

KILLING WITH CUDDLES

cuddles undermine conservation efforts – here's why



Many animal lovers flock to farms offering the opportunity to interact with lion cubs or walk with lions. According to FOUR PAWS South Africa's country director, Fiona Miles, if you truly love animals, you will give this disturbing industry a skip. FOUR PAWS is one of the largest animal welfare organisations in South Africa, fighting for the conservation of big cats... But not everyone has the best interests of the iconic African big cats at heart, and unsuspecting animal lovers could be contributing to the decimation of the lion population, through engaging in animal interactions, Miles said.

These cubs are not orphans

"Most of the facilities that offer cub petting activities claim that their cubs were orphaned, abandoned or even rejected by their mother and that the facility has rescued them. This is not true! These cubs are bred on demand in captivity to feed these petting establishments with a continuous stream of lion cubs," explained Miles.

There are around 300 farms on which lions are bred and kept for commercial purposes in South Africa. While there are about 3,000 wild lions living in national parks and reserves in South Africa, there are between 8,000 and 10,000 lions living in captivity.

Petting cubs has a negative impact on their health

Big cats sleep many hours a day – especially young cubs. These lion cubs are forced to interact with the paying public for up to 8 to 10 hours a day, resulting in exhaustion.

"For these big cats to 'safely' interact with people during cub petting and lion walks, they need to be habituated. This involves removing cubs from the care of their mothers within hours to days of birth, to be hand-reared by people. This is not only incredibly stressful for the mother and her cubs, but the cubs also don't receive the goodness of the mother's milk. As these cubs are not raised by their natural mothers, and often live without adults of their own kind to teach them how to behave, hunt or interact with their peers, they don't know how to be a big cat," Miles said.

Cub petting feeds the lion trade

"Once the lions used in animal interactions, such as cub petting and lion walks, are too big and dangerous to interact 'safely' with people, they end up in either the canned hunting industry or killed for their bones to be sold as ingredients of traditional Chinese medicine in Southeast Asia. About 600 to 700 captive lions are killed in trophy hunts each year.

This trade stimulates demand for lion bones and incentivises poachers to target lions and sell their bones into these markets. South Africa is the largest legal exporter of lion bones and skeletons for use in Southeast Asia, with an annual export quota of 800 lion skeletons approved in 2018 by the then Department of Environmental Affairs," Miles said.

Cub petting farms are not sanctuaries

"Many petting facilities justify the activity by telling their visitors that the cubs used in these interactions will be reintroduced in the wild and that the interactions are benefitting conservation. Reintroductions of captive-bred and hand-reared lions are virtually impossible to achieve. Instead of visiting a cub petting farm, rather support a true sanctuary," suggested Miles. "Sanctuaries are captive wildlife facilities that don't breed, trade, or offer interactions and instead provide a forever home to animals that can't be returned to the wild." "Alternatively, visit one of South Africa's beautiful national parks or private game reserves, where you can see these animals in their natural habitat. If we reduce the demand for big cat petting farms, these facilities will eventually cease to exist," stressed Miles.



ROYAL BAFOKENG NATION

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given of a Pitso ya Kgothakgothe of the Royal Bafokeng Nation, to be held on Saturday, 27 July 2019 at 10:00 at the Bafokeng Civic Centre.

The meeting is intended for the tabling and passing of a resolution in respect of the following:

The Granting of a Servitude of 10 hectares for the Extension of Marang B Substation over the Remainder of the Farm Klipgat 281 JQ

Members of the community are requested to come in numbers, as the above resolution is of national importance.

For enquiries, please contact Adv Modisaotsile Mokate at (014) 566-1200 or Modisaotsile.Mokate@bafokeng.com

KGOTHAJKGOTHE

Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi invites all members of the Bafokeng Community who are 18 years and older to the Bafokeng General Meeting (Kgothakgothe) at which RBN's reports will be presented. The meeting is also intended for the tabling and passing of resolutions in respect of Eskom Servitudes.

The meeting is scheduled as follows:

Date: Saturday, 27 July 2019

Venue: Bafokeng Civic Centre

Time: 10:00

Arrangements have been made to transport community members to and from the meeting. Buses will start picking up from 08:00 in the morning, from the usual bus stops.

For more information, please contact: Minah Huma at (014) 566-1200

www.bafokeng.com

For more information visit
www.four-paws.org.za
Positive Dialogue Communications
press release