



Mr Thanya Netithamkul
Director General
Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
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February 2019

Dear Mr Thanya Netithammakul,

We are writing on behalf of the Asia for Animals Coalition, representing international animal welfare and conservation organisations. We express our deep concern with regards to the welfare of animals at the Samutprakan Crocodile Farm and Zoo.

Reports documented within the international media¹ and online² highlight the wholly inadequate conditions for animals housed at this facility and forced to perform circus tricks for public entertainment.

We are particularly concerned for the welfare of a male elephant being forced to perform circus tricks. The extremely poor body condition of this elephant is a major concern. Its continued use in circus entertainment demonstrates the zoo's inability to meet his most basic of physical and behavioural needs.



Forcing animals such as crocodiles and elephants to perform unnatural tricks also portrays

¹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/painfully-thin-elephant-forced-perform-13713367>

² https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g293916-d455812-Reviews-Samutprakan_Crocodile_Farm_and_Zoo-Bangkok.html

them to the public in a humiliating manner, instead of showing their natural grace and beauty, thereby promoting empathy and respect for such a majestic species. The treatment of animals at this zoo clearly provides no conservation or educational value.



The poor treatment of this elephant is likely to cause a significant amount of stress, which can result in the manifestation of behavioural abnormalities. Most importantly, performing animals are deprived of choice: choice of behavior, social encounters, activity, cognitive engagement, foraging, foods, resting times and places. Everything with which a wild animal occupies their time with is denied and replaced by human-mandated activities. The combination of boredom, frustration and fear can cause severe pathology.

Elephants may not show overt signs of distress, but chronic stress is internalized to engender physiological and psychological changes that may make the animals seriously ill over time. Chronically high levels of cortisol, immune suppression, structural changes in the brain, cognitive dysfunction, heart disease, kidney disease, weakening of the muscle structures, and endocrine disturbances are but some of the problems which chronically stressed animals may suffer from. Poor veterinary care and compromised immune function from stress can result in high parasite burdens, nutritional disturbances, viral infections, and wounds that do not heal.³

The conditions and treatment of the animals within the zoo contravene the laws of Thailand enacted to prevent animal cruelty.

The Prevention of Cruelty and Animal Welfare Act (2014) authorises officials to inspect premises where they suspect animal ill-treatment is taking place and provides the powers of confiscation—article 25 (4). The Act applies to all domesticated animals including those in captivity, applicable both through article 22 in Section 6 Animal Welfare Provision (fine up to 40,000 Baht) as well as article 20 in Section 5 Cruelty if negligence resulted in illness or injury (punishable with imprisonment of up to two years and/or a fine of up to 40,000 Baht).

Globally we are seeing an ever-growing number of countries banning the use of wild animals in entertainment. Over 50 countries have already passed progressive laws. The use of animals in entertainment at the Samutprakan Crocodile Farm and Zoo contravenes this global trend.

On behalf of our members globally, we appeal to you to end the use of animals in circus entertainment at the zoo. We also request you work with experts in the welfare assessment of animals in captivity, to carry out an urgent animal welfare audit of the zoo. These specific issues should be addressed as a priority. We offer our support in achieving this goal.

³ Kati Loeffler, DVM, PhD, MRCVS, Veterinary Advisor, International Fund for Animal Welfare. Personal communications, 2015

Sent on behalf of the following organisations:

1. Animal Concerns Research & Education Society
2. Animal Guardians
3. Animal People Forum
4. Animals Asia Foundation
5. Big Cat Rescue
6. Blue Cross of India
7. Born Free Foundation
8. Change for Animals Foundation
9. Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations
10. FOUR PAWS International
11. Humane Society International
12. International Animal Rescue
13. International Fund for Animal Welfare
14. Sarawak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
15. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HK)
16. The Philippines Animal Welfare Society
17. World Animal Protection

Please respond to David Neale, Animal Welfare Director, Animals Asia Foundation,
Room 1501, Tung Hip Commercial Building, 244-252 Des Voeux Road Central, Sheung Wan,
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Copied to;

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Supported by;

1. . <supporting orgs and logos listed here following deadline 8TH MARCH >