



THE ROAR FOUNDATION NEWS • SUMMER 2008

NEWS ALERT

"The Federal ban on Breeding of the Exotic Feline for Personal Possession" will be introduced in Washington D.C. by Congressman Ed Perlmutter (D 7th District) of Colorado in the fall.

Please check our website for the House Bill number and the Senate Bill number to begin the campaign to write, phone or e-mail your Federal Representative and Senators to help this bill come to fruition.

I am enclosing the message from our July 2007 Newsletter to refresh your memory about the very real need for this bill to be passed. Every communication counts! You can be a major part of this urgent Federal Law's passing. Don't ever forget, with the Great Cat we are dealing with one of our planet's Highest Order of Predator! It's a Public Safety Issue!

Dear

The enclosed draft bill, currently titled the "Federal Ban on Breeding Exotic Cats for Personal Possession Act", seeks to halt the breeding of all wild cats (native and non-native) in the United States to be sold as pets or for private possession. USDA licensed or certified breeders, dealers and exhibitors will NOT be exempt. The exotic cat in the U.S. is not endangered. They breed easily. It is a huge business in the U.S., in the financial realm of illegal drugs. The breeders will breed the Sumatran Tiger to the Bengal Tiger to the Siberian Tiger, just as long as they get those cubs to sell. The AZA accredited zoos call them mutts. You can purchase them at swap meets, from news ads, on the internet, or from exotic feline clubs for whatever amount you are foolish enough to pay. Many are purchased to end up in a canned (contained) hunt to be killed, with a weapon of choice; a guaranteed trophy for a head on the wall or a rug on the floor.

The large number of these animals kept captive in the U.S. has become a national crisis. Across the U.S. more than an estimated 5,000 large cats are kept in USDA licensed facilities, and as many as another 10,000 are in private hands. There are more tigers living in people's back yards in the state of Texas than exist in the country of India* (see tiger populations-inside). It is unknown how many small wild cats, such as lynx, bobcats, and servals are held in captivity. The permitting, licensing and regulating of these wild exotic felines is not uniform across the U.S.; in some states it is more difficult to obtain a license for your dog than to purchase a lion or tiger for your backyard. Therefore it is impossible to arrive at an accurate number of these dangerous animals purchased as pets. Yet the breeding continues.

Within the past 5 years, big cats have been responsible for over 32 known fatal attacks on people, and 546 known injuries. Recently in Kansas, 17 year-old Haley Hilderbrand was attacked and killed at a USDA licensed facility while she and other graduating classmates attended a photo session with a tiger. The year before, an attack in Minnesota left a 10 year-old boy unable to ever walk again or breathe on his own. Ask yourself, who in their right mind would allow this to continue? Big cats, driven by natural instincts, can be, and are, a danger to the public. Like any other danger to the public, such as illegal drugs or weapons, dangerous animals must be legally controlled. Smaller wild cats can also be a danger, as they can inflict serious injuries.

Legitimate and reputable animal sanctuaries, which never breed animals, are struggling to take in the hundreds of wild cats who are dumped, seized,

abandoned or abused every year. One sanctuary in Tennessee has over 200 cats; another one in Colorado has over 100; and The Roar Foundation in California, which I founded in 1983, and is the financial support of The Shambala Preserve, houses over 70 cats for their lifetime.

That's just a small sample. Literally hundreds of these animals need sanctuary placement every year. Animal Sanctuaries struggle to keep up with the demand, but most have reached full capacity and cannot financially cope with these demands. Large cats can live for 20 years. Where will these animals go in the future? A kind, humane, and safe solution does not exist at this time. The only solution is passing stringent laws enforcing the ban on breeding the exotic feline to be sold as pets and for entertainment purposes. State wildlife agencies and the USDA admit that there are not enough field staff to properly visit and inspect the thousands of facilities that house these animals! For example, California Fish and Game will not be inspecting any exotic facility until 2009. Although Congress unanimously passed the Captive Wildlife Safety Act in 2003, which I co-authored, exempt facilities are still allowed to breed big cats and, in states where private ownership is still legal, sell them within their own state. With the serious shortage of State and Federal wildlife inspectors, adequately policing this vast network of Black Market dealers is become impossible.

And finally, most individuals who own big cats privately cannot provide the appropriate environment, nutrition, safety, and enrichment that the wild animals need to live a decent life in captivity. There is nothing we can give a captive wild animal that it needs, except possibly medical care. In a misguided attempt to make these animals less dangerous to humans, many are victims of tooth removal and painful surgeries to remove their claws. In some areas, make matters even worse, some areas of the country do not have even a wildlife veterinarian who is skilled and trained to examine and treat big cats. This insanity must stop! The breeding must stop!

I urge you to sponsor the introduction of the "Federal Ban on Breeding Exotic Cats for Personal Possession Act" in the U.S. Congress. I would be happy to provide you with any additional information. My experience working directly in the field of rescuing the exotic feline since 1971, has given me and my associates a true perspective of the problems and dangers of this issue. If you have any questions, substantiating facts, or comments regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me at 661-268-0380. I look forward to hearing from you.

The opposition for this huge business is powerful. Private breeders CLAIM they are saving the species. But we know that the offspring of the cats are considered to be "generic" and not suitable for conservation. The genetic record is almost always unknown. Any breeding that claims to "conserving the species" is a scam.

We need your help as well as that of your friends and associates.

Thank you so much!
With Love for the Wild Ones,

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May 31, 2007

Address

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Within the past 5 years, big cats have been responsible for over 32 known fatal attacks on people, and 109 known injuries. Recently in Kansas, 17 year-old Haley Hilderbrand was attacked and killed at a USDA licensed facility while she and other graduating classmates attended a photo session with a tiger. The year before, an attack in Minnesota left a 10 year-old boy unable to ever walk again or breathe on his own. Ask yourself, who in their right mind would allow this to continue? Big cats, driven by natural instincts, can be, and are, a danger to the public. Like any other danger to the public, such as illegal drugs or weapons, dangerous animals must be legally controlled. Smaller wild cats can also be a danger, as they can inflict serious injuries.

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Most sincerely,
Tippi Hedren
President
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AMENDED 5-31-07

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A BILL

An Act to amend the Animal Welfare Act to ban the breeding, selling, and trading of exotic or native or non-native (indigenous and non-indigenous) hereinafter known as WILD animals, specifically Familiar Carnivora: Order Felidae (Cats), by any persons regardless of currently existing permits or licenses to hold, keep or care for these animals granted by any governmental agency; local, state or federal.

Be it enacted by the Senate and The House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as "The Federal Ban on the Breeding of the Exotic Felines for Personal Possession Act".

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

As used in this title:

A. PROTECTED WILD ANIMAL

1. GENERAL RULE – The term "exotic wild animal" means a wild, native or non-native (indigenous or non-indigenous) species of an animal order and family specified in subparagraph (B) or a WILD, native or non-native species of animal order and family specified in such subparagraph, that would exist without confinement or restraint in a wild and free environment, and any hybrid of any such animal.

B. SPECIFIED ORDERS AND FAMILIES

The animal orders and families covered by this title are the following:

2. Family Carnivora: Order Felidae (Cats) and all subspecies, Orders and hybrids thereof.

C. "PERSON" means any individual, Partnership, Firm, Joint Stock Company, Corporation, Association, Trust, Estate Sanctuaries, or other legal, personal or business entity.

D. PERSONAL POSSESSION – The term "personal possession" and "personally possess" refers to a person's custody or confinement of a protected Wild animal.

E. "BREEDING" means causing and/or allowing the reproduction of WILD animals by people accredited or specifically licensed by the Federal Agency specifically responsible for the administration of "The Federal Ban on the Breeding of the Exotic Felines for Personal Possession Act".

F. HYBRID means an animal resulting from the breeding of two different species of animals. For example, crosses between wild animal species such as lions and tigers are considered to be wild animals..

G. INDIGENOUS WILD ANIMAL means any wild animal found in the wild state within the boundaries of the United States, its territories or possessions.

H. NON-INDIGENOUS WILD ANIMAL means any wild animal found in the wild state outside the boundaries of the United States, its territories or possessions.

I. NON-PERMITTED BREEDER means an individual or other entity (company, corporation, Inc. or LLC) not specifically allowed to cause the breeding of indigenous or non-indigenous WILD felids, or the cross breeding thereof.

J. PERMIT means a document giving permission - An official document or certificate giving permission for something.

K. WILD means any animal that is now or historically has been found in the wild state.

L. WILD STATE means living in its original natural condition, not domesticated.

M. ZOO means any park, building, cage, enclosure or other structure or premise in which a wild animal or animals are kept for public exhibition or viewing.

N. ZOOLOGICAL means pertaining to a zoo.

SECTION 3: JUSTIFICATION

The Legislature finds that keeping WILD animals by any person or persons poses a serious threat to the public health and safety of humans residing in or visiting in the United States. Across the country, children and adults have been mauled and/or killed by large cats, both native and non-native. WILD animals are readily available for purchase in many states throughout the United States.

Wildlife sanctuaries are filled to capacity with rescued or confiscated Wild cats, placed by Local, State and Federal wildlife agencies, such as the USDA, SPCAs, animal control agencies, rescue groups and private citizens. Most are confiscated

due to a lack of permits or licenses to possess them, abusive treatment, unhealthy living conditions, unmanageability, or attacks on human adults or children.

The rescued animals are placed with sanctuaries without any financial aid from these same agencies which prevail upon qualified facilities to assume lifetime commitments to care for these animals.

Recapture of escaped wild animals is an expensive and perilous endeavor for municipalities, with the recapture frequently carried out by unqualified persons. The Federal Government must take steps at a national level to ensure the protection of the public and the humane treatment of exotic and native WILD animals. Presently where laws exist, Local, State and Federal agencies have no financial or human resources to enforce them. In many states there are no laws.

SECTION 4: PENALTIES AND FINES

Consistent with the regulations established in the Animal Welfare Act.