



NC



ARK



North Carolina Association of Reptile Keepers

Dr. Jones, Director of NC Zoo, Continues to Lobby for Animal Rights

This is an article that just came out in the Charlotte Observer followed by my response:

CONTROL IS NEEDED, AND QUICKLY'

Owning tigers still legal in N.C.

Some counties have local bans, though state legislation has stalled

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JIM STRATAKOS / ROCK HILL HERALDA Siberian Tiger is one of big cats that will be featured at Tiger World.

Video: See the tigers at play

More than 40 states ban owning certain exotic animals -- such as the tigers making headlines lately -- or regulate their ownership.

North Carolina isn't one of them.

David Jones, director of the N.C. Zoo in Asheboro, said that means the state may become even more attractive to people who breed and sell tigers.

"Control is needed, and quickly, regarding the keeping of large cats," Jones said Monday.

Talk about banning the private ownership of tigers and some other exotic animals began gaining traction in North Carolina four years ago.

Tales of tigers continue to crop up. This week, a Rock Hill woman said she was turning a former zoo in Rowan County into "Tiger World." Three years ago, two tiger cubs were found wandering a highway in Gaston and Cleveland counties, stunning the region.

Although deaths related to tigers are rare nationwide, in December 2003, a 10-year-old boy in Wilkes County was mauled and killed by a relative's pet tiger. Most recently, a tiger at the San Francisco Zoo mauled a teenager to death.

The N.C. Zoo and the Carnivore Preservation Trust in Pittsboro, a nonprofit sanctuary for animals including tigers, support banning private ownership of the exotic animals.

But legislation to do that hasn't gotten far in the N.C. General Assembly, stalling in committee. Some in the state's agriculture industry and animal hobbyists, especially those who work with reptiles, oppose the ban, calling it too far-reaching.

Some counties, like Gaston and Cleveland, have local ordinances making the ownership of tigers illegal. Authorities there weren't able to find out who owned the two cubs found in 2005.

But luckily, Rajah and Kaela, believed to be brother and sister, are now flourishing, according to staff at the Carnivore Preservation Trust, where the animals share an enclosure.

Each less than 100 pounds at the time of their dumping and rescue, the pair now eat several whole chickens a day.

"(They) are just as cute and sweet as 300-pound cubs can be," said Kathryn Bertok, the trust's curator of animals. Both animals have been surgically fixed so they cannot reproduce, something the trust does for rescue animals with unknown breeding.

Still growing -- Kaela is expected to hit 400 pounds by the time she turns 5 years old, and Rajah more than 500 pounds -- the two spend their days in pens charming tour groups with their sibling-like antics, Bertok said.

"They're loving and grooming each other, and then they become crabby, competing for attention and shoving each other out of the way" Bertok said.

This is my response to the reporter:

Ms. Achenbaum,

Good morning and Happy New Year.

I just wanted to comment on your story this morning. With the tragic incident at the AZA accredited SF Zoo there has been a push by Animal Liberation advocates (also known as Animal Rights) to renew their efforts to ban animals in captivity using this tiger mauling as a flashpoint to gain interest from the media. Animal Liberationists seek to end all animal ownership and use, to include: livestock farming, biomedical research, hunting, animals in entertainment /education, exotics and even traditional pets like cats and dogs.

These efforts are being led by two radical elements of the Animal Liberation Movement; Born Free USA (formerly known as Animal Protection Institute-API) and PeTA. Both groups have abominable records here in NC. You may remember that PeTA was caught killing puppies and throwing them in a dumpster in Ahoskie, NC in 2005. Their rationale being that euthanasia is preferable to a life of "slavery" in human captivity. They were subsequently prosecuted for "littering". API seeks to enforce Animal Liberation doctrine through legislation and litigation. They introduced SB1032 a blanket ban on thousands of animals. This bill failed and was replaced with SB1032 Study Bill to determine whether any legislation was needed. This study was to be hosted by the NC Zoo. As documented in Senate Judiciary II Committee testimony, this study was a fiasco. David Jones and Lorraine Smith from the NC Zoo were complicit with API in stacking the study committee with members of 3 different Animal Liberation advocates while actively trying to limit access by responsible animal interests. Only with the interdiction of Senator Basnight's office was I made a voting member. Lorraine Smith made API a voting member as well as legal counsel and draftsman. She continuously steered the debate in favor of API. She and Dr. Jones both lied and suppressed facts in evidence presented during the study to support API's newly introduced bill SB1477. That's right, API introduced a new bill prior to the conclusion of the SB1032 Study Bill and then sought to have the pending Study Report support what they had planned even prior to SB1032 Study. What Dr. Jones and Lorraine Smith did was immoral, unethical and probably amounted to

illegally lobbying for API. Lorraine Smith subsequently was fired for her part in corrupting the SB1032 Study Report. When all of this came to light during Senate Committee testimony, API's SB1477 was killed in committee, although Senator Jones the sponsor and chair of that subcommittee used parliamentary procedure to "pocket" the bill for possible consideration in the short session of '08. API is now demanding that since the SB1032 Study was corrupted that this issue be studied again... I'm sure that irony is not lost on you. API is suspected to have been responsible either directly or indirectly for the release of the tiger cubs in NC simultaneously to the introduction of their first bill SB1032. They are also suspected in the release of dozens of baby alligators around NC in conjunction with the introduction of their newer bill SB1477. If you research the introduction of their bills around the country over the past 7 years you will see a similar pattern. Pair of Serval cubs in WA, pair of lion cubs in KS, alligators in IN and IA... the list goes on. Always around key turning points for their bills.

I would also take exception with Dr. Jones quote: >David Jones, director of the N.C. Zoo in Asheboro, said that means the state may become even more attractive to people who breed and sell tigers.<

That is simply not true. There is a federal law that prohibits exactly what he claims to be a threat to our state and public safety. It is called the 'Captive Wildlife Safety Act' signed in 2004 by George Bush. It prevents the interstate commerce and transportation of big cats and other animals except by USDA regulated facilities such as the NC Zoo. It was lobbied for heavily by API and touted as a solution to the problem of pet tigers. So it is already a felony to transport cats into the state for purpose of breeding and sale to individuals. Dr. Jones is engaging in scare tactics.

The only entity in NC that supported either of API's bills is NC Zoo. All other state agencies and responsible animal interests either oppose or remain neutral. The fact of the matter is no responsible animal interest in NC supports backyard tigers as pets. What the responsible interests do object to are Animal Liberationists using NC as a platform for their national agenda of ending all animal ownership and use, and turning our state into a circus in the process. It is particularly disheartening to see the NC Zoo giving entry to these radicals so they might become the only game in town. The current proposal would destroy all the private Zoos in NC leaving only NC Zoo. There is a proposal by USDA licensed facilities to end the practice of pet tigers by limiting ownership only to USDA licensed facilities... no more pet tigers period. But of course API wants all exotics. The NC Association of Reptile Keepers along with top academics and conservationists from around the state have a proposal to modify criminal statutes to mandate caging standards and safety protocols for some reptiles, failure to do so would result in the potential for felony prosecution. And if SF Zoo is any indication, once API gets the ban they want they go after the AZA institutions they exempted the first time around. API is calling for the end of all animals in captivity, AZA Zoos included. See this link where API attacks Jack Hanna who is director of the AZA Columbus Zoo on Good Morning America.

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=4055821&page=1>

I have documented evidence supporting all of my claims. If you would like to discuss the situation please call me.

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