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# What are the odds of being killed by a US captive bear?

Posted on August 22nd, 2010  
by REXANO in All News  
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REXANO, [www.REXANO.org](http://www.REXANO.org) Editorial By Zuzana Kukol

A few days ago, a young exotic animal caretaker was killed in Ohio by a captive black bear that he knew for over six years. A media frenzy ensued as a result of this extremely rare and tragic occurrence, with calls for more bans on private exotic animal ownership. But what are the odds of being killed by a captive bear in the USA?

Five people were killed by captive bears in the United States from 1990 to August 2010. One death was caused by a grizzly bear, and four by black bears.

That means on average 0.25 person dies in USA per year as a result of a captive bear attack.

One - Year Odds are 1 in 1,240,168,000, and Lifetime Odds are 1 in 16,106,078. To put things in perspective, about 45,000 people are killed in US each year in traffic accidents, which is 120-125 people EACH DAY.

- 2010 – OH: Male employee was killed by black bear during feeding in the commercial facility whose USDA license has been revoked recently.
- 2009 – PA: A woman has been killed during cage cleaning by her pet bear. The facility was state licensed with a recently expired permit.
- 2008 – CA: Male trainer in the USDA licensed facility was killed by the male grizzly bear during the training session.
- 2006 – IL: Male farm/zoo worker killed by black bear out of his cage in formerly USDA licensed, now closed to the public facility.
- 1993 – MI: A man was killed by his brother-in-law black bear after he entered the animal's pen to feed it. The owner had all necessary state permits to keep the bear.

The death by US captive bear is extremely rare. None of these deaths were the result of the captive bears being unsupervised off the private owners' or zoo's property. Instead, all victims were voluntarily on the property where the animal was kept, be it owner(s), handlers, employees, friends or visitors wanting to see the animals. The odds of a member of the general public **getting killed by exotics** are therefore even lower. Since 1990, there is no record of a member of the general public in the USA dying as a result of a captive bear at large, meaning, unsupervised and OFF the property where the animals were kept. A bear out of the cage, but still on owner's/zoo property, is not considered AT LARGE for our statistical analysis.

Captive keeping of bears might be a slight voluntarily accepted hobby/occupational hazard, but it is NOT a public safety issue.

Click [HERE](#) for PDF file: USA: Captive Bear Statistics – Human Fatalities 1990-August 2010

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