

Tigers Don't Need Drugs!

Hi my name is Jenny, I am a 28 year old English backpacker visiting Chiang Mai and I love Tigers so much I have been coming here every day for the last two weeks! (its now 23rd June 2009).

I have learnt a lot and understand customers concerns as I had them myself. If I can I would really like to help Tiger Kingdom and all its other customers by looking at the worries that I had regarding the tigers and help others to see what I have come to learn from my time here.

I have seen how Tiger Kingdom has had to put up with a lot of negativeaty from people in the past. As an independant, whom has had the great privalidge of spending a good few full days here I have decided it is about time someone set the record straight. Below are FACTS about the tigers that may help you understand why they act the way they do in captivity and what the trainers here at tiger kingdom are doing to make everyones expeirences (tigers and customers alike) safe and happy.

I hope you can find it helpful.



Jenny
xx

"Are any of the tigers here drugged?"

The short answer to that is no, but some customers visiting the park simply don't believe it. They like me need facts to understand, but sometimes do not like to ask. Here I will attempt to give the facts and then you can be able to make up your mind based on a little more than just what you see.

FACT 1:

Nature has equipped tigers with day vision that is about the same strength as a human, but at night it is 6 times better than us and most of their prey! This makes hunting in low light easier, which is one of the reasons they choose to be more active at night.

FACT 2:

In the wild tigers may hunt at any time of the day to survive, but they prefer (like owls) to do it at dusk, dawn or nighttime.

If hunting is unsuccessful during the night, a hungry tiger will hunt during the day out of necessity. Mother tigers will also hunt during the day to provide enough food for their cubs.

Tigers in captivity have enough food to fill their belly's every single day with no need to hunt, giving them no hunger driven need to expend energy during the hottest parts of the day.

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FACT 3:

All 28 of the tigers at Tiger Kingdom were born and raised by staff under the breeding program right here in Chiang Mai.

These guys are like family to the trainers who have raised them here from birth. Every day from around 6am to 9pm the trainers are here, cleaning, feeding and playing with the tigers. They certainly love their tigers to dedicate so much time and hard work to them and in return the tigers who rely on them for so much treat them like their own respected parents.

FACT 4:

Tigers live up to 15 years in the wild but in captivity they can live up to 20! The reason for this is because of the care that is provided by the zoo or park. Regular food, protection against the elements, vaccinations, treatment against disease, habitat that they do not have to fight for (weather it be with humans or other tigers). In general most zoos and parks really want to keep their tigers fit healthy and alive!

Drugging is something done when the health of an animal comes second to the desires of its owner. The oldest tiger under the care of Tiger Kingdom is 20 years old, his name is Uwon and is one of the original tigers to live at Tiger Kingdom. He is well loved and living in Uborn zoo for his retirement. All the tigers here are loved and if you look closely at their coats, teeth and claws you can see that they are well looked after. In reality there really is no need nor want for the tigers to be drugged.

It would be bad for the park (and in turn for the tigers only source of income) and bad for the tigers health! Who would really want to do that to an animal whom they had raised from birth?

FACT 5:

Who wants to run around in the tropical heat of the day?

Put a fur coat on and have a walk around the park for a few hours. How do you feel? Now have your friends pat you and fuss over you for a good few hours, would you feel sleepy?

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FACT 6:

Tigers like to sleep 18 hours a day!

The thing here is that a naturally full and contented tiger does not want to expend energy, it much prefers to sleep. And who wouldn't? Its an easy life! The problem is that in order to feed, house, and take care of the tigers Tiger Kingdom relies on customers to come to the park and have a good experience. People want photos of active awake tigers and if they don't see what the want to see they go away and tell others how unsatisfied they were. For this reason the tigers are quite often woken up throughout the day during their sleep times (between 10am and 5pm) to please the customers who ultimately keep them alive.

After a while the tigers get used to having interrupted sleep. Just like we might get used to and ignore the sound of a ticking clock in our bedroom the tigers try to seep through the daily goings on around them. Reluctant to get up for yet another customer they seem dozy and unresponsive. Again we have a problem! People now think the tigers are drugged, go away and tell others they are drugged, leave horrible messages and reviews on the Internet and in turn stop the very people that keeps these tigers alive from coming in. Its a real problem and it really upsets the staff here, who believe it or not really love these animals.

These are just a few facts that may help to set your mind at ease, but you don't have to take my word for it. Do research based on facts rather than other peoples opinions, read up on tigers, spend more than just a few hours here in the park, turn up early in the morning (7am) or stay much later (8pm), be around for feeding and activity time. You can even volunteer, feeding, cleaning and observing tigers and trainers closely yourself!!

Its not hard to see how well these tigers live when you take a little more time to see. I put this pack together off my own back. I used to be a graphic designer and wanted to give Tiger Kingdom something back for all the nosing around they let me do. Tiger kingdom told me of future plans to organise a foundation for the building and running of a retirement facility for older tigers who no longer want to stay at Tiger Kingdom or Uborn Zoo. It would be a non profit sanctuary for the old and the injured and I very much hope that with a little help they can make this come true.

All my best wishes for a pleasant and better informed experience!

Jenny-Louise Wickett

28 years old from England

(You can find me on facebook)