

Ayutthaya Elephant Village

First Visit: 25th March 2017

One large male tiger was chained to a cool platform in a cave-like room. He was very unresponsive even when staff poked him during the photo process. His fur was also unkempt and dirty, looking as though he did not clean himself--something that can indicate poor welfare.

Upon further exploration of the area, seven more tigers were found in a section of small concrete cages that were located behind the photograph room. These were covered up using a series of tarpaulin banners and plywood, preventing outside viewing. Through a series of holes and breaks in the coverings, the inside of the area was able to be seen.

Inside the cages, the floor was concrete and there was no additional furnishing, platform or enrichment. Water was provided, but the water bowls were covered in mould with green water. Tigers did respond to the researchers in various negative fashions or were completely disinterested. The outside of the cages was made of mesh, but this was broken and rusted.

There was no grass or natural vegetation. Numerous tigers were also seen contained together in these small areas.

Throughout the entire time, staff were unfriendly and aggressive. They did not want the researchers even seeing the living quarters of the tigers.

Second Visit: 13th April 2018

Once again, there was a large male tiger in the small room waiting for photos. This time it was a different, younger tiger who was a lot more active than the previous year's tiger. There were two tiger cubs, who were also brought out for photos and were about three months old. Staff stated that they were born here and that the mother was also here. One of the cubs appeared physically fine, but the other had severe conjunctivitis in its left eye. Staff appeared not to notice this issue or care and it was clear that it had been left untreated. The cub was still brought out for photos with no qualms and shaken and poked by the staff member while it wriggled and cried. Both cubs were pacing and crying when left alone and were stressed when taking part in the photos.

The remaining tigers appeared to be in the same area as before, as they could be heard. However, this caged area was now closed off with a large cinder block wall preventing any viewing. This has created a completely boxed area with little to no flow of air for the tigers residing within.

Once again, staff were very aggressive and did not want the researchers looking into the cage area.

Third Visit: 2019

There was no change in the living conditions of the tigers – concrete floors and no enrichment. However, the two young cubs from last year were nowhere to be seen. The adult male tiger on the platform appeared to be the same tiger as last year.

Similar to the year before, the tiger cages are now virtually unviewable. Staff were alert to anyone looking through into the cages. One tiger could be seen pacing.