



Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition
P.O. Box 6944
San Carlos, CA 94070
www.cwapc.org

Big Cats & People: Human Injury and Death Rate Reaches All Time High

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kim K. Haddad, DVM
C: 650-619-0628

(SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.)— February 13, 2004—This year is setting a tragic record.

Yesterday's death of Al Abell in Hardin County, Illinois by his pet lion, is just the most recent tragic, and preventable, incident involving privately owned big cats. Similar incidents are occurring at an alarming rate across the country.

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.

So far in 2004, there has been one incident per week involving privately owned big cats and people.

In 2003, there were at least 33 incidents involving captive big cats. Of these incidents, 3 were human fatalities, 14 human injuries; hundreds more either escaped or were confiscated.

In 2004— and it is only the middle of February— there have been at least 7 incidents involving big cats. These incidents resulted in 1 human death, 2 human injuries, and 4 big cat escapes, 6 were shot and killed, 5 found dead, and at least 10 seized. Clearly if we continue on this path we will have many more deaths and injuries in 2004.

The Captive Wildlife Safety Act, signed into law January will begin to tighten the reins by prohibiting interstate transport of large cats for the pet trade. But tragic incidents 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;
3. Never buy a wild animal as a pet!!

Contact: Kim K. Haddad, DVM
Manager CWAPC
C: 650-619-0628
P: 650-595-4692
F: 650-595-4690
info@cwapc.org