

Information Sheet on Declawing and Tooth Removal

(Issued in August 2006)

Declawing or the removal of the canine teeth (fangs) in wild or exotic carnivores or nonhuman primates is no longer considered to be appropriate veterinary care unless prescribed by the attending veterinarian for treatment of individual medical problems of the paws or teeth. These procedures are no longer considered to be acceptable when performed solely for handling or husbandry purposes since they can cause considerable pain and discomfort to the animal and may result in chronic health problems. These procedures are no longer allowed under the Animal Welfare Act. This notice is consistent with the current position statement issued by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

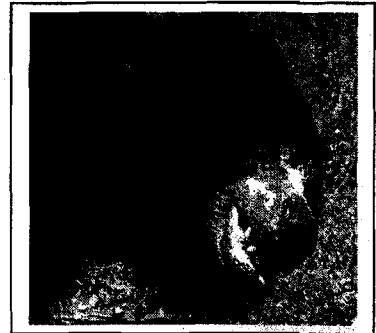


What animals does this apply to?

This applies to all regulated nonhuman primates and captive wild or exotic carnivores, including, but not limited to, big cats, canid species, and bears.

Who does this apply to?

This policy applies to all AWA licensees (breeders, dealers, and exhibitors) and registrants (research facilities).



What does this mean to the licensee or registrant?

All AWA licensees must no longer routinely perform these procedures (declawing and removal of canine teeth) on their wild or exotic carnivores and nonhuman primates. Continuing to routinely use these procedures may subject the licensee to citation for noncompliance with the AWA, and may result in enforcement action. Treatment of individual animals with documented medical problems as prescribed by the attending veterinarian is not subject to these restrictions. Registrants may use such procedures only as part of a research protocol that has been reviewed and approved by the IACUC at the institution.



What about animals have already been declawed or defanged?

Facilities with animals that have been subjected to these procedures prior to the issuance date of this notification will not be found in noncompliance with this provision since these procedures cannot be undone.

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[Animal Welfare Act \(text\)](#)

Animal Care Regulations:

- [Part 1 Definitions](#)
- [Part 2 Regulations](#)
- [Part 3 Standards](#)
- [Part 4 Rules of Practice](#)

[Animal Welfare Act Summary \(Text or Pdf\)](#)

2000 Report on the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia

- [report in pdf format](#)

Fact Sheets (one or two page summaries)

- Information Sheet on Declawing and Tooth Removal ([pdf](#))
- Questions and Answers on Authority ([text](#) or [pdf](#))
- A New Era in Animal Welfare ([text](#))
- The Animal Welfare Act Factsheet ([Text](#) or [Pdf](#))
- Compliance Inspections ([Text](#) or [Pdf](#))
- Dealers ([Text](#) or [Pdf](#))
- Animal Exhibitors ([Text](#) or [Pdf](#))
- Safeguarding Pets ([Text](#) or [Pdf](#))
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Animal Care Manuals / Policy

- Animal Care's Policy Manual ([Pdf](#))
- Dealer Inspection Manual ([Pdf](#))
- Research Manual ([Pdf](#))

Animal Care Reports

Annual Reports of Enforcement by Fiscal Year

- [2004](#)

APHIS Forms Now Available on the Web

- APHIS Form 7005:
[Record of Acquisition and Dogs and Cats on Hand](#)
- APHIS Form 7006:
[Record of Disposition of Dogs and Cats](#)
- APHIS Form 7006A:
[Continuation Sheet for Record of Disposition of Dogs and Cats](#)
- APHIS Form 7020:
[Record of Acquisition, Disposition or Transport of Animals \(Other than Dogs and Cats\)](#)

Traveling With Your Pet

- This information has its own page now. Please go to: www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/pettravel.html

Tech Notes

- Ensuring Adequate Veterinary Care ([Text](#)) or ([Pdf](#))
- Understanding Compliance Inspections([Pdf](#))

Appeal of an Inspection Report

- Letter to Licensees and Registrants concerning findings noted on inspection reports ([Text](#))

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

- IACUC one page checklist ([Pdf](#))
- IACUC survey ([Pdf](#))

Elephant Documents

- Guidelines for the Control of Tuberculosis in Elephants - 2003 ([pdf](#))
- Elephant Necropsy Protocol - 2003 ([pdf](#))
- Elephant Research and Tissue Request Protocol -

Subject: **Veterinary Care:** **Policy #3**
Expired Medical Materials
Pharmaceutical-Grade Compounds in Research
Surgery
Pre- and Post- Procedural Care
Program of Veterinary Care
Declawing and Defanging Practices in Wild or Exotic
Carnivores or Nonhuman Primates
Health Records
Euthanasia

References: AWA Section 2143
9 CFR, Part 2, Sections 2.31, 2.32, 2.33, 2.40; 9 CFR, Part 3, Section 3.110

History: Provides requested guidance. Replaces memoranda dated May 31, 1990, November 29, 1991, April 6, 1992, and September 25, 1992. Replaces policies dated April 14, 1997, January 14, 2000, and August 18, 2006, to update the section regarding declawing and defanging practices used in wild or exotic carnivores or nonhuman primates.

Justification: The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires that all regulated animals be provided adequate veterinary care.

Policy: **Expired Medical Materials**

The use of expired medical materials such as drugs, fluids, or sutures on regulated animals is not considered to be acceptable veterinary practice and does not constitute adequate veterinary care as required by the regulations promulgated under the Animal Welfare Act. All expired medical materials found in a licensed or registered facility are to be brought to the attention of the responsible official. The facility must either dispose of all such materials or segregate them in an appropriately labeled, physically separate location from non-expired medical materials. The Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has no jurisdiction over facilities using expired medical materials for non-regulated animals or non-regulated activities.

For acute terminal procedures, APHIS does not oppose the use of expired medical materials if their use does not adversely affect the animal's wellbeing or compromise the validity of the scientific study. Proper anesthesia, analgesia, and euthanasia are required for all such procedures. Drugs administered to relieve pain or distress and emergency drugs must not be used beyond their expiration date. Facilities allowing the use of expired medical materials in acute terminal procedures should have a policy

covering the use of such materials and/or require investigators to describe in their animal activity proposals the intended use of expired materials.

The attending veterinarian and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) are responsible for ensuring that proposed animal activities avoid or minimize discomfort, distress, and pain to the animal. These responsibilities cannot be met unless the veterinarian and the IACUC maintain control over the use of expired medical materials.

Pharmaceutical-Grade Compounds in Research

Investigators are expected to use pharmaceutical-grade medications whenever they are available, even in acute procedures. Non-pharmaceutical-grade chemical compounds should only be used in regulated animals after specific review and approval by the IACUC for reasons such as scientific necessity or non-availability of an acceptable veterinary or human pharmaceutical-grade product. Cost savings alone are not an adequate justification for using non-pharmaceutical-grade compounds in regulated animals.

Surgery

AWA regulations require that survival surgeries be performed using aseptic techniques and that major operative procedures on nonrodents be performed only in dedicated surgical facilities. Nonsurvival surgeries require neither aseptic techniques nor dedicated facilities if the subjects are not anesthetized long enough to show evidence of infection. Research facilities doing surgical demonstrations while traveling must use aseptic techniques and dedicated surgical facilities. Motel meeting rooms and auditoriums do not qualify as dedicated surgical facilities.

Nonsurvival surgeries not performed aseptically or in a dedicated facility must at least be performed in a clean area, free of clutter, and using acceptable veterinary sanitation practices analogous to those used in a standard examination/treatment room. Personnel present in the area must observe reasonable cleanliness practices for both themselves and the animals. Eating, drinking, or smoking are not acceptable in surgery areas, and locations used for food handling purposes do not qualify as acceptable areas for performing surgeries.

Pre- and Post-Procedural Care

All animal activity proposals involving surgery must provide specific details of pre- through post-procedural care and relief of pain and distress. The specific details must be approved by the attending veterinarian or his/her designee. However, the attending veterinarian retains the authority to change post-operative care as necessary to ensure the comfort of the animal. The

withholding of pain and/or distress relieving care must be scientifically justified in writing and approved by the IACUC. The appropriate use of drugs to relieve pain and/or distress must be specified in the animal activity proposal to avoid possible delays due to investigator concerns that a treatment regimen may interfere with the study. Furthermore, the specified drugs for relief of pain and/or distress must be readily available for use as described in the proposal.

While an animal is under post-surgical care, the ownership of the animal is not to change. If the animal is taken to an off-site location, such as a farm, for post-operative care, that location should be identified as a site of the research facility. An animal is not to be taken to an off-site location before it fully recovers from anesthesia unless justified in the animal activity proposal. Appropriate post-operative records must be maintained in accordance with professionally accepted veterinary procedures regardless of the location of the animal.

Program of Veterinary Care

Facilities which do not have a full-time attending veterinarian must have a written Program of Veterinary Care (PVC). This Program must consist of a properly completed APHIS Form 7002 or an equivalent format providing all of the information required by the APHIS form. The attending veterinarian must visit the facility on a regular basis, i.e., often enough to provide adequate oversight of the facility's care and use of animals but no less than annually. Records of visits by the attending veterinarian must be kept to include dates of the visits and comments or recommendations of the attending veterinarian or other veterinarians.

The PVC must be reviewed and updated whenever necessary (e.g., as a new species of animal or a new attending veterinarian is obtained, or the preventive medical program changes). It must be initialed and dated by both the attending veterinarian and the facility representative whenever it is changed or reviewed without change. The preventive medical program described in the PVC is expected to be in accordance with common good veterinary practices (e.g., appropriate vaccinations, diagnostic testing). It should include zoonotic disease prevention measures and, if necessary, special dietary prescriptions.

Declawing and Defanging Practices in Wild or Exotic Carnivores or Nonhuman Primates

Declawing of wild and exotic carnivores and the removal or reduction of canine teeth in nonhuman primates and wild and exotic carnivores have been used in the past in an attempt to minimize dangers presented to humans and other members of these species. These procedures are not innocuous and can

cause ongoing pain, discomfort, or other pathological conditions in the animals. In addition, they do not prevent predatory behaviors, safeguard the general public, nor prevent biting in nonhuman primates and carnivores.

The declawing of any wild or exotic carnivore does not constitute appropriate veterinary care. Any medical treatment of a paw should be limited to the affected digit(s) or area and would not require bilateral declawing.

The removal of the canine teeth of a nonhuman primate, unless for the immediate medical needs of the animal, does not constitute appropriate veterinary care.

We are adopting the position statements of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) on these practices because these positions reflect the generally accepted veterinary standards. Not everyone has access to the AVMA information, so we are including the position statements of the AVMA (2005 and 2007).

“Declawing Captive Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Cats

The AVMA opposes declawing captive exotic and other wild (indigenous) cats for nonmedical reasons.”

“Removal or Reduction of Canine Teeth in Captive Nonhuman Primates or Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Carnivores

The AVMA is opposed to removal of canine teeth in captive nonhuman primates or exotic and wild (indigenous) carnivores, except when required for medical treatment or scientific research approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Reduction of canine teeth may be necessary to address medical and approved scientific research needs, or animal or human safety concerns. If reductions expose the pulp cavity, endodontic procedures must be performed by a qualified person.

To minimize bite wounds, recommended alternatives to dental surgery include behavioral modification, environmental enrichment, and changes in group composition.”

Health Records

Health records are meant to convey necessary information to all people involved in an animal’s care. Every facility is expected to have a system of health records sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate the delivery of adequate health care. For those facilities that employ one or more full-time veterinarians, it is expected there will be an established health records system consistent with professional standards that meets and probably exceeds, the minimum requirements set forth in this policy. For facilities that do not

employ a full-time veterinarian, it is suggested the health records system be explained as part of the written PVC, to ensure involvement of the attending veterinarian in developing the system. For all facilities, health records must be current, legible, and include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Identity of the animal.
- Descriptions of any illness, injury, distress, and/or behavioral abnormalities and the resolution of any noted problem.
- Dates, details, and results (if appropriate) of all medically-related observations, examinations, tests, and other such procedures.
- Dates and other details of all treatments, including the name, dose, route, frequency, and duration of treatment with drugs or other medications. (A “check-off” system to record when treatment is given each day may be beneficial.)

Treatment plans should include a diagnosis and prognosis, when appropriate. They must also detail the type, frequency, and duration of any treatment and the criteria and/or schedule for re-evaluation(s) by the attending veterinarian. In addition, it must include the attending veterinarian’s recommendation concerning activity level or restrictions of the animal.

Examples of procedures which should be adequately documented in health records include, but are not limited to, vaccinations, fecal examinations, radiographs, surgeries, and necropsies. Routine husbandry and preventive medical procedures (e.g., vaccinations and dewormings) performed on a group of animals may be recorded on herd-health-type records. However, individual treatment of an animal must be on an entry specific to that animal. As long as all required information is readily available, records may be kept in any format convenient to the licensee/registrant (e.g., on cage cards for rodents).

Health records may be held by the licensee/registrant (including, but not limited to, the investigators at research facilities) or the attending veterinarian or divided between both (if appropriately cross-referenced), but it is the responsibility of the licensee/registrant to ensure that all components of the records are readily available and that the record as a whole meets the requirements listed above.

An animal’s health records must be held for at least 1 year after its disposition or death. (Note: Some records may need to be held longer to comply with other applicable laws or policies.) When an animal is transferred to another party or location, a copy of the animal’s health record must be transferred with the animal. The transferred record should contain the animal’s individual medical history, information on any chronic or ongoing health problems, and information on the most current preventive medical procedures (for example, the most recent vaccinations and dewormings). For traveling exhibitors,

information on any chronic or ongoing health problems and information on the most current preventive medical procedures must accompany any traveling animals, but the individual medical history records may be maintained at the home site.

Euthanasia

The method of euthanasia must be consistent with the current Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia. Gunshot is not an acceptable method of routine euthanasia for any animal. Gunshot as a routine method of euthanasia not only endangers surrounding animals, buildings, and personnel, but it is likely to cause distress to other animals. It should only be used in situations where other forms of acceptable euthanasia cannot be used (such as emergency or field conditions where the animal cannot be appropriately restrained) or in cases where gunshot will reduce danger to other animals or humans. Only personnel skilled in the use of firearms, using appropriate firearms, and familiar with the "kill point" of an animal should perform the euthanasia. If the firearm is not aimed so that the projectile enters the brain and causes rapid unconsciousness and subsequent death without evidence of pain or distress, this method does not meet the definition of euthanasia. (All State and local laws relevant to gunshot must also be met.)



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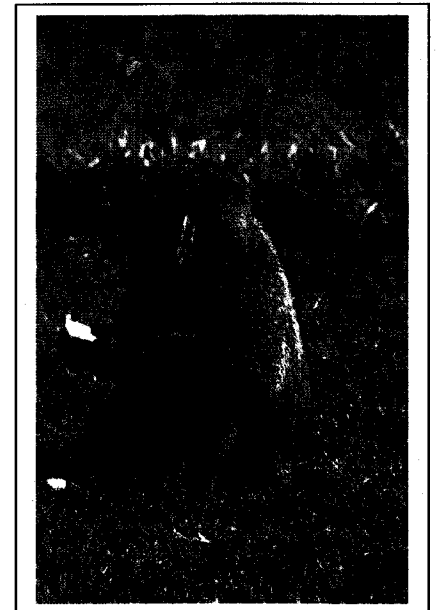
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What about animals have already been declawed or defanged?

Facilities with animals that have been subjected to these procedures prior to the issuance date of this notification will not be found in noncompliance with this provision since these procedures cannot be undone.

**Removal or Reduction of Canine Teeth in Captive Nonhuman
Primates or Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Carnivores**

(Approved by the AVMA Executive Board November 2003; revised April 2004, June 2007)

The AVMA is opposed to removal of canine teeth in captive nonhuman primates or exotic and wild (indigenous) carnivores, except when required for medical treatment or scientific research approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Reduction of canine teeth may be necessary to address medical and approved scientific research needs, or animal or human safety concerns. If reductions expose the pulp cavity, endodontic procedures must be performed by a qualified person.

To minimize bite wounds, recommended alternatives to dental surgery include behavioral modification, environmental enrichment, and changes in group composition.

Declawing Captive Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Cats

▲ [Top](#)

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Removal or Reduction of Canine Teeth in Captive Nonhuman Primates or Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Carnivores

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The AVMA is opposed to removal or reduction of canine teeth in captive nonhuman primates or exotic and wild (indigenous) carnivores, except when required for medical treatment or scientific research approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Reduction that does not expose the pulp cavity may be acceptable. Reduction that exposes the pulp cavity, without pulotomy or root canal, or removal of these teeth may result in oral pathologic conditions and pain.

To minimize bite wounds, recommended alternatives to dental surgery include behavioral modification, environmental enrichment, and changes in group composition

*From AVMA web site
~ 2006*

*AVMA policy
statements.*

(www.avma.org)

DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF ONYCHECTOMY (DECLAWING) IN EXOTIC FELIDS AND A REPARATIVE SURGICAL TECHNIQUE: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

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Abstract

Onychectomy, or declawing, is a controversial and morbid procedure when used in the management of exotic felids. There are three basic techniques, all of which lead to significant gait disturbances and boney deformities. Although each method of onychectomy has a purported rationale, every declawed animal we have encountered manifests some degree of dysfunction, such as abnormal standing conformation and the slow and painful placement of paws during ambulation. Fourteen declawed exotic felids with morbid sequelae of onychectomy have been treated with a reparative surgical technique. Over 90 percent of these animals have exhibited markedly improved gait and stance.

Introduction

Onychectomy is a popular technique used in the management of exotic felids. Three basic methods have been described. In the first (method one), the entire third phalanx of each digit is removed.² In the second (method two), most of the third phalanx is amputated, leaving the deep digital flexor tendon attached to the remaining flexor tubercle.³ The third (method three) is described as leaving the flexor and extensor tendons attached to the third phalanx, while removing the horn-forming tissue on the unguis crest.^{1,2} Each of the methods has reported advantages, but none is free of adverse sequelae.

While proponents of method one accurately claim that complete removal of the third phalanx (p3) minimizes potential of subsequent infection and trauma caused by the retained bone fragment,² the disruption of flexor and extensor tendons, as well as the abnormal position of the second phalanx (p2), cause digital pad pathology and loss of function, namely flexion and extension of the paw.

Method two supporters argue that the deep digital flexor tendon should be preserved.³ While this allows for some flexion of the paw, without the counter action of the extensor tendon, the flexor pulls the fragment of p3 proximally under p2. This causes digital pad pathology as well as discomfort for the animal as it attempts to walk on the remaining bone,² which acts like a "pebble in the shoe."

Advocates of method three correctly state that paw integrity will be maintained with flexor and extensor tendon preservation. Because of the nature of the feline claw,¹ however, it is impossible to remove all of the horn-secreting tissue without removing the majority of p3.² Subsequent nail

regrowth and abscess formation can be expected.

The Wildlife Waystation is home to more than 130 big cats. Onychectomy is not performed at our facility, but many animals have been declawed prior to their arrival. Every one of these cats has suffered to some degree from the crippling effects of declaw surgery. These effects have been ameliorated by the new reconstructive surgery described in this paper. To date, we have repaired thirty-four paws with significant improvement in function and apparent reduction in pain.

Anatomic Review

Normal anatomy of the claw is provided in Figs. 1 and 2.

Methods

Eight cougars, three tigers, two leopards, and one lion have had either their front feet, or both their front and back feet repaired. Preoperative measurements of pad size and subjective ratings of paw pad suppleness and integrity were made. Radiographs, and in some cases, magnetic resonance images, were used to assess the status of p2 and p3 and the presence of pathology, including soft tissue infection, osteomyelitis, bone degeneration and arthritis. In the front paws of two cougars, p3 had been completely amputated in the initial declaw surgery. In the front paws of the remaining six cougars, p3 had been only partially amputated. In two animals there was significant nail regrowth with subsequent abscess formation. All three tigers had only partial amputations of p3, with one animal having significant nail regrowth and abscess formation. Both leopards had only partial amputations of p3, one with abscess formation. The lion had partial amputation of p3 with subsequent abscess formation due to nail regrowth.

Digital video recordings have been taken of the animals walking before and after the surgery. The video is used to monitor changes in the animals' ability to walk, jump and climb.

In preparation for surgical repair of the declawed feet, paws are clipped to the carpus, including the area of the former nail. Chlorhexidine solution is then sprayed on the paw before the Esmarch bandage tourniquet is wrapped from the distal paw towards the antebrachium in a binding manner to milk blood from the paw. Care must be taken to apply pressure over a broad area to avoid nerve damage. The tourniquet is then released from the distal end toward the proximal to expose the paw. After a complete surgical scrub, an incision approximately 3 cm in length is made from the dorsal aspect of the paw to the palmar aspect at the site of the former nail. The pad must be avoided. In the case where part of p3 remains, the partially amputated bone is exposed via blunt dissection, any purulent material is debrided and the fragment is then grabbed with A-O reduction forceps to mobilize and exteriorize the deep digital flexor tendon. A cruciate suture (0 PDS) is placed in the remaining digital flexor tendon and attached dorsally into the extensor tendon, or if the latter cannot be identified, into the remaining tissue in the extensor groove of the second phalanx. Before the suture is secured, the cartilage that remains on the distal end of p2 is removed by rongeur. The suture is then tightened to reposition the pad nearer to its proper anatomic position relative to p2. The incision is closed with tissue glue. Pressure wrap bandages are placed over the paws with tabs for

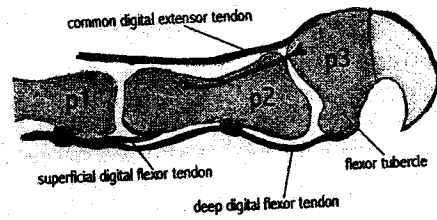


Figure 1. Normal anatomy, claw.

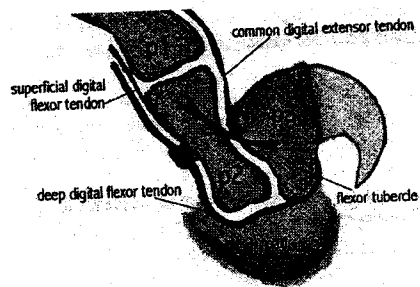
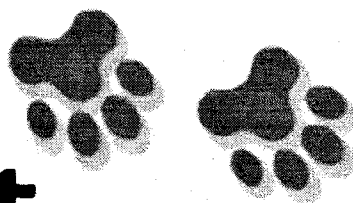


Figure 2. Normal anatomy, claw.

PAW PROJECT

A 501(c)(3)
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organization

The Paw Project



Number 4

Winter 2006

ABOUT DECLAWING

Declawing, also called onychectomy, is an amputation of the toe at the last joint. This removes the bone from which the nail grows. Declawing may result in permanent lameness, chronic pain, infection, and arthritis. It is illegal in many countries.

Since 2000, Paw Project vets have performed reparative surgeries on lions, servals, tigers, cougars, bobcats, lynxes, leopards, and jaguars—all victims of declaw surgery. Their claws cannot be restored, but tendons can be reattached, giving the cats much relief from their long suffering and allowing them to leap, run, and play more as nature intended.

In this issue:

- Paw Repair Surgery 1
Continues
- Animal General 2
Hospital
- West Hollywood 2
vs. CVMA
- Helping Katrina 3
Victims
- Debunking Declaw 4
Myth
- Rome Bans 4
Declawing
- Canadian Vets 4
Oppose Declawing
- Links to Anti- 4
Declaw Websites

Twenty Paws Repaired in 2005

2005 was the year that declawing of exotic and native wild cats became illegal in California. The nation's first and only statewide declaw ban was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September 2004 and became law on January 1, 2005. The bill was sponsored by the Paw Project and introduced by Assemblyman Paul Koretz.

"I am pleased that California's big cats are now protected. Maybe we will have a chance to catch up on repairing paws in this state," says Paw Project founder, Jennifer Conrad, DVM.

"Declawing only takes about 20 minutes; however, it takes about five hours to surgically repair the toes on just two paws. The sad truth is that many of the animals the Paw Project treats have had all four paws declawed."

In 2005, the Paw Project team performed 20 paw repair surgeries on declawed big cats, including bobcats, a lynx, and several tigers.

Even though declawing these cats is now illegal in California, there are still hundreds of animals that can benefit from surgery.

Frederick, a eleven-year-old male tiger, belonged to a Hollywood animal trainer and appeared in movies before he became lame. After the trainer saw the deformities caused by declawing and watched the surgery to repair Frederick's front paws, he has vowed never again to declaw any of his cats. The story of Frederick was featured in the PBS program, California Connected (for the link to the online video, see Hot Links at the bottom of page 4).

The Paw Project's donors have made it possible for other crippled



Copyright 2005 - Snowden Bishop

Paw Project director, Dr. Jennifer Conrad (above), prepares her 500 lb. patient for paw repair surgery at Animal Specialty Group Veterinary Hospital in Los Angeles. Below, Shasa, a Canadian lynx, prior to rear paw repair surgery.



Copyright 2005 - Snowden Bishop

animals to have repair surgery.

Shasa, a female Siberian lynx, was rescued from a fur farm and had her front and back feet declawed before coming to live at Forever Wild, a southern California sanctuary. Shasa had all four of her feet repaired in two separate

surgeries in 2005.

"We are thankful for The Paw Project," says Joel Almquist, director of Forever Wild. "After surgery, our animals have much less pain and are more active. We're sure they will have happier and longer lives."

Paw Project Teams with Animal General Hospital



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The Paw Project (TPP) has a sister program, Animal General Hospital (AGH). AGH's purpose is to provide veterinary medical care and supplies to animals in need.

Although the two programs are run by the same nonprofit parent organization, they operate independently for the most part. But sometimes they find common ground.

Recently, an Animal General Hospital donor made a contribution for the purchase of large water tanks to provide recreation for captive tigers and to help them cool down during hot weather.

AGH bought more than 50 six-foot diameter galvanized metal tanks for some of the feline residents of Forever Wild, P.A.W.S. Ark 2000, and Shambala, three California sanctuaries. Many of the cats were Paw Project paw repair patients.

Volunteer Brandy Ferdig delivered the tanks to Forever Wild. "It was great," she said, "The

tigers couldn't even wait for the tanks to be filled. They just hopped in and started splashing and playing."

In October, TPP/AGH was called to help another, more unusual, type of declawed animal — an iguana.

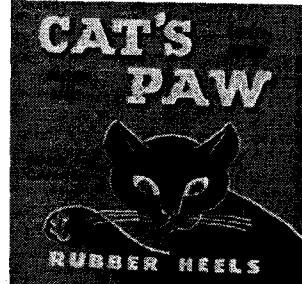
Carmen had been relinquished by her owner to a West Los Angeles shelter and was scheduled to be euthanized. TPP/AGH bailed her out with the help of Mary Cummins of Animal Advocates.

"This is another cruel example of an unfortunate animal, who depends on its claws, being thoughtlessly deprived of them," says Dr. Conrad. "It is so wrong. Claws are absolutely essential to iguanas. They're climbing animals. I can't imagine what vets are thinking when they do this."

Says Cummins, "She's a good iguana, but because she is declawed, she can't climb at all. I'm going to build her a low ramp to her basking shelf. She is truly disabled. I hope we can find her a 'special needs' home."

Above left: Blue, a former paw repair patient, chills in his new water tank. Below left: Carmen, a declawed iguana, has difficulty climbing even the most gently inclined branches. Inset photo shows her declawed foot.

"Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
— Margaret Mead



Urge WeHo to Fight for Declaw Ban

In 2003, West Hollywood, CA (WeHo) passed the nation's first local ban on declawing. The California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) wants to overturn the law. On November 30, the city lost a motion for summary judgment. The final decision may be decided in the court of appeals if WeHo pursues the case. The CVMA, a trade association for veterinarians, contends that the Paw Project-sponsored law is a restriction of veterinary practice and that only the state government, not local governments, may enact such laws. West Hollywood's law bans anyone, including veterinarians, from declawing any animal for

non-medical reasons. West Hollywood believes that declawing is a form of animal cruelty and maintains that the city has the right and the responsibility to prohibit cruel practices. The CVMA wants to protect its members' ability to declaw cats despite the fact that their colleagues in many other nations consider declawing a violation of professional ethics. Declawing is illegal or considered unethical in most of the world outside the US. For example, in the United Kingdom, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons officially regards declawing as "mutilation" and as an "unacceptable practice." But do US vets sacrifice ethics for financial gain?

Vets who declaw four cats a week at \$350 per procedure can add over \$72,000 to their yearly incomes. The CVMA suit threatens the right of a community to determine what type of activities are acceptable within its jurisdiction. The precedents set by this suit may have serious far-reaching effects for other animal welfare issues. If you wish to let the CVMA know how you feel about their efforts to prevent the banning of cruel practices, please write them. The e-mail address for CVMA President, Eric Weigand is info@clmntvet.com, and for Executive Director, Valerie Fenstermaker, the address is vfenstermaker@cvma.net.

Animal General Hospital Aids Katrina Animals

Volunteers from Animal General Hospital spent much of September and part of October in New Orleans rescuing animals after the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina. Among the dozens of animals pulled from wrecked homes and off the streets were dogs, cats, birds and fish left behind when their human families evacuated.

In the days after the hurricane struck, Animal General Hospital, along with many other animal rescue organizations, went to New Orleans to rescue animals that had been left with no access to food or water.

One day, while Animal General Hospital volunteer Sherman Baylin was attempting to coax a scrawny dog, later named Boudin, into the AGH van, others volunteers were searching St. Anthony Street for a tuxedo cat they had seen earlier. Calling for the kitty, AGH volunteers Brandy Ferdig and Gina Hanson heard an unexpected reply. A small bark, the cry of a dying dog, caught their ears. They rushed through the unlocked doorway of a house that had been evacuated 18 days earlier. There, lying on the floor of the storm-ravaged kitchen was a tiny Papillon. The dog was so weak that he couldn't lift his head, much less walk. Animal General Hospital veterinarian Dr. Jennifer Conrad tended to the helpless animal, administering IV fluids and providing medical care as the pup recuperated in a motel room. The next twelve sleepless hours were spent checking on the little Papillon and attending to his every need. Because of his long, flowing coat, the volunteers called their miniature patient Professor Longhair, after the famous New Orleans musician. By the twenty-four hour mark, the Professor was able to stand and walk a few steps. He was on the road to recovery.

Animal General Hospital volunteers were able to locate the Professor's family by his rabies tag — and then his remarkable story unfolded.

When New Orleans flooded, the dog's caretakers, Phillip and Rick, were forced to leave their home. Due to Rick's frail health, a MedEvac helicopter was called for. The two men discarded their luggage so they could take their four dogs on the chopper. At the last moment, the carrier containing the Professor broke, and the tiny dog darted back into the empty house. Rick started after him, but was held back by the crewmen. Gunfire in the area prompted the pilot to leave immediately. Rick and Phillip thought they would return in a day or two to pick up their little pup. That hope quickly evaporated after just a few minutes in the air. Rick suffered a heart attack and was airlifted to Miami for emergency care.

The story ends happily. Rick has recovered, and the family was reunited on October 8, when Alfie (the Professor's real name) was flown to Miami. The entire family has since returned to New Orleans.

Denny Update — Denny, a crippled, declawed lion who lives at the Performing Animal Welfare Society sanctuary in Galt, CA has not yet had paw repair surgery. Denny's plight was reported in the last Paw Project newsletter.

Radiographs taken of Denny's feet and legs show other deformities of the bone. While doctors at UC Davis decide how to treat Denny, the repair surgery planned by the Paw Project has been postponed. If you have questions, please contact us.



Top: Boudin and a very weak Alfie (lying) in van after being picked up
Middle: Alfie recovering in motel room two days after rescue
Bottom: AGH fed this and hundreds of other starving and abandoned cats

PAW PROJECT

A 501(c)(3)
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organization

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The Paw Project/
Animal General Hospital
is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
animal welfare organization.

EIN: 59-3782436
CA Corp ID: 2604032

The Paw Project's mission is to promote the humane and ethical treatment of animals, to educate the public about the painful and crippling effects of declawing, to end the practice of declaw surgery, and to rehabilitate big cats that have been declawed.

Tax-deductible contributions to the Paw Project are used to pay for surgical facilities and supplies, educational programs, and anti-declawing efforts.

www.lalacards.com



Declawing: It Doesn't Save Lives

Supporters of declawing incorrectly use the argument that declawing saves lives. They maintain that cats who scratch furniture may end up in shelters where, in all likelihood, they will be euthanized.

However, this claim ignores several important and well-documented points.

There is evidence that declawed cats are more likely to be abandoned to shelters and that cats have a greater chance of being relinquished because of behavioral problems caused by declawing, specifically biting

and litter box avoidance.

In a 1996 Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) article, Dr. Gary Patronek, using multivariate statistical analysis, found that declawed cats had an increased risk of relinquishment and that among relinquished cats, 52.4% of declawed cats were reported to exhibit litter box avoidance, compared to 29.1% of non-declawed cats.

Recent articles have linked declawing with a chronic pain syndrome that results in aggressive behavior. Painful paws may

also cause a cat to avoid rough litter...and the litter box.

Biting and litter box avoidance are less tolerated by pet owners than scratching, increasing the chance that declawed cats will end up in shelters.

The National Council on Pet Population Study & Policy has reported house soiling (38%), followed by aggression (19%), as the most common behavioral reasons for pet relinquishment. A 2002 JAVMA article by Dr. Janet Scarlett, showed that only 3.3% of cats are relinquished for unwanted scratching.

When in Rome, Don't Declaw

In October, the city council of Rome, Italy, passed an ordinance outlawing the declawing of cats. The new law also requires regular dog-walking and bans the use of electric-shock collars. Offenders face fines of between \$75 and \$750.

Rome joins the growing number of places where declawing is not performed. Earlier this year, Austria passed a federal

Animal Protection Act, which also bans declawing.

Monica Cirinna, the Rome city councilor responsible for the animal welfare law said, "The civilization of a city can be measured by the way it looks after its animals. It is good to do whatever we can for our pets who fill our existence with their attention in exchange for a little love."



Roman cats are protected from declawing and other forms of cruelty by the city's new animal welfare law.

Canadian Vets Oppose Declawing Big Cats

Paw Project veterinarians, Jennifer Conrad and Kirk Wendelburg were instrumental in persuading the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association to adopt a new position statement that "opposes the surgical removal of claws of non-domestic felids (cats) kept in captivity."

The Canadian Animal Welfare Committee developed the position citing the findings of the

scientific paper, authored by Conrad and Wendelburg, entitled "Deleterious Effects of Onychectomy (Declawing) in Exotic Felids."

The Canadian VMA position statement finds, "Declawing of these animals can be a painful procedure, involving a lengthy healing period. Postoperative complications, including infection, hemorrhage, bone spurs, and

claw regrowth, may occur. Corrective surgery may be necessary, and declawing may result in lifelong discomfort for the animal."

"It's a real honor," says Wendelburg, "to have our research accepted by our professional colleagues." Conrad concurs, adding, "We hope this will be another step toward the end of declawing."

Hot Links



*Paw Project hot links are 100% soy protein

- Paw Project: www.pawproject.org or www.pawproject.com
- Animal General Hospital: www.animalgeneralhospital.org
- Canadian VMA on big cat declawing: www.canadianveterinarians.net/ShowText.aspx?resourceID=44
- RCVS position on declawing: www.rcvs.org.uk/Templates/PreviousNext.asp?NodeID=89772
- Animal Advocates: www.animaladvocates.us/education.htm
- Forever Wild Animal Sanctuary: www.foreverwildexotics.com
- California Connected: www.californiaconnected.org/wp/archives/275
- Performing Animal Welfare Society: www.pawsweb.org
- Best Friends Declaw Discussion: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/NMHP/message/1910

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING



Ebony's Story ([larger view](#))

This radiograph of the left paw of a 14-year-old leopard shows clearly the "pebble in the shoe" effect that often results from declaw surgery. Instead of just the natural soft paw pad cushioning the tips of the fingers, a portion of bone sits uncomfortably under another bone, causing Ebony tremendous pain when she tried to walk.

Declawed as a cub, by the time Ebony was 8 years old she had given up walking. She spent her days laying in one place, irritable and snarling at anyone who approached. Last year, Ebony had all four feet repaired by the Paw Project veterinarians. Her personality improved remarkably. She now enjoys walking all over the compound and has a very friendly disposition.

[NEXT »](#)

FAQs ...

- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)

[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)

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[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

[« PREVIOUS](#)
 [NEXT »](#)



Bobby's Story ([larger view](#))

This bobcat was declawed by complete amputation (disarticulation) of the last bone in the finger, the third phalanx. By the time he was 5 years old, he stopped walking and was very reluctant even to stand on his front feet.

When Paw Project veterinarians examined him, the infection and bone popped right out of the skin. Now that his feet are repaired, this bobcat is very active and playful.

FAQs ...

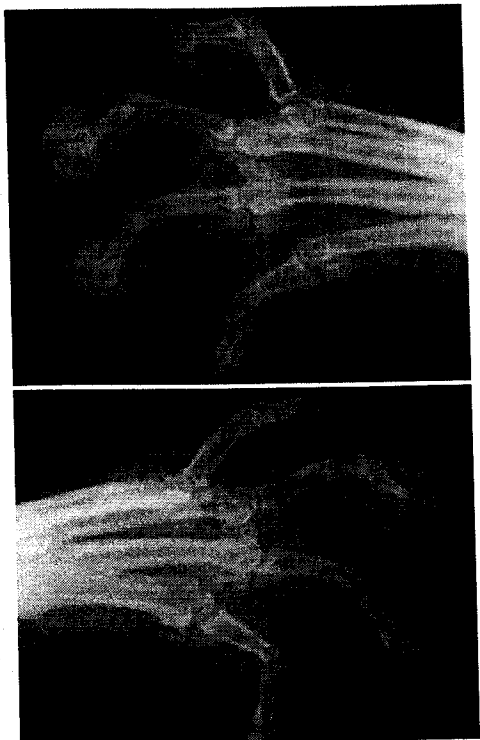
- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

« PREVIOUS NEXT »



Charlie's Story ([larger view](#))

This 17-year-old cougar was declawed as a cub by a complete amputation of the third phalanx. Although there is no portion of the bone remains to allow nail regrowth, this method of declawing caused the second phalanx (middle bone of the three finger bones) to poke through the skin.

These radiographs reveal apparent evidence of infection on almost every toe, which was caused by gravel becoming deeply imbedded in the bone due to chronic exposure to dirt.

FAQS ...

- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)

[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)

[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)

[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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[HOME](#) [FAQs](#) [ABOUT US](#) [YOU CAN HELP](#) [GALLERY](#) [NEWS CENTER](#) [RESOURCES](#)

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

[« PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT »](#)



Calador's Story ([larger view](#))

This is a radiograph of a 15-year-old jaguar's paw. Calador was declawed as a cub and suffered complications from the surgery. Although the bone fragment left behind from the incomplete amputation was not lodged beneath the bone, the nail regrew immediately under the skin, producing an abscess that debilitated Calador for most of his life.

Paw Project veterinarians removed the abscess, and now Calador is walking with much less pain; however, as he

could not walk normally, on his toes, for so many years, he developed arthritis in the wrists.

FAQs ...

- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)
[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)
[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)
[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)
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CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

<< PREVIOUS NEXT >>



Radiograph of a cat's front paws (larger view)

This radiograph of a cat's front paws reveals why the animal experienced progressively worsening lameness declawing. The lower paw shows portions of the severed third phalanx displaced under the pad in several toes. This condition produces a painful "pebble-in-the-shoe" effect when the cat walks.

- FAQs ...
- **FAQS - GENERAL INFO**
- **CASE STUDIES**

INDEX

- Ebony, a leopard
- Bobby, a bobcat
- Charlie, a cougar
- Calador, a jaguar
- Radiograph of a cat's paws
- Radiograph detail, cat's front paws
- Abnormal nail regrowth
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the procedure

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

« PREVIOUS NEXT »



Radiograph, detail, cat's front paws
(larger view)

This detail of the radiograph shown in the previous slide shows clearly the displaced remnants of the third phalanx that remain embedded under the cat's tender paw pads as a result of declawing surgery.

FAQs ...

- **FAQS - GENERAL INFO**
- **CASE STUDIES**

INDEX

- Ebony, a leopard
- Bobby, a bobcat
- Charlie, a cougar
- Calador, a jaguar
- Radiograph of a cat's paws
- Radiograph detail, cat's front paws
- Abnormal nail regrowth
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the procedure

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)

[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)

[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)

[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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[HOME](#) [FAQs](#) [ABOUT US](#) [YOU CAN HELP](#) [GALLERY](#) [NEWS CENTER](#) [RESOURCES](#)

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

[« PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT »](#)



Abnormal nail regrowth, a case study ([larger view](#))

The declaw procedure left portions of the nail-forming tissue, resulting in the grossly abnormal claw shown in this picture.

FAQs ...

- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)

[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)

[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)

[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

< PREVIOUS NEXT >



Declaw surgery, the procedure (larger view)

The anesthetized cat is prepared for declawing by placing a tourniquet around the limb to lessen blood loss when the toes are partially amputated.

FAQs ...

- **FAQS - GENERAL INFO**
- **CASE STUDIES**

INDEX

- Ebony, a leopard
- Bobby, a bobcat
- Charlie, a cougar
- Calador, a jaguar
- Radiograph of a cat's paws
- Radiograph detail, cat's front paws
- Abnormal nail regrowth
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the procedure

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)

[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)

[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)

[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)

[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

« PREVIOUS NEXT »



Declaw surgery, the tool ([larger view](#))

The most common method of declawing employs a Resco clipper. This tool is made to trim the claws of dogs, but is used also for declaw surgery.

FAQs ...

- **FAQS - GENERAL INFO**
- **CASE STUDIES**

INDEX

- Ebony, a leopard
- Bobby, a bobcat
- Charlie, a cougar
- Calador, a jaguar
- Radiograph of a cat's paws
- Radiograph detail, cat's front paws
- Abnormal nail regrowth
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the procedure

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)
[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)
[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)
[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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[HOME](#) [FAQs](#) [ABOUT US](#) [YOU CAN HELP](#) [GALLERY](#) [NEWS CENTER](#) [RESOURCES](#)

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

[« PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT »](#)



Declaw surgery, the tool ([larger view](#))

When the handle is squeezed, the guillotine blades of the Resco clipper severs the toe. Sometimes the entire third phalanx is cut off, sometimes only a portion of it.

FAQs ...

- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)
[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)
[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)
[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)
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[HOME](#) [FAQs](#) [ABOUT US](#) [YOU CAN HELP](#) [GALLERY](#) [NEWS CENTER](#) [RESOURCES](#)

CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

FAQs ...

- [FAQS - GENERAL INFO](#)
- [CASE STUDIES](#)

[« PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT »](#)



Declaw surgery, the procedure [\(larger view\)](#)

The claw and a portion of the toe is removed. The wound is often close using super-glue instead of stitches.

INDEX

- [Ebony, a leopard](#)
- [Bobby, a bobcat](#)
- [Charlie, a cougar](#)
- [Calador, a jaguar](#)
- [Radiograph of a cat's paws](#)
- [Radiograph detail, cat's front paws](#)
- [Abnormal nail regrowth](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the tool](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)
- [Declaw surgery, the procedure](#)

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)
[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)
[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)
[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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CASE STUDIES ON FELINE DECLAWING

FAQs ...

- **FAQS - GENERAL INFO**
- **CASE STUDIES**

« **PREVIOUS**



Declaw surgery, the procedure
[\(larger view\)](#)

This photo clearly shows that not only are the nails removed in the declawing surgery, but also the skin, fur, and soft tissue of the cat's toe.

INDEX

- Ebony, a leopard
- Bobby, a bobcat
- Charlie, a cougar
- Calador, a jaguar
- Radiograph of a cat's paws
- Radiograph detail, cat's front paws
- Abnormal nail regrowth
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the tool
- Declaw surgery, the procedure
- Declaw surgery, the procedure

[FAQs on Declawing](#) | [About The Paw Project](#) | [Donations](#) | [Gallery](#) | [Animal Rights Resources](#) | [Home](#)
[Declawing Case Studies](#) | [Declaw Surgery \(onychectomy\)](#) | [Paw Repair Surgery](#) | [Support Animal Welfare](#) | [Sanctuaries](#)

[Paw Project Team](#) | [Paw Project Partners](#) | [Photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen](#)

[Join Paw Project Mailing List](#) | [Paw Project Press](#) | [Publications and Paw Project Newsletter](#)

[Acknowledgements](#) | [Terms/Legal](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact](#)

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FAQs ON DECLAWING AND FELINE SCRATCHING BEHAVIOR

There are many myths, misunderstandings, and misinformation concerning declawing. If you are considering having this surgery done on your cat, or if your veterinarian has suggested it, please take a few minutes to learn about this major surgical procedure before you make a decision.

FAQs About Declawing

- ▶ **What is declawing?**
- ▶ **How common is declawing? Why?**
- ▶ **Is declawing a painful procedure?**
- ▶ **Do declawed cats find homes more easily because they won't damage furniture? Will people abandon or euthanize their cats if they cannot have a veterinarian declaw their cats?**
- ▶ **Does declawing contribute to the development of the types of behavioral problems that result in relinquishment?**
- ▶ **What is the experience of animal shelter and rescue workers with respect to declawing and behavioral problems?**
- ▶ **Do people with compromised immune systems need to declaw their cats?**
- ▶ **If it is possible to repair the paws of animals in which the surgical outcome of declawing has been unfavorable, why not teach veterinarians how to do restorative or remedial surgery on individuals whose outcomes are bad?**
- ▶ **Is there precedent for banning declawing?**
- ▶ **Are tendonectomy (tenectomy) or laser surgery more humane alternatives to conventional declaw surgery?**
- ▶ **Aren't neutering and spaying procedures that surgically alter animals for the convenience of humans also?**
- ▶ **Why do cats scratch things?***
- ▶ **Why do people declaw their cats?**
- ▶ **What is declawing?**
- ▶ **What are the potential complications of declawing?**
- ▶ **How can I stop unwanted scratching behavior without declawing?**
- ▶ **Is laser declawing okay?**
- ▶ **Why did my veterinarian suggest declawing my cat?**

FAQs ...

- **FAQS - GENERAL INFO**
- **CASE STUDIES**

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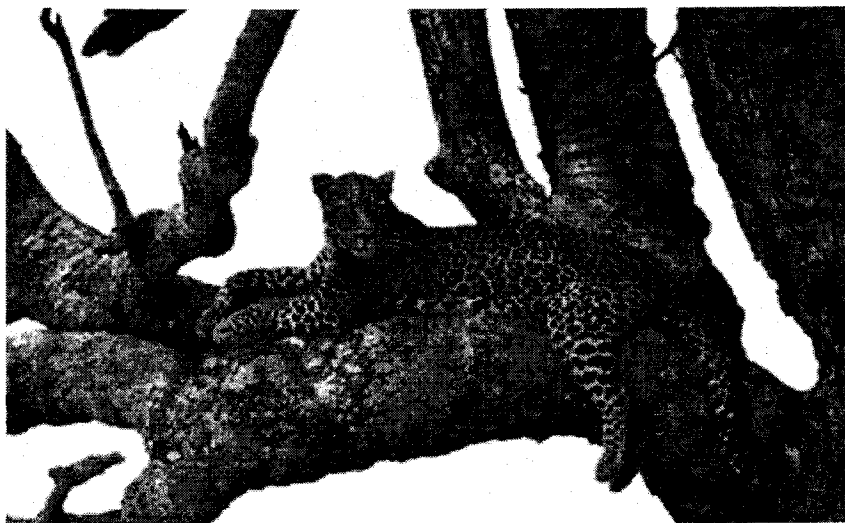
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Mohandas Gandhi said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Though animals are still very much 'things' in the eyes of American law, changes in the attitude of the American public are evident. Thirty-seven states have recently passed laws making some forms of animal cruelty a crime. A ban on declawing is consistent with this evolving attitude and would make California a leader and a model in the field of animal welfare.



The Paw Project advocates animal welfare, promotes public awareness about the painful and crippling effects of feline declawing, rehabilitates declawed cats through paw repair surgery, and supports measures to end the unnecessary practice of onychectomy (declaw surgery).

The **PAW** PROJECT

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The Paw Project initiated efforts which led to the ban on declawing in West Hollywood, CA, the first law of its kind in North America. **The Paw Project** was also the sponsor of [AB 1857](#), introduced by [Assemblyman Paul Koretz \(D-42nd District\)](#). In September 2004, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 185, enacting the first state law in the US banning the declawing of wild and exotic cats.

Data from clinical studies of **The Paw Project** were used to develop the new [USDA policy](#) which declares that "declawing...in wild or exotic carnivores...is no longer considered to be appropriate veterinary care unless prescribed by the attending veterinarian for treatment of individual medical problems of the paws. These procedures are no longer considered to be acceptable when performed solely for handling or husbandry purposes since they can cause considerable pain and discomfort to the animal and may result in chronic health problems." These procedures are no longer allowed under the [Animal Welfare Act](#). This decision effectively establishes a nationwide ban on declawing of wild and exotic cats, wolves, bears, and other animals.

Declawing is a surgical procedure, also called [onychectomy](#), in which the animal's toes are amputated at the last joint. Most people do not realize that a portion of the bone—not only nail—is removed. Declawing may result in permanent lameness, arthritis, and other long-term complications. It is actually illegal in many countries. [View case studies of cats that have suffered negative health effects due to declawing »](#)

Since April 2000 veterinarians working with **The Paw Project** have performed reparative surgery on lions, tigers, cougars, leopards, and jaguars that had been victims of declaw surgery. Enjoying relief for the first time after years of suffering, declawed cats that could hobble only a few agonizing steps prior to reparative surgery are able to leap, run, and play much more as nature intended. [View a movie of Kona, before and after paw repair surgery »](#)

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Cats

Big Cats Saved From Declawing by the Animal Welfare Act

From [Franny Syufy](#),
Your Guide to [Cats](#).

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Declawing or the removal of the canine teeth (fangs) in wild or exotic carnivores or nonhuman primates is no longer considered to be appropriate veterinary care unless prescribed by the attending veterinarian for treatment of individual medical problems of the paws or teeth. These procedures are no longer considered to be acceptable when performed solely for handling or husbandry purposes since they can cause considerable pain and discomfort to the animal and may result in chronic health problems. These procedures are no longer allowed under the Animal Welfare Act. This notice is consistent with the current position statement issued by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

[USDA Announcement](#)

How Did This Come About?

In 2002, Dr. Jennifer Conrad, founder of [The Paw Project](#), presented a scientific paper on the crippling effects of declawing to the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians. Another conference attendee, Dr. Timothy Reichard, a zoo veterinarian, used Dr. Conrad's data to author the American Veterinary Medical Association position on declawing big cats. This animal welfare position paper became the foundation for the new USDA policy.

Who Does This New Policy Affect?

According to a press release from The Paw Project:

The new policy applies to animals held by USDA license holders including exhibitors, dealers and breeders of wild and exotic animals, as well as research facilities. This decision is estimated to affect thousands of animals. Though the new policy does not affect animals previously altered by these methods, it will protect all animals that have not had these procedures already performed.

Background of The Paw Project

Dr. Conrad and her associates at The Paw Project perform reparative surgeries on big cats that have been crippled by declawing. For the most part, these exotic animals were owned by private parties; people who loved the idea of owning a big cat, but feared their potential for scratching. The Paw Project is helping the more than 100 big cat sanctuaries across the U.S. in saving their cats from the pain of previous declawing. In addition, The Paw Project has played a major role in sponsoring feline anti-declawing laws within the state of California, on behalf of pet cats. One successful ban, a law passed in West Hollywood in April of 2003 is currently being challenged by the California Veterinary Medicine Association (CVMA). AB 1857, the California Animal Cruelty Declawing Bill, was passed and signed into law on September 29, 2004 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. AB 1857 bans declawing of wild and exotic cats, and became effective January 1, 2005.

Of the new USDA policy, Dr. Conrad says, "This is a major victory for the animals and those who care about them."

Amen.

Thursday September 14, 2006 | [comments \(1\)](#)

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Are tendonectomy (tenectomy) or laser surgery more humane alternatives to conventional declaw surgery?

Tendonectomy is a procedure in which the tendons in the toes are severed. The cat still has its claws, but is unable to control them. This procedure does not necessarily protect people from being scratched, and it is associated with a high incidence of abnormal claw growth and muscle atrophy. In a 1998 JAVMA article, Jankowski, et al., concluded that "owners should be aware of the high complication rate for both [tendonectomy and declawing] procedures and of the need for constant trimming of claws of cats that have undergone tendonectomy." Jankowski also reported that 55% of the cats having tendonectomy were still able to scratch with their claws to some degree, and that 10% of the cat's owners had the cats declawed after the tendonectomy procedure for this reason. In March 2003, the AVMA stated that tendonectomy is "not recommended."

Dr. Wendy Feaga, a Maryland veterinarian, wrote in *Veterinary Medicine* (May 1998) regarding tendonectomy, "I hope this cruel practice is stopped immediately." She describes a post-tendonectomized cat that "had badly arthritic toes and did not move around comfortably. The toenails were thick and disfigured, and the toes were painful on palpation. I was horrified."

Lasers can be used in lieu of a scalpel to perform declaw surgery, though the result of the procedure is the same. A study reported in the September 1, 2002 issue of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Association* by Mison, et al., found that lasers offered no benefit over the more conventional methods of declawing, stating "differences in discomfort and complications between groups treated via scalpel versus CO2 laser were not clinically relevant." In another study, Levy and others (1999) found that complications (bleeding, limping, swelling, infection) were generally worse in the laser onychectomy group, compared to blade onychectomy in the first 2 days after surgery.

What are the potential complications of declawing?

Pain.

While the immediate post-surgical pain that the cats suffer is obviously severe, it is impossible to know how much chronic pain and suffering declawing causes. However, one can consider similar procedures in people. Many human amputees report life-long, painful "phantom" sensations from the amputated part. Declawing is ten to eighteen separate amputations, so it is not unreasonable to believe that declawed cats experience phantom pain in one or more toes. Cats typically conceal pain or illness until it becomes unbearable. With chronic pain, it may be that they simply learn to live with it. Their behavior may appear normal, but a lack of overt signs of pain does not mean they are pain-free.

Post-surgical complications.

Lameness, abscesses, and regrowth of the claw can occur after surgery. In one report that studied cats for only five months after surgery, about 25% of cats developed complications from both declaw and tenectomy surgeries (digital tenectomy or tendonectomy is a procedure, sometimes promoted as an "alternative" to declawing, where the tendons that extend the toes are cut).

Joint Stiffness.

In declawed (and tenectomized) cats, the tendons that control the toe joints retract after the surgery, and over time these joints become essentially "frozen." The toes can no longer be extended, but remain fully contracted for the lifetime of the cat. The fact that most cats continue to "scratch" after they are declawed is often said to "prove" that the cat does not "miss" its claws. However, this could also be explained by the cat's desperate desire to stretch those stiff, contracted joints.

Arthritis.

Researchers have shown that, in the immediate post-operative period, newly declawed cats shift their body weight backward onto the large central pad of the front feet and off the toes. This effect was significant even when strong pain medication was given, and remained apparent for the duration of the study (up to 40 hours after surgery). If this altered gait persists over time, it would cause stress on the leg joints and spine, and could lead to damage and arthritic changes in multiple joints.

Litter box problems.

Many experts say that declawed cats have more litter box avoidance problems than clawed cats. It is not uncommon for declawed cat owners to trade scratched furniture for urine-soaked carpeting. In one survey, 95% of calls about declawed cats related to litter

box problems, while only 46% of clawed cats had such problems—and most of those were older cats, many with physical ailments that accounted for the behavior.

Biting.

Deprived of claws, a cat may turn to its only other line of defense—its teeth. Some experts believe that naturally aggressive cats that are declawed are likely to become biters.

Death.

There is always a small but real risk of death from any general anesthesia, as well as from hemorrhage or other surgical complications. Declawing that results in biting or litter box avoidance may result in the cat being dumped at a shelter or simply abandoned. If taken to shelters, such behaviors make them unadoptable, and they will be destroyed. Many cats are exiled to a life outdoors because of these unwanted behaviors, even though declawed cats should not be allowed outside—their ability to defend themselves, and to escape danger by climbing, is seriously impaired. They also risk injury or death by dogs, cars, coyotes, poison, and other hazards of outdoor life. It is unfortunately common to have outdoor cats stolen and used as live bait to train fighting dogs, or sold to laboratories or biological suppliers.

Is laser declawing okay?

Laser declawing causes less bleeding and swelling than other techniques. This reduces pain and complications in the first few days after surgery, but the long-term implications of the procedure remain the same.

If it is possible to repair the paws of animals in which the surgical outcome of declawing has been unfavorable, why not teach veterinarians how to do restorative or remedial surgery on individuals whose outcomes are bad?

A small number of declawed large and wild cats have had reparative paw surgery, which has resulted in significant improvement for the animals, but has not restored them to a normal condition. The surgery can take up to six hours to treat two paws, which significantly increases the inherent surgical risks. It has been performed on only a few domestic cats.

Declawing is performed solely for the convenience of the animal's owner. There is absolutely no benefit to the animal. Because declawing impairs the normal function of an animal's feet, declawing can be considered to result in a bad outcome. It is much more practical not to declaw in the first place, than to attempt lengthy and risky reparative surgery later.

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Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, Great Britain (www.rcvs.org.uk):

The RCVS describes declawing as "mutilation." Further it states "the removal of claws...to preclude damage to furnishings is not acceptable."

"Claws are an integral part of a cat's life...Declawing is a painful and permanently crippling procedure that should not be practiced."

Dr. Nicholas Dodman, author and professor, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine:

"Declawing fits the dictionary definition of mutilation to a tee."

In Defense of Animals (www.idausa.org):

IDA opposes declawing, and in their publications state, "The excuses people use for wanting to declaw a cat are usually trivial, and nearly always put the well-being of their belonging above that of the cat."

Friends of Animals (www.friendsofanimals.org):

"If you love your cat, don't declaw."

Dr. Louis Camuti, noted author and veterinarian:

"I wouldn't declaw a cat if you paid me \$1000 per nail!"

Animal Protection Institute (www.api4animals.org):

"Please make the humane choice -- do not declaw."

The Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights (www.avar.org):

Declawing is "unacceptable because the suffering and disfigurement it causes is not offset by any benefits to the cat. Declawing is done strictly to provide convenience to people."

Animal Care and Control Department, City and County of San Francisco:

"Declawing is NOT the answer. Declawing is a painful and difficult operation. It is the same as removing the first joint on all your fingers. It impairs the cat's balance and causes weakness from muscular disuse."

Paul Rowen, DVM, Little Shelter Animal Sanctuary, New York:

"You can't declaw with love."

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Los Angeles (www.spcala.com):

"We do NOT support, nor condone, the act of declawing cats. It is cruel, unnecessary, and inhumane."

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DECLAWING and PAW REPAIR SURGERY

Declawing

Big cats are declawed by their owners with the intention of making the animals less dangerous to handle. Typically, the owners are private collectors who are trying to make a household "pet" out of a feral feline that is, by nature, not a suitable pet. It is rare for public zoos to have declawed cats. Unfortunately, the tiger or cougar that was cute and playful as a cub can be dangerous as an adult, whether or not it has claws. A "pet" weighing several hundred pounds and eats twenty pounds of meat a day may no longer seem like such a good idea. These cats, victims of human ignorance or arrogance, are sometimes killed. The luckier ones find themselves abandoned or confiscated by authorities and become residents of an animal refuge. There are over a hundred such sanctuaries in the U.S. alone, housing thousands of declawed big cats.

Declaw surgery is usually performed when the animal is a cub. While some felines will have immediate complications from the procedure, it may be many months or years before the damaging effects of declawing become obvious. Three basic declawing techniques have been described. The methods differ according to how the terminal bone of each toe (the third phalanx, or p3) is treated. The claw grows directly from nail-forming tissue deep within this bone.

In the first method, the entire third phalanx is removed, severing all of the tendons that normally allow the cat to flex and extend the toes of its paws. In the second, most of the third phalanx is amputated, leaving a tendon (the deep digital flexor tendon) attached to the remaining portion (the flexor tubercle) on the underside of the paw. The third method is less often employed and is described as leaving the flexor and extensor tendons attached to the third phalanx, while removing only the nail-forming tissue from the bone. In actual practice, some of the nail-forming tissue usually remains. Each of the methods has reported advantages, but none is free of problems.

Cats normally walk with the weight of their bodies borne by their toes and each step is cushioned by the pad under the toe. Declawed cats have difficulty maintaining this

posture for several reasons. The tendon attached to the retained segment of the third phalanx may pull that bit of bone under the foot where it will act as a painful "pebble-in-the-shoe." This piece of bone may contain remnants of the nail-forming tissue, and the nail may continue to grow deep with the foot, causing infection. The pad is often displaced backwards, toward the rear of the foot, allowing the weight of the cat's body to push the end of the second toe bone (second phalanx, or p2), through the thinned tissue on the underside of the foot. These complications may occur in any combination, but invariably result in great pain.

To avoid the pain, the cats will attempt to put their weight farther back on their feet, in effect walking on their "wrists." The stresses caused by this abnormal stance and gait, take their toll as arthritis develops in the legs of the cats, further crippling them and making worse their suffering. In more severe and particularly heartbreaking cases, the animal will try to move by walking on their "elbows."

Paw Repair Surgery

Veterinary surgery poses particular challenges generally not encountered in human medicine. Just getting the animal to the operating room can be daunting. The cat is administered tranquilizing medication by means of a dart. When adequately sedated, the cat is taken from its enclosure to the operating room. It requires a crew of several people to carry the cat and position it on the operating table where monitors are attached to check the vital signs of the animal during its long general anesthetic.

After shaving the fur from the feet and scrubbing them with antiseptic soap, the surgeon makes an incision on the underside of the toe at the site of the former claw. The pad is avoided. In cases where part of third phalanx remains, the partially amputated bone is exposed, infected tissue and nail remnants are cleaned out, and the fragment is then grasped with surgical clamps to mobilize the deep digital flexor tendon. The fragment is removed and a heavy suture is placed in the remaining digital flexor tendon and attached into the extensor tendon on the top surface of the toe. Before the suture is secured, any cartilage remaining on the distal end of the second phalanx is removed and the end of the bone is re-contoured. Tightening the suture will reposition the pad nearer to its proper anatomical position. The incision is closed with tissue glue, and pressure wrap bandages are placed over the paws.

In cases where the third phalanx has been completely amputated, the surgical technique is similar except that the tendons may be more difficult to find. The second phalanx is re-contoured and the pad is repositioned as described above.

If the cat has had all four of its feet declawed, which is the usual case, two separate surgical procedures are required. It is considered unsafe to subject a big cat to general anesthesia for the amount of time required to treat all 18 toes (five on each front foot and four on each rear foot). The reparative surgery takes up to 40 minutes per toe, and a six-hour surgery to repair two feet is not uncommon. The front feet are usually repaired first.

Regrettably, the reparative surgery cannot replace what a human has destroyed. These cats will never have the full, normal function of an animal with intact claws, and years of abnormal function may have caused irreversible arthritic changes in their joints.

Reattaching the tendons affords improved extension and flexion of the paws, so the cats can once again grasp objects. Reparative surgery enable cats to live free from the pain associated with chronic foot infections and many of the mangling effects of declaw surgery can be reversed. Our veterinarians report that after reparative surgery these magnificent creatures can run and jump where once they could barely hobble.

Dr. Conrad presented a paper describing a reparative technique for declawed big cats at the annual meeting of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians on October 7, 2002, in Madison, Wisconsin.

[back to top \[+\]](#)

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- [RESOURCES](#)
- [SANCTUARIES](#)
- [DECLAWING](#)



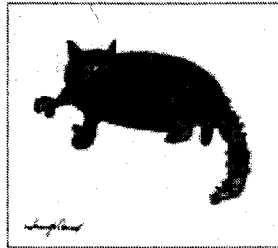
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Issues

[Issues](#) > [Policy](#) > [Position statements](#) > [Animal welfare](#) > [Declawing exotic and wild cats](#)

Position statements

Declawing Captive Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Cats

(Current as of June 2005)

The AVMA opposes declawing captive exotic and other wild (indigenous) cats for nonmedical reasons.

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Issues[Issues](#) > [Policy](#) > [Position statements](#) > [Animal welfare](#) > [Declawing of domestic cats](#)**Position statements****Declawing of Domestic Cats**

(Current as of June 2005)

Declawing of domestic cats should be considered only after attempts have been made to prevent the cat from using its claws destructively or when its clawing presents a zoonotic risk for its owner(s).

The AVMA believes it is the obligation of veterinarians to provide cat owners with complete education with regard to feline onychectomy. The following points are the foundation for full understanding and disclosure regarding declawing:

- Scratching is a normal feline behavior, is a means for cats to mark their territory both visually and with scent, and is used for claw conditioning ("husk" removal) and stretching activity.
- Owners must provide suitable implements for normal scratching behavior. Examples are scratching posts, cardboard boxes, lumber or logs, and carpet or fabric remnants affixed to stationary objects. Implements should be tall or long enough to allow full stretching, and be firmly anchored to provide necessary resistance to scratching. Cats should be positively reinforced in the use of these implements.
- Appropriate claw care (consisting of trimming the claws every 1 to 2 weeks) should be provided to prevent injury or damage to household items.
- Surgical declawing is not a medically necessary procedure for the cat in most cases. While rare in occurrence, there are inherent risks and complications with any surgical procedure including, but not limited to, anesthetic complications, hemorrhage, infection, and pain. If onychectomy is performed, appropriate use of safe and effective anesthetic agents and the use of safe peri-operative analgesics for an appropriate length of time are imperative. The surgical alternative of tendonectomy is not recommended.
- Declawed cats should be housed indoors.
- Scientific data do indicate that cats that have destructive clawing behavior are more likely to be euthanatized, or more readily relinquished, released, or abandoned, thereby contributing to the homeless cat population. Where scratching behavior is an issue as to whether or not a particular cat can remain as an acceptable household pet in a particular home, surgical onychectomy may be considered.
- There is no scientific evidence that declawing leads to behavioral abnormalities when the behavior of declawed cats is compared with that of cats in control groups.

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[Rabies control ordinance](#)

[Use of antimicrobials](#)

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Issues

Issues > Policy > Position statements > Animal welfare > Canine aggression

Position statements

Removal or Reduction of Teeth as a Treatment for Canine Aggression

(Current as of June 2005)

The AVMA is opposed to removal or reduction of healthy teeth of dogs as a treatment for canine aggression. This approach to managing aggression does not address the cause of the behavior. The welfare of the patient may be adversely affected because the animal is subjected to dental procedures that are painful, invasive, and do not address the problem. Removal or reduction of teeth for nonmedical reasons may also create oral pathologic conditions.

In addition, dogs may still cause severe injury with any remaining teeth, and removal or reduction of teeth may provide owners with a false sense of security. Injury prevention and the welfare of the dog are best addressed through behavioral assessment and modification by a qualified behaviorist.

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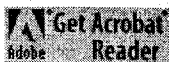
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- [Position statements](#)
- [Guidelines](#)

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- [Animal welfare](#)
- [Compounding](#)
- [Rabies control ordinance](#)
- [Use of antimicrobials](#)
- [Vaccination](#)

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Issues

[Issues](#) > [Policy](#) > [Position statements](#) > [Animal welfare](#) > [Removal or reduction of canine teeth](#)

Position statements

Removal or Reduction of Canine Teeth in Captive Nonhuman Primates or Exotic and Wild (Indigenous) Carnivores

(Current as of June 2005)

The AVMA is opposed to removal or reduction of canine teeth in captive nonhuman primates or exotic and wild (indigenous) carnivores, except when required for medical treatment or scientific research approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Reduction that does not expose the pulp cavity may be acceptable. Removal of these teeth or reduction that exposes the pulp cavity, without endodontic treatment, may result in oral pathologic conditions and pain.

To minimize bite wounds, recommended alternatives to dental surgery include behavioral modification, environmental enrichment, and changes in group composition

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DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF ONYCHECTOMY (DECLAWING) IN EXOTIC FELIDS AND A REPARATIVE SURGICAL TECHNIQUE: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

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Abstract

Onychectomy, or declawing, is a controversial and morbid procedure when used in the management of exotic felids. There are three basic techniques, all of which lead to significant gait disturbances and bony deformities. Although each method of onychectomy has a purported rationale, every declawed animal we have encountered manifests some degree of dysfunction, such as abnormal standing conformation and the slow and painful placement of paws during ambulation. Fourteen declawed exotic felids with morbid sequelae of onychectomy have been treated with a reparative surgical technique. Over 90 percent of these animals have exhibited markedly improved gait and stance.

Introduction

Onychectomy is a popular technique used in the management of exotic felids. Three basic methods have been described. In the first (method one), the entire third phalanx of each digit is removed.² In the second (method two), most of the third phalanx is amputated, leaving the deep digital flexor tendon attached to the remaining flexor tubercle.³ The third (method three) is described as leaving the flexor and extensor tendons attached to the third phalanx, while removing the horn-forming tissue on the ungual crest.^{1,2} Each of the methods has reported advantages, but none is free of adverse sequelae.

While proponents of method one accurately claim that complete removal of the third phalanx (p3) minimizes potential of subsequent infection and trauma caused by the retained bone fragment,² the disruption of flexor and extensor tendons, as well as the abnormal position of the second phalanx (p2), cause digital pad pathology and loss of function, namely flexion and extension of the paw.

Method two supporters argue that the deep digital flexor tendon should be preserved.³ While this allows for some flexion of the paw, without the counter action of the extensor tendon, the flexor pulls the fragment of p3 proximally under p2. This causes digital pad pathology as well as discomfort for the animal as it attempts to walk on the remaining bone,² which acts like a "pebble in the shoe."

Advocates of method three correctly state that paw integrity will be maintained with flexor and extensor tendon preservation. Because of the nature of the feline claw,¹ however, it is impossible to remove all of the horn-secreting tissue without removing the majority of p3.² Subsequent nail

regrowth and abscess formation can be expected.

The Wildlife Waystation is home to more than 130 big cats. Onychectomy is not performed at our facility, but many animals have been declawed prior to their arrival. Every one of these cats has suffered to some degree from the crippling effects of declaw surgery. These effects have been ameliorated by the new reconstructive surgery described in this paper. To date, we have repaired thirty-four paws with significant improvement in function and apparent reduction in pain.

Anatomic Review

Normal anatomy of the claw is provided in Figs. 1 and 2.

Methods

Eight cougars, three tigers, two leopards, and one lion have had either their front feet, or both their front and back feet repaired. Preoperative measurements of pad size and subjective ratings of paw pad suppleness and integrity were made. Radiographs, and in some cases, magnetic resonance images, were used to assess the status of p2 and p3 and the presence of pathology, including soft tissue infection, osteomyelitis, bone degeneration and arthritis. In the front paws of two cougars, p3 had been completely amputated in the initial declaw surgery. In the front paws of the remaining six cougars, p3 had been only partially amputated. In two animals there was significant nail regrowth with subsequent abscess formation. All three tigers had only partial amputations of p3, with one animal having significant nail regrowth and abscess formation. Both leopards had only partial amputations of p3, one with abscess formation. The lion had partial amputation of p3 with subsequent abscess formation due to nail regrowth.

Digital video recordings have been taken of the animals walking before and after the surgery. The video is used to monitor changes in the animals' ability to walk, jump and climb.

In preparation for surgical repair of the declawed feet, paws are clipped to the carpus, including the area of the former nail. Chlorhexidine solution is then sprayed on the paw before the Esmarch bandage tourniquet is wrapped from the distal paw towards the antebrachium in a binding manner to milk blood from the paw. Care must be taken to apply pressure over a broad area to avoid nerve damage. The tourniquet is then released from the distal end toward the proximal to expose the paw. After a complete surgical scrub, an incision approximately 3 cm in length is made from the dorsal aspect of the paw to the palmar aspect at the site of the former nail. The pad must be avoided. In the case where part of p3 remains, the partially amputated bone is exposed via blunt dissection, any purulent material is debrided and the fragment is then grabbed with A-O reduction forceps to mobilize and exteriorize the deep digital flexor tendon. A cruciate suture (0 PDS) is placed in the remaining digital flexor tendon and attached dorsally into the extensor tendon, or if the latter cannot be identified, into the remaining tissue in the extensor groove of the second phalanx. Before the suture is secured, the cartilage that remains on the distal end of p2 is removed by rongeur. The suture is then tightened to reposition the pad nearer to its proper anatomic position relative to p2. The incision is closed with tissue glue. Pressure wrap bandages are placed over the paws with tabs for

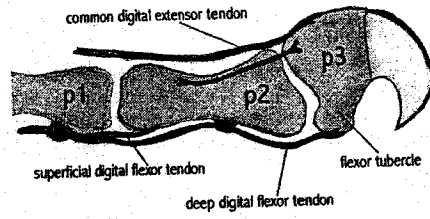


Figure 1. Normal anatomy, claw.

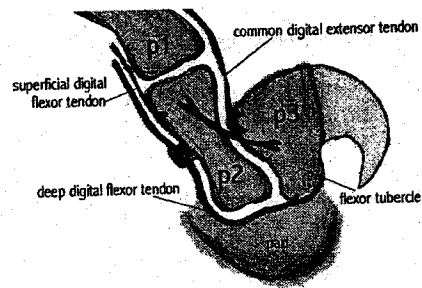




Figure 2. Normal anatomy, claw.

The following is a list of countries in which declawing cats is either illegal or considered extremely inhumane and only performed under extreme circumstances.

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Scotland
Wales
Italy
France
Germany
Austria
Switzerland
Norway
Sweden
Netherlands
Northern Ireland
Ireland
Denmark
Finland
Slovenia
Portugal
Belgium
Spain
Brazil
Australia
New Zealand**

Please email me if you can add to this list.

	De-Clawing Alternative FOR MORE INFO	
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BACK

Dr. Christianne Schelling Copyright 2006 All Rights Reserved

Scratching behaviour is a normal and natural part of a cat's existence. It is used to condition the claws, as a territorial mark, and as a mechanism for stretching and toning the back and shoulder muscles. A cat's claws are also their primary defence and provide good traction, allowing rapid acceleration and sharp turns while running and bestowing climbing ability.

To best examine the issue of declawing, it is essential to understand the procedure as it is applied in practice. First, the cat is given a general anaesthetic and the fur surrounding the cat's paws is shaved off. A tourniquet is placed around the leg, and the nail area is rinsed with alcohol. The actual amputation is performed by making a cut across the first joint (possibly involving the foot pad) using a guillotine type nail cutter. The area is then tightly bandaged to prevent haemorrhage. The bandaging can be removed two to three days after the surgery.

Two fundamental statements provide the basis for discussing this issue: First, that it is morally wrong to surgically alter any being, without his/her consent, unless for medical necessity, or to provide a health benefit when consent is impossible. Second, that all species are equal in their right to be treated with respect and compassion, thus obligating us to provide this respect and compassion to anyone under our care.

a stance...

Since scratching is a natural behaviour of cats, we must be prepared to accept this behaviour along with the cat. Despite the fact that most cats will use designated scratching posts when provided, we must accept that occasional damage to our material belongings may result. The solution to this is not to mutilate the cat, but to learn acceptance. If scratching is a problem for people, it is their

For many cat lovers declawing is unconscionable. Many veterinarians will not perform the procedure, it is outlawed in some countries, and there is currently no animal welfare organization that condones the practice. Despite the nonsurgical alternatives that exist, many people still view this as a preventative procedure that is necessary for a cat to be a "good pet." It is this last viewpoint that so many cat lovers find infuriating. Cats are already wonderful companions. They do not require any surgical modifications to become the companions they are known as worldwide. As many, who have authorized having their cat declawed, will freely admit, it was done to prevent damage to their furniture. Cats represent a living, thinking, feeling, entity; how can we ever place their welfare on the same balance as that of our furniture?

Declawing is inhumane. Although, scientifically, there have been no decisive long-term studies to research the behavioural effects, declawing represents a clear and undisputable risk to the cat. No one has the right to mutilate another, for their own personal gain.

By Scott Baker:



Despite frequent discussion, feline *onychectomy* (declawing) remains a source of confusion for many.

This brochure will examine this controversial procedure and the implications facing a cat, on which it is performed.

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Proponents of declawing defend this procedure with several common assertions:

1.) "Declawing does nothing to harm the cat".

The failing of this argument is, that without question, declawing certainly increases the risk of long term harm to the cat - and most definitely causes short term harm. *Onychectomy* in cats is used by pharmaceutical companies to test pain killers, as it is one of the most painful procedures that can be performed. Just consider that it has been (and still is, in some places) used as a form of torture with humans.

The surgery, if not performed correctly, can result in many detrimental effects. Any general anaesthetic puts a living organism at risk. If the bandages are put on too tightly the foot can become gangrenous, and necessitate amputation of the leg. In many instances one or more claws will begin to regrow, causing extreme pain, or if either the trimmer is dull or the cat's nail is brittle, the bone may shatter. This is called a *sequestrum*, which becomes a sight for irritation and continuous drainage from the toe. This can only be corrected by another surgical procedure.

Some chronic, physical ailments, including *cystitis* and skin disorders have been traced to the period immediately following this surgery. Theories also suggest possible effects to the cat's weight bearing and movement kinetics.

There is no evidence either way as to the long term behavioural effects a declawed cat may or may not experience, and much anecdotal evidence exists to support both viewpoints.

However, as they have been deprived of their primary source of defence - their claws - declawed cats often resort to biting when they feel threatened. Many groomers and veterinarians agree, that declawed cats are far more difficult to handle, both because of the increased incidence of biting, and due to a lack of self confidence resulting for the loss of their favoured defence mechanism. Shelters are also often forced to euthanize declawed cats that have been surrendered because of this type of aggressive behaviour.

With all these risks, one would like to compare them to the benefit that the cat experiences - unfortunately there are none.

2.) "If I do not declaw the cat, I would have to surrender it to the pound, and it will likely be euthanized."

This argument is used by many, but when considered in depth, it is simply countered with the old adage: "two wrongs don't make a right". Amputating a cat's toes is just as wrong as surrendering a cat simply because he/she no longer fits in with his/her person's lifestyle, or having a cat euthanized because it was acting as a cat should. It is easy to justify one inhumane option, but both are unnecessary, and neither is justifiable.



3.) "How do you justify neutering if surgical alteration is supposed to be so bad; it is only done for human convenience - to avoid spraying and annoying heat periods anyway."

When approached from a purely logical standpoint, this becomes a difficult question.

First, one must accept that keeping companion animals is not inherently bad in itself. If this is taken as a truth, then we as humans, become responsible for the wellbeing of their species. This includes providing birth control, as is necessary to preserve the health of that species. For animals, three possible birth control options currently exist: *castration* (neutering) or *vasectomy* for males, *ovariohysterectomy* (spaying) or *tubal ligation* for females, or forced abstinence. *Castration* and *ovariohysterectomy* provides birth control, but it also shapes a cat through a surgical means to fit better into our human society, as the entire reproductive organs are removed, and the hormone flow, which governs sexual behaviour, is ceased. *Vasectomy* and *tubal ligation* provide birth control while leaving the reproductive organs as intact as possible, and therefore not altering the cat's natural behaviour. However, this alternative is not recommended for female cats due to their reproduction biology. Forced abstinence should only be chosen as a short term solution. Intact tomcats are compelled by physiological changes to mate. Forcing them not to mate causes them undue stress and discomfort. The eggs of an intact *queen* (female cat) who is not permitted to mate, and therefore can not ovulate, become encysted in her ovaries, which may lead to cancerous tumours. Unlike declawing, any form of sterilisation provides a net benefit for the feline species' and is therefore justifiable.

Claws are an important feature of the cat's anatomy. Resources, to help deal with a cat's desire to use them, are endless.

Declawing and Its Alternatives

WHAT DECLAWING IS

Declawing, or onychectomy, is an amputation of the toe at the last joint. This removes the claw and the bone from which it originates. On a human hand this would be an amputation at the knuckle just above the nail. It is not just removal of the claw as many people think.

THE PROCEDURE

Some veterinarians administer injectable antibiotics, narcotic pain medication and sedatives. The cat is anesthetized or chemically restrained, the paws are prepared by cleaning, disinfection and sometimes clipping the hair. Using one of a variety of techniques the toes are amputated at the last joint. The incision site is either left open, sutured or glued closed. Usually bandages are applied from toe to mid foreleg and left in place for one to three days. When the bandages are removed cats are sent home with instructions to use some form of litter box filler that won't stick to the incisions such as shredded newspaper.

THE CASE FOR DECLAWING

Some cats are destructive of furniture and carpeting, attack other cats in the house, attack the owner or children or inadvertently snag their claws on the owner or children. People who are immunocompromised (are HIV positive or undergoing chemotherapy) are sometimes worried about infections caused by cat scratches.

THE CASE AGAINST DECLAWING

Declawing can be painful, disfiguring, cause lameness and psychological trauma. There is no agreement among veterinarians and some would characterize the procedure as merely "uncomfortable". Inability to defend oneself from cats dogs and an inability to climb trees have been cited as reasons not to declaw outdoor cats. Possible surgical complications include: inadvertent removal of part of a digital pad, incomplete removal of the nailbed and partial regrowth of the nail, infection, rare anesthetic complications and prolonged healing time in older cats. Additionally some people feel that declawing is a surgery of convenience for the owner on the order of ear cropping and tail docking.

ALTERNATIVES TO DECLAWING

Behavioral modification - my personal favorite. If the cat stops clawing inappropriately then one has a cure. The drawback is that it requires some concentrated vigilance and

action on the part of the owner. Initial attempts often fail and require persistence, inventiveness and willingness to try a number of different techniques. These techniques range from covering items in foil, using a squirt bottle, verbal admonishment and showing the legal scratching surface to smacking the offender when caught in the act. Frequently cats stop doing things if they know they make you angry which requires some display of anger even if it is just yelling. Crude but sometimes effective and certainly cheap.

Soft Paws - This product consists of blunt plastic sheaths which are "Superglued" onto the nail. They need to be replaced as they fall off.

Nail Clipping - This is the lowest tech treatment of the problem. It does however require people to learn to do it themselves or bring cats to the veterinarian or groomer to have it done. It is not difficult if the cat is reasonable. Cats may however continue to claw and can still do some damage.

Tendonotomy - Not new but lately an increasingly used surgical technique. It is reputed to be more humane than declawing and nearly as effective. This surgery consists of severing the deep digital flexor tendon through a small incision on the underside of each toe. The feet are otherwise left intact. Severance of this tendon means the cat can no longer voluntarily extrude the claw. The feet are generally not bandaged and cats go home that day or the following day. Tendonotomized cats need to have their nails clipped every two to four months or they can become overgrown and inadvertently snag on carpeting etc. If this solution does not work to the owner's satisfaction the cat can be declawed at a later time.

DISCUSS THE ABOVE

Discuss the above with your veterinarian. If they disagree with me that will be par for the course. Three veterinarians will give you four opinions of anything. The Ethics of Declawing is discussed elsewhere at this site.

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Ethical Issue:

The Ethics of Declawing

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The Controversy

The declawing of cats continues to be a highly charged issue among cat owners and veterinarians. There are owners who sacrifice their furniture rather than declaw a cat and owners who declaw all their cats pre-emptively. There are veterinarians who will refuse to declaw cats and others who have no qualms about it whatever. Most cat owners and most veterinarians will declaw cats but with some misgivings. Even among veterinarians who have no qualms about declawing it remains an uncomfortable issue because owners frequently ask discomfiting questions.

What The Procedure Is

It is technically called an onychectomy and constitutes an amputation of the toe at the last joint. This removes the claw and the bone from which it originates. On a human hand this would be an amputation at the knuckle just above the nail.

Common Arguments in Favor

Cats are destructive to furniture, cats attack other cats in the house, cats attack the owner or children, cats inadvertently snag their claws on the owner or children. The owner has HIV or is otherwise immunocompromised.

Common Arguments Against

Recovery from the procedure is painful. Some veterinarians think it is excruciatingly painful, some characterize it as "uncomfortable". Surgical complications: Inadvertent removal of part of a digital pad, incomplete removal of the nail bed and partial regrowth of the nail, infection, rare anesthetic complications. Also cited are disfigurement of the feet, lameness for inapparent reasons, long healing time in older cats, psychological

trauma, inability to defend oneself from other cats, inability to climb outdoors, though some cats can still climb. Some people feel that it is a surgery of convenience for the owner on the order of ear cropping and tail docking.

Ethical Considerations

Please note that these considerations are very different from those generally discussed in relation to declawing. These are the philosophical arguments underlying the common ones. Even though these considerations seem abstract most positions that people take with respect to declawing are based on the following:

Is it permissible to subordinate the welfare of one species to another? Is it permissible to impose one's will on a member of another species at all? Is it permissible to impose one's will on a member of another species "for his/her own good". If it is permissible to impose one's will on a member of another species "for his/her own good" how far is one entitled to go before violating this trust? Who is entitled to make the decision and on what authority?

No Moral Hierarchy

If one believes that there is no moral hierarchy on earth, we were all just put here together or we all just evolved here together then there is no defensible argument justifying cats hamstringing humans to prevent them from exercising their filthy habits, e.g. killing and torturing other humans by the millions, polluting the oceans and atmosphere, filling wrecking yards with dead cars and exploiting children for financial gain. The reverse argument makes equal sense; humans have no right to incarcerate and surgically alter cats to prevent them from exercising their filthy habits. The argument that cats have an inherent right to protect their planet from destruction only holds as far as making us stop that destruction but does not extend to merely offensive activities. This argument does not work well in reverse because to avoid direct damage by cats all we have to do is refrain from handling them.

Moral Hierarchy

If, however, one believes that there is a moral hierarchy on earth, that is some species are more equal than others and are worth more than others either inherently or in the eyes of a god, then the argument becomes more complicated. I have not yet heard a convincing argument which endows humans with moral superiority, and the right to control and manipulate other species for our own benefit, that does not invoke God or a god as the grantor of those rights. This argument, in the western world, usually devolves into a discussion of whether God or a god exists, whether the bible is in fact the literal word of God and whether the interpretation of the words written there should be taken as carte blanche rulership over other species or "stewardship".

Benign Captivity

Are we entitled to keep cats indoors, breed them, declaw them? If you believe in biblical carte blanche, no problem. We're better, we're more important, they're here for us. If you don't or are not so sure then the question becomes one of where to draw the line, how do you justify each infringement on their freedom. Keeping a cat indoors? They live longer, they suffer fewer infectious diseases and, as my veterinarian friend makes the case, one is protecting native bird species from them*. Personally I can almost buy the argument. If we are entitled to do what is necessary "for their own good" and to protect ourselves that would probably entitle us to feed them, vaccinate them, spay and castrate them to prevent overpopulation. All these things are arguably advantageous to cats as a species.

Obligations

Having decided to keep these animals in the house most people (excusing those with biblical carte blanche) would agree that they are obliged to ameliorate the conditions of their captivity by keeping the litter box clean, feeding them, keeping them free of fleas and other external and internal parasites. That's easy, but what does one do about those activities which are perfectly normal but offensive to us; scratching the furniture, tearing up the carpet, scratching people, spraying and digging in the plants? The remedies to these offenses in no way benefit the cat, they only benefit people. Whether you subscribe to rationale A, B or C -

- (A) We can do whatever we want with them because we're entitled.
- (B) We're keeping them indoors for their own good.
- (C) We're not so sure where we stand ethically but we like cats indoors.

- the practico-ethical question becomes how far are we going to go to get what we want, relief from this noxious behavior. My answer is this: Do the least damaging thing to the cat which will get you what you want. Since we are discussing the justification for declawing let's forget the other offenses.

Remedies Ranked

1. Not all cats are destructive. Let them be innocent until proven guilty; give them scratching posts, scratching pads, cat trees and show them how to use them.
2. Behavioral modification - successful behavioral modification constitutes a cure, no more problems. It requires, however, concentrated vigilance and action. Initial attempts often fail and require persistence, inventiveness and willingness to try a number of different techniques.
3. Nail Clipping - Low tech and relatively simple but you have to do it or get your veterinarian or groomer to do it. Not fool proof. They can still do some limited damage but sometimes get out of the habit of scratching because it's not the same without the tips.
4. Soft Paws™ - This product consists of blunt plastic sheaths which are "Superglued" onto the nails. They need to be replaced as they fall off.

5. Tendonotomy - Surgical procedure, not new but currently in vogue. Prevents extrusion of the claws and scratching. Reputed to be more humane, less painful than declawing but requires clipping the nails every two to four months so they don't grow long and catch on things.

6. Declawing.

The Real Issue

For most people the real issue is not whether it is ethical to declaw a cat, the real issue is whether they are going to spend the time and energy to seek alternatives. For many people a cat is an accessory to their lifestyle or a concession to one of their children. Declawing the cat only costs money, training the cat requires attention. Frequently the latter is in shorter supply than the former. This is symptomatic of owning too much and doing too many things to do justice to any of them. Being in this trap myself I understand it. Maybe someone with a way out will write in and help us all.

*One veterinarian I know is violently opposed to allowing cats outdoors. Cats kill many birds some of which are indigenous species; domestic cats are not. This veterinarian would certainly agree that pet cats should be indoors.

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International Society for Endangered Cats

(thing) by Lucy-S

4 Cls

Sun Apr 21 2002 at 20:04:39

One Monday night, about 70 IU students and Bloomington, IN residents had a face-to-face encounter with a survivor of the international drug wars. A native of India or perhaps Pakistan, he is a lean, handsome fellow known simply as Bunga.

He glared at the people who came to see him and growled. And then he ignored everybody and started playing with a feathered bob on a string.

"Bunga was confiscated in a drug bust," explained John Becker, executive director of the International Society for Endangered Cats (ISEC).

ISEC was founded in 1988 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the 36 species of cats that live in the wild throughout the world. Most of these species are endangered, some critically. ISEC is based in Columbus, OH and their website is at <http://www.isec.org/>.

Becker said that Bunga, a member of the species Felis chaus (more commonly known as the reed or jungle cat), was captured and taken from his native country by drug smugglers who were trading in black market goods such as exotic animals.

Bunga ended up at the house of a drug dealer who mistakenly thought a wild cat would make a cool pet. To protect himself and his furniture, the dealer had Bunga declawed, but whoever did it botched the job. Becker said that as a result of the declawing, Bunga sometimes walks with a limp, and he can never be returned to the wild.

That is the main reason why Bunga has become one of Becker's four show-and-tell wild cats that he brings with him to his educational presentations. Becker said that during one 18-month period, he gave programs on the plight of endangered cats to more than 400 different schools and organizations around the U.S.

With Becker's speaking schedule, it's no wonder Bunga seemed a bit grumpy as Becker and his assistant coaxed him out of his cat carrier. But once he was out in the lights of the auditorium, it was easy to see why the drug dealer wanted him -- he's 20 pounds of lithe muscle covered in satiny black fur. Add in his big golden eyes and gravelly meow, and he's a kitty many covet.

And Bunga is truly rare. Jungle cats, which originally ranged from Egypt to Southeast Asia, are endangered due to habitat loss and the exotic pet trade. Becker said that only 21 jungle cats live in zoos around the United States. In addition, Bunga is a comparatively uncommon melanistic (black) animal; regular jungle cats have tawny fur.

"When we take animals like this out into educational programs, we're concerned that some people will think that a cat like this would make a neat pet," Becker said. "wild animals like this never, ever make good pets. We hear stories every single day of people who try to turn a wild cat into a pet who get hurt."

Before he brought out Bunga, Becker started his presentation with a slide show on endangered cats. Audience members saw everything from the rusty-spotted cat, which barely weighs 2.5 pounds full-grown, to the biggest of the big cats, the Siberian tiger, which can weigh up to 800 pounds. He also showed slides of rare exotic felines few people have even heard of, such as the flat-headed cat, whose big-eyed face almost looks like that of a monkey.

"There are some major factors in these animals becoming endangered," Becker said. "One is that people are still making fur coats out of them."

He paused to show a slide of a smiling shopkeeper in Nepal proudly displaying floor-length coats made from the skins of clouded and snow leopards.

"The sad fact is, the rarer these animals are, the more their furs are worth, and the more diligently some people try to kill them," Becker said.

He added that habitat destruction is another major factor in the decline of these animals. "When I was in Belize, we were going down this highway, and on one side of the road it was beautiful forest, and on the other side it was just a blackened waste."

He later learned the forest was being burned down to plant citrus trees.

He said the loss of these cat species would be a tragedy not only because of their beauty but because they are top-level predators critical to maintaining the planet's ecology. Without them, the populations of other animals such as rats and deer may grow out of control, causing other problems such as de-vegetation.

Becker said that while there are many other wildlife protection groups that deal with wild cats, such as Project Tiger and the International Snow Leopard Trust, ISEC is the only group concerned with all 36 of the planet's endangered cat species.

He said that of those 36, people mostly focus on the seven big cat species, so it's up to ISEC to raise awareness of the smaller cats that are in trouble. In addition to giving educational programs, ISEC works with these other groups and raises money for scientific research efforts around the world. Some of the projects ISEC has partially funded include the Global Cheetah Project, which examines the condition of cheetahs all over Africa, and an ongoing bobcat study at Mississippi State University.

Becker said ISEC is particularly interested in increasing captive breeding programs around the U.S. He said most species' populations are so low in the wild, the only hope for saving them lies in building up captive populations so that someday the cats can be reintroduced into the wild, as was successfully done with the black-footed ferret and the California condor.

"Unfortunately, we only have 6 species survival plans for 37 species," he said. "We don't even have a game plan for saving most of these cats."

He said it has become necessary for scientists to actively search for cats in the wild to capture so that they can be sure they have a viable gene pool to breed from.

"Lots of wild cats don't breed well when they're left to their own devices in captivity," he said.

To address this problem, some research groups, such as the Center for the Reproduction of endangered wildlife at the Cincinnati Zoo, are focusing on fertility-enhancing procedures such as creating in vitro wild cat embryos for implantation into domestic cats.

Becker said such measures may be too late for some species. He said even though most public interest has gone toward saving big cats like lions and tigers, they are heading on the downward spiral toward extinction.

<http://everything2.com/?node=International+Society+for+Endangered+Cats> http://everything2.com/?node_id=1289110



Big Cat Fact Sheet

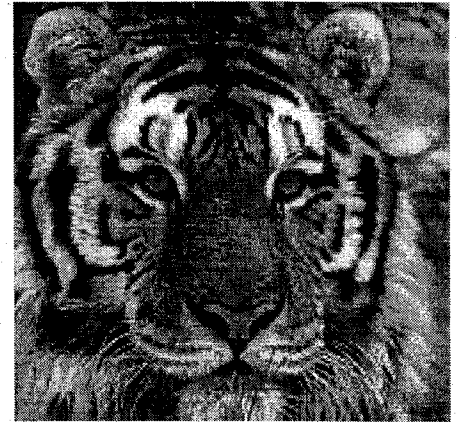
Wild Animals are NOT Pets Adopt a Pet, Not a Problem

Problem:

It is estimated that there are 10,000 to 20,000 large, wild cats in private ownership in the United States. By their nature, large cats (lions, tigers, cougars, jaguars, cheetahs, and panthers) do not make good pets. Keeping large, wild and exotic cats as pets is both dangerous for people and inhumane for animals.

Facts:

- There have been multiple incidents of injury and death. For example, in two separate incidents, a 3 year old boy and a 9 year old girl were killed by pet tigers in Texas. Another toddler had his arm bitten off by a pet tiger, and a 4 year old boy in New York underwent plastic surgery on his face after he was attacked by a 40-pound pet serval being taken for a walk.
- The average pet owner cannot provide appropriate housing, secure containment, adequate nutrition, appropriate medical care and cannot meet the complex social, emotional, and behavioral requirements of large, wild cats.
- Many large cats suffer from painful declawing and dental extractions for the sole purpose of making them less dangerous pets.
- Tiger cubs bred in captivity are typically separated from their mothers when they are just days old and soon after are declawed. In the wild, cubs can stay with their mothers for three years.
- Adult cats that have been kept as pets are often discarded and can end up in substandard roadside zoos and pseudo-sanctuaries, or with some other private owner. Some are killed for their organs, body parts, and meat.
- Unregulated breeding of large cats—particularly tigers—decreases the genetic viability of the species. These animals are of no use to accredited zoo breeding programs or to the wild gene pool. These animals cannot be released into the wild.



- Few people have the facilities or expertise to care for these dangerous wild animals and most large cats live out their lives alone in squalid, cramped enclosures.
- There are no federal regulations in the U.S. banning or controlling private ownership of large cats, or exotic animal ownership in general. Twelve states ban private possession of exotic animals, seven states have a partial ban, and fifteen require a license or permit.

Solution

- Never buy a large, wild cat for a pet.
- Do not patronize substandard unaccredited facilities that exhibit large cats.
- Report suspected dangerous housing or abuse of large, wild cats to local humane societies or animal control officers.
- Support appropriate legislation to regulate the ownership of wild animals as pets.

To learn more about CWAPC
please contact: info@cwapc.org

DECLAWING CATS:

Issues & Alternatives

DECLAWING RESOURCE SECTION INDEX:

ISSUES:

Medical, ethical, and behavioral issues

ALTERNATIVES:

Training & Nail Trimming Instructions

Instructions for Building Scratching Posts & Cat Trees

"Saving cats' toes -- one owner at a time...."



Do you know someone who needs to be convinced that this is *NOT* a good idea?

MEDICAL, ETHICAL, and BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

Declawing! What You Need To Know

Flyer from the *All States Burmese Society* which gives detailed, factual information as well as positive suggestions. The information may be copied and distributed, unchanged, with proper credit. It is also available in **PDF format** which provides an outstanding printed version:

Declawing! What You Need To Know



NOTE: To open this file, you need **Adobe's Acrobat Reader**, which you can [download for free](#); then configure your browser to launch *Acrobat* whenever you download a *pdf* file.

CHIN HILLS TRADITIONAL BURMESE

http://amby.com/cat_site/dc-wyntk.html

Declawing of Cats

This outstanding article examines the controversial procedure and the impact it can have on the cat; it is also available in **PDF format** which provides an outstanding printed version:

Countering arguments for de-clawing.



NOTE: To open this file, you need **Adobe's Acrobat Reader**, which you can [download for free](#); then configure your browser to launch *Acrobat* whenever you download a *pdf* file.

Scott Baker

<http://www.felinefuture.com/catcare/declawing.php>

SURGICAL CLAW REMOVAL ... AN EXTREME SOLUTION

.... provides compelling reasons to avoid declawing, describing the physical and psychological effects and philosophic concerns. Options are listed, including a detailed description of the proper technique for nail trimming. This on-line copy of the brochure (available from the [Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights](#)) is a *must read* especially for veterinarians who may feel that they are being held 'emotional hostage' by owners who claim they would have their cats killed if declawing were not an option.

Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights

http://www.avar.org/avar_cat_declawing.html

Medical Issue: Declawing And Its Alternatives

Ethical Issue: The Ethics Of Declawing

Two articles from veterinarian Matthew J. Ehrenberg detailing his views on this controversial issue.

Matthew J. Ehrenberg, DVM; *Cats Only Veterinary House Calls*

<http://www.catsonly.com/Med%20Declaw.htm>

Do Not Declaw

The City and County of San Francisco advise you to **NOT** declaw; a clear explanation is provided as well as advice on alternatives.

City & County of San Francisco

<http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/acc/declawed.htm>

Declawing is not recommended

Clear reasons why owners should avoid declawing; why vets do it; serious questions to ask yourself and your vet before embarking on this course of action.

Defiant Breeders

<http://www.defiant.net/declaw.html>

DECLAWING: A Veterinarian's View

Find out why this vet states that "*Declawing is actually an amputation of the last joint of your cat's 'toes'!* When you envision that, it becomes clear why declawing is not a humane act." Check out the [list of countries](#) where declawing is illegal, or considered extremely inhumane... then ask yourself if your cat doesn't deserve equal care and protection!!

Dr. Christianne Schelling

<http://www.declawing.com/>

Stop Declaw: The Declawing Information Site

A picture is worth a thousand words.... Also provides a statement by Nicholas Dodman, DVM as well as links to numerous resources.

Stop Declaw

<http://stopdeclaw.com>

Declawing Cats?

This article by Reed Coleman makes it clear that this procedure is NOT equivalent to

a manicure by providing info from veterinarian, Dr. James Weikum, describing the seriousness and potential ill effects of declawing as well as a brief overview of alternatives.

KOIN-TV

<http://www.koin.com/athome/catsanddogs/athome-catsanddogs-980828-182117.html>

Is it harmful to declaw a cat?

This article, reprinted with permission from the *Kitty Adoption FAQ's* (Kitten Rescue Online), gives an overview of the reasons why a cat should *NOT* be declawed provided by veterinarians and cat experts.

Kitten Rescue Online

http://amby.com/cat_site/kr-declaw.html

The Declaw Page Menu

Many excellent articles, including:

- *My Two Cents - The Ethics of Declawing* personal thoughts about declawing and a growing list of countries where declawing is illegal
- *A Message From the United Kingdom* Helen Simmons explains what life is like in a country without declawing
- *Clawed and Declawed cats together?* Question & Answers found in a newsgroup

Join the Educate!! Don't Amputate!! *WEBRING* (You don't even have to have a catsite!!) or participate in the discussion on the Educate!! Don't Amputate!! *MESSAGEBOARD*. And, if you still are considering declawing, read some of the horror stories (despite what some vets claim, the outcome *isn't* always good).

Lisaviolet's Cathouse

<http://lisaviolet.com/cathouse/declaw.html>

The Facts About Declawing (Feline Digital Amputation - Onychectomy)

Read these facts *BEFORE* you subject your cat to this procedure. Includes info from vets, research results, etc.; read Dr. Nicholas Dodman's article on *Understanding the Motivation of the Scratching Behavior*.

Max's House®/S.T.A.R.T. II® (Save The Animals Rescue Team)

<http://www.maxshouse.com/Truth%20About%20Declawing.htm>

You Can't Declaw with Love

This article by Paul Rowen, D.V.M., and Carole Wilbourn describes the steps involved in declawing as well as the immediate and long-term physical and emotional consequences of this procedure.

Little Shelter

http://www.avar.org/avar_cat_declawing.html

The Truth About Declawing

The Declawing Question

What Are We Doing To Our Cats?

A sample of the many great resources available from the Cats International site; the *Cat Behavior and General Feline Information* section also provides training advice and instructions for building a scratching post.

Cats International (formerly Wisconsin Cat Club)

http://www.catsinternational.org/9_1.html

Declawing of Cats - CFA guidance statement

CFA Health Committee statement, opposing the declawing of cats (onychectomy) and the severing of digital tendons (tendonectomy), and an outstanding **Information summary** which not only describes more fully *WHY* the CFA is opposed but also raises some questions regarding the validity of the "scientific studies" to which people refer when claiming that there are no ill effects.... Includes references.

The Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA)

<http://www.cfainc.org/health/declawing.html>

Do you really want to de-claw your cat?

Please read this page by Jeri Dopp, first. She provides information as well as alternatives, including clear training tips and nail trimming advice.

Jeri Dopp

<http://www.safehavenforcats.com/declaw.htm>

Declawing Cats: Manicure or Mutilation?

Important info, *including*

- Why Do Cats Claw Objects?
- Understanding Declawing
- Three-Point Program to train a kitten or to retrain an adult cat.
- Resources & References

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

<http://www.peta-online.org/mc/facts/fsc6.html>

Paws Come With Claws

Clear, level-headed article which provides info about some of the undesirable complications and after effects of declawing; includes training tips.

Buddy Dog Humane Society

<http://www.buddydogs.com/html/declawing.html>

Good Cats Wear Black

Annie Bruce, cat owner consultant and author of *Cat Be Good*, states that "Ninety-five percent of declawed cat owners are calling about a peeing problem. (Note: The remaining five percent called about biting or chewing.)" The FAQ's: Litter Box Problems and Declawing, provides compelling evidence that declawing now can create far worse problems for owners later.

Annie Bruce

<http://www.goodcatswearblack.com>

Declawing: Behavior Modification or Destructive Surgery?

This article by Tina Perry appeared in *Animal Issues* and provides a solid overview of the reasons declawing is unacceptable as well as tips for behavior modification.

Animal Protection Institute

<http://www.api4animals.org/doc.asp?ID=555>

Paws Come With Claws - That's One Of Natures Laws

An excellent article describing what happens to the cat and why misguided owners resort to declawing. Includes how owners can prevent damage to themselves and their furnishings without causing harm to their cat.

Mark Delman

<http://home.earthlink.net/~mdelman/catclaws.html>

Is Declawing Cruel?

This article includes the often pathetic consequences of declawing as well as the detailed section: *Six Simple Alternatives to Declawing Your Cat*.

Suzanne Bucciarelli DandyLions Cattery

<http://petstation.com/declaw.html>

Declawing Your Cat

Information to consider carefully if you're contemplating having your cat declawed; alternatives are provided.

Oakland (CA) SPCA

<http://www.oaklandspca.org/cats/declawing.html>

Clawed for Life

This section of *Pawprints and Purrs* has a single purpose: To educate those people seeking facts about declawing a cat. Its goal is to further the education of those who want to know why cats need the claws they come with. Includes reasons why cats *MUST* keep their claws, along with suggestions for trimming nails and training cats to use *appropriate* areas for scratching. If possessions are more important than the welfare of the cat in the family, you are urged *not* to own a cat.

Susie S. Bachman

<http://www.sniksnak.com/declaw.html>

Declawing Cats: Making a Humane Decision

Includes these sections:

- Why are claws important to a cat?
- Why do cats scratch?
- What is declawing?
- What risks are associated with declawing? (Medical & Safety risks)
- What are alternatives to declawing? (Scratching Posts & Nail trimming)

The Massachusetts S.P.C.A. (MSPCA-AHES Methuen)

<http://www.methuen-mspca.org/petcare/hm/declaw.htm>

The Problems With Declawing

Here's why declawing creates more problems than it solves. Veterinarian Dr. Paul Rowan outlines the most commonly used procedure; article includes both the immediate and long-term physical complications as well as the emotional consequences of declawing.

PAWS Companion Animal Shelter

[http://www.paws.org/shelter/resources/library/1_copy\(50\).htm](http://www.paws.org/shelter/resources/library/1_copy(50).htm)

If You Love Your Cat, Don't Declaw!

Article discusses *WHY* cats need their claws, the negative impact of declawing, and clearly describes how to train your cat trim nails correctly.

Jackie Bell

http://amby.com/cat_site/health.html

If You Love Your Cat DON'T DECLAW!

Article by Celia Heriot, Pet Pride, taken from *Cat Fancy* magazine.

<http://www.petpride.org/4catsake.htm#If you love your cat DON'T DECLAW>

Declawing Problems

Internationally respected vet, Dr. Jim Humphries, talks about declawing (a response to an owner's question).

Dr. Jim's Virtual Cat Clinic

<http://www.dvmedia.com/cats.html#anchor10499715>

About Declawing Your Cat

A brief article clearly stating the problems with declawing and providing alternatives.

Laurie Schiff *Elvessa's Tonkinese*

<http://www.fatpet.com/elvessa/declaw.htm>

Claws ARE Included

A message from Monster, aka: 'Luvcatz' giving the cat's perspective on the declawing issue. Also included are descriptions of a number of excellent online resources (with links), as well as sections detailing the surgical procedures (including complications), and providing the results of pain management and opinion poll studies, etc.

- **Declaw surgery, what it really is**
- **Declaw surgery description**
- **Laser declaw surgery procedure**

Monster, aka: 'Luvcatz'

<http://www.geocities.com/~luvcatz/declaw.html>

Declawing

If you think, as Maxine used to, that declawing is "no big deal," perhaps you'll find her site informative; many links to other sites are provided.

Maxine Hellman.

<http://www.geocities.com/Petsburgh/2418/dclaw.htm>



Medical, ethical, and behavioral issues

Training & Nail Trimming Instructions

Instructions for Building Scratching Posts & Cat Trees

**Return to the
Cat Site**

"Saving cats' toes -- one owner at a time...."



**Do you know someone who needs to
learn how to trim nails or train a cat?**

TRAINING & NAIL TRIMMING INSTRUCTIONS

Don't DECLAW: Train and Trim, Instead!!!

How to trim nails and train cats so that declawing is unnecessary.

Amby Duncan-Carr

http://amby.com/cat_site/cattrain.html

Instead of Declawing...

Provides suggestions for you to use so that you can live happily with your cat, claws and all!

Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley

<http://www.mcvicker.com/hssev/hssev14.htm>

Claws

This article from *Animal Watch* provides info about why cats *NEED* their claws and how to retrain them to use appropriate surfaces; includes helpful tips on how to give your cat a manicure.

Jacque Lynn Schultz; ASPCA Companion Animal Services

<http://www.aspca.org/calendar/watcomf6.htm>

Cat Scratch Control: You Name the Spot

This *CatLife* article by Rebecca Sweat includes info and tips from veterinarians Sandra Barclay, D.V.M. and John Ciribassi, D.V.M as well as Pam Johnson Bennett, a feline behavior consultant, to help you understand and redirect your cat's destructive behavior, trim nails, etc.

PetLife Online [archived copy]

<http://web.archive.org/web/19981205093511/http://www.petlifeweb.com/am98/clam98-1.htm>

Scratching

Why cats scratch and what you can do to encourage them to scratch something other than your furniture or carpets. Site also provides Declawing Info as well as a wide variety of other Cat Care Topics.

21cats.org

http://www.21cats.org/cgi/care_db.pl?scratching.txt

Declawing

The Humane Society of Delaware County offers an extensive set of training suggestions for a variety of situations.

The Humane Society of Delaware County

<http://www.delawarecohumanesoc.org/declaw.htm>

Cat Scratching Solutions

Dr. Christianne Schelling provides reasons to not declaw cats, a clear explanation of *why cats scratch*, as well as training tips and information about Soft Paws, an option that you may find useful if you don't have the opportunity to train your cat right now or if a member of the family is medically at-risk if scratched....

Dr. Christianne Schelling

<http://www.catscratching.com/>

StickyPaws

"CATFANCY Magazine" Chooses StickyPaws™ one of the TOP TEN Best New Cat Products!. Find out about this product and see if it would help you train your cat.

Fe-Lines, Inc.

<http://www.stickypaws.com/html/faqs/>

Scratching Furniture

Step-by-step instructions for using positive reinforcement to train your cat to use a *scratching post*, instead of your furniture!

Provided by author and behavior specialist, Gwen Bohnenkamp.

Perfect Paws Training Center

<http://www.perfectpaws.com/scratch.html>

How can I get my cat to stop scratching the furniture?

This article by Steve Dale, Tribune Media Services syndicated columnist, gives tips for training your cat while protecting your furniture during the learning process.

Steve Dale

http://www3.webpoint.com/wgnradio_pets/scratch.htm

Biting and Scratching

Step-by-step instructions to accustom your cat to being handled and ways to train your cat not to bite or scratch *you!* Provided by author and behavior specialist, Gwen Bohnenkamp.

Perfect Paws Training Center

<http://www.perfectpaws.com/handle.html>

The Case Against Declawing

Lists safer, kinder, easier, and less expensive ways to deal with the problems of clawing. With a little attention and training, you can keep your cat from scratching the furniture without costly, painful surgery.

Washington Humane Society

<http://www.washhumane.org/washhumane/info/infdclw.htm>

Ask Parker

A regular feature of the NHSPCA newsletter.

This is the reply to a question regarding declawing:

I have a cat that is tearing up my furniture with her claws. Why does she do this? I'm thinking about having her declawed if she doesn't stop. Is that a humane thing to do?

The New Hampshire Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NHSPCA)

http://www.nhspca.org/fa96_askpark.html

How to Keep Your Cat from Damaging Things

Training tips from a Carol McCutcheon along with her *declawing position statement* (contract also available online).

Mellowmews Abyssinians

<http://www.abys.net/declaw.htm>

CLAWS AND ALL:

Living with Your Cat, Your Furniture, and Your Peace of Mind, an article by Rachel Lamb, provides suggestions for training and positive reinforcement so that you and your cat will agree on what is (*and what is not*) to be used for scratching.

The Humane Society of the United States: *HSUS News* -- Spring 1996

<http://www.hsus.org:80/claws.html>

Trimming Claws

Suggestions for how to correctly trim your cat's nails (without *EITHER* of you getting hurt).

Cindy Tittle Moore (from *FAQ About Cats*)

<http://michiana.org/MFNetLife/CatsFAQ1.html#S2E>

Scratching the Surface

How do I get my cat to begin scratching its scratching post instead of the furniture?

Set-by-step instructions for behavior modification and training for you and your cat.

Steve Dale, *My Pet World*, Tribune Media Services syndicated columnist.

<http://rec.webpoint.com/pets/scratch.htm>

Teaching your cat to use a scratching post

Explains *WHY* cats scratch, how to select (or make) a suitable post, and how to get your cat to use it instead of the furniture. The Massachusetts S.P.C.A. (Springfield Animal Shelter)

<http://www.methuen-mspca.org/petcare/htm/declaw.htm>

Feline Nail Care

Catnip Calico from Catnip Calico's Popoki Corner provides information about *WHY* cats scratch and includes some training suggestions.

Compiled from email and from a posting on the *HomeVet Bulletin Board*.

http://amby.com/cat_site/nailcare.html

CATS AND SCRATCHING

Understanding your pet's behaviour and tips for modifying it.

Includes suggestions to make the scratching post the most appealing thing to scratch in your cat's environment.

The Winnipeg Humane Society

<http://www.xpressnet.com/humane/x-2.htm>

Helping Your Cats Claw Their Way to Success

P.A.W.S. provides this overview of the behavior and ways to modify it *WITHOUT* resorting to inhumane mutilation.

The Progressive Animal Welfare Society

[http://www.paws.org/shelter/resources/library/1_copy\(49\).htm](http://www.paws.org/shelter/resources/library/1_copy(49).htm)

Great Kittens Have Good Owners

Guidelines to help you train and socialize your kitty; suggestions to help prevent or eliminate undesirable behavior.

Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley

<http://www.mcvicker.com/hssc/hssc18.htm>

Cats and their Claws

General overview, including the permanent adverse consequences that are possible, as well as suggestions for alternatives that will protect your furniture and prevent harm to your cat!!

The SPCA of Texas

<http://www.spca.org/cat.html#5>

A Scratching Outlet

Specific suggestions for making objects with potential "scratch appeal" temporarily unappealing and how to make acceptable scratching items more attractive to your cat.

Article by Carolyn Osier, March 1996, *Cat Fancy Magazine*

<http://www.petchannel.com/cats/library/care/scratching/scratching.htm>

The New Kitten: Some Pointers about Your New Friend

Some information to help you understand instinctive behavior and train your pet more effectively.

The Central Animal Hospital

<http://www.lunaweb.com/kitten.htm>

SCRATCHING, NAIL TRIMMING, AND DECLAWING

Tips for Buying or Making a Scratching Post and Training Your Cat. Includes important information and helpful instructions.

Champaign County Humane Society

<http://www.cuhumane.org/topics/scratch.html>

Controlling Scratching and Clawing of Cats

You may have heard the common complaint, "*Our cat is destroying everything in the house with her claws!*", and assumed that nothing can be done (short of maiming or getting rid of the cat). This article provides clear info on why cats scratch and providing alternatives so that *EVERYONE* will be happy! Includes how to choose a post, how to train your cat to use it, and how to trim claws.

Pets Connection *[archived copy]*

<http://web.archive.org/web/19970607161933/www.dlcwest.com/~createdforyou/catpost.html>



Medical, ethical, and behavioral issues

Training & Nail Trimming Instructions

Instructions for Building Scratching Posts & Cat Trees



BUILDING THIS DOES ONE OBJECT AT A TIME...



**Do you want to learn *how* to build
a scratching post or a cat tree?**

CONSTRUCTION INSTRUCTIONS

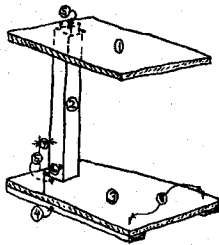
Cosmic Cardboard Scratchers with Catnip Cosmic Cardboard Scratchers with Catnip
Cats with claws and without absolutely love sinking their claws or kneading their paws into these corrugated cardboard scratchers All include loose catnip to sprinkle inside

DO-IT-YOURSELF CAT TREE

Step-by-step plans (including materials list, and instructions) for building a great place for your cats to perch!

Based on plans originally published in PETA's *ANIMAL TIMES* including modifications by Cat's Haven; revised and reformatted by Amby Duncan-Carr.

http://amby.com/cat_site/cattree.html



Build your own Scratching Post

Clear instructions, common tools, straight-forward illustration etc., from the creator, Kevin Loader! The only thing you don't get is a visit and try-out from "co-creator" and principal user, Kiki (although I'm sure he'd love to!)

[NOTE: This page is provided by the Web Archive since the original site seems to have vanished; the email address listed is probably no longer accurate.]

Kevin Loader

<http://web.archive.org/web/19981207022751/http://www.sidus.net/kloader/usepost.htm>

Cat Tree Forest

.... describes a sturdy cat tree designed and built by Caledonia's and Liberty's people. A clear drawing is shown but no specific dimensions are included.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/5421/forest.htm>

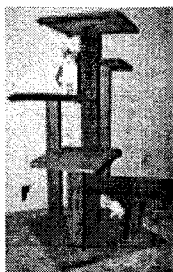


Kitty Sunroom and the Kitty Bathroom Plans

For \$10 you can get the plans for these great kitty spots. The site has some info and pictures; get your creative juices flowing!!

John & Patricia Canivan

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/CatAnna/plans.htm>



Cat Climber

These **building directions** include a list of all the materials needed; diagrams and instructions are also provided. Dave says it's H E A V Y so you may want to have help moving it if you assemble it elsewhere (or perhaps you'll want to put it together near its final location!!).

Dave Harrison

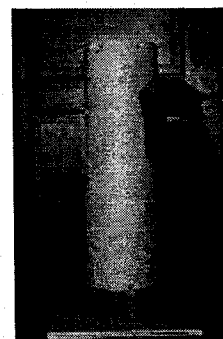
<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/david-rebecca/Catclimber.html>

How to build a scratching post

Here are set-by-step instructions for making a *Sisal Wrapped Scratching Post* - cat tested and approved! Includes training advice; the *Coping With Your Cat* section (also on this site) provides additional training tips and clearly explains why cats should *NOT* be declawed.

Cats International (formerly Wisconsin Cat Club)

http://www.catsinternational.org/9_3.html



BUILD A SCRATCHING POST! Do it yourself: Step-by-step directions -- Low-cost!

Instructions from Gregory and Pamela Talin-Bryant; inspirational assistance provided by Stella & Izzy.

<http://www.ultranet.com/~tb/toys.htm>

The Cat Ladder

As you can see, Xena, Gabby, Lissy, and Lucy have done a thorough quality inspection and are quite pleased with this great cat perch made from a step ladder, cardboard concrete mold, and sisal rope, along with 2x4 anchors. Build this, add cats, and you'll have a great-looking conversation piece for any room in your home.

Anne M. Kolaczyk

<http://www.nd.edu/~akolaczy/catladder.html>



"Build A Cat TREE" instructions, in common everyday language

Provides answers to common questions, hints, tips and clues for how to build your own cat tree. Also, check out the selection of unique, hand-crafted cat trees available for inspiration (or purchase).

Smith Industries

<http://www.smithindustries.com/How-To.html>

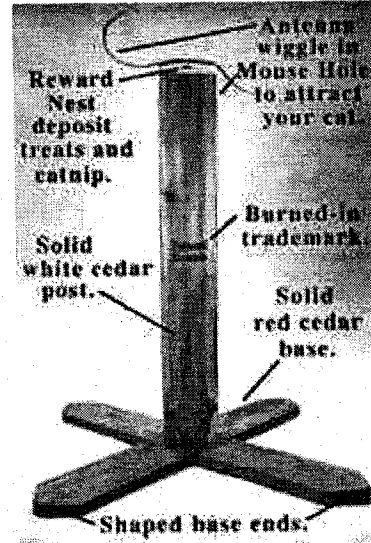
Not into *DO-IT-YOURSELF* projects?? Check this alternative:

Natural Scratch For Natural Cats

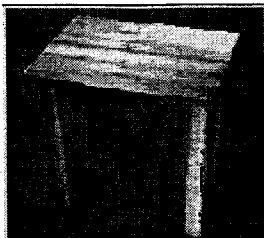
This solid cedar scratching post system features an interactive string toy, kitty treats, catnip, and a seven-page training booklet. The new, improved version has a white cedar post, is available in two sizes (24" or 32" high) and comes with a red cedar base of equal dimensions -- this provides stability so that your cat won't have the awful experience of digging in and then having the post fall over!! The beautiful X-shaped base also provides an appealing *HORIZONTAL* scratching surface. Cedar provides the tactile sensations preferred by cats *PLUS* you're not training your kitty to scratch on the carpets!!

Ted Schaar

<http://www.naturalscratch.com/>



Cat-friendly End Table



Here's the idea behind this new concept for hearth and kitty: *Instead of complaining about what some cats do to some living room furniture, why not use those same activities to make handsome rooms and happy cats?* This end table is not *CHEAP* and will be an attractive and much appreciated addition to your home!!

Jonah Kalb / Catnip Trading

<http://www2.viaweb.com/cgi-bin/clink?catnip+LENYxD+catendtab.html>






GIFs available from:

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[Carolyn's Cat Corner](#)

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 <p><u>Back to the CAT SITE</u></p>	 <p><u>Amby Duncan-Carr</u></p>	<p><u>Visit Amby's HOME PAGE</u> </p>
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Last Updated: 28 July '02 at approximately 14:55 GMT

© 1997 - 2002 [Amby Duncan-Carr](#)

URL of this page:
http://amby.com/cat_site/declaw.html



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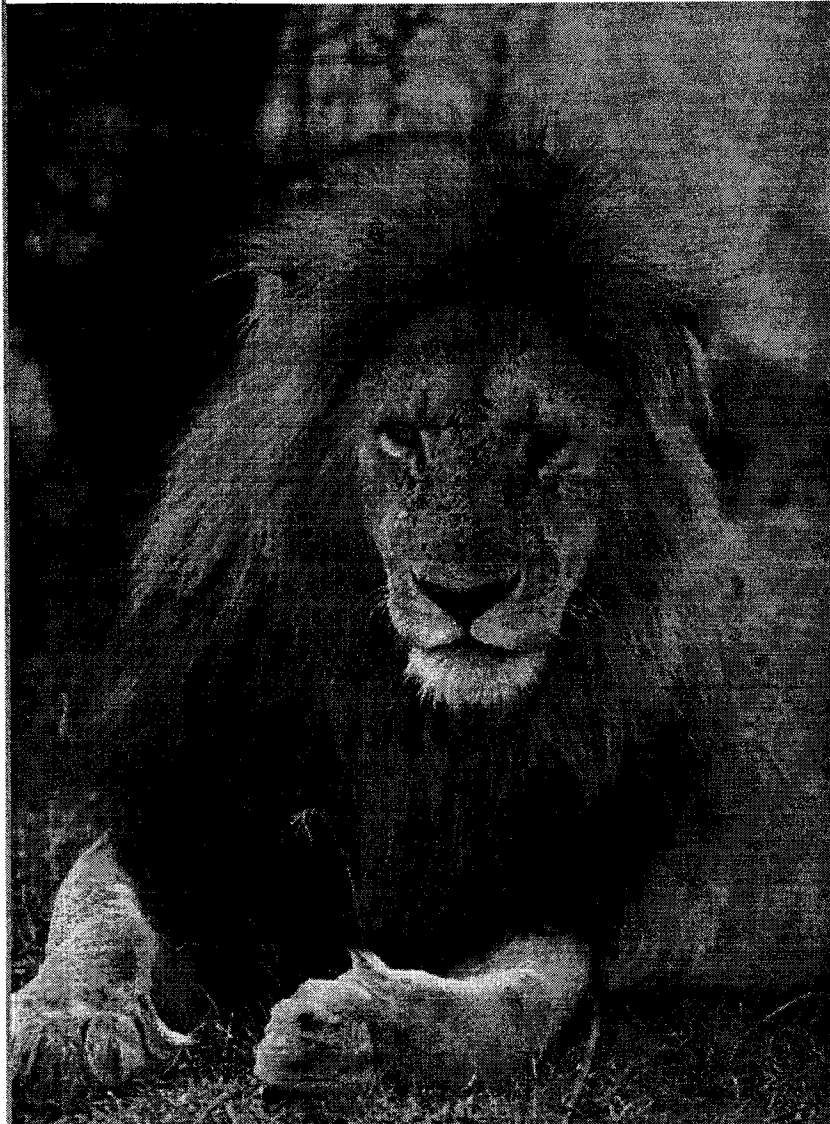
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California

Declawing Banned nationwide under Animal Welfare act



September 15, 2006 : 12:00 AM

USDA Announces Big News

LOS ANGELES, September 12 – Declawing captive wild or exotic animals such as lions, tigers, wolves and bears is no longer permitted under the federal Animal Welfare Act.

In the recently announced policy decision of the United States Department of

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Wed, October 4, 2006

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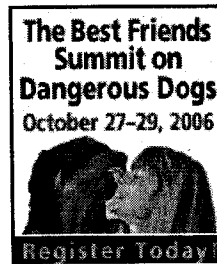
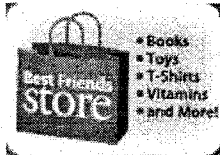
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THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES



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The Humane Society of the United States Applauds USDA Policy against Declawing and Tooth Removal from Captive Wild Animals

September 1, 2006

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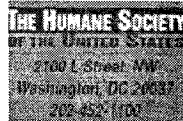
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WASHINGTON – Today the Humane Society of the United States applauded an August 2006 decision by the United States Department of Agriculture that ends the practices of declawing and removing canine teeth from certain captive wild animals unless the procedure is prescribed by a veterinarian for medical problems or required for scientific reasons. The procedures will no longer be acceptable when they are performed to make the animals easier to handle. According to the USDA, these procedures can cause considerable pain and may result in chronic health problems.

"This is an exceptional change in policy that will save thousands of animals much pain and distress," stated Don Elroy, director of wildlife advocacy for The HSUS. "We applaud the USDA for these changes in policy."

The new policy affects monkeys, chimpanzees and other primates as well as wild and exotic carnivores, such as lions, tigers and other big cats, wolves and bears. It applies to animals held by USDA license holders including exhibitors, dealers and breeders as well as to research facilities. This decision is estimated to affect thousands of animals. Though the new policy does not affect animals previously altered by these methods, it will protect all animals that have not had these procedures already performed.

The USDA is adopting the animal welfare policies of the American Veterinary Medical Association, which opposes both declawing big cats and teeth removal in primates and large carnivores. The AVMA recommends behavioral modification, environmental enrichment and changes in group composition as alternatives to dental procedures for minimizing bite wounds.

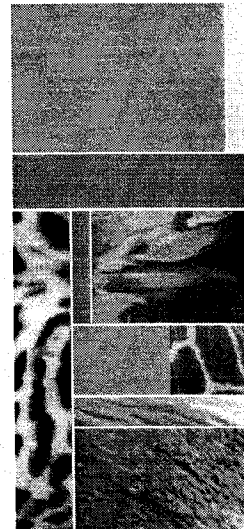
As a result of the USDA policy change, these procedures are no longer allowed under the Animal Welfare Act. "This is one for the animals," stated Elroy.

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization with more than 9.5 million members and constituents. The HSUS is a mainstream voice for animals, with active programs in companion animals, disaster preparedness and response, wildlife and habitat protection, marine mammals, animals in research, equine protection, and farm animal welfare. The HSUS protects all animals through education, investigation, litigation, legislation, advocacy and field work. The nonprofit organization is based in Washington and has field representatives and offices across the country. On the web at www.hsus.org.

Contact Information

Belinda Mager, 646-469-4987



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[Regulating big cats into extinction?-2](#)

September 2006



TIME TO DECLAW AND DEFANG OUR GOVERNMENT?

By Zuzana Kukol

I always loved freedom, and I always loved big cats.

When I first moved to the USA in mid 1980s as a political refugee from former communist Czechoslovakia, one of my favorite movies became Zucker-Abraham-Zucker's *Top Secret!* which is a spoof of Elvis and World War II underground resistance thriller movies. Val Kilmer plays Nick Rivers, a Presley-like American rock idol sent behind the Iron Curtain to then East Germany on a goodwill tour. East Germans are depicted as Nazis and the Underground is mostly Frenchmen.

The highlight of the movie, at least for me, was the movie version of East German National Anthem, sung to the tune of the Shorewood (Wisconsin) High School marching song.

Considering I just moved from my old oppressive country to the USA, the land of the free, the lyrics at the time were extremely funny and scary at the same time: *"Hail, hail East Germany / Land of fruit and grape / Land where you'll regret / If you try to escape / No matter if you tunnel under or take a running jump at the wall / Forget it, the guards will kill you, if the electrified fence doesn't first."*

Back then I felt nothing could spoil the wonderful America I just moved to.

I wonder if I would still find the movie and song as amusing now, 20 years later, with US federal and local governments becoming more intrusive into peoples' lives and infringing on personal and property rights and freedoms.

It isn't whether I agree or disagree with the agenda of the ever increasing maze of bans, rules and regulations, my concern is whether government should be micromanaging our lives to this extent as many of the laws in my opinion should be a matter of personal choice, not government mandate.

I drive cars and ride motorcycles. In my state we have seat belt and helmet laws, however, these don't apply to dirt bikes as these are not street legal and therefore don't need to be insured or registered with DMV and so the helmet law doesn't apply.

Do I wear a helmet? You bet I do, as I believe helmets and seat belts save lives.

Do I believe this should be required by law?

Absolutely NOT; it should be my own decision, not the government's to decide if I want to wear them or not.

I wear helmets and seat belts because I believe in them, but I am absolutely against laws requiring their use. I don't need or want the government to protect me from myself.

My next pet peeve is smoking laws. I do not smoke and get physically sick when near cigarette smoke, but I still don't think government should be telling restaurant owners or any private business to not allow smoking in their establishments. It should be up to the customers to decide where they want to dine or conduct business based on their food and smoking preferences.

What will be next, government telling us we can't smoke in our houses either?

And just this summer, from galaxy 'Oppression' (not enough light years away) comes federal Haley's act, HR 5909, a measure that, if enacted, would forbid the public from ever touching big cats, such as tigers, jaguars, lions, leopards, cheetahs and cougars, even when they are tiny babies. Fines for disobeying would be up to \$10,000 if the private owners allow anyone to feed, pet, or play with big exotic cats of any age.

This 'feel-good' bill is in honor of Haley Hilderbrand from Altamont, who was killed in Kansas in August 2005 by a Siberian tiger while voluntarily posing for a picture in an USDA licensed facility.

While Haley's untimely death is very unfortunate, this bill would have done nothing to prevent this accident since what happened in Haley's case was a clear violation of federal USDA rules we had in effect already.

It is a violation of federal regulations to exhibit any tiger, lion, cougar, cheetah, leopard, or jaguar over the age of 16 weeks to the

public without proper caging or barriers. Federal regulations also prohibit public contact with these animals, even when restrained. Since such activity is regulated under the Animal Welfare Act, this agency is required to investigate any incidents or complaints resulting from the activity of any USDA licensee.

Tiger that killed Haley was a full grown animal and the exhibitor clearly broke the existing rules that would have prevented this tragedy.

Never mind the facts that only 16 people were fatally mauled by captive wild cats between 1990 and 2006. That is one death per year. Most deaths and attacks were on handlers and owners, whom have accepted and know extremely well the risk.

None of the deaths were the result of the exotic cats running loose. All happened to people voluntarily on the property where the animals were kept, be it owners, handlers, employees, friends, or visitors wanting to see the animals.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, 53,500 children from ages 0-19 died in 2003, many in activities that involve toys, pools, cars, bicycles, boating, sports, but there is no federal legislation restricting the public from them. Why not, isn't their life and death sensationalized or important enough to name a bill after them?

The latest federal rule from USDA prohibits declawing and defanging of bears, primates and big cats. Animals are considered property under US legal system, so the issue, once again, is not whether you as a citizen agree or disagree with these procedures, the issue is whether the government should have a right to tell us what to do with our private property, and my answer is NO.

Nobody is forcing animal owners do declaw or defang their animals, and to this day I haven't seen a scientific study that would prove it is harmful when done correctly. According to AVMA, American Veterinary Medical Association, there is no scientific evidence that declawing of domestic cats leads to behavioral abnormalities when the behavior of declawed cats is compared with that of cats in control groups.

On the other hand, many communities, in lieu of lower licensing fees, recommend spaying and neutering, which has been proven to have long term effects. Other than obvious short term problems associated with these reproductive surgeries such as infections, bad scarring or bad reaction to anesthesia (on rare occasions even leading to death), bleeding, stitches breaking or pulling out, after removing the reproductive organs, some animals will have long term health effects associated with the hormonal changes, occurring years after an animal has been spayed. These may include weight gain, urinary incontinence, or decreased stamina.

Maybe it is time to declaw and defang our government which keeps sticking their claws and sinking their teeth too deep into our flesh without regard for personal freedoms and choices.

Rather than keep adding more stupid laws, maybe our government should go in opposite direction, go through the books and remove many of the bad

Time to Declaw and Change our Government.
laws that passed years ago to restore normalcy and freedoms in what used
to be a wonderful free country.

I didn't change, I still love freedom and big exotic cats, but the right to enjoy them seems to be in short
supply lately.

thefcf site is best viewed with IE 5.5 and above and a resolution of
1024x768.

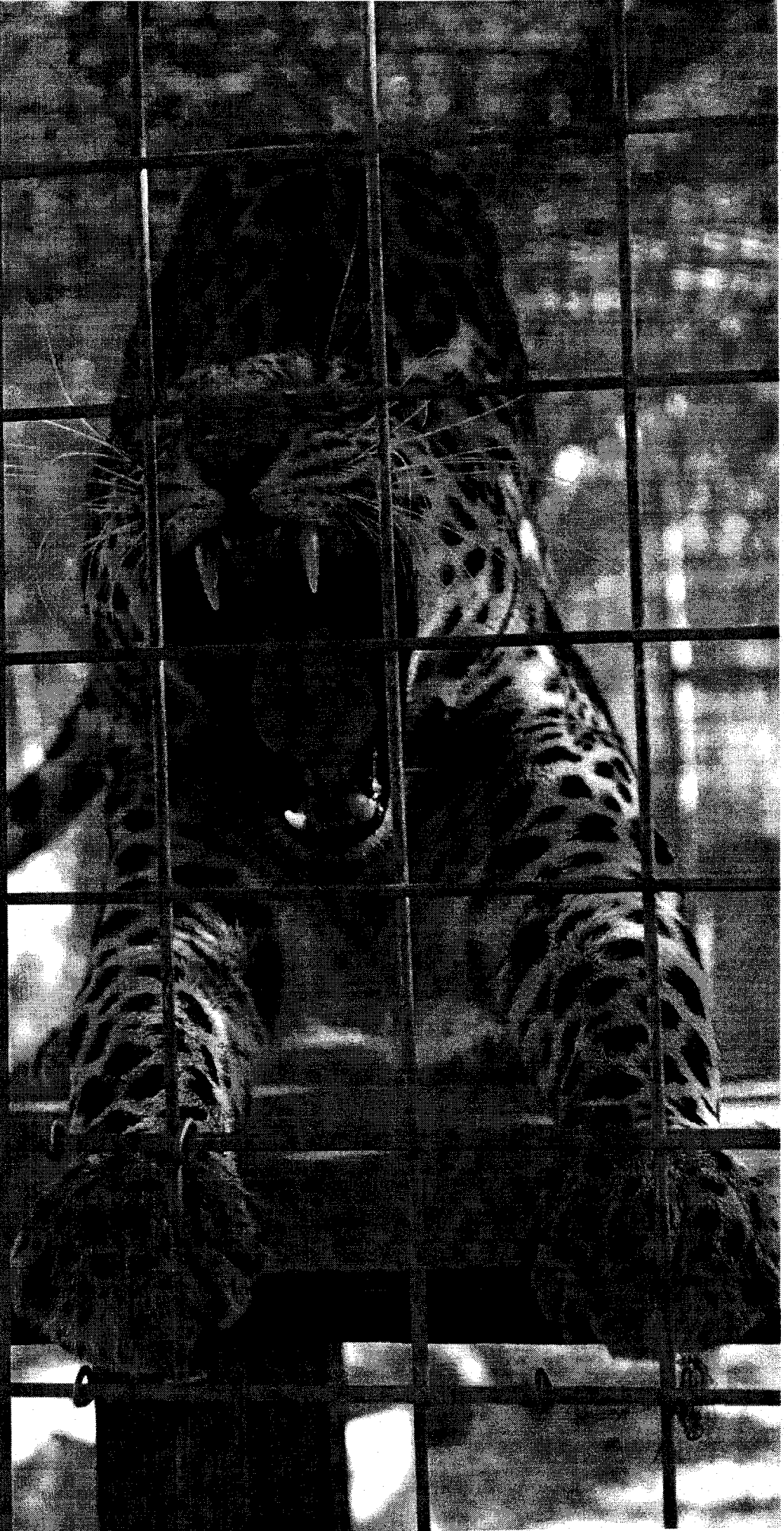
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Fatal Attractions

Big Cats in the USA

IFAW Report on
Dangerous Safety
Violations
at USDA-Licensed
Wildlife Facilities



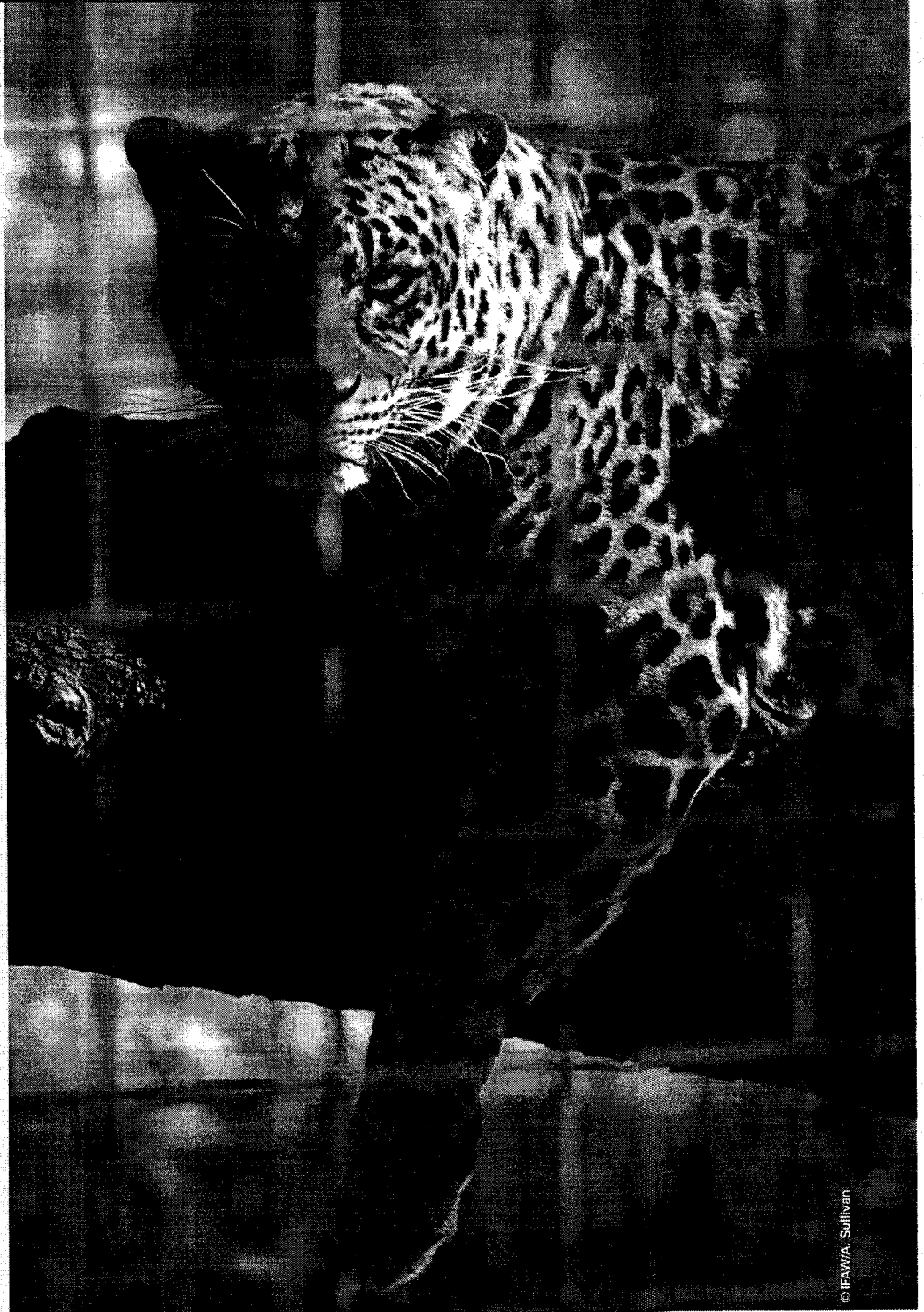


The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is one of the largest international animal welfare organizations in the world.

IFAW seeks to promote conservation and animal welfare policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people. Our work is concentrated in three areas: reducing the commercial exploitation and trade of wild animals, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress.

IFAW pursues a variety of local, national and global campaigns around the world. We have offices in 15 countries and a staff of more than 200 experienced campaigners, legal and political experts, and internationally acclaimed scientists. In each region where we work, IFAW's activities are informed by local customs and culture and tailored to the particular economic and political conditions of that area.

All of IFAW's efforts are rooted in the belief that a world in which animal life can survive and thrive is fundamental to human well-being.



© IFAW/A. Sullivan



© IFAW

At one facility, IFAW staff saw a leopard bite off the finger of an untrained sanctuary worker in a situation similar to this. Leopards become aggressive when they do not have enough room to roam.

An African leopard at the Wildlife Survival Sanctuary, Spring Hill, Florida

"Exotic and wild animals are not suited to be kept as pets. The average pet owner lacks the expertise and facilities to provide appropriate housing, secure containment, adequate nutrition, appropriate medical care and cannot meet the complex social, emotional and behavioral requirements of these animals."

WILBUR AMAND, V.M.D.
Former Executive Director, American Association of Zoo Veterinarians

FATAL ATTRACTIONS: Big Cats in the USA

Imagine looking out your window and seeing a 450-lb. Bengal tiger walking down your street.

Or finding out that your neighbor has decided to open a backyard zoo – featuring predatory lions, leopards and cheetahs.

Or losing your 17-year-old daughter in a tiger attack – that occurs while she is having her high school picture taken at a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) licensed wildlife facility.

These frightening and tragic incidents aren't happening on the other side of the world – they're happening in New Jersey, Florida and Kansas – and all over the United States.

An Alarming Trend

There may be only 5,000 tigers left in the wild – and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), one of the world's largest international wildlife organizations, has long worked to protect them.

Yet, incredibly, there are an estimated 5,000-7,000 tigers living in captivity in the United States – as well as another 10,000 or more lions, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars and cougars. And their numbers are growing – rapidly and uncontrollably – as the demand for “cute” cubs as novelty pets also grows.

These big cats and their cubs are not at accredited zoos where you would expect to find them. Many are living in cramped, appalling conditions in substandard sanctuaries, roadside or “amateur” zoos, backyards and even city apartments – situations that are not only dangerous to these magnificent felines, but also seriously endanger any people in proximity to them.

As the number of big cats in the United States has grown, so has the frequency of big cat attacks, escapes and deaths. In response, IFAW is now deploying our extensive global expertise in large cat conservation closer to home by working to protect both these threatened predators and the public from the inevitable tragedies that occur when they are in unnaturally close contact.

IFAW Investigates Dangers at USDA-Licensed Wildlife Facilities

Of all the big cats in the United States, nearly 5,000 are kept in facilities licensed and inspected by the USDA.

That seems reassuring. But in reality, a USDA-licensed facility could be anything from a fenced-in backyard of a private home to a rundown roadside zoo, to a large “pseudo-sanctuary.” The three categories of USDA licenses covering breeders, dealers and exhibitors are far too broad and the licenses themselves are surprisingly easy to get. For instance, all legal species are covered by the same licenses – so the same license is obtained



© IFAW/A. Sullivan

THAT'S ONE BIG BABY. For \$10, you can have your photo taken bottle-feeding a 7-month-old Siberian tiger on a leash at a USDA-licensed facility in Davenport, FL.

Although very young “cubs” are sometimes allowed to be exhibited under certain circumstances, this tiger is far too old to qualify – and should be subject to the same distance and/or barrier requirements as adult big cats.

The Rising Toll

Until only recently, statistics on big cat attacks were not even recorded in one central place – so the public was only aware of the few stories that have made headline news. Now, though, these incidents are being recorded.

BETWEEN JANUARY 2003 AND NOVEMBER 2005:

- **7 children have been mauled and bitten; 2 have been killed**
- **31 adults have been mauled and bitten; 3 have been killed**
- **56 big cats have escaped – these big cats have been found in suburban neighborhoods, backyards and along highways**
- **357 big cats have been confiscated for being confined in dangerous or unsafe conditions**
- **46 big cats have been killed due to escapes, disease and natural causes**

Sanctuaries: Not "Safe Havens"

Wildlife sanctuaries are popular family destinations. And most of us trust they are safe to visit – especially when licensed by the USDA. But sadly, this has proven to be tragically untrue.

On August 19, 2005, Haley Hilderbrand, 17, of Altamont, Kansas, was posing next to a Siberian tiger for her senior high school picture at a USDA-licensed facility known as Lost Creek Animal Sanctuary. What should have been a normal day turned into unspeakable tragedy when the tiger attacked and killed her despite being on a leash held by the handler.



© IFAW/A. Sullivan

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT. A young woman's face is just inches away from 700 lb. Siberian tiger at a USDA-licensed facility in Christmas, FL. One swipe of a claw could leave this woman seriously scarred or blinded.

USDA regulations require facilities to maintain sufficient distance and barriers between exotic animals and the public or have dangerous animals controlled by an experienced handler. **USDA regulations also state that a leash is not an adequate barrier between a big cat and the public.** In reality, these regulations are often ignored by facilities and the USDA simply does not currently have the resources or personnel to properly enforce the law.

The USDA itself recognizes there are problems with inspecting facilities and enforcing the Animal Welfare Act. The USDA also warns against the dangers of keeping big cats as pets¹.

¹ United States Department of Agriculture's Position Statement, "Large Wild and Exotic Cats Make Dangerous Pets." Miscellaneous Publication No. 1560, issued February 2000. <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/position.html>

for a tiger as for a goat – whether the owner is operating as a breeder, dealer or exhibitor. In addition, there is inadequate oversight once obtained. Unfortunately, due to a lack of resources, regulations are rarely effectively enforced.

As a result of insufficient regulations and poor enforcement, many senseless big cat tragedies involving humans have occurred and future heartbreaks are inevitable. Big cats in backyard enclosures have pulled young children under chain link fences and killed them. Tigers have escaped USDA-licensed facilities and roamed suburban neighborhoods. Leopards on leashes often lounge on sanctuary lawns for young children to pet.

Many of these serious public safety hazards could be easily avoided if facilities had specific regulations and standards for maintaining dangerous animals.

Unfortunately, none of these incidents are the results of an occasional lapse in enforcement or non-compliance at one or two facilities. Between April 2004 and June 2005, IFAW investigated 42 USDA-licensed facilities where big cats were kept and exhibited. Serious and disturbing violations were observed at nearly every single facility IFAW visited.

Here is a brief summary of the findings:

- **The vast majority of the big cats they saw were housed at facilities that were structurally unsound.** Many enclosures had rusty fences and some facilities had no barriers at all.
- **Direct public contact between dangerous big cats and people – including very young children – was allowed at many facilities.**
- **Poor housekeeping and animal hygiene were observed at the majority of facilities including dead animals, filthy water buckets (which often included urine and feces), vermin and grossly inadequate sewage disposal.**
- **Meat, which is the staple of the big cat diet, was often stored without refrigeration.** Many animals were fed rotten food.
- **Many facilities had no attendants on hand at big cat exhibits – and some even allowed children to work as attendants!**

As a result of this investigation, IFAW is calling for immediate action on both the federal and state levels to safeguard the public safety and ensure the welfare of big cats in captivity. These recommendations are outlined on page 11 of this report.

"Accredited zoological parks and bona fide research facilities mandate specialized training for handlers and enforce strict protocols concerning prevention of zoonotic diseases and injury hazards with captive animals. In contrast, well intentioned pet dealers, breeders, and private owners often lack the expertise and resources to maintain exotic and native wildlife safety."

STEPHEN OSTROFF, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Director, National Center for Infectious Diseases (NCID),
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Where Do All the Tigers Come From? Can They Ever Be Sent Back to the Wild?

Many of these big cats that are languishing in substandard sanctuaries in the US are bought as adorable cubs over the Internet – for about the same price as a pedigree dog. (The typical price tag for a leopard cub is \$600; a Bengal tiger sells for \$1,500; and other cubs can be bought for as little as \$400 – with “free shipping” included.)

Usually, there is no background check or license requirement needed – and most big cats live among us completely unregulated due to a lack of state and federal oversight.

The sad truth is these tiger cubs don't stay cute. In just 6 months, they're strong enough to inflict a lethal bite or a deep scratch wound. By 3 years old, big cats often become aggressive and most owners can't handle their growing physical and nutritional needs.

For example, a 350-lb. adult Bengal tiger needs to eat 12 pounds of meat a day, 5 days a week – or more than 60 pounds a week.² Not to mention that large cats need acres to roam and prefer to catch and dismember their own prey – in fact, if they don't chew on animal carcasses, big cats experience severe dental problems.³ And of course, if your leopard is sick, it may be difficult or even impossible to find a nearby veterinarian who is qualified and experienced in treating dangerous carnivores.

People also wrongly assume that big cats can be domesticated and become a friendly addition to the family. However, big cats are wild by nature and will instinctively attack when triggered by fear, hunger, intrusion on their domain or any other innate response – no matter how accustomed to people the animal may be, or how experienced the owner is. In 2003, Roy Horn, of the world-famous Siegfried and Roy entertainment act, was attacked on stage by one of his own tigers showing that even the most well-trained big cats can attack without warning.



A leopard on a leash is a shocking sight to anyone who knows about predatory cats. While this cat is lying peacefully now, it could very quickly attack this young girl. Leopards are extremely effective hunters and killers in the wild.

© IFAW

Big cats are also often declawed and sometimes defanged as a way to make them “safer” and more “tame” pets. However, these cruel procedures⁴ do nothing to “tame” these animals and declawing has even been shown to increase a cat's likelihood to bite.⁵

Overwhelmed, owners often try to get rid of these huge animals. But accredited zoos cannot or will not take them due to their poor breeding and the sheer overabundance of unwanted exotic cats.

Sadly, these discarded wild cats often end up in unregulated roadside facilities, or are simply “dumped” somewhere after they have lost their appeal. Recently two 80-lb. tiger cubs were found wandering down a North Carolina highway.⁶ Big cats are even shot in “canned hunts,” where they are sometimes drugged before being released into an enclosure to be shot by hunting enthusiasts looking for a guaranteed kill.

The few legitimate sanctuaries and well-run, accredited facilities simply do not have the space or resources to absorb thousands of unwanted large cats. Many animals end up in pseudo-sanctuaries, which claim to save tigers through captive breeding. However, unregulated breeding of large cats – particularly tigers – actually decreases the viability of the species. The fact of the matter is, due to inbreeding and unregulated breeding – which can perpetuate medical problems – big cats bred in captivity can never be re-introduced to the wild.



© IFAW

This picture looks innocent enough – but young children should never be allowed to feed or come in direct contact with wild cats, which can deliver a deadly bite from an early age.

² “Management and Conservation of Captive Tigers” <http://nagonline.net/Diets%20pdf/Tiger%20Nutrition%20Manual.pdf>

³ “Management and Conservation of Captive Tigers” <http://nagonline.net/Diets%20pdf/Tiger%20Nutrition%20Manual.pdf>

⁴ West Hollywood, CA, set a precedent for other municipalities in banning the declawing of domestic and wild cats in April 2003. Following this, AB395 was introduced to ban declawing of all cats statewide and AB1857 was introduced to ban the declawing of captive, wild cats.

⁵ AB1857 FactSheet-Declawing, The Paw Project

⁶ In January 2005 in Charlotte, North Carolina, two tiger cubs each weighing at least 80 pounds were found wandering along a highway prompting zoo officials to warn that private ownership of exotic animals poses an increasing danger in the state. Two children in NC since mid-2003 have been mauled by tigers in the state; one died of his injuries.

IFAW's Big Cats in the USA Campaign

We Support Legitimate Refuges ... Rescue Endangered Cats ...
And Campaign for Laws to Protect the Public and Big Cats

IFAW is at the forefront of this serious national issue ...

Caring for Big Cats That Can Never Be Released to the Wild: Since 2000, IFAW has supported a wildlife sanctuary in Texas, which holds more than 600 exotic animals (including many large cats), many of which are refugees from the exotic pet trade.



© IFAW/A. Sullivan

A gaping violation of USDA regulations. The gap in the enclosure is wide enough for someone to stick their arm through. Only a flimsy rope, 1 1/2 feet off the ground separated the public from this adult tiger's cage.

In this case, there is neither sufficient distance nor a safe enough barrier to keep the public protected as stipulated in USDA regulations.

Rescuing Tigers from Substandard Sanctuaries: In November 2003, IFAW conducted a joint operation to help local authorities rescue 24 Bengal tigers kept in appalling conditions in a woman's New Jersey backyard "pseudo-sanctuary." The seizure made national and international

headlines and was the end result of a four-year court case against the owner after a 450-lb. tiger escaped into the neighborhood in 1999 and was shot dead. In 2005, IFAW also assisted in the relocation of 13 big cats from two substandard facilities in Nevada.

Getting Laws Passed to Protect Both Large Cats and People: IFAW was also instrumental in campaigning for passage of the US Captive Wildlife Safety Act (CWSA), which bans the interstate trade of big cats for commercial purposes. However, the selling and breeding of large cats within state borders and the associated animal welfare and human safety issues remain at crisis levels.

- **Since 2004, IFAW has supported the passage of four state bills regarding exotic animal ownership:** California (2004), Minnesota (2004), New York (2004) and Arkansas (2005).

- **In 2005, IFAW helped implement a stringent regulation in Kentucky** and is currently campaigning for the enactment of a similar regulation in Kansas.

- **Still, at this point, 35 states have little or no regulations on the ownership of big cats.** IFAW will continue to work with many of these states to enact bans on owning big cats and other exotic animals.

Now IFAW Focuses Public Attention on the Problems of "Pseudo-Sanctuaries"

While the stories of big cat attacks and escapes usually make headlines, there has been no comprehensive review undertaken to examine the magnitude of this national public safety and animal welfare problem.

Therefore, IFAW gathered its own information on the dangers to people and big cats at wildlife facilities and visited 42 USDA-licensed facilities where big cats are being kept and exhibited.

The USDA-licensed exhibitors investigated were in 11 states – and included roadside animal exhibits, zoos, sanctuaries, petting zoos, wildlife parks, nature preserves and game farms.

The investigators, who are experts in captive wild animal issues, took 2,521 photos to document the conditions of the facilities, the conditions of the animals and countless Animal Welfare Act violations.

IFAW Exposes Disturbing Big Cat Violations

The American people depend on the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Care Division [USDA-APHIS/AC], to monitor compliance of the Animal Welfare Act [AWA] of 1966 and its amendments.

Under this Act, licensed exhibitors are required to provide animals with adequate care and treatment and have a duty to maintain safety measures to protect the public.

However, during our yearlong investigation, IFAW discovered key violations of all APHIS safety measures at the majority of the 42 USDA-licensed facilities visited.

A Summary of Our Primary Findings

APHIS Requirements	IFAW Findings
<p>LICENSING IS REQUIRED: For any person operating or desiring to operate as a dealer, exhibitor or operator of an auction sale. (Section 2.1 (1) (a))</p> <p>For example: circuses, roadside animal exhibits, zoos, petting zoos, animal acts, wildlife parks, nature preserves and game farms.</p>	<p>Facilities were found exhibiting without a license – which means they are not being inspected, either.</p> <p>Many private owners are obtaining licenses to evade laws prohibiting private ownership of big cats.</p>
<p>VETERINARY CARE: Each dealer or exhibitor needs to have an attending veterinarian to provide adequate care to animals. (Section 2.40 (a)(1)(2))</p>	<p>Unhealthy animals were observed with longstanding ailments such as fungal infections, parasites and open sores. Many animals were sick, bloated and lying down ill and unable to walk.</p>
<p>ENCLOSURES: Facilities must be structurally sound and in good repair to contain the animals and protect them from injury. (Section 3.125 (a))</p>	<p>Many visited facilities had structurally unsound enclosures. Some had rusty fences.</p>
<p>FENCES: Perimeter fences must be of sufficient height to keep animals and unauthorized persons out.</p> <p>Fences should be at least 8 feet high for large felines such as lions, tigers, leopards, cougars and bobcats.</p> <p>Fences should be at least 3 feet from the primary enclosure to prevent physical contact with people outside the perimeter fence. (Section 3.127(d))</p>	<p>At almost every facility, IFAW investigators observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inadequate perimeter fences ■ Lack of barriers ■ Lack of proper height and distance
<p>SANITATION: Provision needs to be made for the removal and disposal of animal and food wastes, bedding, dead animals, trash and debris in order to minimize vermin infestation, odors and disease hazards. (Section 3.125(d))</p>	<p>At all facilities, some level of poor housekeeping and animal hygiene was observed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Litter, debris and even dead animals ■ Filthy standing water often contaminated with urine and feces ■ Inadequate disposal leading to vermin and insects ■ Feces and puddles of urine, strong sewage smells and ammonia from urine ■ Rotten food
<p>SHELTER: Must be provided to protect animals from inclement weather and overheating due to direct sunlight. (Section 3.127 (a) and (b))</p>	<p>Many facilities offered animals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inadequate or no shelter ■ Little or no shade cover
<p>SPACE AND SEPARATION: Enclosures need to give animals enough space to move and interact socially. (Section 3.128)</p> <p>Species that are housed together need to be compatible. (Section 3.133)</p>	<p>Majority of enclosures were inadequate for the species.</p> <p>Incompatible species were often housed together causing undue danger and stress to the animals.</p>
<p>FOOD AND WATER: Food and water should be clean and sanitary and free of contamination. (Sections 3.125(b), 3.129(a) and 3.130)</p>	<p>At many facilities, IFAW observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Filthy, algae-covered water, including urine and feces ■ Rotten food ■ Food covered with vermin and insects ■ Unrefrigerated perishable food
<p>ANIMAL HANDLING: Handling of animals should not cause trauma, stress or physical harm. (Section 2.131(a)(1))</p>	<p>IFAW investigators observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A one-week-old cougar cub separated from its mother and living in a plastic food container ■ A leopard being dragged on a leash
<p>During public exhibition, animals handled must be handled so there is minimal risk of harm to the animal and to the public with sufficient distance and barriers between the animal and the general viewing public. (Section 2.131(b)(1))</p>	<p>Direct contact was observed at many facilities. In some cases, young children were allowed to pet these dangerous wild animals and photos with adult cats, restrained only by a leash, were available.</p>
<p>When animals are in direct contact with the public, a knowledgeable and responsible attendant must be present. Dangerous animals such as lions and tigers must be under the direct control of an experienced trainer. (Section 2.131(c)(2) and (3))</p>	<p>Many facilities with no attendant – or with a young child as the only attendant.</p>
<p>If public feeding of animals is allowed, the food must be provided by the animal facility according to the dietary needs of the species. (Section 2.131(c)(4))</p>	<p>Patrons hand-feeding rotten chicken to animals.</p>

USDA License Categories

There are three types of licenses under the USDA covering Breeders (Class A), Dealers (Class B) and Exhibitors (Class C). A "commercial purpose" is defined as when the owner is earning more than \$500 a year from dealing, breeding or trading the big cat(s). An individual or a business can only obtain one license. In cases where a business is under multi-ownership, each individual active in that business must be licensed.

Class A (Breeder) USDA license is intended for individuals participating in the breeding and sale of animals.

Class B (Dealer) USDA license pertains to individuals who participate in the sale and trade of animals or the offspring of animals that are not part of the licensee's permanent collection.

Class C (Exhibitor) USDA license can be considered the all-encompassing license. Class C licensees are permitted to breed and sell their own animals' offspring, sell offspring from adults other than their own, and are permitted to fully exhibit all animals. This class covers most of the tigers in private ownership. To be issued a Class C USDA license, the individual must engage in some sort of commercial activity (entertainment being a common one). All licensed zoos in the US receive a Class C license.⁷

All three license categories require the licensee to have adequate husbandry knowledge for the animals they own. Additionally, all facilities and animal care methods must comply with the AWA. In July 2004, the Animal Care Committee of USDA-APHIS revised the handling requirements, stating, "All licensees that maintain wild or exotic animals must demonstrate adequate experience and knowledge of the species they maintain." (AWA section 2.131(a)). However, sufficiently enforcing these requirements is nearly impossible with current resources.

⁷ www.aphis.usda.gov

Current Federal & State Regulations Leave Gaping Holes for Big Cat Attacks and Escapes

The incomplete state and federal regulatory framework in the USA fuels the trade in big cats.

Broadly speaking, the keeping of large cats falls into two categories:

- **Big cats at wildlife facilities:** The USDA manages the regulation of commercial or exhibiting animal facilities at a federal level.
- **Big cats as pets:** Each state is responsible for regulating the ownership of large cats as pets and state regulations vary enormously.

Big Cats at Wildlife Facilities: The USDA Recognizes the Problems

The USDA is responsible for ensuring that commercial operators and exhibitors that own exotic animals are abiding by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). However, the USDA does not have the power to ban the ownership of exotic animals as pets.

Under the USDA regulations, any person who possesses exotic animals for the purposes of exhibition to the public, or to commercially breed or deal in exotic animals, is held accountable to the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and must comply with its minimum standards of care and treatment. The Animal Welfare Act is enforced by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), part of the USDA, which licenses and regulates exhibitors, breeders and dealers.

Permits are issued when minimum requirements are fulfilled and a pre-licensing inspection is completed. The license is then issued by APHIS. A year later, USDA-APHIS is required to inspect the facility, and to continue to do so annually, to ensure the facility is operating in compliance to the Animal Welfare Act.

Despite these regulations, IFAW investigators witnessed serious human safety and animal welfare violations at all of the 42 USDA-licensed facilities observed.

The USDA itself recognizes that there are problems with inspecting wildlife facilities and enforcing current regulations. It has conducted its own audit and has put forth a number of its own recommendations, which IFAW supports (see page 9).

What if a Facility is not in Compliance with the Animal Welfare Act?

There is no immediate penalty. Rather, the licensee is supposed to go through a series of court proceedings, which can be appealed. Depending on the court decision, the USDA must ensure that the licensee does not continue to violate the Animal Welfare Act or in an unlikely case, that the licensee's permit is permanently revoked. However, if an individual's license is revoked, IFAW has found that it is very easy for that same individual to become licensed under a different business name or for a family member to become licensed for that individual.⁸

⁸Information derived from IFAW USDA court decision research and analysis 1998-current.

The average time between an APHIS inspector documenting AWA violations and a decision by the court to penalize the licensee is 3 years (IFAW has found the decision range to be between 5 months – 11 years).⁹

The USDA does have the power to issue penalties and revoke licenses. Once a penalty is issued, one of two things can occur: the licensee is given a grace period to pay a fine and is issued a cease and desist order from operating (although the animals can usually remain on the property), or they are issued a penalty and their license is temporarily or permanently revoked. In the rare case that the operator's license is revoked, the animals are not always confiscated. Instead, the operator is accountable for placing animals with other exhibitors, which can mean recycling the animals back into substandard facilities or, often, that the animals never even leave the facility that was in violation.¹⁰

In addition, there are a large amount of violation cases that are settled outside the court.

Problems with the Current USDA Licensing System

There are loopholes in the actual licensing process, there are loopholes in the inspection process and there are loopholes throughout the court penalty process. All in all, the USDA is not operating at full capacity, utilizing their resources or acting with sufficient force to enforce the Animal Welfare Act.

For instance, if a big cat owner does not breed or sell commercially in an amount over \$500 per year, and does not exhibit to the public, then they are NOT required to obtain a USDA license. It falls under the responsibility of the state to determine how to license these individuals – if at all. Given that individuals are allowed to keep big cats as pets in many states, this opens the door for big cat owners to bypass the USDA licensing system.

The recent and rapid increase in the exotic pet trade has rendered the USDA licensing system – a system originally intended to deal with agricultural issues – unable to deal with all the animal welfare issues it presents.

However, the USDA does recognize that there are problems with sufficiently inspecting facilities and enforcing the Animal Welfare Act. Specifically on big cats, the USDA warns of the dangers of keeping them as pets and has hired a staff member as a Large Felid (Cat) Specialist.

In the USDA Office of Inspector General's Audit Report of APHIS Animal Care Program Inspection and Enforcement Activities of September 2005,¹¹ problems are identified and recommendations are put forward which IFAW supports.

The audit report makes several findings including the following:

- Cases were documented where the Animal Care Program has declined to take enforcement action against violators who compromised public safety or animal health.
- Due to a lack of clear national guidance, the Animal Care Program's Eastern Region is not aggressively pursuing enforcement actions against violators of the Animal Welfare Act.

⁹Information derived from IFAW USDA court decision research and analysis 1998-current.

¹⁰Information derived from IFAW USDA court decision research and analysis 1998-current. The majority of court decisions are settled outside the court, these are called Consent Decisions.

¹¹USDA Office of Inspector General's (Western Region) Audit Report of APHIS Animal Care Program Inspection and Enforcement Activities of September 2005, Report No. 33002-3-SF.

Big Cat Tragedies in the News



This is no kitty. Although servals are small, they are particularly aggressive and dangerous pets. According to the Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition (CWAPC) there have been 6 incidents involving servals since 2001 - including at least 2 attacks.

OCTOBER 2003 ■ A 425-lb. tiger is found in a Harlem apartment in New York City.

OCTOBER 2003 ■ Famous entertainer Roy Horn is nearly killed by a "trained" tiger – demonstrating how even the most experienced tiger handlers can be surprised by a tiger's wild instincts and that tigers can never be fully trained or trusted.

DECEMBER 2003 ■ A 10-year-old child is dragged under a chain link fence in North Carolina and killed by his aunt's pet tiger.

JULY 2004 ■ A 600-lb. tiger, owned by actor Steve Sipek who once played Tarzan, escapes and prowls a Miami neighborhood for 24 hours before being killed by a safety officer. Only a year later, Sipek buys two more tiger cubs to add to his wild animal collection.

AUGUST 2005 ■ A 17-year-old Kansas teenager, Haley Hilderbrand, is killed by a tiger at a USDA-licensed wildlife facility.

NOVEMBER 2005 ■ A tiger escapes a USDA-licensed facility in Greenwich, New York, while its cage is being cleaned and is found in a nearby backyard.

Between January 2004 and August 2005, there has been an average of 2 potentially dangerous big cat escapes a month in the US.¹²

¹²<http://cwapc.org/pr/index.html> - Adding the newest November escape, the number comes to 39 escapes over 20 months – an average of 2 escapes per month.



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An IFAW investigator was allowed to pet a 1-year-old Siberian tiger, while the handler bottle-fed it at a USDA-licensed facility in Umatilla, FL. The cat is staked out on a long leash (about 15 feet) and if it decided to attack, no human would be able to move quickly enough to get away. USDA regulations state that leashes and trained handlers are not sufficient. Barriers and distance are needed to keep the public safe.

"Wild animals are not appropriate pets; they're dangerous to people, they can bite, they injure and kill children and adults on a regular basis, they can transmit potentially deadly diseases, they can wreak havoc on the local environment and the indigenous wildlife population when they're released."

KIM HADDAD, DVM.
Manager, Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition



© IFAW

This adult lion may be purring from being scratched – but could just as easily turn around and bite off the hand of this woman. Like tigers, adult lions often become unexpectedly aggressive and can attack trainers who have handled them from birth.

- The Animal Care Program offers a 75% discount on fines (agreed to by the violator) resulting in minimal amounts being paid in out-of-court settlements.
- The tracking and prioritization of inspection activities is not being done effectively.
- APHIS' Financial Management Division did not follow the law and internal control procedures in processing and collecting penalties.

The Audit Report makes a number of recommendations including the following:

- Review all cases where the regions decline to take enforcement actions against violators.
- Eliminate the automatic 75% discount for repeat violators or direct violations (where the animals' welfare is often at stake) and calculate fines based on the number of animals affected by the violation.
- Seek legislative change to increase the fines up to \$10,000 for research facilities.
- Conduct more frequent reviews of facilities identified as repeat violators.
- Fully train committee members on protocol review, facility inspectors and the Animal Welfare Act.

Big Cats as Pets: Momentum Grows at the State Level Against Private Ownership

Each of the 50 states regulates private ownership according to their own laws and regulations.

- 15 states have a complete ban on the ownership of big cats: Alaska, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Wyoming.¹³
- The rest of the states have little or no regulation on the ownership of big cats.

There are various levels of licensing depending on state laws and regulations – ranging from needing an actual license to simply registering the animals with a state agency. Thirteen states have permit requirements, obligating the owner to purchase a permit for each animal in possession. Fourteen states have no permit requirements, but may require animals to be registered or receive a veterinary certificate, etc. The remaining states do not require the owner to do anything in order to keep a big cat as a pet.

Even if the ownership of big cats at the state level was banned, a significant problem would remain in terms of what to do with the existing big cat population.

Given the enormous amount of exotic animals in substandard, "pseudo-sanctuaries" across the country, the number of confiscations on welfare grounds can only escalate. This places a huge burden on the USDA, which has limited options of adequate facilities at which to place confiscated animals.

¹³States that have a ban on ownership, but not all include big cats: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming

IFAW Recommendations

A Call for Immediate Action at the Federal and State Levels

IFAW believes that there needs to be tougher laws and regulations at both the federal and state levels to help promote public safety and to ensure the welfare of big cats in captivity. Improved and well-enforced standards of care would curb breeding and trading practices and improve substandard facilities, thus eventually reducing the number of big cats in cruel confinement.

AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

In order to help the USDA better enforce the Animal Welfare Act and address the animal welfare and human safety concerns of keeping big cats in private ownership, IFAW is making the following recommendations:

(1) A New Category of USDA License Specifically for Big Cats

To protect public safety and improve the standards of care and living conditions for large cats living in Department of Agriculture-licensed facilities, IFAW is calling for the establishment of a new USDA category of license for facilities holding large cats which would specifically address this group of animals (any live species of lion, tiger, leopard, cheetah, jaguar, or cougar or any hybrid of such species) and provide the types of amenities needed to guarantee public safety.

(2) Prohibition on Direct Contact with General Public

IFAW believes that the only way the public can truly be protected from big cats is if they are never allowed to come into direct contact with them. Therefore, as part of the new category of license, IFAW recommends a prohibition on direct contact by the general public and volunteers so that each USDA licensee and registrant that holds large cats will be required to take the steps necessary to ensure that the public does not come into direct contact with them. We believe this new requirement is in the best interest of both the animals and the general public. IFAW also recommends that the USDA be given the authority to expand this no contact policy to include other dangerous animals.

(3) A 24-month Moratorium on New Licenses for Facilities with Big Cats

To provide the Secretary of Agriculture with the time to establish improved facility standards to meet the needs of large cats living in captivity and protect the public, we believe it is necessary to establish a 24-month moratorium on the issuance of new licenses involving facilities holding large cats.

(4) Tougher Fines for Animal Welfare Act Violations

Fines and penalties need to be increased for violations of the Act and should be used to improve enforcement. These penalties can also help fund:

- Costs incurred in providing temporary housing, care and maintenance of seized animals;
- Rewards to anyone who furnishes information which leads to an arrest, conviction or civil penalty assessment;
- Expenses directly related to inspections, investigations and civil or criminal enforcement proceedings;
- Veterinary services, hospital care or medicines needed for abused animals.

AT THE STATE LEVEL

Big Cats as Pets Should be Banned in Every State.

IFAW is working with individual states to ban private ownership of dangerous animals as pets. Momentum is building against the private ownership of big cats as pets – almost 1/3 of states have outright bans on the possession of large, dangerous cats. However, there is much more work to be done:

- More than 2/3 of state governments allow the private purchase and possession of large cats.
- A handful of states have no regulations regarding big cats whatsoever (with some exception for proof of legal ownership and health certificates).
- In the more than 1/3 of states that require an import/ownership permit, license or registration to own a large cat, attacks and escapes continue.

For more information on IFAW's work to protect big cats and promote public safety, visit: www.ifaw.org/us/born_tobewild.

To support our efforts to protect animals worldwide, visit www.ifaw.org or call 1-800-932-IFAW.



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USDA

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/bigcatq@a.html>

Commonly Asked Big Cat Questions

I've heard that there have been changes in the regulations regarding the handling of big cats. Is that true?

The handling regulations were amended in July 2004, and a new section 2.131(a) was added. It states: "All licensees that maintain wild or exotic animals must demonstrate adequate experience and knowledge of the species they maintain." Consequently, the other subsections in Section 2.131 were renumbered.

Most of the handling questions we receive involving big cats concern the current Section 2.131(c)(1). The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that there is an inherent danger present for both the viewing public and the exhibited animal(s) where there is any chance that the public could come into direct contact with juvenile or adult big cats. The handling regulations prohibit the exhibition of such animals without sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animals and the viewing public to assure the safety of the public and the animals. Trained handlers, leashes, and stages, for example, are not substitutes for sufficient distance and/or barriers.

What species are considered to be "big cats" by APHIS?

Lions, tigers, jaguars, leopards, cougars, cheetahs, and any hybrids thereof. This list is consistent with the definition of big cats in the Lacey Act.

What about cubs? Can I exhibit them in situations allowing contact with the public?

It depends. The handling regulations require that all animals be handled as carefully as possible. They also specifically prohibit young or immature animals from exposure to rough or excessive public handling, and prohibit animals from being subjected to any combination of temperature, humidity, and time that is detrimental to the animal's health and well-being. The latter requires exhibitors to take into consideration an animal's age, species, and overall health status, among other things. Although we do not encourage public contact with cubs, it is possible for an exhibitor to exhibit cubs over approximately 8 weeks of age (i.e., when their immune systems have developed sufficiently to protect them from most communicable diseases), to the public, and still comply with all of the regulatory requirements.

What is meant by the term public?

The terms "the public" and "the general viewing public" in the handling regulations generally mean customers or visitors, and not an exhibitor's paid employees or unpaid bona fide workers who comprise the exhibitor's regular work force (i.e., personnel with regular hours who work under formal arrangements). Exhibitors themselves are not "the public" or "the general viewing public."

Are volunteers members of the public?

The public and the general viewing public can also include volunteers. We have learned of several exhibitors who charge fees or accept donations from volunteers or trainees in exchange for interaction with juvenile and/or adult big cats. We consider such volunteers or trainees to constitute the public, and have prosecuted these exhibitors for violating the handling regulations, among other things.

Is public feeding of big cats allowed?

Generally, exhibitions that allow the public to feed adult or juvenile big cats do not meet the handling regulations. We are aware of only one exhibition that does. In this exhibition, the animals are held in enclosures and there is a second barrier that both keeps members of the public at a safe distance from the actual enclosure and prevents contact between the animals and the public. This second barrier eliminates the public's ability to approach or reach into the animals enclosure, and eliminates the animal's ability to reach out and scratch or grab people. Members of the public, while behind the barriers, can place food into a chute that runs into the enclosure. The food used is appropriate for the species and is not provided in excessive amounts.

pdf: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/dealer/handling.pdf>

HR 5909 Haley's Act
"2006 Annual Convention Review"
Bay Cat

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Tigers declawed for Make-A-Wish Foundation!



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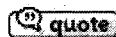
Message

keykey
** Nerd **



Joined: 16 Jan 2006
Posts: 619
Location: London, ON
Canada

Posted: Thu Sep 14, 2006 8:29 pm Post subject: Tigers declawed for Make-A-Wish Foundation!



The veteran veterinarian declawed three Siberian tiger cubs Monday at his Underwood Animal Hospital in Heath, where the tigers' owners, Terry and Marian Thompson, of Zanesville, take their tigers, lions and leopards for care. Other exotic animals go elsewhere, Terry Thompson said.

Thompson said the three tigers were declawed Monday so they could be handled by children who have their wish granted by the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions.

Ok now I don't agree with declawing a wild animal it just isn't right. Not unless the animals was going to die and they need to safe its life. I understand the Make-A-Wish Foundation, but there should be another way other then declawing wild animals.

Also in this article was.

Quote:

Siberian tigers are an endangered species, indigenous to eastern Russia, northeast China and parts of North Korea. The largest of all living cats, males can grow to weigh an average of 650 pounds, while females tip the scales at about 350 pounds, according to www.tigerhomes.org.

<http://tinyurl.com/pw356>

"KEYKEY ~ ANGEL"

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gb3llma
Gray Wolf



Joined: 04 May 2004
Posts: 1847
Location:
Michigan~Endlessly sorting
snapshots!

Posted: Thu Sep 14, 2006 10:47 pm Post subject:



Oh WOW! OK, I have to say that I am SO totally against declawing a feline (or any animal for that matter) that I am sitting here thinking about writing a letter or SOMETHING to the "Make a Wish Foundation". This bothers me a lot. There is probably a "LIST" for prospective children/families to look through and choose from.....ie the sorts of 'wishes' the foundation is able to provide. Maybe. How many children would just 'conjure up' that idea of playing with tiger cubs, hmmm? So. Perhaps the Foundation could be encouraged to think up a better idea Just thinking out loud here folks.....what do YOU think?

I also think it is WAY COOL to see Tigerhomes.org quoted (WITH a link to the main page) in that article!! WTG!

Back to top

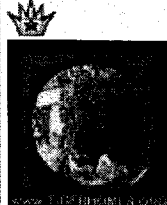
Smilodon
African Leopard
☆☆☆☆☆



Joined: 11 Feb 2006
Posts: 203
Location: Hot, Stormy
Oklahoma

Back to top

BarbaraJ
* Little Nerd *



Joined: 18 Aug 2004
Posts: 521
Location: North Carolina

Back to top

vlad
Marbled Cat
☆☆☆☆☆



Joined: 24 Jul 2005
Posts: 1920
Location: Enjoying the
CYBER-JUNGLE!

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world." ~John Muir~

[profile](#) [pm](#)

Posted: Fri Sep 15, 2006 1:53 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)

Ug, I don't think that would be on the cub's wish lists ☹ .

It's sabertoothed cat, not sabertoothed tiger!

Yea, I'm a Leopard!

I'm #103112 on Furry Paws, in case any questions regarding my art turn up

[profile](#) [pm](#)

Posted: Fri Sep 15, 2006 4:47 pm Post subject: Declawing

[quote](#)

I seem to remember that we had a topic in here before about declawing and how harsh it is on the animals, even crippling as they get older. Very bad idea ☹

"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer". Albert Einstein

[profile](#) [pm](#)

Posted: Fri Sep 15, 2006 9:05 pm Post subject:

[quote](#)

Barbara - Is this the discussion that you were referring to?

☹ Protect the 1st State Law Banning Declawing of Exotic Cats

This is yet another example of our mutilating animals so that they can relate to us on OUR terms! ☹ By "our terms" I'm referring to the misplaced notion that we can relate to and trust the big cats the same way we would a domesticated pet! Once these animals become large, they are still LETHAL, even with teeth & claws removed.

No doubt these people were only thinking of the the children when they had this done, however -- that does not take away from how cruel that is to the baby tigers. Cats walk on their toes & need their claws to walk normally, stretch their tendons, climb, defend themselves, and to stay on equal footing (pun intended ☹) with their "clawed" counterparts.

Dave has reminded us often -- of how seldom people give serious thought to animals needs or welfare, or treat them with enough importance. ☹ ☹ Big cats (and little ones) actually NEED their claws to have the healthiest and most fulfilling lives. We have the domestic housecats as companion animals. Too often people try to do the same thing with the big cats -- and it often leads to a great deal of suffering on the part of the big cat. Imagine having an itch that you cannot scratch because all you have to deal with it are your TEETH! ☹ Imagine someone trimming off the last joint of all ten toes! That is what declawing does! It is not just a nail removal. The first knuckle is removed on all four feet! Every person that I've told had decided NEVER to declaw their domestic cat. Many people don't know how cruel this procedure is to the animal. It is mutilation. See the video of the puma trying to walk in the link above (from Collective Effort on the declaw law).

We need to THINK about these things before we make irreversible decisions for animals who are unable to withhold or grant their consent. What a responsibility we have! Their quality of life is important, and in my personal opinion, we should not diminish that in order to force an animal to relate to us on OUR terms (like a domestic animal when they are actually WILD!).

Pretty interesting about the Ohio laws... The ownership of a Siberian tiger is unregulated, while the ownership of a bobcat, which is WAY smaller & less lethal is regulated because they are a native endangered species.

Quote:

There are no laws in Ohio regulating the private ownership of any exotic animals, unless they are used as part of a business. State law requires only a permit to possess native endangered species, such as the bobcat, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

"Time spent with cats is never wasted." - May Sarton

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Veterinarian developed safe, humane alternative to declawing cats.
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No Need to Declaw

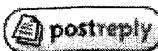
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Page 1 of 1

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Laurie J Gage

10/04/2006 11:26 AM

To: Barbara A Kohn/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA

cc:

Subject: Articles 

Well this isn't exactly what I'm looking for but it is the best I can find right now... At least it shows the animals are not normal after 12 days....

Effect of postoperative analgesic protocol on limb function following onychectomy in cats

J Am Vet Med Assoc. July 2005;227(1):89-93.

Cory W Romans, Wanda J Gordon, Duane A Robinson, Richard Evans, Michael G Conzemius
Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University,
Ames, IA 50011, USA.

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To evaluate the analgesic effects of topical administration of bupivacaine, i.m. administration of butorphanol, and transdermal administration of fentanyl in cats undergoing onychectomy. **DESIGN:** Prospective study. **ANIMALS:** 27 healthy adult cats. **PROCEDURE:** Cats were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 treatment groups, and unilateral (left forefoot) onychectomy was performed. Gait analysis was performed before and 1, 2, 3, and 12 days after surgery. All forces were expressed as a percentage of the cat's body weight. **RESULTS:** On day 2, peak vertical force (PVF) was significantly decreased in cats treated with bupivacaine, compared with cats treated with butorphanol or fentanyl. The ratio of left forelimb PVF to PVF of the other 3 limbs was significantly lower on day 2 in cats treated with bupivacaine than in cats treated with fentanyl. No significant differences in vertical impulse (VI) were found between groups on any day. Values for PVF, VI, and the PVF ratio increased progressively following surgery. However, for all 3 groups, values were still significantly decreased, compared with baseline values, 12 days after surgery. **CONCLUSIONS AND CLINICAL RELEVANCE:** Results suggest that limb function following onychectomy is significantly better in cats treated with fentanyl transdermally or butorphanol i.m. than in cats treated with bupivacaine topically. Regardless of the analgesic regimen, limb function was still significantly reduced 12 days after surgery, suggesting that long-term analgesic treatment should be considered for cats undergoing onychectomy. Irrigation of the surgical incisions with bupivacaine prior to wound closure cannot be recommended as the sole method for providing postoperative analgesia in cats undergoing onychectomy.

Laurie J. Gage, D.V.M.
USDA APHIS Large Cat Specialist



Laurie J Gage

10/04/2006 11:45 AM

To: Barbara A Kohn/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA

cc:

Subject: Another article...

Here is another article about our lack of ability to assess pain in cats. It mentions cats after an onychectomy. Not sure why we need to defend our position when it is in line with the position of the AVMA. Somehow, more than just a few vets are concerned about this problem.

Assessing Feline Pain (V139)

Western Veterinary Conference 2005

Sheilah Robertson

Section of Anesthesia and Pain Management, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL, USA

Objectives of the Presentation

Cats may experience acute pain related to trauma or surgical procedures or chronic pain associated with several disease processes including osteoarthritis, dental disease, skin disease, cancer and interstitial cystitis. The ability to assess an individual cat's pain and its response to intervention is essential if treatment is to be successful. In the clinical setting assessment depends primarily on observing changes in behavior. This presentation will highlight clinically relevant assessment tools for both acute and chronic pain in the feline patient.

Key Clinical Diagnostic Points

Pain is an extremely complex multidimensional experience with both sensory and affective (emotional) elements. Obviously, there are distinct populations, including human neonates, nonverbal adults, and animals that cannot express their pain overtly. All mammals possess the neuroanatomic and neuropharmacologic components necessary for transduction, transmission, and perception of noxious stimuli; therefore it should be assumed that animals do experience pain even if they cannot communicate it in the same way humans do. Because of this dilemma, the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) has added the following important caveat to its definition of pain: "The inability to communicate in no way negates the possibility that an individual is experiencing pain and is in need of appropriate pain-relieving treatment." Therein lies the challenge of assessing pain in those individuals.

All pain is subjective. No one can "feel" another person's pain. Even after identical surgical procedures, humans do not experience the same quality and intensity of pain. In view of that, how can we determine with any degree of certainty what an animal feels? Put simply: in humans, pain is what the patient says it is; and in animals it is what humans say it is. Clearly, there is more room for error when humans assess pain in an animal, because all judgments are subjective and, if the humans "get it wrong," a great disservice is done to the patient.

It has been known for some time that each person is unique with respect to the number, morphology and distribution of opioid receptors and that these differences are genetically determined. This phenomenon has recently been confirmed in cats with the identification of opioid "responders" and "non-responders"¹. This may explain differences in pain tolerance and the range of responses to analgesic drugs and emphasizes the importance of pain assessment in each individual.

There is presently no gold standard for assessing pain in animals. Many different scoring methods that include physiologic (in an attempt to identify objective measures) and behavioral variables have been published, but few have been rigorously validated. The issue of pain assessment in animals is especially complex because consideration must include differences in gender, age, species, breed, and environment. Assessment systems must also take into account the different types and sources of pain, such as acute versus chronic or neuropathic pain and visceral compared to somatic pain.

Many cats undergo surgery at least once in their lifetime since the majority of pet cats are sterilized. In spite of this, they tend to be under treated for pain and remain the "poor relation" of the dog²⁻⁵. For example although veterinary surgeons scored the pain associated with an exploratory laparotomy in dogs and cats equally, 71% of dogs received analgesics for this procedure compared to 56% of cats⁴. Fortunately, in the last few years, the cat has received greater attention and various methods of managing surgical, traumatic and chronic pain have been developed and assessed.

Cat pain is under treated for several reasons, but not because of a lack of compassion by caregivers. Before we can say we have treated pain in cats, we must be able to recognize it and this presents one of the greatest challenges in pain management of cats. Pain is difficult to recognize in this species as they do not demonstrate pain overtly; indicators of pain may be subtle and easily missed even by diligent observers^{6,7}. Proper assessment of pain in cats will depend on the development and validation of behavior based multidimensional pain measurement tools. Such tools exist for dogs⁸, but similar tools for cats are in their infancy.

Studies that have tried to correlate objective physiological data such as heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, respiratory rate, plasma cortisol and beta-endorphins^{9,10} with pain in cats with variable success. For example, in a tightly controlled research setting, blood pressure looked promising as an indirect indicator of pain in cats¹¹ but in a clinical environment this variable was an unreliable⁹. Changes in plasma cortisol and beta-endorphins are components of the "stress response" to anesthesia and surgery, and much effort has been expended trying to correlate these hormones with pain in laboratory and clinical analgesia trials. Plasma cortisol is an extremely unreliable indicator of pain *per se* in cats¹⁰. Mechanical nociceptive threshold testing with various devices (palpometers, algometers) (**Figure 1**) has proved to be a useful technique for evaluating both primary (wound) and secondary (remote areas) hyperalgesia in cats¹². Changes in wound sensitivity have correlated with visual analog scoring in cats¹² suggesting that assessing wound tenderness is a valuable tool and should be incorporated into an overall assessment protocol.

Figure 1.



Palpometers have been useful in clinical studies of wound sensitivity.

Observation of behavior is undoubtedly the best means of assessing the degree of pain experienced by a cat⁶. This requires some experience of observing normal (pain free) behavior in cats so that decreases in normal behaviors as well as recognition of new behaviors can be recognized or documented. Cats in acute traumatic or postoperative pain are usually depressed, immobile and silent. They may appear tense and distanced from their environment and do not respond to petting or attention and may often try to hide. Some cats become manic and aggressive, growl and hiss and roll around their cage, but this is less common. Purring can be misleading in cats as they may do this when content and also when "distressed", fearful or in pain.

Cats often shake their paws and try to bite at their feet if bandages are placed on declaw wounds. In general, many cats dislike any restrictive dressings, including the tape used to secure intravenous catheters, and will shake, bite, or "freak out" if such dressings are placed. These behaviors could indicate pain or dislike of the bandage so it is important to differentiate between the two.

Figure 2.



Dislike of bandages and pain must be differentiated in the post-operative period.

Levy *et al.*¹³ reported that application of bandages alone caused a 200% increase in urine cortisol, suggesting that cats find this stressful. One important step in pain evaluation is to manipulate the affected area to confirm the presence, or absence of pain. Cats with abdominal pain adopt a sternal posture, with elbows back, stifles forward and abdominal muscles tensed. Limb pain prevents weight bearing and may cause self-mutilation at the site of pain. One of the many commonly reported problems following onychectomy is excessive licking and chewing of the feet¹⁴.

Scoring Systems

Because animals cannot self-report, all scoring systems that depend on a human observer must by definition be subjective to some degree and leave room for error, which could be either under- or over-assessment of the animal's pain. Any system used must be valid, reliable, and sensitive. Without strictly defined criteria and use of well-trained and experienced observers, many scoring systems are too variable. Simple descriptive (ranging from no pain to worst pain), numerical rating (usually a scale of 1 to 5 which correlates with descriptors), and visual analog scales [VAS] (placing a mark on a 100 mm line anchored by no pain on one end and worst possible pain on the other) are all commonly used to assess acute pain. In dogs these tools showed significant observer variability--as high as 36%, however the numerical rating scale was most suitable if a single, trained observer performed all assessments¹⁵.

An expansion of the VAS system is the DIVAS system; animals are first observed from a distance undisturbed and then approached, handled, and encouraged to move or walk. Finally the surgical incision and surrounding area are palpated, and a final overall assessment of sedation and pain is made. This approach overcomes some of the deficiencies of purely observational systems; for example, a cat may lie very still and quiet **because** a wound is painful and this would go undetected unless the observer interacted with the animal. The DIVAS system has been used to assess

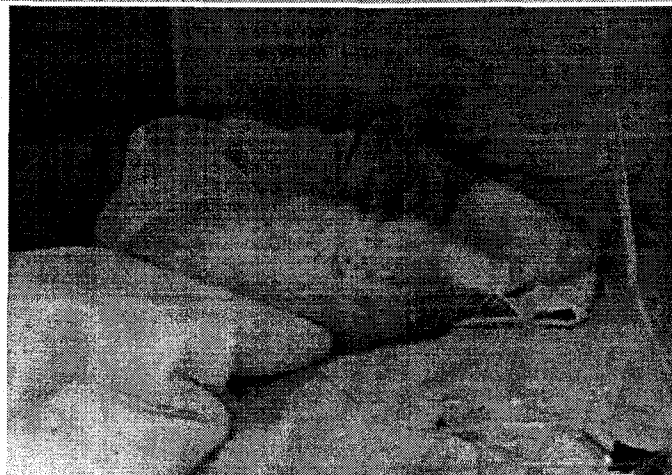
postoperative pain in cats and, when performed by one individual unaware of treatments, it detected differences between analgesics (meperidine and carprofen) and between treated (analgesia) and untreated (no analgesia) cats¹⁶.

Each practice should choose or design a pain scoring system that meets its own specific needs, and finding one that suits may require trial and error. The system chosen should be user friendly and readily used by both veterinarians and animal care staff. It should also be an integral part of the animal's postoperative evaluation. After temperature, pulse, and respiration are checked, pain, which has been coined the "fourth vital sign," should also be assessed and treated, if necessary. A scale should include both non-interactive and interactive components and rely heavily on changes in behavior.

Behaviors That May Indicate Pain in Cats

Cats that adopt a hunched posture, sit quietly and seek no attention, or resent being handled are likely experiencing pain. A cat sitting quietly in the back of the cage after surgery may be painful; however, a caregiver who anticipates more active signs of pain, such as pacing or vocalizing, would not recognize that pain. **Figure 3** shows a cat that is comfortable following surgery; note the normal relaxed lateral position. In contrast, the cat in **Figure 4** is hunched, with its head hung low.

Figure 3.



Despite major surgery this cat has adopted a normal sleeping posture indicating that it is comfortable.

Figure 4.



This cat is showing classic signs of discomfort following surgery; it has adopted a hunched appearance with its head hung low and eyes slanted.

Lack of grooming is abnormal in cats and should prompt the observer to assess pain; however, it is unlikely that a caregiver can draw any reasonable conclusions about grooming in the immediate post-operative period. Thus, lack of grooming would not be expected to be a helpful criterion during the first 12 to 24 post surgical hours but can be useful in the successive postoperative days.

An important component of pain assessment in all animals, including cats, is palpation of the wound (Figure 2, 5).

Figure 5.



Palpation of the surgical site and surrounding areas should be part of the overall pain assessment protocol.

Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is undoubtedly a clinical problem in cats, but is not well documented. Compared to dogs very little is known about degenerative joint disease in cats¹⁷, but radiographic evidence in geriatric cats suggests the incidence may be as high as 90%¹⁸. Because of a pet cat's lifestyle, lameness is not a common owner complaint, but changes in behavior including decreased grooming, reluctance to jump up on favorite places, aversion to being petted or stroked, and soiling outside the litter box should prompt the veterinarian to look for sources of chronic pain. Many signs are insidious and not obvious to the owner who sees the cat every day. In addition, many owners disregard these changes as inevitable with ageing. However the owner is the person who knows the cat best and with careful questioning, invaluable information on changes in behavior can be obtained. Owners may not realize how debilitated their pet was until they see dramatic improvements following treatment. Recently, modifications of pressure platforms have enabled gait evaluation of cats¹⁹, which may offer an objective method of assessing lameness and efficacy of treatment in this species. Currently there are no validated chronic pain scoring systems for cats, but as in dogs, we should be striving not so much for a system that exclusively assesses pain, but rather the overall quality of life. Such tools are being developed in dogs²⁰ and hopefully will be developed for cats in the near future.

Summary

Careful assessment of each individual patient is essential to effective pain management. The most accurate assessment systems involve looking at changes in behavior, or exhibition of abnormal behaviors. Evaluation may include observing the cat from a distance, but most importantly interactive, "hands-on" assessment is essential and this includes palpation of the painful site. Chronic pain assessment will depend heavily on information contributed by the owner. Each practice should develop a scoring system that meets their needs and include this as part of the medical record.

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Speaker Information

Laurie J. Gage, D.V.M.
USDA APHIS Large Cat Specialist



Laurie J Gage

10/04/2006 11:36 AM

To: Barbara A Kohn/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA

cc:

Subject: Here is one on pain management

Hi Barb

Well most everything in the literature has to do with small cats, but this one is of interest as it puts the onychectomy in the category of "moderate to severe pain".

Identification of Pain: Cats Are Not Small Dogs
International Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Symposium 2005

Tamara L. Grubb, DVM, MS, DACVA
Pain Management, Pfizer Animal Health
Uniontown, WA, USA

Pain is described in *Stedman's Medical Dictionary* as, "**suffering, either physical or mental; an impression on the sensory nerves causing distress or, when extreme, agony**". The sensation of pain is perceived and processed by peripheral receptors, afferent pathways to the spinal cord, discrete neurological tracts ascending the spinal cord and terminal modulating and perceptual areas in the brain. The anatomical components of this pathway are present in all mammals, from hamsters to human beings to horses, and we should be certain that animals do indeed feel pain. As veterinarians, we take an oath to "use scientific knowledge and skills for the ...relief of animal suffering..." and the prevention and/or relief of both acute and chronic animal suffering should be a common objective of each and every veterinarian and veterinary nurse or technician.

However, not all of our patients receive the best pain management that we can provide. For instance, cats, the most popular pet in the United States, are frequently under treated for pain.^{1,2} This occurs for a variety of reasons, including difficulty in recognizing pain in cats and lack of knowledge of analgesic therapy for cats.

Recognizing Pain

Pain is one of the leading reasons that human beings seek medical care and is considered to be so important to overall health that it has now become the fifth vital sign, along with body temperature, pulse rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure. The human patient is able to provide a pain score, which can be recorded. Unfortunately, the assessment of animal pain is more complex and, understandably, we have difficulty assessing the degree of pain that animals experience. The sensation of pain is a very individual response and is difficult to quantify, especially in patients that lack the ability to verbalize, like children and animals, and to describe the intensity of the pain. We are left with an array of behavioral, physiological and endocrinological changes that we attribute to pain. Behaviorally, animals often display avoidance or aggression, especially when a painful area is approached or palpated. Vocalization, anorexia, restlessness and insomnia are often associated with pain. On a physiological basis, tachycardia, tachypnea and hypertension often occur during painful episodes. Endocrine changes are used primarily in pain investigations to decrease the chance that learned behavioral (e.g., aggression) and physiological (e.g., tachycardia) responses to situations other than pain (e.g., hospitalization) are mistaken for exhibition of pain. However, all of these behavioral, physiological and hormonal parameters can change with stress that is not associated with pain and this makes their interpretation even more difficult. We must also look for more subtle changes that occur in the specific animal's behavior before and after the painful experience. As a result, technicians and other support staff that have close contact with the patient both before and after surgery or other painful procedures often become the most important link between the patient and the veterinarian and should serve as the patient's advocate in the elimination of patient pain and suffering. This role extends to the pet owner after the pet is discharged from the hospital. All care givers should be familiar with the signs of pain in our animal patients.

Recognition of pain can be especially difficult in cats since they rarely demonstrate pain overtly. Although objective measures like changes in heart rate, respiratory rate, body temperature, etc... should be noted, a change in behavior from the normal is the most common sign of pain in cats. A previously friendly cat will become angry or aggressive, or a cat that hid in a box will no longer care if it is out in the open. A list of pain behaviors often exhibited by cats is presented in Table 1. As expected from our own clinical experiences, many of the behaviors are contradictory (e.g., aggression vs hiding) or not intuitively associated with painful behavior (e.g., purring) and we must remember that it is the behavior **change** that is most important.

TIP: If the presence of pain truly cannot be determined, a small dose of an analgesic drug can be used to 'ask' the patient if it is in pain. If the patient appears more relaxed and comfortable following the test dose, then a full dose of the analgesic drug should be administered.

Table 1. Typical pain-associated behaviors in cats (Adapted from 'Essential Tools for Pain Management', Pfizer Animal Health³)

Posture	Temperament	Vocalization	Locomotion	Other
Arched head, neck or back Tucked abdomen Lying flat on side Tucked into a ball	Avoidance (hiding or withdrawing) Aggressive (attacking, biting, scratching) Agitation Any change from pre-pain behavior Strong reaction when painful site is approached or palpated	Cats often fail to vocalize when in pain May growl, hiss, yowl or even purr	Reluctance to move or be moved Restlessness, circling, inability to rest or sleep Lameness or stilted gait Inability to move	Tachycardia Tachypnea Shallow breathing Dilated pupils Anorexia Difficulty or disinterest in grooming Difficulty urinating, defecating, etc.. Failure to use litter box Inappropriate urination Muscle tremors Etc...

Anticipating Pain

However, even with observant care givers, the signs of pain are often missed since many of the species that are our patients inherently and instinctively hide signs of pain in the presence of a human observer. It is not that animals don't feel pain, but that their instincts are those of a prey/predator society in which demonstration of pain is a sign of weakness. Thus, the animal might not exhibit overt signs of pain or might not exhibit signs of pain until the pain is so intense that the animal can no longer hide the pain. However, since animals have the same neuroanatomic pain pathway that human beings have, we can be certain that procedures that are painful to us are painful to cats. **We must often rely on the knowledge that our patient has suffered a stressor that is most likely painful (e.g., trauma or surgery) and treat the patient with analgesics while monitoring for elimination or alleviation of the signs of pain.** In other words pain should be expected from procedures known to cause pain and should be treated accordingly. And since pain can be particularly difficult to detect in cats--and in most other patients that are unable to verbalize (e.g., dogs, horses, human infants, etc...)--we should endeavor to treat based on the expected pain rather than waiting for pain to be exhibited. When possible, pain should be **anticipated** and **prevented** rather than treated after completion of a painful procedure. See Table 2 for predicted pain intensities for a variety of procedures and conditions and see the two quotes below for views that should dictate the way we treat pain in veterinary patients.

"Conscientious provision of analgesia to patients, who may exhibit no behavioral evidence of pain, dramatically reduces morbidity and mortality after major surgery. Veterinarians thus should no longer force patients to prove that they are in pain when common sense indicates that they might be." Dr.

Bernie Hansen⁴

"One of the psychological curiosities of therapeutic decision making is the withholding of analgesic drugs because the clinician is not absolutely certain that the animal is experiencing pain. Yet the same individual will administer antibiotics without documenting the presence of a bacterial infection. Pain and suffering constitute the only situation in which I believe that, if in doubt, one should go ahead and treat." Dr. Lloyd Davis⁵

Table 2. Anticipation of pain intensity based on procedure or condition (Adapted from:

Mathews KA, Vet Clinics of North America, 2000;30:729-755)⁶

I. Mild Pain

- Early, resolving, or simple conditions
- Routine dentistry, no extractions

II. Mild to Moderate Pain

- Castration (some species or animals)
- Cutaneous or subcutaneous mass removal
- Minor ophthalmic procedures
- Minor dental procedures
- Minor lacerations
- Cystitis, otitis
- Chest drains

III. Moderate Pain

- Extracapsular cruciate repair
- Minimally invasive orthopedic procedures
- Laparotomy (some, uncomplicated)
- Diaphragmatic hernia repair (acute, simple)
- Mass removal (moderately invasive, not extensive)
- Early or resolving pancreatitis
- Soft tissue injuries (not severe)
- Urethral obstruction
- Ovariohysterectomy
- Castration (some)
- Enucleation

IV. Moderate to Severe and Severe Pain

(Varies with degree of illness or injury)

- Osteoarthritis, acute polyarthritis
- Intra-articular surgical procedures
- Fracture repair (single or uncomplicated)
- Limb amputation
- Onychectomy
- Peritonitis
- Capsular pain as a result of organomegaly (e.g., pyelonephritis, hepatitis, splenitis)
- Hollow organ distention
- Mesenteric, gastric, testicular or other torsions
- Ureteral, urethral, or biliary obstruction
- Thoracotomy
- Laparotomy (some)
- Pleuritis
- Diaphragmatic hernia (some)
- Trauma (some)
- Thoracolumbar disc disease
- Total ear canal ablation
- Cancer pain
- Thrombosis or ischemia
- Hypertrophic osteodystrophy
- Panosteitis
- Corneal abrasion or ulcer
- Glaucoma
- Uveitis
- Whelping or queening
- Mastitis

V. Severe to Excruciating Pain

- Neuropathic pain, including nerve entrapment, Cervical intervertebral disk herniation and inflammation
- Extensive inflammation (e.g., peritonitis, fasciitis, cellulitis)

- Post-surgical pain where extensive tissue injury or inflammation exists
- Multiple fracture repair +/- extensive soft tissue injury
- Necrotizing pancreatitis or cholecystitis
- Pathologic fractures
- Bone cancer
- Meningitis

Analgesic therapy for cats

Although few drugs are currently licensed by the FDA for relief of pain in cats in the United States, a number of available analgesic drugs can be safely and effectively used in this species. In fact, the same classes of analgesic drugs commonly used in dogs such as opioids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs, local anesthetic agents, alpha-2 agonists, NMDA receptor antagonists, etc... can also be used in cats.^{7,8} Cats also often respond well to non-pharmacologic therapy, like acupuncture and massage. Regardless of which drugs are chosen, 3 basic tenets of pain management should always be followed: 1) analgesic drugs should be administered preemptively; 2) multimodal analgesia should be used whenever possible; and 3) analgesia should continue as long as pain is present. Pain does not end just because the patient is discharged from the hospital. "Preemptive analgesia" or analgesia administered prior to the painful stimulus prevents or alleviates the hypersensitization of the pain pathways. Hypersensitization, or "wind up" occurs in response to a painful stimulus and makes the resulting pain more difficult to control. This can lead to a painful response that is heightened over what is expected from the stimulus or even to a painful response to a normally innocuous stimulus. Preempting pain will decrease the overall intensity of the pain sensation and will increase the effectiveness of analgesic drugs. The dose and frequency of analgesic drugs required to control pain that was preempted is minimal compared to the dose and frequency required to control pain that was allowed to develop unchecked. Because animals hide pain for as long as they possibly can, we can be certain that, once an animal is exhibiting pain, the hypersensitization process has begun and pain will be more difficult to treat.⁹ Thus, our primary goal should be to **prevent** pain rather than to **treat** pain.^{7,8,10}

"From the recent research concerning the mechanisms of nociception, it is clear that it is better to prevent pain than to treat it. This is a somewhat novel idea when applied to treating pain, but the idea of prevention is clearly entrenched in other medical disciplines. Many animals are vaccinated to prevent them from suffering the pain related to particular disease even though the prevalence of many of these diseases is low. We know that every surgical procedure causes some pain to the patient and that some procedures are more painful than others. With the idea of prevention in mind, we must first do everything possible to reduce the factors that potentiate pain perception." Dr. Peter Pascoe¹⁰

Along with preemptive analgesia, multimodal analgesia should be considered since analgesia is generally best provided by using a combination of analgesic drugs and / or analgesic techniques.⁸ This practice capitalizes on the additive or synergistic effects of analgesic drugs and allows us to provide analgesia that is more intense and of longer duration than analgesia provided with any one drug used alone. By utilizing drugs from different classes in combination, we can 'attack' pain at different sites in the pain pathway. For example, the use of an NSAID with an opioid typically provides greater analgesia than either an NSAID or opioid alone. Similarly, an alpha-2 agonist and an opioid administered concurrently provide analgesia of significantly greater duration than either drug administered alone. To achieve the best analgesia, multimodal therapy should be utilized preemptively and continued throughout the painful episode. Finally, pain must be addressed even after the patient has been discharged from the hospital. Many veterinarians feel that animals do not need analgesic drugs once they have left the hospital because the patients tend not to exhibit pain at home. However, as previously stated, we know that animals instinctively hide pain and that pain, even from elective procedures, does not just magically go away once the animal is no longer in the hospital. Instead, the pain dissipates gradually over a period of days to weeks (depending on the severity of the disease, injury or surgery) and the pain that the animal experiences in that time should be addressed. Even if the animal appears 'okay', as scientists we know that we severed nerves, caused tissue trauma, and induced inflammation and that these sources of pain will undoubtedly cause some discomfort that only **we** can address.

Summary

Whether or not cats demonstrate pain in a way that we can recognize, we can be assured that they do indeed feel pain and we should be more diligent at anticipating pain rather than treating pain. Low dosages of analgesics can be used for the diagnostic assessment of pain.

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Speaker Information

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Subject Re: AWA declawing notice questions 

(b)(6)

I have been advised by my supervisor that the response to your questions regarding the Animal Care policy on declawing of carnivores and defanging of carnivores and nonhuman primates should come directly from the office of the Deputy Administrator for Animal Care. Please direct all future inquiries to Dr. Gipson. I apologize for any inconvenience at this time.

Sincerely,

Barbara Kohn
Animal Care