

Lopburi Zoo

First visit: 25th February 2017

The zoo contained a number of different species, with enclosures varying in adequacy. The carnivores - tigers, lions, and bears - all seem to be the victims of the Victorian-style cage concept, with wrought iron bars and concrete floors.

A male and female tiger were kept separately in adjacent cages measuring around 8x8 metres each. At the back of each cage were two small night rooms measuring approximately 2x3 metres and containing a small platform. The tigers were locked out of these in the day. Our researchers hoped they were not locked in them overnight but rather given access to both areas. The big cages each contained a bath full of water and a cave area that the tiger could climb on or hide in.

The female paced for the duration of the visit and was not easy to distract. The male remained sleeping under his cave and showed no interest in a human presence or the tigress next door. There was no enrichment, natural vegetation or attempt to create a stimulating environment.

Second visit: 13th April 2018

There was no change noted in the standard of the cages - still a lack of enrichment, no natural vegetation and a non-stimulating environment. However, this time the tigers were able to interact with each other, as the door between their cages was open.

The tigress was still very prone to pacing but also would attempt to interact with the male. Staff had implemented a tiger feeding activity, which involved attaching a piece of meat to the end of the stick and pushing it high up between the bars. The tigress seemed interested in this activity and would stand up to grab these morsels, giving her a little mental and physical stimulation. The male remained lying in his cave, though he did briefly interact with the female when she came to visit, albeit somewhat unwillingly.

Overall, welfare standards remain low.

Third visit: 12th April 2019

Only one tiger, the male, is now present. He has access to both cages. However the standard of the cages was the same – barren, concrete floored, though it does contain a deep pond and a cave/platform. However, this year the male was prone to pacing, which he did a lot.

Welfare has arguably decreased simply because there is now no con-specific for him to interact with.

