

May 3, 2016

Nick Wiley, Executive Director  
Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation and Commission

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Re: Request for Investigation of Stearns Zoological Rescue & Rehab Center  
for Possible Illegal Sale or Transfer of Tiger

Dear Mr. Wiley:

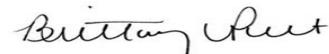
I'm writing on behalf of PETA to request that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission investigate Stearns Zoological Rescue & Rehab Center, dba "Dade City's Wild Things" (DCWT; lic. no. 105548), for the sale or transfer of a young tiger cub, in possible violation of Fla. Stat. § 379.3761 and Fla. Admin. Code RR. 68A-6.0022(6) and 68A-6.0023.

As detailed in the attached Appendix, PETA has been tracking and gathering information concerning an untrained and unlicensed individual named Trisha Meyer, who lives in the Houston area and acquired a tiger cub then named Bindi from DCWT around March 1, 2016. PETA believes that Bindi is the tiger cub who was recently and famously found roaming at large in Conroe, Texas. PETA has consulted with a tiger expert who analyzed photographs of the cub that were posted on DCWT's Facebook page, Meyer's Instagram page, and the Conroe Police Department's Facebook page and who believes with a high degree of professional certainty that the same cub—Bindi, who is now known as Nahla—appears in all the photographs.

PETA believes that the transfer of this cub by DCWT may have been illegal and requests that you investigate the facility, its records, and this and all its other Class I animal transfers and also hold DCWT accountable for any violations of Florida law that your investigation reveals.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,



Brittany Peet  
Deputy Director, Captive Animal Law Enforcement  
[REDACTED]

cc: Col. Curtis Brown, Director, Division of Law Enforcement  
[REDACTED]

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PETA FOUNDATION IS AN  
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TO SUPPORT ANIMAL PROTECTION.

AFFILIATES:

- PETA U.S.
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

## Appendix

### I. Legal Background

In Florida, no person may sell any Class I wildlife, "including a sale with delivery made in [the] state, regardless of the sale or the location of the initial transaction," unless authorized by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Fla. Stat. § 379.3761(1); *see also* Fla. Admin. Code R. 68A-6.002(1)(a)(11) (categorizing tigers as Class I wildlife). Furthermore, possessors of Class I wildlife must maintain accurate records of changes in inventory and document all sales or transfers of wildlife. *See* Fla. Admin. Code RR. 68A-6.0022(6), 68A-6.0023(7). The record of the sale or transfer must be "made available for inspection upon request of Commission personnel for a period of three years after the sale or transfer" and include the date of the sale or transfer, quantity and species of wildlife sold or transferred, and name and address of the recipient. *Id.* R. 68A-6.0023(7)(a).

### II. Factual Summary

For several months, PETA has been tracking and gathering information concerning an untrained and unlicensed individual named Trisha Meyer, who lives in the Houston area and who acquired a tiger cub then named Bindi from DCWT around March 1, 2016. PETA's documented observations include the following:

- On October 23, 2015, DCWT posted to its Facebook page a photograph depicting one of its employees feeding a very young tiger cub named Bindi. *See* Ex. 1, Photo Sheet, Image 1.
- DCWT continued to exhibit Bindi at its facility for several months and posted photographs of the animal to its Facebook page on November 14, 2015, and February 16, 2016. *See id.* Images 2 and 3.
- On March 8, 2016, PETA reviewed and saved an electronic copy of an [Instagram page](#) attributed to a woman named Tricia Meyer, aka "Emily Lu," who lives in Texas and posts photographs of herself and her children in close contact with various wild animals. *See* Ex. 2, Trisha Meyer's Instagram Page Timeline ("Timeline"; March 8, 2016).
- The Instagram page contained at least 20 photographs of a young tiger cub, including one that was captioned, "Yes there is a #bengal#tiger in *my* window !!! Lol #bigcatsofinstagram" (emphasis added). *See* Ex. 1, Photo Sheet, Image 4; Timeline, Nos. 1–20.
- Photographs 1 and 3 through 9 depict the tiger cub inside a crate, inside a hotel room, and in a hotel parking lot, demonstrating that the animal was traveling with Meyer at the time the photographs were taken. *See* Timeline, Nos. 1 and 3–9. All the photographs featuring the young tiger cub have since been removed from Meyer's Instagram page. On March 20, 2016, DCWT posted to its Facebook page four photographs of Bindi that were apparently not taken at DCWT—one of which featured Meyer and Meyer's daughter in a swimming pool with Bindi—and captioned the post "Bindi growing into a beautiful girl." *See* Ex. 1, Photo Sheet, Images 5 and 7; *see also* Image 11 (photograph of Meyer's daughter posted to Meyer's Instagram page). Another photograph in the Facebook post shows Bindi lying on a blanket that can be seen in two photographs that were posted to Meyer's Instagram page, including one image that features the

young tiger cub, further establishing that the tiger in Meyer's photographs is Bindi. *See* Ex. 1, Photo Sheet, Images 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10; Ex. 2, Timeline, Letters A and B, No. 19.

- On April 26, 2016, law enforcement in Conroe, Texas, captured a young tiger cub who was found roaming at large in the city. *See* Matthew Tresaugue, [Conroe Tiger Sent to Animal Sanctuary Shortly After Theft Attempt](#), April 27, 2016, *Houston Chronicle*. A resident of Humble, Texas, named Cody Tibbits claimed that he purchased the cub from an unidentified person. *Id.* Conroe Municipal Court ultimately awarded temporary custody of the cub to the city, and she was transferred to International Exotic Animal Sanctuary in Boyd, Texas. *Id.*

### III. Expert Analysis

██████████—an expert in zoology with 25 years of experience training big cats, including tigers, and who is an animal-training, behavior, and welfare consultant for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other organizations—examined [the photographs](#) posted to the Conroe Police Department's Facebook page, DCWT's Facebook page, and Meyer's Instagram page, and believes with a high degree of professional certainty that the young tiger cub in all the photos is the same animal—Bindi. *See* Ex. 3, Declaration of ██████████ (Apr. 22, 2016). ██████████'s expert opinion and the evidence in the exhibits strongly suggest that DCWT sold or at the very least transferred Bindi to Meyer, an untrained and unlicensed layperson who traveled from Texas to Florida to acquire the vulnerable animal and who appears to have subsequently sold or transferred the animal to another person who was unqualified to care for her.

### IV. Conclusion

Please inspect DCWT and its records to determine whether the sale or transfer of Bindi and all other Class I animals complied with Florida law and hold it accountable for any violations of law that your inspection may reveal.