

THE BIG CAT HANDLING CRISIS



You may see advertisements offering you the opportunity to pet tiger or other big cat cubs and have your photo taken with them or even swim with them. You may run across an exhibitor offering this at fairs, malls, or even at the US Capitol. The cubs of course are adorable and who wouldn't want to hold one of these cute cubs? You will probably be told things like the proceeds go toward conservation, the cubs were "rejected" by their mother, and the cubs will live at a wonderful sanctuary when too large to pet.

The truth is that by petting the cubs you are unknowingly participating in a business that results in a lifetime of misery for these animals and has a **negative** impact on conservation of these majestic animals in the wild. The story is multifaceted and unfortunately does not lend itself to a short elevator pitch. Below is a brief three point summary. To learn the full facts behind how the public is misled and these cubs are so exploited and mistreated, including explanatory videos, visit the URL at the bottom of this page.

HOW THE CUBS ARE TREATED

The cubs are ripped from their mothers at birth, physically punished to diminish their natural behaviors, and deprived of sleep. The cubs have very weak immune systems caused by bottle feeding instead of the having the benefit of the mother's milk and lack of sleep. They are used for petting before they can be vaccinated. There is no record keeping of how many die from disease.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM WHEN TOO BIG TO HANDLE

If they live long enough to get to be too big to pet, there is no tracking of whether they are then destroyed because they are no longer useful. If they are not killed, they typically end up living in tiny, barren cages for the rest of their lives. The females are often bred unnaturally soon after birth (in the wild they raise the cubs for 2-3 years before conceiving again). This unnatural repetitive breeding is believed to lead to breast cancer.

HOW CUB PETTING IMPACTS CONSERVATION IN THE WILD

Not only is there no conservation value to the breeding and no conservation education associated with cub petting, but it actually negatively impacts conservation in the wild in two ways. First, it sends entirely the wrong message by misleading people into believing that keeping inbred tigers of mixed subspecies is "conservation" so we do not have to worry about them going extinct in the wild. Second, the rampant breeding for petting and lack of tracking of tigers in the U.S. diminishes the credibility of the United States in the international community when we oppose the "tiger farming" in Asian countries that leads to more poaching of the tiger in the wild.

CONCLUSION

Tiger cubs are adorable and the desire to pet or take a photo with one is understandable unless you know the dark underside of this seemingly innocent activity. Contrary to the claims of the exhibitors, cub petting results in misery for the animals both as cubs and later as adults, and actually has a negative impact on conservation.

Please do not "pay to play" with tiger cubs and help us educate others not to support this abusive exploitation.

FOR THE FULL STORY PLEASE VISIT <https://bigcatrescue.org/cubs/>