



Prohibit the Private Ownership of Dangerous Wild Animals

Laws prohibiting the private ownership of dangerous wild animals—such as big cats, bears, primates, wolves, and dangerous reptiles—promote animal welfare and protect human safety. These animals can cause death, inflict serious injury, and spread deadly diseases. It is difficult, if not impossible, for individuals to meet the specialized needs of captive wild animals. With exotic wildlife readily available from dealers and over the Internet, localities and states that do not act will attract a growing problem.

The Humane Society of the United States is pursuing legislation at the state and federal level to limit the possession of dangerous wild animals to qualified facilities. In 2019, legislation has been, or is expected to be, introduced in Alabama, Kansas, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Texas as well as the federal Big Cat Public Safety Act.

Threat to animal welfare

Most individuals cannot provide appropriate and humane care for captive wild animals. When the animals grow too large and difficult to handle, they are typically confined to small cages, passed from owner to owner, abandoned, or simply turned loose – endangering the community and native wildlife. Experts, including the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, oppose the private possession of wild animals as pets.

Threat to public safety

Wild animals retain their basic instincts, even if they are born in captivity and raised by humans. Emergency personnel should not have to confront a rampaging chimpanzee, a stalking tiger, or a bear running amok. And communities and adjacent property owners should not have to wonder if a resident's dangerous and predatory exotic pets are securely contained and safely handled.

Threat to public health

Wild animals can carry diseases such as rabies, tuberculosis, Herpes B virus, and Salmonella. For example, macaque monkeys, who are commonly kept as pets, naturally carry the Herpes B virus. According to the Centers



injured. Tigers account for more than half of the deaths and injuries.

Although it is likely that most incidents go unreported, records show that scores of children are among the more than 350 people who have been injured by captive primates during dangerous incidents in 45 states since 1990. Children have been attacked and injured by pet primates while riding their bikes, playing outdoors, visiting local parks, walking their dogs, and shopping at malls and grocery stores. Traumatized youngsters have been bitten by macaques who tested positive for the deadly Herpes B virus, subjected to painful rabies-protection injections, sent to the hospital to be tested for a variety of frightening diseases, suffered bite

wounds that penetrated to the bone, and lost fingers. One woman died after contracting Herpes B from a macaque and others have suffered catastrophic injuries, such as the Connecticut woman who had to undergo a face transplant after she was mauled by a friend's pet chimpanzee.

Typically purchased as cute, cuddly cubs, bears quickly mature into a lethal combination of long claws, sharp teeth, powerful jaws, and unpredictable behavior. Six adults have been killed, and nearly 90 injured, by captive bears since 1990. At least 30 children, including four 4-year-old boys have been injured. One child's hand was nearly severed, and three others lost fingers. The bears are victims, too. More than two dozen bears have been killed as a result of escapes or attacks.



for Disease Control and Prevention, "[T]he consequences of symptomatic [Herpes B] infection may be severe," with a nearly 80% mortality rate in humans.

Drain on public resources

The private ownership of dangerous wild animals has reached epidemic proportions and, as a result, shelters, animal control and other law enforcement agencies expend countless hours and precious financial resources in their efforts to address the numerous tragedies that inevitably arise when bears, lions, tigers, primates, and other wild species are kept in private hands.

No impact on zoos, sanctuaries, circuses, or most current owners

Model legislation would exempt zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, sanctuaries accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, and research and educational facilities. Existing animals should be grandfathered so that people who currently have these animals can keep them, but breeding and new acquisitions of restricted species should be prohibited.

Many states ban dangerous wild animals as pets

Numerous states, including South Carolina, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and West Virginia have enacted legislation prohibiting certain wild animals as pets. With exotic and native wildlife readily available from animal dealers and over the Internet, states that do not act will attract a growing problem.

Stats

Since 1990, more than 377 dangerous incidents involving big cats have occurred in 46 states and the District of Columbia. Four children lost their lives and scores of others lost limbs or suffered other often traumatic injuries. Twenty adults have been killed and hundreds have been