

# Trakarn Tiger Zoo

## First Visit: 8th March 2017

Though the facility was technically closed, there were a lot of staff on the grounds keeping things clean and feeding the animals. Our researchers were granted access and allowed to wander freely around the grounds.

Each of the tigers had their own cage and a shared mini enclosure. The cages were roughly 4x4m and had the same look and style as the cages found in Tiger Kingdom. They had cement flooring and wooden platforms.

Though unconfirmed, many ex-volunteers of Tiger Kingdom Chiang Mai reported older tigers being removed to Ubon Zoo, presumably Trakarn Tiger Zoo so there is a distinct possibility these are affiliated. Interestingly, our researchers had already visited the newly opened Tiger Park @ Pattaya, which was also setup in a very similar manner to Tiger Kingdom and where one staff member had informed our researchers that the newborn cubs had come from Ubon Ratchathani.

The enclosures ranged in size with the smallest measuring roughly 6x12m. These each had grass and dirt substrate and a small pond though this was empty. Some had small trees and logs though there was no other enrichment present. Most of the enclosures only had one tiger out at a time in what appeared to be a rotational basis with the exception of a large enclosure at the front gate which had two tigers in it.

Tigers seemed well adjusted to one another, and were relaxed, playful, friendly and calm with each other and also with our researchers. For the most part the physical condition of the tigers was great though some tigers were leaning towards obesity. A couple had parts of their tail missing and some were pacing a little too excessively in an unbroken pattern.

Though the welfare levels were not as good as other zoos, they were certainly not the worst. It is unclear what their breeding practices were, if indeed young cubs were born and moved on and whether

any tigers participated in tourist interactions when the facility had been open. Regardless, it was good to see that even though the zoo was closed, the staff still put the tigers out in their enclosures.

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

Our researchers headed out to the facility but this time there was a large banner announcing the zoo's closed status and everything appeared abandoned.

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

The facility has now reopened. It is operating in the exact same manner as before. The same number of tigers appear to be residing here. They have rotational access to small enclosures that have grass, trees and ponds. The cages are about 4x4m and are concrete-floored and barren. There is no enrichment provided.

Most of the tigers show negative behaviours which include pacing. No signs of pain were observed, though there were some small injuries and old injuries evident.

It is believed that this facility is linked to the new Tiger Park franchise since spit from Tiger Kingdom.

