

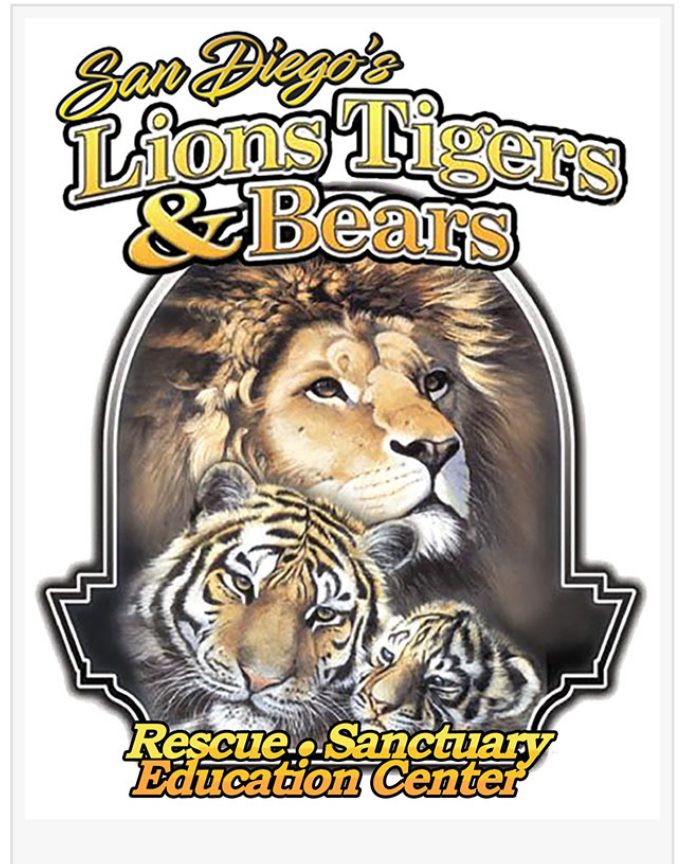
Lions Tigers & Bears Exotic Animal Sanctuary & The Wildlife Confiscation Network Unite Against Wildlife Trafficking

Wildlife trafficking, worth \$7-23bn annually, endangers global species. The CA Wildlife Network combats this with partners LionsTigersandBears.org.

ALPINE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Wildlife trafficking, a grave global concern, is pushing countless animals and plants to the brink of extinction due to the illegal harvest and trade of live organisms and their derivatives. It stands as one of the largest illegal industries, trailing only behind drug and human trafficking, with an estimated annual worth between \$7-23 billion.

Furthermore, wildlife traffickers are often linked to other illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and weapons smuggling. This trade not only endangers species but also poses significant threats to human health, fosters conditions conducive to disease spillovers and pandemics, hampers the global economy, fuels transnational criminal networks, and fosters government instability and corruption.

The internet has played a pivotal role in the growth of wildlife trafficking, spanning across regions such as North America (specifically the U.S.), Europe, and Asia. The digital realm offers traffickers a vast and borderless marketplace, operating 24/7 with minimal oversight. It has opened new markets, particularly in the pet and collector industries, where enthusiasts are continually seeking out exotic species. Live animals, apart from wildlife products, are frequently caught up in this illegal trade. These animals endure unimaginable suffering, with many perishing due to brutal capture and transport conditions. In the United States, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service encountered 834 cases over five years involving the refusal of clearance for live wildlife, resulting in the seizure or abandonment of 48,793 individual live animals. This averages 14 new cases per month and 27 individual live specimens per day.



Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the Southern California Wildlife Confiscations Network has launched a pilot program to establish a framework for reducing wildlife trafficking and ensuring the welfare of confiscated live wildlife. It aims to build a national network by bringing together zoos, aquariums, non-governmental organizations, universities, botanical gardens, and certified facilities of the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries to ensure the highest standards in the management of confiscated wildlife.

Established in 2002, [Lions Tigers & Bears](#) is a NO KILL, NO BREED, NO CONTACT animal rescue, sanctuary and educational facility located in east San Diego County. As one of the few exotic animal sanctuaries in the United States accredited by both the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries and the American Sanctuary Association, we abide by the strict standards of care set forth by these accrediting bodies, ensuring all animals in our charge are provided with the utmost care, compassion and attention.

Our Stories of Moka and Eddie

In August 2017, Moka, a two-month-old tiger cub was rescued from smugglers who were attempting to illegally transport him across the border from Mexico to the United States. This innocent tiger cub found refuge at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, where he received care and attention for approximately a year.

Justice was served in this case, as both smugglers involved were sentenced to nine months in federal prison for their unlawful actions. However, Moka's journey didn't end there.

Due to the fact that Moka is a generic tiger and wouldn't be part of the Species Survival Plan (SSP) breeding program, he could not remain at the Safari Park or in Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoos. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recognized the need to find Moka a permanent home, and that's when Lions Tigers & Bears (LTB) entered the picture.

In June 2018, Moka made his way to LTB, and after a period of adjustment to his new home, he was introduced to Nola, a white tiger cub of similar age. Our expert keepers took careful steps to ensure their successful integration. Initially, Moka and Nola were placed at opposite ends of a habitat with gates in between. We closely observed their behavior and, as they grew comfortable with each other, we gradually removed the gates. Today, Moka and Nola live together, enjoying a safe and loving environment at Lions Tigers & Bears.

Eddie, the jaguar, was initially sold in an interstate commerce transaction that began in Houston, Texas, and was then transported to Murrieta, CA. Subsequently, he was sold again to an individual in Riverside, California.

As Eddie continued to grow, he became of little value or use to the party who had initially acquired him, and he was seen as disposable. Initially, the owners even hired someone to kill

him. However, instead of meeting that tragic fate, Eddie was abandoned in a large dog crate at the entrance of Lions Tigers and Bears in September 2021 when he was just a few months old.

A thorough investigation was conducted, and those involved in Eddie's mistreatment were brought to justice and sentenced. Eddie was named after the construction worker who found him and ensured his safety. Eddie's unique abilities as a jaguar, particularly his climbing skills, have influenced the design of his habitat. To keep him stimulated and engaged his habitat features numerous ramps and platforms, as well as a roof to cater to his natural instincts and behaviors.

As a proud member of the WCN, Lions Tigers & Bears urges individuals to take action by visiting our website at www.lionstigersandbears.org. There, you can learn more about wildlife trafficking, volunteer at our sanctuary, and discover more stories about our rescued animals.

You can also become informed consumers by visiting wildlifetraffickingalliance.org, which provides ways to protect wildlife from illegal trade.

If you suspect wildlife trafficking, we encourage you to report it to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Tips line at fws_tips@fws.gov or call 1-844-FWS-TIPS (1-844-397-8477).

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