

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge Rallies Public to Take a Stand Following Death of Recently Rescued Tiger

One of Six Tigers Rescued from Closing Oklahoma Facility Succumbs to Illness

Eureka Springs, Ark. (Jan., 23, 2019) – Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge (TCWR) rescued six male tigers from a closing facility in Oklahoma last Thursday.

After traveling 700 miles round-trip, the team arrived back at the Refuge with two white striped tigers, a pure-white tiger, a Golden Tabby tiger and two orange tigers in tow. Tommie, Frankie, Robbie, Tigger and Floyd appeared to be in good health, aside from being overweight and potential genetic health issues.

One tiger, Diesel, was suffering from an infection and was immediately taken to TCWR's onsite veterinary hospital for treatment and further diagnosis. Staff veterinarian, Dr. Kellyn, started him on antibiotics and pain medication the Thursday he arrived. By Monday, tests revealed that Diesel was not recovering.

"We had hoped to see an increase in his platelet count, or at the very least, that it was holding steady at the number it was Thursday," Animal Curator, Emily McCormack, explained. "His body was continuing to lose cells; this confirmed that we were fighting a losing battle."

Diesel's red blood count was at a dismal 10% Thursday with the normal range being 30-52%, and by Monday, it had dropped to 7.8% despite treatment. At 5%, his body would no longer be able to function.

"We can't allow an animal to suffer," McCormack stated. "We had to let him go."

Diesel passed away Monday afternoon. A Facebook post made by the organization revealed, "...in a room full of people who had quickly fallen in love with him over several days, we let him peacefully slip away."

The post also explained that Dr. Kellyn felt his death "appeared to be the result of a blood pathogen transmitted through ticks and/or fleas," and was later specified as "feline infectious anemia", which attacks the red blood cells that carry oxygen.

Because he fell ill before coming to the Refuge, TCWR says they will be monitoring the other five tigers from the rescue for symptoms of the same pathogen.

In an earlier video posted to Facebook, McCormack revealed that all of the tigers were survivors of the cub petting industry. They were set to be destroyed by a different owner once they surpassed the legal age to be handled; the facility TCWR obtained them from took them in from that owner before that could happen. The director of the facility then contacted TCWR Monday, January 14, when he found out he was being evicted from the property.

In the statement released digitally regarding Diesel's passing, TCWR wrote, "Diesel and his five friends were born into the cub petting industry; their fates were decided upon conception. While we do our best to save as many survivors of the exotic pet trade as possible, we aren't always in time. The only way we can save them all is to put an end to this heartless industry. If you haven't educated yourself on the exploitation of exotic animals in our country, please do so today..."

TCWR is encouraging their supporters to fight in Diesel's memory through education and advocacy.

Robbie, Tommie, Frankie, Floyd and Tigger are still in need of donations. They are being given modified diets, and team members are using a variety of strategies to encourage them to exercise in order to address their obesity. All but Floyd have easily adapted to their new environment and can be found playing in and exploring their habitats.

Floyd was previously diagnosed with metabolic bone disease and has evident physical deformities in his limbs. At the time of this release, he is spending most of his time in his den. He has already started a pain management and vitamin regimen, but Dr. Kellyn will be sedating him once the weather reaches a safe temperature in order to do a more extensive examination.

Given the five tigers' genetics and history, there is a significant likelihood of other health hurdles emerging as time goes on.

"Due to the practices of big cat breeding within the exotic pet trade, we almost always have to address a slew of health issues with the animals we rescue," McCormack noted. "Thankfully, once they get here, they've found their forever home, and we focus on what is best for them. However, we can't do it alone."

The public can help by donating online at <https://www.turpentinecreek.org/support-us/donate/>, over the phone by calling 479-253-5841 or by mailing checks to:

239 Turpentine Creek Lane,
Eureka Springs, AR
72632

Those interested in adoption or sponsorship can sign up online at <http://bit.ly/Adopt-Sponsor> or over the phone by calling 479-253-5841.

Tigger and Floyd can be viewed on the guided tour in the habitat directly behind the administrative office building. Robbie, Tommie and Frankie are located further down the walking tour loop.

TCWR is open seven days a week, from 9 AM – 5 PM during the winter; tours leave every hour on the hour starting at 10 AM with the final one departing at 3 PM.

More information can be found on TCWR's Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TurpentineCreekWildlifeRefuge/>), Youtube channel (<http://bit.ly/TCWRYoutube>) and Twitter and Instagram pages (@turpentinecreek).

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About Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge

Founded in 1992, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization operating one of America's largest big cat sanctuaries. The 450-acre refuge, located 7 miles south of Eureka Springs, is America's premier big cat wildlife refuge. Turpentine Creek does not buy, sell, trade, or breed our animals. We are a hands-off facility and do not allow contact with the animals in our care. We are accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, a member of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, a member of Tigers in America, USDA Licensed and Arkansas Game and Fish Licensed. Our Mission is to provide lifetime refuge for abandoned, abused, and neglected "Big Cats" with emphasis on Tigers, Lions, Leopards, and Cougars.

Additional Information Sources & Photos

<http://www.TurpentineCreek.org>

https://www.facebook.com/TurpentineCreekWildlifeRefuge/photos_stream

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