

FOR TIGERS



ANNUAL REPORT 2020







FROM THE CHAIRWOMAN

2020 has been a remarkable year, and sadly for all the wrong reasons. Covid-19 has affected every corner of the world, and even Thailand's captive tigers haven't escaped it. As the Thai tourist industry came to a crashing halt this spring, many facilities housing tigers were forced to close to the public, resulting in decreased revenue. While it's hard to know the full effect of this yet, there is no doubt that it has affected facilities' ability to provide for their animals.

For *For Tigers*, the pandemic meant less opportunity to travel across Thailand to perform welfare assessments, but it also put a stopper in the wheels for some of our planned actions. As we are lucky enough to have a Bangkok-based trustee we were nevertheless able to perform welfare assessments at the facilities that re-opened after the first wave and used this opportunity to report to the public the effects of the Covid-pandemic on captive tiger welfare in Thailand. This is something we will continue researching in 2021, as the effects of the pandemic are still being felt within Thailand's tourist industry.

We were planning on using 2020 to continue our work within the DNP facilities in order to improve the welfare standards for the relocated Tiger Temple tigers, but due to Covid-restrictions, no construction work has been permitted within the facilities this year. Downsizing of crew has also meant that there were no longer staff available for letting tigers in and out of enclosures, and so even the enclosures we helped build in the past couple of years have stood empty. We move into 2021 with high hopes that these enclosures will come back into use, and that we can continue our collaboration with the DNP and provide the tigers with more enrichment, better enclosures and a higher level of welfare in general.

As a very digital year, most of our outreach this year has happened through the internet. We have attended several international conferences, watched our director Tanya Erzincioğlu present her novel work on Qualitative Behaviour Assessment in tigers as part of a workshop series organized by SEAZA, as well as organizing a fully online international Walk for Tigers.

Summing the year up, we can't say that we accomplish everything we hoped for this year, but within the extraordinary circumstances of 2020, we also can't be too unhappy with the progress we've made. We're very much looking forward to a new start in 2021, and we hope that it will bring less isolation, more positive interactions and a chance to learn from everything we have experienced this year.

Annie Vera Hunnestad, Chairwoman

FOR TIGERS' VISION AND MISSION

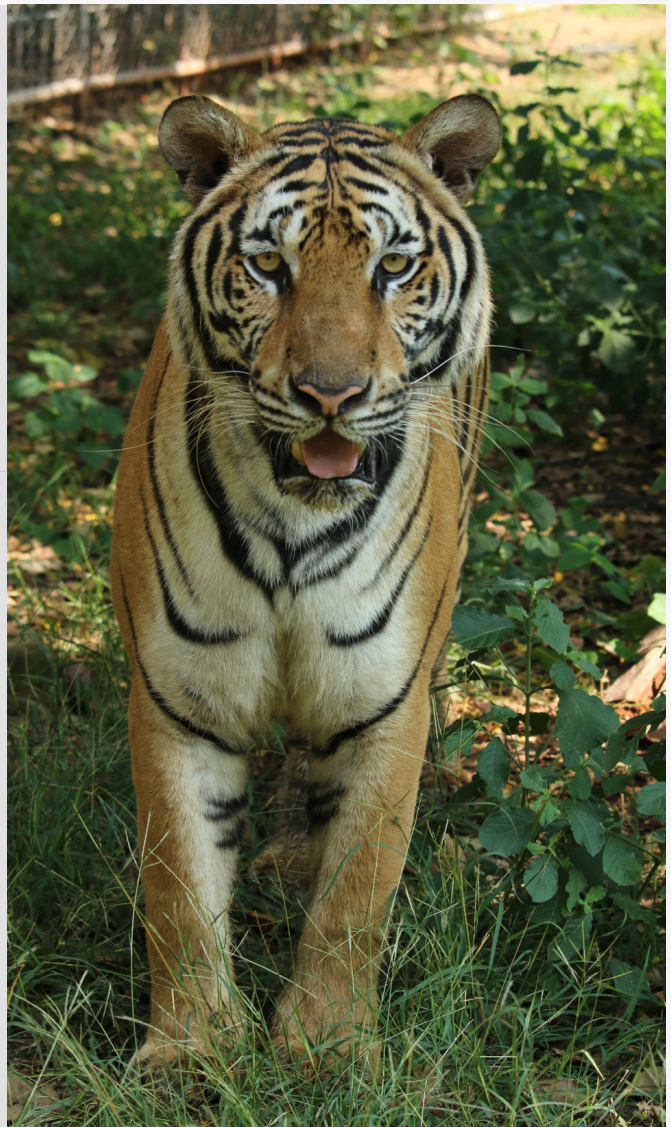
Though small, we are aiming high. Our vision is to see a Thailand where all captive tigers have a life worth living. In order to achieve this, we strive to collaborate, educate, inspire and secure a high standard of welfare for all captive tigers in Thailand.

There is a long journey ahead of us to achieve this vision but we are currently working alongside a growing number of like-minded organisations with the same vision in mind. In addition to this, we are building partnerships and collaborations with facilities and organisations within the South East Asian area in order to work alongside venues that have lower welfare standards. Through building relationships with these facilities, we aim to help them improve their tigers' welfare. As part of this, we do not advocate closure of sub-standard facilities, but rather encourage change and improvement.

We also challenge ourselves, constantly updating and improving our tiger welfare materials through the latest literature on tiger husbandry and welfare.

OUR AIMS

- To provide educational services and support in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals at facilities housing captive tigers in Thailand
- To work with locals toward better ethical treatment and approaches toward animals, wild and captive
- To educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among captive tigers
- To analyze and assess the welfare, care, treatment, and housing conditions of captive tigers in facilities across Thailand that are open to the public
- To engage the public to support positive changes for improving conditions of animals in captivity
- To create and distribute information on responsible wildlife tourism



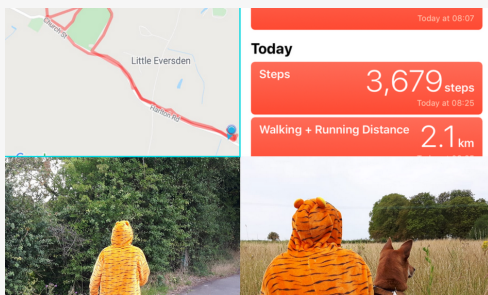
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020

This year For Tigers has continued to build on the work started in 2019 moving forward with creating educational material, researching facilities and encouraging new partnerships and providing direct aid.

- 28** Facilities visited and assessed
- 1** Collaborations
- 1** Captive tiger welfare resource published
- 4** Virtual conferences attended



Our third report - Scratch That!, takes a look at common myths perpetuated about captive tiger interactions.



The 28th SEAZA conference, EAZA Annual conference, Global Online Animal Training Summit and the 29th International Society for Anthrozoology Annual Conference were attended by For Tigers representatives in virtual form.

We continued to liaise with the DNP regarding any aid they might need. We began laying the groundwork for a new collaboration with an organisation within the South East Asian region with the intent to improve captive tiger welfare.



Our third Walk for Tigers event was a virtual event but this didn't slow us down. The event aimed to reach a collective 1000km walked and had participants from ten different countries.





Why is Animal Welfare Important?

Good welfare should address the needs of captive tigers; both their physical and mental requirements. However, this is often hard to achieve in a captive setting as improving welfare in some areas can actually reduce welfare in others. For example, creating a completely natural outdoor enclosure can result in a greater chance of injury, though it does afford the tiger the ability to perform natural behaviours – the welfare conundrum here is to balance risk versus benefit. This is where more recent welfare ideas focus on what the animal wants as well as what it needs..

It can also be hard to know what exactly constitutes adequate conditions for an animal. Failing to adequately provide for captive tigers can result in negative behaviour occurring. Stereotypical or abnormal repetitive behaviours such as pacing are the result of a poor environment that lacks stimulation. These behaviours are mechanisms that help the tiger cope with its environment. To reduce abnormal repetitive behaviours, a complex environment should include enrichment, a variety of levels, substrates, hiding places, feeding methods and appropriate interaction with members of the same species (conspecifics) and positive human-animal relationships.. This helps recreate as natural an environment as possible, thus better meeting the tiger's physical and mental needs.

- **A complex environment promotes a tiger's mental and physical stimulation**
- **Providing the right environment and stimuli help promote natural behaviours in captive tigers**
- **By providing for a tigers' needs, we can reduce the likelihood of abnormal behaviours occurring**

DIRECT AID IN 2020



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government facilities were closed. The facilities were also working with a skeleton crew in order to minimise exposure to the virus. While the enclosures from 2019 were completed at the start of the year, there were not enough staff on site to monitor the tigers going outside. Additionally, further improvements could not be made this year as external construction teams could not enter the facility grounds. Unfortunately, this has meant no new upgrades for this year.



RESEARCH & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN 2020

During this financial year, our staff attended the 28th South East Asian Zoo Association (SEAZA) in virtual form, the 29th International Society for Anthrozoology Annual Conference, the Global Online Animal Training Summit and the European Association for Zoos and Aquarium (EAZA) in order to gain a better understanding of welfare issues, discuss potential steps that could be taken and to network with like-minded organisations and NGOs.

We continued our work of assessing the tiger facilities in Thailand. Despite Covid-19, we visited and assessed 28 public facilities holding captive tigers, in order to follow on from our work in 2019.

We also investigated what were the most commonly asked questions from tourists with regards to captive tigers. We compiled a report addressing and answering these questions in an educational format.



PARTNERSHIP NETWORK IN 2020

As mentioned above, we continued to maintain our positive working relationship with the Department of National Parks (DNP) despite not being able to provide direct aid this year.



We continued to pursue the next step in working with other tiger venues within Thailand. This was continued on from our research compiled throughout 2018 when visiting all the tiger venues in the country, and determining which venues might be interested in a working partnership and to improve welfare.

At the end of 2019, during the SEAZA conference, we made connections with Singapore WRS. Specifically regarding a potential enrichment program and its creation. This collaboration was able to progress this year and work on this programme has begun via Zoom collaborations due to COVID-19 restrictions on travel.

PUBLIC AWARENESS (EDUCATION) IN 2020

For Tigers always strives to provide clear and objective information regarding tiger welfare at the facilities across Thailand. This is disseminated via regular newsletters, a website blog and the responsible use of various social media channels. Our latest report was distributed throughout these platforms.



In addition, we held our third fundraising event, which continues to be key in communicating many of the welfare issues prevalent across Thailand's tiger facilities. Unlike previous events, this took place virtually with participants joining from ten different countries around the world. The virtual event encouraged everyone to walk outside safely, as their respective countries permitted, to reach a collective total of 1000km covered. Through our online social media channels, we were able to provide education and insight into captive tiger welfare, even hosting a comedy Zoom event to further this cause and providing more information in a unique way.



Our director also presented her novel work on Qualitative Behaviour Assessment with regards to tiger welfare at the SEAZA conference. This work strives to offer a different way to assess captive tiger welfare utilising a method that keepers could easily implement. The work also investigated whether interaction with tourists in these captive settings was a welfare issue, though results were inconclusive.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2021?

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As we move into the new year, For Tigers will continue to pursue each of the outlined activities: Direct Aid, Research and Resource Development, Partnership Network and Public Awareness (education). We are hoping to be able to add training to our future activities as we continue to pursue potential partnerships in the coming year.

Below are some of the objectives we hope to achieve in 2021:

- Continue to improve and upgrade the Department of National Parks through additional enrichment and cage upgrades
- Identify facilities willing to accept support and aid
- Continue moving forward with the tiger venue and support their progress and transition
- Revisit all the facilities visited and assessed in 2020 updating our report on their welfare score
- Create educational and/or training material such as enrichment guides that can be delivered to staff working with tigers in Thai venues.
- Attend SEAZA 2021 and other conferences to continue networking and liaising with other organisations, both NGO and tiger venues
- Development of additional research opportunities with zoos and NGO partners
- Create further educational material to aid tourists in choosing welfare-friendly venues
- Translate all educational and training material into Thai (for venue staff), and various other languages including Mandarin, Russian, Hindi and French in order to reach, and educate, a wider range of tourist groups

THANK YOU!

For Tigers is very grateful to all its donors, for, without your support, none of this work would be possible!



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