

Press Release

AZA accredited Denver Zoo keeper killed by jaguar doing what she loved; general public's safety was never compromised.

Animal rights groups exploit rare tragedies by using grieving relatives of those harmed by exotic animals as their poster children to help push their agenda of prohibiting exotic animals in society.

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Las Vegas, NV February 26, 2007--The Feline Conservation Federation (www.thefcf.org) and Responsible Exotic Animal Ownership (www.REXANO.org) send condolences to the family of the Association of Zoo and Aquariums' (AZA) accredited Denver Zoo employee who was fatally injured on February 24th by Jorge, the zoo's jaguar.

"All responsible professional handlers of the big cats understand that mistakes can be deadly and that is why it is so important to check all doors, slide gates and make visual contact with these felines. Never assume a cage is unoccupied," says Lynn Culver, president of the Feline Conservation Federation (FCF).

Like all US captive big cat related fatalities, be it private pet or zoo, the general public was never at risk. "This type of sensationalized but rare death is an occupational hazard accepted by animal trainers, handlers, keepers, NASCAR drivers, military personnel, police, Alaska fishermen, firefighters and many others," says Zuzana Kukol, a Nevada tiger trainer and co-founder of REXANO, a newly launched free web resource that provides tools and statistics-based research material to private owners of exotics to fight unfair legislation.

Statistical analysis of the data disproves the claim that exotic animals in captivity are a threat to public safety. "Since at least 1990 there has not been one death as a result of a captive big cat or reptile roaming at large," says REXANO co-founder Scott Shoemaker..

The majority of fatalities are to handlers or owners or people voluntarily on the property where the animals are kept, not to the uninvolved public. Shoemaker advises, "The best way to avoid being killed by a captive exotic animal is to simply not trespass on the property where they are being kept."

Private owners of wild and exotic animals in the USA have been coming under increasing attack from the animal rights (AR) organizations and uninformed legislators. "The death of a zoo employee from a jaguar is an extremely rare occurrence. It would be nice if for once the AR fanatics could refrain from exploiting this kind of tragedy, but they never do. They feed on this kind of hysteria," says FCF president Culver.

AR groups exploit rare tragedies by using grieving relatives of those harmed by exotic animals as their poster children to help push their agenda of prohibiting exotic animals in society. West Virginia, North Carolina, Washington, Missouri, Iowa, Ohio and Indiana have AR backed ban bills introduced into the legislature.

"Wild animals kept in untrained hands in our communities pose a serious threat to Indiana residents," said Indiana Senator Sipes.

The truth is Indiana has laws that require caging, fencing and contingency plans. The Indiana permit system prohibits animals from being in unqualified hands and these animals have not harmed the public. "Since these bills are unnecessary," Kukol asks, "what is the real reason for proposing them?"

"Animals are personal property. We oppose Ohio legislation that restricts the private ownership or use of animals or that inhibits free trade of any animal that meets state Department of Agriculture testing and import requirements," says Polly Britton, secretary for the Ohio Association of Animal Owners (www.OAAO.us).

"As long as animal welfare and public safety laws are followed, the private ownership of all animals should be protected in the USA," says Shoemaker.

"Control the land and the animals, then you control the people," states Kim Bloomer a natural pet care educator, lecturer and host of the online radio show Animal Talk Naturally www.AnimalTalkNaturally.com

Bloomer warns, "There is a hidden agenda with regard to all of these laws and it has nothing to do with public safety or concerns for good animal care. Rather, it is about eroding or removing American freedoms, the right to own as many animals as we can provide for."

About REXANO

Free web resource with statistics to fight anti exotic animal legislation.

Submitted by [REXANO](#)