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10 Terrible Captive Wildlife Incidents in 2019
Shameful List Confirms Wild Animals Should Not Be in Captivity

San Andreas, Calif. (January 15, 2020) – The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) presents its inaugural list of 10 Terrible Captive Wildlife Incidents with 10 shocking entries that illustrate why wild animals should not be kept in captivity. PAWS has been advocating on behalf of captive wildlife since 1984, while at the same time providing sanctuary for rescued or retired elephants, bears, big cats, primates, and other wild animals at its three sanctuaries in California. While any captive environment is problematic for wild animals, this list highlights some of the most egregious incidents.

Captive wild animals can be found in a variety of situations, from zoos to tourism and from entertainment to exotic pets. Sadly, 2019 brought appalling examples of cruelty, selfishness, stupidity, injury and deaths, as well as dangerous public interaction with captive wild animals who often pay the price for the selfies shared on social media.

A change in societal attitudes toward the exploitation of captive wild animals, and recent advances – such as prohibitions on the use of exotic animals in circuses and Canada’s ban on keeping whales and dolphins in captivity – are promising. However, this list shows there is much more work to be done.

PAWS’ list is drawn from the numerous international media reports on incidents involving captive wild animals. The list covers nine different countries and a range of species. PAWS’ intent is to raise awareness of the problems created for wild animals in captivity in order to end the exploitation that continues to harm both animals and people. The list is presented in no particular order and includes 10 entries and two dishonorable mentions as follows:

- Emaciated elephant calf’s back legs snap, days after performing for tourists (Thailand)
- Bear escapes cub petting attraction and is shot to death (U.S.)
- China imports 30 wild-caught elephant calves from Zimbabwe for zoos and circus shows (China/Zimbabwe)
• Zoo painfully declaws lion so visitors can play with her (Gaza)
• Toddler suffers severe injuries at zoo’s behind-the-scenes rhino encounter (U.S.)
• Lion breeding-farm horror (South Africa)
• The dangerous lives and deaths of tigers in zoos (U.K., U.S.)
• Zoo visitors carve their names onto rhinoceros’ back (France)
• Escaped exotic cat attacks mother and daughter walking down street (U.S.)
• Russian whale jail (Russia)

**Dishonorable mentions:**

• Cincinnati Zoo supplies university with wild animal mascots (U.S.)
• Discovery Channel’s *Man Vs Bear* (U.S.)

The full text for PAWS’ **10 Terrible Captive Wildlife Incidents in 2019** can be found [here](http://pawsweb.org/).

For more information on PAWS, visit [http://pawsweb.org/](http://pawsweb.org/).

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**About the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)**

Founded in 1984, the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) operates three sanctuaries in California, including the 2,300-acre ARK 2000 natural habitat refuge, and cares for elephants, bears, big cats and other wild animals rescued or retired from circuses, zoos and the exotic pet trade.

PAWS is licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and is accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries. It is rated a four-star charity by Charity Navigator and received an “A” rating from CharityWatch.