

# Incidents involving big cats kept as pets or in private menageries

Since 1992, there have been at least 100 dangerous and cruel incidents involving big cats kept as pets or in private menageries. Three children and one adult were killed, and dozens of others suffered often traumatic injuries. Many captive big cats are kept in inhumane conditions, pose a threat to the community, create a burden for law enforcement agencies and sanctuaries, and jeopardize conservation efforts.

## Incident details

**May 9, 2021 | Houston, Texas:** A juvenile tiger was spotted walking around a yard and crossing the street in a Houston neighborhood. After a resident alerted neighbors, an off-duty sheriff's deputy went to the scene and kept the cat at gunpoint until a man led the tiger into a house then put the big cat in a vehicle and sped away. A week later, authorities located and confiscated the tiger, who was transferred to Black Beauty Ranch in Murchison, Texas. The man who fled with the tiger was subsequently found guilty of murdering a man four years earlier.

**March 16, 2021 | San Antonio, Texas:** A 13-week-old tiger cub and an adult bobcat were confiscated from a home by Bexar County Sheriff deputies. The cats were taken to the San Antonio Zoo, which reported that neither cat had been properly cared for. The tiger cub was malnourished and had a poor hair coat as well as poor body condition. The bobcat, although only 5 years old, looked like a geriatric cat and appeared to have vision problems.

**Feb. 13, 2021 | San Antonio, Texas:** The Bexar County Sheriff's Office received a report that a crying tiger had been left outside in freezing temperatures. Deputies located the tiger, who was wearing a dog harness, in a poorly secured cage and confiscated her from the property. The approximately 6-month-old, 60-pound tiger was transferred to Black Beauty Ranch in Murchison, Texas, where it was determined that she had an open sore on her forehead from rubbing against the cage and had been on an inappropriate diet that would have ultimately caused severe health problems.

## Source

“Video: Tiger spotted in Memorial neighborhood,” KHOU, May 9, 2021.  
“Suspect’s wife turned India the tiger over to authorities on Saturday, HPD says,” ABC13, May 16, 2021.  
“Victor Cuevas, suspect accused of fleeing with Houston tiger in 2021, found guilty of 2017 murder in Fort Bend County,” Click2Houston, May 3, 2022.

“Tiger, bobcat seized from southeast side home,” KENS5, March 16, 2021.

“‘Elsa the Tiger’ rescued from the cold gets a new home,” KENS 5, Feb. 23, 2021.

Incident details	Source
<p><b>Feb. 5, 2021   San Antonio, Texas:</b> A woman called officials when she discovered a tiger walking around her back yard. By the time police officers arrived, the cat was no longer on the property, but they determined that the tiger had jumped the fence from the woman’s neighbor who had “borrowed” the big cat from a friend.</p>	<p>“Reports of a tiger on the loose in Southwest San Antonio,” WOAI, Feb. 6, 2021.</p>
<p><b>March 25, 2020   Mercedes, Texas:</b> Authorities seized a tiger and several other wild animals from a South Texas home located near a residential neighborhood and church. The animals were discovered while the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration executed a search warrant in relation to a drug case.</p>	<p>Katie Hall, “White Bengal tiger, other exotic animals seized from South Texas home...Austin Zoo, feds say,” <i>Austin American-Statesman</i>, April 6, 2020.</p>
<p><b>Feb. 11, 2019   Houston, Texas:</b> A person who entered a dilapidated abandoned home discovered a 350-pound caged tiger and called authorities. Animal control and police investigated and found the tiger in a garage in a 4-foot-by-8-foot flimsy, unlocked cage that was secured only with a screwdriver and a nylon strap. The dehydrated tiger—who was lying on a layer of trash, feces, urine, rotting meat, maggots and mold—had urine burns and abrasions on his legs as well as a lack of muscle development in his hind end. He was sedated and transferred to Black Beauty Ranch in Murchison, Texas.</p>	<p>Cathy Hernandez, Keith Garvin, Cory McCord, Taisha Walker, “Tiger found by pot smoker in abandoned Houston home taken to Texas ranch,” Click2Houston, Feb. 11, 2019.  Nicole Hensley, “Tiger found by 311 caller in Houston home sent to Texas wildlife refuge,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, Feb. 12, 2019.  Nicole Hensley, “Ex-tiger owner arrested after cat found caged with feces, rotting meat and maggots,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, May 15, 2019.</p>
<p><b>Jan. 1, 2019   Parkland, Florida:</b> The Broward Sheriff’s office contacted state wildlife officials after receiving calls from alarmed neighbors about a cougar lounging in a resident’s driveway and then jumping a fence into a backyard. Wildlife agents sedated and trapped the cougar, who was wearing a collar, which indicated the animal was an escaped pet. Officials said the big cat was less than a year old and weighed 60 pounds. Wildlife officers determined that the animal was underweight and kept in a barren cage that was too small and had no shelter.</p>	<p>Jenny Staletovich, “Florida panther trapped in Parkland? Not so fast, wildlife officials say,” <i>Miami Herald</i>, Jan. 2, 2019.  “Boxing champ Tyrone Spong faces wildlife charges after ‘extremely dangerous’ cougar gets loose,” <i>South Florida Sun-Sentinel</i>, Aug. 15, 2019.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 7, 2016   Pahrump, Nevada:</b> Authorities discovered three juvenile tigers and eight monkeys at a home in Pahrump. The tigers, two of whom weighed 87 pounds and the other who weighed 107 pounds, were loose in the back yard eating raw meat while being supervised by a teenage girl. Neighbors, who had seen the tigers outside on previous</p>	<p>Lesley Marin, “Update: Tigers seized in Nye County find new home,” KTNV, Nov. 16, 2016.</p>

## Incident details

## Source

occasions, expressed concern that the only thing separating the animals from the yard where their young children played was a 4-foot fence. The animals' owner had packed up and moved the animals to Nevada when she faced problems in Texas.

**April 21, 2016 | Conroe, Texas:** A young female tiger was found wandering the streets of Conroe. The tiger, who was wearing a collar and leash, approached a young couple and jumped up on the man, putting her paws on his shoulders. The tiger's owner had taken his pet to a friend's house, where she escaped. The police took the tiger into custody.

**Sept. 3, 2015 | Hemet, California:** A 10-week-old tiger cub who was found wandering through a neighborhood was turned in to the local humane society. The cub had been declawed and was suffering from a hernia, which a veterinarian determined may have been caused by being picked up too much.

**July 20, 2015 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin:** A woman alerted police after seeing a lion-like big cat on the city's north side. Since the initial sighting, a blurry video was captured showing an animal who could be a cougar or young African lion and—for more than a week—dozens of other residents reported seeing the animal. Police and officials with the Department of Natural Resources also observed the big cat. Authorities closed off streets, conducted searches and set traps, but efforts to capture the animal failed.

**Nov. 7, 2014 | Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana:** A 70-pound cougar who had been declawed on all four paws was found dead along the side of a road.

**Sept. 1, 2013 | Fairfield Beach, Ohio:** A 400-pound lion who was being kept as a pet escaped from her cage and wandered the neighborhood. A state wildlife agent notified the owner, who got the animal back into her cage.

**June 20, 2013 | Charlestown, Indiana:** A couple shot and killed a leopard who had apparently been preying on neighborhood pets. Conservation officers believed the leopard was someone's pet.

"Wandering tiger now at North Texas exotic animal sanctuary," CBS DFW, April 28, 2016.

"Tiger found wandering in Conroe 'having fun' exploring new home at animal sanctuary," Click2Houston, April 28, 2016.

"Abandoned tiger cub found wandering around Calif. neighborhood," *USA Today*, Sept. 4, 2015.

Suzanne Hurt, "Vet says abandoned tiger cub 'not healthy,'" *Press Enterprise*, Sept. 8, 2015.

Myra Sanchick and Katie Delong, "'Lion' latest: Source says tracks photographed, confirming large cat with retractable claws," FOX6NOW, July 31, 2015.

Marion Renault, "As confirmed sightings dwindle, Milwaukee lion fading into urban legend," *Journal Sentinel*, July 30, 2015. Louis Weisberg and Lisa Neff, "'Lion on the loose' sparks concerns about exotic pets," *Wisconsin Gazette*, Aug. 13, 2015.

"Dead declawed cougar found near DeQuincy," KATC, Nov. 17, 2014.

"Lion found roaming Fairfield County neighborhood," WBNS, Sept. 4, 2013. "Lion may have been first to escape under Ohio law," Newsnet5.com, Sept. 8, 2013.

"Woman gets shock of her life after hunting and killing a bobcat ... and it turns out to be a leopard," *Daily Mail*, June 23, 2013.

## Incident details

**May 6, 2013 | Atchison, Kansas:** The Atchison County Sheriff's Office seized a tiger, two cougars, three bobcats, two lynx, a serval and two skunks who had largely been abandoned on a rural property. When discovered by the sheriff's office, the animals had no clean drinking water and were being tended to, at most, on a weekly basis. Several animals had died. The animals' enclosures were made of flimsy chain-link fencing and were secured with hose clamps and thin chains. The cats were living in mud and filth, and some of the shelters provided were much too small for the animals. Atchison County, animal protection organizations and the Kansas City Zoo spent more than \$20,000 to care for the animals and transfer them to sanctuaries.

**June 25, 2012 | Pataskala, Ohio:** While visiting a home with a private menagerie of wild animals to determine whether 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.

**May 28, 2012 | Brooksville, Florida:** A 275-pound cougar kept as a pet escaped from his cage in a backyard menagerie and killed a neighbor's dog who had wandered onto the property.

**Oct. 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

## Source

Mary Meyers (Atchison Globe), "Tiger, mountain lions removed from home," *Joseph News-Press*, May 6, 2013.

"Pet cougar bites caseworker, perplexing police," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 27, 2012. "Pataskala woman's pet mountain lion bites state worker," WBNS-TV, June 27, 2012.

Katie Maassen, "Gator Ron's pet cougar escapes cage, kills dog," WTSP, June 5, 2012.

"Outbreak fears as monkey remains on the loose in Ohio after animal park owner dies," *Herald Sun*, Oct. 20, 2011. "Officials try to contain exotic animals after property owner found dead," *Zanesville Times Recorder*, Oct. 19, 2011.

Incident details	Source
<p>had just been released from prison after serving a one-year term for weapons offenses.</p>	
<p><b>Oct. 16, 2011   Odessa, Texas:</b> 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 the hospital with significant damage to the left side of his body. The cougar was seized by animal control officials and euthanized.</p>	<p>Audrie Palmer, "Mountain Lion Mauls Boy," <i>Midland Reporter-Telegram</i>, Oct. 17, 2011.</p>
<p><b>April 2010   Brown County, Ohio:</b> A cougar who had been purchased as a pet at a flea market escaped and remained on the loose a month later.</p>	<p>"Mountain lion sightings reported in Ohio," <i>Port Clinton News Herald</i>, May 28, 2010.</p>
<p><b>Feb. 21, 2009   Oakley, Kansas:</b> 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.</p>	<p>"Lion mauls man at animal refuge; no charges expected," Associated Press, Feb. 27, 2009.</p>
<p><b>Jan. 18, 2009   Ingram, Texas:</b> A 330-pound 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.</p>	<p>Irene Van Winkle, "Pet tiger escapes, prowls Ingram area before capture," <i>West Kerr Current</i>, Jan. 22, 2009.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 29, 2008   Pocahontas County, West Virginia:</b> A 250- to 300-pound Bengal tiger escaped from a wild 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.</p>	<p>"Pet Bengal tiger killed after escaping from home," <i>Pet Pulse</i>, Dec. 3, 2008. Justin D. Anderson, "Exotic animal farm owner says he had to shoot tiger," <i>Charleston Daily Mail</i>, Dec. 2, 2008.</p>
<p><b>Aug. 19, 2008   Washoe County, Nevada:</b> 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.</p>	<p>Steve Timko, "2 leopards seized from home's roof," <i>Reno Gazette-Journal</i>, Aug. 20, 2008.</p>
<p><b>July 14, 2008   El Paso County, Colorado:</b> El Paso County Sheriff's deputies searched for what was believed to be an African lion who was spotted running loose by two witnesses,</p>	<p>"African lion loose in eastern El Paso County," KMGH, July 14, 2008.</p>

Incident details	Source
<p>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.</p>	
<p><b>May 19, 2008   Neosho, Missouri:</b> 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, turned around and charged again before being killed by several shots from the deputy's rifle and handgun. Authorities speculated that the cat, who had been declawed, was a pet who had escaped or been abandoned.</p>	<p>Jeff Lehr, "Deputy kills jaguar ... or leopard," <i>Joplin Globe</i>, May 21, 2008.</p>
<p><b>March 24, 2008   Las Vegas, Nevada:</b> A panther likely kept as a pet attacked a dog in the backyard of a home in a residential area. Police attempted to shoot the panther, but the animal escaped.</p>	<p>"Panther Attack Worries Northwest Residents," <i>Las Vegas Now</i>, March 24, 2008.</p>
<p><b>Dec. 25, 2007   Dallas, Texas:</b> 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 makeshift leash. Shell casings were found in her head and chest, indicating she had been shot five times.</p>	<p>David Schechter, "Tiger found dead near I-35 on Christmas," WFAA-TV, Dec. 28, 2007.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 19, 2007   Pike County, Ohio:</b> One of two lions kept as pets 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 the two lions were kept was caked with feces and littered with rotting animal carcasses.</p>	<p>"Escaped lion chases cars in Columbus," WTOL, Nov. 23, 2007.  "Lion's owner cited for failure to confine the animal," Associated Press, Nov. 30, 2007.  NEWS AT 5, FOX 5 KVVU-NV, Nov. 23, 2007.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 14, 2007   New Hampton, Iowa:</b> A tiger kept as a pet escaped from a cage by rushing past the owner at feeding time 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.</p>	<p>Tom Alex, "Escaped pet tiger mauls dog, is shot by deputy," <i>Des Moines Register</i>, Nov. 16, 2007.</p>
<p><b>Oct. 16, 2007   Greenbrier County, West Virginia:</b> A deer hunter reported seeing a 250- to 300-pound male African lion in the woods. The lion paced within 15 feet of his vehicle for about 40 minutes then circled his tree stand. The Department</p>	<p>David Cottrill, "Hunter encounters lion at Roaring Creek," <i>Mountain Messenger</i>, Oct. 20, 2007.</p>

Incident details	Source
<p>of Natural Resources confirmed this was the second report they had received about the lion.</p>	
<p><b>July 6, 2007   Marion County, Arkansas:</b> A man was injured by one of his 5½-year-old 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.</p>	<p>Armando Rios, "Cougars rescued in Marion County," <i>The Baxter Bulletin</i>, July 7, 2007.</p>
<p><b>May 2007   Chanceford Township, Pennsylvania:</b> A 110-pound cougar kept as a pet escaped from a cage and was on the loose for more than a day.</p>	<p>Ted Czech, "Escaped cougar returns," <i>Daily Record</i>, May 4, 2007.</p>
<p><b>May 2007   Gambier, Ohio:</b> Two lions and four tigers were abandoned by the owner of the Siberian Tiger Foundation after she was evicted from the property. Knox County residents paid approximately \$2,000 and the property owners spent \$3,000 caring for the animals until they were relocated to sanctuaries in October 2007.</p>	<p>Gail Martineau, "Knox County assumes care for six exotic cats," <i>Columbus Dispatch</i>, Aug. 12, 2007. Pamela Schehl, "Tigers, lions head off to animal sanctuaries," <i>Mount Vernon News</i>, Oct. 22, 2007.</p>
<p><b>Sept. 28, 2006   Las Vegas, Nevada:</b> A sick, severely malnourished cougar was abandoned at the Las Vegas Zoo in the middle of the night. The declawed and neutered animal had clearly been someone's pet.</p>	<p>"Mountain lion dropped off at Las Vegas Zoo," KVBC, Sept. 28, 2006.</p>
<p><b>May 2, 2006   Orangeburg County, South Carolina:</b> Local authorities expressed frustration over lax laws after discovering an area resident was keeping a tiger in a filthy, undersized cage in her front yard.</p>	<p>Addie Bradshaw, "Tale of the Tiger," WLTX, May 2, 2006.</p>
<p><b>Sept. 28, 2005   Lewis County, Washington:</b> A 5-year-old boy was tackled by one of the tigers his grandfather kept as a pet. 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. County officials ordered that the boy receive rabies prevention shots.</p>	<p>Erik Olson, "Boy bitten by tiger," <i>Chronicle</i>, Oct. 1, 2005. "Tiger-bite victim ordered to receive rabies vaccinations," <i>The Chronicle</i>, Oct. 11, 2005.</p>
<p><b>June 11, 2005   Lima, Ohio:</b> Bradley Craft was attacked by a 160-pound cougar he kept as a pet. 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.</p>	<p>Tim Rausch, "Big cat attack prompts board look at regs," <i>Lima News</i>, July 9, 2005.</p>
<p><b>June 2005   Reno County, Kansas:</b> State wildlife and county sheriff officials confiscated a malnourished and underweight cougar from a private residence. The animal, who was caged</p>	<p>Jason Probst, "Department wants tougher rules on exotic animals," Associated Press, July 3, 2005.</p>

## Incident details

## Source

with no food and only stagnant water, weighed less than 60 pounds—approximately 70 pounds lighter than a healthy weight. The cougar had reportedly escaped several times in the past.

**Feb. 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.

“Authorities kill tiger that had been roaming Simi Valley hills,” Associated Press, Feb. 23, 2005.  
Catherine Saillant, “Couple admit owning escaped tiger,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 9, 2007.

**Feb. 23, 2005 | Pahrump, Nevada:** A leopard kept as a pet at Karl Mitchell’s facility bit off the tip of a woman’s finger.

Angie Wagner, “Group rescues pet tigers, says private ownership should end,” Associated Press, March 2, 2005.  
Brian Allen, “Neglected Animals Removed From Pahrump Residence,” KLAS-TV, March 2, 2005.

**Jan. 18, 2005 | Arkansas:** A 400-pound 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.

“Tiger has new home after being abandoned in north Arkansas,” Associated Press, Jan. 18, 2005.

**Jan. 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.

“Tiger cubs arrive at zoo; officials call it a ‘ongoing problem,’” Associated Press, Jan. 11, 2005.

**Dec. 24, 2004 | Suffolk County, New York:** An 8-year-old boy was attacked by the leopard his father kept as a pet. The boy was scratched on the chest and bitten on the neck, requiring 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.

Alfonso A. Castillo, “4-year deal in leopard case,” *Newsday*, Dec. 21, 2005.

**Sept. 2004 | Fort Polk, Louisiana:** A 100-man search team consisting of soldiers and trackers armed with M-16 rifles and tranquilizer dart guns spent at least three days attempting to capture an approximately 100-pound tiger who was on the loose at Fort Polk army base. The Louisiana National Guard also joined the effort, using a helicopter with night vision gear

“La. National Guard joins search for tiger,” *The Town Talk*, Sept. 3, 2004.



## Incident details

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to search for the tiger from the air. The tiger roamed the post's woods and was also spotted near a golf course and a housing unit.

**July 26, 2004 | Shepherdsville, Kentucky:** A 2-year-old, declawed snow leopard kept as a pet escaped from his cage, broke through a wire gate and ran into thick woods behind the owner's house. The leopard was captured nine days later.

"Snow leopard escapes in Bullitt County," WHAS11.com, July 28, 2004.  
Craig Hoffman, "Pet Snow Leopard Captured In Bullitt County," WAVE-TV, Aug. 4, 2004.

**July 12, 2004 | Loxahatchee, Florida:** Deputy sheriffs and state game officials launched an extensive search for a 600-pound 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.

Akilah Johnson, "Pet tiger eludes capture after escape from one-time Tarzan's home," *Sun-Sentinel*, July 13, 2004.  
"Police kill tiger as it lunged at officer; Tiger's owner said to be 'extremely distraught,'" CNN, July 13, 2004.

**May 28, 2004 | Chillicothe, Ohio:** A woman was transported by helicopter to a hospital after she was bitten on the arm by the lion her father kept as a pet. She reached into the cage to pet the lion, who bit her and would not let go of her arm, even after spraying the lion with a garden hose. Her father shot and killed the lion.

Claire Cahoon, "Woman attacked by African lion in Liberty Township," *Chillicothe Gazette*, May 29, 2004.

**March 13, 2004 | Massena, New York:** A 4-year-old girl was mauled by the cougar her grandmother kept as a pet. 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.

"Girl mauled by grandmother's caged cougar," Associated Press, March 17, 2004.

**Feb. 9, 2004 | Plaquemine, Louisiana:** A woman was attacked by a declawed 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.

Michelle Krupa, "Leopard was like 'a baby' to Port Sulphur woman," *Times-Picayune*, Feb. 11, 2004.

**Jan. 31, 2004 | Fort Wayne, Indiana:** A 4-year-old, 140-pound cougar kept as a pet 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 owner's neighbors filed a lawsuit seeking permanent removal of his "inherently

"Neighbors Sue Man Over His Pet Wildcats," Associated Press, Feb. 27, 2004.

Incident details	Source
<p>extremely dangerous” animals, which included another cougar and three African wild cats.</p>	
<p><b>Jan. 24, 2004   Lowgap, North Carolina:</b> A tiger attacked and bit a 14-year-old girl on the cheek and neck as she was taking photos of four caged tigers kept as pets. She was hospitalized in guarded condition. All four tigers were killed on the site.</p>	<p>“Tiger mauls 14-year-old girl in Surry County,” Associated Press, Jan. 24, 2004.</p>
<p><b>Dec. 14, 2003   Millers Creek, North Carolina:</b> A 10-year-old boy was killed by a 400-pound tiger his uncle kept as a pet as the boy 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.</p>	<p>“10-year-old N.C. boy killed by Bengal tiger,” Associated Press, Dec. 15, 2003.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 8, 2003   Frisco, Texas:</b> 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.</p>	<p>“Tiger found roaming in Collin Co.,” KXAS, Nov. 8, 2003.</p>
<p><b>Oct. 3, 2003   New York, New York:</b> Police, along with animal control officers and Bronx Zoo employees, confiscated a 500-pound 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.</p>	<p>“Tiger keeper plans to visit ‘pet’ in Ohio,” Associated Press, April 9, 2004.</p>
<p><b>Aug. 21, 2003   Whetstone Township, Ohio:</b> A chained 180-pound cougar kept as a pet snapped his collar, escaped and attacked a neighbor’s dog, causing more than 100 lacerations.</p>	<p>“Pet mountain lion mauls dog,” <i>Telegraph-Forum</i>, Aug. 21, 2003.</p>
<p><b>Jan. 24, 2003   Albert Lea, Minnesota:</b> 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 a tiger his father kept as a pet.</p>	<p>David Chanen, “Tiger cub’s plight prompts call for exotic-pets law,” <i>Star Tribune</i>, Feb. 12, 2003.</p>
<p><b>Jan. 8, 2003   Laurens, South Carolina:</b> A 200-pound cougar kept as a pet was recaptured in a residential neighborhood after he had escaped from a pen 5 miles away and roamed freely for three days.</p>	<p>Vanita Washington, “Fugitive cougar captured in woman’s yard,” <i>The Greenville News</i>, Jan. 8, 2003.</p>
<p><b>Oct. 28, 2002   Las Vegas, Nevada:</b> Neighbors became frightened and alerted animal control when they spotted two</p>	<p>“Tigers spotted on Vegas Rooftop,” KLAS-TV, Oct. 28, 2002.</p>

Incident details	Source
<p>tiger cubs running loose on a neighbor’s rooftop. The cubs had escaped from the homeowner’s private menagerie.</p>	
<p><b>June 30, 2002   Lexington County, South Carolina:</b> 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.</p>	<p>April Simun, “Woman fined for failing to confine lions,” <i>The State</i>, July 26, 2002.</p>
<p><b>April 21, 2002   Easley, South Carolina:</b> A tiger kept as a pet 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 was normally kept in a metal cage in the backyard.</p>	<p>“Easley family’s pet tiger bites son in leg,” <i>Post and Courier</i>, April 28, 2002.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 14, 2001   Detroit, Michigan:</b> Local residents found a juvenile tiger who had been beaten to death and dumped in a field.</p>	<p>“Dead Tiger Found In Southwest Detroit; Investigators Say Animal Was Badly Beaten,” <i>ClickOnDetroit.com</i>, Nov. 14, 2001.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 2, 2001   Pahrump, Nevada:</b> 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.</p>	<p>Doug McMurdo, “Nye sued over tiger bite,” <i>Pahrump Valley Times</i>, Feb. 8, 2002.</p>
<p><b>Oct. 10, 2001   Lee County, Texas:</b> A 3-year-old boy was killed by one of three tigers a relative kept as pets 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.</p>	<p>Claire Osborn, “3-year-old boy killed by pet tiger at grandparent’s house,” <i>Austin American-Statesman</i>, Oct. 11, 2001.</p>
<p><b>Aug. 19, 2001   Tonganoxie, Kansas:</b> 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.</p>	<p>“Woman attacked by caged lion,” <i>Topeka Capital Journal</i>, Aug. 20, 2001.</p>
<p><b>April 27, 2001   Oakwood, Ohio:</b> The sheriff’s office warned residents to keep their children and companion animals</p>	<p>“Alleged lioness remains elusive,” <i>The Crescent-News</i>, April 29, 2001.</p>

Incident details	Source
<p>indoors after receiving several reports from residents that an escaped lion had been sighted.</p>	
<p><b>April 7, 2001   Van Buren County, Arkansas:</b> 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.</p>	<p>“One of three pet tigers dies after capture,” THV, April 9, 2001.</p>
<p><b>March 16, 2001   Witts Springs, Arkansas:</b> 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.</p>	<p>Sonseeahray Tonsall, “Tiger on the loose,” KARK-TV, March 16, 2001. Kevan Mathis, “Escaped Bengal tiger shot,” <i>Harrison Daily Times</i>, March 19, 2001.</p>
<p><b>Jan. 26, 2001   Las Vegas, Nevada:</b> A cougar kept as a pet 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.</p>	<p>“Cougar jumps on bus,” KVBC, Jan. 26, 2001. “‘Cat Bus:’ Big cat hops aboard school bus,” KTNV, Jan. 26, 2001.</p>
<p><b>Dec. 19, 2000   Omaha, Nebraska:</b> 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.</p>	<p>Untitled, Associated Press, Dec. 20, 2000.</p>
<p><b>Aug. 26, 2000   Delmont, South Dakota:</b> 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.</p>	<p>“Wild Animals Kept As Pets Can Pose Danger,” KELOLAND TV, Sept. 22, 2000. “Teen Atacked By Tiger Will Stay With Father,” KELOLAND TV, Oct. 13, 2000.</p>
<p><b>June 6, 2000   Harris County, Texas:</b> Animal control officers spent three hours searching for a tiger who had escaped from a backyard cage while the owners were out of town. The tiger was tranquilized and recaptured.</p>	<p>S.K. Bardwell, “Tiger captured after escaping cage,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, June 7, 2000.</p>

Incident details	Source
<p><b>June 5, 2000   Greenfield, Wisconsin:</b> Police seized a leopard, a cougar and dozens of other wild mammals and reptiles from the apartment of a 22-year-old man. The animals were living in cramped and poorly ventilated conditions.</p>	<p>James H. Burnett, “Man with apartment full of animals charged with cruelty,” <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i>, June 9, 2000.</p>
<p><b>March 15, 2000   Channelview, Texas:</b> A 4-year-old boy had his arm torn off, mid-bicep, by a 400-pound tiger his uncle kept as a pet. 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.</p>	<p>Leigh Hopper, “Tiger quarantined   Boy likely will have use of arm,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, March 17, 2000.          Lisa Teachey, “In wake of tiger attack, a hard choice   Family weighs move here for boy’s recovery,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, March 30, 2000.</p>
<p><b>Dec. 2, 1999   Williamsville, Missouri:</b> A 5-year-old boy required surgery after he was mauled by a lion kept chained in a neighbor’s yard. The animal inflicted puncture wounds to the boy’s throat and head. The lion was killed.</p>	<p>“Pet lion attacks 5-year-old boy,” Associated Press, Dec. 4, 1999.</p>
<p><b>June 6, 1999   Yorktown, Texas:</b> A 10-year-old girl was killed when one of her stepfather’s two 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.</p>	<p>Becky Cooper, “Tiger kills Yorktown 9-year-old,” <i>Victoria Advocate</i>, June 8, 1999.          Becky Cooper, “Sentence handed out in tiger trial,” <i>Victoria Advocate</i>, June 1, 2000.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 18, 1998   Kaufman, Texas:</b> A Texas man was attacked by a lion he kept as a pet and suffered serious injuries. The female lion jumped on him from behind.</p>	<p>“Owner attacked by pet lion,” States News Service, Nov. 20, 1998.</p>
<p><b>Nov. 8, 1998   Cut and Shoot, Texas:</b> Two tigers escaped their backyard cage and attacked a dog and a pig before being shot dead by police. Security officers were posted at a local school while one tiger eluded searchers for more than 30 hours. In 1997, a cougar kept as a pet by the same man escaped and was never recaptured.</p>	<p>“Tigers escape pens at Cut and Shoot; 1 eludes searchers,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, Nov. 8, 1998.          “Police, dogs search for Texas tiger,” Reuters, Nov. 9, 1998.          Paul McKay, “Searchers kill 2nd escaped tiger in thicket near Cut and Shoot,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, Nov. 9, 1998.</p>
<p><b>May 2, 1998   Wylie, Texas:</b> A cougar kept as a pet bit a 4-year-old boy on the leg. The boy required \$5,800 in medical care.</p>	<p>Roy Appleton, “Lucky stripes; Cougar trouble leads woman to tiger in need of home,” <i>Dallas Morning News</i>, Jan. 21, 1999.</p>

## Incident details

**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 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.

**May 8, 1997 | Lubbock, Texas:** One of five tigers kept as pets mauled his owner. The tiger grabbed the man by the head, ripping out his jaw and one ear canal. The victim later stated, "When I heard the bones crush in my head, I figured, well you know, this is it." His wife recalled the look in her husband's eye as "the look of death, like he knew he wasn't gonna make it," and his son remembered the tiger "just shaking him like a rag doll. Dad was laying there and he was completely covered in blood and he wasn't moving." The victim was admitted to the hospital in critical condition. The owner's son killed the tiger.

**March 12, 1997 | Caldwell, Texas:** A 13-year-old boy was hospitalized for a week after he was attacked by a 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."

**Sept. 16, 1996 | Crystal Beach, Texas:** A declawed lioness kept as a pet died after she was shot and tranquilized by a deputy. The lioness attacked a man after a burglar had apparently set her free.

**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 the tiger's owner pleaded guilty to charges of child endangerment and was placed on probation.

**Dec. 26, 1995 | Quinlan, Texas:** A 3-year-old boy was mauled by the cougar his family kept as a pet. His 6-year-old sister

## Source

Jonathan Nelson, "Couple wants Columbia County to impose ban on exotic animals," *The Oregonian*, Dec. 14, 1999.

"Texas," *USA Today*, May 8 1997.  
"Bringing home the big cats," CBS News, July 14, 1999.

James Pinkerton, "Darling – but dangerous," *Houston Chronicle*, June 22, 1997.

Kevin Moran, "Declawed pet lion shot in escape dies despite vets' efforts," *Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 19, 1996.

"Girl's condition critical after tiger mauling, car accident," *Charleston Gazette*, May 9, 1996.

"Owner of tiger that mauled girl outside Dallas lacked permit," *Austin American-Statesman*, May 11, 1996.

"Tiger's owner indicted," *Houston Chronicle*, May 24, 1996.

James Pinkerton, "Darling – but dangerous," *Houston Chronicle*, June 22, 1997.

"Texas," *USA Today*, Dec. 27, 1995.

Incident details	Source
<p>suffered minor injuries in the attack. The cougar was shot and killed.</p>	
<p><b>Nov. 23, 1995   Wake County, North Carolina:</b> A declawed, 350-pound 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.</p>	<p>Kelly Thompson Cochran and Steve Swindell, "Family's pet tiger attacks, seriously wounds 3-year-old boy," <i>News &amp; Observer</i>, Nov. 24, 1995.  J. Mike Blake and Ted Richardson, "Blinded by a tiger at age 3, teen comes out a winner," <i>The Daily News Online</i>, March 7, 2010.</p>
<p><b>Oct. 29, 1995   Allegan County, Michigan:</b> While her 9-year-old daughter watched in horror, a woman was attacked and killed by a 200-pound declawed lion after she entered her cage at the home of a friend who collected wild animals. The friend was seriously injured when he tried to stop the attack and was flown to a Kalamazoo hospital with neck bites.</p>	<p>Peg West and Ken Kolker, "Officials probe fatal lion attack in Fennville," <i>Grand Rapids Press</i>, Oct. 30, 1995.</p>
<p><b>Sept. 18, 1995   Wesley, Kansas:</b> A 2-year-old boy required hospital treatment for a severe bite on his ear from the family's 4-month-old cougar.</p>	<p>Mike Hutmacher, "Where the Wild Things are Officials Call for More Regulation of Exotic Pets," <i>Wichita Eagle</i>, Sept. 19, 1995.</p>
<p><b>Sept. 18, 1995   Haysville, Kansas:</b> A man shot and killed an African lion he found pacing on his driveway after the lion had escaped from a neighbor's pen.</p>	<p>"ACROSS THE USA: NEWS FROM EVERY STATE," <i>USA Today</i>, Sept. 19, 1995.</p>
<p><b>Sept. 17, 1995   Wichita, Kansas:</b> A cougar who had escaped and been on the loose for a week was recaptured.</p>	<p>"Where the wild things are," <i>Wichita Eagle</i>, Sept. 19, 1995.</p>
<p><b>June 2, 1995   Queens, New York:</b> A 2-year-old boy was bitten by his neighbor's 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.</p>	<p>"2-Year-Old Boy Hurt In Pet Cougar Attack," <i>New York Times</i>, June 4, 1995.</p>
<p><b>1995   Green Bay, Wisconsin:</b> NFL player Travis Jervey was bitten by an approximately 7-month-old lion he kept as a pet. According to Jervey, the lion "bit a hole" in his arm when he tried to take a hat away from her.</p>	<p>Darryl Slater, "Colorful former Citadel running back Travis Jervey inducted into South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame," <i>The Post and Courier</i>, May 14, 2013.</p>
<p><b>Sept. 5, 1994   Nauvoo, Alabama:</b> A 550-pound male tiger escaped from a chain-link pen at a private menagerie with two tigers and a cougar. The tiger approached a neighbor's home</p>	<p>"Tiger Killed After Escaping," Associated Press, Sept. 5, 1994.</p>

Incident details	Source
<p>100 yards away and attacked his dog. The neighbor shot and killed the tiger.</p>	
<p><b>Aug. 8, 1994   Cincinnati, Ohio:</b> A 180-pound female lion kept as a pet in Hyde Park escaped from a home and walked around the neighborhood. The lioness was recaptured by a friend of the animal's owner. The owner was cited for violating the city's wild animal law and the SPCA seized the lioness.</p>	<p>John Hopkins, "Hyde Park man cited after lion's escape," <i>Cincinnati Enquirer</i>, Aug. 12, 1994.</p>
<p><b>Aug. 1994   Columbia Township, Ohio:</b> An 18-month-old male lion kept as a pet was seized by the SPCA after a veterinarian determined the lion suffered from malnutrition. The lion was kept in a 10-foot-by-10-foot cage and had not been fed in three days.</p>	<p>John Hopkins, "Hyde Park man cited after lion's escape," <i>Cincinnati Enquirer</i>, Aug. 12, 1994.</p>
<p><b>March 22, 1994   Beech Grove, Arkansas:</b> A 150-pound declawed cougar kept as a pet escaped and attacked a 71-year-old neighbor, inflicting deep bite wounds to the man's shoulder and arm.</p>	<p>Larry Young, "Pet cougar attacks man in his yard," <i>Arkansas Democrat-Gazette</i>, March 23, 1994.</p>
<p><b>March 1994   Leon, Kansas:</b> An 11-year-old girl was bitten by a 143-pound African lioness, the same animal who attacked a boy a month earlier (see below). The lioness was destroyed.</p>	<p>"Where the wild things are," <i>Wichita Eagle</i>, Sept. 19, 1995.  "Elk County couple has history of animal trouble," WIBW-TV, March 21, 2008.</p>
<p><b>Feb. 1994   Leon, Kansas:</b> An 11-year-old boy was bitten by a lion who he was told was tame.</p>	<p>"Where the wild things are," <i>Wichita Eagle</i>, Sept. 19, 1995.  "Elk County couple has history of animal trouble," WIBW-TV, March 21, 2008.</p>
<p><b>Aug. 9, 1993   Georgetown, Ohio:</b> 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 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.</p>	<p>"Teen rescues brother from lion attack," <i>Columbus Dispatch</i>, Aug. 11, 1993.</p>
<p><b>March 22, 1992   Portland, Oregon:</b> A liger (lion-tiger hybrid) kept as a pet 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.</p>	<p>"HOTLINE," <i>Circus Report</i>, April 6, 1992.</p>