

## WILD FELINES AS PETS

You may be the best animal owner in the world, but by purchasing a wild or exotic feline or any wild or exotic animal, you are perpetuating a business that leads to miserable lives for many of the very animals you profess to adore. If you really want to help these animals, volunteer at a reputable animal facility.

**Wild and Exotic Animals DO NOT make good pets.**

PLEASE READ!

### So you want to own an exotic feline? Did you know:

1. Ownership of exotic and wild animals is regulated at the local, state, or national level. Even if it is legal at the state level, it may not be legal within a city or township. Some states (including PA) require that you have years of experience with the species BEFORE issuing a permit. Once a permit is issued, expect yearly inspections of your facility and animal. Illegal ownership can result in fines and confiscation of the animal.
2. Exotic and wild felines are strong! Bobcats are capable of killing deer! Cougars can kill elk! Lions and tigers can break a zebra's neck with one bat. Imagine if your "pet" tiger wants to play with you! Even in playing, they can kill you with one bat of a paw.
3. These animals eat a lot! One lion or tiger will eat between 30-40 pounds of meat every DAY (but sometimes eat up to 100 pounds in one sitting). They will eat approximately 800 pounds of meat every month! You will spend around \$300.00 per week to feed on tiger or lion! Cougars and leopards will eat on average 100 pounds of meat each week! Even smaller felines eat a lot! Bobcats and servals will eat about 30 pounds of meat each week!
4. Nutrition is very important. Improper diet can result in medical problems such as calcium deficiency.
5. Most veterinarians do not have the knowledge to treat an exotic or wild feline. Even veterinarians with adequate knowledge may refuse to treat someone's "pet" tiger, lion, cougar, etc. because of the risk of injury to themselves and their staff.
6. If the animal has the proper nutrition and care, they can live a long time. Tigers and lions will live up to 20 years (or more in some cases) in captivity. Cougars and leopards will live between 15-18 years and bobcats can live up to 30 years in captivity! (Think about feeding a lion or tiger 800 pounds of meat a month for 20 years! That is approximately 192,000 pounds of meat!)
7. When they reach maturity, exotic or wild felines are more likely to be unpredictable and dangerous. They will start to test you and others by biting and swatting. The question isn't IF they will hurt you, but WHEN and HOW bad (will you be lucky and live or will it be fatal)? If the feline lives in

your house, it will also start marking its territory by spraying strong urine on your furniture, walls, carpet, and even you.

8. Felines are curious and must have new things to do. If your intentions are keeping a small exotic or wild feline in your home, they will destroy furniture, curtains, carpet, wood, decorations, etc. either by chewing, scratching, or spraying on it. These animals need large outdoor exhibits with variety of enrichment opportunities.
9. These animals still have many wild instincts. If you think it is cute for a domestic cat to play “cat and mouse” you may think again when your “pet” feline thinks you, your child, or a domestic pet is a mouse.
10. When a person is tired of dealing with their “pet” feline, they try to find a new home for the animal. Most zoos will not take someone’s pet. Then they turn to rescue organizations only to find that they are full from other people’s “pets”. Often these innocent animals are put to sleep.



**Left:** A six month old cub weighing approximately 70 pounds.  
**Right:** A 3 year old adult tiger weighing between 300-500 pounds!  
They do NOT stay little for long!