

Thaithong Zoo

First visit: 7th April 2018

The area of the facility was very small and so were the cages. Each of the cages holding the tiger were made up of two parts - a section containing a concrete platform for the photographs and a smaller second area that were presumed to be the living quarters - this was sectioned off with bars and a door leading our researchers to believe that the tigers only had access to that area after hours, rather than the entire cage.

Each of these areas was around 10x5 metres in total, with a concrete floor and no enrichment, with the exception of a wooden platform in the living area. The larger orange tiger (possibly an Amur or some similar parentage), did have an extra 2x5m outside area that contained a bath at one end.

Each of the tigers appeared to be chained for the duration of the day - the chain was about a foot long. This seemed to be possibly some form of safety as each of the concrete cages were standalone, allowing tourists to walk right around. The cages only had bars, no mesh and did not have proper safety barriers in place. Therefore, if the tigers were free within the cage, an unsuspecting tourist could easily be grabbed.

None of the tigers had water within reach and had to wait for staff to bring the bowl to them, which staff did on occasion. Nearing the end of the day, raw chicken was brought out for their food.

Physical and mental health of the tigers was hard to determine given that none of them really moved and appeared asleep, disinterested or possibly lethargic throughout the visit - our researchers would guess lethargy due to lack of proper exercise, mental stimulation and general poor welfare.

Staff were matter-of-fact in the handling of all the animals, with none of the big cats showing any overt signs of fear or aggression. In fact the lioness showed a very positive attitude towards the handler and was the only one not chained. Staff carried short sticks and used

them to push the tigers into the desired position or redirect the head. No hitting of any kind was witnessed.

Second visit: 1st April 2019

There was no change in living conditions for the tigers. The same three tigers were chained in the same cages. They did not have access to water unless the staff were able to give it. Staff treatment was more aggressive on this occasion.

There is no enrichment, natural vegetation or large enclosure for these tigers. Body condition remains poor with tigers, when they stood, limping and with sores. These tigers are also declawed.

