



## Sample Letter to the Editor

[ Date ]

[ Newspaper Name ]

[ Newspaper Address ]

[ RE: Headline and author if you're writing in reference to a story OR "Wild Animals in the City of \_\_\_\_\_" ]

Dear Editor:

Most people don't realize that an enormous variety of wild animals, such as tigers, wild dogs, monkeys and venomous reptiles, can be purchased by private citizens as pets. Many of these animals pose a significant threat to human health and safety.

In addition to the more obvious risks faced by persons living with or handling large, powerful animals, many of them equipped with sharp claws, teeth and aggressive dispositions, or smaller, highly venomous animals, there is also a significant risk to bystanders and neighbouring property owners should these animals escape.

Reports of wild animal pets escaping have been relatively frequent over the past few years. In Ontario alone, cougars, tigers, a "black panther" and numerous other animals have all been on the loose recently.

There have also been numerous instances of wild animal pets injuring or killing their keepers or bystanders. In May 2004 a young boy was attacked by a pet tiger, sustaining serious injuries, while having his photo taken with the animal. Tiger attacks, puncture wounds and lacerations from monkeys, venomous snake bites and many other incidents have become increasingly common.

Many wild animals can also carry transmittable diseases such as rabies, hepatitis B and the monkeypox virus. In fact, some animals, such as almost all reptiles, carry potentially harmful pathogens as part of their natural internal flora and fauna. No matter how you look at it, the keeping of many wild animals is inherently dangerous.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that almost all wild animals suffer when kept as pets. The complex, natural environments that they have evolved to live in cannot be replicated in home situations, so many of them end up living in grossly undersized, deplorable conditions. They are typically unable to move about or behave normally and become physically diminished and psychologically disturbed.

I encourage everyone to think about the points I have raised and to give wild animals a fair shake. Support laws that prohibit the keeping of wild animals and, above all, don't purchase one (adopt a dog or cat instead). Wild animals do not make good pets.

Sincerely,

[ Your Name & Address ]

