

# big cat incidents

Less than 400 of the estimated 5,000 to 7,000 captive tigers in the U.S. are held at facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The remaining tigers and many other big cats are primarily at unaccredited breeding facilities, poorly run roadside zoos, traveling zoos, pseudo-sanctuaries, and private menageries where the greatest risk of fatal attacks or injuries are likely to occur. Since 1990, more than 300 dangerous incidents involving big cats have occurred in 44 states. Four children lost their lives and dozens of others lost limbs or suffered other often traumatic injuries. Sixteen adults have been killed, and scores have been mauled. Many captive tigers are kept in inhumane conditions, pose a threat to the community, create a burden for law enforcement agencies and sanctuaries, and jeopardize conservation efforts. Following is a partial list of dangerous incidents involving captive big cats, with some of the more notable items **highlighted**.

## “Daddy, why did that tiger bite my arm off?”

4-year-old boy, recovering in a hospital after he was attacked by his uncle’s pet tiger in Texas

### WELFARE CONCERNS

Captive big cats require special diets, exercise, and opportunities to express natural behaviors. Scientists have found significantly higher stress and frustration levels in caged carnivores who, in the wild, would roam vast territories. Rampant and careless breeding has resulted in very large numbers of unwanted tigers as well as unhealthy tigers and other big cats who suffer from shrunken hearts, shortened tendons, club feet, kidney ailments, malformed backbones, deformed faces, and contorted necks.

**June 25, 2012/Pataskala, Ohio:** While visiting a home with a private menagerie of exotic animals to determine if it was safe for the woman’s twin 3-year-old nieces to live there, a county caseworker was bitten by a cougar kept in a makeshift cage in the backyard, despite false assurances that the cougar had no teeth. When the woman ran her hand along the outside of the caging, the cougar “grabbed [her] left pinky finger and held on,” causing bleeding and sending her to the hospital where she was told she needed to see a specialist.<sup>1,2</sup>

**May 28, 2012/Brooksville, Florida:** A 275-pound pet cougar escaped from his cage in a backyard menagerie and killed a neighbor’s dog who had wandered onto the property.<sup>3</sup>

**May 16, 2012/Wynnewood, Oklahoma:** In a CBS News piece covering an HSUS undercover investigation of GW Exotic Animal Park, zoo owner Joe Schreiber warned there would be a “small Waco” if anyone tried to remove some of his more than 200 big cats. The investigation revealed children, who were sometimes injured, being allowed to interact with dangerous wild animals. The reporter also mentioned that GW is under investigation by the USDA for the deaths of 23 tiger cubs between 2009-2010.<sup>4</sup>

**October 18, 2011/Zanesville, Ohio:** Fifty animals escaped from Terry Thompson’s farm when Thompson opened all the enclosures and fences and then killed himself. The sheriff’s office warned residents to stay in their homes and recommended that local schools close, and a sign on the Interstate cautioned motorists to stay in their vehicles. Forty-eight animals were subsequently shot and killed by sheriff’s deputies—two wolves, six black bears, two grizzly bears, 18 tigers, three cougars, and 17 African lions. A baboon was killed by the big cats and a macaque monkey who was released and never found was believed to have been killed and eaten by the big cats. Three leopards, a grizzly bear and two monkeys were taken to the Columbus Zoo. Thompson had just been released from prison after serving a one-year term for weapons offences.<sup>5,6</sup>



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# big cat incidents

Since 1990	
Incidents	306
States	44
Human Deaths	20
Human Injuries	244
Animal Deaths	125

**October 16, 2011/Odessa, Texas:** A 4-year-old boy was attacked and mauled by a 150-pound cougar who was kept as a pet by a relative. The child was standing near the cougar's cage when the animal reached out and grabbed him. The boy was taken to hospital with significant damage to the left side of his body. The cougar was seized by animal control officials and euthanized.<sup>7</sup>

**August 11, 2011/Halifax Township, Pennsylvania:** An employee of the Lake Tobias Wildlife Park was attacked by a 450-pound tiger after she stuck her arm inside a fence containing tigers. She sustained a severe injury to her arm which required reconstructive surgery.<sup>8</sup>

**July 17, 2011/Manchester, Iowa:** The owner of the Cricket Hollow Zoo was attacked by a 600-pound tiger who escaped from a cage when a gate was mistakenly left open. The tiger ripped the meat from the bone of the man's upper arm and practically scalped him, leaving his left ear dangling. The man's wife chased the tiger back into the pen with a stick. The victim was flown to a hospital where his scalp and ear were sewn back into place and his arm surgically repaired.<sup>9</sup>

**November 19, 2010/San Antonio, Texas:** A cougar escaped from the Wild Animal Orphanage while cages were being moved. Law enforcement officers searched for the animal for eight hours, during which time the cougar attacked and nearly killed a puppy. Area schools were put on alert, and recess was canceled at the elementary school. The cougar was ultimately tranquilized and recaptured.<sup>10</sup>

**October 22, 2010/Rock Springs, Wisconsin:** A volunteer at Wisconsin Big Cat Rescue and Education Center was severely bitten by an adult tiger who grabbed the man's arm and pulled it into the cage as the man was providing water to the big cat. Other volunteers helped the victim extract his arm from the cage, and the man was flown by helicopter to a hospital where he underwent surgery on his hand and arm.<sup>11</sup>

**October 2, 2010/Idaville, Indiana:** Two 900-to-1,000-pound tigers escaped from a cage at a private menagerie called Great Cats of Indiana. The tigers pushed out the corner post of a cage, which was held together with approximately 10 16-penny nails. The tigers were reportedly acting aggressively and were shot by the facility's owner. One tiger was killed after being shot four times in the head and twice in the body with a .223 rifle and twice in body with a 12-gauge shotgun. The other sustained a wound to the abdomen from a 12-gauge shotgun. The tigers were loose for at least 13 hours before they were shot.<sup>12</sup>

**September 5, 2010/Essex County, New Jersey:** A leopard escaped from an enclosure at the Turtle Back Zoo and hid behind a retaining wall in a zoo service building. Visitors were moved to safe areas and the zoo was closed for approximately 45 minutes while the leopard was sedated and recaptured.<sup>13</sup>



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## WELFARE CONCERNS

**December 25, 2007/Dallas,**

**Texas:** A 1-year-old, 180-pound tiger was found dead in a wooded area off the interstate. The female tiger was declawed and wearing a make-shift leash. Shell casings were found in her head and chest - she had been shot five times.

**September 1, 2010/Las Vegas, Nevada:** Numerous visitors looked on as an adult male lion attacked a trainer at the MGM Grand lion habitat. The victim was treated at a hospital and received stitches for a bite on the leg.<sup>14,15</sup>

**August 28, 2010/Miami, Florida:** While chasing an escaped gibbon, a 500-pound tiger jumped over a 14-foot-high fence and escaped from an enclosure at Jungle Island. The tiger wandered freely around the zoo for approximately 20 minutes. At one point he came within 10 feet of a 2-year-old toddler and stared face to face with her. More than 100 park visitors were ushered into a dark barn for protection. Four people were hurt during the chaos and were treated for minor injuries. A fifth person was transported to a hospital after suffering a panic attack.<sup>16,17</sup>

**April 23, 2010/Rockwell, North Carolina:** A 100-pound tiger broke through plastic glass while being loaded onto a trailer at Tiger World, an unaccredited zoo. For several moments, the escaped tiger was on a leash but not under the control of a handler. The tiger passed “just feet” directly in front of two families with young children, all of whom ran and hid behind a cash-register area. The USDA later ordered Tiger World to pay a \$2,571 penalty for this incident.<sup>18,19,20</sup>

**April 15, 2010/Beltrami County, Minnesota:** Two 100-pound adolescent African lions bumped open a gate and escaped from an enclosure at Paul Bunyan’s Animal Land. The two lions were found wrestling with a dog in the front yard of a home in a residential neighborhood approximately two blocks away.<sup>21</sup>

**April 2010/Brown County, Ohio:** A cougar who had been purchased as a pet at a flea market escaped and remained on the loose a month later.<sup>22</sup>

**February 19, 2010/Palm Beach County, Florida:** A jaguar at the Panther Ridge Conservation Center grabbed a woman’s hand and tore off her thumb when the woman wrapped her fingers around a part of an enclosure. This was at least the third dangerous incident at the facility in the past five years (see March 29, 2008/Wellington, Florida, and February 26, 2005/Wellington, Florida).<sup>23</sup>

**October 10, 2009/Cleveland, Ohio:** An adult clouded leopard escaped from his enclosure at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo when a wire in his cage broke. The leopard was tranquilized and recaptured.<sup>24</sup>

**July 30, 2009/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A 400-pound tiger belonging to the Fercos Brothers magic act escaped while being walked on a leash outside of the owners’ gated property. The tiger ran after a rabbit, causing Tony Fercos to fall and drop the leash. Police responded to reports from local residents about a tiger wandering the streets, and the animal was found in a resident’s backyard. The owners cornered the tiger and returned him to his cage.<sup>25,26</sup>



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“Honest to God,  
when is it going to  
end? ... To these  
animals, we’re food.”

Mother of a 7-year-old  
Minnesota girl attacked  
by a tiger

**May 25, 2009/Lisbon, Ohio:** A 10-year-old girl was bitten by a friend’s pet cougar when she reached her arm into the cage. The girl was rushed to a local hospital and then airlifted to Children’s Hospital in Pittsburgh. A USDA inspector cited the owner, Matt Joseph, for unsafe handling and warned, “[a]nyone could access these animals when the owners are not at home.”<sup>27,28</sup>

**May 24, 2009/Great Bend, Kansas:** A 150-pound cougar escaped an enclosure at the Great Bend Zoo when a zookeeper left a door open. Zoo visitors were evacuated and the cougar was shot and killed by police because tranquilizer darts were not readily available and the animal became aggressive.<sup>29</sup>

**May 24, 2009/Memphis, Tennessee:** A zookeeper at the Memphis Zoo was bitten by an adult tiger who escaped into a corridor through unlocked doors. The keeper was taken to a hospital for a bite to his leg. The tiger was sedated and returned to her cage.<sup>30</sup>

**May 2, 2009/Osceola County, Florida:** A pregnant cougar owned by Jungle Adventure Park escaped as she was being moved from one cage to another and ran into nearby woods. The state wildlife agency and county sheriff’s office searched unsuccessfully for the cougar.<sup>31</sup>

**April 24, 2009/Calhan, Colorado:** A volunteer was bitten on the arm by a tiger while he was cleaning cages at Serenity Springs Wildlife Center. The man was taken by ambulance to a hospital.<sup>32,33</sup>

**April 17, 2009/Jacksonville, Florida:** A jaguar escaped from an enclosure at the Jacksonville Zoo through a hole in the fence possibly caused by a grounds keeper. The jaguar was netted and returned to the enclosure.<sup>34</sup>

**February 21, 2009/Oakley, Kansas:** One of three lions kept in the private menagerie of Jeffrey Harsh attacked a man who put his arm into the cage. Harsh reportedly beat the lion with a steel pipe so she would release the man. The victim sustained deep lacerations to both arms and was taken to a hospital in Denver for surgery.<sup>35</sup>

**February 11, 2009/Omaha, Nebraska:** A veterinarian at the Henry Doorly Zoo was bitten by a tiger while performing a routine medical examination on the animal. The 200-pound anesthetized tiger bit the veterinarian’s right forearm three times and he was taken to the hospital in serious condition.<sup>36</sup>

**February 7, 2009/Troy, Alabama:** A 2-year-old boy was clawed by a leopard at the McClelland Critters zoo when the owner of the facility took visitors behind the barrier that separates the animals from the public. The boy sustained lacerations that required more than 100 stitches and the family filed a lawsuit against the facility.<sup>37,38</sup>



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“I can remember seeing the sky. But I don’t know if that’s true or a dream. I remember seeing a huge blue expanse, and I remember seeing the clouds.”

North Carolina teenager, 15 years after he was blinded when his father’s pet tiger bit and crushed his skull

**January 18, 2009/Thurmont, Maryland:** An animal care worker at Catoclin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo was critically injured by one, and possibly two, jaguars after she failed to secure the animals’ inside area before working in it. Both jaguars entered the area and the woman was attacked by the nearly 200-pound male jaguar and possibly the female jaguar as well. A fire extinguisher was sprayed at the male jaguar to fend him off. Emergency medical technicians responded to the incident and the victim was taken to the Maryland Shock Trauma Center. She spent 10 days in the hospital for injuries to her face and upper body. Both jaguars were placed in quarantine for one month.<sup>39,40</sup>

**January 18, 2009/Ingram, Texas:** A 330-pound pet tiger owned by Anke Leitner escaped from her enclosure and was discovered in the residential backyard of a 79-year-old woman. The tiger was shot with a tranquilizer dart and recaptured.<sup>41</sup>

**January 8, 2009/Salem, Oregon:** During a USDA inspection, exhibitor James Wise was demonstrating to the inspector how he gave an adult male tiger a pill. When Wise turned around, the tiger lunged at him, bit his forearm, and pushed him into a fence. Wise hit the tiger on the face until he released his grip long enough for Wise to escape the enclosure.<sup>42</sup>

**December 12, 2008/Las Vegas, Nevada:** Numerous visitors looked on as a lion attacked and bit a trainer on the leg during a feeding at the MGM Grand lion habitat. Another trainer intervened by hitting the lion on the nose. The victim sustained injuries requiring stitches.<sup>43</sup>

**December 9, 2008/Albion, Indiana:** A 350- to 400-pound Bengal tiger escaped from her enclosure at the Black Pine Animal Park when a keeper accidentally left a door open. The tiger was seen running on a local firefighter’s farm. Park employees, sheriff’s deputies, firefighters, conservation officers, and local and state police were called in and thermal imaging equipment was used to aid in the search, which lasted nearly seven hours. Two tranquilizer darts had no effect on the tiger who eventually returned to the park on her own and was coaxed into a cage.<sup>44</sup>

**November 29, 2008/Pocahontas County, West Virginia:** A 250- to 300-pound pet Bengal tiger escaped from an exotic animal farm owned by David Cassell after squeezing through a hole in chain-link cage fencing. Employees at a local ski resort saw the animal’s footprints, county and state officials were notified, and the tiger was tracked into the Monongahela National Forest where she was ultimately shot and killed by Cassell.<sup>45,46</sup>

**November 16, 2008/Luray, Virginia:** A 16-year-old employee at the Luray Zoo was attacked by an adult tiger as she attempted to pet the animal while giving a tour to a group of visitors. The tiger reportedly pulled the girl’s arm into the cage, causing severe injuries to her left hand and arm and biting off her right pinkie finger. Luray Zoo was fined \$500 by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration and cited by the USDA for violating handling regulations as a result of the incident.<sup>47,48,49</sup>



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“My boy was not mauled, he was being eaten alive.”

Father who saw his 13-year-old boy being attacked by his grandfather’s pet tiger and lion in Texas

**November 15, 2008/Dade County, Florida:** A 16-year-old girl was mauled by a 150-pound cougar at the private menagerie of Alan Rigerman. The animal pinned the girl to the ground and clenched his jaws around her head. A neighbor freed the girl by punching and kicking at the cougar. The victim underwent extensive surgery to repair a large gash in the back of her neck.<sup>50,51</sup>

**October 30, 2008/Atlanta, Georgia:** One of two 1-year-old cheetahs who were being transported in the cargo hold of a passenger plane from Wildlife Safari Park in Winston, Oregon, to the Memphis Zoo in Tennessee escaped from her travel crate. An airline baggage worker in Atlanta opened the plane’s cargo door and found the cheetah running loose amid the luggage. The plane was moved into a closed airport hangar, and both cheetahs were tranquilized and taken to the Atlanta zoo for a few days before continuing their trip to Memphis.<sup>52</sup>

**October 29, 2008/Broken Arrow, Oklahoma:** A volunteer was attacked by a 1,000-pound liger (a cross between a lion and a tiger) while feeding the animal at Safari’s Wildlife Sanctuary. The man suffered puncture wounds to his neck and upper back as well as trauma to his vertebrae. He was flown by medical helicopter to a hospital and died the next day from his injuries. A group of 40 elementary school children was walking by the animal’s cage as the incident occurred.<sup>53,54,55</sup>

**September 2008/Mentone, Alabama:** A cougar escaped from his cage at Lookout Mountain Wild Animal Park and attacked a black leopard’s paw through the fence of her enclosure. The cougar was shot and killed in order to get him to release his hold on the leopard’s paw.<sup>56</sup>

**August 19, 2008/West Palm Beach, Florida:** An adult lion and an adult tiger escaped from their cage overnight at McCarthy’s Wildlife Sanctuary. Three schools in the area were on lockdown while officers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office searched for the animals, who were both located the next day, tranquilized, and returned to cages.<sup>57,58</sup>

**August 19, 2008/Washoe County, Nevada:** Two black leopards were found on the roof of a private home after they apparently jumped a 12-foot fence while the owners were out of town. Authorities tranquilized both leopards, and they were taken to the local animal shelter.<sup>59</sup>

**August 5, 2008/Richmond, Illinois:** During a rehearsal for a circus performance, a tiger at the Hawthorn Corporation circus training facility attacked a man, knocking him to the ground, face down, and grabbing him by the neck. The man sustained deep puncture wounds and several scratches to his upper body, neck, and knee. Others present during the attack hit the animal with wooden poles in order to get him to release the victim. Paramedics transported the man to the hospital, where he stayed for five or six days. It was the second time the man had been attacked by a tiger at the facility.<sup>60,61</sup>



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“I have friends come for dinner; they won’t come back. If they have kids, the kids are terrified.”

Neighbor of a New York man who obtained a USDA exhibitor license to skirt state law that prohibits keeping pet tigers and other big cats

**August 4, 2008/Branson, Missouri:** A 16-year-old worker at Predator World was left a quadriplegic after he was attacked by three tigers when he went into the enclosure to photograph the animals for a visitor. One of the tigers jumped on the victim and knocked him to the ground before the two other animals joined the attack and dragged him to a water pool. Staff members used a fire extinguisher to deter the cats and pulled the teen from the cage. He was airlifted to the hospital and listed in critical condition with severe trauma to his neck and airway as well as a serious laceration to his leg. The family later filed a lawsuit against the animal park.<sup>62,63</sup>

**August 3, 2008/Warren County, Missouri:** A 26-year-old volunteer at the Wesa-A-Geh-Ya exotic animal farm was attacked by an 800-pound tiger while cleaning cages. The man was standing on top of a cage when a tiger scaled the 12- to 14-foot chain-link fence and grabbed him. The victim’s leg had much of the skin stripped off down to the bare bone, and he was flown by air ambulance to the hospital, where he underwent two surgeries to amputate his lower leg. The facility owners, who initially tried to cover up the incident by claiming that the victim had been attacked by a pit bull, shot and wounded the tiger during the attack and then later shot and killed him.<sup>64,65</sup>

**July 14, 2008/El Paso County, Colorado:** El Paso County Sheriff’s deputies searched for what was believed to be an African lion who was spotted running loose by two witnesses, one of whom saw the animal chase several dogs through a field. Authorities issued a reverse 911 call warning area residents of the loose lion.<sup>66</sup>

**May 24, 2008/South Bend, Indiana:** A keeper at the Potawatomi Zoo was attacked by a leopard while cleaning an off-exhibit holding area. She was taken to a hospital by ambulance to be treated for her injuries.<sup>67</sup>

**May 24, 2008/Royal Oak, Michigan:** A keeper at the Detroit Zoo was bitten and scratched by a lion while transferring the animals inside for the evening. He fended the animal off with pepper spray and was treated at a nearby hospital, where he received stitches for his injuries.<sup>68</sup>

**May 19, 2008/Neosho, Missouri:** A black leopard approached a woman hanging laundry in her yard and then clawed at the door to her home when she retreated inside. The cat then charged a sheriff’s deputy who arrived on the scene, ran past him, and turned around and charged again before being killed by several shots from the deputy’s rifle and Glock handgun. Authorities speculated that the cat, who had been declawed, was a pet who had escaped or been abandoned.<sup>69</sup>

**May 11, 2008/Toledo, Ohio:** A keeper at the Toledo Zoo sustained three lacerations to his chest after a 5-year-old tiger reached through a double mesh barrier and clawed him. He was treated at a nearby hospital.<sup>70</sup>



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“[T]igers are 360–720 times more likely to be involved in a fatal attack than dogs.”

P.J. Nyhus, R.L. Tilson, and J.L. Tomlinson, “Dangerous Animals in Captivity: Ex Situ Tiger Conflict and Implications for Private Ownership of Exotic Animals,” *Zoo Biology* 22:(2003) 573–586.

**May 5, 2008/Miami, Florida:** Mark McCarthy, owner of McCarthy’s Wildlife Sanctuary, was bitten by an adult tiger during a photo shoot for a music video. The tiger began to choke and panicked when a chain tightened around her neck and body. McCarthy sustained bone-deep puncture wounds to his calf while attempting to free the chain, which ultimately had to be cut to be removed. He was treated by paramedics at the scene.<sup>71,72</sup>

**March 29, 2008/Wellington, Florida:** The owner of Panther Ridge Conservation Center was attacked by two cheetahs while conducting an exhibition inside the animals’ cage during a fundraising event. She was pinned down by the cheetahs, who then bit and clawed at her for 10 minutes before she could be removed from the cage and airlifted to a hospital. She sustained 40 puncture wounds to her back, arms, and legs.<sup>73,74</sup>

**March 24, 2008/ Las Vegas, Nevada:** A panther likely kept as a pet attacked a dog in the back yard of a home in a residential area. Police attempted to shoot the panther, but the animal escaped.<sup>75</sup>

**February 21, 2008/Honolulu, Hawaii:** A 245-pound tiger escaped from his enclosure at the Honolulu Zoo when a zookeeper failed to secure two gates in the exhibit. During the 20 to 25 minutes that he was on the loose, the tiger walked past a volunteer and into an open area of the zoo, where nothing but a 4-foot fence separated him from the wider public areas of the zoo, including a playground.<sup>76</sup>

**February 10, 2008/West Palm Beach, Florida:** A Palm Beach Zoo employee was bitten by a tiger during a training session. The worker was taken to a local hospital for treatment.<sup>77,78</sup>

**February 9, 2008/Davenport, Florida:** A volunteer was clawed by a tiger while cleaning the animal’s cage at Horseshoe Creek Wildlife Foundation. The woman suffered injuries when the tiger swiped at her leg.<sup>79</sup>

**January 20, 2008/Cedar Creek, Texas:** A volunteer at the Capital of Texas Zoo was bitten by a cougar when she reached into the pen to pet the animal. The cougar gripped her arm and the girl sustained a broken thumb and bites that required stitches. She was the second person to be bitten by this animal (see 2007/Cedar Creek, Texas).<sup>80</sup>

**January 10, 2008/San Francisco, California:** A 90-pound snow leopard nearly escaped after he chewed or tore through a steel mesh wall that separated his feeding cage from a zookeeper service area. The animal created a hole large enough to get his leg and head through.<sup>81</sup>

**December 27, 2007/Manitowoc, Wisconsin:** Two cougars escaped from the Lincoln Park Zoo when the fencing of the cage was cut by vandals. The animals were on the loose for approximately two hours before being located, tranquilized, and returned to the cage.<sup>82</sup>



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“To have escaped from their confines and being loose in the community was just unimaginable.”

Detective for the Bannock County Sheriff's Office in Idaho, commenting on the escape and killing of 19 African lions at Ligertown

**December 25, 2007/San Francisco, California:** A 300-pound tiger escaped from her enclosure, which was surrounded by a moat 20 feet wide and a 12½-foot-high wall. She attacked three visitors, quickly killing a teenager and following the other two male victims—a teenager and an adult—for 300 yards before mauling them. The two survivors sustained deep bites and claw cuts on their heads, necks, arms, and hands, and both underwent surgery for their wounds. The tiger was shot and killed by police. This was the same tiger who ripped the flesh off a zookeeper's arm approximately one year ago (see December 22, 2006/San Francisco, California).<sup>83</sup>

**December 3, 2007/Acton, California:** A 4-year-old male tiger mauled a caretaker who was cleaning his enclosure at the Shambala Preserve. The man sustained multiple bite wounds and was airlifted to a hospital, where he was listed in critical condition.<sup>84</sup>

**November 19, 2007/Saint Louis, Missouri:** A portion of the Saint Louis Zoo was evacuated when a 1-year-old cheetah scaled a wall at least 10 feet high and got into an area intended to separate animals from people and was loose for nearly half an hour. The incident marked the third time since 2000 that a cheetah has escaped at this zoo.<sup>85</sup>

**November 19, 2007/Pike County, Ohio:** One of two pet lions escaped from a cage and onto a nearby highway, where he chased and attacked passing cars. The State Highway Patrol and the Pike County Sheriff's Department responded to the call. The owner ultimately lured the 550-pound lion back to the cage. A Pike County Humane Agent inspected the property and found that the wood and wire cage where two lions were kept was caked with manure and littered with rotting animal carcasses.<sup>86,87,88</sup>

**November 14, 2007/New Hampton, Iowa:** A pet tiger escaped from a cage by rushing past the owner at feeding time and attacked and mauled the family's dog. When the dog ran toward cars from the local sheriff's department and the tiger followed, a deputy sheriff shot and killed the tiger through a partially opened window of his vehicle.<sup>89</sup>

**October 1, 2007/Pahrump, Nevada:** A cougar escaped from her holding pen at Running Wild animal compound and attacked a volunteer who entered the enclosure with a bucket of meat. The woman was knocked to the ground by the cougar and bitten on the neck, back, hands, and arms. The cougar stopped the attack when emergency sirens approached the facility.<sup>90</sup>

**July 14, 2007/San Antonio, Texas:** A keeper who forgot to close a gate was attacked by a 244-pound tiger at the San Antonio Zoo. The tiger knocked the man down, dragged him, and bit him on the head several times before the keeper managed to escape by spraying the animal with pepper spray. The keeper was airlifted to the hospital with critical injuries to his head, neck, and arm.<sup>91,92</sup>



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## WELFARE CONCERNS

### July 19, 2005/Colton, California:

John Weinhart, operator of Tiger Rescue, a facility that charged a fee for the public to have their photos taken with tiger cubs, was convicted of child endangerment and animal cruelty and sentenced to two years in jail and five years of probation. Authorities raided his home in 2003 and found 11 tiger and leopard cubs in the attic, two tigers on the front porch, 58 dead tiger cubs in a freezer, and about 30 dead tigers decomposing on the property. Thirty-nine abused tigers were seized and relocated to the Performing Animal Welfare Society sanctuary.

**July 6, 2007/Marion County, Arkansas:** A man was injured by one of his 5½-year-old pet cougars as he was cleaning the animals' cage. The male cougar knocked the man to the ground and bit him on the back of the neck, head, and leg. He was taken to the hospital and treated for his injuries.<sup>93</sup>

**May 2007/Chanceford Township, Pennsylvania:** A 110-pound pet cougar escaped from a cage and was on the loose for more than a day.<sup>94</sup>

**Saturday, February 24, 2007/Denver, Colorado:** A keeper at the Denver Zoo was attacked and bitten on the neck by a 140-pound jaguar in a service hallway adjacent to the enclosure for the animals. The woman suffered extensive internal injuries and died at the hospital of a broken neck. The jaguar was shot and killed during the incident.<sup>95,96,97</sup>

**January 21, 2007/San Angelo, Texas:** A woman was given a tetanus shot at a hospital emergency room after a 10-week-old African lion cub bit her right forearm and would not let go until a worker repeatedly hit the cub in the face. The cub, who was placed under quarantine, was being exhibited by GW Exotic Animal Foundation at a mall where patrons were allowed to pet and interact with the lion.<sup>98</sup>

**January 5, 2007/Center Point, Indiana:** An 80-pound cougar scaled a 14-foot fence and escaped from her enclosure at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center. More than two months later, she was still on the loose.<sup>99,100</sup>

**2007/Cedar Creek, Texas:** A volunteer at the Capital of Texas Zoo was bitten by a cougar when she reached into the pen to pet the animal.<sup>101</sup>

**December 22, 2006/San Francisco, California:** A keeper at the San Francisco Zoo was attacked by a 350-pound tiger who reached through the bars of her cage and grabbed the woman. The keeper sustained deep lacerations to her arms, which required surgery and may have resulted in the loss of one arm. A zoogoer who witnessed the attack described what she saw: "The right arm was in the tiger's mouth .... The left arm was just being held there (in the claws) and the right arm was being eaten. She was screaming and flailing away." The tiger released the woman when other zookeepers jabbed the tiger in the head with a pole.<sup>102,103,104</sup>

**December 22, 2006/Washington, D.C.:** A clouded leopard at the National Zoo escaped her cage through a hole in the fence and ventured onto zoo grounds. Visitors were evacuated while zoo employees surrounded the cat with nets and tranquilizer guns, sedated her, and returned her to her cage.<sup>105</sup>

**November 24, 2006/Evansville, Indiana:** Animal trainer Wade Burck was clawed by a tiger during a performance of the Hadi Shrine Circus. Burck received hospital treatment, including stitches, for wounds to his left forearm and leg.<sup>106,107</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“Granny, I hate to call you this time of night, and don’t want you to get scared, but a tiger is loose.”

Texas man warning his 79-year-old mother-in-law that an escaped pet tiger was pacing along her rear fenceline barely 20 feet away from her back window

**November 18, 2006/Coral Gables, Florida:** A 4-year-old girl was mauled by a 62-pound cougar at a children’s birthday party. The cat took the child’s head into her mouth, inflicting severe cuts to the girl’s eyelid, cheek, and ear, and requiring surgical reattachment of part of her severed ear. The cougar had been provided by Wild Animal World and was killed to be tested for rabies. The proprietor of Wild Animal World had been cited at least twice previously for similar attacks.<sup>108</sup>

**November 14, 2006/Gulf Breeze, Florida:** Two 150-pound cougars escaped through a hole in the fence of their pen and were loose for nearly three hours at The Zoo. The facility was closed and visitors were moved to secured areas while a search, aided by an Escambia County helicopter using infrared cameras, Santa Rosa deputies, and Midway firefighters, was conducted for the cougars. Both were ultimately tranquilized and returned to the cage.<sup>109</sup>

**November 13, 2006/Gulf Breeze, Florida:** A keeper at The Zoo was bitten by a leopard and sustained wounds on her hand.<sup>110</sup>

**October 16, 2006/Fleetwood, North Carolina:** A woman who attempted to pet a leopard at the New River Zoo was bitten on the arm and wrist, sustaining injuries that required surgery. The woman alleged that the owner of the zoo had encouraged her to pet the animal. The leopard was euthanized.<sup>111,112</sup>

**October 16, 2006/Copley Township, Ohio:** A veterinarian with the U.S. Department of Agriculture was attacked by a tiger during an inspection at the L&L Exotic Animal Farm. The tiger reached outside the cage, grabbed the woman’s arm, pulled her toward the cage, and got her arm into her mouth. She was treated at the hospital for scratches and bruising.<sup>113</sup>

**October 6, 2006/Hesperia, California:** A 500-pound tiger escaped from a cage at the Cinema Safari Zoo when zoo workers failed to lock the cage during cleaning. Because the zoo did not have the proper equipment on hand to tranquilize a tiger, the animal was on the loose for hours, during which time he attacked a donkey, biting the animal’s neck and a leg. When the proper equipment was obtained, the tiger was tranquilized and returned to the cage.<sup>114</sup>

**September 12, 2006/Balm, Florida:** Lancelot Kollmann, owner of an animal business called Sir Lance A Lot, was attacked by a 250-pound tiger while cleaning a cage. His lower lip was split in two, requiring 25 stitches, and the side of one arm, which was sliced down to the bone, required five stitches and a drainage shunt.<sup>115,116</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“If somebody thinks they’re going to walk in here and take my animals away, it’s going to be a small Waco.”

Owner of GW Exotics in Oklahoma, a roadside zoo with approximately 200 big cats, during an interview with a reporter

**August 22, 2006/Tampa, Florida:** Enshala, a 180-pound Sumatran tiger at the Lowry Park Zoo, escaped her enclosure 15 minutes before closing time and was loose for 50 minutes when an unlocked latch allowed her access to an empty exhibit under renovation. Zoo visitors were moved to safety in the zoo’s restaurants or sent home as a 10-person weapons team assembled. Enshala became agitated when she was shot with a tranquilizer dart, causing her to lurch at a zoo veterinarian as well as a 7-foot wall separating her from public areas. She was shot by zoo president Lex Salisbury who fired four shots with a 12-gauge shotgun, killing her.<sup>117</sup>

**July 18, 2006/Ballston Spa, New York:** A 4-year-old boy was clawed by an adult tiger displayed by the Ashville Game Farm at the Saratoga County Fair. The child was sitting next to a cage while having his photo taken with a baby kangaroo when the tiger reached out and clawed him. The boy was treated at the hospital and received 14 stitches for a 1-inch gash on his head. As a result of this incident, state officials forced the facility to relocate its big cats. In 2008, Terry Thompson of Zanesville, Ohio, picked up three tigers, two lions and two cougars from Ashville Game Farm. These animals were likely among the nearly 50 animals shot and killed by police in October 2011 after they were released by Thompson before he committed suicide.<sup>118,119,120</sup>

**June 16, 2006/Kaufman County, Texas:** A part-time employee at Zoo Dynamics, an animal facility owned by Marcus Cook, was chased and mauled by a 300-pound tiger who climbed out of an uncovered enclosure. The tiger grabbed the man and threw him down, ripped off his ear, and left severe claw marks all over his body. The man spent the weekend in intensive care and received some 2,000 stitches. The employee in charge took the victim to the hospital without notifying local authorities that a tiger was still loose on the premises and recaptured the animal upon his return.<sup>121,122,123</sup>

**May 2006/Kingman, Arizona:** A woman was attacked by two tigers at Jonathan Kraft’s Keepers of the Wild animal sanctuary and required surgery for her injuries.<sup>124</sup>

**April 6, 2006/Pine County, Minnesota:** Cynthia Gamble, owner of Center for Endangered Cats, was killed by an adult male tiger when she entered his cage. She died of crushing injuries to her throat and blood loss. The 400-pound tiger, who was about 100 pounds underweight, bit off her right foot and portions of both arms. The tiger was euthanized.<sup>125</sup>

**February 24, 2006/San Antonio, Texas:** A cheetah at the San Antonio Zoo escaped from her enclosure by climbing over an approximately 10-foot-high fence into a tree and then jumping to the ground. She was loose for 20 minutes before being tranquilized and returned to her cage.<sup>126</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“I heard my little boy saying, ‘Daddy.’”

Texas father who watched helplessly as his 3-year-old son was dragged around like rag doll and ultimately killed by a tiger

**February 15, 2006/Birmingham, Alabama:** An employee at the Birmingham Zoo was attacked by an adult lion while feeding the animals and moving them to the outdoor exhibit. The woman was taken to the hospital with bites on her scalp, right arm, and abdomen.<sup>127</sup>

**January 30, 2006/Fort Wayne, Indiana:** A tiger escaped an enclosure at the Fort Wayne Zoological Society when a keeper failed to close a gate separating the enclosure from an aisle where the keeper was working. The keeper escaped to an unoccupied area and the tiger was tranquilized and returned to the enclosure.<sup>128</sup>

**January 10, 2006/Center Hill, Florida:** A cougar slipped through an unsecured door and escaped from his enclosure at the Savage Kingdom breeding facility. As the cougar headed for an open field, an employee attempted to lasso him and was bitten on the lower leg. Other employees got ropes around the cougar’s neck and the animal strangled to death as he struggled to resist the ropes.<sup>129</sup>

**November 16, 2005/Greenwich, New York:** An adult tiger escaped from the Ashville Game Farm and Exotic Zoo by pushing through a section of fence across the top of her cage and jumping out. She was on the loose for approximately five hours before being found in a resident’s yard several miles from the zoo, tranquilized, and returned to her cage.<sup>130,131</sup>

**October 6, 2005/Duluth, Minnesota:** Two zookeepers were bitten by a 400-pound tiger at the Lake Superior Zoo while they were moving the animal back to his cage following surgery. The anesthetized tiger bit down on one employee’s arm, holding the bite for approximately 30 seconds and causing puncture wounds that required the man to be hospitalized. A second zookeeper sustained cuts to his hands and fingers as he helped other employees who used a broomstick and their hands to pry the tiger’s mouth open.<sup>132</sup>

**September 28, 2005/Lewis County, Washington:** A 5-year-old boy was tackled by one of his grandfather’s pet tigers. The 80-pound tiger escaped through a gap in the fence and scratched the boy’s leg and gave him a puncture wound on his foot.<sup>133</sup>

**August 18, 2005/Mound Valley, Kansas:** A 17-year-old girl was killed by a 300-pound tiger while having her picture taken with the animal at the Lost Creek Animal Sanctuary. During the photo session, the tiger, who was being held on a chain, lunged at the girl. The handler was unable to restrain the animal, and the tiger clamped his jaws on the girl’s neck. She was severely bitten and her neck was broken. The tiger was killed.<sup>134</sup>

**July 8, 2005/Peoria, Illinois:** A Frisco Bros. Petting Zoo employee was injured when a 2-year-old tiger grabbed his hand with her front claws as he was removing a feeding tray from the animal’s enclosure. The man was taken to the emergency room and the tiger was quarantined by animal control for 30 days.<sup>135</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“You’d expect anything besides a lion coming in your back door.”

Father of a 5-year-old girl who was attacked inside of their mobile home by a neighbor’s escaped pet lion in South Carolina

**July 2005/Richmond, Illinois:** Craig Perry, of Perry’s Wilderness Ranch and Zoo, was mauled by a tiger at the Hawthorn Corporation’s circus-training facility. One of 14 tigers circled Perry during a photo shoot and then attacked his left leg. Perry required immediate surgery and suffered nerve damage. Perry filed a lawsuit against Hawthorn and the tiger trainer seeking more than \$50,000 for medical bills and pain and suffering.<sup>136</sup>

**June 22, 2005/Little Falls, Minnesota:** A 10-year-old boy was attacked by a lion and a tiger while visiting a private collection of pet exotic cats kept at an auto dealership owned by Chuck Mock. When Mock opened a cage to go inside, a tiger pushed through the door and attacked the boy. As Mock pulled the tiger off, a lion came out and bit the boy, dragging him 25 to 30 feet. The boy sustained numerous facial fractures and his spinal cord was severed, leaving him a quadriplegic. The lion and tiger were killed.<sup>137,138</sup>

**June 11, 2005/Underwood, Minnesota:** A full grown African lion escaped from his cage at the Arcangel Wildlife Farm and wandered through neighbors’ yards for approximately two hours before being shot and killed by a sheriff’s deputy.<sup>139</sup>

**June 11, 2005/Lima, Ohio:** Bradley Craft was attacked by his 160-pound pet cougar. Craft grabbed the cougar’s tail to prevent the cat from attacking his mother and the cat turned on him, biting him in the leg.<sup>140</sup>

**April 27, 2005/Red Wing, Minnesota:** A 37-year-old woman was mauled by four tigers while cleaning their pen at Grant Oly’s Tiger Zone. She was airlifted to a hospital with wounds to her leg and neck and was listed in serious condition. She was hospitalized for several days and underwent rabies shots. The county seized Oly’s seven tigers and hired a big cat expert to care for them at his property. Oly’s tigers were later transported to a Colorado sanctuary, at a cost of \$30,000 to the county.<sup>141,142,143,144</sup>

**March 6, 2005/Underwood, Minnesota:** A 16-year-old girl was petting a tiger through the bars of a cage at the Arcangel Wildlife Farm when the tiger bit her finger and clawed her hand. The wound required a dozen stitches and three operations to treat an acute infection. The girl also underwent rabies shots.<sup>145</sup>

**February 26, 2005/Wellington, Florida:** A 500-pound Bengal tiger escaped from a cage at Panther Ridge Sanctuary by pushing past a woman who was feeding him and who hadn’t latched the cage properly. More than 20 sheriff’s deputies and state wildlife officers armed with rifles were positioned inside and outside the perimeter fence of the facility as the tiger wandered the grounds for more than two hours. Two tranquilizer darts were required to sedate the tiger so that he could be recaptured.<sup>146</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“The tigers managed to get him by the throat and neck area and drag him into the water.”

Missouri sheriff, describing an attack by three tigers on a teenager who was left a quadriplegic by the incident

**February 23, 2005/Simi Valley, California:** A tiger who had been roaming loose for at least eight days was shot and killed several hundred yards from soccer and baseball fields at the edge of a housing development. Authorities with California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Department of Agriculture had been looking for the animal, setting traps and using infrared equipment at night.<sup>147,148</sup>

**February 23, 2005/Pahrump, Nevada:** A pet leopard at Karl Mitchell’s facility bit off the tip of a woman’s finger.<sup>149,150</sup>

**February 12, 2005/Oldsmar, Florida:** A woman was bitten on the hand by a tiger cub provided by Zoo Dynamics for public photo sessions at an automobile dealership.<sup>151</sup>

**February 11, 2005/Cut and Shoot, Texas:** A worker at Wildlife Extravaganza was hospitalized for several days after her arm was pulled through the feeding hole by a leopard as she prepared to feed the cat. Two animal control officers were stationed at the property around the clock to ensure there was no improper contact while the leopard was placed under a 30-day quarantine.<sup>152,153</sup>

**January 26, 2005/Sioux Falls, South Dakota:** A man was given rabies shots and received stitches to his finger after claiming he was bitten by a tiger at the Great Plains Zoo as he reached through a fence into the cage.<sup>154</sup>

**January 20, 2005/Baraboo, Wisconsin:** An 8-year-old girl was bitten on the chest by an 80-pound, 7-month-old lion cub at Creature Features Pet Store. The girl had to undergo rabies shots. The lion was owned by Jeff Kozlowski.<sup>155,156</sup>

**December 24, 2004/Suffolk County, New York:** An 8-year-old boy was attacked by his father’s pet leopard. The boy was scratched on the chest and bitten on the neck, and he required medical treatment. The boy’s father later pleaded guilty to charges that included assault, reckless endangerment, unlawful imprisonment, weapons charges and endangering the welfare of a child for forcing his children to live with two wild felines.<sup>157</sup>

**December 5, 2004/Laredo, Texas:** A circus worker was rushed to the hospital after she was badly bitten on the hand by a caged tiger at Great Circus of China.<sup>158</sup>

**November 20, 2004/St. Augustine, Florida:** A 350-pound tiger, displayed by The Catty Shack Ranch at the St. Johns County Fair, attacked his handler and a 14-year-old boy as he was being walked on a leash to a cage. The tiger jumped on the boy’s back and knocked him to the ground and then turned on the handler. Police used stun guns to stop the attack. The handler suffered puncture wounds to his head and the boy was knocked down and scratched.<sup>159</sup>

**November 20, 2004/Branson West, Missouri:** An 18-year-old volunteer at Predator World spent the night in the hospital after being bitten on the arm by an 80-pound black leopard as he stood next to the cage.<sup>160</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“The average U.S. citizen has absolutely no business owning one of these animals, absolutely none. ...They are putting the public safety in danger; they’re putting themselves in danger, and they are confining these animals that are not meant to be confined.”

Father of a 10-year-old girl who was killed by his ex-wife’s pet tiger in Texas

**November 6, 2004/Gentry, Arkansas:** A visitor was taken to the hospital after a tiger pulled the flesh off her finger at the Wild Wilderness Drive Thru Safari when she placed her hand in the cage.<sup>161</sup>

**October 30, 2004/Salisbury, Maryland:** A visitor to the Salisbury Zoo had part of his finger torn off when he approached a jaguar’s cage.<sup>162</sup>

**September 9, 2004/Chicago, Illinois:** A keeper at Lincoln Park Zoo was seriously injured with multiple bite wounds and lacerations after being attacked by a lion in the outdoor exhibit. The incident forced an evacuation of the zoo.<sup>163</sup>

**September 8, 2004/Trenton, Maine:** An employee was seriously injured, with wounds to his face and arm, by a leopard at the Acadia Zoological Park.<sup>164</sup>

**August 1, 2004/Grayslake, Illinois:** A man was bitten by a 2-month-old lion cub displayed by Perry’s Wilderness Ranch and Zoo at the Lake County Fair. The man was having his photo taken with the cub, who he described as “feisty,” when the cub climbed up to his shoulder and bit him, breaking the skin and leaving teeth marks. The cub was quarantined for one month.<sup>165</sup>

**July 31, 2004/New York, New York:** A 450-pound white tiger belonging to Adriatic Animal Attractions bolted from the New Cole Bros. Circus while being transferred from one cage to another near the Forest Park bandshell in Queens. Dozens of police officers with machine guns and tranquilizer darts pursued the tiger for 30 minutes as he prowled for a mile through a park crowded with picnickers, scattering screaming people and causing two traffic accidents. He was recaptured by the trainer. Two women filed a \$60 million lawsuit after suffering spinal fractures and other injuries in the multicar pileup on the Jackie Robinson Parkway.<sup>166,167</sup>

**July 26, 2004/Shepherdsville, Kentucky:** A 2-year-old, declawed pet snow leopard escaped from his cage, broke through a wire gate, and ran into thick woods behind the owner’s house.<sup>168</sup>

**July 17, 2004/Detroit Lakes, Minnesota:** A worker with the Arcangel Wildlife Farm was bitten by a tiger who was on display at a local festival. The leashed tiger lunged at the man and bit him on the arm when the man attempted to move him.<sup>169</sup>

**July 14, 2004/Little Falls, Minnesota:** A 22-year-old woman was bitten by an African lion when she stuck her hand into a cage while visiting a private collection of pet exotic cats kept at an auto dealership owned by Chuck Mock. The woman suffered a severe laceration to her middle finger and cuts on two other fingers.<sup>170</sup>

**July 12, 2004/Loxahatchee, Florida:** Deputy sheriffs and state game officials launched an extensive search for a 600-pound pet tiger who jumped a 12-foot fence and escaped from Steve Sipek’s private menagerie. Residents were escorted to and from their homes while the tiger was on the loose. The tiger was shot and killed the next day when he lunged at a wildlife officer.<sup>171,172</sup>



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# big cat incidents

## WELFARE CONCERNS

**January 18, 2005/Arkansas:** A 400-pound pet tiger was abandoned in the mountains of north central Arkansas along the Buffalo River. The tiger trekked 60 miles over the next four days, returning to his owner's home and was then taken to a refuge.

**June 2, 2004/Landover Hills, Maryland:** A tiger belonging to exhibitor Mitchel Kalmanson escaped from the UniverSoul Circus, which was performing in a shopping mall parking lot, after fighting with another tiger and attacked an elephant, biting her on the hip. During the escape, there were several elementary schools attending the performance, and children were walking under the tent in the area where the tiger escaped.<sup>173,174</sup>

**May 28, 2004/Chillicothe, Ohio:** A woman was transported by helicopter to a hospital after she was bitten on the arm by her father's pet lion when she reached into the cage to pet her. The lion would not let go of her arm, even after spraying the lion with a garden hose. Her father shot and killed the lion.<sup>175</sup>

**April 16, 2004/Indio Hills, California:** After a tiger used in the movie industry escaped from his compound, the California Department of Fish and Game and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department launched a search. The tiger was later captured.<sup>176</sup>

**March 13, 2004/Massena, New York:** A 4-year-old girl was mauled by her grandmother's pet cougar. The 160-pound cougar apparently reached through the cage and grabbed the girl. She was hospitalized with cuts and bruises on her head and an eye injury.<sup>177</sup>

**March 11, 2004/Reno, Nevada:** A volunteer needed more than 15 stitches after a declawed leopard at the Sierra Safari Zoo bit her as she reached into the pen for a food bowl.<sup>178</sup>

**February 12, 2004/Hardin County, Illinois:** A 52-year-old man with a private menagerie of exotic cats and wolves bled to death after he was mauled by a declawed African lion as he changed the bedding in the lion's cage. During the autopsy, a coroner found that the man had suffered numerous puncture wounds and a broken neck. The lion was discovered running loose on the property and was shot and killed by police.<sup>179</sup>

**February 9, 2004/Plaquemine, Louisiana:** A woman was attacked by a declawed pet leopard she kept in a makeshift 10-foot by 10-foot cage behind her house trailer. The leopard bit her on the head, nearly tearing off her ear and ripping the flesh from her scalp. Sheriff deputies and one of the woman's relatives shot the leopard four times, killing him. The leopard had been acquired from a Georgia breeder.<sup>180</sup>

**January 31, 2004/Fort Wayne, Indiana:** A 4-year-old, 140-pound pet cougar escaped from a car during a traffic accident and was shot and killed by police when he lunged at an emergency worker. A month later, the man's neighbors filed a lawsuit seeking permanent removal of his "inherently extremely dangerous" animals, which includes another cougar and three African wild cats.<sup>181</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“[H]alf of the lady’s head [was] engulfed in the leopard’s mouth. It was just ripping at her.”

Officer with a Louisiana sheriff’s office describing a woman being attacked by her pet leopard

**January 24, 2004/Lowgap, North Carolina:** A tiger attacked and bit a 14-year-old girl on the cheek and neck as she was taking photos of four caged pet tigers. She was hospitalized in guarded condition. All four tigers were killed on the site.<sup>182</sup>

**December 14, 2003/Millers Creek, North Carolina:** A 10-year-old boy was killed by his uncle’s 400-pound pet tiger as he shoveled snow near the tiger’s cage. The tiger reached under the fence, dragged the boy into the cage, and inflicted at least eight puncture wounds to his head, neck, and chest. The boy’s uncle shot and killed the tiger.<sup>183</sup>

**December 9, 2003/Marion County, Kansas:** A tiger was shot and killed after escaping from Chris McDonald’s private menagerie and killing two dogs and a wolf. The facility had recently been raided by officers who found evidence they were operating a meth lab. Officers also discovered a number of animals were malnourished and severely dehydrated. Days later, a sheriff killed a second tiger when the animal became aggressive following the killing of his companion. In the following weeks, the USDA confiscated 13 tigers, lions, and leopards.<sup>184,185</sup>

**November 11, 2003/Palm Desert, California:** A zoo employee and a zoo visitor at the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens were bitten by a cheetah who was being walked on a leash through the park. The zoo visitor was holding a 2-year-old child on her lap when the cheetah attacked her, biting her calf and thigh. The child was treated for a head injury after she fell onto cement.<sup>186,187</sup>

**November 7, 2003/Rockwell, North Carolina:** Steve Macaluso, owner of a private menagerie called Charlotte Metro Zoo, was bitten on the neck by a leopard. Zoo volunteers and employees reported that Macaluso needed dozens of stitches.<sup>188</sup>

**October 6, 2003/Golden Valley, Arizona:** An employee at Keepers of the Wild Zoo was bitten and dragged by a 450-pound tiger as she tried to pet him. She was hospitalized for five days with four puncture wounds on her leg.<sup>189</sup>

**October 3, 2003/Las Vegas, Nevada:** While walking a tiger across the stage on a leash, Roy Horn of the Siegfried & Roy casino act was mauled and critically injured by a tiger during a show. The tiger bit Horn on the right arm, then lunged at him, bit him on the neck, and dragged him across the stage in front of more than 1,500 horrified tourists. Horn suffered bite wounds and massive blood loss. The 7-year-old tiger had been performing in the show since he was 6 months old.<sup>190,191</sup>

**October 3, 2003/New York, New York:** Police, along with animal control officers and Bronx Zoo employees, confiscated a 500-pound pet tiger belonging to Antoine Yates from a Harlem apartment. Yates was later arrested at a Philadelphia hospital where he had fled for treatment of a deep bite wound to his right leg. At various times, eight children had lived in the apartment where the tiger was kept.<sup>192</sup>

**August 21, 2003/Whetstone Township, Ohio:** A chained 180-pound pet cougar snapped his collar, escaped, and attacked a neighbor’s dog, causing more than 100 lacerations.<sup>193</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“He was tore up. He was a heck of a mess.”

Father of Ohio teenager who was hospitalized following an attack by a neighbor’s escaped pet lion

**August 12, 2003/St. Louis, Missouri:** A cheetah at the St. Louis Zoo escaped from an enclosure by going through a 12-foot wide moat and over a 12-foot high wall. The animal walked among visitors before being recaptured.<sup>194</sup>

**July 3, 2003/La Crosse, Wisconsin:** A tiger mauled circus trainer Bruno Blaszak in front of 400 people during his show at a festival. The tiger charged at Blaszak, knocked him down, and clawed him. His right leg required 30 to 40 stitches.<sup>195</sup>

**June 30, 2003/Calhan, Colorado:** Two tigers severely mauled an employee of Big Cats of Serenity Springs as he entered their cage. The employee was knocked down by one tiger and suffered a mangled leg and scalp injuries. As a result, the tigers were beaten with shovels and later killed.<sup>196,197</sup>

**June 23, 2003/Crossett, Arkansas:** A firefighter visiting the Crossett Zoo suffered a deep laceration and lost part of his thumb when he was bitten by a tiger.<sup>198</sup>

**June 14, 2003/Dodge City, Kansas:** An adult tiger who was being exhibited by G.W. Exotic Animal Foundation swiped at a young boy, tearing his pants. The tiger was being used for photo ops with the public at the Village Square Mall.<sup>199</sup>

**June 2003/Mead, Washington:** A Korean actor filed a negligence lawsuit against Cat Tales Zoological Park, a roadside zoo and exotic animal training center, after she was mauled by a white tiger during filming of a story about two of the facility’s tigers. She suffered a cut on her forearm.<sup>200</sup>

**May 28, 2003/Nampa, Idaho:** A toddler was jumped on by a 170-pound tiger at For the Birds, a roadside zoo where visitors are allowed to pet tigers. Other zoo visitors and employees have been jumped on and bitten by tigers.<sup>201</sup>

**April 6, 2003/San Antonio, Texas:** A 350-pound lion from escaped from Wild Animal Orphanage and roamed through a residential neighborhood for several hours. An employee required hospital treatment for a fractured pelvic bone and bruised rib when the lion charged and knocked her down as she attempted to shoot the animal with a tranquilizer dart. The lion was tracked with a police helicopter and shot and killed by four police officers armed with handguns and shotguns.<sup>202</sup>

**April 2, 2003/Adair, Oklahoma:** Several tigers belonging to the International Wildlife Center of Texas and boarded at Safari Joe’s Rock Creek Exotic Animal Park attacked and killed a volunteer handler. One of nine caged tigers grabbed and pulled her arm into the cage as she was giving them water, and other tigers joined in the attack. Another worker beat the tigers with a shovel to break up the attack. The tiger severed her arm, causing a fatal loss of blood. The tigers were displayed at fairs and used in photo ops with the public.<sup>203,204,205</sup>



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# big cat incidents

## WELFARE CONCERNS

**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.

**March 31, 2003/Hennepin, Illinois:** A man was mauled to death by two tigers he kept in a backyard menagerie as he entered their pen to shift them to another enclosure. Police shot and killed both tigers in order to retrieve the body. This was the second incident at the Second Nature Exotic Cats Sanctuary (see May 26, 2002/Hennepin, Illinois).<sup>206</sup>

**March 23, 2003/Sacramento, California:** A keeper at the Sacramento Zoo was hospitalized and treated for puncture wounds to his neck, right shoulder, and left leg, as well as a laceration on his nose, after he was attacked by a 325-pound tiger while he was preparing to feed the animal. A zoo volunteer beat the tiger on the head with a shovel to stop the attack.<sup>207</sup>

**March 22, 2003/Red Wing, Minnesota:** A 5-month-old, 40-pound tiger cub at Grant Oly's Tiger Zone grabbed and bit a pregnant woman on the wrist, causing a puncture wound, and bit a 16-year-old girl. Police searching Oly's premises found guns, ammunition, and marijuana. The tiger was euthanized for rabies testing.<sup>208,209</sup>

**February 4, 2003/Jacksonville, Florida:** A 450-pound tiger, belonging to exhibitor Mitchel Kalmanson, escaped from the UniverSoul Circus while the cage was being cleaned. The tiger climbed over a car, jumped over a fence, headed down an alley, frightened employees at a nearby restaurant, and was recaptured 10 minutes later.<sup>210,211</sup>

**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.<sup>212</sup>

**January 8, 2003/Laurens, South Carolina:** A 200-pound pet cougar was recaptured in a residential neighborhood after he had escaped from a pen 5 miles away and roamed freely for three days.<sup>213</sup>

**December 2002/Malibu Hills, California:** Television star Elisha Cuthbert was treated at a hospital for a deep puncture wound to the hand after she was bitten by a cougar while shooting a scene for the TV show *24*.<sup>214,215</sup>

**November 30, 2002/Leesburg, Virginia:** Animal control was called to help recapture an 80-pound tiger who escaped from a petting zoo and was on top of a car in a parking lot.<sup>216</sup>

**November 4, 2002/Red Wing, Minnesota:** A teenager reported to authorities that tigers at Grant Oly's Tiger Zone had bitten him and two adults.<sup>217</sup>

**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.<sup>218</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“We’re in fear of our children’s safety.”

Neighbor of a Texas man who had four pet big cats escape in two separate incidents

**October 17, 2002/Southport, Florida:** A 500-pound African lion pounced on, dragged, and mauled his owner at a roadside zoo called 77 Zoological Park as the owner stepped into the cage to pose for a photo with the animal. The lion ripped a hole in his throat, pulled his right eye out of its socket, severed tendons in his neck and chest, tore his skin, and bit through his flesh to the bone. The man nearly died at the hospital where, after undergoing surgery, he spent weeks, including 11 days in critical condition. He lost eighty percent of his eyesight and was expected to need additional surgery to restore his vision.<sup>219</sup>

**October 11, 2002/Jackson, New Jersey:** The 70-year-old husband of “tiger lady” Joan Byron-Marasek was attacked by a 400-pound tiger at her controversial Tigers Only Preservation Society (TOPS) as he was feeding the tigers. He suffered head injuries, and his arm was nearly severed.<sup>220</sup>

**October 4, 2002/Leona, Texas:** A man was severely mauled by a 400-pound tiger at the Perrydise Exotic Animal Ranch when he stuck his arm in the feeding opening of the cage to touch the animal, resulting in amputation of his arm just above the elbow.<sup>221</sup>

**September 28, 2002/Bloomington, Illinois:** A 400-pound tiger was shot and killed by police after he escaped from a trailer at a truck stop and hid in bushes near a residential area for nine hours. Local police spent \$9,000 attempting to recapture the tiger. This same tiger mauled a 7-year-old girl earlier in the year (see May 26, 2002, Hennepin, Illinois).<sup>222, 223, 224</sup>

**September 22, 2002/Quitman, Arkansas:** Four 600- to 800-pound African lions, believed to have escaped from a nearby exotic animal farm, were shot and killed after running loose for several days, terrifying residents.<sup>225</sup>

**September 20, 2002/Scotts Valley, California:** A declawed 150-pound tiger, who was being walked on a leash by Zoo to You at an assembly with 150 children at the Baymonte Christian School, suddenly lunged at a 6-year-old boy and grabbed the child by the head with her jaws. The boy was wrestled away from the tiger by the principal and airlifted to a medical center where he received 55 stitches for two cuts to his scalp. A psychologist gave counseling to the terrified children who witnessed the attack.<sup>226</sup>

**July 25, 2002/Tacoma, Washington:** A 4-year-old male clouded leopard jumped on and scratched both arms of a handler at the Point Defiance Zoo during a behind-the-scenes tour at the zoo. A small group of children was nearby. The woman had to call for help to get the 43-pound cat under control and her wounds were treated at a hospital. The same animal had scratched another handler’s leg 18 days previously (see July 7, 2002/Tacoma, Washington).<sup>227</sup>

**July 7, 2002/Tacoma, Washington:** A clouded leopard scratched the legs of a handler at the Point Defiance Zoo.<sup>228</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“We’ve had two buyers that backed out. He said there’s no way that I want to bring my family in here with somebody that has what he has next door.”

New York contractor who has not been able to sell homes valued at \$438,000 after prospective buyers learn a resident has a backyard menagerie of five big cats

**July 2002/Nampa, Idaho:** A tiger being used in an exhibition injured a 12-year-old child’s finger at For the Birds.<sup>229</sup>

**June 30, 2002/Lexington County, South Carolina:** A Lexington County woman was fined \$465 for allowing her two 1½-year-old female African lions to run loose for 45 minutes. The resident also had two cougars, two bobcats, and a serval.<sup>230</sup>

**June 17, 2002/Red Wing, Minnesota:** A tiger at Grant Oly’s Tiger Zone bit a teenager on the arm, causing a puncture wound that required stitches.<sup>231</sup>

**May 26, 2002/Hennepin, Illinois:** A 7-year-old girl was bitten on the forearm and wrist and clawed on her upper arm by a tiger at a private menagerie as she attempted to pet the animal. The girl required 110 stitches and three months of physical therapy. The tiger’s owner was convicted of endangering a child.<sup>232</sup>

**May 12, 2002/Tampa, Florida:** A 350-pound African lion at Busch Gardens ripped off the arm of a zookeeper standing next to the lion’s cage while she was giving a private tour to her family. The attack occurred shortly after the zookeeper had fed the lion pieces of meat during training exercises. Surgeons were not able to reattach the woman’s arm. The zookeeper filed a lawsuit seeking in excess of \$15,000 in damages.<sup>233,234,235</sup>

**April 21, 2002/Easley, South Carolina:** A pet tiger was quarantined for biting an 8-year-old boy in the leg after the tiger had been given a bath. The boy sustained four puncture wounds. The tiger is normally kept in a metal cage in the backyard.<sup>236</sup>

**March 10, 2002/Red Wing, Minnesota:** A tiger at Grant Oly’s Tiger Zone bit off a portion of a 14-year-old boy’s finger.<sup>237</sup>

**March 9, 2002/Wynnewood, Oklahoma:** A cougar suddenly bit Joe Schreibvogel, director of the G.W. Exotic Animal Park, during feeding. The cougar reached out from the cage, grabbed Schreibvogel’s sleeve, and began gnawing on his hand, nearly severing his thumb and finger. The man received stitches on his wrist, thumb, palm, and across the entire base of his index finger.<sup>238</sup>

**March 2, 2002/Strafford, Missouri:** Two adult lions escaped from their cage at Exotic Animal Paradise after an employee failed to secure the enclosure. One of the lions was shot with three tranquilizer darts, failed to recover from the sedation, and subsequently died.<sup>239</sup>

**February 15, 2002/Pahrump, Nevada:** Animal exhibitor Karl Mitchell shot and killed one of his tigers after the animal became frightened and escaped his control while being moved to a new residence.<sup>240</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“I heard a crunch. I felt the left side of my body go numb. I thought he was going to kill me. I never lost consciousness. I wish I had.”

North Carolina man who was mauled by a captive cougar

**February 2, 2002/Loxahatchee, Florida:** A woman was hospitalized in critical condition with a laceration on one side of her head and a skull fracture after she was attacked and bitten by a 750-pound declawed tiger at Steve Sipek’s private animal compound. The attack happened when the woman entered the tiger’s cage to paint in preparation for a photo shoot.<sup>241</sup>

**February 1, 2002/Tampa, Florida:** A leashed 200-pound tiger lurched toward a young boy during a Busch Gardens “animal encounter” during which animals are taken into the park to interact with the public.<sup>242</sup>

**January 24, 2002/Gentry, Arkansas:** Two animal handlers at Wild Wilderness Drive Thru Safari were attacked while transferring cougars between cages. One handler received multiple bites on an arm and leg, and the other was bitten in the face.<sup>243</sup>

**December 29, 2001/Leona, Texas:** A 6-year-old boy was taken to the emergency room after being attacked by a tiger at the Perrydise Exotic Animal Ranch. The child sustained severe lacerations to his face and hand when a tiger reached through the cage and clawed him as he was photographing the animal.<sup>244</sup>

**November 2, 2001/Pahrump, Nevada:** A man was severely injured by a tiger while visiting a private residence. The man was bitten on the arm when he was allowed to feed the animals and required more than \$160,000 in medical care, including reconstructive surgery. A lawsuit was filed against tiger owner Annette Grabowski and her companion, Paul Mason, for negligence and against Nye County for failure to take action despite a previous biting incident.<sup>245</sup>

**October 10, 2001/Lee County, Texas:** A 3-year-old boy was killed by one of three of a relative’s pet tigers as he was about to have his picture taken with the animals. The 250-pound tiger snatched the boy from the arms of an adult, clamped down on his leg, and dragged him around the enclosure, causing head injuries. The tiger was beaten on the head until he released the boy’s foot.<sup>246</sup>

**August 19, 2001/Tonganoxie, Kansas:** A woman was hospitalized after she was bitten by a neighbor’s caged lion. The woman had been feeding a bear when the lion reached out of a cage, grabbed and pulled her arm into the cage, and bit her upper arm.<sup>247</sup>

**July 31, 2001/Center Hill, Florida:** A 500-pound tiger attacked and killed a man who was making cage repairs at a breeding compound called Savage Kingdom. The tiger pushed through a hole in the fence, tackled the man and grabbed him by the throat, killing him in an instant. The tiger was shot and killed so that rescue crews could get to the victim’s body. The man’s widow filed a lawsuit against Robert Baudy, the facility’s owner.<sup>248,249,250</sup>



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# big cat incidents

## WELFARE CONCERNS

### **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.

**July 27, 2001/Racine, Minnesota:** A 2-year-old, 400-pound white Siberian tiger was destroyed for rabies tests after he bit a 7-year-old girl. The tiger had escaped from a cage at a roadside zoo called B.E.A.R.C.A.T. Hollow and attacked the girl, inflicting two puncture wounds that became infected. The tiger was stuffed and mounted.<sup>251,252</sup>

**June 25, 2001/Nashville, Tennessee:** The Nashville Zoo was evacuated after officials found a cheetah wandering outside of a pen. After being loose for ten hours, the cheetah was shot with a tranquilizer dart and recaptured.<sup>253</sup>

**April 29, 2001/Oskaloosa, Kansas:** A Jefferson County sheriff's lieutenant shot and killed an escaped tiger as the tiger crouched in an attack position. The 600-pound tiger ran loose for an hour after fleeing while being unloaded at a private menagerie called Gatekeepers Wildlife Sanctuary. The animal had twice tried to attack a veterinarian when he was shot with a tranquilizer dart.<sup>254</sup>

**April 27, 2001/Oakwood, Ohio:** The sheriff's office warned residents to keep their children and companion animals indoors after receiving several reports from residents that an escaped lion had been sighted.<sup>255</sup>

**April 7, 2001/Van Buren County, Arkansas:** Three tigers kept as pets escaped from cages after having been moved by court order from a Faulkner County subdivision. The tigers roamed for three hours before being recaptured, and one died after being tranquilized. After the escape, the sheriff of Van Buren County stated that he did not want the tigers in his county either.<sup>256</sup>

**April 2001/Omaha, Nebraska:** Animal handler Bryan Franzen required stitches after he was clawed by a tiger during a performance at the Tangier Shrine Circus.<sup>257</sup>

**March 25, 2001/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A tiger with Safari Wildlife attacked and killed his handler. The tiger put his paw on the man's back, pushed him down, and bit his throat. The handler died within minutes from loss of blood. The tiger was used for photo ops with the public and had also appeared in numerous motion pictures and advertisements. He was being groomed for a promotional advertisement when the attack occurred. Another handler was hospitalized with injuries to his knees and puncture wounds.<sup>258</sup>

**March 23, 2001/Morgan County, Missouri:** An African lion escaped from his cage at Wayne Oxford's Ozark Nature Center while animals were being loaded for transport. Terrified residents spent the next four days escorting children and keeping companion animals indoors while dozens of police officers and conservation agents searched for the animal. The lion was baited, trapped, and recaptured. In a plea agreement, Oxford paid \$5,000 in restitution, but taxpayers were still required to pay \$2,000 in veterinary care.<sup>259,260,261,262</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“If this could happen to my pet, then what would happen if it would be my granddaughter?”

Florida woman after her dog was killed by a neighbor’s escaped pet cougar

**March 19, 2001/Olmsted Falls, Ohio:** A worker spreading gravel in a tiger enclosure at Burnette Farm was mauled and critically injured by a 500-pound tiger. Owner Jim Burnette stopped the attack by hitting the tiger on the back of the head with a shovel. The worker underwent surgery for bite wounds to his neck.<sup>263</sup>

**March 16, 2001/Witts Springs, Arkansas:** A 400-pound tiger escaped from a backyard menagerie by gnawing her way through the heavy steel enclosure. The tiger was loose for three days, terrorizing residents and biting a dog, who was subsequently treated for three large fang marks on each side of his neck. Authorities from the Searcy County Sheriff’s Department, state police, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Buffalo National River Park Service searched for the tiger, who continued to elude capture after she was shot in the shoulder by an area resident. She was tranquilized and recaptured after she was located in a thickly wooded area by a police helicopter.<sup>264,265</sup>

**January 26, 2001/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A pet cougar escaped from her pen and hopped aboard a school bus. No children were on board at the time. The driver fled from the bus, and animal control workers captured the animal.<sup>266,267</sup>

**December 19, 2000/Omaha, Nebraska:** A 6-month-old cougar cub pounced at a landlord who was checking on a rental home after the tenant was arrested for armed robbery.<sup>268</sup>

**December 3, 2000/Morgan County, Missouri:** Wayne Oxford, of Ozark Nature Center, was charged with child endangerment after a cougar bolted from an unlocked cage, killed a dog and six puppies, then ran into a house while a child was inside. Witnesses locked the house’s front door, thinking no one was inside. The boy inside the home ran into a bedroom and was later rescued through a window.<sup>269</sup>

**October 21, 2000/Gambier, Ohio:** While participating in a “close encounter” at the Siberian Tiger Foundation, a 10-year-old boy was knocked to the ground and bitten on the leg by a tiger. He received stitches to his left thigh at a hospital emergency room. This was the tenth incident in seven months of people being bitten or otherwise injured by tigers at the facility.<sup>270,271</sup>

**September 10, 2000/Albuquerque, New Mexico:** A tiger cub bit a man on the arm during a photo op at the New Mexico State Fair.<sup>272</sup>

**August 26, 2000/Delmont, South Dakota:** A 14-year-old boy was flown to a hospital after being mauled by a tiger on his father’s farm. The teenager was hospitalized for months with bite wounds to the leg, neck, and shoulder and spent a month in intensive care.<sup>273,274</sup>

**August 16, 2000/Sapulpa, Oklahoma:** One of two 11-month-old tigers broke loose and frightened nearby children while they were being moved between cages at Safari Joe’s.<sup>275</sup>



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# big cat incidents

## WELFARE CONCERNS

**November 14, 2001/Detroit, Michigan:** A juvenile tiger who had been beaten to death and dumped in a field was found by local residents.

**August 12, 2000/Boise, Idaho:** A woman was mauled by a tiger at a fundraiser for Zoo Boise after the cat escaped from an unlocked cage. She was hospitalized in serious condition with a broken leg, puncture wounds, and a gunshot wound that she received when police fired their guns to scare the tiger away.<sup>276</sup>

**July 2000/Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin:** An employee at the Irvine Park Zoo in Wisconsin was bitten by a cougar after she tried to pet him. The bite punctured the skin and nicked the bone. The woman was hospitalized for three days.<sup>277</sup>

**June 6, 2000/Bloomington, Illinois:** A man was treated for a 3-inch cut and puncture wounds to his hand, inflicted by a snow leopard after he tried to pet the animal at the Miller Park Zoo. A similar incident occurred at the same zoo in September 1995 when a man suffered a 3½-inch gash to his hand when he attempted to pet a leopard.<sup>278</sup>

**June 6, 2000/Harris County, Texas:** Animal control officers spent three hours searching for a pet tiger who had escaped from a backyard cage while the owners were out of town. The tiger was tranquilized and recaptured.<sup>279</sup>

**May 21, 2000/Kiowa, Colorado:** A tiger ripped off the arm of a volunteer at the Prairie Wind Animal Refuge.<sup>280</sup>

**May 17, 2000/Brewster, Massachusetts:** A 14-year-old girl suffered puncture wounds to her leg during an attack by a 500-pound tiger at a roadside zoo called Bassett Wild Animal Farm. She was rescued by two other workers and taken to the hospital. The girl, a part-time employee at the zoo, was feeding the cat when he bit her leg and shook her before releasing her.<sup>281</sup>

**March 15, 2000/Channelview, Texas:** A 4-year-old boy had his arm torn off, mid-bicep, by his uncle's 400-pound pet tiger. Surgeons spent nine hours reattaching the arm and within just five days the boy's medical bills totaled \$80,000. The boy's uncle, Larry Tidwell, was fined \$500 for failing to have a permit for the tiger but was allowed to keep the animal.<sup>282,283</sup>

**February 23, 2000/Great Bend, Kansas:** A high school student was bitten on the hand and arm after sticking her arm into a cougar's cage at the Brit Spaugh Zoo.<sup>284</sup>

**2000/Jacksonville, Florida:** An elderly woman was bitten on the arm by a tiger cub belonging to Curtis LoGiudice, owner of the Catty Shack Ranch. In addition, a trainer suffered 23 puncture wounds from a cougar, and another woman sued LoGiudice after she was attacked by the same cougar.<sup>285</sup>

**December 2, 1999/Williamsville, Missouri:** A 5-year-old boy required surgery after he was mauled by a pet lion kept chained in a neighbor's yard. The animal inflicted puncture wounds to the boy's throat and head. The lion was killed.<sup>286</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“We’ve been concerned for the safety of people in this community.”

Neighbor of a Tennessee man with a big cat menagerie after a 4-year-old boy was mauled by a liger

**November 18, 1999/Sedgwick County, Kansas:** Two adult lions escaped from a pen at a private menagerie with 10 big cats belonging to Ken Alvarez, killing a dog on the property. Several county deputies spent hours assisting a caretaker in returning the lions to the cages. Neighbors complained that big cats had escaped twice before and that the facility’s perimeter fence had fallen in several places.<sup>287</sup>

**October 30, 1999/Buffalo, New York:** A keeper at the Buffalo Zoo was pounced on, bitten, and clawed by a clouded leopard when she entered the 10-foot square cage for cleaning. The incident happened in front of about 30 visitors. She was treated at a hospital for leg wounds.<sup>288</sup>

**October 20, 1999/Evansville, Indiana:** A zookeeper at the Mesker Park Zoo was mauled by a lion who severely injured his leg and arm.<sup>289</sup>

**June 26, 1999/Sterling, Kansas:** A woman with a group of Boy Scouts visiting Safari Zoological Park was attacked by a caged tiger when she put her hand on the cage. The zoo owner beat the tiger on the head and tried unsuccessfully to pry the animal’s mouth off the woman’s arm. The tiger abruptly let go, leaving the victim with a dislocated shoulder, a broken right hand, a puncture wound, torn biceps, severe cuts and other damage to the muscles in her arm.<sup>290</sup>

**June 6, 1999/Yorktown, Texas:** A 10-year-old girl was killed when one of her stepfather’s two pet tigers grabbed her by the neck and dragged her into a water trough. The girl’s stepfather was sentenced to 10 years probation, fined \$5,000, and ordered to serve 800 hours of community service for recklessly causing serious bodily injury to a child.<sup>291,292</sup>

**March 31, 1999/Tyler, Texas:** A woman’s arm was nearly severed by a tiger at Tiger Creek Wildlife Refuge. A volunteer at the facility, she reached in to pet the tiger, when he attacked. Doctors were unsure whether they would be able to save her arm.<sup>293</sup>

**March 16, 1999/Colorado Springs, Colorado:** A 6-year-old boy was severely injured by a leopard at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo after he climbed over a rope to get a closer look at the animal. The leopard grabbed the boy in her mouth and clutched him with her paws through the fencing of her enclosure. Three months earlier, a woman was scratched by a tiger at the zoo after sticking her hand into a cage.<sup>294</sup>

**February 27, 1999/Fort Wayne, Indiana:** A tiger mauled an employee of the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo while she was cleaning the cage, causing injuries to her chest, neck and back.<sup>295</sup>

**January 27, 1999/Jackson Township, New Jersey:** Police shot and killed a 431-pound tiger who escaped from the Tigers Only Preservation Society and was found 11 miles away, wandering through a residential subdivision.<sup>296</sup>



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# big cat incidents

**TIGER cub** – five month old female, well socialized, \$500. 740-596-0543. OH 4-1-11

**African lion cubs**, six weeks old, very sweet, house raised, still on bottle, \$1500. 225-405-3158 or 225-791-5984. LA 10-15-05

Free to good home: 1.1 adult tigers, good temperament; 0.1 adult black leopard. Location Oklahoma. Questions, 580-677-0443. OK 6-1-11

White tigers due in June, \$8000. For more information call 979-535-4335. TX 6-1-11

Free tigers – five females, one male. All are hetero, ages vary from fifteen months to twenty months. 812-256-3894, ask for Tim. Southern Indiana 7-1-06

FREE: one female lion, 4 months; one male tiger, 4½ months; 2½ year female tiger. Good dispositions and well socialized. 309-783-2112. IL 1-1-08

Tiger cub female, six weeks old, bottle raised, started on leash, does educational lectures, well mannered. Call Kathy, 603-878-2255. NH 6-1-05

SIBERIAN tigers looking for a good home, four years old and older. Contact Maria at Silver Wolf Animal Refuge, 830-743-1693 in Sequin, TX 5-1-11

Big cats are readily available to unqualified people

**January 7, 1999/Wichita, Kansas:** A 75-pound tiger cub attacked a 5-year-old child at a private residence, causing a throat wound that required 20 stitches. The tiger belonged to Safari Zoological Park, a roadside zoo that hauls animals around to schools, festivals, store promotions, and private events. The tiger was killed the next day. The incident was the third time in less than a year that an animal from the park had been investigated for attacking someone.<sup>297</sup>

**1999/Jacksonville, Florida:** A cougar from Curt LoGiudice's Catty Shack Ranch bit a 19-month-old child.<sup>298</sup>

**November 21, 1998/Chicago, Illinois:** A Ringling Bros. circus employee was seriously mauled by a tiger used in the circus when three tigers escaped from their cage in a Chicago parking lot. The tiger clawed the handler on his neck and side. This was the second attack by tigers used by Ringling in one year. (see January 7, 1998/St. Petersburg, Florida).<sup>299</sup>

**November 18, 1998/Kaufman, Texas:** A Texas man was attacked by his pet lion and suffered serious injuries. The female lion jumped him from behind.<sup>300</sup>

**November 15, 1998/Chatham County, North Carolina:** A cougar mauled a volunteer with Carnivore Preservation Trust causing numerous bites and deep scratches.<sup>301</sup>

**November 13, 1998/Newberry, Florida:** The same tiger who killed his trainer on October 8, 1998, attacked and killed his owner. The woman was leading the tiger to a pen when he lunged and bit her neck, killing her instantly. Authorities shot and killed the tiger.<sup>302</sup>

**November 8, 1998/Cut and Shoot, Texas:** Two pet tigers escaped their backyard cage and attacked a dog and a pig before being shot dead by police after charging pursuers. Security officers were posted at a local school while one tiger eluded searchers for more than 30 hours. In 1997, a pet cougar kept by the same man escaped and was never re-captured.<sup>303,304,305</sup>

**October 8, 1998/Newberry, Florida:** A nearly 400-pound tiger who was being moved between pens attacked and killed his trainer at the Holiday's Cat Dancer facility. The tiger had been used in the operation's traveling animal show and featured in circuses, fairs, and other public venues. The tiger grabbed the trainer by the throat.<sup>306</sup>

**September 2, 1998/Tampa, Florida:** A volunteer at Wildlife on Easy Street needed 451 stitches after a leopard pulled her hand through the bars of a cage and latched onto her arm with his teeth, removing skin from her elbow to her wrist.<sup>307</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“Yes, I’m scared. I’m still shaking.”

Texas deputy after being forced to shoot and kill an escaped African lion who charged a group of people in a residential neighborhood

**August 22, 1998/Myakka City, Florida:** A 520-pound tiger bit the hand of a 14-year-old volunteer with Tiger Claw Productions. The bite stripped flesh and tendons from her hand and required two surgeries to repair as well as long hours of physical therapy. Following the attack, the girl was treated with anti-depressants and visited a psychotherapist three times a week to deal with the trauma. Due to mounting medical bills, the family’s truck was repossessed.<sup>308,309</sup>

**July 31, 1998/Vallejo, California:** A woman getting her photo taken at Marine World with a Bengal tiger was mauled and hospitalized with multiple cuts to her neck and throat. A trainer trying to separate them was also injured.<sup>310</sup>

**July 30, 1998/Minot, North Dakota:** A 5-year-old boy suffered facial cuts requiring plastic surgery after being attacked by a 4-month-old tiger cub at a Bridgeport Nature Center photo booth at the state fair.<sup>311</sup>

**May 2, 1998/Wylie, Texas:** A pet cougar bit a 4-year-old boy on the leg. The boy required \$5,800 in medical care.<sup>312</sup>

**April 7, 1998/Charlotte, North Carolina:** Two lions at the Charlotte Metro Zoo attacked a keeper, one biting him on the leg while the other took the man’s head in his mouth. The keeper suffered deep puncture wounds to his head and leg. He had to be airlifted to a trauma center.<sup>313</sup>

**April 1, 1998/Arkansas:** A 300-pound tiger attacked a worker at a breeding compound, inflicting deep gashes into his neck and right arm.<sup>314</sup>

**Spring 1998/Wichita, Kansas:** A tiger from Safari Zoological Park scratched or bit an adult while the animal was appearing at a store’s promotional event.<sup>315</sup>

**February 10, 1998/Lincolnton, North Carolina:** A 150-pound leopard nearly killed his trainer after attacking her at a Royal Palace Circus performance in North Carolina. The trainer suffered injuries requiring reconstructive surgery and hospitalization for a week.<sup>316</sup>

**January 7, 1998/St. Petersburg, Florida:** A trainer with the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus suffered severe head wounds after a tiger grabbed him by the head during a training session in preparation for a publicity shoot. Richard Chipperfield was hospitalized in critical condition and required extensive surgery. The trainer’s brother shot the tiger five times with a 12-gauge shot gun after the animal had been returned to a transport cage, killing him.<sup>317</sup>

**1998/Harris County, Texas:** A 4-year-old girl was mauled by a Bridgeport Nature Center tiger during photo ops at a county fair. The girl required stitches and \$17,000 in plastic surgery to her leg. The girl’s family filed a lawsuit against Bridgeport.<sup>318</sup>

**October 22, 1997/Calabasas, California:** The same jaguar who attacked a trainer on October 16, 1997, attacked another trainer who suffered bite wounds on his leg and a cut to his hand on a movie set.<sup>319</sup>



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# big cat incidents

## WELFARE CONCERNS

**June 5, 2000/Greenfield, Wisconsin:** Police seized a leopard, a cougar, and dozens of other exotic mammals and reptiles from the apartment of a 22-year-old man. The animals were living in cramped and poorly ventilated conditions.

**October 16, 1997/Calabasas, California:** A trainer on a movie set in California was airlifted to a hospital where she underwent surgery to repair a broken ankle after being attacked by a jaguar. She was expected to remain hospitalized for several days.<sup>320,321</sup>

**August 17, 1997/Marshfield, Massachusetts:** A 13-year-old girl was rushed to the emergency room after being bitten on the hand by a Bridgeport Nature Center tiger during a photo session in Massachusetts. The exhibitor left the state before authorities could quarantine the tiger. The girl had to undergo painful rabies treatment. The Marshfield Mass. Animal Control Department reported “several” other bites associated with this photo booth.<sup>322</sup>

**June 7, 1997/Scappoose, Oregon:** A woman suffered deep puncture wounds to the neck and post-traumatic stress disorder when she was attacked by a neighbor’s pet leopard. The woman filed a lawsuit against the leopard’s owner after her medical bills went unpaid, despite assurances that his insurance would cover it.<sup>323</sup>

**May 8, 1997/Lubbock, Texas:** One of five pet tigers mauled his owner. The man was admitted to the hospital in critical condition. The owner’s son killed the tiger.<sup>324</sup>

**May 7, 1997/Carrollton, Pennsylvania:** A 400-pound tiger used in the Franzen Bros. Circus killed 50-year-old Wayne Franzen in front of 200 horrified schoolchildren. The tiger pounced on him when he turned his back, grabbed him by the neck, and dragged him around the circus ring.<sup>325</sup>

**May 4, 1997/Knox County, Tennessee:** A liger (tiger-lion hybrid) reached under a fence of his 8-foot by 12-foot cage, grabbed a 4-year-old boy with his claw, and pulled him toward the cage at Joe Robinson’s roadside menagerie. Emergency personnel took the boy to a medical center for treatment of lacerations to his leg and buttock.<sup>326</sup>

**April 29, 1997/Oklahoma City, Oklahoma:** A leopard escaped from his cage and killed a woman who was visiting her son at the Oakhill Center for Rare and Endangered Species. Sheriff’s deputies shot and killed the leopard seven hours later when he was found along a road after dark.<sup>327</sup>

**April 27, 1997/San Antonio, Texas:** A man reportedly lost his finger and his friend was injured when they broke into Wild Animal Orphanage and tried to pet a tiger.<sup>328</sup>

**March 19, 1997/Orlando, Florida:** A tiger escaped from a cage and mauled a keeper when a safety gate was left open at Savage Kingdom, the breeding compound owned by Robert Baudy. The keeper suffered a broken thigh, crushed knee, and severed arteries and veins in his leg. Authorities shot and killed the tiger when the animal made its way into an enclosure surrounded by a fence that was low enough for the animal to jump.<sup>329</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“One of the trainers  
... just started  
punching the tiger in  
the forehead to get  
him to let go of the  
boy’s leg. That didn’t  
seem to work.”

Witness describing a  
tiger attacking a 10-  
year-old Ohio boy

**March 18, 1997/San Antonio, Texas:** A 300-pound tiger climbed a 10-foot fence and escaped from Wild Animal Orphanage, killing a duck and an ostrich, wounding a llama, and pawing a sheriff’s deputy before being tranquilized and recaptured.<sup>330,331</sup>

**March 12, 1997/Caldwell, Texas:** A 13-year-old boy was hospitalized for a week after he was attacked by a pet tiger and a lion kept in a cage built into the side of his grandfather’s house. The boy’s father said, “My boy was not mauled, he was being eaten alive.”<sup>332</sup>

**1997/Kirbyville, Texas:** A tiger bit two fingers off the left hand of Monique Woodard, owner of the Exotic Cat Refuge and Wildlife Orphanage. Doctors were able to reattach one of the fingers.<sup>333</sup>

**December 21, 1996/Brooklyn Park, Minnesota:** Three pet-supply store workers were bitten or scratched by a 7-month-old tiger who had been brought to the store to have his picture taken. The three workers agreed to receive rabies shots.<sup>334</sup>

**October 8, 1996/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A Las Vegas animal trainer had to undergo surgery on his feet and legs after being mauled by a tiger at Keepers of the Wild.<sup>335</sup>

**September 16, 1996/Crystal Beach, Texas:** A declawed pet lioness died after she was shot and tranquilized by a deputy. The lioness attacked a man after a burglar had apparently set her free.<sup>336</sup>

**July 18, 1996/Middletown, New York:** A white tiger from Hawthorn Corporation bit the hand of a carnival worker while performing at the Orange County Fair.<sup>337</sup>

**May 7, 1996/Midlothian, Texas:** A 6-year-old girl suffered severe injuries to her head, neck, arms, back, and legs in an attack by a tiger, one of seven big cats at a private menagerie. Her mother was bitten as she tried to stop the attack. During the investigation it was found that these same cats had been involved in three previous documented attacks. The animals were seized and tiger’s owner pleaded guilty to charges of child endangerment and was placed on probation.<sup>338,339,340,341</sup>

**January 5, 1996/Vallejo, California:** One trainer at Marine World Africa was seriously hurt and another received minor injuries when they were attacked by two cougars as they prepared to take the cougars for a walk.<sup>342</sup>

**1996/Pomona, California:** A lion displayed by Safari Wildlife got loose and roamed around the Los Angeles County fairgrounds before being recaptured.<sup>343</sup>

**December 26, 1995/Quinlan, Texas:** A 3-year-old toddler was mauled by his family’s pet cougar. His 6-year-old sister suffered minor injuries in the attack. The cougar was shot and killed.<sup>344</sup>

**December 18, 1995/Fort Worth, Texas:** A 300-pound tiger at the Fort Worth Zoo leaped an 11-foot-wide moat and attacked a zookeeper. The keeper was bitten on the shoulder, arm, and hand and was off work for several weeks.<sup>345</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“I don’t appreciate lions living next door to me.”

Neighbor of a private menagerie in Michigan after a woman was killed by a pet lion

**November 23, 1995/Wake County, North Carolina:** A declawed, 350-pound pet Bengal tiger mauled and critically injured a 3-year-old boy while his father was walking the animal on a leash. The tiger bit his face, crushing his skull and exposing his brain. A five-person medical team worked on the boy’s head and face for 14 hours. He was left permanently blind by the incident. The tiger was shot and killed. The boy’s father was convicted of misdemeanor child abuse.<sup>346,347</sup>

**November 13, 1995/Memphis, Tennessee:** Two Sumatran tigers mauled a man who entered their enclosure at the Memphis Zoo.<sup>348</sup>

**November 2, 1995/Washington, D.C.:** House Speaker Newt Gingrich was bitten on the chin by a baby cougar he was holding and who had been brought to the Capitol by Jack Hanna.<sup>349</sup>

**October 29, 1995/Allegan County, Michigan:** While her 9-year-old daughter watched in horror, a woman was attacked and killed by a 200-pound declawed pet lion after she entered her cage at the home of a friend who collected exotic animals. The friend was seriously injured when he tried to stop the attack and was flown to a Kalamazoo hospital with neck bites.<sup>350</sup>

**September 30, 1995/Indianapolis, Indiana:** A lion being used by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus bit off the index finger of a woman who put her hand in his cage kept in a staging area.<sup>351</sup>

**September 27, 1995/Lava Hot Springs, Idaho:** Nineteen African lions at Ligertown Game Farm were tracked, shot, and killed over a 12-hour period after escaping from flimsy, filthy cages. Another 27 big cats were seized. Ligertown’s two owners were treated at a hospital for minor injuries. The whole operation cost more than \$1 million.<sup>352</sup>

**September 18, 1995/Haysville, Kansas:** A man shot and killed an African lion he found pacing on his driveway after the lion had escaped from a neighbor’s pen.<sup>353</sup>

**September 18, 1995/Wesley, Kansas:** A 2-year-old boy required hospital treatment for a severe bite on his ear from the family’s 4-month-old cougar.<sup>354</sup>

**September 17, 1995/Wichita, Kansas:** A cougar who had escaped and been on the loose for a week was recaptured.<sup>355</sup>

**September 1995/Bloomington, Illinois:** A man suffered a 3½-inch gash to his hand when he attempted to pet a leopard at the Miller Park Zoo.<sup>356</sup>

**August 6, 1995/Phoenix, Arizona:** A cougar at the Phoenix Zoo bit a 3-inch chunk from the arm of a 5-year old boy after he wandered too close to the animal’s cage. The boy was taken to a hospital where the wound on his arm was stitched closed and he received treatment for scratches on the side of his chest.<sup>357</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“The bone is breaking!”

Distraught volunteer at a Texas zoo on a 911 call while a cougar is biting her arm

**June 2, 1995/Queens, New York:** A 2-year-old boy was bitten by his neighbor’s pet cougar cub when he reached through a barred window to pet the animal. The 9-month-old cougar nearly severed one of the boy’s fingers, which was reattached at the hospital.<sup>358</sup>

**May 28, 1995/Novi, Michigan:** Three lions and four tigers toppled onto a freeway when the 6-foot by 12-foot trailer they were in came unhitched. An 11-month old tiger bolted into a wooded area, leading police on a four-hour chase that included a helicopter search and foot patrols. The animals were en route to a Home Depot for photo ops with the public.<sup>359,360</sup>

**March 5, 1995/Washington, D.C.:** A woman was fatally mauled by lions after climbing into an enclosure at the National Zoo. The body was so battered and shredded so violently that her fingerprints were gone and her face unrecognizable.<sup>361</sup>

**December 29, 1994/Scottsbluff, Nebraska:** A zookeeper at the Riverside Zoo was attacked by a 140-pound leopard who sunk his teeth into the woman’s throat. The victim sustained injuries to her face and chest and required surgery to repair her windpipe.<sup>362,363</sup>

**October 11, 1994/San Diego, California:** San Diego Zoo animal trainer Joan Embery suffered two deep gashes on her face from a cheetah she was exhibiting on a television talk show.<sup>364</sup>

**June 18, 1994/Columbia, South Carolina:** A 17-year-old worker was hospitalized with bite wounds to his head, neck and legs after he was mauled by a 600-pound tiger while cleaning the animal’s cage at Taylor’s Exotics animal farm. The tiger was killed for rabies testing.<sup>365</sup>

**June 7, 1994/Miami, Florida:** A senior zookeeper with 20 years’ experience was mauled and killed by a 350-pound tiger at Miami Metrozoo while preparing to move the animal in to the public viewing area.<sup>366</sup>

**April 5, 1994/Jackson, Mississippi:** An 80-pound cheetah scaled an 8-foot fence and pounced on an 8-year-old boy at the Jackson Zoo. The boy was scratched and nipped before the cheetah was recaptured.<sup>367</sup>

**March 22, 1994/Beech Grove, Arkansas:** A 150-pound declawed pet cougar escaped and attacked a 71-year-old year neighbor, inflicting deep bite wounds to the man’s shoulder and arm.<sup>368</sup>

**March 1994/Leon, Kansas:** An 11-year-old girl was bitten by a 143-pound African lioness, the same animal who attacked a boy a month earlier. The lioness was destroyed.<sup>369,370</sup>

**February 1994/Leon, Kansas:** An 11-year-old boy was bitten by a lion who he was told was tame.<sup>371,372</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“We don’t want people to feel what we’re having to.”

Grandmother of a 17-year-old Kansas girl, advocating stronger laws after her granddaughter was killed while posing with a tiger for her senior picture

**December 12, 1993/Palm Beach, Florida:** A worker at Lion Country Safari who was attacked by a 450-pound lion sustained crushed ribs, collapsed lungs, a torn scalp, a severed neck vein, and more than 20 puncture wounds.<sup>373</sup>

**September 14, 1993/Joplin, Missouri:** A circus employee lost part of her arm after an attack by a tiger on the circus’ animal farm. Doctors had to amputate her arm below the elbow.<sup>374</sup>

**August 9, 1993/Georgetown, Ohio:** A teenage boy was hospitalized with facial cuts when he was attacked by a lion while walking in a field near his home with his brother and two friends. The pet lion had escaped from a cage at a nearby farm. His older brother hit the lion several times to stop the attack. The lion was shot and killed by sheriff’s deputies.<sup>375</sup>

**May 6, 1993/Las Vegas, Nevada:** A keeper feeding a trio of lions in the backyard of a Las Vegas residence was hospitalized after one of the cats attacked her. The victim, a member of the Fercos performing family, suffered five gouges to her leg. During an April performance, another employee was bitten by a lion.<sup>376</sup>

**May 6, 1993/Bronx, New York:** A man with a history of mental instability was mauled by two lions at the Bronx Zoo after he climbed into their cage and received 19 stitches to his head and face.<sup>377</sup>

**April 17, 1993/Little Rock, Arkansas:** A tiger performing with the Shrine Circus at the Barton Coliseum escaped, ran into the audience, and bit a 13-year-old girl. The tiger was owned and trained by Jordan Circus.<sup>378</sup>

**February 24, 1993/Norfolk, Virginia:** Graham Chipperfield, a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus big cat trainer, was mauled by a lion while breaking up a fight between two other lions.<sup>379</sup>

**February 3, 1993/Wichita, Kansas:** A keeper was hospitalized in serious condition with wounds to his face and neck after being mauled by a Bengal tiger at Tanganyika Wildlife Company. The tiger lunged through the open door of a cage and attacked when the keeper bent down to pick up something. A second keeper attempted to beat the tiger away with a shovel and then shot and killed the tiger.<sup>380</sup>

**November 29, 1992/Pahrump, Nevada:** A man was severely bitten by a 750-pound tiger owned by animal trainer Alex Pasternak. The injured man shot and wounded the tiger in the hip in order to get the animal to release his grip. The victim was taken to the hospital where he received 35 stitches in his right arm.<sup>381</sup>

**September 27, 1992/Reno, Nevada:** A Reno illusionist underwent surgery after suffering “bone-deep” bite wounds to his leg and arm by a 250-pound tiger being used in a performance.<sup>382</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“The first one grabbed her and the rest of them joined in.”

County deputy describing a volunteer who was mauled to death by tigers at a roadside zoo in Oklahoma

**May 20, 1992/Muhlenberg Township, Pennsylvania:** Two tigers with Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus escaped from an unlocked cage during a performance. One tiger roamed around the center ring, frightening 2,000 spectators before he was recaptured.<sup>383</sup>

**April 7, 1992/Iron Hill, Delaware:** One of two cougars owned by a private breeder jumped 12 feet across an enclosure and attacked a woman removing a food dish, clamping his teeth into the back of her neck and dragging her farther into the cage. The cougar had the woman pinned for at least three minutes while the cat’s owner kicked and punched at the animal. The woman sustained bites on the head, neck, and upper back. The breeder said he would sell the two animals and possibly replace them with a cub.<sup>384</sup>

**March 22, 1992/Portland, Oregon:** A pet liger (lion-tiger hybrid) attacked an 11-year-old girl who had to undergo surgery to repair extensive muscle damage in her arm. The animal would not let go of the girl and had to be shot and killed.<sup>385</sup>

**October 9, 1991/Manchester, New Hampshire:** A model was hospitalized for five days and received 56 stitches and rabies shots after being attacked by a 550-pound lion during a photo session. The lion, who was secured by a U-bolt and chain, pulled the model to him and grabbed her head in his mouth, inflicting wounds to her back and head. The woman was awarded \$75,000 in damages against both the photographer and Bahgavan Antle, who supplied the lion.<sup>386,387</sup>

**September 29, 1991/Jackson County, Kansas:** A caged lion bit a man on the hand causing puncture wounds that required stitches after the man attempted to pet the lion at a Christmas tree farm.<sup>388</sup>

**September 17, 1991/Tucson, Arizona:** A lion cub bit the arm of a 3-year-old girl at the Reid Park Zoo.<sup>389</sup>

**August 17, 1991/Fresno, California:** A lion with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus bit a man who tried to pet the caged lion.<sup>390</sup>

**June 1, 1991/Anderson County, South Carolina:** A 250-pound pet lion escaped from a backyard chain-link fenced enclosure, burst into a mobile home, and attacked a 5-year-old girl and her grandmother. The girl’s father wrestled with the lion until the owner, Tony Allen, arrived and returned the lion to her cage. The girl required stitches for wounds to her neck and chest. Allen, who later shot and killed the lion, had recently obtained a USDA license to skirt a county ordinance prohibiting wild animals as pets.<sup>391</sup>

**April 18, 1991/Wilkesboro, North Carolina:** A 3-year-old girl required stitches after she was attacked by a leopard traveling with the Great American Circus.<sup>392</sup>

**November 5, 1990/Phoenix, Arizona:** A woman visiting a Phoenix resort was attacked by a 450-pound tiger while his trainer was walking him on a leash. Witnesses reported that the tiger acted like a “pussycat” only moments before the attack. The woman was hospitalized with severe puncture wounds.<sup>393</sup>



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# big cat incidents

“They’re predators  
and they look at a  
little child as prey.”

Zoo manager  
commenting about a  
10-year-old Ohio girl  
who was attacked by a  
neighbor’s pet cougar

**August 9, 1990/Sturgis, South Dakota:** A 5-year-old girl was mauled by a 175-pound leopard who was restrained by a small chain on a box in Engessor’s Endangered Species traveling act. She was treated at a hospital for puncture wounds to her arm and back and claw marks on her back. The girl’s mother sued for \$100,000 in damages.<sup>394</sup>

**June 18, 1990/Sidney, Montana:** A 7-year-old boy was bitten by a leopard with a traveling zoo when the owner removed the animal from a cage so members of the public could pet her.<sup>395</sup>

**May 29, 1990/San Francisco, California:** A zookeeper was mauled by a leopard in front of school children at a San Francisco zoo. The keeper underwent surgery for deep wounds to his head, shoulders, and arm.<sup>396</sup>

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