

FOR TIGERS



ANNUAL REPORT 2018







FROM THE CHAIRWOMAN

"Since the closure of the Tiger Temple in 2016, many animal welfare activists believed that tiger tourist interactions in Thailand would be on the decline, but time has shown that to be a false assumption. In the years following the closure of the temple and the removal of the temple tigers to government facilities, several new tourist attractions have popped up around Thailand. Many of these follow the same recipe as the temple – with cub feeding and interactions with older tigers high in demand. This highlights the importance of continuing to work towards better awareness in the general public, and of teaching tourists exactly what their money contributes to when they choose a tiger selfie. At the same time, the tigers that are already in captivity need to be provided with the necessary care to ensure a high level of welfare. To achieve this, keepers, owners and other involved parties need help in terms of education and practical aid.

2018 was an important year for For Tigers, as we, in January, were registered as a charity in the UK. Being a registered charity gives us more options as to how we can operate, fundraise and perform outreach, and it was an important step towards a greater influence on the welfare of captive tigers in Thailand. As a newly registered charity, For Tigers also spent a large amount of time on education and outreach in 2018. Representatives attended the Tourism and Animal Welfare Symposium at London South Bank University, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and South East Asia Zoo Association conferences in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Thailand respectively, and inaugurated the annual Walk For Tigers event in Cambridge.

The state of the captive tiger population in Thailand was thoroughly mapped in our first report, *Unchaining Tiger Tourism*, which was released in July. This report will serve as the basis for further study of captive tigers in Thailand, and has provided comprehensive new information about tiger facilities and their welfare situations. This is an important first step, not only for For Tigers, but also for other organisations hoping to positively impact the welfare of captive Thai tigers.

In 2018, we also continued our partnership with Wildheart Foundation and completed the construction of two new enclosures for the tigers at one of the Department of National Park's (DNP) facilities. These enclosures came in addition to the four already funded by For Tigers (prior to registration and charity status) and Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand the previous year. Along with donations of enrichment items such as rope, and several donations of carnivore supplement and food, For Tigers were able to help better the welfare standards at the government facilities run by the DNP. Continuing this collaboration with the DNP will be an important focus point moving forward in 2019, and we hope to continue construction of enclosures as well as working on more substantial enrichment plans. We also look forward to a potential collaboration with other tiger venues, where we hope to use our experience in helping them become a tourist attraction that no longer includes tiger selfies." -

Annie Vera Hunnestad, Chairwoman

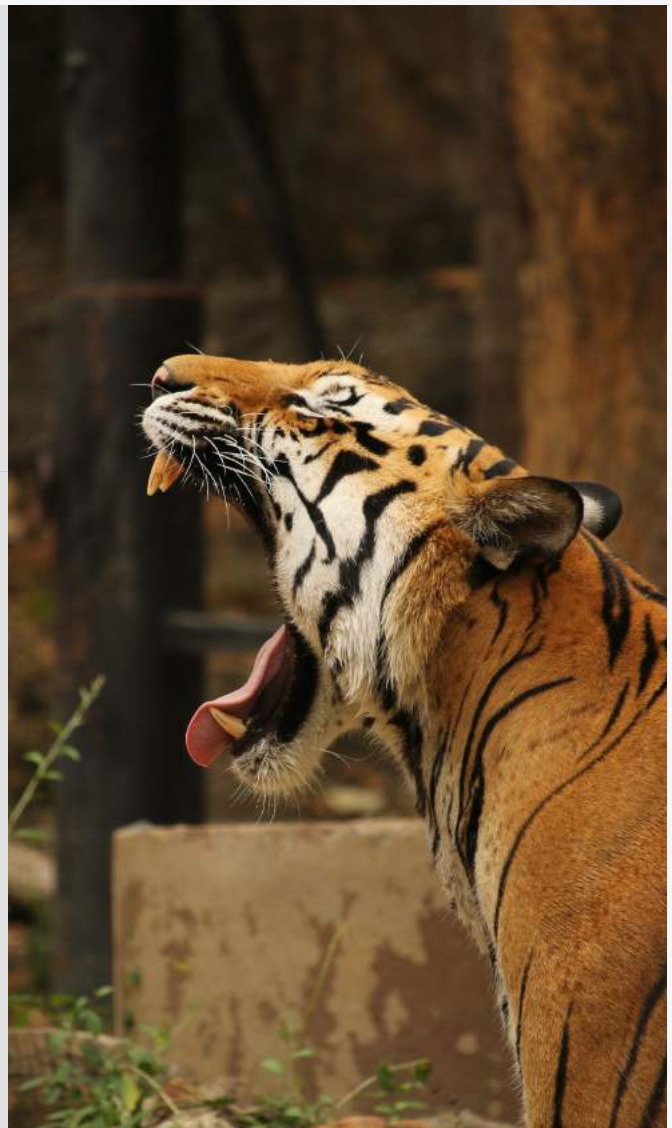
OUR VALUES

Our values help to define our objectives as a charitable organisation and the way we work with the public and the tiger venues themselves. We consistently work toward improving animal welfare of, and promoting humane behaviour toward, captive tigers in Thailand.

- We do not advocate shutting down or boycotting facilities. If we come across a facility with poor welfare we try to find ways to work with the venue to help them improve. Boycotting tends to cause the welfare of the animals to decline. Any decisions in this area are not taken lightly and always consider the positive and negative welfare implications.
- We are not a political organisation; choosing to work with, and partner with venues who are looking to improve their welfare standards rather than operate against them
- We constantly update and improve our organisational captive tiger welfare standard. through research and the latest literature on husbandry, welfare and ethics.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To provide educational services and support in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals at facilities housing captive tigers in Thailand
- To work with locals toward better ethical treatment and approaches toward animals, wild and captive
- To educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among amongst captive tigers
- To analyze and assess the welfare, care, treatment, and housing conditions of captive tigers in facilities across Thailand that are open to the public
- To engage the public to support positive changes for improving conditions of animals in captivity
- To create and distribute information on responsible wildlife tourism



WHAT IS FOR TIGERS?

For Tigers is a charitable organisation dedicated to improving the welfare of captive tigers. The concept for this charity was founded on the back of the Tiger Temple closure in July 2016. The trustees currently involved with For Tigers were, at one time or another, volunteering at the Temple. After the removal of the tigers to the DNP government facilities, there was a deep concern over the tiger's welfare in their new home due to the substandard facilities provided by the government and the lack of action to improve them.

The tigers from the Temple started to suffer from stress and began to develop signs of stereotypical behaviours and self mutilation caused, in part, by the sudden reduction in the size of the area they could roam, separation from other tigers and unfamiliar surroundings and keepers. It was then that the Follow the Tigers campaign was started. As the campaign kicked off, it became more and more apparent that it wasn't only the DNP facilities that were not adequately providing for the needs of captive tigers, but facilities around Thailand. and that this was a bigger problem then just the Tiger Temple.



For Tigers started to visit numerous facilities holding tigers around Thailand and began to document the tigers living there and the conditions they were living in. The realisation grew that the vast majority of the facilities were well below International standards. Something needed to be done to raise awareness and educate the public to this fact. This is when For Tigers was born.

For Tigers is dedicated to those tigers living in captivity. At this time it seems that the majority of tiger related organisations focus on conservation efforts but there isn't so much of a focus on those tigers that will remain captive for life. This is where For Tigers comes in.

OUR MISSION

WHAT DO WE DO?

To achieve For Tigers' objectives, we identified the fundamental activities that are the core of all For Tigers' activities. These include direct aid, research and resource development, partnership networks and public awareness (education):

Direct Aid: We currently raise funds to assist two government-run facilities with the care of their tigers by building enclosures and donating extra food, carnivore supplement and enrichment for them. We hope as we grow that we will be able to help more facilities in the future.

Research and resource development: Through assessing and recording each tiger seen, its living conditions, care and welfare, we are able to document the growing number of captive tigers in Thailand with the hopes that this will enable authorities to hold facilities responsible for their care and well-being.

Partnership Networks: Attendance at welfare symposiums and conferences is key to networking and working with like-minded organisations. We also plan to cultivate positive working relationships with tiger venues in Thailand.

Public Awareness (education): Through our social media sites, reports and videos, we hope to share our research information with the public, particularly those interested in animal welfare and/or visiting tigers in captivity. As more people learn to recognise what poor welfare is, the demand for improved welfare will lead facilities to make positive changes for their tigers. We also organise fundraising events to disseminate this information.

For Tiger's activities benefit the public in the following manner:

- Improve captive tiger welfare in Thailand by educating the public about tiger tourism venues through science-based information via a transparent website, reports, and social media platforms
- Improve and promote humane captive tiger welfare by informing and educating tiger venues on best welfare practices through training and direct aid



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018

This year For Tigers was able to start moving forward in a more concrete way, due to the registration of the charity in January.

- 38** Facilities visited and assessed
- 6** Enclosures built at DNP
- 1** Captive tiger welfare resource published
- 3** Symposiums/conferences attended



Our first report - Unchaining Tiger Tourism is released detailing the welfare issues prevalent in Thailand's captive tiger facilities



Both the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), and the South East Asia Zoo Association (SEAZA) conferences were attended in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Thailand

Enclosures five and six are funded and completed bringing our enclosure total to six. For Tigers also provided a year's worth of carnivore supplement, additional chicken and pork and various enrichment items.



Inaugural Walk for Tigers Event is a success with walkers starting in Cambridge and finishing 9 miles later at Shepreth Wildlife Park



THE WELFARE CHALLENGE

Background

There are numerous captive animal facilities in Thailand. When it comes to captive tigers facilities, there is a current estimate of 40 facilities holding captive tigers. These range from government run centres to public zoos of varying welfare standards. The zoos are either military run, provincial, privately owned, or run by the Zoological Parks Organisation of Thailand (ZPO).

The big issue here is that a large proportion of these facilities make their money by breeding inordinate numbers of tigers for tiger interactions. These interactions range from cub petting through to photo opportunities with adult tigers.



The Welfare Problem?

Animal welfare laws in Thailand are lacking. The Prevention of Animal Cruelty and Provision of Welfare Act only came into place in 2014 and was the first animal welfare law in the country. Unfortunately the definition of cruelty was vague and poorly defined leading to law enforcement having to interpret what constitutes cruelty, thus enabling some facilities to continue practicing ethically questionable interactions and poor welfare standards.

The tourist demand for interactions and photo opportunities with tigers, both large and small, is a driving factor that keeps these facilities open. Tourists fuel the demand making keeping tigers a lucrative business. However, some tourism sectors are learning and understanding the importance of welfare, thus choosing to avoid more exploitative venues. Additionally, there are animal rights activists pushing for these facilities to close. In the event of this happening, these tigers will only be moved to substandard DNP facilities, resulting in no real increase in quality of life.

There is however, growing pressure from national and international media and the public, for Thai facilities to improve the welfare of captive animals, thus meeting internationally recognised standards.



How does For Tigers help?

For Tigers brings together a small team that all have working experience within the Thai tiger tourism industry. Our team is well versed in the complex nature of Thailand's welfare laws and the issues that surround improving tiger welfare.

For Tigers has been working with the DNP since 2016 when the Tiger Temple tigers were removed to their facilities. The DNP facilities are substandard though meet current welfare requirements in Thailand. However, the DNP are the main enforcers for captive wildlife welfare and confiscate animals where necessary. By working with this group, who have a strong say in how zoos are run (licenses are also granted through this body), we can encourage and aid in improvement of their own facilities, paving the way for other facilities around the country to follow suit.

In addition, For Tigers has been researching the welfare standards of each public tiger facility in Thailand. The results of this research are published as educational reports for public consumption in order to reduce demand for these types of interactions and facilities.

- **We do not campaign or lobby for changes in Thai law**
- **We do not advocate for the shutting down of poor welfare facilities**
- **We respect cultural differences, but do not let this get in the way of improving captive tiger welfare**
- **We work with the local zoos and venues to facilitate positive welfare changes**

DIRECT AID IN 2018



Building on what had been started prior to the charity's founding, we, with the facilities' permission, continued to provide direct aid to the Department of National Parks (DNP) facilities. This was in the form of continuing the building of outdoor enclosures – in previous years we had funded and built four enclosures.

This year we collaborated with Wildheart Foundation to continue on with our work building enclosures at the DNP. With their help, two more enclosures have been completed, bringing our total up to six enclosures for the tigers. These enclosures contain trees, ponds and platforms with the aim to provide the tigers with a more natural space than space in which they currently reside.





Additional aid was provided in the form of emergency food provisions, the purchase and donation of carnivore supplement and some enrichment items to improve the welfare of the captive tigers under the DNP's care.

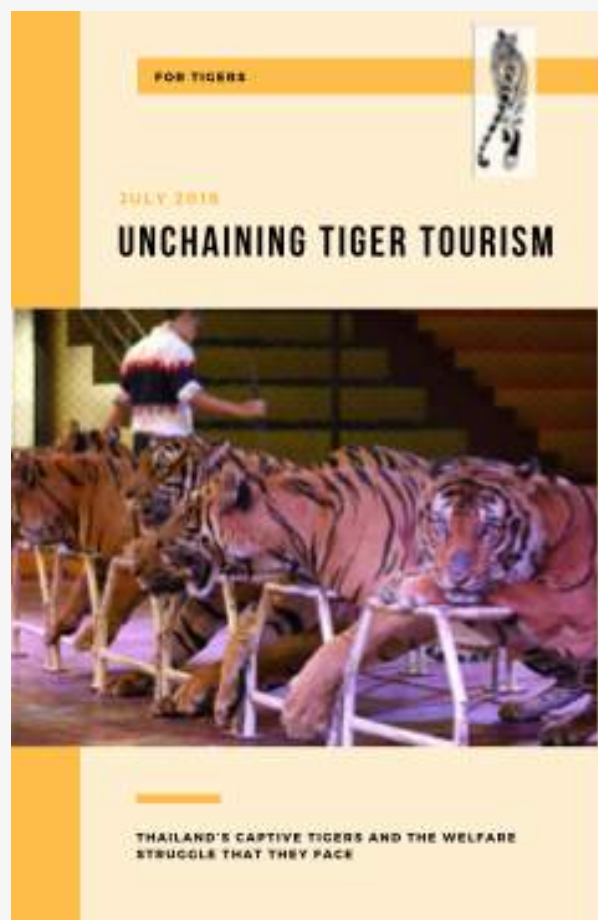
The enclosures are now shared by eight tigers who now have access to a more natural environment.



RESEARCH & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN 2018

During this financial year, our staff attended a symposium dedicated to improving animal welfare in tourism, as well as attending both the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), and the South East Asian Zoo Association (SEAZA), in order to gain a better understanding of the welfare issues and discuss potential steps that could be taken to improve animal welfare.

We visited and assessed 38 public facilities holding captive tigers doing so from a tourist point of view in order to write educational material to highlight the welfare issues of captive tiger tourism. This report aims to be user-friendly and provide potential visitors to these tiger venues with an accessible resource detailing the welfare issues of such venues.



PARTNERSHIP NETWORK IN 2018

At the end of 2017, prior to registration of For Tigers as a charity, we had already created a partnership with the US-based Wildheart Foundation. During this financial year this partnership went a step further with Wildheart Foundation directly funding two new enclosures at the DNP – a step that would not have been possible without their collaboration with For Tigers, as we provided the entry point into the DNP facilities.

This brought our tally of enclosures up to six and allowed us to fund enrichment and food donations to the DNP instead.



We also pursued the next step in working with other tiger venues within Thailand. This was started by looking through our research compiled earlier in the year when visiting all the tiger venues in the country, and determining which venues might be interested in a working partnership to improve welfare.

Additionally, a well-known hands on tiger venue within Thailand reached out to us, inviting us to view and participate in a new hands off experience promoted to tourists. This new experience prioritises the welfare of the tiger while still bringing in much needed income for the venue. The venue also announced its intentions to transition from a hands-on facility to a more welfare-friendly tourism model, thus paving the way for For Tigers to step in and provide aid and guidance.

PUBLIC AWARENESS (EDUCATION) IN 2018

For Tigers always strives to provide clear and objective information regarding tiger welfare at the facilities across Thailand. This is disseminated via regular newsletters, a website blog and the responsible use of various social media channels. Our report was distributed throughout these platforms.



In addition we held our first fundraising event, which was key in communicating many of the welfare issues prevalent across Thailand's tiger facilities. All of our communication with the public is designed to raise effective awareness of welfare issues, elicit positive change and also secure on going income for our work. Social media is particularly pertinent in these areas so we are continuing to grow our audience and interaction in these areas.



A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a tiger cub standing on its hind legs, reaching up with its front paws towards a chain-link fence. The cub is looking up at the fence. The background is slightly blurred, showing some foliage and a building.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2019?

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As we move into the new year, For Tigers will continue to pursue each of the outlined activities direct aid, research and resource development, partnership network and public awareness (education).

Below are some of the objectives we hope to achieve in 2019:

- Continue to improve and upgrade the Department of National Parks through additional enrichment and cage upgrades
- Identify facilities willing to accept support and aid
- Continue moving forward with the tiger venue and support their progress and transition
- To revisit all the facilities visited and assessed in 2018, updating our report
- To attend SEAZA 2019 to continue networking and liaising with other organisations, both NGO and tiger venues
- Development of additional research opportunities with zoos and NGO partners
- Create further educational material to aid tourists in choosing welfare-friendly venues

THANK YOU!

For Tigers is very grateful to all its donors, for without your support, none of this work would be possible!



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