

# Ubon Ratchathani Zoo

## **First visit: 9th March 2017**

The zoo is a large one and needs to be travelled in a vehicle. When our researchers arrived at the first enclosure, it was a pleasant surprise for the enclosure was one of the largest in the country - as a gestimate 800sqm probably larger. This housed two male tigers - brothers, Su Thep and Nom Yen. The enclosure was completely natural with tall trees, grass, rocks, bushes and more. There were also platforms, roped logs, pulley systems and a feeding pole. The entire area was ringed in a deep moat, which the tigers could swim in. The second enclosure with the white tiger was along similar lines though slightly smaller in size.

The tigers were very relaxed, disinterested in visitors and perfectly content to perform natural behaviours - swimming in the moat, patrolling their territory, scent marking or simply relaxing.

During the feeding show - a setup where pieces of meat were attached to various parts of the pulley system, the two males demonstrating their jumping and climbing abilities to impressive effect.

At the back of the enclosures could be seen the night rooms and a further tiger was spied walking back and forth in that area.

## **Second Visit: 18th April 2018**

There was no change in either of the enclosures with the enrichment programme operating in the same way. The tigers reacted the same to unthreatening human interaction and to each other - calm, relaxed and curious.

One of the tigers had been reported dead last year thanks to tainted meat. However, the fourth tiger could be seen in the back. When questioning the keeper it transpired this was the sister of the two brothers and she was given access to the enclosure as well, just

separately from them. The tigers were also locked in overnight as there were concerns of the enclosure being unsafe during the night if no one was watching.

Overall, this zoo has some of the highest welfare in the country.

### **Third Visit: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

The setup and welfare standards of this zoo remain the same and is the highest scoring facility in Thailand.

Tigers all appear happy and relaxed displaying a wide range of positive natural behaviours. There is a good level of enrichment provided to the tigers including feed poles, jumps, platforms and plenty of places to hide.

