

Tiger Kingdom Learning Centre

First Visit: 2nd November 2018

This initial visit, our representative took part in the Tiger Keeper for a Day, invited there by Tiger Kingdom staff. The programme runs as follows:

- Arrival and introduction including health and safety
- First zone for cage cleaning, checking faeces and administering medical care
- Kitchens for food prep of zone one
- Creation of all-natural enrichment toys
- Lunch
- Hide enrichment toys in enclosure
- Encourage play using tiger toys from outside
- Visit to eco-farm
- Feeding of tigers and end of programme

The general setup of this facility was along same lines as the other two Tiger Kingdom facilities. Each zone comprised of two lines of ten cages (twenty cages in each area) and four enclosures - five cages per enclosure. The cages were roughly 4x4m, concrete floored, with a water bowl containing clean water and wooden platform (varying in height between the cages). Only one tiger was held per cage.

Enclosures had brick floors through which the grass can grow in similar fashion to the other Tiger Kingdom facilities. This brickwork is unnecessary creating a more sterile look when the grass is short and prevents tigers from walking on substrate. However, there are sand pits in a number of enclosures to alleviate this and after a brief discussion regarding this matter, future designs will potentially be altered.

Each enclosure contained few trees (though these are wired to prevent the tigers accessing them; they were young trees), and a large clean pond. Some of the enclosures had wooden platforms built, which would be good to see throughout all the areas. Whilst

tigers were kept singly in cages, on their rotation out into the enclosures, some were let out in groups if they got on well allowing some social interaction. Whilst rotation is good, providing additional olfactory enrichment, the tigers still spent the majority of their time in the cages, which were bare (aside from the platform) and in need of more in-cage enrichment as well as a better substrate rather than the concrete flooring currently used.

Additionally there was nowhere for the tigers to hide completely from view from staff, visitors or con-specifics. Enclosures lacked shade with tigers having to return to their cage for a shaded or cool area.

The tigers had varied reactions towards people, for the most part appearing calm and relaxed. Some were a little more tense and aggressive, though this is to be expected when a large group of strangers arrives - bearing in mind these tigers are retired from tourist life and may not have been around people very much in recent years.

Overall, this facility was much improved when compared to its counterparts in Phuket and Chiang Mai. Further welfare improvements are needed in order to fully provide these tigers with a fulfilling and as natural as possible life.

