

Big Cat Cub Incidents in the U.S.

The following is a partial list of incidents involving big cat cubs held captive by roadside zoos and traveling zoos in the U.S. since 2000. Animals are repeatedly bred so that these enterprises have a constant supply of cubs available to earn money through “encounter” sessions and photo opportunities in which people pay to hold and be photographed with the cubs. Since cubs quickly grow to their adult size, which can be as much as 700 pounds for a tiger, cubs can be used for photo opportunities only during their first few months of life, and they must be taken from their mother soon after birth in order to habituate them to humans. Some cubs never make it to adulthood because of poor nutrition, illness, physical abuse, or neglect. As the cubs grow larger, they become too dangerous to interact with the public. The older cubs are replaced by younger ones and confined to cages or sent to roadside zoos. This cycle continually repeats itself and, in the case of tigers, exacerbates the U.S. tiger crisis: There are far too many and not enough responsible facilities to take them. Contact PETA for documentation.

June 9, 2021/Weyauwega, Wisconsin: The USDA cited Animal Haven Zoo for failing to retain complete disposition records for two tiger cubs born on April 29, 2021. The inspector noted that such records are necessary “so that animal tracing can be done if needed (for example—health tracing).” The USDA also issued Animal Haven Zoo a critical citation for failing to handle animals in a manner that did not cause trauma, overheating, behavioral

stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort. On or around May 24, 2021, an Animal Haven employee transported a male tiger cub less than 4 weeks old to a classroom and exhibited him to the class. The investigator noted that public exhibition of the infant cub put him “at risk for getting sick,” as “[n]ondomestic cats of this age do not have a completely developed immune system and are unable to fight off disease and infection.”

March 23, 2020/Dade City, Florida: The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida entered a final judgment in PETA’s favor in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) lawsuit filed in October 2016 against Dade City’s Wild Things and its principals, Kathy Stearns and her son, Randy Stearns. The judgment established that the defendants’ treatment of tigers—including prematurely separating tiger cubs from their mothers, forcing tiger cubs to participate in encounters with the public, and caging them in substandard conditions—violated the ESA. The court also issued a permanent injunction banning Dade City’s Wild Things and Kathy and Randy Stearns from ever owning or possessing tigers again and ordered them to forfeit their tigers for placement in reputable sanctuaries.

January 16, 2020/West Union, Illinois: The USDA issued Walnut Prairie Wildside a critical, repeat citation for failing to handle animals in a manner that minimized the risk of harm to them and the public during exhibition. Between November 2019 and January 2020, the facility was using a juvenile tiger named Tony who was well over 20 weeks old in full-contact exhibitions with members of the public, including children. During these encounters, members of the public were allowed into an enclosure with the loose tiger, with no trainer close enough to be able to stop an incident if the animal became too playful or aggressive and no barriers or areas to prevent contact between the tiger and the

public. Because of the lack of barriers, the safety of the public depended solely on the supervision of the keeper, who did not use a lead or harness or have any direct control over the animal. The inspection report noted that the tiger was at an age at which he was biting, scratching, pawing, and play-wrestling and was too big (over 55 pounds) and too strong to be loose in a cage with members of the public, especially young children. The licensee did not receive any acceptable specialized training in handling or training adult tigers, and the handling procedures used in interactions between the public and the tiger underscored the lack of knowledge, experience, and good judgement of the licensee.

November 13, 2019/Mooresville, North Carolina: The USDA cited Zootastic for failing to handle a 6-month-old tiger named Sheldon as carefully as possible with minimal risk of harm to the animal and the public while exhibiting at the Sheldon's K9s Fall Festival on October 12, 2019. Video footage from the event showed that the tiger remained lying on his or her side, panting and mostly unresponsive to external activity. When stimulated, the tiger did not respond with normal feline behavior. This may have been because of general exhaustion, heat exhaustion, and/or sedation, and exhibiting the tiger in this condition could harm the animal's health and well-being. The tiger weighed approximately 50 pounds at the time and was restrained by a harness and leash without sufficient physical barriers to protect both the animal and the public.

August 19, 2019/Natural Bridge, Virginia: The USDA issued a citation and notification of penalty to Natural Bridge Zoo for several alleged violations of the AWA. A settlement agreement was offered with a penalty of \$41,500 to settle the egregious alleged violations, including:

- Failing to provide adequate veterinary care after staff denied a sick tiger cub potentially lifesaving care. Natural

Bridge Zoo administered an enema to a tiger cub ("Meaty") on April 18, 2015. The following day, the cub was taken to the veterinarian for treatment of lethargy and dehydration. On April 25, 2015, the cub was taken to the veterinarian again, but Natural Bridge Zoo declined the veterinarian's recommendations for intravenous fluids and hospitalization. The tiger cub died later the same day.

- Failing to handle tiger cubs so that there was a minimal risk of harm to the animals and the public, with sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animals and the public, specifically babies and young children. On multiple occasions, Natural Bridge Zoo used tiger cubs Daxx and Deja for photo sessions through the age of 17 weeks and when they weighed more than 40 pounds.

May 8, 2019: The USDA cited Walnut Prairie Wildside for failing to demonstrate adequate knowledge and experience of the animals it maintains. The licensee was in possession of an 8-week-old tiger cub named Lily, who was acquired when she was under 2 weeks old. The licensee had never owned a big cat or received any training on raising or training a growing big cat. When the licensee originally obtained the cub, her diet was completely inappropriate—the animal was being fed too much, but the food was lacking in the necessary protein, vitamins, and minerals. At the time of inspection, the owner was conducting handling exhibitions in which the public was allowed to pick up, carry, and take photos of the cub. The inspector observed an exhibition and noted that it was clear that the cub did not want to be picked up but the public was allowed to continue while she grunted, growled, and swatted at the faces of people holding her. The inspector told the licensee that the tiger's behavior indicated that she had had enough handling and should be taken off exhibit, but the licensee continued to stand by and

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watch as the handler did not correct or stop the interaction.

During other encounters with the cub, one woman picked her up and put her fingers in the cub's mouth for her photo, then dropped the cub on her head. Another woman picked up the cub and, after being swatted in the face and on the neck, she lowered the cub back down to the ground on her back, with her spine supporting her bodyweight. During these two encounters, the employee let the cub off the leash and had her back turned while a guest picked up the cub under her forelegs around the rib cage, so that her body hung down in front of the guest's body for the photo. The cub was grunting and uncomfortable, but neither the employee nor the licensee stopped the encounter. After the encounter, the employee left the cub unattended while helping the licensee with a large snake. The cub tried to go toward the 13-foot python, and the inspector had to stop the cub and get the attention of the employee to retrieve her. The cub scratched the employee on the chin when she was picked up. During another encounter, a stroller with a child in it was allowed so close that the cub could have jumped into it, and the cub was biting at the ankles of guests, including a 4-year-old girl.

The inspection report noted that the lack of proper training and experience while raising and handling a tiger could pose a serious threat of harm to the animal, employees, and the public as the cub grew and became stronger and possibly more aggressive. Per the licensee, a knowledgeable, experienced person had come to the property on two occasions to provide training on handling the tiger. No one was available full-time on site, and the licensee did not have any plans to get further training at another facility. The licensee was correcting issues as he was told about them—however, the inability to recognize these problems himself demonstrated his lack of training in and experience with raising and handling a

large, dangerous animal. Gaining experience and learning while already having a cub on site, and only while an experienced person was infrequently on site, did not meet the regulatory requirement of demonstrating adequate experience and knowledge necessary for maintaining a tiger.

October 23, 2018: As a result of a lawsuit that PETA filed against Rick Pelphrey, a veterinarian who admitted to declawing lions, tigers, and big-cat hybrids illegally at a Charlestown, Indiana, roadside zoo named Wildlife in Need, a federal court order set the precedent that declawing endangered and threatened big and exotic cats when not medically necessary violates the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Pelphrey had no specialized training to care for big cats, and he declawed approximately 12 big cats without giving them any pain medication over the previous three years at Wildlife in Need. See March 17, 2017.

July 25, 2017/Washington County, Oregon: The USDA cited exhibitor Steven Higgs for transporting a 2-week-old tiger cub named Zarah. The cub had been transported by car from Oklahoma to Oregon. The USDA [previously determined](#) that neonatal cubs are unable to thermoregulate and lack fully functioning immune systems. Higgs was previously cited for transporting neonatal felids (bobcats) on May 23, 2016. Higgs was also cited for failing to have the acquisition record for Zarah available.

June 7, 2017/Oroville, California: The USDA cited the Barry R. Kirshner Wildlife Foundation for failing to provide a lion cub named Lucie who was severely lame, uncomfortable, and unwilling to stand with adequate veterinary care. She was also cited for a repeat violation for failing to follow the diet plan correctly for this lion cub. She was giving the animal about 30 grams

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of calcium gluconate daily, whereas the dose needed was actually 100 grams daily.

March 17, 2017/Charlestown, Indiana:

The USDA cited Wildlife in Need, Inc., for interfering with its officials by repeatedly denying that there were any other cubs on the premises besides the two declawed lion cubs and one tiger cub the inspectors had already observed. After he was presented with evidence that the inspection team knew about the animals, he finally admitted that there were two other tiger cubs. He admitted that he had lied to the inspection team because the cubs had undergone a “botched” declaw procedure and that he was “embarrassed” and didn’t want the team to see them. He said that the procedure had taken place approximately two weeks earlier. He allowed the team to inspect the cubs but refused to allow an inspection of the room that they were kept in.

The USDA also cited Stark for failing to provide the two 5- to 6-week-old tiger cubs with adequate veterinary care. Their paws were significantly swollen, and the animals were spotting blood and struggling to walk. The cubs had been brought out for the inspection in a crate that was about 24 inches long by 18 inches wide. They had to be physically removed from it, and when persuaded to move, the orange cub would leave spots of blood from the front paws. The white tiger cub was severely lame and dragging a hind limb. This cub consistently lay down and appeared to be suffering throughout the inspection. Stark was also cited for failing to list these cubs in his records—he had recorded only one cub’s birth on February 10, 2017, instead of three. The inspector noted, “An orange and white tiger cub were deliberately left off of the records to provide false information to inspectors, as the licensee had advised during the inspection that the facility only had 1 orange tiger born in 2017.” Stark eventually admitted that he had hidden the

two cubs because he “did not want to get into trouble for the veterinarian’s mistakes.” One of the cubs had a 50 percent chance of dying because of complications from the procedure, according to the attending veterinarian.

February 15, 2017/Dade City, Florida:

The USDA issued a decision and order in response to the July 17, 2015, complaint that the agency had filed against Dade City’s Wild Things. The facility was assessed a civil penalty of \$21,000, issued a 60-day license suspension, and ordered to cease and desist violating the AWA, including by allowing the public to swim with tiger cubs. The order is stayed pending a ruling on Dade City’s Wild Things’ appeal.

July 20, 2016/Oroville, California: The USDA cited the Barry R. Kirshner Wildlife Foundation for failing to handle a male lion cub named Atlas properly. During a cub encounter, a member of the public held the lion without a harness or leash. A gate into the facility that was approximately 130 feet from the exhibition, was left open. According to the inspector, the lion cub was of sufficient size and strength to harm a member of the public or escape.

November 17, 2016/Troutman, North Carolina: The USDA issued Zootastic Park of Lake Norman a penalty of \$7,450 for nine violations of the AWA, including for failing to provide adequate veterinary care to a tiger cub with significant swelling around her eyes, yellow ocular discharge, and patches of hair loss.

July 8, 2016/Charlestown, Indiana: The USDA filed an Animal Welfare Act (AWA) complaint against Stark and Wildlife in Need alleging over 110 willful violations of the AWA since 2012, including exposing tiger cubs to rough and excessive handling during public encounters.

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July 5, 2016/Troutman, North Carolina:

The USDA cited Zootastic Park of Lake Norman for failing to provide adequate veterinary care to a tiger cub with significant swelling around her eyes, yellow ocular discharge, and patches of hair loss. The facility was also cited for failing to have records of disposition for several tiger cubs available for inspection.

May 25, 2016/Kingwood, West Virginia:

The USDA cited Hovatter's Wildlife Zoo for failing to feed 7-week-old lion cubs a nutritionally adequate diet.

March 24, 2016/Myrtle Beach, South Carolina:

The USDA cited T.I.G.E.R.S. (The Institute of Greatly Endangered and Rare Species), aka "Myrtle Beach Safari," for failing to have a program of veterinary care that addressed a recurring problem at the facility—two white tiger cubs exhibited ringworm-like lesions. The agency noted the need to address public-safety issues, including when the animals can have public contact.

March 2, 2016/Massillon, Ohio: The Ohio Department of Agriculture issued an order placing roadside zoo Stump Hill Farm under quarantine while it conducted an investigation into the facility's alleged illegal possession of dangerous wild animals. The order cited multiple instances in which owner Cyndi Huntsman exported animals, including two tiger cubs, without a permit.

February 1, 2016/Wynnewood,

Oklahoma: The USDA cited G.W. Exotic for failing to house three tiger cubs properly. One cub was 7 weeks old, and the other two were 12 weeks old. They were roaming unsupervised in a house at the rear of the park, risking injury to themselves.

December 18, 2015/Las Vegas, Nevada:

FOX5 reported that two tiger cubs owned by Siegfried and Roy died from kidney infections. The cubs were housed at

Siegfried and Roy's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat at the Mirage.

November 17, 2015/Oroville, California:

The USDA assessed Barry R. Kirshner Wildlife Foundation a penalty of \$5,464 for violations of the AWA occurring between November 1, 2011, and August 1, 2014. These included allowing members of the public to come in direct contact with juvenile lions, and allowing a member of the public to conduct a photo shoot with an unrestrained adult tiger and two tiger cubs.

November 16, 2015/Wynnewood,

Oklahoma: The USDA cited G.W. Exotic for failing to provide tiger cubs with a safe nursery area. Electrical outlets didn't have covers, exposing bare, live electrical wires, and two single-pane windows were low enough that the cubs could potentially break them and escape.

September 21, 2015/Okeechobee,

Florida: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cited exhibitor Sue Pearce for failing to provide a tiger cub, who was found injured with a swollen neck and bite marks, with adequate veterinary care. Pearce called the attending veterinarian and described the injuries, and the vet prescribed treatment over the phone without having examined the cub. The cub's condition deteriorated, and she died the following day.

September 13, 2015/Charlestown,

Indiana: The USDA cited Wildlife in Need, Inc., for failing to handle tiger cubs properly. During "Tiger Playtime," four 16-week-old tiger cubs weighing 35 to 40 pounds were allowed to interact with approximately 40 to 50 members of the public. Two of the cubs walked into the public area after the gate was opened, one cub who appeared to be asleep was dragged in by his front paws, and the fourth cub was pushed from behind. The cubs had no collars or leashes on them, and the attendants used a riding crop

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to swat their noses if they started to bite. The inspector noted, "The cubs were swatted frequently with the riding crops when the attendants were near them. Some of the swats were excessive in severity causing the cubs obvious discomfort." Members of the public, including an 8- or 9-year-old girl, were bitten in at least two different incidents.

Wildlife in Need was also cited for using these cubs every day for months in multiple sessions without sufficient breaks in between. The inspector noted, "The fact that these cubs are allowing the attendants to drag them around by their front legs, non-responsively, suggests they are exhausted and have no choice but to cope with the situation." The cub who had been pulled into the room was pulled to other areas during the 30-minute session. He remained unresponsive and never stood. As the session progressed, two other cubs lay down to nap and then were also dragged around the room. At the end of the "playtime," three of the cubs were dragged by their legs from the exhibit area, and the remaining awake cub was used for photo opportunities

September 9, 2015/Calhan, Colorado:

The USDA cited roadside zoo Serenity Springs Wildlife Center for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to a 7-week-old tiger cub who suffered from crusted hair and discharge from both eyes and was housed in an unsanitary enclosure with rodent feces and exposed drywall. The facility was also cited for failing to provide another sick tiger cub with timely veterinary care. En route to the veterinarian, the cub died from an underlying immune-system deficiency. Serenity Springs received an additional citation for failing to follow a veterinarian-approved diet plan, which required that tiger cubs receive calcium supplements. Two cubs were observed to have lameness and joint swelling, possibly caused by inadequate calcium in their diets.

August 19, 2015/Wynnewood, Oklahoma:

The USDA cited G.W. Exotic for failing to provide a 19-day-old tiger cub with a secondary heating or cooling method for climate control while being exhibited at the Mississippi Valley Fair in Iowa. The inspector stated, "Animals this young in the absence of their parents are not able to adequately thermoregulate and exposure to temperatures which may be comfortable for adults may still be detrimental to the health of young cubs. Exposure to an excessive number of people and other animals at this young age poses a disease risk to the cub."

August 5, 2015/Davenport, Iowa:

During an inspection at the Mississippi Valley Fair, the USDA cited exhibitor Joe Schreiber for improper handling of a 19-day-old tiger cub who was being held alone, in view of the public, in a playpen-like enclosure with no secondary heating or cooling method for climate control. The inspector noted, "Animals this young in the absence of their parents are not able to adequately thermoregulate and exposure to temperatures which may be comfortable for adults may still be detrimental to the health of young cubs. Exposure to an excessive number of people and other animals at this young age poses a disease risk to the cub."

August 4, 2015/Kingwood, West Virginia:

The USDA cited roadside zoo Hovatter's Wildlife Zoo for failing to handle tiger cubs properly. The cubs used in the facility's photo shoots were too large, too strong, and too aggressive to engage in direct contact with the public. One tiger growled and used his claws to try to escape from the handler when the animal was moved from his or her cage.

August 1, 2015/Sussex, New Jersey:

Space Farms Zoo ran an ad in the Animal Finder's Guide, a trade publication for exotic-animal breeders and dealers, offering to sell or trade two male tiger cubs.

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July 27, 2015/Charlestown, Indiana: The USDA cited Wildlife in Need, Inc., for failing to feed four 10-week-old tiger cubs properly. They were still on a formula diet but should have been provided meat starting at 2 to 3 weeks of age, and the majority of their diet should have been meat by 8 weeks of age.

July 17, 2015/Dade City, Florida: The USDA filed a complaint against roadside zoo Dade City's Wild Things for 20 alleged violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), including four separate citations for failing to handle young tigers as carefully as possible in a manner that didn't cause behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort; two separate citations for using physical abuse to handle young tigers, including pulling their tails to restrain them and holding a tiger aloft by his neck; and two citations for "exposing young or immature tigers to rough or excessive handling and/or exhibiting them for periods of time that would be detrimental to their health or well-being" and for "exhibiting young tigers for periods of time and/or under conditions that were inconsistent with their good health and well-being."

June 4, 2015/Kingwood, West Virginia: The USDA cited Hovatter's Wildlife Zoo for failing to handle tiger cubs properly. The cubs were pulled from their mother at birth and were cared for in the licensee's home. At 2½ weeks old, they were used for public encounters, and at 5 weeks old (at the time of this inspection), the cubs had not been vaccinated—putting them at risk since they didn't have fully developed immune systems. Hovatter's was also cited for failing to have a nutritionally adequate feeding plan for the cubs.

May 23, 2015/Jamestown, Pennsylvania: The USDA cited roadside zoo Pymatuning Deer Park for failing to have a veterinarian-approved diet plan to ease two 6-week-old tiger cubs to solid food.

May 19, 2015/Natural Bridge, Virginia: The USDA cited roadside zoo Natural Bridge Zoo for failing to feed tiger cubs properly. Four cubs were born on April 9, 2015, and removed from their mother within one hour of birth. They were fed a diet that was inappropriate for their age and species. The one cub still remaining at the facility had a rough hair coat, prominent pelvis, and pot-bellied appearance.

April 8, 2015/Gentry, Arkansas: The USDA cited Wild Wilderness Drive-Through Safari for failing to handle lion cubs properly. On October 22, 2014, a park visitor sought medical attention for an injury received while participating in a park-allowed interaction with an uncontrolled 12-week-old lion cub.

January 6, 2015/Natural Bridge, Virginia: The USDA cited Natural Bridge Zoo for failing to handle tiger cubs carefully. The cubs were pulled from their mother at birth and put on display in the gift shop when 2 to 3 weeks old. They were then used in photo sessions when 3 to 4 weeks old, which exposed them to the public before they were immunocompetent. Natural Bridge Zoo was also cited for failing to handle tiger cubs properly. In one case, a cub who was too big and strong for direct public contact was being used for photo opportunities.

December 5, 2014/Massillon, Ohio: The USDA cited Stump Hill Farm for interfering with an inspection by failing to report the possession of a juvenile tiger. The inspector asked the licensee multiple times in various ways about the presence of a juvenile tiger on the premises, and each time, the licensee responded that there were no young or juvenile tigers on the property. However, the attending veterinarian confirmed that his clinic had treated an injured tiger cub, Lilly, a few days earlier. The inspector returned to the property and told the licensee what he had learned. She confirmed that there was a cub and that

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“she had ‘forgotten’ about this tiger because it was housed in another enclosure on the property which was located away from where the other big cats were housed” in order to reduce stress and contamination.

The inspector also questioned the licensee about a specific enclosure between one containing an adult lion and another containing two adult tigers. The space in the fence was large enough for the big cats to injure any animal in the middle enclosure, so the inspector asked the licensee if animals were ever placed in that enclosure. The licensee said no but later during the inspection admitted to putting the tiger cub Lilly in there while staff cleaned her enclosure. Stump Hill was cited for placing Lilly in the enclosure near the other big cats. She had been injured in her primary enclosure, which resulted in a wound on her leg and the amputation of a toe. The licensee claimed that the injury occurred when Lilly got her paw stuck between metal piping and chewed on her own paw and leg in an attempt to free herself. Stump Hill was also cited for failing to have the record of acquisition for Lilly at the time of the inspection.

September 13, 2014/Calhan, Colorado: The USDA cited Serenity Springs Wildlife Center for improperly handling an 8-week-old tiger cub by allowing the public to handle him for at least six hours in one day with no documented breaks. During this long public encounter, the cub uttered vocalizations indicating distress numerous times.

September 11, 2014/Tuttle, Oklahoma: The USDA cited roadside zoo Tiger Safari for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to a 16-week-old white tiger cub who had skin lesions but had not been examined by a veterinarian.

August 19, 2014/Charlestown, Indiana: During a USDA inspection of roadside zoo Wildlife in Need, Inc., inspectors observed

several incidents that took place during “Tiger Playtime,” when approximately 30 members of the public sat in an enclosed area and were allowed to interact freely with two tiger cubs. An attendee was pawed and mouthed in the face, one child was bitten on the top of his thigh, another child was grabbed from behind and both sides of his or her head and ears were mouthed by a cub, and one of the inspectors was bitten on the back, resulting in broken skin and bleeding.

August 11, 2014/Greensburg, Indiana: The USDA cited Stapp Circle S Ranch for improper feeding of a 9-week-old tiger cub, who was fed only meat without additional calcium or vitamin supplements. Lack of calcium can lead to metabolic bone disease in cubs and cause fractures and painful bone conditions.

March 18, 2014/Naples, Florida: The USDA cited exhibitor Patrick Clancy for failing to feed a nutritionally complete diet and supply adequate veterinary care to a tiger cub who was walking with a limp. She was being exhibited at the Collier County Fair.

March 10, 2014/Branson, Missouri: The USDA cited roadside zoo Promised Land Zoo for failing to have an employee who had been approved by the USDA for the care and handling of exhibited big cats to oversee the adult lion and 7-week-old tiger cub displayed at the facility.

March 10, 2014/Miller, Missouri: The USDA cited Hostetler Wildlife Farms for failing to provide tiger cubs with adequate veterinary care. Three cubs were born in January, and according to the facility representative, one “got a little cold and the mother may have sat on it.” The cub wasn’t taken to a veterinarian. Hostetler was also cited for improper handling of a tiger cub born in mid-January who was transported to another facility on January 31. This cub had

health concerns, including illness and possible injury, from the date of his birth, and the facility representative at the destination site stated that “there was something wrong with that cub.”

January 17, 2014/Charlestown, Indiana:

The USDA cited Wildlife in Need, Inc., for failing to handle animals properly. The tiger cubs used in the “Tiger Baby Playtime” event were approximately 15 to 16 weeks old. The licensee admitted that people had been scratched and nipped during the exhibitions and that he told visitors to smack the tigers on the nose if they got too rough. He said that some people didn’t hit the tigers hard enough and that if he needed to step in, he would. The inspector noted that these cubs were “too large, too strong and aggressive” and that the licensee must stop using them for direct-contact exhibitions.

September 25, 2013/Naubinway,

Michigan: The USDA cited roadside zoo GarLyn Zoo for failing to have an employee with experience or training in handling tigers in direct control of a tiger cub being used for pictures with the public.

August 9, 2013/Denver, Colorado: While exhibiting at the Denver County Fair, Serenity Springs Wildlife Center was cited by the USDA for failing to restrain a 7-week-old tiger cub properly during a photo shoot with the public. The cub was vocalizing and squirming, and the employee didn’t properly handle the cub in order to minimize the risk of harm to the animal and the public.

June 11, 2013/Calhan, Colorado: The USDA noted on an inspection report for Joe Schreibvogel, operator of G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation, that it was reviewing an incident that involved the transportation of two tiger cubs and their subsequent death on or around May 10, 2013. (See May 23, 2013/Calhan, Colorado.)

May 23, 2013/Calhan, Colorado: The USDA cited Serenity Springs Wildlife Center for failing to follow the attending veterinarian’s instructions to monitor a tiger in labor, leading to the death of the tiger and the single cub during birth. In addition, the USDA cited Serenity Springs for failing to handle two 3-day-old tiger cubs properly. They were acquired from another facility, and one died within 24 hours of arriving at Serenity Springs. Two days after arriving at Serenity Springs, the second cub was unable to pass feces and was euthanized.

May 6, 2013/Calhan, Colorado: The USDA cited Serenity Springs Wildlife Center for a repeat violation for failing to provide two lame tiger cubs with veterinary care. During an inspection to check the condition of a tiger cub previously identified to be severely lame and unable to bear weight on his right front limb, the inspector observed that the cub had a severe limp, wouldn’t bear weight on his right hind leg, and had noticeable swelling of the ankle area. Another cub was also severely limping on his right hind leg and had swelling around the ankle area. The cub would only hop a short distance before falling to the ground.

April 18, 2013/Calhan, Colorado: The USDA cited Serenity Springs Wildlife Center for a repeat violation for failing to provide a tiger cub with adequate veterinary care. The cub was previously observed to have a severe limp, and during this inspection, the limp affecting the right front leg appeared to be worse. The cub wouldn’t bear weight on the paw and struggled to get to the food dish in the enclosure.

April 10, 2013/Calhan, Colorado: The USDA cited Serenity Springs Wildlife Center for failing to provide a tiger cub with adequate veterinary care. He was observed to have a severe limp affecting his right front leg, causing him to stumble and fall onto his shoulder. He was also seen walking with a crab-like posture with his hind legs and

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appeared to be in pain. This condition had not been noted by any of the staff members or reported to the veterinarian.

March 28, 2013/Troutman, North

Carolina: The USDA cited roadside zoo Zootastic Park of Lake Norman for leaving a door to a room in the gift shop housing a lion cub unlocked and for improperly handling a white tiger cub weighing approximately 40 pounds. A customer was allowed to lie face-to-face on the floor with the cub, who apparently bit the man on the nose.

February 28, 2013/Litchfield Park,

Arizona: The USDA cited roadside zoo Wildlife World Zoo for allowing a 3-month-old tiger cub to run through a local television studio. The inspector noted that the cub was seen biting the clothing of an offstage handler while the lead handler was seen with scratches and bite marks on his arms. The host of the television program was also seen pulling on the tiger's tail.

January 24, 2013/Chicago, Illinois: The USDA cited traveling exhibitor Jo-Don Farms for failing to have barriers in place to protect a tiger cub and the public during a photo event.

October 23, 2012/Seattle, Washington: The USDA cited Steve Higgs for improperly handling a juvenile tiger. An onlooker was able to get close enough to touch the tiger's face.

May 21, 2012/Wynnewood, Oklahoma: The USDA cited Beth Corley for improperly handling animals. The report stated that the handling practices for large felid cubs were under review.

January 5, 2012/Cherokee, North
Carolina: The USDA cited Cherokee Bear Zoo for failing to provide details regarding the vaccination protocol for tiger cubs in its program of veterinary care. The facility was

also cited for a repeat violation for failing to provide a tiger cub with an adequate veterinarian-approved diet. The cub appeared small and underweight and had a dry and brittle coat.

December 1, 2011/Wynnewood,

Oklahoma: According to a USDA inspection report, a 3-month-old tiger cub who was being exhibited on a leash at G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation jumped on a small child and knocked him down. The child was scratched as a result.

November 28, 2011/Cincinnati, Ohio:

After visiting a tiger exhibit at Northgate Mall run by Joe Schreiber, operator of G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation, *Inside Edition* noted that it cost shoppers \$55 to play with tiger cubs in a pen and have a picture taken with a cub. The 8-week-old cub that the reporter petted and posed with barely moved and was obviously sick. When asked about the sick cub, the exhibit employee replied, "I don't know. Maybe he's just tired or stressed." Another cub was missing a patch of fur and appeared distressed while posing for pictures.

September 14, 2011/Dade City, Florida:

The USDA cited Dade City's Wild Things for failing to handle a tiger cub properly. During a "tiger swim session," a cub was reluctant to move to the edge of the pool, and the handler pulled him by the leash. The cub showed signs of distress by vocalizing and moving around when he was handled in the pool. After swimming a short distance, he then swam toward the handler who was at the wall of the pool and extended his paws, apparently wanting to get out. Instead of pulling him out of the water and stopping the encounter, the handler prevented the cub from exiting and continued the swim session.

September 7, 2011: The USDA cited Robert Engesser, owner of The Zoo (aka "Jungle Safari"), a traveling zoo based in

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Florida, for putting the public and animals at risk by placing a young lion directly onto the laps of children. The inspector noted that in “all cases,” the zoo attendant had no control over the 11-week-old lion cub and that the practice “could easily result in injury.” Adults were also allowed to hold and handle the cub.

July 7, 2011/Larkspur, Colorado: While exhibiting animals at the Colorado Renaissance Festival, Serenity Springs Wildlife Center was cited by the USDA for failing to restrain a tiger cub properly during a public performance.

June 14, 2011/Troutman, North Carolina: The USDA cited Zootastic Park of Lake Norman for failing to have a barrier around a tiger cub. The inspector observed the tiger cub climbing out of the pen several times.

June 9, 2011/Okeechobee, Florida: The USDA cited Animal Adventures for improperly handling tiger cubs who were removed from their mother shortly after birth and deprived of natural nursing opportunities and colostrum. One tiger cub developed aspiration pneumonia and died. The remaining cubs were housed in the licensee’s living room next to three dogs and exposed to multiple people, which increased the risk of disease for the immunologically compromised cubs.

May 18, 2011/Troutman, North Carolina: The USDA cited Zootastic Park of Lake Norman for failing to have sufficient barriers for a bear cub, and a 4½-week-old white tiger cub who was too young for public contact.

March 18, 2011: The USDA cited Robert Engesser, owner of The Zoo (aka “Jungle Safari”), a traveling zoo based in Florida, for using a “highly active” 16-week-old tiger cub in public photo sessions. The handler said that he would replace the tiger with another

younger cub because the current cub was getting more active.

August 23, 2010/Troutman, North Carolina: The USDA cited Zootastic Park of Lake Norman for failing to consult a veterinarian about a vaccination/deworming program for a thin 13-week-old tiger cub.

June 8, 2010/Kaufman, Texas: The USDA cited the now-defunct traveling big-cat exhibitor ZooCats, Inc., for failing to provide several tigers with adequate veterinary care. A tiger died during dystocia (obstructed labor), and according to the licensee, she received no veterinary care prior to or during the dystocia. No necropsy was performed, and the licensee stated that the attending veterinarian felt it was not necessary since the dystocia probably resulted from genetic predisposition. Soon after this tiger’s death, another tiger aborted cubs. She, too, received no veterinary care during or after the birth, and no necropsies were performed. Yet another white tiger had given birth approximately three weeks earlier to three cubs. The licensee said one was born dead. The inspector noted the significant number of unexplained tiger cub deaths at this facility and that the “circumstances indicate that violations of the AWA, such as previously documented inadequate diets may have contributed to these deaths.”

June 2, 2010/Wynnewood, Oklahoma: An AllVoices.com article reported that 23 tiger cubs died over a seven-month period at G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation. According to the article, operator Joe Schreibvogel claimed that the cubs died as a result of being fed a tainted kitten formula. The Food and Drug Administration tested samples that the park provided it but detected no salmonella or *Cronobacter sakazakii* in them. The USDA opened an investigation into the deaths.

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June 1, 2008/Wynnewood, Oklahoma:

G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation ran an ad in *Animal Finders' Guide*, offering to sell two 9-week-old black bear cubs for \$500 each. The ad also mentioned that baby tiger cubs would be ready to go in the middle or at the end of June at 11 weeks of age.

January 1, 2008/Wynnewood, Oklahoma:

G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation ran an ad in *Animal Finders' Guide*, a trade publication for exotic-animal breeders and dealers, offering to give away free 10- to 12-week-old tiger cubs, yearlings, and adults, noting that they had all been bottle-fed from the day they were born.

October 26, 2007: The USDA cited Robert Engesser, owner of The Zoo (aka "Jungle Safari"), a traveling zoo based in Florida, for improper handling of animals. An unvaccinated 6-week-old lion cub was being used for public photo sessions, putting the cub at risk of contracting contagious diseases.

June 1, 2007/Wynnewood, Oklahoma:

G.W. Exotic Animal Memorial Foundation ran an ad in *Animal Finders' Guide* offering to give away free 12-week-old tigers.

May 31, 2007/Boonsboro, Maryland:

The USDA cited the now-defunct Charlotte Metro Zoo for failing to give adequate rest breaks to the tiger cubs it exhibited at a carnival. Although the tiger cubs were kept in a penned area to rest, members of the public were allowed to come into the pen or lean over the sides to pet them.

January 21, 2007/San Angelo, Texas:

A 10-month-old lion cub was quarantined after scratching a mall patron at the Sunset Mall in San Angelo, Texas. The cub was being used in a Joe Exotic, of G.W. Exotics, presentation called "Mystical Magic of the Endangered" during which spectators were allowed to interact with and pet the animals.

October 5, 2006/Shelby, North Carolina:

The USDA cited the now-defunct Charlotte Metro Zoo for failing to protect tiger cubs from diseases. Members of the public were allowed to pet the cubs at the Cleveland County Fair, and the Charlotte Metro Zoo allowed the cubs to suck on customers' hands, which they were not required to wash beforehand.

July 13, 2006: The USDA cited Robert Engesser, owner of The Zoo (aka "Jungle Safari"), a traveling zoo based in Florida, for an incomplete program of veterinary care, which omitted vaccination information for two juvenile lion cubs. The inspector also noted that the two lion cubs being used in photo shoots would soon be too large to be safely handled during direct public contact.

July 6, 2005/Smithfield, Illinois:

The USDA cited Browns Oakridge Exotics for mishandling approximately two-week-old tiger cubs who were exhibited at a customer appreciation day. The inspector said cubs must be at least six weeks old and properly vaccinated before being in public, or they can be susceptible to a variety of diseases.

April 5, 2006/Cherokee, North Carolina:

The USDA cited Cherokee Bear Zoo for failing to have a public barrier around two tiger cubs on display and failing to restrain the cubs properly.

April 4, 2006/Mount Vernon, Maine:

The USDA cited roadside zoo DEW Haven for failing to provide a tiger cub, and a lion cub with adequate shelter. It was snowing and raining on the day of the inspection, and both cubs were in pens with shelters that weren't large enough for them to have freedom of movement.

March 21, 2006 Mount Vernon, Maine:

The USDA cited roadside zoo DEW Haven for failing to provide a barrier between a 130-pound tiger cub and the public, and

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allowing the members of the public to pet the cub.

February 12, 2005/Oldsmar, Florida: A woman was bitten on the hand by a tiger cub used by the now-defunct traveling exhibitor Zoo Dynamics for photo opportunities at an automobile dealership.

January 8, 2005/Cleveland County, North Carolina: Two 6-month-old injured tiger cubs, weighing approximately 80 to 100 pounds each, were abandoned and found wandering on the side of a road.

January 1, 2005/Chiefland, Florida: An advertisement placed by The Zoo in Animal Finders' Guide, a trade publication for exotic-animal breeders and dealers, featured lion cubs for sale by Robert Engesser.

August 30, 2004/Kaufman, Texas: The USDA cited now-defunct ZooCats, Inc., for failing to have the attending veterinarian conduct an annual site visit and review the plan of veterinary care. The inspector noted that the two youngest tigers and the smallest of the lions displayed protruding hip bones and dull hair coats, conditions of great concern.

August 19, 2004/Owatonna, Minnesota: The USDA cited now-defunct Arcangel Wildlife for failing to ensure that a 6-week-old tiger cub used for photo shoots at the Steele County fairground was being properly handled. The inspector noted that the cub was the only one being used, and people of all ages were allowed to hold him.

July 30, 2004/Kaufman, Texas: The USDA cited now-defunct ZooCats, Inc., for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to several 3- to 6-month-old tiger cubs who weren't being given supplements and were "thin in appearance to the point of the hip bone of these animals protruding." In addition, the inspector stated, "Also the hair

coats of these animals are dull in appearance." The facility was also cited for offering the cats food every other day rather than daily as required.

May 7, 2004/Rockwell, North Carolina: A USDA inspector cited the now-defunct Charlotte Metro Zoo for improperly handling a 2-week-old tiger cub after seeing the cub being handled for approximately one hour by at least 12 people. The animal was allowed to rest—but in direct sunlight and for only 15 minutes. He was panting, and his skin tented when he was lifted, indicating that he may have been getting dehydrated. The outside temperature was 91 degrees, and the temperature of the table surface that he rested on was 93 degrees.

April 16, 2004/Kaufman, Texas: The USDA cited now-defunct ZooCats, Inc., for failing to provide two 4-month-old tiger cubs, who were very thin and exhibited dry coats, with adequate veterinary care. They had not been seen by the attending veterinarian since they were approximately 30 days old. ZooCats was also cited for keeping four approximately 6-month-old tiger cubs in temporary housing that wasn't large enough to provide each animal with comfortable protection from the elements.

November 8, 2003/Frisco, Texas: A 4-month-old, 50-pound, declawed tiger cub was abandoned and captured by police after a motorist spotted the animal roaming on the side of the road.

September 13, 2003/Rockwell, North Carolina: The USDA cited the now-defunct Charlotte Metro Zoo for improperly handling animals at the Cabarrus County Fair in Concord, North Carolina. Children and other members of the public were allowed to hold and pet a 4½-month-old tiger without sufficient safety measures to ensure minimal risk of harm to the public.

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March 22, 2003/Red Wing, Minnesota: A 5-month-old, 40-pound tiger cub at now-defunct Grant Oly's Tiger Zone bit a 16-year-old girl and grabbed and bit a pregnant woman on the wrist, causing a puncture wound. Police searching Oly's premises found guns, ammunition, and marijuana.

January 24, 2003/Albert Lea, Minnesota: A malnourished tiger cub was seized from a home in a residential neighborhood after school officials learned that scratches and bite marks on a fifth-grade boy were caused by his father's "pet" tiger.

October 28, 2002/Las Vegas, Nevada: Neighbors became frightened and alerted animal control when they spotted two tiger cubs running loose on a neighbor's rooftop. The cubs had escaped from the homeowner's private menagerie.

July 22, 2002/Plano, Texas: The USDA cited now-defunct ZooCats, Inc., for failing to give water to two cougar cubs, five tiger cubs, and a bear cub who were all kept in an animal trailer. According to the caretaker, the animals had last been offered water 12 hours earlier.

October 30, 2001/Gentry, Arkansas: The USDA cited Wild Wilderness Drive-Through Safari for failing to provide a public barrier around the enclosure for lion cubs.

May 24, 2001: The USDA cited Robert Engesser, owner of The Zoo (aka "Jungle Safari"), a traveling zoo based in Florida, for a direct violation of the AWA. The youngest lion cub was being fed goat milk replacer "which [had] not been approved by the attending veterinarian as being of sufficient nutritive value for this age or type of animal."

October 27, 2000/Massillon, Ohio: According to the *Akron Beacon Journal*, Stump Hill Farm leased a declawed tiger cub to Massillon High School's football team

to serve as a "mascot." During the months he was kept at the high school, the tiger was held in a garage between exhibits.

October 10, 2000/Charlotte, North Carolina: According to the *Salisbury Post*, a 4-month-old leopard and a 5-month-old tiger escaped from a car when Steve Macaluso, owner of the now-defunct Charlotte Metro Zoo, lost control of his vehicle and crashed while returning from a photo shoot. The cubs were later captured.

September 10, 2000/Albuquerque, New Mexico: A tiger cub bit a man during a photo opportunity at the New Mexico State Fair.

August 17, 2000/Horseheads, New York: The USDA cited Robert Engesser, owner of The Zoo ("aka Jungle Safari"), a traveling zoo based in Florida, for failing to give proper veterinary care to a tiger cub suffering from metabolic bone disease caused by the lack of a proper diet.