly inside. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)



**FIG. 20:** At this roadside zoo, these primates were kept in cramped, concrete cages that failed to meet their physical and psychological needs. (Cherokee Bear Zoo, NC)





**FIG. 21:** Many of the pens at this roadside zoo failed to provide an enriched and stimulating environment for the animals kept there. (Faircloth Zoo, NC)



**FIG. 22:** This roadside zoo was irresponsible to allow a strong and lively leopard cub out of her pen on a leash as an "attraction" for visitors to touch. (New River Zoo, NC)

**FIG. 23:** This Fennec fox showed marked abnormal pacing, back and forth in this small, low roofed pen. (New River Zoo, NC)

small plastic shelter and a water container. Otherwise, the pen was barren. There was no enrichment and no branches or trees for the tiger to scratch. The cub showed signs of stereotypical behavior, pacing back and forth. Two adult tigers were in a small pen next to the tiger cub. This pen had a low roof and an earthen floor. The only items inside were a wooden shelter and a water trough. Both tigers also displayed stereotypical behavior by pacing. (See photo below)



There were a number of larger enclosures with grassed areas that housed bears, lions, and at least one tiger. These were open-topped and were circled by electric wires running alongside the fence. The pens contained a wooden hut as a shelter, a large metal water trough, and a taller wooden structure stood above the shelter. The rest of the enclosure was barren. (See Fig. 21)

- At the North Carolina **New River Zoo**, two snow monkeys were housed in a pen that was too small. Snow monkeys are climbing animals, yet the roof was low and there were no substantive climbing structures. The pen contained some branches, small rocks, and a tire. A wooden shelter area was attached to the pen. The monkeys appeared frantic and paced inside the pen in a stereotypical manner. One of the monkeys was also self-mutilating.

Adult leopards were kept in narrow, low barren pens about 10 feet high. A black leopard cub (taken around on a leash as a zoo "attraction") was kept in a pen that was only about four feet high, with a plastic dog kennel, small rocks, and some branches. (See Fig. 22) Lynxes were kept in a low-roofed pen with no substantive climbing structures. Leopards and lynxes are tree-dwelling animals and need height and climbing structures.

A number of other species were also kept at the zoo, some in small cages or pens. For example, a coatimundi was in a small raised pen. Two Fennec foxes were in a small grassed pen with a very low roof. One displayed stereotypical behavior, pacing frantically inside. (See Fig. 23)

- Santa's Land** in North Carolina is a theme park and petting zoo that housed a number of bears and cougars. Four adult black bears were kept in pairs in two extremely small, dark pens with concrete floors and a

low roof. In one of the pens, there was no shelter for the bears. The only structures in the pen were a small raised wooden platform and a shallow concrete water container that appeared to be the bears' only source of water and was almost empty. The pen was cramped and barren.

A railing ran around the bear pens; however, there were spaces between the gate posts and gates that were large enough for a hand or paw to go through. (See Fig. 24)

Two cougars were housed in a small, dark, concrete pen with a covered roof. There was no shelter; instead, there was a raised wooden platform. The only other structure in the pen was a concrete water bowl. Otherwise, the pen was barren and lacked enrichment.

- At **Triangle Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, numerous different species were housed including bears, large cats, primates, servals, wallabies, birds, crocodiles, and camels. Two Himalayan bears were kept in a small, closed-topped pen. The flooring was made of what appeared to be a hard, shiny, artificial material. There was a depression in the surface for a water area. The only items in the pen were a small metal hut attached to one side, a log, and a metal bracket (possibly used to hold a bucket). A plastic tube allowed the public to feed the bears. Otherwise, the pen was empty. It was a non-stimulating, barren environment — a pen designed purely for appearance and ease of cleaning and not to meet the behavioral needs of the bears. The bears appeared lethargic. (See Fig. 25)

Two lions were kept in a very small, barren pen with a roof. The surface was made either of concrete or some other artificial material. A brick building was attached as a shelter. The only other item in the pen was a water trough. There was no enrichment whatsoever, not even a platform so that the lions could get off the floor. (See photo below)



A tiger (only one could be seen) was kept in an identical pen next to the lions but with less floor space. The brick shelter appeared to be closed and there was a wooden structure in the pen instead. The tiger displayed stereotypical behavior, pacing inside the pen. (See p. 12)

Two hamadryas baboons were kept in a small, closed-topped pen. It was similar in design to the others with the shiny artificial floor. A brick building attached to the pen appeared to be the shelter. The only other item inside



**FIG. 24:** At this facility, this bear was kept in appalling conditions. The pen had a concrete floor and was extremely small and barren. (Santa's Land, NC)



**FIG. 25:** Being housed in a barren, non-stimulating environment can result in animals becoming lethargic and inactive. (Triangle Metro Zoo, NC)





### The Law:

No state law in North Carolina, Ohio, or Washington regulates the type of enclosure, shelter, or enrichment that should be provided to privately-owned exotic animals.



**FIG. 26:** This cougar was found living in a small compartment of a display trailer because no suitable pen was available. (Heaven's Corner, OH)

**FIG. 27:** This leopard displayed abnormal and aggressive behavior. He repeatedly paced at a very fast speed inside his pen and leapt at the fence. (Heaven's Corner, OH)

the pen was a wooden structure.

A marmoset (only one could be seen) was kept in an indoor circular wire cage with a wire floor. The cage contained only a shelter box and some branches.

Wallabies were kept in small, indoor, metal enclosures. There were wood chippings on the floor and some hay but no shelter or means to escape from public view.

- **Heaven's Corner for Endangered Animals** in Ohio advertised itself as a sanctuary and a zoo. Animals kept there included bears, a leopard, a jaguar, a tiger, cougars, lynxes, a monkey, and a number of reptiles. The owner could also be booked to exhibit animals for \$300 for half a day. He had a display trailer with three animal compartments. A cougar was housed in one of the compartments. The owner said this was a temporary arrangement until he had built a new enclosure. (See Fig. 26 & p. 1)

Many of the pens were small, with little natural enrichment. Two bears were kept in a very small, dark pen with a roof. There were no natural structures or earthen floor, just a small concrete tunnel and some balls. The bears were pacing.

A leopard, housed alone, showed severe signs of stereotypical behavior (pacing). His pen had little enrichment; there was just a plastic shelter and a ball. There appeared to be no natural structures and nothing to climb. (See Fig. 27)

A few of the animal pens did have earthen floors with more attempts to provide some enrichment, such as a tree trunk. However, a 19-year-old "rescued" capuchin monkey was housed on her own in a totally inappropriate environment. She was held in an indoor pen sealed by a glass window and wire screen. There was no natural light, just artificial lighting, and no climbing structures, just an old wooden box that had been used to transport reptiles, and a soft toy. (See photo below)



- **Hope's Heaven Sent Zoo & Etc.** in Ohio was a run-down site, with numerous animals, both exotic and domesticated species. Many of the



animal enclosures were poorly constructed and maintained. Some of the animals were kept in what can only be described as appalling conditions. This site was open to the public and gave school tours. A cougar housed on his own had a dilapidated wooden hut as his source of shelter. (See Fig. 28) Nearby, two Arctic foxes were kept in an inadequate, small, wire-constructed pen with a wire floor. (See photo below)



**FIG. 28:** This cougar's shelter was totally inadequate, consisting of five wooden pallets. (Hope's Heaven Sent Zoo & Etc., OH)

- **Noah's Ark Animal Farm** in Ohio housed lemurs, bears, and cougars. The facility was run-down and many of the animal pens were barren and small with concrete floors. They were clearly inadequate to meet the animals' needs.

A cougar was kept in a barren, small, circular pen with an attached wooden hut. The floor was concrete and completely bare. A small wooden shelf was attached to one side of the pen. A number of ring-tailed lemurs were kept in suspended pens with wire floors. No climbing structures were visible, only a swinging plastic box. A ball had been put into each pen for "enrichment." (See Fig. 29)

Two bears were kept in a very small, barren, dark pen with a roof and a small sleeping hut attached. Their behavior and movements were severely restricted. The floor was concrete. There were no natural structures and nothing for the bears to scratch. A plastic ball appeared to be the only attempt at enrichment. There were three rubber bowls; only one appeared to be upright and contained a small amount of dirty water. One of the bears made efforts to sit in this bowl. There were no deep water tubs for bathing or play. The bears appeared bored and frustrated. One displayed stereotypical behavior by chewing the bars of the pen. (See Fig. 30 & p. 3) A plastic tube allowed the public to give the bears purchased biscuits. One bear repeatedly knocked at the tube.

Two other bears were kept in a pen that was bigger but that still showed little sign of enrichment. The floor was concrete. There were no natural structures and nothing for the bears to scratch. Two tubes, presumably for play, appeared to be too small for the bears to go through. No water was available for the bears to bathe and play in. A plastic tube was attached to each pen and the public could buy food from a machine and feed the bears via the tube. The bears appeared bored and frustrated, pacing



**FIG. 29:** At this roadside zoo, lemurs were housed in barren cages with wire floors. (Noah's Ark Animal Farm, OH)



**FIG. 30:** Abnormal behaviors such as chewing and licking cage bars may occur when animals try to cope with a barren environment. (Noah's Ark Animal Farm, OH)



**FIG. 31:** At this facility, pens for tigers and lions often failed to provide the structures and furnishings needed for animals to carry out species-specific behaviors. (Noah's Lost Ark, OH)

around the pen. (See photo below)



- **Noah's Lost Ark** in Ohio calls itself an exotic animal rescue facility that does not breed or sell animals. Animals kept there included lions, tigers, leopards, cougars, bears, and monkeys. Some of the animals lived in pairs; others were housed alone. Although the animal enclosures were of a reasonable size with earthen floors and were certainly larger than many seen at other facilities, in some, there was little enrichment. Most enclosures contained no raised platforms or natural structures such as trees or logs where the cats and bears could scratch.



One tiger was kept on his own inside a fenced-in pole barn. There was no outside area. (See photo above). One enclosure containing two tigers had only a water trough with a plastic barrel floating in it. (See Fig. 31) Two bears were kept in an enclosure that contained only a couple of small concrete tunnels. This type of barren environment must lead to frustration and boredom, as was evidenced by stereotypical behavior in some of the animals. (See Fig. 32)



- **Stump Hill Farm** in Ohio is open to the public by appointment and hires out its animals for events. It has been cited by the USDA on a number of occasions over the years for failing to provide minimal standards of care for its animals, including a failure to provide environmental enrichment to a chimpanzee, a spider monkey, and a lemur housed on their own; failure to provide minimum space to a chimpanzee housed on his own; failure to provide veterinary care; and failure to provide drinking water. About 270–300 animals were housed at this facility, including wolves, bears, big cats, and primates. (See Fig. 33)

Many of the bear pens were extremely small and the bears were severely constrained. The floors were covered in wood shavings but no structures or enrichment items were visible (apart from an empty plastic oil drum in one pen). The roofs were low and opaque, which made the pens dark and cramped. Stereotypical behavior, including pacing and swaying, was displayed by a number of the animals. Small, makeshift wooden huts appeared to be the only form of shelter. Water was provided in a bowl, with none to bathe in and no trees or branches for the animals to scratch. (See Fig. 34)



A number of big cats were kept in pens similar to those housing the bears. The animals' movements were severely restricted by the small pens. The pens were barren. Two panthers housed together had a cable spool as "enrichment" and a small plastic hut as shelter. Two white tigers were kept together in a barren pen. One of the tigers repeatedly paced inside. Another tiger was also seen pacing inside her small enclosure. Like the bears, the big cats did not appear to be provided with any wooden structures to scratch or water in which to bathe. (See photo above)

- At the **Olympic Game Farm** in Washington, visitors drive through areas containing a number of exotic species. Lions, tigers, cougars, and wolves were kept in a series of pens with wire roofs. The access road for cars ran alongside the front and back of these pens. Outside areas were small and did not have much in the way of enrichment. No structures were visible, just an occasional plastic ball. The inside area was not completely closed off. Wire (instead of wood) covered one side of each of the wooden structures so that the animals were always on display for visitors, with



**FIG. 32:** These two bears were kept in a barren, un-stimulating environment. (Noah's Lost Ark, OH)



**FIG. 33 & 34:** Many animals, including these wolves and bear, were confined to small, barren environments that failed to meet their physical and psychological needs. (Stump Hill Farm, OH)





**FIG.35:** At this drive-through farm, bears lined up behind a very low fence “begging” for treats to be thrown from visitors’ cars. (Olympic Game Farm, WA)

**FIG. 36:** Bears enjoy bathing and swimming, yet at this location, this water trough was too small for the animals to climb into. (Olympic Game Farm, WA)



### The Law:

No state law in North Carolina, Ohio, or Washington regulates whether animals should be kept in pairs or allowed to be kept in solitary confinement.

nowhere for them to hide. (See photo below)



The drive-through bear enclosure was a large grassed area, although the landscape was essentially barren, with just a few metal corrugated structures as shelter, almost as if to keep the animals on permanent display. There were no visible large water troughs for the bears to sit or bathe in. One concrete trough was so narrow that the bears could only sit next to it and dangle their paws in the water. (See Figs. 35 & 36)

At another location, a group of four bears was kept in a grassed enclosure (smaller than the one described above). One side bordered a barn, although it did not appear that the bears had access to the barn. The enclosure was barren, except for a tree trunk and what appeared to be a corrugated metal structure. Attached to the fence, on the outside of the enclosure, was a metal trailer with metal bars. The trailer had a line of chicken wire around it, attached to metal poles stuck in the ground, providing a very crude and ineffectual safety barrier. A bear sitting in the trailer was able to stick his paws through the trailer bars. The trailer gave the bears no real privacy or shelter from the elements. (See p. 4)

## Solitary Confinement

The most important form of enrichment for social animals is group housing. To deprive these animals of contact with others of their kind is not only inhumane, but may result in dysfunctional and psychologically disturbed animals.

A number of places API visited in its investigation housed animals in solitary confinement. Many of the species in question were social animals who would naturally live in family groups; for example, in the wild, nonhuman primates live in complex social groups based on family and friendship.

## Investigation Results:



- **Private Owner C** from Ohio kept one male and one female snow monkey. They were housed next to each other, but separately. These monkeys were being kept in an artificial environment, deprived of meaningful social contact with others of their kind. The private owner also

housed a capuchin monkey singly. (See Fig. 1)

- **Private Owner D** from Washington housed three cougars in separate pens. (See Figs. 13 & 14)
- **Private Owner F** from Washington housed a tiger, cougar, and two bears in separate pens. (See Figs. 15 & 37)
- The **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina housed a number of primates, including a chimpanzee and at least one macaque, on their own with no opportunity to socialize with others. (See Figs. 18 & 38 & p. 9)
- **Stump Hill Farm** in Ohio had several primates who were housed alone (See Fig. 39), including a chimpanzee housed on his own away from the other primates. He was 26 years old. (See Fig. 40)

## Safety

Numerous serious safety issues surround the keeping of exotic animals in both the private setting and at roadside zoos licensed by the USDA. Many of these issues were highlighted in API's investigation, including injuries and attacks to owners as well as to others; children being placed at risk of attack; facility personnel and owners displaying reckless behavior in the presence of visitors; and facility personnel and owners allowing individuals with no experience with exotic animals to have direct contact with animals.

Sites that house exotic animals must always operate in a manner that ensures the safety of the animals, the staff or owners, visitors, and the surrounding community. Owning exotic animals is a responsibility that must be taken seriously, as exotic animals have escaped from their enclosures and have caused serious injury and even death. Exotic animals also pose a public health threat through communicable diseases.

The exotic animal industry is well aware of the dangers these animals pose to the public, yet it continues to lobby for the private ownership of such animals. API's investigation uncovered shocking evidence that not only reveals the alarming number of injuries and attacks that have occurred, but also demonstrates the risks that irresponsible owners took while other people were present.

### Injuries and Attacks

Exotic animals pose serious safety risks to their owners and anyone who comes into contact with them. The exotic animal industry usually tries to minimize these dangers; however, API's investigation suggests that many animal bites and attacks by exotic animals on private owners as well as staff working at locations open to the public go unreported. Thus, the true danger posed by exotic animals is underrepresented, possibly substantially.

Statements made by exotic animal owners during API's investigation clearly show that no matter what owners do to their exotic "pets" or whether they have raised and "tamed" them from birth, they are still unpredictable, dangerous animals that pose a threat to anyone who comes into contact with them. Most of



**FIG. 37:** This owner kept his bears in solitary confinement in deplorable conditions. (Private Owner, WA)



**FIG. 38:** A social species in the wild, this primate was kept in solitary confinement. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)



**FIG. 39:** This capuchin was kept in a small cage with no companionship. (Stump Hill Farm, OH)



**FIG. 40:** This chimpanzee was kept in solitary confinement with a chain around his neck. (Stump Hill Farm, OH)

the owners of exotic animals API spoke to in its investigation were well aware of the potential dangers their animals pose to themselves and others.

### **IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

*"The big cats are hard and they cause a lot of problems. Y'know, people do a lot of really irresponsible things with the big cats and people wind up getting killed all the time."* (Private owner, Washington)

*"People get them as babies and they think, well...it's going to love and hug me and it's going to kill you later. That's what's going to happen."* (Owner of a USDA-licensed facility, Ohio)

*"They're stupid. They go out and buy tigers. They go out and buy monkeys. They take them out in public and they bite somebody or they bite them at home. They build them a cage that's not big enough, not sturdy enough, and then they go let their little kids go play with them. We had a bunch of little kids get eaten by tigers last year. Like, a 12-year-old boy got eaten.... Yeah, it's just carelessness. But it's like they're so caught up in everything else they don't even pay attention to the fact that it can still kill you and hurt you. But mostly Americans are stupid. We've got too much freedom almost."* (Partner of roadside zoo owner, North Carolina)

*"I don't know if she goes in with the cougars that much anymore because they're just so dangerous. It's just not a good idea and the bobcats are real cantankerous. So you never know what a bobcat is going to do either."* (Private owner in Washington describing the behavior of another private owner)

*"That's the problem with the big cats, too, because even, y'know, cougars I raised from the time they are tiny babies, if they got in a bad mood they'd just jump on you from behind and... you just have to remember they're wild."* (Private owner, Washington)

*"Macaques are very territorial and very aggressive.... They're pretty much impossible after six years old...after that they're too dangerous.... Look them in the eye and they think it's a challenge and they just attack."* (Private owner who rents out monkeys for events, Ohio)

API's investigators were actually present during several incidents in which an exotic animal attacked a private owner or an owner of a facility housing exotic animals. The private owners usually minimized the seriousness of the situation, but clearly these incidents are not rare and should not be taken lightly. They demonstrate that exotic animals are inherently dangerous, and no matter what level of care they receive, they are unpredictable and will revert back to their natural instincts.

### **Investigation Results:**



#### **Some of the incidents witnessed during API's investigation:**

- **Private Owner D** from Washington entered her bobcat enclosure and was attacked twice by one of the bobcats. She shouted at the cat ("Don't



bite”) and then encouraged the cats to go through a gate into what was supposed to be a lock-out area. The gate to the lock-out area was not secure, allowing the bobcats to push their way out. The bobcat who had already bitten her escaped through the gate and attacked the owner again. (See Fig. 41)

- At **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, the owner of the facility was bitten by a tiger while he was in a pen containing several tigers. The owner hit the tiger with the palm of his hand twice and shouted:

*“Oh God, don’t you bite me.” (See photo below)*



**FIG. 41:** A private owner was attacked by one of her bobcats when she entered this pen. (Private Owner, WA)

- At a **USDA-licensed facility** in Ohio owned by a representative of an outspoken organization that actively lobbies against the banning of the ownership of exotic cats, API investigators were allowed to go into a pen and touch a “tame and friendly” bobcat. The cat had no canine teeth, but he still bit the arm of one of the investigators. The investigators were also allowed to go to the fence of a cougar enclosure and put their fingers up to the fence to touch a cougar’s nose.

- At **Tiger Ridge Exotics** in Ohio, the owner was bitten by a lynx. The animal was sitting on the lap of one of API’s investigators, who was inside the pen at the suggestion of the owner. When the lynx put her mouth around the investigator’s arm, the owner of the facility reached out and the lynx grabbed his arm with her teeth and bit him, inflicting a bleeding wound. (See Fig. 42)

**During the API investigation, exotic animal owners freely spoke of how animals had attacked them in the past. The majority of these incidents appear to have gone unreported. Examples of attacks include:**

- **Private Owner C** from Ohio described how one of her macaque monkeys almost bit off her nose:



**FIG. 42:** This owner of a USDA-licensed facility was reckless with visitors and his own safety. He was bitten by this lynx. (Tiger Ridge Exotics, OH)



**FIG. 43:** Exotic animals such as primates are dangerous and unpredictable. They can inflict serious injuries on their owners and others. (Private Owner, OH)

Statements made by exotic animal owners during API's investigation clearly show that no matter what owners do to their exotic "pets" or whether they have raised and "tamed" them from birth, they are still unpredictable, dangerous animals who pose a threat to anyone who comes into contact with them.



Injuries and even deaths occur when people are allowed to have direct contact with dangerous exotic animals. Here, the owner of Tiger Ridge Exotics in Ohio is seen on a trampoline with a bear.

*"[She] bit my nose, almost bit my nose off. They'll definitely bite."*

The private owner then spoke of her capuchin monkey, who she had obtained from a previous owner:

*"They pulled his teeth and then he still could bite.... Teeth pulling is common for capuchins in the States. You see, they are horrendous biters. I mean, they bite so bad that they can just rip tendons and...they go for your jugular."*

- **Private Owner I** in Ohio, who also had a USDA license, said that one of her monkeys had bitten several people. She also stated:

*"It's really not a good idea to put your face in their face...cause I've seen a couple of people who have had their faces bit really bad."*

Regarding herself, she said:

*"They can hurt you bad, I mean like real bad. I'm thinking the couple of times I got attacked by [one of her monkeys]. If he would have had his fangs, I probably would have been crippled in certain ways because they puncture so bad."*

Speaking about one of her gibbons, she said:

*"He would just bite me so badly. Be loving me and then next thing you knew half of my face was gone." (See Fig. 43 & p. 13)*

- The owner of **Tiger Ridge Exotics** in Ohio described how a number of his animals had attacked him, including a bear, monkey, and jaguar. Regarding the bear attack, he stated:

*"She [the bear] bit me couple of times before she really got me, really hurt me.... If you go in there and just turn your back on her and walk out, sooner or later, she'll attack you."*

The owner entered a jaguar enclosure, using a metal rod to control the animal. Referring to the jaguar, he said:

*"That one attacked me once.... Got me around the neck."*

According to an article in the *New York Times* (3/27/05) that included an interview with the owner, "the owner survived an attack by a male grizzly and its pregnant mate that required 300 stitches in his back and arms, had his leg broken by a tiger that didn't care for his company at dinner and, worst of all, was bitten by a monkey, leaving him with blood poisoning and requiring him to spend two weeks in the hospital."

- At the **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, the owner was attacked by a leopard and bitten on the back of his neck. The incident occurred while he was being filmed for a commercial. According to his partner, he had to get more than 88 stitches and have tendons sewn back together:

*"He wasn't paying attention. He was playing with a leopard and he sat down on the ground, playing with it, not paying attention and the leopard jumped on him. He knocked it off and the leopard jumped back again and bit him on the back of the neck, five inches long and five inches deep."*



- The owner of **Burnette's Pet Farm Educational Center** in Ohio stated that he was bitten badly by one of his monkeys:

*"I nearly lost my hand.... He tore the artery out."*

- A worker at **Stump Hill Farm** in Ohio stated that he had been bitten by the bears at the facility:

*"Oh yeah, I've got bit. I've got bit. The whole side of my finger got taken off here last time, like this far down...down to the bone...real bad."*

He did not go to the hospital, claiming:

*"If you go to the hospital, then they want to know what bit you and then they come down and put the animal to sleep.... You can't tell too many people." (See Fig. 44)*

- **The owner of a USDA-licensed facility** that runs an exotic animal stage show in Washington stated that one of his female bobcats bit him the worst out of all the animals he had:

*"My worst bites have been from that one up there. Out of every animal I own, the worst bites from her. I had to grab her once and she has all of her claws. She bit my legs, my stomach, my everything was bleeding. My hands were bleeding.... I could have gone to the doctor but if you go to the doctor everything is a big deal." (See Fig. 45)*

### **Child Endangerment**

Exotic animals, in particular big cats such as cougars and tigers, represent a real danger to children. Yet private owners and owners of roadside zoos and menageries take unacceptable risks with child safety. Exotic animals are also taken into schools or hired as an attraction for children's parties.

Children have been attacked and even killed by big cats. In 2003, a ten-year-old boy was killed by his aunt's "pet" tiger in North Carolina.

## **Investigation Results:**



**Despite these dangers, API's investigation found private owners keeping their big cats in pens where children could have direct contact with the animals:**

- In Washington, a small child lingered around a tiger enclosure where the safety fence was not in good repair at **Private Owner F's** house.
- The daughter of **Private Owner G** in Washington was able to walk up to the cage housing a cougar in her backyard. There was no safety fence surrounding the pen or a lock-out area attached to the gate. The gate opened directly onto the yard. There was nothing stopping the child from sticking her hand through the fence or preventing the cougar from escaping when the gate was open. This situation was a disaster waiting to happen. (See p. 11)



**FIG. 44:** Staff and visitors at roadside zoos and menageries are at risk from attacks by dangerous exotic animals. (Stump Hill Farm, OH)



**FIG. 45:** Bobcats are particularly dangerous animals, yet people behave recklessly around them and end up being attacked. (A USDA-licensed facility, WA)





**FIG. 46 & 47:** This child was at risk from tiger cubs and monkeys who were kept in her home. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)

- **The owner of a USDA-licensed facility** and representative of an organization in Ohio that actively lobbies against the banning of the ownership of exotic cats stated:

*"The big cats pick out the smallest person in a crowd and then they think, you know, that's the one I'm going for because that one will be easier to catch and then they focus on that person. They never take their eyes off. Y'know, we were teasing our daughter all the time that if she's not good we're going to throw her in with [the 'pet' cougar]."*

- At **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, API investigators were invited into an on-site private residence to see the infant monkeys and tiger cubs who were kept in the house. A five-year-old child also lived there. There were two monkeys (a Java macaque and a snow monkey) in diapers and two tiger cubs. All animals apparently had their teeth and claws. (See Figs. 6, 46, & 47 & p. 8)

Directly underneath the porch of the house, an adult black leopard was kept in a small pen. From the porch, the child was able to stick her hands through the wire directly into the pen and touch the leopard. The leopard was able to reach his paws through the wire onto the floor of the porch. (See photo below)



A couple of incidents that took place while our investigators were present made it clear that the little girl was nervous around the animals. The mother was irresponsible to allow the interaction between the child and the animals. Not only was the child's safety at risk, but the animals themselves were at risk from the actions of the child. On one occasion the child was pulling the Java macaque around roughly on his leash and swinging him in the air while shouting and laughing. Her mother made no attempt to stop her. The mother stated:

*"The other one I've got, the little girl [monkey], now, any little kid, she'll tear them apart. She hates little kids."*

At various points during the visit, the little girl either touched or held the monkeys. When the snow monkey was brought back into the room after a photo session, she jumped onto the mother's shoulders and tried to leap at the girl, who was on the sofa behind her mother. The mother dragged the monkey down roughly by one of her limbs and said in an aggressive tone,

*"Hey, hey, I don't think so."*

The monkey landed close to the tiger cub, who reached out for her with his paws. The handling of the monkey was rough and inappropriate. A person said in the background,

*"You know how she's getting."*

The mother asked her daughter if she was okay. The girl replied,

*"She freaked me out."*

On another occasion, the tiger cub climbed onto the girl and grabbed her with his paws. She tried to push him off saying,

*"You leave us alone, get off me."*

She got up off the floor with the cub still holding onto her. Her mother had to push the cub away. The child climbed out of reach onto the back of the sofa. (See Fig. 47) She was clearly nervous of the cub, because a short while later she asked her mother,

*"Hey mommy, you won't let him bite me if I get down there?"*

API investigators asked if the tiger cub was able to bite. The woman replied,

*"Yes, he's teething and it hurts the worst when they're teething. They bite so hard trying to break through."*

At one point, the tiger cub bit the woman's foot. The woman cried out,

*"Oh, that hurt!"*

and smacked the cub on the head. API's investigator commented that she needed to be careful with her daughter. The mother replied,

*"Always. Oh very, oh yeah."*

She said that when her daughter was two years old, she had three tigers living with her until they were six months old and weighed 100 pounds.

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**API's investigation also revealed that dangers to children exist at roadside zoos and menageries that are licensed by the USDA:**

- At **Santa's Land** in North Carolina, two seven-month-old bear cubs were put on public display during feeding time. A low single rail circled the platform, a completely ineffective safety barrier. Adults and children had gathered for the event. The cubs could be heard vocalizing and banging at the door in anticipation of being fed. Three staff members appeared with leashes. However, the gate to the pen was opened and the cubs were allowed to run out unrestrained onto the platform in front of the people. They climbed the two poles and a staff member held a bottle of fruit punch for them to drink. Only then were the bears leashed. The public were openly encouraged to touch the bears. One of the staff told the visitors:

*"Our insurance company says no petting. However, if you decide you want to pet them, keep in mind we're not liable, okay. Now they will bite, but if you decide you want to pet them, I suggest you might want to pet them on the back, away from the head area."*

Children reached out and started to stroke the bears. The gate was then opened and the bears were led back inside their pen. The gate was left open while the leashes were removed. (See Fig. 48 & photo on top of next page)

*There is no reason for children to have personal contact with wild animals. Petting a wild animal does not teach children to respect or appreciate the individual animal or species.*

*The children our investigators saw were lucky, but numerous other children have not been so fortunate. (See Appendix IV on page 82 for a detailed list of incidents that seriously injured or killed people.)*



**FIG. 48:** Visitors, including children, were openly encouraged to pet these large bear cubs. (Santa's Land, NC)





## The Law:

The Animal Welfare Act requires that there be a sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public.



Allowing children direct access to exotic animals is not only irresponsible but extremely dangerous. The children our investigators saw were lucky, but numerous other children have not been so fortunate. (See Appendix IV on page 82 for a list of incidents that seriously injured or killed individuals.)

- At **Cherokee Bear Zoo** in North Carolina, a group of children were allowed to stick their hands through bars to touch five-month-old tiger cubs who still had their canine teeth. (See photo below) The cubs started to jump up at the bars. The children became nervous and their parents called them away. During the time API investigators were there, a family had its photograph taken. The man opened the pen door, which had no safety area, and grabbed the first cub by the collar. He did not even put the cub on a leash, but rather ran with him, holding on to the collar, to the table. After the session, the man walked the cub back to the pen. He then opened the door and shoved the tiger back in. (See Fig. 49)



**FIG. 49:** Tiger cubs were handled roughly and unsafely when members of the public, including children, paid to have their photos taken with them. (Cherokee Bear Zoo, NC)





## Reckless Behavior in the Presence of Visitors

Many of the owners of exotic animals were reckless with respect to how they handled the animals in the presence of visitors. Some of the sites visited did not provide effective protection for the public. For example, some of the enclosures were poorly maintained and adequate barriers were not always provided to prevent visitors from putting their fingers and hands close to or inside pens or enclosures. Other sites that housed potentially dangerous wild animals such as bears, tigers, and lions did not always have secure locks or a double-door entry system into the pens. Moreover, the behavior and actions of those in charge placed visitors at risk of injury and attack.

These types of activities send the wrong message to visitors: that it is appropriate and, for that matter, safe to handle exotic animals.

### Investigation Results:



- **Private Owner D** from Washington opened the gate to an indoor cougar pen in front of the API investigators to allow for a close-up photograph. The owner then encouraged both investigators to hand-feed fresh meat to the cougars through the gap between the gate post and the metal gate. The idea was to place the food directly into the cougars' mouths, which was difficult to do. The cougars were hungry; they growled at each other and used their paws to try and grab the food from the investigators' hands. The gap was wide enough for hands and paws to fit through. One of the cougars stuck out his paw and swiped at one of the investigators while he was trying to give him a piece of chicken. The investigator was unsettled by the experience.
- **Private Owner F** from Washington entered the enclosure of one of his two bears. He opened the gate inwards while people were standing near him, approached the bear and stuck his face into the bear's face, saying, *"Give me kisses."*  
  
The man then started to pat and rub the bear. The bear turned and jumped at him. The man called out, *"No, no, no. I don't want to play."*  
  
The bear, with his paws around the man's back and waist, threw him against the fence and then continued to hold on tightly to him. The man managed to move towards the gate, still with the bear holding on to him and said, *"Okay. Unlock the gate. Unlock it."*  
  
He pulled himself away from the bear's grip and pointed a finger at him saying, *"That's enough."*  
  
This man was lucky that nothing more serious happened — this time.

- At the **Primate Picnic** held in Centralia, Illinois, a large number of owners and their "pet" monkeys spent a weekend together. Many stayed at a local motel. The motel was full of private owners and their monkeys in addition to other regular guests not attending the event. The set-up presented a real danger to the other guests of motel had one of the animals escaped.  
  
At the picnic, most of the monkeys appeared to be restrained by a leash



*At Stump Hill Farm in Ohio, some safety barriers were poor, which meant that visitors were able to reach out and put their hands through the bars of cages that housed dangerous wild animals.*



**FIG. 50:** Large gatherings of owners and their exotic "pets," such as this "Primate Picnic," pose a danger to local communities. ("Primate Picnic," IL)

around the abdomen. At least one monkey who escaped had to be chased. A woman shouted out,

*"You can't get this many monkeys together and not one of them escape."*

Another person said,

*"There's always an escape every year."*

Our investigator was told that at a previous picnic, a monkey went missing for three days. These picnics present a serious public safety and health risk. (See Fig. 50)



**FIG. 51 & 52:** The owner of a roadside zoo behaved recklessly when he showed off to visitors by sitting on one tiger's back and sticking his head into the mouth of another. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)

- At **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina, the owner performed tricks with tigers in front of visitors. An adult tiger on a leash was seen lying on a wooden platform in a non-secure area. The owner put his arm into the tiger's mouth and then his head. The owner then walked the tiger, holding only the collar, back into his enclosure. (See photo below & Figs. 51 & 52)



Later in the day, the owner unlocked the door to a safety/lock-out area attached to a tiger enclosure. He walked in, letting the door swing behind him without securing it by a bolt or lock. He then let one of the tigers into the safety area through another door leading from the tiger enclosure. The tiger was in the unsecured safety area. There was only an unlocked, swinging door between the tiger and the visitors at the zoo.

- **Tiger Ridge Exotics** in Ohio had no double-door entry systems or safety areas within the various enclosures housing bears and large cats.

The behavior of the facility owner during the visit was alarming. He entered a number of enclosures containing bears and lions, opening gates that led directly from the animal areas into the areas used by the public with little apparent concern or awareness of safety. This meant that for a short period of time, there was no effective barrier between the animals and API investigators. The gate to one of the enclosures containing two lions and a bear actually opened outwards, an unsafe set-up. The AWA requires that there be a sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public,



which clearly was not the case in this instance.

The owner also entered a pen containing two bears, one of whom had attacked him severely in the past. The bears were just on the other side of the gate, which the owner appeared to simply push behind him without locking it. As he entered, one of the bears grabbed his arm with his mouth, forcing him to step backwards. After getting the bear to stand for “treats,” the owner stuck his face into the bear’s face. He then opened the gate and stood there with the gate open while trying to get one of the bears to perform a trick. (See Fig. 53)

The owner also took our investigators to a basement area. One pen contained two tigers (See Fig. 54), and another a jaguar. The owner acknowledged that the animals were aggressive and API investigators witnessed this aggressive behavior. When the owner went into the jaguar pen, he used a pole to control the animal and could be heard saying,

*“He’ll get you.”*

Yet on both occasions he opened and shut the metal gates with API investigators on one side and the animals immediately on the other. The animals behaved very aggressively. The jaguar leapt at the gate as they left.

A young bear was used to attract people driving past the facility. He was at the front of the property in an insecure area that was surrounded by what appeared to be three crudely-placed, presumably electric wires. This fence appeared to be an insufficient barrier to contain the bear. (See photo below)



**FIG. 53 & 54:** The owner of a USDA-licensed facility risked the safety of visitors by opening gates of pens right in front of them. The pens contained dangerous wild animals such as bears, tigers, and lions. (Tiger Ridge Exotics, OH)

- At **Olympic Game Farm** in Washington, visitors paid a fee to either walk or drive through the park and look at animals. There were a number of issues of concern regarding the security of the fences and enclosures and the potential risks to visitors. In the drive-through bear enclosure, the bears lined up along the inside of the fence “begging” for food by sitting on their hind legs and waving a paw. The road ran directly alongside the perimeter fence of the enclosure. This perimeter fence was electric and made of wire. However, it was only about four feet high. Whether it would be enough to keep in a bear who was really motivated to get out was questionable. (See Fig. 55 & photo on top of next page) A concrete water





**FIG. 55 & 56:** Visitors to this site were potentially put at risk by poor quality fencing. This fence was the only barrier between large bears and visitors in their cars. In addition, a gate leading to a bear area had only a sliding bolt (not a lock) that appeared to be easy to open. (Olympic Game Farm, WA)



trough, which was almost as tall as the fence, was placed alongside the fence. Presumably, a bear could stand on top of this trough and jump over the fence. (See Fig. 36)

At another location, a group of four bears was kept in a smaller, grassed enclosure. The wire fence surrounding most of this was low, poorly maintained, and did not look secure. It did not appear to be an electric fence; instead, a wire overhang was in place. However, a wood-framed gate, covered with wire, had no overhang and did not appear capable of preventing the bears from getting out. There was also a large hole in the wire. The gate had a sliding bolt going across it, but no lock. (See Fig. 56)

### **Recklessly Allowing Individuals with No Experience with Exotic Animals to Have Direct Contact**

Close encounters with wild, potentially dangerous animals is something prevalent at roadside zoos and menageries in this country. Visitors are offered, often for a fee, the opportunity to have their photo taken with an exotic animal, to spend time in an area full of exotic animals, or even to enter an enclosure and hug and kiss a 500-pound tiger.

The federal Animal Welfare Act prohibits direct contact between juvenile or adult animals and the public without a sufficient distance and/or barrier between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of all parties. In addition, the AWA requires that young or immature animals not be exposed to rough or excessive public handling or be exhibited for periods of time that would be detrimental to their health or well-being.

API's investigation revealed occasions in which people took part in photo sessions with exotic animals with no sufficient distance and/or barrier between them and the animal. Further, the federal regulations did not seem to stop licensed exotic animal owners from allowing individuals, including API investigators, into enclosures with dangerous animals such as monkeys, tigers, and bobcats.

## Investigation Results:



- Nothing was more reckless and dangerous to the public than what API investigators experienced at the **Siberian Tiger Conservation Association** in Ohio, after signing up for a one-day training program to work with large exotic cats. At the time of this visit, the establishment had lost its USDA exhibitor's license because a number of people had been attacked and injured by the cats during so-called "close encounters." The facility was no longer officially open to the public; however, despite the attacks and the subsequent loss of her license, the owner continued to hold "close encounters" with tigers by allowing the public to pay for a "training and education" session. This activity, which was advertised on the facility's website, has apparently continued to occur without a USDA license and, to date, no official action has been taken by the USDA. (See Figs. 57 & 58)

API investigators were placed at risk during their time at this facility. The owner's behavior towards her visitors was irresponsible and reckless. API investigators were allowed not only to hand-feed the cats, they were also encouraged and cajoled to touch, stroke, kiss, and even sit astride the cats.

On one occasion, the owner put her arm and hand inside a tiger's mouth. (See photo below) API investigators were then encouraged to stick their arms in the tiger's face to be licked. At one point, the tiger grabbed one of the investigator's arms. On two occasions, a tiger jumped at the investigator, who was filming at the time. One tiger grabbed the investigator's leg and tried to bite him before being pulled away.



The owner told one of the students she had with her to keep watching one tiger who was still in the "pounce position." As a tiger walked up to one of the investigators, the owner told the tiger,

*"Okay, that's enough. You're showing too much interest."*

Other incidents that happened during the day involved one tiger putting her mouth around the owner's leg (enough contact was made with the skin for her to check to see if she had a mark on her leg). She smacked the tiger on the nose after this incident, which was inappropriate and could

*According to the Kenyon Collegian and the USDA, in October 2000, a ten-year-old boy was knocked to the ground and bitten on the leg by a tiger at the Siberian Tiger Conservation Association (then known as the "Siberian Tiger Foundation") while participating in a "close encounter" at the facility. This was the tenth incident in seven months of people being bitten or otherwise injured by tigers at the facility.*



**FIG. 57 & 58:** This owner was extremely reckless with people's lives by allowing "close encounters" with unpredictable and dangerous wild animals. (Siberian Tiger Conservation Association, OH)





**FIG. 59 & 60:** Public tours at this roadside zoo involved visitors, including children, being allowed to wander among kangaroos and wallabies to pet them. A kangaroo kick can cause serious injury. (Outback Kangaroo Farm, WA)

potentially have caused further problems. Another tiger put her mouth over the fingers of one of the students while she was splashing water in a trough. The owner said,

*"She's going to take your finger...if you're not careful."*

- At **Outback Kangaroo Farm** in Washington, the public, including children, were allowed to walk among kangaroos, touching and feeding them. There were no safety barriers, although kangaroos are very powerful animals and can cause serious injury and death. (See Figs. 59 & 60)

Visitors could also spend time in a room with lemurs. This showed a lack of responsibility towards public safety, particularly with infant animals around. Primates are extremely protective of their young. API investigators were even encouraged to hand-feed the lemurs and to stand up so that the lemurs would climb onto their backs. During this encounter, the owner admitted that the adult male lemur had bitten a previous owner.

- At a **USDA-licensed facility** that runs an exotic animal stage show in Washington, API investigators were surprised to be taken into a bobcat enclosure. The owner did not seem to be worried, however, despite the fact that at least one of the bobcats inside had attacked him in the past and he had been bitten by another. As they entered, the owner said,

*"You probably don't want to try to reach for them unless they may come to you. Watch your back."*

One bobcat leapt onto a tree trunk just above an API investigator. The cat looked as if he was going to pounce, and the owner called out,

*"He's going to jump on your head." (See photo below)*



Exotic animals such as tigers, bears, and monkeys are routinely used in photo opportunities at roadside zoos, fairs, and even in shopping malls. The public is placed at great risk when allowed to have direct contact with such dangerous and unpredictable animals. Several of the facilities API's investigators visited regularly held photo opportunities or took their animals off-site to various public venues.



## Investigation Results:



- Despite acknowledging the potential dangers that tiger cubs and monkeys pose to the public, the owner of **Charlotte Metro Zoo** in North Carolina regularly allowed visitors to see these animals, as well as took them to fairs for photo opportunities:

*"That tiger, Apollo...he's the one that's almost four months old.... At four months old that tiger can give you a nice bite that will send you to a doctor. Even those little monkeys I have in the house, they can give someone a bad bite too."*

The animals were handled roughly and treated aggressively by the owner. He demonstrated to API investigators how to restrain a monkey using one of the macaques. He pinned the monkey's arms behind his back, clasped the monkey's head in his hand with his thumb forced sideways inside the monkey's mouth, and then said,

*"or stick them [fingers] right down her throat."*

The monkey was visibly distressed. The owner also told API investigators how to control a monkey who bites:

*"You grab them and you bite them. Bite them right back."*

On the visit, the owner spoke to API investigators about dealing with "difficult" behavior in primates. He told them:

*"Let them know that you are the boss."*

He also said,

*"Take your finger, shove it down her throat, gag her. She'll stop biting you then."*

- The **Cherokee Bear Zoo** in North Carolina used two tiger cubs in photo sessions. (See Figs. 49 & 61 & p. 40) People were allowed to bottle-feed the tiger cubs while getting their photograph taken. The man in charge of this area said the cubs were five months old. He said that their front paws had been de-clawed but they had their teeth. When asked if the tigers were dangerous, the man replied,

*"Ah, no."*

Regarding the de-clawing he said,

*"That's the only way you can pet him."*

However, the behavior of the man was irresponsible and visitors, in particularly children, were placed at risk by his actions. The tiger cubs were still capable of inflicting a serious bite.

At one point, following a photo shoot, a staff member left one of the cubs unsupervised and unleashed by herself on the table. One of the API investigators had to point this out to him. The cub jumped off the table and started to walk around the area, which was not sealed off from the public.

- At the **New River Zoo** in North Carolina, a five- or six-month-old black leopard cub was taken out of her pen by the owner to be walked on a leash by a worker/volunteer. The pen had no safety area. The door to the pen was opened and the cub allowed to come out unleashed. For safety

*In essence, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) provides animals with only the most basic of necessities to stay alive.*



**FIG. 61:** This large tiger cub was used in photo shoots where members of the public, including children, held and bottle-fed him. He had his canine teeth and was capable of inflicting serious injury. (Cherokee Bear Zoo, NC)



**FIG. 62:** This leopard cub was used as an “attraction” despite the risk she posed to visitors. (New River Zoo, NC)



### The Law:

The Animal Welfare Act requires that: (1) animals must be handled so there is minimal risk of harm to the animal and to the public, with sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public and (2) young or immature animals not be exposed to rough or excessive public handling or exhibited for periods of time which would be detrimental to their health or well-being. At many of the USDA facilities API visited, these provisions appeared to be violated.

purposes, the cub should have been leashed inside the pen. The cub had her teeth and claws. She was dragged around on the leash, very lively and inquisitive. She leapt up at people and the visitors were allowed to touch her. The woman walking the leopard cub stated:

*“She could hurt you clawing and nibbling, but she don’t mean to. She’s not being mean.... You can’t always tame a wild animal.... They (leopards) can snap just like any other large cat.... She likes to jump up and hang on, y’know.”*

The woman’s partner said:

*“She usually looks like somebody’s beat her up. She comes home, her arms were bruised, black and blue....”*

The woman replied:

*“Oh, these are all scars from Sue [the leopard]. She don’t mean to. She’s just a very strong baby.” (See Figs. 22 & 62)*

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On the days that API’s investigators visited the various roadside zoos and private homes that allowed public contact, the visitors were lucky. Others have not been so lucky. (Please see Appendix IV on page 82 for a detailed list of incidents that seriously injured or killed individuals.)





## Tiger Ridge Exotics, Ohio

This site was nothing more than someone's personal menagerie. This bear cub was used by the owner in an effort to attract people driving past to visit.



## Captive Exotic Animals and the Law

The private ownership of exotic animals in the United States is regulated by a patchwork of federal, state, and local laws that generally vary by community and by animal. Individuals owning exotic animals must be in compliance with all federal laws as well as any state, city, and county laws.

### Federal

To date, the federal government has not played a major role in providing oversight of the private ownership of exotic animals. In fact, no federal law exists that regulates or prohibits the keeping of exotic animals as “pets.”

#### Lacey Act

The only federal law directly addressing privately-owned exotic animals is the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, which amends the Lacey Act (16 USC § 701; 16 USC §§ 3371-3378).

This law was passed in 2003 and prohibits the interstate sale and transportation of lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, cougars, and their hybrids destined for the pet trade. This law provides exemptions for legitimate wildlife sanctuaries that do not breed animals and for those people licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exhibit these animals pursuant to the Animal Welfare Act. However, it is important to note that this law does not prevent the continued in-state breeding and sale of big cats nor the physical ownership of a big cat in any particular state.

The Lacey Act is often misidentified as a federal law that oversees the private ownership of exotic animals. The reality is that, like the Endangered Species Act, the Lacey Act as amended in 2003 regulates the interstate commerce and importation of animals and not physical possession.

In March 2005, the Captive Primate Safety Act was introduced in the U.S. Congress; if passed, it will add nonhuman primates to the list of animals that cannot be sold or transferred in interstate commerce for use as a “pet” within the United States.

There are other federal laws that address public exhibition, breeding, or selling of exotic animals; that regulate threatened and endangered species; or that restrict the importation of animals into a state or the United States. None of these laws, however, govern when an exotic animal is kept as a “pet.”

#### Animal Welfare Act

Originally passed in 1966, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) extends minimal protection to certain warm-blooded animals who are exhibited to the public, bred for commercial sale, used in research, or transported commercially (7 USC § 2131-2156 (1966 and as amended, 1970, 1976, 1985, 1990, and 2002)).

The AWA is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Animal Plant Health Inspection Service through its Animal Care Program. Thus, individuals or entities that exhibit animals to the public and/or breed and sell animals covered under the AWA must obtain a license, commonly referred to as a USDA license.

While the AWA regulates the possession of warm-blooded animals such as elephants, lions, tigers, bears, and nonhuman primates, it does not protect



*This serval roamed freely inside a private home in Washington.*

*Exotic “pet” owners are abusing the system and obtaining USDA licenses with ease. While claiming that they are exhibiting the animal to the public, the reality is that the animal is being kept as a “pet.”*

*This is why USDA licenses should not be exempted under state and local laws governing exotic animal ownership issues.*

reptiles; birds, rats, and mice used for research purposes; or farmed animals used for food, fiber, or other agricultural purposes. Currently, cold-blooded animals such as snakes and alligators are exempt from coverage under the Act. Retail pet shops are not covered under the Act unless the shop sells exotic animals or sells animals to regulated businesses. Exotic “pets” owned by private citizens are not regulated.



On the federal level, the AWA is the most comprehensive law regulating exotic animals exhibited and bred — but many of its standards are minimal, at best, and are not adequately enforced.

Individuals who are required to be licensed under the AWA must provide their animals with adequate care and treatment in the areas of housing, handling, sanitation, nutrition, water, veterinary care, and protection from extreme weather and temperatures. (Please see Appendix II on page 67 for key provisions of the AWA that govern the public display and breeding and subsequent selling of captive exotic animals.) Although the federal requirements establish baseline standards, these are far from ideal. The USDA encourages licensed facilities to exceed the specified minimum standards.

The AWA has established several regulations that govern recordkeeping, safety measures, proper handling, and basic care and treatment standards. Some of the provisions are as follows:

### **Recordkeeping**

Licensed facilities must maintain on their premises accurate records of the animals that come into their possession and of the veterinary care the animals receive. This information must be made available to USDA inspectors during an inspection.

### **Safety Measures**

Exhibitors must minimize possible harmful risks to the public and to the animals during public exhibition by ensuring that there is sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public.

When animals are in direct contact with the public, a responsible and knowledgeable employee must be present at all times. Also, dangerous animals

*Many deficiencies are noted among licensed facilities each year, but fewer than one percent are charged for violations, and an even smaller number have their license suspended or revoked.*



*Wild animals in captivity, such as these powerful bears at Tiger Ridge Exotics in Ohio, are unpredictable and can cause serious injury and death to humans who come in contact with them.*





*At Stump Hill Farm in Ohio, young tiger cubs were brought out for visitors to pet and bottle-feed. Excessive handling would be extremely stressful for these young animals.*

such as lions, tigers, wolves, bears, and elephants must be under the direct control and supervision of a knowledgeable and experienced animal handler (see 9 CFR § 2.131). However, what constitutes a “sufficient distance or barrier” and who is a “responsible and knowledgeable employee or animal handler” is not defined within the regulations, so it remains unclear what or who would meet this requirement.

### **Handling**

According to requirements under the AWA, all licensees “must demonstrate adequate experience and knowledge of the species they maintain” (see 9 CFR § 2.131). The Act does not define what constitutes “adequate experience and knowledge.” Handling of animals must be done as “expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort” (see 9 CFR § 2.131).

Among other requirements, the AWA mandates that during public exhibition:

- Animals must be handled so there is minimal risk of harm to the animal and to the public, with sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public.
- Animals shall be allowed a rest period between performances at least equal to the time for one performance.
- Young or immature animals shall not be exposed to rough or excessive public handling or exhibited for periods of time that would be detrimental to their health or well-being.

Drugs, such as tranquilizers, shall not be used to facilitate, allow, or provide for public handling of the animals (see 9 CFR § 2.131).

The handling requirements are vague and allow for varied interpretations of what is allowed and what is not allowed. As the regulations state, there must be a “sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public”; however, there is no definition of what constitutes “sufficient” distance. In theory, this provision should prohibit photo opportunities where the public is standing right next to or holding an animal, yet allowing near or direct contact between the public and exhibited animals appears to be a common practice.

### **Enclosures**

The AWA’s animal enclosure standards are minimal. The AWA only requires that “enclosures shall be constructed and maintained so as to provide sufficient space to allow each animal to make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement” (see 9 CFR § 3.128).

### **Environmental Enhancement to Promote Psychological Well-Being of Nonhuman Primates**

- Dealers, exhibitors, and research facilities must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan for environment enhancement adequate to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates. The plan must be in accordance with the currently accepted professional standards as cited in appropriate professional journals or reference guides, and as directed by the attending veterinarian.

The plan, at a minimum, must address each of the following: social grouping, environmental enrichment, and special considerations dependent upon the species, and must not allow restraint devices unless required for health reasons (see Section § 3.81).

There are also a series of minimum requirements that pertain to feeding, watering, sanitation, and transport standards. (Please see Appendix II on page 67 for a more detailed list of provisions governing USDA licensees.)

While these requirements initially sound good for the covered animals, on closer examination, the AWA and its implementing regulations do not adequately protect even the covered animals from mistreatment, neglect, and improper handling and training. In essence, the AWA provides animals with only the most basic of necessities to stay alive.



Even more distressing are the AWA's inspection and enforcement practices.

Licensed facilities are required to be inspected at least once annually. Licensed persons are subject to routine unannounced inspections, re-inspection due to previous violation(s), and complaint inspections to ensure compliance with the requirements of the AWA. In addition, USDA inspectors are empowered to identify unlicensed facilities and inspect and cite them for failure to obtain a license. If deficiencies are found or complaints are made, facilities are often inspected more frequently.

Under APHIS, roughly 100 inspectors are responsible for monitoring conditions at approximately 12,000 facilities throughout the United States. This means that many facilities are not routinely inspected.

The appropriate person at the facility must accompany the inspector. If an inspection reveals deficiencies in meeting the AWA standards and regulations, the inspector instructs the facility to correct the problems within a given time frame. Uncorrected deficiencies are documented and possible legal action is considered.

Serious or multiple uncorrected deficiencies, or evidence of abusive treatment and neglect, may result in a notice of warning or initiation of an administrative prosecution of the licensee under the Act. In the latter case, the licensee is served with a complaint stating the charges and seeking the appropriate penalties. If the licensee fails to answer the charges, a USDA Administrative Law Judge issues a default order that assesses penalties. If the



*Inappropriate "treats" or junk food, such as these donuts at the Faircloth Zoo in North Carolina, are sometimes given to exotic animals in captivity.*

*Exotic "pets" owned by private citizens are not regulated by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).*



*A rhesus monkey, dressed in a diaper and attached to a leash, sat in her small metal cage at the "Primate Picnic" in Illinois.*





*In their natural habitats, big cats have space and freedom, which are denied them at places such as Tiger Ridge Exotics in Ohio.*



*At Noah's Ark in Ohio, this bear seemed destined to a life of extreme privation and boredom in this small concrete, barren pen.*

licensee files an answer to the complaint, the case proceeds to resolution either by consent decision or by oral hearing before an Administrative Law Judge.

Under consent decision rules, the licensee settles the case by agreeing to the entry of a consent decision and waiving a hearing before a judge. In this circumstance, accused exhibitors “neither admit nor deny” violating the Animal Welfare Act and agree to civil penalties. Agreeing to a consent decision allows a licensed facility not to have any “violations” under the AWA; therefore, it can freely state that it has never been charged or been in violation of the Act.

If the accused licensee fails to respond to the complaint, the case proceeds to a hearing, after which the Administrative Law Judge issues a decision and assesses civil penalties. Either party — the licensee or the USDA — may appeal the decision to the USDA Judicial Officer. Adverse decisions by the Judicial Officer may be appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals. Penalties may include fines, license revocations and suspensions, and other requirements. Fines may be suspended or used for specific purposes at the discretion of the Department.

Many deficiencies are noted among licensed facilities each year, *but fewer than one percent* are charged for violations, and an even smaller number have their license suspended or revoked.

Moreover, exotic “pet” owners are abusing the system and obtaining USDA licenses with ease. While claiming that they are exhibiting the animal to the public, the reality is that the animal is being kept as a “pet.”



This is why USDA licenses should not be exempted under state and local laws governing exotic animal ownership issues. In cities and states that do have bans, partial bans, or permitting and licensing requirements, individuals often sidestep the law by obtaining a USDA license. These individuals claim to be animal exhibitors or breeders, thereby circumventing state exotic “pet” laws. State laws on the possession of exotic “pets” usually exempt from the provisions of the law people who hold a USDA license. These loopholes allow individuals not to have to comply with the prohibition and/or regulations on the keeping of exotic animals in their locality or state.

## **Endangered Species Act**

Passed by Congress in 1973 with the goal of protecting endangered species throughout the world, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) now recognizes more than 1,700 plant and animal species as endangered or threatened.

The ESA prohibits the taking, import or export, or selling or offer to sell of any listed endangered or threatened species (16 USC § 1538, et seq.). Exceptions can be made by allowing the issuance of permits authorizing otherwise-prohibited activity for scientific purposes, for enhancing the propagation of the survival of the species, or for the incidental taking of endangered wildlife.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently interpreted the “enhancing the propagation or survival of the species” exception to mean that said use is of some “educational value.” Thus, circuses, roadside zoos and menageries, and other entities are routinely granted permits to import, export, take, and possess listed species under the guise that the display of these animals is educational.

Further, through captive-bred wildlife permits, individuals are permitted to possess a listed species in the course of a commercial activity, or to sell or offer for sale in interstate or foreign commerce any endangered wildlife that is bred in captivity. In 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared the captive-bred tiger in the United States to be “generic”; this means that a person who breeds a U.S.-born captive tiger does not have to obtain a permit.

## **Public Health Services Act**

The Public Health Services Act prohibited the importation of nonhuman primates and their offspring into the United States after October 1975 for any use other than scientific, educational, or exhibition purposes. However, many nonhuman primates enter the U.S. for these stated purposes and often find their way to the hands of exotic animal owners.

The regulation specifically states that “the maintenance of nonhuman primates as pets, hobby or an avocation with occasional display to the general public is not a permissible use.” A difficulty with this law is that unless it can be proven that the primate in question or his or her ancestors entered the country after October 1975, the Act cannot be enforced. Most individuals are unaware of their animal's heritage and it is next to impossible to trace an animal's origin. Therefore, this law is of limited utility in curbing the use of nonhuman primates as exotic “pets” or in roadside zoos and menageries.

## **State Law**

State governments have taken the lead in regulating the sale, possession, and use of captive exotic animal ownership in the United States. The laws affecting exotic animals vary from state to state as to the type of regulation imposed; states may have a prohibition, a license requirement, or no regulation at all. In addition, the laws vary as to what specific animals are regulated.

Thirty-seven (37) states have some form of law governing the issue and thirteen (13) states have no relevant laws.



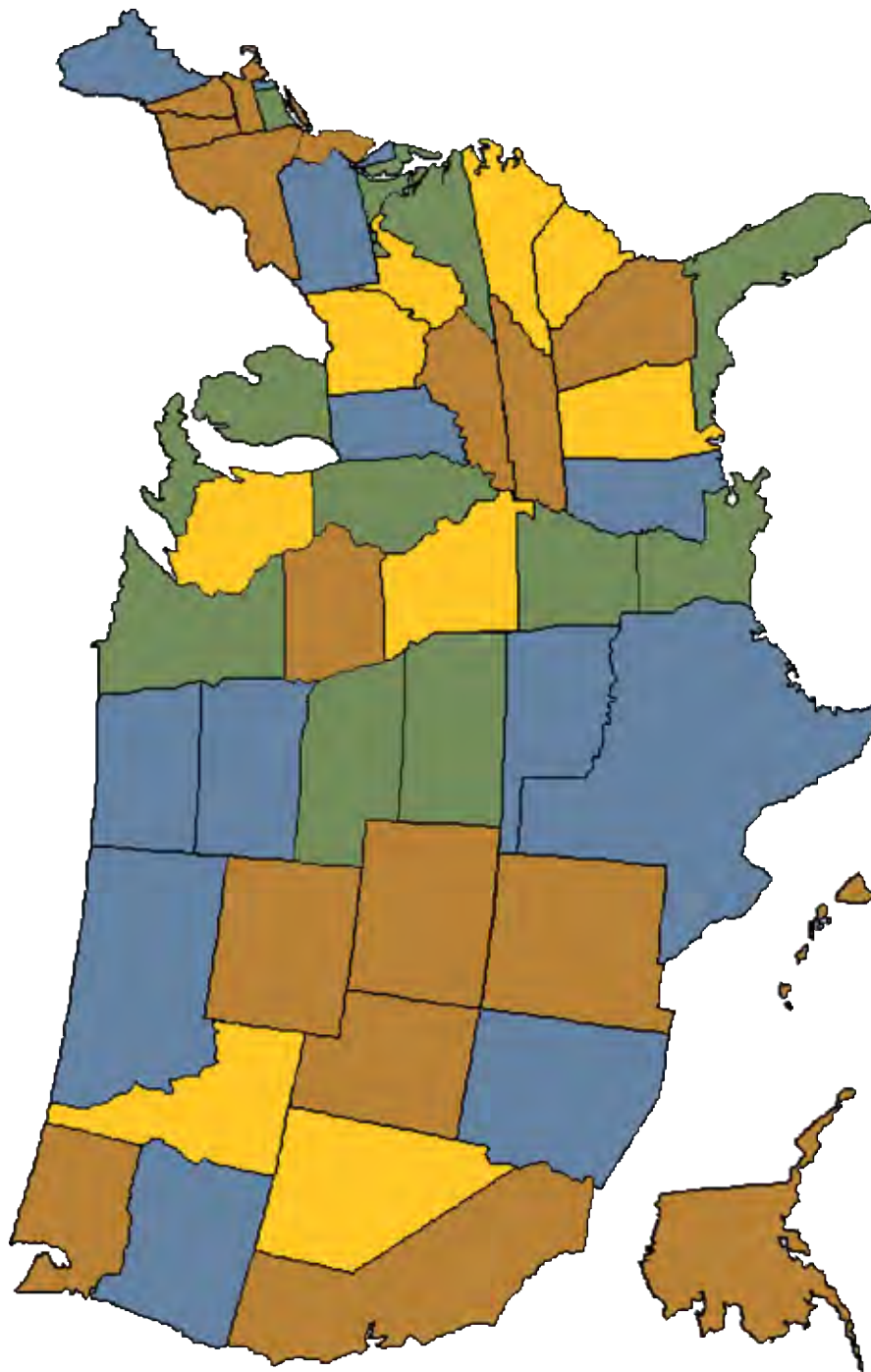
*API Investigators saw a wide range of wild and exotic animals — like this lynx at a roadside zoo in Ohio — held captive in a life of misery.*



*This capuchin peers out of his “playground prison” at a private home in Ohio. Private owners are often under the tragic misconception that treating primates like human children is good for the animal, when in fact, it can inflict life-long damage to the physical and mental well-being of the primate.*



## 2007 Summary of State Laws Relating to Private Possession of Exotic Animals



**18 states** have a ban on private ownership of exotic animals — at least large cats (some of them ban all wild cats), wolves, bears, reptiles, and most non-human primates: Alaska, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming

**10 states** have a partial ban on private ownership of exotic animals — allowing ownership of some exotic animals but precluding others: Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Virginia

**13 states** require the “owner” of the exotic animal to obtain a license or permit from the relevant state agency to privately possess the animal (excludes states only requiring import permits): Arizona, Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas

**9 states** have no license or permit requirements, but may regulate some aspect thereof (entry permit, veterinary certificate) or have no state statute governing this issue: Alabama, Idaho, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wisconsin

(State law map and lists on page 57 updated September 2007)

Eighteen (18) states prohibit the private ownership of at least large cats; wolves; bears; dangerous reptiles, such as alligators and crocodiles; and most nonhuman primates:

- Alaska
- California
- Colorado
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- New Mexico
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Vermont
- Washington
- Wyoming

Ten (10) states have partial prohibitions on the private ownership of wild and exotic animals (that is, they prohibit ownership of some of the species listed above and allow ownership of others:

- Arkansas
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- Virginia

Thirteen (13) states require the owner of an exotic animal to obtain a license or permit from the relevant state agency to keep the animal:

- Arizona
- Delaware
- Indiana
- Maine
- Mississippi
- Montana
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Dakota
- Texas

Nine (9) states have no license or permit requirements, but may regulate some aspect thereof (that is, they may require a one-time entry permit or veterinary certificate):

- Alabama
- Idaho
- Missouri
- Nevada
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin



The majority of states merely govern the actual physical possession of these animals rather than set forth standards of care and treatment. Few states have



*With no place to hide, bears at the Cherokee Bear Zoo in North Carolina must spend their days in these concrete pits "begging" for "treats" as "entertainment" for visitors.*



*Because the majority of states merely govern the ownership of exotic animals, the care and treatment of these animals (including this cougar at Hope's Heaven Sent Zoo & Etc. in Ohio) are left up to the discretion of the often misguided and inexperienced owners.*





*A private owner in Washington had these cougars housed separately in small pens in her backyard.*

adopted provisions that address caging conditions, enrichment, shelter, breeding, feeding, watering, sanitation, and transportation.

Even in those states (as well as localities) that prohibit or regulate private ownership, the laws generally exempt USDA-licensed facilities from the provisions of the law. As previously discussed, this is a huge loophole, often exploited by exotic “pet” owners who receive a license by claiming that they are exhibitors. These individuals may exhibit an animal a couple of times in order to bypass local and/or state prohibitions, but the animals they keep are, in actuality, “pets.” This is why it is imperative that state legislation address this issue and not exempt USDA-licensed facilities outright in their legislation.

Please see Appendix III on page 72 for a more detailed summary of the various state laws on the keeping of exotic animals in private hands.

## Local Laws

Many cities and counties have adopted ordinances that are more restrictive than the state law.

Typically, the City or County Council takes action as a result of a recent attack in the area, an escape, or by the virtue of an exotic animal's physical attributes and natural behavior or public safety concerns. There are thousands of local laws that prohibit the private possession of exotic animals as “pets” all across the country.





## Faircloth Zoo, North Carolina

At this rundown roadside zoo, some animals were found in small, unsuitable cages.



## Conclusion

Across the country, millions of exotic animals are privately owned. Animals kept as “pets” or in roadside zoos and menageries include lions, tigers, cougars, servals, wolves, bears, monkeys, alligators, venomous snakes and other reptiles, and many other species.

Their very nature makes these animals incapable of being domesticated or tamed. Not only are exotic animals inherently dangerous, but the average person cannot provide the special care, housing, diet, and maintenance they require.

The critical threats that the exotic “pet” trade poses to animal welfare and public safety were the impetus for a groundbreaking investigation undertaken by API. In the summer and fall of 2005, API investigated a number of private homes and federally-licensed facilities that housed exotic animals in North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington state — three states that currently have no laws regulating the private ownership of exotic animals. (*NOTE: Since this investigation, a 2007 law in Washington was passed with the help of API and now prohibits owning most exotic “pets.”*) The investigation focused on how individual owners provided for the needs of these exotic animals by examining issues such as housing and enrichment; we also looked at the safety issues and the extent of attacks and injuries to those having contact with these animals (including owners).

This wide-ranging investigation has revealed disturbing new evidence that confirms just how critical the issue of private exotic animal ownership is. API uncovered the shocking conditions in which exotic animals are kept, the suffering they endure, and the inadequate and inappropriate care and treatment they receive, as well as the real threats that exotic animals pose to human safety. Especially troubling is the fact that the majority of instances of inadequate care



and treatment did not violate any current federal law or respective state law.

The message from this investigation is clear: the only way to put an end to the suffering and dangers that exotic animal ownership poses to humans and nonhumans alike is to stop the private possession, breeding, and trading and sale of these animals for personal profit and amusement. Given the serious problems involved with the private ownership of exotic animals, it is imperative that states address this issue and pass strong legislation now.

Moreover, until the private ownership of exotic animals is ended nationwide, the lives of exotic animals currently living in these situations must be improved. Standards need to be implemented for private owners to ensure not only that the care, treatment, and housing are appropriate for the species of exotic animal in their possession but also that the public are adequately protected from the dangers that captive wild animals present.

Faced with the evidence uncovered here, the growing concern of professionals and organizations nationwide, and the rising tide of attacks and injuries, it is clear that four things must follow from this investigation:

- States must act now to pass laws ensuring that the private possession of exotic animals is prohibited.
- The breeding, selling, and display of exotic animals at roadside zoos and menageries must end.
- The public must be educated about the animal welfare concerns and public safety threats associated with roadside zoos and exotic “pets,” and be shown that wild animals do not belong in private hands.
- Where exotic animals cannot be transferred to a genuine sanctuary, existing owners must, at a minimum, increase the standard of care being provided to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals and the public.

This investigation has demonstrated with clarity and force that the time has come to end the private ownership of exotic animals in the United States. API calls upon legislators and communities to act now to ensure that strong and effective laws are passed to address this critical issue before another tragedy occurs.







### USDA-Licensed Facility, Ohio

This facility had a USDA breeder's license and has advertised young animals for sale, some just a few weeks old, on the Internet and through a magazine. The owner also displayed animals at fairs and other events.



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## **APPENDIX I:**

### **API's Recommendations**

API's groundbreaking investigation into the private ownership of exotic animals has demonstrated clearly the need for urgent action to be taken to end this dangerous trade.

Faced with the evidence uncovered by this investigation, and the rising tide of attacks and injuries nationwide, API is calling for four key steps to be taken as a matter of priority:

- States must act now to pass laws that ensure that the private ownership of exotic animals is prohibited.
- The breeding, selling, and display of exotic animals at roadside zoos and menageries must end.
- The public must be educated about the public safety threats and animal welfare concerns associated with roadside zoos and privately-owned exotic animals, and be shown that wild animals do not belong in private hands.
- Where exotic animals cannot be transferred to a genuine sanctuary, existing owners must, at a minimum, increase the standard of care being provided to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals and the public.

Tackling the scale and extent of the problem will require action from legislators, the general public, and existing exotic animal owners. API has formulated a set of recommendations that need to be acted upon if the urgent animal welfare and public safety concerns that result from the private ownership of exotic animals in the United States are to be addressed.

### **Recommendations for Legislators**

The private ownership of exotic animals represents a real danger to families, neighbors, communities, and the public at large, as well as to the animals themselves.

In many states, people are allowed to keep exotic animals in their homes and backyards, as well as collect them to display at roadside zoos and menageries without any restrictions or with only minimal oversight. The exotic animal industry is well aware of the dangers these animals pose to the public, yet continues to lobby for private exotic animal ownership.

Given the serious problems involved with the private ownership of exotic animals, it is critical that states address this issue and work toward passing strong legislation. Laws must be passed to prohibit the ownership of exotic animals as “pets” and at roadside zoos and menageries.

Currently, state laws addressing the keeping of exotic animals are inconsistent with each other — varying from type of restriction to the type of species being regulated. Strong and comprehensive laws must be introduced and passed in all the states that currently do not prohibit private ownership of exotic animals. Further, the laws that are currently in existence must at the very least prohibit ownership of the most dangerous exotic animals, such as large cats, wolves, bears, nonhuman primates, and dangerous reptiles.

Another critical issue that needs to be addressed is that in cities and states that do have bans, partial bans, or permitting and licensing requirements, individuals often sidestep the law by obtaining a USDA license. These individuals

claim to be animal exhibitors or breeders, thereby circumventing state exotic “pet” laws. State and local laws on the ownership of exotic “pets” usually exempt people who hold a USDA license from the provisions of the law. This is a huge loophole that is being exploited to the detriment of the public and the animals. USDA-licensed facilities must not be exempted from coverage of legislation.

API is a leader in the campaign to end the private ownership of exotic animals and is committed to continuing its efforts until exotic animals are protected nationwide. We have worked with state and local legislatures across the country and have played a major role in efforts to prohibit the private ownership of exotic animals. We have model legislation that we tailor to each state and expertise and experience that have been utilized by states nationwide. We look forward to assisting legislators in addressing this issue at a state and local level.

## **Recommendations for Individuals**

Individual members of the public play a key role in working to end the tragedy of private ownership of exotic animals in communities nationwide. From personal choices and public education to involvement in passing strong laws, individuals can make a difference. People concerned about exotic “pets” can take the following steps:

- Do not buy exotic animals as “pets.” Educate family and friends about the animal welfare problems and safety concerns related to the private ownership of exotic animals.
- Speak out if an exotic animal is observed running loose, injuring people, damaging property, living in deplorable conditions, or being abused. If an animal is in these circumstances, or is being kept in violation of city, county, and/or state law, report it to the appropriate animal control agency and the police or sheriff’s department.
- Do not visit or patronize roadside zoos and menageries or disingenuous “sanctuaries” that breed or display animals for profit.
- If state, city, or county law does not already prohibit private ownership of exotic animals, contact state and local lawmakers and urge them to introduce such legislation.
- Get involved. Support legislation at all levels to ban the private ownership of exotic animals.
- Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper describing why exotic animals belong in the wild and not in homes and backyards.

## **Recommendations for Existing Exotic Animal Owners**

When state legislation has been passed to prohibit exotic animals in private hands, the animals currently in possession have generally remained with the individual owner for the animal’s lifetime. Where exotic animals cannot be transferred to a genuine sanctuary, therefore, it is critical that existing owners must, at a minimum, increase the standard of care being provided to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals and the public.

The life conditions for the exotic animals currently in private hands must be drastically improved. API calls upon existing exotic animal owners to ensure that the following minimum steps are implemented:

- An end to the de-clawing and/or de-fanging of exotic animals.



- An end to the breeding and sale of exotic animals and an end to their public display for profit.
- The provision of appropriate enclosure space that allows the animal to engage in normal behaviors that are common for the species in the wild.
- The provision of shelter from all types of elements and rich and varied species-appropriate enrichment.
- The placing of social animals with animals of their own species and an end to solitary confinement
- The provision of barriers between the animals and individuals/general public, ensuring that direct contact is precluded.
- The provision of enclosures/pens with locks that cannot be picked or opened by animals or the public, and a well-constructed perimeter fence around the enclosures.
- Ensuring that children are not allowed near exotic animals.
- An end to all direct contact with exotic animals, including display and photo opportunities.

## **APPENDIX II:**

### **Animal Welfare Act Regulations**

Below are portions of the regulations, standards, and policies governing the practice of individuals/facilities licensed under the federal Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131-2159). The complete regulations and standards can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (9 C.F.R. Section 2.1-2.133; 3.1-3.142).

The following regulations apply to all animals covered under the act.

#### **Veterinary Care**

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- Each dealer or exhibitor shall have an attending veterinarian who shall provide adequate veterinary care to its animals. (Section 2.40(a))
- In the case of a part-time attending veterinarian or consultant arrangements, the formal arrangement shall include a written program of veterinary care and regularly scheduled visits to the premises of the dealer or exhibitor; and each dealer and exhibitor shall assure that the attending veterinarian has appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care and use. (Section 2.40 (a)(1) & (a)(2))
- Each dealer or exhibitor shall establish and maintain programs of adequate veterinary care that include: the availability of appropriate facilities, personnel, equipment, and services; the use of appropriate methods to prevent, control, diagnose, and treat diseases and injuries, and the availability of emergency, weekend, and holiday care; daily observance of all animals to assess their health and well-being. This observance may be conducted by someone other than the attending veterinarian as long as there is a mechanism of direct and frequent communication with the attending veterinarian. (Section 2.40(b)(1)(2)(3))

#### **Handling**

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- All licensees who maintain wild or exotic animals must demonstrate adequate experience and knowledge of the species they maintain. (Section 2.131(a))
- Handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort. (Section 2.131 (b)(1))
- Physical abuse shall not be used to train, work, or otherwise handle animals. (Section 2.131 (b)(2)(i))
- Deprivation of food or water shall not be used to train, work, or otherwise handle animals: Provided, however, that the short-term withholding of food or water from animals by exhibitors is allowed by these regulations as long as each of the animals affected receives its full dietary and nutrition requirements each day. (Section 2.131(b)(2)(ii))
- During public exhibition, any animal handled must be handled so there is minimal risk of harm to the animal and to the public, with sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public. (Section 2.131(c)(1))
- Performing animals shall be allowed a rest period between performances



at least equal to the time for one performance. (Section 2.131(c)(2))

- Young or immature animals shall not be exposed to rough or excessive public handling or exhibited for periods of time which would be detrimental to their health or well-being. (Section 2.131(c)(3))
- Drugs, such as tranquilizers, shall not be used to facilitate, allow, or provide for public handling of the animals. (Section 2.131(c)(4))
- Animals shall be exhibited only for periods of time and under conditions consistent with their good health and well-being. (Section 2.131(d)(1))
- A responsible, knowledgeable, and readily identifiable employee or attendant must be present at all times during periods of public contact. (Section 2.131(d)(2))
- During public exhibition, dangerous animals such as lions, tigers, wolves, bears, or elephants must be under the direct control and supervision of a knowledgeable and experienced animal handler. (Section 2.131(d)(3))
- If public feeding of animals is allowed, the food must be provided by the animal facility and shall be appropriate to the type of animal and its nutritional needs and diet. (Section 2.131(d)(4))
- When climatic conditions present a threat to an animal's health or well-being, appropriate measures must be taken to alleviate the impact of those conditions. An animal may never be subjected to any combination of temperature, humidity, and time that is detrimental to the animal's health or well-being, taking into consideration such factors as the animal's age, species, breed, overall health status, and acclimation. (Section 2.131(f))
- A sufficient number of adequately trained employees shall be utilized to maintain the professionally acceptable level of husbandry practices. These practices shall be under a supervisor who has a background in animal care. (Section 3.132)

The following regulations cover the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of warm-blooded animals *other than* dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, nonhuman primates, and marine mammals, to whom a different set of regulations apply.

## Facilities

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- The facility must be constructed with such material and strength as appropriate for the animals involved. (Section 3.125(a))
- The indoor and outdoor facilities shall be structurally sound and shall be maintained in good repair to protect the animals from injury and contain the animals. (Section 3.125(a))
- Temperature in indoor facilities shall be sufficiently regulated by heating or cooling to protect the animals from the extremes of temperature, to provide for their health, and to prevent their discomfort. (Section 3.126(a))
- Indoor housing facilities shall be adequately ventilated by natural or mechanical means to provide for the health and to prevent discomfort of the animals at all times. Such facilities shall be provided with fresh air either by means of windows, doors, vents, fans, or air-conditioning and shall be ventilated so as to minimize drafts, odors, and moisture condensation. (Section 3.126(b))
- Indoor housing facilities shall have ample lighting, by natural or artificial means, or both, of good quality, distribution, and duration as appropriate for

the species. Such lighting shall be uniformly distributed and of sufficient intensity to permit routine inspection and cleaning. (Section 3.126(c))

- A suitable sanitary method shall be provided to eliminate excess water from indoor housing facilities. If drains are used, they shall be constructed properly and kept in good repair as to prevent backed up sewage and foul odors. (Section 3.126(d))
- On or after May 17, 2000, all outdoor housing facilities (i.e., facilities not entirely indoors) must be enclosed by a perimeter fence that is of sufficient height to keep animals and unauthorized persons out. Fences less than 8 feet high for potentially dangerous animals, such as, but not limited to: large felines (e.g., lions, tigers, leopards, cougars, bobcats, etc.), bears, wolves, rhinoceros, and elephants, or less than 6 feet high for other animals must be approved in writing by the Administrator. It must be of sufficient distance from the outside of the primary enclosure to prevent physical contact between animals inside the enclosure and animals or persons outside the perimeter fence. Such fences less than 3 feet in distance from the primary enclosure must be approved in writing by the Administrator. A perimeter fence is not required for traveling facilities where appropriate alternative security measures are employed. (Section 3.127(d))

## Sanitation

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- Provision shall be made for the removal and disposal of animal and food wastes, bedding, dead animals, trash, and debris. (Section 3.125(d))
- Disposal facilities shall be so provided and operated as to minimize vermin infestation, odors, and disease hazards. (Section 3.125(d))
- Excreta shall be removed from primary enclosures as often as necessary to prevent contamination of the animals contained therein and to minimize disease hazards as well as to reduce odors. (Section 3.131(a))
- When enclosures are cleaned by hosing or flushing, adequate measures shall be taken to protect the animals confined in such enclosures from being directly sprayed with the stream of water or wetted involuntarily. (Section 3.131(a))
- Buildings and grounds shall be kept clean and in good repair in order to protect the animals from injury. (Section 3.131(c))
- Accumulations of trash shall be placed in designated areas and cleared as necessary to protect the health of the animals. (Section 3.131(c))
- A safe and effective program for the control of insects, ectoparasites, and avian and mammalian pests shall be established and maintained. (Section 3.131(d))

## Shelter

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- When sunlight is likely to cause overheating or discomfort to the animals, sufficient shade by natural or artificial means shall be provided to allow all animals kept outdoors to protect themselves from direct sunlight. (Section 3.127(a))
- Natural or artificial shelter appropriate to the local climatic conditions for the species concerned shall be provided for all animals kept outdoors to afford them protection and to prevent discomfort to such animals. (Section 3.127(b))

## Space Requirements and Separation

---

- Enclosures shall be constructed and maintained so as to provide sufficient space to allow each animal to make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. (Section 3.128)
- Enclosures that allow only postural adjustments are inadequate to meet this requirement. "Adequate freedom of movement" includes the ability to exercise. Since it is sometimes difficult for a traveling exhibitor to provide a primary enclosure large enough to allow an animal sufficient exercise, an enclosure that allows only "normal postural and social adjustments" will be considered acceptable if the animal contained therein is released regularly from the primary enclosure (or tether) into a secure space, such as a ring or corral, that provides the opportunity for species-appropriate exercise. This release must occur at least once per day for an appropriate length of time unless otherwise justified. These periods will be in addition to regular performance and practice time. For some species, an area enclosed by an electrical fence is acceptable for this purpose if monitored at all times. Trained elephants and domestic hoofstock may be walked by a qualified handler for this purpose. (Animal Care Policy #6)
- If enclosures used while "on the road" (i.e., when away from permanent quarters but not actually in transit) do not provide adequate height for animals that occasionally exhibit vertical postures to engage in such activities, this requirement can be satisfied through releases of the affected animals into an exercise pen or equivalent. If a pen is used for this purpose, animals should be released at least once per day and allowed to remain for a reasonable length of time unless otherwise justified. These periods will be in addition to regular performance and practice time. (Animal Care Policy #6)
- When elephants are housed on chains while not in transport, chains must be of sufficient length and arrangement so as to permit each elephant to comfortably lie down, get up, self-groom, and move about within a reasonable range. If elephants are kept unchained in a truck or railway car, each elephant must have enough space to make these postural adjustments as well. These same requirements apply to tethered hoofstock. (Animal Care Policy #6)
- When more than one animal is kept in an enclosure at one time, all animals must simultaneously have sufficient space to accommodate the postures and movements described above. (Animal Care Policy #6)
- Animals housed in the same primary enclosure must be compatible. Animals shall not be housed near animals that interfere with their health or cause them discomfort. (Section 3.133)

## Food and Water

---

- Adequate potable water shall be available on the premises (Section 3.125(b)).
- If potable water is not accessible to the animals at all times, it must be provided as often as necessary for the health and comfort of the animal. (Section 3.130)
- All water receptacles shall be clean and sanitary. (Section 3.130)
- Supplies of food and bedding shall be stored in facilities that adequately protect such supplies against deterioration, molding, or contamination by vermin. (Section 3.125(c))



- Refrigeration shall be provided for perishable food. (Section 3.125(c))
- The food shall be wholesome, palatable, and free from contamination and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain all animals in good health. (Section 3.129(a))
- Animals shall be fed at least once a day except as dictated by hibernation, veterinary treatment, normal fasts, or other professionally accepted practices. (Section 3.129(a))
- Food and food containers shall be sufficient in quantity and located so as to be accessible to all animals in the enclosure and shall be placed so as to minimize contamination. (Section 3.129(b))
- Food receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitary at all times. If self-feeders are used, adequate measures shall be taken to prevent molding, contamination, and deterioration or caking of food. (Section 3.129(b))

There is also a series of regulations that cover the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of nonhuman primates. The provisions are similar to those of the regulations listed above. One notable exception is that USDA licensees must provide environmental enhancement adequate to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates:

## **Environmental Enhancement to Promote Psychological Well-Being**

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- Dealers, exhibitors, and research facilities must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan for environment enhancement adequate to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates. The plan must be in accordance with the currently accepted professional standards as cited in appropriate professional journals or reference guides, and as directed by the attending veterinarian. (Section 3.81)
- This plan must be made available to APHIS upon request, and, in the case of research facilities, to officials of any pertinent funding agency. (Section 3.81)
- The plan, at a minimum, must address each of the following: social grouping, environmental enrichment, and special considerations dependent upon the species, and must not allow for restraint devices unless required for health reasons. (Section 3.81)
- The attending veterinarian may exempt an individual nonhuman primate from participation in the environment enhancement plan because of its health or condition, or in consideration of its well-being. Records of any exemptions must be maintained by the dealer or exhibitor and must be made available to USDA officials or officials of any pertinent funding Federal agency upon request. (Section 3.81)

**APPENDIX III:**  
**2007 Summary of State Laws Governing**  
**Private Possession of Exotic Animals**

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Alabama	REG	No person, firm, corporation, partnership, or association may possess, sell, offer for sale, import, or cause to be brought or imported into the state the following fish or animals: fish from the genus <i>Clarias</i> ; fish from the genus <i>Serrasalmus</i> ; Black carp; any species of mongoose, any member of the family Cervidae (deer, elk, moose, caribou), species of coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, wild rodents, or wild turkey. However, there are no requirements for a person possessing exotic animals, such as lions, tigers, monkeys, etc.	ALA. ADMIN CODE r. 220-2-.26
Alaska	BAN	No person may possess, import, release, export, or assist in importing, releasing, or exporting, live game animals as pets. Live game animals are defined as any species of bird, reptile, and mammal, including a feral domestic animal, found or introduced in the state, except domestic birds and mammals. The Department interprets live game to include all animals, including exotics, such as wild felines, wolves, bears, monkeys, etc., not listed as domestic under ALASKA ADMIN. CODE tit. 5. §92.029. It is unlawful for a person to possess, sell, or advertise for sale a wolf hybrid.	ALASKA ADMIN. CODE tit. 5. §92.029; ALASKA STAT. §16.05.940
Arizona	LCN	Person possessing restricted wildlife must obtain a wildlife holding permit to lawfully possess the animal. The Department issues wildlife holding permits to: (1) individuals who legally possess restricted live wildlife and are moving into the state, (2) for educational display, (3) for the advancement of science, and (4) to foster an animal unable to return to the wild. Persons already residing in Arizona are not permitted to possess restricted live wildlife as pets unless they qualify for a permit. Restricted live wildlife includes, but is not limited to, the following species: all species of Carnivora (canines, felines, excluding domestic); orangutans, chimpanzees, gorillas, alligators, crocodiles, cobras, vipers, etc. However, all other non-infant primates can be possessed as pets if the animal is free from any zoonotic diseases.	ARIZ. ADMIN. CODE R12-4-406; R12-4-409; R12-4-417; R12-4-425; R12-4-426
Arkansas	P. BAN	It is unlawful to own or possess a large carnivore for personal possession. A large carnivore is defined as a lion, tiger, or bear.  It is unlawful to possess six or more bobcat, coyote, deer, gray fox, red fox, opossum, quail, rabbit, raccoon and squirrel. If a person wishes to possess other animals not originally from the state and not listed above then the person must show upon request verification that the animal was legally acquired in the previous state.	AR CODE 20-19-502 & GFC 18.17

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
California	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess wild animals unless the animal was in possession prior to January 1992. Wild animals include, but are not limited to, the following orders: Primates; Marsupialia; Insectivora (shrews); Chiroptera (bats); Carnivora (non-domestic dog and cats); Proboscidea (elephants); Perissodactyla (zebras, horses, rhinos); Reptilia (crocodiles, cobras, coral snakes, pit vipers, snapping turtles, alligators); etc.	CAL. CODE REGS. Tit. 14, §671 and §671.1
Colorado	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess most exotic species unless for commercial purposes. Persons may, however, possess up to six live native reptiles, and unregulated wildlife. Unregulated wildlife includes but is not limited to: sugar gliders, wallabies, wallaroos, kangaroos, etc.	2 COLO. CODE REGS. §406-8
Connecticut	P. BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess potentially dangerous animals unless the animal was in possession prior to May 23, 1983. Potentially dangerous animals include: the Felidae family (lion, leopard, cheetah, jaguar, ocelot, jaguarundi cat, puma, lynx, and bobcat); the Canidae family (wolf and coyote); and the Ursidae family (black bear, grizzly bear, and brown bear), venomous reptiles, alligators, crocodiles. Persons may possess primates after obtaining a permit and satisfaction of designated qualifications; however, permits are not required of qualified zoos or nature centers.	CONN. GEN. STAT. §26-40A and §26-55
Delaware	LCN	All persons must obtain a permit before they can possess a live wild mammal or hybrid of a wild animal. It is illegal to possess, sell, or exhibit any poisonous snake not native to or generally found in Delaware.	DEL. CODE ANN tit. 3, §7201, §7202, and §7203
Florida	P. BAN & LCN	It is unlawful for a person to possess any Class I Wildlife unless the animal was in possession prior to August 1, 1980. Class I Wildlife includes, but is not limited to, the following: chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, baboons, leopards, jaguars, tigers, lions, bears, elephants, crocodiles, etc. Persons may possess Class II Wildlife if he or she obtains a permit from the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. Class II Wildlife includes, but is not limited to, the following: howler and guereza monkeys, macaques, cougars, bobcats, cheetahs, ocelots, servals, coyotes, wolves, hyenas, alligators, etc. All other wildlife in personal possession not defined as Class I or II Wildlife must obtain a no-cost permit. In addition, FL has promulgated regulations governing possession of Class II and III animals (caging requirements, etc.).	FLA. ADMIN. CODE ANN. r. 68A-6-0021-23; 68A-6-002

CODE:

- BAN** = Ban on private ownership of exotic animals, such as non-domesticated felines, wolves, bears, reptiles, nonhuman primates
- P. BAN** = Partial ban on private ownership of exotic animals; allows ownership of some exotic animals but precludes ownership of the animals listed
- LCN** = Requires the owner of the exotic animal to obtain a license or permit from the relevant state agency to own the animal (excludes states only requiring import permits)
- REG** = The state does not require the owner to obtain a license or permit to own the animal within the state, but may regulate some aspect thereof (i.e. entry permit, veterinary certificate, etc.)
- NO** = No statute or regulation governing this issue

Note: The animals listed within the above regulations are samples of the animals regulated by the various states. Please check the actual law for a complete list of animals covered.



State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Georgia	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess inherently dangerous animals as pets. Inherently dangerous animals include, but are not limited to, the following orders: Marsupialia (kangaroos); Primates (chimpanzees, gorillas, macaques); Carnivora (canines, felines); Proboscidae (elephants); Crocodylia (crocodiles, alligators, cobras, all poisonous rear-fanged species). Only persons engaged in the wholesale or retail wild animal business or persons exhibiting wild animals to the public will be issued a license to possess inherently dangerous animals.	GA. CODE ANN. §27-5-4 and §27-5-5
Hawaii	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to introduce exotic animals for private use into Hawaii. Exotic animals include, but are not limited to: nonhuman primates, Felidae family (lion, leopard, cheetah,); the Canidae family (wolf and coyote); and the Ursidae family (black bear, grizzly bear, and brown bear), etc.	HAW. ADMIN. RULES §4-71-5, §4-71-6, §4-71-6.1, §4-71-6.5
Idaho	NO	All species of mammals, birds, or reptiles that are found in the wild and are not species of special concern may be held in captivity without a permit so long as the possessor retains proof that the animal was lawfully obtained. In addition, before bringing an animal into the state an owner must obtain an import permit and comply with specific caging requirements for the animal.	IDAHO CODE §36-701
Illinois	P. BAN	No person may harbor, care for, act as a custodian, or maintain in his possession any dangerous animal except at a properly maintained zoological park, federally licensed exhibit, circus, scientific, or educational institution, research laboratory, veterinary hospital, or animal refuge. Dangerous animal means a lion, tiger, leopard, ocelot, jaguar, cheetah, margay, mountain lion, lynx, bobcat, jaguarundi, bear, hyena, wolf, coyote, or any poisonous life-threatening reptile. However, there are no state requirements for a person possessing nonhuman primates and other exotic species not defined as "dangerous animals."	ILL. REV STAT, ch. 720, para. 585/0.1; 585/1, 585/2; 585/3
Indiana	LCN	All persons who possess a dangerous exotic animal must obtain a permit for each animal they possess. Dangerous exotic animals include: lions, tigers, jaguars, cougars, panthers, cheetahs, wolves, coyotes, jackals, hyenas, bears, venomous reptiles, alligators, crocodiles, gorillas, bonobos, orangutans, Burmese pythons, reticulated pythons, green and yellow anacondas, etc. However, there are no state requirements for private possession of monkeys.	IND. CODE ANN. §14-22-26-1 - §14-22-26-6
Iowa	BAN	A person shall not own, possess or breed a dangerous wild animal. A dangerous wild animal is defined as any member of the following families, orders or species: canidae (excluding a domestic dog), hyaenidae, felidae (excluding a domestic cat), ursidae, perissodactyla, proboscidea, order primates, crocodilia, and water monitors, crocodile monitors, beaded lizards, gila monsters, designated species of venomous snakes, reticulated pythons, anacondas, and African rock pythons.	IOWA CODE ANN. §717F.1-.13

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
<b>Kansas</b>	P. BAN	No person may possess or breed a dangerous regulated animal as a "pet." Dangerous regulated animals include the following: lion, tiger, leopard, jaguar, cheetah, mountain lion, hybrid of a large cat, bear, or venomous snake. Persons who are licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture and hold an Animal Welfare Act license are exempt as well as zoos accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, a wildlife sanctuary, research facility, etc.	KAN. STAT. ANN. §32-1301-32-1312
<b>Kentucky</b>	BAN	No person may possess inherently dangerous exotic animals. Inherently dangerous exotic animals include, but are not limited to: tigers, lions, nonhuman primates, dangerous reptiles, bears, etc. People can keep inherently dangerous exotic animals possessed prior to July 2005, but cannot obtain any new animals or breed currently-kept animals.	301 KY. ADMIN. REGS. 2:082
<b>Louisiana</b>	P. BAN	No person may possess bears, cougars, or nonhuman primates as pets. If you possessed one of these animals prior to the passage of the regulation you are grandfathered in.	LA. ADMIN. CODE tit. 76, §115
<b>Maine</b>	LCN & P. BAN	A person may possess a wild animal after obtaining a permit. No primate shall be possessed, except for purposes of therapeutic, emotional, or handicapped aid.	ME. REV. STAT. ANN. tit. 12 §7235-A; CODE ME. R. §7.33
<b>Maryland</b>	BAN	No person may possess or breed the following species of animals as a "pet": foxes, skunks, raccoons, all species of bears, alligators, crocodiles, all species of wild cats, wolves, nonhuman primates, various venomous reptiles, etc. Persons possessing one of the listed animals prior to May 31, 2006 may continue to keep the animal as long as the person provides written notification to the local animal control authority on or before August 1, 2006 of said possession.	MD. CODE ANN., CRIMINAL LAW §10-621
<b>Massachusetts</b>	BAN	No person may possess as a pet a wild bird, mammal, fish, reptile, or amphibian unless the animal was owned prior to June 30, 1995. A wild bird, mammal, fish, reptile, or amphibian is defined as any undomesticated animal that is not the product of hybridization with a domestic form and not otherwise contained in the exemption list.	MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 321, §2.12 and §9.01; and MASS. GEN. LAWS ANN. ch. 131, §77A

**CODE:**

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- LCN** = Requires the owner of the exotic animal to obtain a license or permit from the relevant state agency to own the animal (excludes states only requiring import permits)
- REG** = The state does not require the owner to obtain a license or permit to own the animal within the state, but may regulate some aspect thereof (i.e. entry permit, veterinary certificate, etc.)
- NO** = No statute or regulation governing this issue

*Note:* The animals listed within the above regulations are samples of the animals regulated by the various states. Please check the actual law for a complete list of animals covered.

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Michigan	P. BAN & NO	No person may possess as a pet a lion, leopard, jaguar, tiger, cougar, panther, cheetah, including their hybrids, any bear species, and any wolf-hybrid unless the animal was possessed prior to July 7, 2000. A prior entry permit must be obtained from the director for all other wild animal or exotic animal species not listed above or regulated by the fish and wildlife service of the United States Department of Interior or the Department of Natural Resources of this state. Prior to an exotic animal entering the state, the Department of Natural Resources may require the possessor to have the animal examined by an accredited veterinarian to determine the health status, proper housing, husbandry, and confinement standards are being met.	MICH. COMP. LAWS §287.731, MICH. COMP. LAWS §287.1001-1023, MICH. COMP. LAWS §287.1101-1123
Minnesota	P. BAN	It is unlawful for a person to possess a regulated animal. A regulated animal is defined as: all members of the felidae family (except domestic cats); all bears; and all nonhuman primates. A person who possessed a regulated animal on the effective date of the law, January 1, 2005, had 90 days to register the animal with the local animal control authority. Persons possessing a registered regulated animal may replace the regulated animal if the animal dies, but may replace the animal only once.	MINN. STAT. §346.155
Mississippi	LCN	It is unlawful for a person to import or possess any wild animal classified as inherently dangerous by law or regulation unless that person holds a permit or is exempted from holding a permit. Inherently dangerous animals include, but are not limited to, the following animals: orangutans, chimpanzees, gorillas, macaques, mandrills, baboons, wolves, bears, hyenas, lions, tigers, jaguars, leopards, cheetahs, cougars, elephants, etc. However, there are no state requirements for private possession of small non-domesticated felines such as ocelots, servals, etc.	MISS. CODE ANN. §49-8-5 and §49-8-7
Missouri	NO	A person may not keep a lion, tiger, leopard, ocelot, jaguar, cheetah, margay, mountain lion, Canada lynx, bobcat, jaguarundi, hyena, wolf, coyote, or any deadly, dangerous, or poisonous reptile unless such person has registered the animal with the local law enforcement agency in the county in which the animal is kept.	MO. REV. STAT. §578.023
Montana	LCN & NO	A person may not operate a wild animal menagerie without obtaining a permit. A "wild animal menagerie" means any place where one or more bears or large cats, including cougars, lions, tigers, jaguars, leopards, pumas, cheetahs, ocelots, and hybrids of those large cats are kept in captivity for use other than public exhibition. All other exotic animals entering the state, such as reptiles, monkeys, etc., must be accompanied by a one-time entry permit and an official health certificate.	MONT. CODE ANN. 87-4-801; 87-4-803; 87-4-804; MONT. ADMIN. R. §32.3.202



State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Nebraska	P. BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess any wolf, skunk, or any member of the Felidae (cats, except domesticated) and Ursidae (bears) families unless the animal was in possession prior to March 1, 1986. However, there are no state requirements for nonhuman primates and reptiles	NEB. REV. STAT. §37-477
Nevada	NO	Specific animals, set forth in NEV. ADMIN. CODE ch. 503, §110, are prohibited from private ownership except if the animal was in possession prior to February 28, 1994. Examples of animals listed under §110 are the following: alligators, crocodiles, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, etc. However, other exotic animals may be possessed without a permit or license. Examples of these exotic animals are monkeys and other primates, marsupials, elephants, felines, wolves, bears etc.	NEV. ADMIN. CODE ch. 503, §110; ch. 503, §140; ch. 504, §488
New Hampshire	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess exotic animals, such as felines, bears, wolves, poisonous reptiles, and nonhuman primates, unless they are exhibitors. However, there are certain noncontrolled animals that may be privately possessed within the state without a license. Noncontrolled animals include, but are not limited to: sugar gliders, nonvenomous reptiles, ferrets, etc.	N.H. REV. STATE. ANN. §207:14 and N.H. CODE ADMIN. R Fis §802.01, §804.01, §804.02, §804.03, §804.04, §804.05, Table 800.02
New Jersey	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess a potentially dangerous species as a "pet." Potentially dangerous species include the following orders: Primates; Carnivora (nondomestic dogs and cats, bears); Sauria (venomous gila monsters); Serpentes (venomous coral snakes, cobras, vipers, pit vipers); Crocodilia (alligators, crocodiles, gavials); Psittaciformes (ring-necked and monk parakeets); and Rodentia (prairie dogs, ground squirrels). Zoos and other exhibitors may possess these animals upon showing that specific criteria have been met, such as extensive experience in handling and caring for the animal.	N.J. ADMIN. CODE tit. 7, §25-4.8 and §25-4.9

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- REG** = The state does not require the owner to obtain a license or permit to own the animal within the state, but may regulate some aspect thereof (i.e. entry permit, veterinary certificate, etc.)
- NO** = No statute or regulation governing this issue

*Note:* The animals listed within the above regulations are samples of the animals regulated by the various states. Please check the actual law for a complete list of animals covered.

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
New Mexico	BAN	It is unlawful for a person to possess non-domesticated felines, primates, crocodiles, alligators, and wolves.	Policy Statement by the Department of Game & Fish
New York	BAN	It is unlawful for a person to possess a wild animal. A wild animal is defined as: all members of the Felidae family (except domestic cats); all members of the Canidae family (except domestic dogs); all bears; all nonhuman primates, venomous reptiles, and crocodiles. A person who possessed a wild animal on the effective date of the law, January 1, 2005, had 60 days to obtain a permit for the animal with the Department of Environmental Conservation.	N.Y. ENVTL. CONSERV. §11-0103; §11-0303; §11-0511; §11-0512; 11-0516; §11-0536; §11-0917; and N.Y. AGRIC. & MKTS. §370
North Carolina	NO	A county or city may by ordinance regulate, restrict, or prohibit the possession of dangerous animals. In addition, an entry permit from the State Veterinarian is required before importing into the state a skunk, fox, raccoon, ringtail, bobcat, North or South American felines, coyote marten, and brushtail possum.	N.C. Sess. Laws 153A-131; and §160A-187; N.C. ADMIN. CODE tit. 2, r. 52B.0212
North Dakota	LCN	Category 3, 4, or 5 of nontraditional livestock may be possessed in the state after obtaining an import permit; a nontraditional livestock license; or a certificate from a veterinarian. Category 4 is those species that are considered inherently dangerous, including bears, wolves, wolf hybrids, primates, all non-domesticated cats except Canadian lynx, and bobcat.	N.D. ADMIN. CODE §48-12-01-02 and §48-12-01-03
Ohio	NO	No person may bring into the state a non-domestic animal unless the possessor obtains an entry permit, a health certificate certifying the animal is free of infectious diseases, and a certificate of veterinary inspection. Persons in the state possessing non-domestic animals do not need to obtain a permit.	OHIO ADMIN. CODE §901: 1-17-12
Oklahoma	LCN	No person may possess or raise wildlife for commercial purposes without having first obtained a permit. Regardless of whether the possession is actually for "commercial purposes," all persons owning these animals as pets must obtain this particular permit.	OKLA. STAT. Tit. 29, §4-107
Oregon	LCN	No person may keep an exotic animal unless, before acquiring the animal, the person possesses, or has applied for and not been refused or have been revoked or suspended, a valid permit from the State Department of Agriculture. Exotic animal is defined as any lion, tiger, leopard, cheetah, ocelot, monkey, ape, gorilla, or other nonhuman primate, wolf or canine not indigenous to Oregon, and bear (except black bear).	OR. REV. STATt. §609.305 AND §609.319

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Pennsylvania	LCN	No person may keep exotic wildlife without first receiving a permit from the wildlife commission. Exotic wildlife includes, but is not limited to: all bears, coyotes, lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, cheetahs, cougars, wolves, and any crossbreed of these animals that have similar characteristics in appearance or features. However, there are no state requirements for a person possessing nonhuman primates and reptiles.	34 PA. CONS. STAT. ANN. §2961 and §2963
Rhode Island	LCN	No person may possess, without first obtaining a permit from the department, animals of the following orders, families, and genera: Primates, Carnivores, Amphibia, Reptilia, Canidae, and Insecta. All person obtaining a permit must demonstrate they have both adequate facilities and adequate knowledge of animal health and husbandry to ensure both public safety and health.	R.I. GEN. LAWS §4-18-3
South Carolina	NO	It is unlawful to possess wolves or coyotes within the state. It is also unlawful to possess wildlife indigenous to the state without a permit. Specifically, one can not possess members of the Cervidae, Suidae, Tayassuidae (peccaries), and Bovidae (bison, mountain goats, and mountain sheep) families, nor can they possess coyotes, bears, turkeys, and furbearers. However, there are no state laws governing the possession of non-domesticated felines, primates, reptiles, and other wildlife not listed above.	S.C. CODE REGS. §50-11-1765; §50-16-20
South Dakota	LCN	A permit is required to possess any non-domestic mammal, or any hybrids thereof, of the following orders: Carnivora (Felidae – non-domestic, Canidae – non-domestic, Ursidae – bears, Mustelidae, and Hyaenidae); Artiodactyla (hoofed animals); Perissodactyla (Tapiridae and Rhinocerotidae). In addition, all animals (including those listed above and nonhuman primates and reptiles) must be examined by a veterinarian and be free of any contagious, infectious, epidemic, or communicable disease. No person may possess non-domestic pigs or raccoon dogs.	S.D. ADMIN. R. 12:68:18:03, 12:68:18:03.01; and S.D. CODIFIED LAWS ANN. 40-14-2

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- NO** = No statute or regulation governing this issue

*Note:* The animals listed within the above regulations are samples of the animals regulated by the various states. Please check the actual law for a complete list of animals covered.



State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Tennessee	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess Class I wildlife unless they were in possession of the animal(s) prior to June 25, 1991. Class I wildlife includes the following orders: Primates (gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, gibbons, siamangs, mandrills, drills, baboons, Gelada baboons only); Carnivores (all wolves, all bears, lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, cheetahs, cougars); Proboscidea (all elephants); Perissodactyla (all rhinoceroses); Artiodactyla (all hippos and African buffaloes); Crocodylia (crocodiles and alligators); Serpentes (all poisonous snakes); and Amphibians (all poisonous species). However, the state does not regulate private possession of species not listed above, such as monkeys and small non-domesticated cats (ocelots, servals, etc.).	TENN. CODE ANN §70-4-401, §70-4-403 and §70-4-404
Texas	LCN	No person may possess a dangerous wild animal without first obtaining a license (certificate of registration). Dangerous wild animals are defined as lions, tigers, ocelots, cougars, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, bobcats, lynxes, servals, caracals, hyenas, bears, coyotes, jackals, baboons, chimpanzees, orangutans, gorillas, or any hybrids of the animals listed. However, there are no requirements for a person possessing all other animals not listed above, such as monkeys, wolves, etc.	TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE ANN §822.101 –116; TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE ANN §240.002 (a) and §240.0025
Utah	BAN	A person may not possess live zoological animals that are classified as prohibited and controlled. Prohibited and controlled animals include, but are not limited to, the following families: Ursidae (bears), Canidae (all species), Felidae (all species except non-domesticated cats), Mustelidae (all species), Primates, and certain species of reptiles, etc. However, in rare circumstances a person may possess these animals as pets if the person obtains a certificate of registration from the Wildlife Board. Generally, only exhibitors and educational and scientific facilities obtain these registrations. A certificate of registration is not required for non-controlled species, a category that includes alligators and crocodiles.	UTAH ADMIN. R. 657-3-17; R. 657-3-24; R. 657-3-25; and R. 657-3-27
Vermont	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess exotic animals such as large felines, bears, wolves, poisonous reptiles, and nonhuman primates as pets. Persons may possess exotic animals for exhibition and educational purposes if they obtain a permit. Although the state statute says a person may not bring into the state or possess an exotic animal unless they obtain a permit, no personal possession permits for pets are issued to individuals.	VT. STAT. ANN. Tit. 10, §4709
Virginia	P. BAN	No person may possess nonnative exotic animals that are classed as predatory or undesirable as a pet. Nonnative exotic animals include, but are not limited to: bears, wolves, coyotes, weasels, badgers, hyenas, all species of non-domesticated cats, alligators, and crocodiles. Persons may possess these animals if they are a licensed exhibitor, i.e. for commercial, educational, or scientific uses. However, there are no state requirements for a person possessing nonhuman primates.	4 VAC 15-30-10; 15-30-40

State	Type of Regulation	Summary of Law	Citation
Washington	BAN	No person may possess or breed a potentially dangerous animal after July 2007. A potentially dangerous animal includes but is not limited to large cats, wolves, bears, hyenas, nonhuman primates, elephants, alligators, crocodiles, water monitors, crocodile monitors; and various species of venomous snakes.	WASH. REV. CODE § _____ (will be placed in TITLE 16)
West Virginia	NO	The state only regulates species native to the state. A person possessing a native animal in captivity as a pet must obtain a permit. However, there are no state laws governing private possession of exotic animals.	W. VA. CODE §20-2-51
Wisconsin	NO	Requires all animals commonly sold in pet shops to have certificates of veterinary inspection if they are brought from outside the state.	WIS. ADMIN. CODE ATCP §11.02
Wyoming	BAN	It is unlawful for persons to possess big or trophy game animals. Big game is defined as antelope, bighorn sheep, deer, elk, moose, or mountain goat. Trophy game is defined as black bear, grizzly bear, or mountain lion. According to WY Fish and Game, it is unlawful to possess all other exotic animals, such as tigers, lions, primates, wolves, bears, etc.	WYO. STAT. §23-1-101; §23-1-103; WYO. REG. Chapter 10, §5

CODE:

- BAN** = Ban on private ownership of exotic animals, such as non-domesticated felines, wolves, bears, reptiles, nonhuman primates
- P. BAN** = Partial ban on private ownership of exotic animals; allows ownership of some exotic animals but precludes ownership of the animals listed
- LCN** = Requires the owner of the exotic animal to obtain a license or permit from the relevant state agency to own the animal (excludes states only requiring import permits)
- REG** = The state does not require the owner to obtain a license or permit to own the animal within the state, but may regulate some aspect thereof (i.e. entry permit, veterinary certificate, etc.)
- NO** = No statute or regulation governing this issue

*Note:* The animals listed within the above regulations are samples of the animals regulated by the various states. Please check the actual law for a complete list of animals covered.

## APPENDIX IV:

### Partial List of Incidents Involving Injuries and/or Attacks by Exotic Animals in the United States

This is a small sample of incidents involving exotic animals: most incidents are not reported to authorities.

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
2/01/06	Flora, IL	An 80-year-old worker at Spotted Acres farm and petting zoo was mauled by a bear and died from his injuries. The man was called to work because the bear had escaped from his cage; he was attacked when he got out of his truck holding a bag of dog food. Sheriff's deputies shot the bear; the petting zoo owner also requested that another bear be killed. ( <i>Chicago Tribune</i> )
1/25/06	Princeton, IA	An elderly couple was attacked by a deer they had been illegally raising as a "pet." Both were hospitalized, and the eight-point buck was shot and killed by the sheriff's department. ( <i>Quad-City Times</i> )
12/11/05	Los Angeles, CA	Celebrity Paris Hilton was attacked by her "pet" kinkajou, Baby Luv. Paris took Baby Luv shopping with her and the animal clawed at her face. Paris was notified that it is illegal to have exotic "pets" in California and the animal was relocated outside the state. (Fox News)
11/14/05	Phoenix, AZ	A family was attacked by its neighbors' "pet" monkey in its front yard. The monkey escaped from his home and bit two children. (CNN Daybreak)
11/11/05	Pontotoc, MS	A kinkajou escaped and attacked an 82-year-old woman. The woman was sweeping her porch when the kinkajou jumped on her and wrapped his tail around her arm. The woman received 20 stitches as a result of being attacked and repeatedly bitten by the animal. The woman's son captured the animal and as a result was bitten as well. ( <i>Sun Herald</i> )
9/29/05	Lewis County, WA	A five-year-old boy was attacked by a tiger cub while the cub was outside a cage. (King 5 News)
8/18/05	Altamont, KS	A 17-year-old girl was attacked and killed by a Siberian tiger during a photo-op for her high school senior portrait. The seven-year-old tiger was being restrained by trainer Doug Billingsly, owner of Lost Creek Animal Sanctuary and Animal Entertainment Productions, where the attack occurred. (Associated Press)
8/12/05	Beeville, TX	A woman turned over her "pet" mangabey monkey to a wildlife sanctuary after she was bitten by him. ( <a href="http://www.kristv.com">www.kristv.com</a> )
7/11/05	Noble County, OH	A three-foot-tall monkey, Buddy, escaped from his home, jumped into a pickup truck, and bit a 20-year-old man on the leg before fleeing. ( <a href="http://www.nbc4i.com">www.nbc4i.com</a> )
6/26/05	Morehead, KY	A monkey leapt out of a car window as his owner picked up an order at a fast food drive-through window. The monkey, Boo Boo, hung on to a clerk's hand and bit and injured a restaurant worker. ( <a href="http://abclocal.go.com">abclocal.go.com</a> )



DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
6/22/05	Little Falls, MN	A ten-year-old boy was attacked by a tiger then a lion while he and his father were visiting their friend. The tiger and lion were being kept at an auto parts store along with nine other large cats. The boy suffered a brain injury and a severed spinal cord, which left him quadriplegic and dependent on a respirator. (Associated Press, <i>Brainerd Dispatch</i> )
6/11/05	Allen County, OH	A man was attacked by his “pet” three-year-old, 160-pound mountain lion. The man grabbed the mountain lion’s tail to prevent the animal from attacking his mother and was subsequently bitten. ( <i>Lima News</i> )
5/07/05	Huntington, WV	A 13-year-old girl suffered injuries after being bitten by a capuchin monkey. The monkey bit the girl’s kneecap and finger. ( <i>Herald Dispatch</i> )
4/09/05	Thackery, IL	A four-year-old girl reached into a pen that housed a “pet” cougar and the animal bit her hand and arm. ( <i>Courier Press</i> )
4/09/05	St. Joseph, MO	A young girl was bitten by a five-foot-long python during an educational presentation at “Experience Western” on the Missouri Western State College campus. The display also included an alligator, chameleon, tarantula, and turtle. The girl was treated at a hospital and released. (KQTV St. Joseph)
3/17/05	Campe Verde, AZ	Two North American wolves attacked their animal handler inside an exhibit at Out of Africa Wildlife Park. The attacked woman was airlifted to a hospital after she suffered major injuries to her arms and legs, requiring surgery. ( <i>Arizona Republic</i> )
3/06/05	Underwood, MN	A 16-year-old girl babysitting for the co-owner of Arcangel Wildlife was injured when she petted 1 of 10 tigers on the property. The tiger caused lacerations to her hand, requiring about 12 stitches. Later that night, a serious infection set in and she needed three successive operations to her hand. ( <i>Forum</i> )
3/03/05	Caliente, CA	Four chimpanzees escaped from their cages and attacked a man and woman visiting another chimpanzee at Animal Haven Ranch. The man was severely mauled, requiring extensive surgery, and the woman lost a finger. An Animal Haven employee fatally shot two chimpanzees to stop the attack and two other chimps remained loose for several hours before being captured. (Associated Press, <i>Bakersfield Californian</i> )
2/12/05	Tampa Bay, FL	A tiger cub bit a woman’s hand during an exhibit at Tampa Bay Auto Mall. Two adult tigers and two cubs were on display so people could have their photographs taken with tigers. The tigers were supplied by Bottomline Events, in conjunction with Zoo Dynamics, which provides animals to zoos and exhibits. Their caretaker was charged with unsafe handling of captive wildlife, resulting in injury to a person. ( <i>St. Petersburg Times</i> )
2/06/05	Bucyrus, OH	A man was rushed to a hospital after being bitten by his rhinoceros viper snake — considered one of the most deadly snakes in the world. He received anti-venin and survived the attack. ( <a href="http://Channelcincinnati.com">Channelcincinnati.com</a> , <a href="http://nbc4i.com">nbc4i.com</a> )

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
1/22/05	Bronx, NY	A 38-year-old man was bitten by his rattlesnake on his hand while moving the snake from one tank to another. It is illegal to keep venomous snakes within the city limits. ( <i>NY Daily News</i> )
1/20/05	Baraboo, WI	A lion cub at Creature Features Pet Store bit an eight-year-old girl visiting the store. Baraboo police ordered the pet store owner to quarantine the cub for at least ten days. ( <a href="http://www.wiscnews.com">www.wiscnews.com</a> )
1/20/05	Fenton, MI	A woman was treated for a potentially serious hand wound after being bitten by her friend's rattlesnake. ( <i>Flint Journal</i> )
1/06/05	Dunlap, IN	A man and his dog were attacked by a wolf hybrid while going for a walk in the local neighborhood. The dog did not survive the attack. ( <i>South Bend Tribune</i> )
12/07/04	Eagle, WI	A man was bitten by his cobra while he was trying to feed him. The man was given anti-venin and survived. ( <a href="http://www.gmtoday.com">www.gmtoday.com</a> )
11/20/04	St. Augustine, FL	A 350-pound Siberian tiger being walked on leash attacked and injured a 14-year-old boy at St. John's County Fair. The tiger's handler was also attacked and injured when he attempted to pull the tiger off the boy. The incident was brought under control only after two police officers fired Taser stun guns at the tiger. The handler was the owner of the Catty Shack Ranch, where the tiger lived. (Associated Press)
11/13/04	Gentry, AR	A Bengal tiger pulled flesh off the right middle finger of a woman visiting Wild Wilderness Drive Thru Safari after she reportedly placed her hand in the tiger's cage. (See 1/24/02 entry for another incident involving Wild Wilderness Drive Thru Safari.) ( <a href="http://NWAnews.com">NWAnews.com</a> )
11/06/04	Sarasota, FL	An 18-year-old worker was bitten by a bear while trying to break up aggressive behavior among several bears at Big Cat Habitat. He was flown to Bayfront Medical Center, where he was listed in fair condition. ( <i>Tampa Tribune</i> )
10/15/04	Birmingham, AL	A five-year-old boy was bitten by his family's "pet" wolf. The boy survived the attack, but the wolf was destroyed. ( <a href="http://www.waff.com">www.waff.com</a> )
9/11/04	Peoria, IL	A worker at Wildlife Prairie State Park was in critical condition after a black bear mauled him. The five-year-old bear was out of his den when the worker entered the bear's pen to feed him. Officials think the gate to the bear's den had been left unlocked. The worker suffered severe leg injuries and nerve damage. (Associated Press)
9/08/04	Trenton, ME	An employee of Acadia Zoological Park was seriously injured by a 13-year-old leopard. Details of the incident were not released. The man was taken to a nearby hospital with injuries to his face and arm. The zoo declined to say whether the leopard was quarantined or destroyed. (Associated Press)
9/06/04	North College Hill, OH	A woman died after being bitten by her venomous snake. Her house was home to 10 venomous snakes and 13 non-venomous reptiles. ( <i>Enquirer</i> )
8/01/04	Brooklyn, NY	Darla, a five-year-old macaque monkey, bit a two-year-old boy being wheeled by his grandparents in a shopping cart at a grocery store. ( <i>Newsday</i> )

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
8/04	Madison, WI	A child was sickened by salmonella after handling small turtles. The parents purchased some small turtles and two days later their four-year-old daughter became ill. (Associated Press)
7/06/04	St. Charles, MN	An escaped monkey bit two people at the Winona County fairgrounds. Five monkeys from Staples Safari Zoo and Animal Rescue escaped when two boys pried open a locked trailer door. Four monkeys were quickly captured, but the fifth fled and bit when cornered. The people who caught the monkey and were bitten received rabies shots while the monkey was placed in quarantine. (Associated Press)
5/28/04	Ross County, OH	A 33-year-old woman suffered injuries to her arm when a lioness owned by her father attacked her. The lion was shot and killed. ( <i>Chillicothe Gazette</i> )
5/23/04	Brutus, NY	A woman lost part of her arm when she was mauled while attempting to pet a caged bear, in a private zoo. She was driven to a hospital, where her arm was amputated just below the elbow. ( <i>Post-Standard</i> )
5/11/04	Albuquerque, NM	A man visiting the Rio Grande Zoo stuck his finger into a jaguar's cage, and the cat bit off the finger. The man fled the scene untreated. (Associated Press)
5/03/04	Glenwood Springs, CO	A seven-year-old girl suffered injuries to her face when a wolf-hybrid jumped up and hit her while she was taking pictures of animals for a school project. ( <i>Post Independent</i> )
5/01/04	Silver Springs, FL	An adult brown bear at Silver Springs' World of Bears bit a bearkeeper's arm near the shoulder, according to a press statement. The keeper was hospitalized for treatment. The bear was to be quarantined for ten days for observation. ( <a href="http://WESH.com">WESH.com</a> , Newschannel 2)
4/11/04	Rose Hill, VA	A snake-handling pastor died in his home after being bitten on the finger by a rattlesnake while performing a Pentecostal Easter service. ( <i>Richmond Times Dispatch</i> )
4/03/04	Boston, MA	A Burmese python wrapped tightly around his owner and bit down on her wrist for more than twenty minutes before police arrived to remove the snake. ( <i>Boston Herald</i> )
3/17/04	Massena, NY	A four-year-old girl was mauled by one of her grandmother's "pet" cougars. The child was hospitalized for bruises to the head and was treated for an eye injury. ( <a href="http://www.newsday.com">www.newsday.com</a> )
3/05/04	Porter, IN	A veterinarian with 35 years' experience handling snakes narrowly avoided death when he was bitten by a "pet" rattlesnake. Antivenin was located and administered. (Associated Press)
2/13/04	Elizabethtown, IL	A man was apparently changing the bedding of his "pet" lion's pen when he was mauled to death. ( <a href="http://NBC5.com">NBC5.com</a> )
2/10/04	Port Sulphur, LA	A woman was attacked by her "pet" leopard while she was petting the animal inside his cage. She survived the attack and was rushed to the hospital and underwent surgery due to cuts to her face and skull. Police officers and her brother-in-law shot the animal. (Associated Press)



DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
2/09/04	Pequea, PA	A 17-year-old boy's finger was seriously damaged after being bitten by his highly venomous West African bush viper snake. There is no antivenin for this snake's bite. ( <i>Sunday News</i> ).
1/24/04	Surry County, NC	A 14-year-old girl was mauled by her father's "pet" tiger while she was inside the cage taking pictures of the animal. Her father owned four tigers and after the incident, all were shot. ( <i>Winston-Salem Journal</i> )
12/27/03	Calvert County, MD	A pigtailed macaque monkey bit a 49-year-old man on his left thumb. ( <i>Washington Post</i> )
12/24/03	Rockwell, NC	Samson, a large cat at Charlotte Metro Zoo, bit the zoo's owner while being used in a television commercial for Carolina Panthers. In a separate incident, a cobra used for a Carolina Cobras football team commercial got loose during filming. ( <i>Salisbury Post</i> )
12/15/03	Millers Creek, NC	A ten-year-old boy was mauled to death by his aunt's "pet" tiger. The tiger pulled the boy under a fence and into his cage. (Associated Press)
11/28/03	Gillette, WY	Two men were hospitalized after being bitten by one of two rattlesnakes who were being illegally kept at the home. (Associated Press)
10/16/03	Little Ferry, NJ	A 44-year-old man was found dead in his garage, the victim of a bite from his "pet" Gabon viper. ( <i>North Jersey Media Group</i> )
10/06/03	Golden Valley, AZ	Tigger, a 6-year-old, 500-pound Bengal tiger at the Keepers of the Wild animal facility, attacked a 21-year-old employee who tried to pet him while cleaning his pool. Tigger bit her on the leg and dragged her across the ground. Another employee used a steel rack to get Tigger off her. Three of Tigger's canine teeth went completely through her leg and she spent five days in the hospital. (KLAS-TV Channel 8 (CBS) Las Vegas, <i>Las Vegas Sun</i> )
10/04/03	Harlem, NY	A 400-pound "pet" Bengal tiger bit his owner on the arm, sending the man to the hospital. The tiger was confiscated from the apartment along with a "pet" alligator. On October 7, 2004 the man was sentenced to five months in jail for reckless endangerment ( <i>New York Times</i> , Associated Press)
10/03/03	Las Vegas, NV	During a stage show at Mirage Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas, Roy Horn of Siegfried & Roy was mauled by Montecore, a seven-year-old, 600-pound white tiger. When Montecore latched onto Horn's arm, Horn tapped Montecore on head with a microphone. An audience of 1,500 watched Montecore drag Horn offstage by his neck, where an artery was opened. Show workers set off fire extinguishers backstage to distract the tiger. Horn suffered severe injuries. (Associated Press)
10/01/03	Birmingham, AL	A "pet" timber wolf bit an eight-year-old child on the leg. ( <i>Birmingham News</i> )
9/30/03	Miami, FL	Thelma, a 20-year-old, 150-pound orangutan, bit a veterinarian's hand at Metrozoo. Thelma, on loan from Oakland Zoo, was being treated for a small foot injury through the bars of her holding area when she grabbed the woman's arm, pulled it through the bars, and bit down, crushing bones. The veterinarian was treated at Baptist Hospital. (KIRO-TV Channel 7 (CBS) Seattle, Associated Press)

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
8/16/03	Town and Country, FL	A man was bitten by his “pet” mamba snake a half-dozen times on his forearm and wrist and was rushed to the hospital. The man possessed 26 poisonous snakes and 4 small crocodiles in his mobile home, where 4 small children also resided. ( <i>Tampa Tribune</i> )
8/12/03	Tampa, FL	A first-grader was bitten by a pygmy rattlesnake. ( <i>Tampa Tribune</i> )
8/03/03	Dayton, OH	A firefighter was bitten by his “pet” rhino viper snake on his left hand and was rushed to the hospital, where he died the next day. ( <a href="http://www.whiotv.com">www.whiotv.com</a> , <i>Daytona Daily News</i> )
7/03/03	La Crosse, WI	During a performance at Riverfest, a tiger clawed his trainer. (WKBT-TV, Channel 8 (CBS) La Crosse)
6/30/03	Calhan, CO	A 35-year-old man was severely mauled by Duke and Merlin, 2,500-pound tigers, while inside their cage for daily cleaning at Big Cats of Serenity Springs, a wildlife facility in El Paso County. The facility's owner rushed in and broke two shovels fighting off the tigers. The man suffered a mangled calf and scalp injuries. Both tigers were killed. (KMGH-TV Channel 7 (ABC) Denver, <i>Denver Post</i> )
6/23/03	Crossett, AR	A firefighter at Crossett Zoo was bitten on the right hand by Tigger the tiger. The firefighter was inside fence that separated Tigger's cage from the rest of the zoo when Tigger bit and clamped down for more than 30 seconds. Surgery repaired a deep laceration and the severed tendon of one finger. The tip of the thumb was bitten off. ( <i>Ashley County Ledger</i> )
6/15/03	Whitehall Township, PA	A man was bitten by one of several poisonous snakes he kept in his apartment. The snake bit the man on his shoulder. The police confiscated 10 poisonous snakes from the apartment. ( <i>Morning Call</i> )
6/06/03	Rockledge, FL	An 80-pound Burmese python, Lurch, escaped from his cage and wrapped tightly around the leg of his owner's mother. Paramedics arrived and freed the woman. ( <i>Tallahassee Democrat</i> )
6/03/03	Red Wing, MN	A Siberian tiger was destroyed for attacking three people. (WCCO-TV Channel 4 (CBS) Minneapolis)
6/03 –7/03	WI, IN, IL, MI, KS, OH	A total of 81 cases of monkeypox in humans were being investigated in these six states as a result of contact with prairie dogs, which had become a popular “pet.” At least 32 cases were confirmed by the CDC. ( <a href="http://journalsentinel.com">journalsentinel.com</a> )
5/31/03	Rhode Island	A “pet” piranha attacked a little girl. The girl was bitten on the finger and immediately rushed to the hospital. (KHOU-TV Ch. 11 (CBS))
5/16/03	Leavenworth County, KS	A man was attacked by his “pet” bear. (KMBC-TV Ch. 9 (ABC))
5/07/03	Orlando, FL	A seven-foot alligator at Gatorland bit a handler on his face. The handler was preparing for the park's Gator Wrestling Show, which took place in an 800-seat arena, when the alligator bit him. The man had four years' experience handling large reptiles at park. ( <i>Orlando Sentinel Tribune</i> )

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
5/04/03	Darlington County, NC	A man was attacked by his water buffalo. After the attack, the water buffalo was shot and killed. ( <i>Messenger</i> )
4/27/03	Boise, ID	A 13-month-old boy died after being attacked by a wolf-hybrid. The animal bit the boy more than a hundred times, eventually puncturing his jugular vein. ( <a href="http://www.kbcity.com">www.kbcity.com</a> )
4/08/03	District of Columbia	A Burmese python bit a person. ( <i>Washington Post</i> )
4/07/03	San Antonio, TX	A buffalo at a petting zoo behind Rachel's Country Corner gored and trampled a 29-year-old caretaker to death. USDA officials were looking into possible violations of Animal Welfare Act. ( <i>Post and Courier</i> )
4/02/03	Adair, OK	A tiger attacked and ripped off the arm of a volunteer handler who was leaning against a cage at Safari Joe's Rock Creek Exotic Animal Park. The woman died of blood loss. The tiger belonged to the International Wildlife Center of Texas, which leased a building in the park. (Associated Press)
3/31/03	Hennepin, IL	The owner of Second Nature Exotic Cats Sanctuary was killed by a tiger when he let two tigers out of a building into a penned enclosure for exercise. Police shot both tigers to rescue the wounded and bleeding man, only to discover he was dead. On his rural property, the man also had one cougar, one lion, and another tiger. ( <i>Peoria Journal Star</i> )
3/18/03 (reported)	20th Century Fox television set	A trained mountain lion bit actress Elisha Cuthbert on the set of the television series 24. The trainer instructed Cuthbert to befriend the animal, but the lion sank his teeth into Cuthbert's hand. Cuthbert was treated for puncture wounds and received a tetanus shot. (Ananova News Search, <i>The Sun</i> )
3/06/03	Annapolis, MD	A woman was bitten on her thumb by her boyfriend's venomous snake and she was rushed to the hospital. The boyfriend was charged with reckless endangerment and importing a venomous snake into the state. ( <i>Baltimore Sun</i> )
1/31/03	Fort Myers, FL	A man was hospitalized and given ten vials of antivenin after his "pet" cobra bit him in the stomach. (Associated Press)
12/15/02	Miami, FL	A 20-year-old female elephant at Metrozoo knocked down a 31-year-old zookeeper and kicked him into pile of rocks. The zookeeper was rendered unconscious, suffered a laceration to his head and injury to his back, and was listed in critical condition at a hospital. The crowd of visitors who witnessed the attack included children. (Associated Press)
11/16/02	Yacolt, WA	A man was bitten on the lip by his "pet" rattlesnake after he attempted to kiss the snake. ( <i>The Oregonian</i> )
10/17/02	Southport, FL	Samson, a 500-pound African lion at Knoll's 77 Zoological Park, attacked a zookeeper who entered a cage for a photo. The lion grabbed the man, threw him in a corner, and chewed on the man before releasing him. The zookeeper had a hole ripped in throat, his right eye pulled out of its socket, severed tendons in neck and chest, torn skin, and bites down to bone, and was listed in critical condition for 11 days. He lost 80% of eyesight and needed an operation to restore his vision. He had worked with large captive animals since the age of 12, when he began training bears in circus in Europe. (Associated Press)



DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
10/13/02	Penn Township, PA	A green mamba snake bit a man on his finger. The snake was in a cage when he bit the man. ( <i>Lancaster New ERA</i> )
10/11/02	Jackson, NJ	A man was attacked by one of his 24 tigers. The man suffered severe injuries to his arm, head, and face. The man was the husband of Joan Byron-Marasek, the "Tiger Lady." ( <i>Star Ledger</i> )
9/30/02	Ravenna, MI	A three-month-old girl was attacked by her family's "pet" raccoon. The girl was attacked in her crib and received facial injuries. She was expected to have to undergo major facial reconstructive surgery. (Associated Press)
9/24/02	Gainesville, FL	The director of the Kanapaha Botanical Gardens was working in one of the parks' water lily gardens when an 11-foot alligator, MoJo, bit off his right arm just below the elbow. MoJo was harpooned, shot, and his stomach slit open to retrieve the arm, but surgeons were unable to reattach it. (Associated Press, <i>York News Times</i> )
9/20/02	Scotts Valley, CA	A 150-pound tiger, Sima, lunged at a six-year-old boy at a school assembly, grabbing the boy's head in her jaws. Zoo to You brought the one-year-old declawed tiger to the school to reward children for selling magazine subscriptions. The boy needed 55 stitches to close his wounds. (Associated Press, <a href="http://zootoyou.com">zootoyou.com</a> )
9/08/02	Pascagoula, MS	A man was bitten on the arm by his rattlesnake four times. The man was rushed to the hospital where he received 27 bottles of anti-venin. ( <i>Sun Herald</i> )
9/01/02	Bend, OR	A three-year-old girl was bitten on the neck by a serval cat. (Associated Press)
8/29/02	Tampa, FL	A "pet" kinkajou scratched and bit three children. A judge ordered the animal to be destroyed to determine whether he had rabies. (WFLA-TV Ch. 8 (NBC))
8/28/02	Howard Beach, NY	A woman was bitten on the hand by her "pet" python at a motel. ( <i>Newsday</i> )
8/14/02	Haywood County, NC	A rattlesnake bit a man's leg after he brought the snake into his kitchen and force-fed the snake an egg. ( <i>Citizen-Times</i> )
8/05/02	Flathead County, MT	A "pet" monkey bit at least four local people. One incident was at a restaurant and another was at a fruit stand on U.S. Route 2. (Associated Press)
8/04/02	Racine, MN	While putting a monkey, JoJo, back in her cage and giving her a hug, a volunteer at B.E.A.R.C.A.T. Hollow animal park was grabbed by her hair. When the volunteer tried to free herself, JoJo bit her on the finger. The volunteer had to receive a series of rabies shots. ( <i>Star Tribune, Duluth News-Tribune</i> )
8/04/02	Davenport, IA	A woman at the Mississippi Valley Fair was bitten, scratched, and hit on the head by monkey who was being used to pose for photographs. The woman was subsequently tested for herpes, HIV, hepatitis, and rabies and filed a lawsuit against the monkey's owner and Mississippi Valley Fair. (Associated Press)
7/28/02	Pocatello, ID	A 15-year-old boy brought home a rattlesnake to keep as a "pet" and was bitten on the finger. The boy was rushed to a hospital. The State Department of Fish and Game removed the snake. (Associated Press)

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
7/26/02	Sandy, UT	A 16-year-old girl was bitten by her “pet” six-foot-long African rock python, Junior. The snake bit the girl’s fingers. Police arrived to rescue the girl and had to use two pairs of scissors to pry the snake off the girl’s hand. The girl suffered extensive puncture wounds. ( <i>Salt Lake Tribune</i> )
7/15/02	Duluth, MN	A man was bitten by his “pet” cobra and was in critical condition. ( <i>Duluth News Tribune</i> )
7/02/02	Henrietta, NY	A man was bitten by his “pet” rattlesnake, who he was keeping illegally. The man was handling three timber rattlesnakes in his home when one of the snakes bit him. ( <i>Rochester Democrat and Chronicle</i> )
7/01/02	West Concord, MN	A captive black bear bit a seven-year-old girl. The girl was in an enclosed pen while her grandfather was feeding several of his “pet” bears. One of the bears, Cindy Lou, lunged at the girl, biting her right leg and taking her to the ground. (Associated Press)
7/01/02	Muskego, WI	A “pet” wallaby, Rocko, bit a six-year-old boy on the finger while the boy was in Rocko’s pen. The boy, along with another child, ran away from Rocko, but Rocko chased the two boys. Rocko then kicked the second boy and knocked him to the ground. ( <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i> )
6/24/02	Montgomery County, TX	A “pet” macaque monkey bit his owner and a nine-year-old boy and scratched a firefighter who tried to help. ( <i>Las Vegas Review-Journal</i> )
6/02	Wickliffe, KY	A five-year-old boy was mauled to death by a wolf-hybrid during a visit to his grandmother’s house. The owner of the animal was ordered to serve six months in jail with a picture of the child on her cell wall. ( <i>Capital Times</i> )
5/02	IN	A ten-year-old boy was attacked by a Burmese python while visiting a pet store. The snake’s owner had brought the animal into the store and allowed the boy to hold the snake. The boy was bitten on the shoulder and the chest and suffered 40 puncture wounds before the animal was removed. (Associated Press)
4/28/02	Easley, SC	An eight-year-old boy was bitten on the leg by his father’s “pet” tiger. ( <i>Post &amp; Courier</i> )
3/22/02	Menifee, CA	A wolf-hybrid bit a ten-year-old boy in a parking lot. The boy suffered puncture wounds, scrapes, and bruises when he was bitten and dragged more than 20 feet. ( <i>Press Enterprise</i> )
2/10/02	Aurora, CO	A 43-year-old man was strangled to death by his 10-foot-long “pet” Burmese python. ( <i>Denver Post</i> )
2/03/02	Loxahatchee, FL	A 58-year-old woman was bitten on the head by a 750-pound declawed “pet” Siberian-Bengal mix tiger. (Associated Press, <i>Palm Beach Post</i> )
1/24/02	Gentry, AR	Two animal handlers at Wild Wilderness Drive Thru Safari were attacked while transferring cougars between cages. One handler received multiple bites on his arm and leg, and other was bitten in face. (Associated Press)
1/17/02	Hollywood, FL	A 12-year-old boy lost the tip of his finger when his “pet” iguana bit it off. ( <i>San Antonio Express-News</i> )

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
1/16/02	Newark, DE	The body of a 42-year-old man who lived with 7 Nile Monitor lizards was discovered being eaten by his “pets.” ( <i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i> )
1/16/02	Palm Beach, FL	A 31-year-old man was bitten by a captive diamondback rattlesnake. He received treatment at a nearby hospital. ( <i>Sun-Sentinel</i> )
1/11/02	Knoxville, TN	A “pet” monkey accused of biting a neighbor was being held pending investigation. (KUSI-TV Ch. 51)
1/10/02	Arroyo Hondo, NM	A 61-year-old woman was killed by her son’s “pet” wolf-hybrid. ( <i>Albuquerque Journal</i> )
12/17/01	West Haven, CT.	A 25-year-old man was bitten by his poisonous “pet” cobra snake. The man was hospitalized for several days while undergoing anti-venin treatment and surgery was expected to be required to repair damage done by the venom. (Associated Press)
12/09/01	Davie, FL	A seven-year-old boy was taken to a hospital for stitches after being attacked and bitten “bone-deep” on his neck by a 40-pound declawed African serval at a PepsiCo International picnic. The child was walking by when an unattended serval leapt on him and knocked him to the ground. Pangaea Productions had been hired to bring the serval and other animals to the event as entertainment. (Associated Press)
12/06/01	Forsyth County, NC	A six-year-old child was seriously wounded on her leg in an attack by two “pet” wolves or wolf hybrids. ( <a href="http://WXII12.com">WXII12.com</a> )
11/23/01	Cleveland, OH	A woman was bitten on both of her hands by a “pet” monkey at a bar, resulting in 16 puncture wounds. ( <i>Plain Dealer</i> )
10/26/01	Gainesville, FL	A man bitten by a coral snake was in stable condition after receiving antivenin. It is uncertain how the man was bitten by the snake, but it is presumed that the snake was his “pet.” (Associated Press)
10/15/01	Dallas, TX	Two rhinos battled at Brownsville Zoo, resulting in the death of one animal and serious injury to a maintenance worker. A female rhinoceros and two male rhinos were mistakenly put together in an exhibit meant to have two females and one male. ( <i>Dallas Morning News</i> )
10/13/01	Jacksonville, FL	A 10½-foot-long albino boa snake latched on to the wrist of a man and would not let go. The snake was killed. ( <i>Florida Times-Union</i> )
10/10/01	Lexington, TX	A three-year-old boy was killed by his step-grandfather’s “pet” tiger. The tiger grabbed the boy by the foot and took off running. ( <i>American Statesman</i> )
10/03/01	Pompano, FL	A woman was bitten by a five-foot-long Monaco cobra snake and fell into a coma. The snake’s owner did not have a permit to keep the snake and did not accompany the woman to the hospital to inform medical personnel what type of antivenin to use. The owner was charged with four misdemeanors for owning and storing the snake improperly. ( <i>Orlando Sentinel, Sun Sentinel</i> )
9/27/01	Palm Harbor, FL	A man was bitten on his hand by a coral snake. ( <i>St. Petersburg Times</i> )



DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
9/13/01	Richfield, WI	A 33-year-old man was bitten by two of his “pet” poisonous snakes while he attempted to clean their cages. He was bitten on the right forearm by an Indian cobra and on his left index finger by an Egyptian cobra. ( <i>Dayton Daily News</i> )
8/26/01	Leavenworth County, KS	A “pet” bear bit a 31-year-old man on his right inside forearm. ( <i>Kansas City Star</i> )
8/26/01	Charlton County, GA	An 18-year-old girl died from a venomous snake bite. The girl was doing laundry in her home when the snake crawled through a vent and bit her. (Associated Press)
8/22/01	Irwin, PA	An eight-year-old girl died after her family’s “pet” ten-foot-long Burmese python wrapped around her neck and suffocated her. The snake was one of five “pet” snakes owned by the family. The snake escaped from a tank. The girl’s father was charged with involuntary manslaughter, reckless endangerment, and child endangerment, and the mother was charged with child endangerment. (Scripps Howard News Service, Associated Press, <i>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</i> )
8/19/01	Leavenworth County, KS	A “pet” lion bit a woman who was trying to feed peaches to some bears. ( <i>Kansas City Star</i> )
8/18/01	London, KY	A “pet” monkey bit a six-year-old girl on the arm during a county festival. ( <i>Herald Leader</i> )
7/31/01	Center Hill, FL	A 500-pound male Siberian tiger at Savage Kingdom broke into an adjoining cage and fatally mauled a workman who was there to make repairs. The tiger was shot by the park’s operator. (Associated Press)
7/27/01	Berkeley County, WV	A “pet” monkey bit three children and was under quarantine while being tested for diseases. The monkey tested negative for hepatitis B and was relocated to a wildlife sanctuary. ( <i>Herald-Mail Online</i> , Associated Press)
7/22/01	Racine, WI	A tiger at B.E.A.R.C.A.T. Hollow pushed his way out of his pen and grabbed a seven-year-old girl, inflicting two puncture wounds. The park was closed to the public, but the girl and her mother were allowed in to take fund-raising pictures. (Associated Press)
7/05/01	SC	A man was bitten by his “pet” Asiatic spitting cobra and was flown to a Florida hospital for antivenin. ( <a href="http://MSNBC.com">MSNBC.com</a> )
6/12/01	Ridgeland, MS	A one-year-old “pet” vervet (African green monkey) bit and scratched a child. The vervet had previously bitten another child. ( <i>MS Animal Rescue League</i> )
5/17/01	Beloit, WI	A ten-foot-long python escaped from his homemade glass cage and crawled into the bed of a five-year-old boy. The snake clamped onto the boy’s hand and coiled around his arm. The boy was treated for bruising and fang cuts. ( <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i> )
5/12/01	Vallejo, CA	Four “pet” Alaskan wolves escaped from their enclosure and attacked a neighbor. The wolves tore the woman’s clothes, but she escaped injury. ( <i>Fairfield Daily Republic</i> )

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
4/25/01	Jackson County, IL	A four-year-old boy was mauled to death by a wolf-hybrid. The wolf-hybrid bit the boy several times and severed his jugular vein. ( <i>Southern Illinoisan</i> )
4/10/01	Todd County, MN	A man was mauled by his “pet” bear while fixing the corn crib used to cage the bear. (Associated Press)
3/25/01	Las Vegas, NV	Jagger, a Bengal tiger kept at Wildlife Safari, killed a trainer and injured his owner while being prepared for an advertising photography shoot. ( <i>Kingman Daily Miner</i> )
3/25/01	Sequin, WA	A zebra bit the arm of a three-year-old boy attempting to feed bread to llamas through a car window at Olympic Game Farm. The zebra pulled the boy from the vehicle and dragged him until the child was rescued by a relative. Stitches were required to close the wound on the child’s arm. ( <i>Spokesman Review</i> )
3/19/01	Olmsted, OH	A volunteer at Burnette Farm and Education Center was attacked by a Siberian tiger as he shoveled gravel in the animal’s cage. The man suffered life-threatening injuries from a bite on his neck. ( <i>Akron Beacon Journal</i> )
3/01	New York City, NY	A three-foot-long California King “pet” snake slithered up four flights of stairs and into an apartment, attacking a sleeping child. The three-year-old was rushed to a nearby hospital. ( <i>New York Post</i> )
3/01	Menifee, CA	A wolf-hybrid attacked a nine-year-old boy who was playing with the animal. The boy was bitten and required 20 stitches. ( <i>Press Enterprise</i> )
2/05/01	Santa Clara, CA	A ten-year-old vervet monkey, Oliver, bit his owner while she was feeding him. Oliver had bitten his owner on several previous occasions. (Santa Clara Valley Humane Society)
12/06/00	Oklahoma City, OK	A five-year-old capuchin monkey bit a boy at a Home Depot store. The monkey was taken to a shelter to be tested for any communicable diseases and was released after testing negative. ( <i>Daily Oklahoman</i> , KOKH-TV, Ch. 25 (Fox))
12/00	Morgan County, MO	An 80-to-100-pound African lion, Simba, escaped from his enclosure. He killed a dog and six puppies, then trapped a small child in a room. The boy was rescued through a window. The owner was charged with child endangerment. ( <i>Kansas City Star</i> )
11/04/00	Worcester, PA	Health officials linked 11 cases of <i>E. coli</i> infection in children to a petting zoo at Merrymead Farm. Eight children were hospitalized, and six developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, which can lead to kidney damage. ( <i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i> )
10/21/00	Gambier, OH	A tiger at Siberian Tiger Foundation bit a ten-year-old boy on the leg. The boy and his father had paid to enter the compound for a “close encounter” with Siberian tigers chained to posts. The boy was treated at a local hospital and released. According to the USDA, 10 instances of people being injured by tigers had occurred in the previous nine-month period at this facility. ( <i>Columbus Dispatch</i> )

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
9/28/00	Tulsa, OK	A monkey, Barney, injured a child at a motel. The monkey either bit or scratched the four-year-old girl's cheek. Barney's owner was staying in the room adjacent to the girl's room. ( <i>Tulsa World</i> )
9/13/00	Albuquerque, NM	A tiger cub being used in a petting zoo at the New Mexico State Fair bit a man on the arm as the man was having his picture taken with the cub. The visitor was treated for minor injuries. (KOB-TV Channel 4 (NBC) Albuquerque)
8/15/00	Sprague, WV	A "pet" chimpanzee got loose from his cage and bit two individuals while roaming the neighborhood. The chimp, Herbie, was subdued and returned to his owner's home. In 1998, Herbie had tried to remove the driver's seat of a postal truck, causing the truck to slam into a parked vehicle. ( <i>News Wire</i> )
8/03/00	Southwest Ranches, FL	A "pet" monkey, Mikey, bit two teenage girls after he escaped from his home. The girls sustained bites to their arms and face. ( <i>Miami Herald</i> )
8/01/00	San Angelo, TX	A monkey, Ted E. Bear, bit one of his owners and was subsequently shot and killed by the owner. The owner was treated at a hospital and released. Ted E. Bear had previously bitten a man in 1998. ( <i>San Angelo Standard Times</i> )
8/01/00	Kansasville, WI	A "pet" snow monkey escaped from his home and attacked a 73-year-old neighbor, biting him on both legs. Then the monkey jumped into a post office truck, attacking and biting a female postal worker. Both people were treated at the hospital and released. The monkey was destroyed and tested for herpes B. ( <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i> )
7/18/00	Platte County, MO	A neighbor's "pet" rhesus monkey jumped on the shoulder of a young boy and bit his arm. ( <i>Kansas City Star</i> )
7/12/00	Kansas City, MO	A "pet" chimpanzee bit a child and then picked up another child and threw her. Jackson County Animal Control took the chimpanzee into its custody and the owner was arrested. (KHSB TV)
7/00	Anne Arundel County, MD	A "pet" monkey was seized by authorities after he bit someone in a bar where his owner had taken him. ( <i>American Lawyer Media</i> )
7/00	Louisville, KY	A "pet" vervet, Angelica, bit her owner on the neck and went for the jugular vein, leaving puncture wounds in the owner's neck. (API Primate Sanctuary)
6/00	WI	A "pet" capuchin monkey attacked his owner. The monkey grabbed a can of deck sealant to throw at his owner, then dropped the can and leapt on the man, biting his stomach. This monkey had a history of biting. ( <i>Chicago Tribune</i> )
5/31/00	Columbia, MD	A "pet" spider monkey escaped from his home and was roaming a Columbia neighborhood. A woman saw the monkey in her tree and went to feed him a piece of bread; the monkey charged after her, grabbed the piece of bread, and bit the woman on her upper left thigh. The monkey was not captured. ( <i>Washington Post</i> )
5/30/00	Pensacola, FL	An orangutan at The Zoo escaped through an unlocked cage door and then attacked and bit a keeper who tried to coax animal back inside. The keeper was treated at a local hospital for bruises and five bite wounds to his knee. ( <i>Pensacola News Journal</i> )



DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT
5/28/00	Madison, AL	A 15-year-old boy was bitten on his left index finger by his “pet” copperhead snake. The boy was taken to a hospital for treatment and subsequently released. Also found in the boy’s room were pythons, boas, an alligator, and a South American crocodile. ( <i>Huntsville Times</i> )
5/20/00	Kiowa, CO	A Bengal tiger at Prairie Wind Animal Refuge tore off the arm of a volunteer who stuck her arm in the animal’s cage to demonstrate that visitors can safely pet tigers at refuge. The refuge operated a photo safari program where some animals were released from their cages and allowed to roam with visitors. ( <i>Rocky Mountain News</i> )
5/17/00	Buffalo, NY	A man was bitten on the hand by his poisonous Gabon viper and was rushed to the emergency room to receive antivenin. The man also possessed an eight-foot-long, 250-pound alligator, and numerous other venomous snakes. ( <i>Buffalo News</i> )
5/16/00	Brewster, MA	A Bengal tiger at Bassett Wild Animal Farm attacked a teenage worker when the girl entered the cage’s feeding area, apparently unaware that a trap door was open. The girl was treated for puncture wounds to her leg. ( <i>USA Today</i> )
3/27/00	Anne Arundel County, MD	A “pet” wolf-hybrid mauled a six-year-old boy. The wolf-hybrid, Cheyenne, escaped from a cage and jumped into the neighbor’s yard and attacked the boy. The boy required 80 stitches to his arm. (WJLA-ABC News)
3/15/00	Channelview, TX	A “pet” Bengal tiger tore off the arm of a four-year-old boy. The boy’s arm was severed just above the elbow by the caged tiger, who was kept in the back yard of the boy’s uncle’s house. The boy stuck his arm through one of the gaps in the tiger’s chain-link cage. ( <i>Houston Chronicle</i> )
2/13/00	Lansing, IL	A nine-year-old macaque, Zip, attacked his owner. Zip latched his fangs into the woman’s head, arms, and legs. She spent ten days in the hospital and lost about a pint-and-a-half of blood. Zip was destroyed. Zip had previously bitten the woman and attacked the family dog. ( <i>Chicago Tribune</i> )

## APPENDIX V:

### Case Study — North Carolina

API's investigation into the private ownership of exotic animals and roadside zoos and menageries in North Carolina revealed the appalling conditions in which some of these animals were kept as well the dangers that such animals present to public safety. Key findings include:

- **Poor Conditions:** Animals kept in inadequate conditions; pens that were too small, which failed to allow animals to express normal species-specific behaviors.
- **Lack of Enrichment:** Pens that were barren or lacked appropriate structures and furnishings and did little, if anything, to stimulate the animals' natural behavior, resulting in stereotypical behavior.
- **Lack of Companionship:** Animals who were housed alone.
- **Cruel and Inappropriate Treatment:** Animals handled roughly and inappropriately; teeth and claws surgically removed; nonhuman primates often treated like human children, kept in diapers; animals left to roam inside houses.
- **Overbreeding:** The continual breeding of certain species to provide a constant supply of young animals for attractions and photo opportunities.
- **Dangerous Public Contact:** The offering of "close encounters" in which the public was allowed to have direct contact with dangerous animals; ineffective barriers to protect the public from having direct contact with the animals.
- **Child Endangerment:** Children placed at risk of attacks and injuries from dangerous exotic animals.
- **Reckless Behavior:** Owners placed the public and themselves at risk through irresponsible behavior.
- **Animal Attacks:** Reports of attacks and injuries inflicted by exotic animals on owners and others.

*North Carolina currently has no state laws regulating the private ownership of exotic animals.*

#### Examples of Poor Conditions / Animal Mistreatment



- **Charlotte Metro Zoo:** Animals housed here included a number of big cats such as tigers, lions, and leopards; bears; and various species of primates, including a chimpanzee, baboons, and macaques. Many of the animals were kept in inadequate conditions: pens were small, barren, and lacked meaningful enrichment. Some animals displayed stereotypical behavior, such as circling, pacing, and rocking. The facility had been cited by the USDA on a number of occasions for failing to provide minimal standards of care for its animals, including failure to provide environmental enrichment, failure to provide shelter, failure to erect a perimeter fence, inadequate feeding, and more.

The large cats lived in different size enclosures and pens with either earthen or concrete floors. For many animals, there was little in the way of structures and meaningful enrichment. Some cats displayed stereotypical



**FIG. A:** *Animals were often kept in poor conditions that lacked appropriate structures and enrichment for the species. In a barren, muddy, and wet cage, there were no raised platforms to allow the cats off the ground. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)*



**FIG. B:** *Bears were kept in barren concrete pits with a visitors' "gallery" above so that people could look down and throw food at them. There was no shelter, forcing them to be on permanent "display." (Cherokee Bear Zoo, NC)*

behavior, pacing inside their pens. On the day of API's visit, it was raining. One pen containing three tigers was very wet and muddy. There were no raised platforms that would allow the cats to be off the ground. (See Fig. A)

One leopard was found on his own in a small metal trailer covered by a blue tarpaulin sheet. Another leopard was kept in a very small, barren pen under the porch of an on-site private residence.

Some of the primates were housed in pairs, but others were kept singly, with no opportunity to socialize. Enrichment methods were not substantive and pens were not suitable for the species they housed. Some pens had concrete floors and lacked height and space. A number of the monkeys displayed stereotypical behavior such as pacing, rocking, circling, and repetitive jumping.

Some animals were handled roughly and treated aggressively by the facility's owner and his partner. The owner told API investigators that the best way to stop a monkey from biting was to gag her by shoving fingers down the animal's throat. He also smacked one tiger on the face after the tiger bit him. His partner roughly handled infant monkeys.

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- **Cherokee Bear Zoo:** This facility contained a number of bears, primates, and tigers. The animals were housed in poor conditions and music blared constantly throughout the zoo.

The bears were kept in concrete pits with a visitors' "gallery" above them so that people could look down and throw food at them. There were a number of these pits, all in a row, containing either two or four bears. The pits were made entirely of concrete. There were no shelters visible. The bears had no privacy, and were forced to be on display the whole time and were literally "performing" for their food. (See Fig. B)

The conditions for the primates and a tiger failed to meet the animals' physical and psychological needs. Most of the primates were kept in circular cages with concrete floors and a roof. These cages were small and barren. The baboons in particular suffered in such a confined space. The tiger pen was small, with a concrete floor; a depression in the ground was used as a water area. Otherwise, the pen was barren. There was no shelter available for the animal.

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- **Santa's Land:** This theme park and petting zoo housed a number of animals, including bears and cougars. Many of the animals were kept in poor conditions, in small and barren pens. (See Fig. C)

Four adult black bears were kept in pairs in two extremely small, dark pens, with low roofs and concrete floors. The only structures in one of the pens were a small raised wooden platform and a shallow concrete container that appeared to be the bears' only source of water and was almost empty. There was no shelter.

Two cougars were housed in a small, dark, concrete pen with a covered roof. There was no shelter, just a raised wooden platform. The only other structure in the pen was a concrete water bowl.

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- **Triangle Metro Zoo:** Animals kept here included bears, big cats, and primates. Many of the animal pens were inadequate: small and barren with a concrete or shiny artificial surface. The pens were clearly designed for appearance and ease of cleaning, not to meet the needs of the animals.



**FIG. C:** These bears were kept in appalling conditions. The pens had concrete floors and were extremely small and barren. One pen had no shelter. (Santa's Land, NC)



**FIG. D:** Animals are often confined to small and barren environments that fail to meet their physical and psychological needs. This tiger displayed marked stereotypical behavior, pacing inside his small, concrete prison. (Triangle Metro Zoo, NC)





**FIG. E:** The owner performed tricks with tigers in front of visitors such as putting his arm and then his head into this tiger's mouth, as seen here. (Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)



**FIG. F:** This child was at risk from a leopard who was kept in a cage under the porch of this house. (On-site Private Residence at Charlotte Metro Zoo, NC)

They lacked enrichment, some only containing a water trough. (See Fig. D)

Two bears were housed in a small closed-topped pen with an artificial floor. There was a depression in the surface for a water area. The only items in the pen were a small metal hut attached to one side, a log, and a metal bracket (possibly used to hold a bucket). A plastic tube allowed the public to feed the bears. Otherwise, the pen was empty.

Two lions were kept in a very small, barren pen with an artificial floor. There was a small brick building attached for a shelter. The only other item in the pen was a water trough. There were no structures or enrichment. A tiger, who displayed stereotypical behavior, was kept in a similarly small and barren pen nearby. (See Fig. D)

## Examples of Threats to Public Safety / Reckless Behavior / Child Endangerment



• **Charlotte Metro Zoo:** The owner of this facility behaved recklessly during API's investigators' visit and took risks with public safety. He performed tricks with tigers in front of visitors, sitting on one tiger's back and sticking his face into the mouth of another. On one occasion, an adult tiger on a leash was on display in a non-secured area. The owner put his arm, and then his head, into the tiger's mouth. He then walked the tiger, holding only the collar, back into his enclosure. (See Fig. E)

Tigers, lions, and monkeys were bred on-site and used in photo shoots and taken to fairs. It appeared that some, if not all, of the tiger cubs and infant monkeys were removed prematurely from their mothers for commercial purposes. The animals were raised inside an on-site private residence. Despite acknowledging the potential dangers that tiger cubs and infant monkeys pose to the public, the owner appeared to regularly take these animals out to let visitors see them and for photo opportunities.

API investigators were invited into an on-site private residence to see the infant monkeys and tiger cubs who were kept in the house. All the animals had their teeth and claws. Incidents took place at the house while API investigators were present that posed a serious danger to a five-year-old girl living there. On one occasion, a tiger cub climbed onto the girl and grabbed her with his paws. Her mother had to push the cub away. The child climbed out of reach onto the back of the sofa. The child was nervous around the animals and at one point asked her mother not to let the tiger cub bite her if she got off the sofa. The tiger cub bit the mother's foot.

Underneath the porch of the house, an adult black leopard was kept in a small pen. From the porch, the child would be able to stick her hands through the wire directly into the pen and touch the leopard. (See Fig. F)

The mother was irresponsible to allow this interaction. Not only was the child's safety at risk, but the animals themselves were at risk from the actions of the child. On one occasion, the child was pulling one of the monkeys around roughly on his leash and swinging him in the air, shouting and laughing while she did it. Her mother made no attempt to stop her.

• **Cherokee Bear Zoo:** A number of incidents took place during API's visit that raised concerns about the risks this zoo took with visitors' safety.

The zoo placed the public at risk by allowing direct contact with dangerous animals during photo sessions. Two five-month-old tiger cubs were used

in these sessions. People were allowed to bottle-feed the tiger cubs while having their photograph taken. The cubs had been de-clawed in their front feet but still had their teeth and were capable of inflicting serious bites. The cubs were not put on leashes for the photos but were roughly handled by the collar. There was no safety area attached to the pen, allowing the cubs direct access into public areas if they escaped. Following one photo session, a staff member left a tiger cub unsupervised and unleashed outside of her pen.

In addition, a group of children was actually allowed to stick their hands through the bars of the tiger pen to touch the tiger cubs. The cubs started to jump up at the children, who became nervous; their parents called them away. (See Fig. G)

- **Santa's Land:** This facility took risks with public safety by allowing zoo visitors, including children, to have direct contact with dangerous animals.

Two seven-month-old bear cubs were put on public display during feeding time. Adults and children gathered for the event, where there was only an ineffective safety barrier (a low single rail circling a platform). The gate to the bears' pen was opened and the cubs were allowed to run out unrestrained onto the platform directly in front of the public. The animals climbed two poles and a staff member held out a bottle of fruit punch for them to drink. It was only then that the bears were leashed. A staff member openly encouraged the public to touch the bears, even though they were told the animals could bite. When the bears climbed down from the poles, children reached out and started to stroke the bears. After a while the gate was opened and the bears were led back inside their pen. The gate was left open while the leashes were removed. (See Fig. H)



**FIG G:** Children were allowed to stick their hands through bars to touch these large tiger cubs. These cubs were also taken out for "photo ops" that included direct contact with the public. (Cherokee Bear Zoo, NC)



**FIG. H:** The public, including children, were openly encouraged to touch bears. One of the staff told visitors: "Our insurance company says no petting. However, if you decide you want to pet them, keep in mind we're not liable, okay. Now they will bite, but if you decide you want to pet them, I suggest you might want to pet them on the back, away from the head area." (Santa's Land, NC)

## Case Study — Ohio

API's investigation into the private ownership of exotic animals and roadside zoos and menageries in Ohio revealed the appalling conditions in which some of these animals were kept as well the dangers that such animals present to public safety. Key findings include:

- **Poor Conditions:** Animals kept in inadequate conditions; pens that were too small, which failed to allow animals to express normal, species-specific behaviors.
- **Lack of Enrichment:** Pens that were barren or lacked appropriate structures and furnishings and did little, if anything, to stimulate the animals' natural behavior, resulting in stereotypical behavior.
- **Lack of Companionship:** Animals who were housed alone.
- **Cruel and Inappropriate Treatment:** Animals' teeth and claws surgically removed; animals left to roam inside houses; nonhuman primates treated like human children.
- **Dangerous Public Contact:** The offering of "close encounters" in which the public was allowed to have direct contact with dangerous animals; ineffective barriers to protect the public from having direct contact with the animals.
- **Reckless Behavior:** Owners placed the public and themselves at risk through irresponsible behavior.
- **Animal Attacks:** Reports of attacks and injuries inflicted by exotic animals on owners and others.

*Ohio currently has no state laws regulating the private ownership of exotic animals.*



**FIG. I:** Many animals, including this bear, were confined to small, barren environments that failed to meet their physical and psychological needs. (Stump Hill Farm, OH)



**FIG. J:** This chimpanzee had no teeth. It is common for owners to have their exotic animals de-clawed, de-fanged, or both in an attempt to limit the potential danger the animals pose to humans. (Stump Hill Farm, OH)

### Examples of Poor Conditions / Animal Mistreatment



- **Stump Hill Farm:** This facility was open to the public by appointment and hired out its animals for events. It had been cited by the USDA on a number of occasions over the years for failing to provide minimal standards of care for its animals, including failure to provide environmental enrichment; failure to provide minimum space; failure to provide veterinary care; and failure to provide drinking water. Animals housed at this facility included bears, big cats, and primates.

Many of the bear pens were extremely small, dark, barren, and cramped. Small, makeshift wooden huts appeared to be the only form of shelter. There was no water to bathe in and no trees or branches for the animals to scratch. A number of the animals displayed stereotypical behavior, including pacing and swaying. (See Fig. I)

A number of big cats were kept in small, cramped pens similar to those housing the bears. The animals' movements were severely restricted and some displayed stereotypical behavior, pacing inside the small pens. Like the bear pens, no wooden structures or water in which to bathe were visible inside the cat pens.

Several primates were housed alone, including a 26-year-old chimpanzee. (See Fig. J)



- **Hope's Heaven Sent Zoo & Etc:** This was a run-down site, with numerous animals, both exotic and domesticated species. Many of the animals were kept in appalling conditions; enclosures were poorly constructed and poorly maintained. A cougar housed on his own had a dilapidated wooden hut, made of pallets, as his source of shelter. Nearby, two Arctic foxes were kept in an inadequate, small, wire-constructed pen with a wire floor. Some animals displayed stereotypical behavior, pacing and circling inside their pens. (See Fig. K)

One primate, a snow monkey, was housed on his own. There was a plastic pipe that ran into his pen, down which the owner poured root beer and candy for him. (See Fig. L) A candy machine was kept on-site for visitors to purchase "treats" for the animals. This site was open to the public and gave school tours.

- **Private Owner B:** This owner, a representative of an outspoken organization that actively lobbies against the banning of the ownership of exotic cats, housed a number of exotic animals in unsuitable conditions in the overcrowded living room of a small house. Four humans lived in this house along with two servals, a lemur, a bush baby, three birds, and at least two snakes. The ring-tailed lemur and bush baby were housed on their own in small cages on the floor. The ring-tailed lemur displayed severe stereotypical behavior, circling around the confines of his small cage. (See Fig. M) The servals ran loose in the house. (See Fig. N) Outside, a six-year-old cougar was kept on his own in a small pen attached to what appeared to be the garage. The pen was barren. The cougar did not have his canine teeth. The owner claimed that the cougar's jaw had been broken, presumably when the teeth were removed.

## Examples of Threats to Public Safety / Reckless Behavior



- **Siberian Tiger Conservation Association:** API investigators were placed at serious risk during their time at this facility. They signed up for a one-day training program to work with large exotic cats. At the time of this visit, the establishment had lost its USDA exhibitor's license because a number of people had been attacked and injured by the cats during so-called "close encounters." The facility was no longer officially open to the public; however, despite the attacks and the subsequent loss of her license, the owner continued to hold "close encounters" with tigers by allowing the public to pay for a "training and education" session. This activity, which was advertised on the facility's website, had apparently continued to occur without a USDA license and, as of the preparation of this report, no official action had been taken by the USDA.

The owner's behavior towards her visitors was irresponsible and reckless. API investigators were allowed not only to hand-feed cats, but were also taken into an enclosure containing three adult tigers and encouraged to touch, stroke, kiss, and even sit astride the animals.

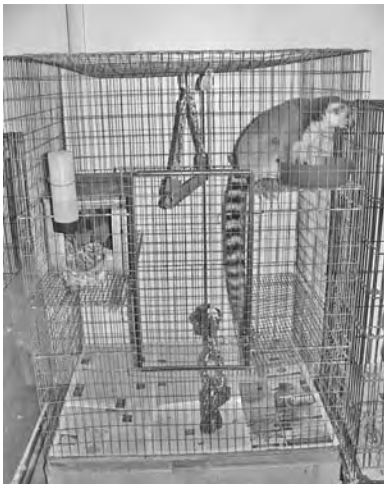
On one occasion, the owner put her arm and hand inside a tiger's mouth. (See Fig. O) API investigators were then encouraged to stick their arms in the tiger's face to be licked. At one point, the tiger grabbed one of the investigator's arms. On two occasions, a tiger jumped at an investigator. One tiger grabbed an investigator's leg and tried to bite him before being pulled away.



**FIG. K:** This run-down site was open to the public and gave school tours. These two Arctic foxes were kept in an inadequate, small, wire-constructed pen with a wire floor. (Hope's Heaven Sent Zoo & Etc., OH)



**FIG. L:** This snow monkey was kept in solitary confinement and given root beer and candy in return for performing "tricks" in front of visitors. (Hope's Heaven Sent Zoo & Etc., OH)



**FIG. M:** *This lemur was deprived of space and companionship. He showed abnormal behavior, circling frantically inside the confines of his small cage. (Private Owner, OH)*



**FIG. N:** *Some private owners even allow their exotic "pets" to roam freely inside their homes, like this serval in Ohio. Not only is this unsuitable for the animals, it poses a danger to humans as well. (Private Owner, OH)*

Other incidents that happened during the day involved one tiger putting her mouth around the owner's leg. She smacked the tiger on the nose after this incident, which was inappropriate and could potentially have caused further problems. Another tiger put her mouth over the fingers of one of the students while she was splashing water in a trough.

According to the *Kenyon Collegian* and the USDA, in October 2000, a ten-year-old boy was knocked to the ground and bitten on the leg by a tiger at the Siberian Tiger Conservation Association (then known as the "Siberian Tiger Foundation") while participating in a "close encounter" at the facility. This was the tenth incident in seven months in which people were bitten or otherwise injured by tigers at the facility.

- **Tiger Ridge Exotics:** This facility housed a number of tigers, lions, and bears. The behavior of the owner during API's visit was reckless and irresponsible. He entered a number of enclosures containing bears and lions, opening gates that led directly from the animal areas into the areas used by the public, with little apparent concern for safety. The facility had no safety areas within the various outdoor enclosures housing bears and large cats. This meant that for a short period of time, there was no effective barrier between the animals and API investigators. (See Fig. P) The gate to one of the enclosures containing two lions and a bear actually opened outward, an unsafe set-up.

A young bear was used to attract people driving past the facility. He was at the front of the property in a location furnished like a children's play area. The area was surrounded by a low fence made from three crudely-placed electric wires. (See photo below) The owner jumped around on a trampoline with the bear cub.



The owner also entered a pen containing two bears, one of whom had attacked him in the past. The bears were on the other side of the gate, which the owner appeared to simply push behind him without locking. One of the bears grabbed his arm with his mouth, forcing him to step backwards. After getting the bear to stand for "treats," the owner stuck his face into the bear's face. He then opened the gate and stood there with the gate open while trying to get one of the bears to perform a trick.

The owner also took API investigators to a basement area. One pen contained two tigers, and another a jaguar. The owner acknowledged that the animals were aggressive. When the owner went into the jaguar pen, he used a pole to control the animal. Yet on both occasions he opened and shut the metal gates with API investigators on one side and the animals immediately on the other. The animals behaved very aggressively, and the jaguar leapt at the gate as it was closed.

During API's visit, the owner of this facility was bitten by a lynx. The animal was sitting on the lap of one of API's investigators, who was inside the animal's pen at the suggestion of the owner. When the lynx put her mouth around the investigator's arm, the owner of the facility reached out and the lynx grabbed his arm with her teeth and bit him, inflicting a bleeding wound. The owner described how a number of his animals had attacked him, including a bear, monkey, and jaguar.



**FIG. O:** *The owner put her arm in a tiger's mouth, then encouraged participants at her "close encounter" to stick their hands in front of the tiger's face to be licked. (Siberian Tiger Conservation Association, OH)*



**FIG. P:** *The owner risked the safety of visitors by opening gates that led directly into the pens of dangerous animals. (Tiger Ridge Exotics, OH)*



## Case Study — Washington

API's investigation into the private ownership of exotic animals and roadside zoos and menageries in Washington revealed the appalling conditions in which some of these animals were kept as well the dangers that such animals present to public safety. Key findings include:

- **Poor Conditions:** Animals kept in inadequate conditions; pens that were too small, which failed to allow animals to express normal species-specific behaviors.
- **Lack of Enrichment:** Pens that were barren or lacked appropriate structures and furnishings and did little, if anything, to stimulate the animals' natural behavior, resulting in stereotypical behavior.
- **Lack of Companionship:** Animals who were housed alone.
- **Cruel and Inappropriate Treatment:** Animals' teeth and claws surgically removed.
- **Dangerous Public Contact:** The offering of "close encounters" in which the public was allowed to have direct contact with dangerous animals; ineffective barriers to protect the public from having direct contact with the animals.
- **Child Endangerment:** Children placed at risk of attacks and injuries from dangerous exotic animals.
- **Reckless Behavior:** Owners placed the public and themselves at risk through irresponsible behavior.
- **Animal Attacks:** Reports of attacks and injuries inflicted by exotic animals on owners and others.

*When this investigation was undertaken, Washington had no state laws regulating the private ownership of exotic animals. Since 2007, Washington has enacted a law banning the private ownership of most exotic "pets."*

### Examples of Poor Conditions / Animal Mistreatment



• **Olympic Game Farm:** At this facility, visitors drive through areas containing a number of exotic species. Lions, tigers, cougars, and wolves were kept in a series of pens with wire roofs. The access road for cars ran alongside the front and back of these pens. Outside areas were small and lacked meaningful enrichment. Shelters were not completely closed off, so the animals had no privacy but rather were always on display for visitors.

The main drive-through bear enclosure was a large grassed area, although the landscape appeared to be essentially barren, with just a few metal corrugated structures as shelter, almost as if to keep the animals on permanent display. The bears lined up along the fence line and begged for treats. There were no large water troughs visible for the bears to sit or bathe in. One concrete trough was so narrow that the bears could only sit next to it and dangle their paws in the water. (See Fig. Q)

At another location, a group of four bears was kept in a smaller grassed area. Attached to the fence, on the outside of the enclosure, was a metal trailer with metal bars. The trailer had a line of chicken wire around it, attached to metal poles stuck in the ground, providing a very crude and ineffectual safety barrier. A bear sitting in the trailer was able to stick his paws through the trailer bars. The trailer gave the bears little in the way of



**FIG. Q:** Bears enjoy bathing and swimming, yet at this facility, this water trough was too small for the animals to climb into. (Olympic Game Farm, WA)



**FIG. R:** This bear lived in a poorly maintained pen and this trailer provided little privacy or shelter from the elements. (Olympic Game Farm, WA)

privacy or shelter from the elements. (See Fig. R)

- **Private Owner D:** This individual, a leading representative of an organization that advocates the keeping of exotic animals as “pets,” kept three cougars and a group of bobcats in pens that lacked space and enrichment. Three narrow pens, each housing one cougar, ran right through the wall of the house into the living room. Gates (without locks) opened out into the living room. The outside pens were small and lacked climbing structures. (See Figs. S & T) The pen for the bobcats also lacked enrichment, containing only a few shelter boxes.

- **Private Owner F:** This individual kept a cougar, a tiger, and two bears in deplorable conditions. The pens were small, barren, dirty, and muddy. There was no attempt at environmental enrichment. The animals' physical and psychological welfare were severely compromised.

A five-year-old tiger and five-year-old cougar were kept in separate small, barren pens topped with wire, creating a low roof. Both pens were extremely muddy and had pools of water. The cats displayed severe stereotypical behavior (pacing and head weaving).

Two bears existed in appalling conditions. They were kept separately in small pens that were low and open-topped. There were no structures or enrichment in these pens. The bears lived on muddy ground on which were strewn a few stones, old plastic eating containers, tin cans, and other debris. There were no shelters to protect them from the elements and no raised platforms to allow them to get respite from the muddy ground that had pools of water. The bears must have suffered greatly from boredom and frustration. This location was lauded as an appropriate facility in which to place a needy exotic animal by a leading representative from an organization that advocates the keeping of exotic animals as “pets” and claims to be the “responsible” face of private ownership. (See Fig. U)

- **Private Owner G:** This individual no longer wanted his five-year-old “pet” cougar and was trying to find a home for him. He had originally bought the cougar from a local pet shop.

The owner claimed that he could no longer care for the cat, and the animal had started to show signs of aggression; apparently the owner had recently been attacked. The cougar was living in a small, barren, unsuitable pen in the yard, which no one had entered or cleaned out for about a month. (See photo below)



**FIG. S & T:** Three cougars were kept in small, barren pens that ran right through the wall of this house and opened out into the living room. These are totally unnatural and unsuitable conditions for dangerous wild animals. (Private Owner, WA)



**FIG. U:** These squalid conditions were home to a “pet” bear. The pen was extremely small and contained no shelter, platform, or enrichment; the ground was covered in mud and debris. (Private Owner, WA)



**FIG. V:** Infant animals are continuously bred at many facilities not only as a source of extra income but also to be used as an attraction for visitors to pet and hold. (Outback Kangaroo Farm, WA)

Concern was expressed by another private owner about whether the roof would collapse when it started to snow. There was no perimeter fence or safety area attached to the pen. It had a low roof and lacked enrichment. The cougar displayed stereotypical behavior, pacing inside the pen.

## Examples of Threats to Public Safety / Reckless Behavior / Child Endangerment



- **Outback Kangaroo Farm:** The public, including children, were placed at risk by being allowed to walk among kangaroos, touching and feeding them. There were no safety barriers, although kangaroos are very powerful animals and can cause serious injury. (See Figs. V & W)

Visitors could also spend time in a room with lemurs. This showed a lack of responsibility towards public safety, particularly with infant animals around. Primates are extremely protective of their young. API investigators were even encouraged to hand-feed the lemurs and to stand up so that the lemurs would climb onto their backs. During this encounter, the owner admitted that the adult male lemur had bitten a previous owner.

- **Private Owner D:** During API’s investigators’ visit, this individual placed herself and others at risk through her reckless and irresponsible behavior. She entered her bobcat enclosure and was attacked twice by one of the bobcats. She encouraged the cats to go through a gate into what was supposed to be a lock-out area. The gate to the lock-out area was not secure, allowing the bobcat who had already bitten her to escape through the gate and attack her again.

The woman also opened the gate to one of her indoor cougar pens, which meant there was no barrier between the cougar and the woman’s visitors in her living room. (See Fig. T) Later, the owner encouraged both API investigators to hand-feed fresh meat to the cougars through a gap between the gate post and the metal gate. The cougars were hungry; they growled at each other and used their paws to try and grab the food from the investigators’ hands. The gap was wide enough for hands and paws to fit through. One of the cougars stuck out his paw and swiped at one of the investigators while he was trying to give him a piece of chicken.

- **Private Owner G:** Poor safety at this individual’s home meant that children, neighbors, and the wider community were at risk. This person kept a cougar in a small pen in his backyard. There was no safety fence surrounding the pen or a lock-out area attached to the gate. The gate opened directly onto the garden. The daughter of the owner was able to walk up to the cougar’s cage. There was nothing stopping the child from sticking her hand through the fence or preventing the cougar from escaping when the gate was open. This situation was a disaster waiting to happen. (See photo on bottom of p. 105)



- **Private Owner F:** Reckless behavior and child endangerment were problems at this individual's home. API investigators saw a small child linger around a tiger pen; the safety fence was not in good repair. They also saw the private owner enter the enclosure of one of his two bears. The bear jumped at him and with his paws around the man's back and waist, threw him against the fence and then continued to hold on tightly to him. The man called for the gate to be unlocked and then managed to move towards the gate, still with the bear holding on to him. He was eventually able to pull himself away from the bear's grip. This man was lucky that nothing more serious happened — this time. (See Fig. X)



**FIG. W:** Public tours involved visitors, including children, being allowed to wander among kangaroos and wallabies to pet them. A kangaroo kick can cause serious injury. (Outback Kangaroo Farm, WA)



**FIG. X:** A private owner recklessly entered the pen of this bear to "show off" to visitors. He kept his bears in solitary confinement in deplorable conditions. (Private Owner, WA)



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