

Safari World, Bangkok

First Visit: 15th February 2017

There are three separate areas within Bangkok Safari World that relate to the tigers: Cub Zone, Safari Zone and Zoo Zone. Our researchers visited each section observing varying levels of welfare.

Cub Zone - This was found on the side of the main path to the zoo where the cubs were being kept in small trolley cages on wheels. There were signs everywhere announcing that visitors could do some bottle feeding with the cubs for an additional price. The cages were roughly 1x0.5m i.e. a transport cage. The sides were covered so that the only viewing point was through the front. Each cage held between 1 to 3 cubs roughly matching in age. Upon chatting with the staff it appears the cubs are out from 10am though it seems they have enough cubs to rotate other cubs into the programme later in the day. The cubs appeared to be very distressed, pacing back and forth (possibly hungry). However, staff did seem to care and would bring out cubs to feed them if no tourists were present. Some minor force was used with hands to smack the cubs but there were no sticks, chains or collars. Later the cubs were all moved to a new area that was louder, had more human traffic, was next to large speakers and a number of orangutans also being made to pose for photos - a highly unsuitable and stressful environment.

Zoo Zone - This was comprised of three separate enclosure areas. The first contained a single Amur tigress who was very friendly to unthreatening human interaction, moving to greet our researchers and chuffing whilst doing so. The second two enclosures housed white tigers, both of which were disinterested/sleeping. All of these enclosures had concrete floors, no enrichment and simple caves that did not provide a complete hiding place from the public. The white tiger enclosures contained small, rather dirty ponds and some natural vegetation. No enrichment was present in any of the enclosures. Night room entrances could be seen at the back, and in some, tigers could be seen pacing.

Safari Zone - this provided the best and most natural environment in terms of the general living however there were far too many tigers all kept in the area making this very unnatural in terms of living conditions. The area was large, easily covering a couple of acres and was full of trees, grass, earth substrate, large natural ponds and platforms. There were no enrichment items present but a feeding show did take place in the morning. This involved a truck with a cage driving through the park. Inside the cage was a girl who fed raw meat to the tigers climbing up the outside. Whilst possibly a form of enrichment, the tigers became highly aggressive in their attempts to get the food with numerous fights breaking out between them. Without food present, the tigers seemed relaxed, calm and alert in each other's presence and also in the presence of numerous vehicles. Some pacing was also noted as were a number of minor injuries including sores and lameness.

Second Visit: 4th April 2018

There was no change in any of the areas regarding their setup and enrichment programmes. Staff reported more tigers than the previous year but this was to be expected given the large number of cubs at their disposal.

One white tiger had a clear eye problem though our researchers were unable to determine the cause. Tigers behaved in much the same way as before. Four Amur cubs had also replaced the Amur tigress in that enclosure all of whom seemed agitated with one constantly pacing at the exit gate.

Generally, poor welfare all around.

Third Visit: 23rd April 2019

There was no change in any of the areas regarding their setup and enrichment programmes. There were still numerous young cubs when our researchers visited with staff once again listing over 100 tigers as residing there, though no specific number was given.

As in previous years there was no enrichment present. Water was dirty and tigers were seen pacing. The only area where positive behaviours were observed was in the large Safari Zone areas. General body condition was poor with tigers living in inappropriate social groupings – notably in the Safari Zone.

