



Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition  
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## Big Cats & People: 10 Year Old Mauled by Lion 3<sup>rd</sup> Big Cat Incident In Minnesota This Month

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(SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.) June 24, 2005---What is happening in Minnesota?

Wednesday's near fatal mauling of a 10 year old boy in Little Falls, Minn. is just the most recent tragic, and preventable, incident involving privately owned big cats. Earlier this month a lion was killed after escaping its inadequate enclosure and 9 tigers may have to be destroyed because there is no safe secure facility with room to house them. Similar incidents are occurring at an alarming rate across the country.

"There's dumb and dumber..... and dumbest of all is to keep big cats and think that you, your friends or the public are safe. 'Lightning' has struck three times in Minnesota this month. Isn't about time the authorities acted with wisdom and responsibility and ended the keeping of exotic wild animals as pets?" *Will Travers, CEO, Born Free Foundation*

The Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition (CWAPC), representing 20 leading animal protection organizations, zoos and sanctuaries, believes keeping wild animals as pets is dangerous for people and inhumane for animals. CWAPC tracks and reports on incidents involving captive wild animals and warns that the rate of human injury and death from privately owned big cats and other wild animals is increasing.

In the past 2 years alone, 8 people killed and more than 61 injured. At least 550 animals have died, too. At least 120 animals have escaped during that time and more than 2,000 have had to be confiscated from inadequate care situations. Under-reporting is a problem. The numbers are increasing each year.

"In a state where the legislature has recently addressed the threat of dangerous wild animals as pets, these incidents only underscore the need for such efforts nationwide." *Wayne Pacelle, CEO, Humane Society US*

The Captive Wildlife Safety Act was signed into law a year and a half ago, but tragic incidents have continued to happen and will continue unless we end the private ownership of dangerous wild animals. If future injuries and deaths are to be avoided, we must pass legislation at the local and state level, and ensure adequate enforcement of existing laws.

### **What The Public Can Do:**

1. Immediately report any situation involving wild animals that seems dangerous to people and/or inhumane to animals to local police, animal control and CWAPC;
2. Learn about the laws in your neighborhood. If there are no regulations, contact your government representatives to say you would support legislation to regulate the private ownership of wild animals; and
3. Never buy a wild animal as a pet!!