

# ANIMAL ISSUES **DIGEST**

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**SANCTUARY IMPROVEMENTS**

**BORN FREE USA AT THE CITES CoP**



## Welcome,

It has been 35 years since, together with my parents, Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers, I co-founded a tiny little organization, then called Zoo Check, now Born Free.

I was a young man in my mid-twenties. The ideals I held then — a world where captive wild animal exploitation in zoos and circuses would be a thing of the past, where nature was properly protected, and where wildlife lived in the wild — seemed just around the corner.

More than three decades on, the world seems in a terrible state. Climate change, pollution, the “plastic epidemic,” the ongoing display of millions of animals in captive facilities for little more than human entertainment, the surge of nationalism and corruption, the bloody ivory trade, trapping, fur, habitat loss... it seems hopeless.

But, it isn't. I remain an optimist! How is that possible?

It is possible because I feel a change, and we're beginning to see it. It's coming.

The pendulum can only swing so far in one direction, as day follows night, before swinging back again. I see evidence of this all around.

I see hundreds of thousands of young people forfeiting a day of schooling to peacefully take to the streets, calling for action on climate change before it's too late.

I see closure of circus after circus — people voting with their feet and staying away from the lure of the big top.

I see a growing list of companies — including big name global brands — saying no to fur and other exotic animal skins.

I constantly hear about the massive surge of those who are moving towards a plant-based diet, abandoning the products of intensive farming practices that are destroying our planet.

I see grassroots groups spending their free time cleaning up our beaches and oceans, removing deadly plastics that injure, maim, and kill.

I also see an increasing public interest in compassion, not only for rescued animals (like the 535 monkeys at our wonderful primate sanctuary in Texas) and for campaigns to end the ravages of the wildlife trade — including consumer countries, led by the USA, now restricting or banning the commercial sale of ivory and rhino horn.

There has been a surge in support for Compassionate Conservation, for strategies securing a future for iconic species — like lions, tigers, and great apes — that not only consider the welfare of the individual animals involved, but prioritize the needs of those human communities that share these animals' fragile environments.



And, where does a lot of this “new energy” come from? The young! Connecting, conversing, campaigning — young people are using communication platforms and social media to come together, share values and dreams, and to take action!

Yes, we may be in a mess. But, we can do something about it by investing in the future. We can help shape the world into a better, kinder, more tolerant place. It is up to us.

So, today, you decide. Join Born Free USA and, together, let's do something amazing — for the animals, for future generations, for our solitary, spinning, unbelievably precious planet — **for us all!**

Will Travers OBE  
Born Free President and Co-Founder

## NEW LOOK, MORE FEATURES

You may have noticed a new look to our magazine as well as more international content!

Don't worry, you'll still receive the same updates and news about animal welfare related issues on local, state, and national levels the same way you always have. With increased cooperation from our global team, we'll also be able to offer more stories and information from Born Free staff and programs around the world to show all fronts in the fight to keep wildlife in the wild.

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We work tirelessly to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect and are able to live their lives according to their needs.

We seek to have a positive impact on animals in the wild and protect their ecosystems in perpetuity, for their own intrinsic value and for the critical roles they play within the natural world.

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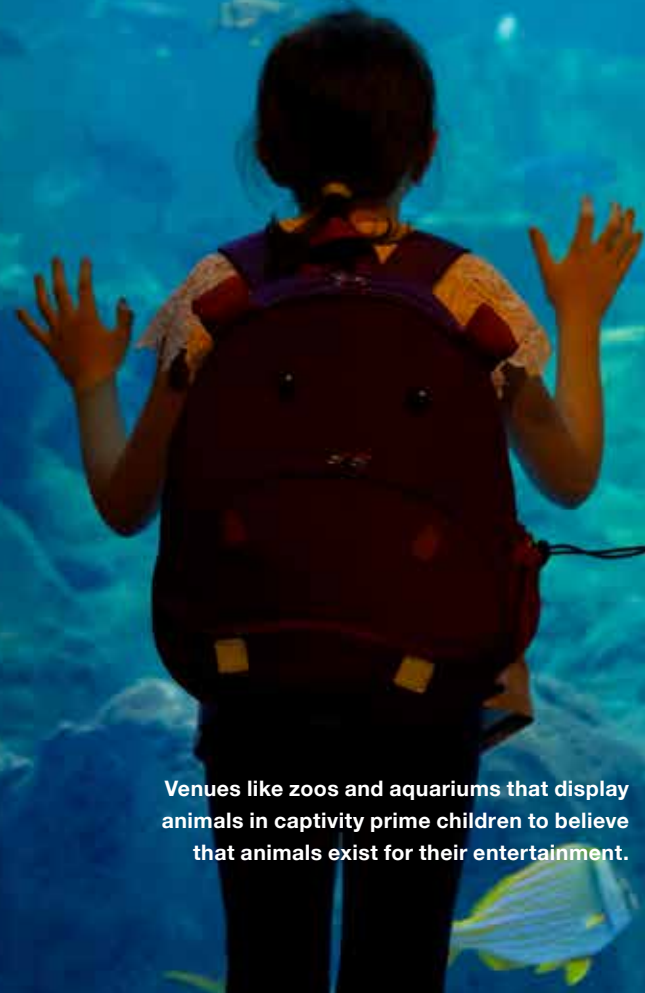
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# WHAT ARE WE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN?

**A**nyone who has spent significant time around young children knows one simple truth: a child's mind is a sponge. Most parents have a story about uttering an adult word once in a child's presence and hearing it repeated for days or weeks on end.

Parents and caretakers are constantly challenged to provide children with positive, educational experiences to fill the sponge while ensuring that they do so in a safe environment. Their future and ours as a society depend upon it. But, while parents focus their time, energy, and income on child-proofing in the home, eating vegetables, and getting a good education, they should also nourish their children's relationships with wildlife and nature. There are far too many examples of situations which teach the dangerous and incorrect lesson that animals are disposable, exploitable objects for our entertainment, leaving young minds with a value system that they will carry for the rest of their lives.



Venues like zoos and aquariums that display animals in captivity prime children to believe that animals exist for their entertainment.



Commercial animal interactions provide kids with a sense of ownership over wildlife, not respect.

One of the typical venues where parents introduce their children to wildlife are zoos. The issue of zoos being educational facilities is a myth that we have covered before, (See our blog on the Zoo Illusion) but it bears repeating. These facilities contradict their educational and conservation aims. Animals are in an unnatural state, under constant stress, and don't act as they would in the wild. Those that offer close-up interactions with animals add an element of danger and unpredictability as well.

## MALL AQUARIUM ATTRACTIONS AND OTHER "TOUCH TANKS" ALLOW A PARADE OF CHILDREN TO POKE, PROD, AND EVEN FEED THE ANIMALS

In early January, news reports circulated about a toddler who fell into a rhino enclosure at a zoo during a "close encounter" attraction. Luckily, in this case, the toddler and her mother only sustained minor injuries. According to news reports, zoo visitors could purchase the option to get private access to touch and brush the rhinos, billing it as an educational experience. Aside from what should be obvious safety concerns for the children and the animals, this incident brings to light a common misconception. Many activities involving wild animals claim to educate children when, in truth, all they really do is entertain them – sending a terrible message to children that it is acceptable to exploit animals for their own amusement.



Aquariums claim touch tank attractions promote education about the natural world, but there is nothing natural about a wild animal being touched and handled by humans.

Mall aquarium attractions and other “touch tanks” take this concept a step further, allowing a parade of children to poke, prod, and even feed the animals, setting a dangerous precedent for what constitutes acceptable behavior in future encounters with wildlife. Exploitive “interactive aquariums” like SeaQuest, which has faced multiple allegations of cruelty and neglect towards its animals, perfectly embody the wrong views of wild animals that we are teaching to our children. (See our blog on SeaQuest) The mission statements of these venues almost always include education and conservation among their main goals, but in reality, provide neither in a meaningful fashion. The same holds true across the pond, where for £15 at the Dartmoor Zoo, children as young as eight can play tug of war with a lion or tiger, quite literally treating wild animals as playthings.

This problem of providing the wrong image of wildlife to our children extends well beyond the walls of

zoos and aquariums, but into our own homes as well. Media programs for children often glorify and romanticize wild animal ownership while obscuring the many ways in which the animals suffer in captivity and the potential danger of having wildlife live in one’s home. The most well-known of these examples is Harry Potter and his pet snowy owl Hedwig, but Hollywood does not seem to be learning from their mistakes. Early news is that in the live action theatrical version of *Dora the Explorer*, slated for release in late 2019, her anthropomorphized monkey, Boots, who attended school with Dora during the show’s run on Nick Jr., will be more of an exotic pet in the feature film. Both of these examples had and will have real world effects on the markets for those specific exotic animals. There are also hundreds of users on social media platforms like Instagram and channels on YouTube that are targeted and tagged towards children and family viewing who have exotic pets and, in some cases, millions of

**THERE IS REAL VALUE FOR CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE, LEARN ABOUT, AND RESPECT WILDLIFE, BUT THESE EXPERIENCES CANNOT COME THROUGH THE EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS.**

subscribers. Many of these accounts are monetized by advertisements as well. They are marketed with theme songs, bright colors and graphics, and tagged with phrases like “cute and cuddly,” “kid friendly,” or “family TV.” The proprietors often have no other source of income than the ad revenue these channels produce, so they are forced to add more animals or be more extreme and entertaining, to keep viewers tuning in. The YouTube channel “MonkeyBoo,” with over 1.8 million subscribers, is no exception, even



Interactive encounters with wild animals not only teach children to treat animals like props, they can also be dangerous.

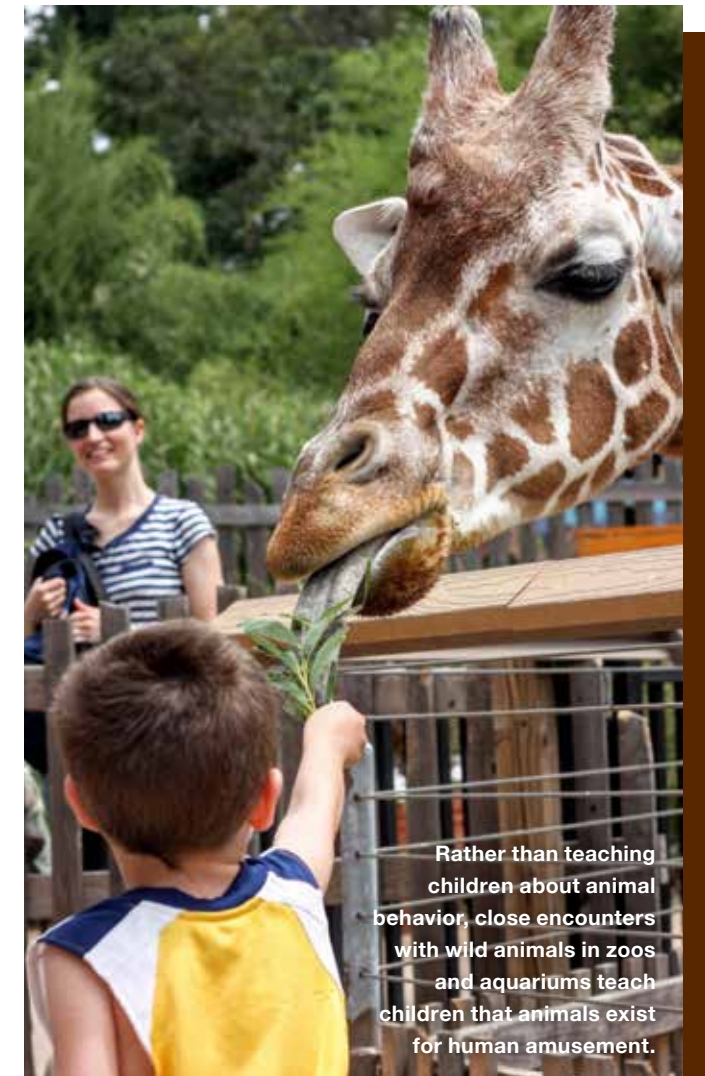


The experience of being touched and handled by even the most respectful of people is unnatural, traumatic, and stressful for wild animals.

going so far as to record giving their pet capuchin monkey a “brain freeze,” taking him down a water slide, and many other cruel subjections to entertain their audience.

There is real value for children to experience, learn about, and respect wildlife, but these experiences cannot come through the exploitation of animals. Parents who care about the welfare of wild animals as much as the sponge that is their child’s mind can easily avoid these situations and provide alternatives that foster the right values. We urge parents to be as diligent about their children’s interactions with wildlife as they already are with so many other carefully managed experiences. Animals are beautiful and alluring, and people – especially children – want to see them and learn more about them. Instead of visiting a zoo or aquarium, set up a backyard garden designed to attract local wildlife. Instead of watching viral videos of wild animals in captivity, look for live web cams of animals in their natural habitats and watch documentaries like *Planet Earth*, or hike a trail in a state or national park and teach children the majesty of seeing these beautiful creatures where they belong, in the wild.

**For more ideas and suggestions for teaching children compassion for animals, visit our website at [bornfreeusa.org/teachkids](http://bornfreeusa.org/teachkids)**



Rather than teaching children about animal behavior, close encounters with wild animals in zoos and aquariums teach children that animals exist for human amusement.

# TIGERS UNDER THREAT

**T**he supreme hunter is in extreme crisis. The tiger's forest home is being destroyed and they face a relentless demand for their body parts. Time to turn the tide, says Penny Banham.

Highly secretive, formidable, and awe-inspiring, the tiger embodies the power of nature. According to legend, tigers hold the key to immortality, harboring the spirits of ancestors. Some believe they bring good luck, oust evil spirits, and guard over children. To others, "tiger and man are brothers," emerging out of a pangolin's den, one with stripes and one that walks on two feet. I am sure you agree the tiger is one of the most majestic animals that inhabits our planet.

Yet, despite our fascination with tigers, we have placed them under dire threat. There may only be 4,000 left in the wild today. Until the last century, there were nine subspecies, but only six of these still exist today (see graphic on pg. 7). Once roaming across Asia, only 7% of original tiger habitat remains, spread across 13 countries, from Russia to Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Mining, logging, farming, palm



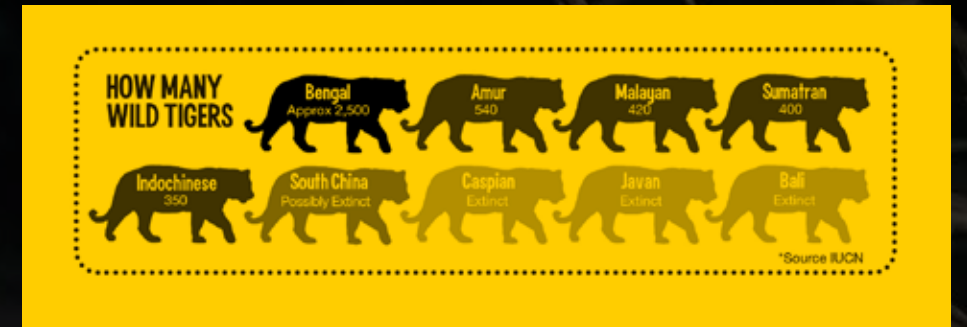
Targeted by poachers

oil plantations, settlements, roads, and railways are fragmenting the landscape, creating a dangerous mosaic for tigers to live in. As an apex predator at the top of their food chain, and as a keystone species playing a key role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, tigers need vast tracts of land to hunt and to live. This is not an animal that thrives in pockets of wilderness. When tiger habitat disappears, so does the tiger, and so do the countless other species that live there.



Turned into 'tonics'

As their habitat contracts and prey numbers dwindle, tigers increasingly attack livestock and even people, coming into conflict with communities and provoking retaliation. Such a conflict played out on the world stage recently when T1 the tigress, also known as Avni, was tracked down by rangers in India's Maharashtra state and shot dead, leaving her two 10-month old cubs behind, alone and vulnerable. Avni lived in a small 155km<sup>2</sup> of forest, punctuated by agricultural fields and settlements, and had reportedly killed several people. To communities living alongside Avni, she was a deadly terror, but she was also a tiger that had been squeezed into a corner, without enough food or space to live.



Killed for body parts

The cold, deadly threat of a bullet also comes from poachers, who ruthlessly kill tigers. From whiskers to tail, every part is traded. Under CITES\*, the trade in tigers and their parts is illegal. Yet, these laws mean little to

## FROM WHISKERS TO TAIL, EVERY PART IS TRADED.

those who have an appetite for tigers. Demand across the globe, particularly in China, fuels poaching. Their skins are used as rugs to adorn the floors of the wealthy; their bones are used to make wine to be consumed as "health" tonics; their genitals are packaged to be sold as aphrodisiacs; and their teeth, paws, and tails are

used as ornaments and gifts.

Born Free will not sit back and watch the tiger disappear. It does not have to be them or us; co-existence is possible. The tiger cannot only exist as a legend or caged in a zoo. With your support, and working with rural communities, we are determined to secure a future for this spectacular species.

\*The UN's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora regulates trade in rare animals and plants.

**Penny Banham, MSc,**  
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Life Less Ordinary

# SOLUTIONS TO CONFLICT



Educating the next generation



Helping communities, protecting tigers



Tiger Ambassadors report poaching

**C**laudio Sillero reports on the “tiger wallahs” of central India, and their innovative work with rural communities to protect tigers and resolve problems.

Kishor Rithe is a computer scientist, Poonam Dhanwatey an interior designer, Nishikant Kale a mechanical engineer, Sanjay Karkare a journalist. All live in central India. What do they have in common? They are wildlifers, naturalists who have chosen to commit their lives to protecting forests and tigers. They are also members of Born Free’s Living with Tigers program, a successful network conceived in 2004 after two years of my research.

Alongside others I have encountered in my extensive travels through India’s forests, Kishor, Poonam, Nishi, and Sanjay epitomize a new breed of tiger wallahs, hot in the footsteps of ATJ Johnsingh, Fateh Singh Rathore, Valmik Thapar, and Belinda Wright, to name a few of those iconic champions we associate with the fate of the mighty striped cat. They share their vision, formidable energy, and willingness to stand for the tiger – and for the people who bear the costs of living next to them.

The extensive Satpuda forests offer the best hope for tigers in India, with a handful of well-established reserves run diligently by the forest departments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. At 25,000km<sup>2</sup>, this is the largest block of tiger habitat in India, but these big cats are not alone. The new generation of tiger

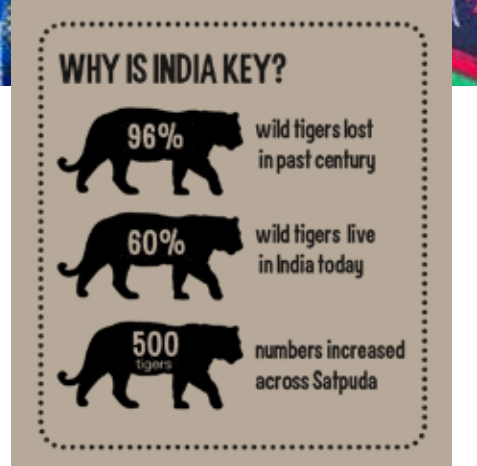
**AFTER A CENTURY OF DECLINE, TIGER NUMBERS ARE ON THE UPSWING, BUT THIS CAN LEAD THEM TO CLASH WITH PEOPLE.**

wallahs I first met all those years ago enthused me with their infectious optimism. Although at the time I had no idea of how things would pan out, I was convinced that, with the right financial and institutional support, these tiger advocates and their budding organizations would deliver. No challenge was too large for them, although they often worked with limited resources, lacking technical know-how, and in isolation from each other.

We have always known that given the right settings, enhanced protection, and access to food, tiger numbers would recover. But, this would not happen without the toiling of our champions keeping up the pressure (and trust me they are formidable fighters when it comes to taking the government to task to ensure effective protection for their beloved forests). There are now more tigers in central India; their range has expanded, with new reserves established; and individual tigers dispersing into corridors and other forests. Hand in hand with government officers and local communities, the tiger wallahs seek long term solutions for the protection of Satpuda’s biodiversity, both directly protecting wildlife and addressing some of the most urgent needs of the people that live close to tigers.

Ironically, our heroes are now dealing with an unintended consequence of their success at increasing the tiger population: an associated increase in human/tiger conflict. But, that is where our focus on people’s livelihoods comes to the fore. Our mobile health units take doctors to villages located several hours away from basic medical facilities. Our education officers visit schools, run nature clubs, and support women’s groups. Our Tiger Ambassadors assist with forest protection and report poaching. Our Fuel for Tigers initiative improves fuel efficiency, and reduces the need for people to venture into the forest to collect wood. And, our Employment Cells offer training and opportunities that open up new possibilities to the unskilled and unemployed.

We must cheer for our tiger wallahs, while we continue to deliver long-



term solutions. Our challenge remains to offer financially sustainable mechanisms to protect the forests where tigers live. And, to do so in a way that delivers improvements in the lives of those people living with wildlife — all while protecting the ecological processes essential for sustainability.

**Professor Claudio Sillero, Born Free Foundation Chief Scientist**  
[claudio@bornfree.org.uk](mailto:claudio@bornfree.org.uk)

Images © [www.tigersintheforest.co.uk](http://www.tigersintheforest.co.uk), F Fortuna/BFF

# NEW ARRIVALS, HOME IMPROVEMENTS, AND AMBITIOUS PLANS AT OUR PRIMATE SANCTUARY

**It has been a busy and exciting period here at the Born Free Primate Sanctuary with four new arrivals joining us since December last year, three brand new enclosures for our residents being constructed, and plenty more ambitious plans for development in the pipeline.**

December began with us welcoming young Japanese macaque, Charlie, to the sanctuary. He had been kept as a pet but, when he grabbed a young family member of the people who owned him – a behavior perfectly natural for a boisterous adolescent monkey but very dangerous to a human child – he was threatened with death. Thankfully, the child suffered no long-term injury and, thanks to a public campaign to save Charlie's life, he was rehomed temporarily to a wildlife sanctuary near San Antonio, Texas. The sanctuary did not have any other Japanese macaques and so asked us to take on Charlie and give him a home for life, where he could be with others of his own kind. He arrived with us before the end of the year and is now well settled into his new home.

The end of February saw the arrival of Japanese macaques Niko, Emiko, and Midori, who previously lived in a zoo. Our plan is for the trio to join one of the troops in our large open-top enclosures where they will live out their days with others of their own kind in a naturalistic six-acre space.

The aforementioned six-acre enclosure will be a new area built specifically to house a social group of monkeys who are experiencing tension and conflict with other social groups in their current living space. By providing them with a brand new enclosure all to themselves, we hope to improve welfare and reduce stress.

In addition to this, our new introduction and recovery enclosure in our biggest 56-acre enclosure is now operational. The enclosure can be used to help newcomers acclimatize to their new home as well as providing a safe space for recovery for monkeys who normally live in the large enclosure but who need a little extra attention as they overcome illness or injury.

Finally, our group of nine long tail macaques have just been relocated to a new enclosure which gives them double the space they lived in previously. They are enjoying exploring their new home and making the most of their exciting new surroundings!

As for the rest of the year, we have proposals in the pipeline to create a new monkey hospital on site, as well as plans to replace some of the sanctuary's older enclosures, which are coming to the end of their useful life. All of this work is, of course, in addition to our day-to-day efforts to provide the best possible care to our existing 535 residents. There is truly never a dull moment, and we would not change it for the world!

**Dr. Liz Tyson, Born Free USA  
Primate Sanctuary Director**



# A NEW "DREAM HOME" FOR OUR LONG-TAILED MACAQUES

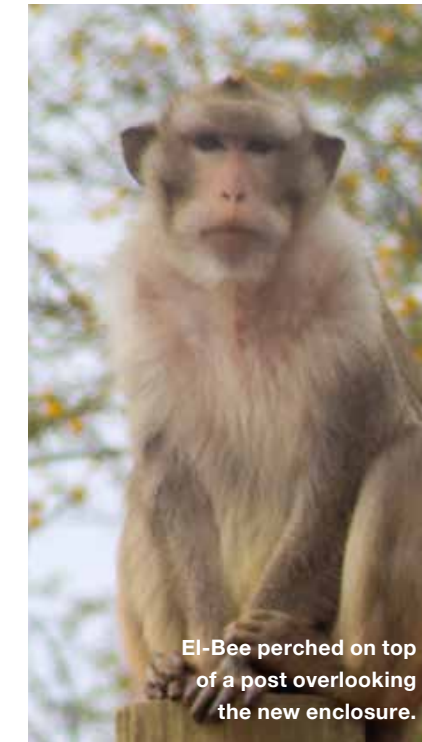
Arriving at the sanctuary is often the first step on the road to recovery for any individual, but given the monkey species under our care can live into their thirties, only a very small part of our work is focused on rescue, and the vast majority of what we do is about providing lifetime care.



Houdine drinking from a Lixit fountain.

Although public interest and attention is often focused on our newest rescues, our sanctuary team is constantly striving to ensure that our existing residents are provided with the very best possible care and living environments. That's why, at the end of last year, major construction work began to create new living spaces for a number of our long-term residents. First up was our group of nine long-tailed macaques: Bert, Ernie, El-Bee, Elf-Man, Houdini, Chuckie, Whitey, Spanky, and Sammy. The nine monkeys had been living in

the same area for more than three years. While it was spacious and provided them plenty of room for climbing, playing, and socializing, we knew we could do better for them and wanted to give them a larger, more naturalistic enclosure with an open top and great foraging opportunities. Work was completed at the end of February and the small troop moved into their new home.



El-Bee perched on top of a post overlooking the new enclosure.

Fully-equipped with a cinderblock house which will protect against cold in winter and keep the group cool in summer, the new open-topped space provides the long tails with double the living space they had previously. They wasted no time in exploring; taking

advantage of their new perspective on the world by scaling their new trees and perching atop their specially-constructed climbing platforms.



Houdine foraging through the natural surroundings in his new home.

As well as new sights, sounds, and neighbors, their new home also provides new tastes! With naturally-growing cactus, the most adventurous of the group began cautiously nibbling the prickly treat – quickly realizing that it is a delicious addition to their daily diet. Grasses and leaves are also on the menu as these expert foragers taste-tested their way around their new environment. Not just that but the quick-thinking monkeys took mere moments to explore and figure out their Lixit drinking fountain, which provides them with fresh running water any time day or night.

All-in-all, both monkeys and staff are delighted with the new and improved enclosure and are thankful to our wonderful supporters, whose generosity has helped to provide these monkeys with their new "dream home."

**Dr. Liz Tyson, Born Free USA  
Primate Sanctuary Director**

# BORN FREE USA TO ATTEND THE UPCOMING CITES CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT AFRICAN WILDLIFE

The next Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP18) will take place from May 23 to June 3 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Born Free USA's Africa Policy and Capacity-Building team will be attending this important, tri-annual meeting to advocate for wildlife species like elephants, lions, giraffes, crowned cranes, vultures, mako sharks, and others. These increasingly endangered species face a variety of anthropogenic threats ranging from habitat fragmentation to poaching, trapping, and legal and illegal trade at both the national and international levels. West and Central African initiatives aiming to strengthen protection for these keystone species deserve worldwide support.

Several African submissions to the upcoming CoP18 seek to incorporate additional wildlife into the CITES system, thereby improving the regulation of international trade in these species.

## GIRAFFES



A prominent proposal involves the world's tallest land mammal, the giraffe, which has suffered a precipitous population decline in the wild due to habitat loss, legal and illegal killing, and use in trade. Between 2006 and 2015, an average of more than one giraffe hunting trophy per day was imported into the U.S., as were a substantial number of gun and knife handles made from carved giraffe bone and products made from their skin or hair.

## MARINE SPECIES



Other CITES proposals involve various commercially exploited marine species, such as mako sharks, guitarfishes, and wedgefishes — all of which face mounting threats from largely unregulated fisheries supplying the Asian market with their high value fins. Monitoring international trade by listing these new species in CITES will help to ensure that it is legal and sustainable.

## AFRICAN LIONS



Other African submissions address wildlife species that, although already included in the CITES system, now need a higher level of protection against ongoing threats:

African lions are facing an unprecedented crisis, with only 23,000-39,000 mature individuals remaining in the wild and occupying just 8% of their historic range. A major contributing factor to their decline is international trade in lion bones and other body parts as well as trophy hunting. Closer recording of trade, heightened enforcement, and support of the African Carnivores Initiative will enhance lion conservation and protection.

## AFRICAN ELEPHANTS



Notoriously, the illegal poaching of elephants and the trafficking of their ivory threaten the survival of the species. CITES measures proposed to strengthen trade regulations for certain African elephant populations, including limiting trade in live animals, coupled with guidelines for the management and disposal of ivory stockpiles, and for the closure of legal domestic ivory markets still remaining, should improve the chances of survival for this iconic species.

## BLACK CROWNED CRANES



The black crowned crane has also seen its wild population plummet, primarily due to trapping of live birds for the pet trade in unsustainable volumes.

The proposal to prohibit commercial international trade will lessen the pressures on this vulnerable crane species.

## WEST AFRICAN VULTURES



West African vulture species have rapidly deteriorating conservation statuses, and are considered either critically endangered or endangered, due to habitat loss as well as to poisoning to use their body parts in traditional medicine or to prevent detection of elephant and rhino poachers. Improving data collection and enhancing conservation of these species, including by CITES participation in the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan, will have a positive impact on their conservation.

**Through these and other initiatives at CoP18, Born Free USA will actively work to increase the international protection for African wildlife threatened by unsustainable and illegal trade.**

**Alice Stroud, Born Free USA Director of Africa Policy and Capacity Building**

\*The recent terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka have caused safety concerns for the CITES Conference of Parties. We still hope to attend the conference, but our first priority is the safety of our staff. Please follow Born Free USA on social media for updates.



# KILL BY NUMBERS: THE RISE OF KILLING CONTESTS

In the last few years, there has been significant media coverage on international and domestic trophy hunting, a practice in which hunters kill wild animals, including protected species, for the sheer pleasure of being able to display the animals and brag about a big kill.

But, here at home, an even more sinister form of hunting has evolved: wildlife killing contests. Make no mistake – this is no sport. This is killing in mass numbers to win a prize – or just killing for the fun of it. Carcasses pile up as a monument to this unnecessary bloodbath.

These contests encourage participants to kill as many animals of a certain species as possible in order to win a prize, which can range from a lifetime hunting license to winning a rifle or bow to a cash prize. Coyotes are the most commonly targeted species for these “tournaments,” but other common species like bobcats, woodchucks, prairie dogs, squirrels, pigeons, crows, and rattlesnakes also suffer the same fate. The terms of contests can vary, but contestants compete to see who can kill the most animals, or the largest animal, or even the smallest of a given species.

Wildlife killing contests are legal and occur in most states, are largely unregulated, and needlessly kill thousands of animals every year. The animals killed during these cruel and inhumane contests are only killed for fun and entertainment – their bodies irreverently discarded and left to rot. Killing contest apologists, including a handful of states’ respective wildlife management departments, say these contests help with wildlife and predator species management despite numerous ecological and scientific studies that refute their effectiveness.

Thankfully, wildlife killing contests are starting to receive media attention, gaining public and political awareness, and wider opposition. Numerous states are starting to enact and introduce a variety of laws placing bans on wildlife killing contests, such as Vermont and New Mexico, which ban coyote killing contests; or California, which bans giving prizes or inducements for killing coyotes and other predators; and Montana, Oregon, and Wisconsin, which have introduced legislation to ban the contests. However, there is much more work that needs to

be done, both legislatively and in terms of creating awareness by educating the public. You can help by contacting your state’s elected officials and urging them to introduce or support legislation banning wildlife killing contests, and by informing people about these cruel contests. The more people learn about these horrible hunting contests, the greater the support will be when legislation is introduced banning the practice.

**Julie Kluck, Born Free USA  
Campaigns Associate**



**While killing contests in the U.S. most frequently target coyotes, snakes and other predators are also common victims.**

# THE FUTURE OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STILL HANGS IN THE BALANCE

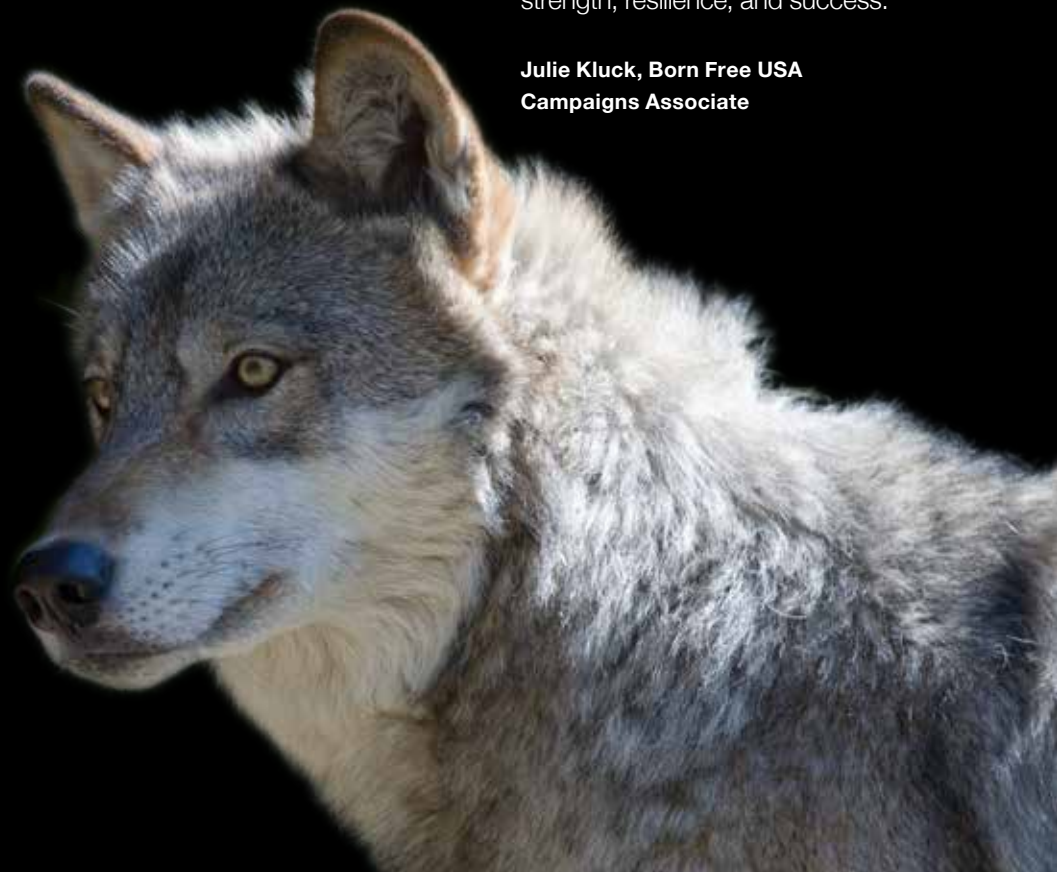
**A**t the beginning of this year, Born Free USA and other wildlife conservation organizations were hopeful that 2019 would be a fresh start for the Endangered Species Act (ESA). With a new Congress and the House of Representatives changing to a Democratic majority, we were looking forward to pursuing an offensive strategy for ESA protections, rather than defending against ESA attacks. Unfortunately, so far, we have been awarded only a glimpse of that hope.

The new year and the new Congress started out positively, with no new anti-ESA attacks, but after a few months, we witnessed several impediments to the ESA such as David Bernhardt being confirmed as Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI). This is particularly troublesome for the ESA because Bernhardt has a long history as a lobbyist for the oil and gas industries. In his role as acting Secretary, he often put the interests of these industries ahead of wildlife and environmental protection. For example, Bernhardt recently weakened protections for the sage grouse, an imperiled bird protected by the ESA, and its habitat by allowing more oil and gas development in the species' primary habitat. We have also seen the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) propose a rule to delist the gray wolf in the lower 48 states. This decision is the latest in a long line of attempts to delist the species, which

plays into the hands of local interest groups where wolf populations reside. Delisting the gray wolf from the ESA would turn management control over to the states, many of which are hostile towards the species and their further recovery.

Born Free USA is disappointed by the confirmation of David Bernhardt as DOI Secretary and strongly opposes the proposed rule to delist the gray wolf in the lower 48 states, but all is not lost. 2019 is still young, and we will work hard with members of Congress and our fellow wildlife organizations to stand up for wildlife, the environment, and the ESA to ensure their continued strength, resilience, and success.

**Julie Kluck, Born Free USA  
Campaigns Associate**



## OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

When we advocate for animal welfare legislation, our influence comes from our readers and followers who spread the message that every individual animal matters. Please contact your elected representatives and tell them that, as a supporter of Born Free USA, you ask them to vote for the legislation below.

### **The Captive Primate Safety Act (H.R. 1776)**

The Captive Primate Safety Act, sponsored by Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), would prohibit interstate commerce and foreign sale of primates for the exotic pet trade.

**TAKE ACTION AT [BORNFREEUSA.ORG/CAPTIVEPRIMATES](https://bornfreeusa.org/captiveprimates)**

### **Conserving Ecosystems by Ceasing the Importation of Large (CECIL) Animal Trophies Act (H.R. 2245)**

The CECIL Act, reintroduced by Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), would extend Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections to species proposed for listing under the ESA. Additionally, it terminates the Department of the Interior's (DOI) pro-trophy hunting conservation council and calls for DOI to no longer

use taxpayer dollars to pay the administrative costs associated with processing the permit application. Lastly, the CECIL Act would require the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study on the effectiveness of trophy hunting in supporting international wildlife conservation efforts.

**TAKE ACTION AT [BORNFREEUSA.ORG/CECILACT](https://bornfreeusa.org/cecilact)**

### **The Big Cat Safety Act (H.R. 1380)**

The Big Cat Public Safety Act was reintroduced in late February, championed by Representatives Michael Quigley (D-IL) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) along with 81 bipartisan cosponsors. This bill would prohibit private ownership of lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, cougars, or any hybrid of these species and would restrict direct contact between the public and big cats, including prohibiting the use of big cat cubs for public interaction such as petting, feeding, or photography.

**TAKE ACTION AT [BORNFREEUSA.ORG/BIGCATPUBLICSAFETY](https://bornfreeusa.org/bigcatpublicsafety)**

**FOR MORE WAYS TO TAKE ACTION FOR ANIMALS,  
PLEASE VISIT [BORNFREEUSA.ORG/ACTION](https://bornfreeusa.org/action)**

## SAVE THE DATE!



Join Born Free USA and Virginia McKenna for a lovely evening of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and fundraising for wildlife.



### **LOS ANGELES**

THURSDAY SEPT. 19, 2019



### **NEW YORK CITY**

THURSDAY SEPT. 26, 2019

**STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES FROM BORN FREE USA  
IN YOUR EMAIL AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA!**



## CREATE LASTING CHANGE FOR WILDLIFE

Your estate gift creates a legacy of compassion that will last for years to come. When you name Born Free USA in your will or trust, you can help us keep wildlife in the wild for future generations. Please contact us at [development@bornfreeusa.org](mailto:development@bornfreeusa.org) or by phone at (301) 448-1407 to discuss a planned gift.



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WE NEED YOU.**

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