

## **Lions, Tigers, and Snakes, Oh My! Florida Animal Control Association Takes Stand on Dangerous Wildlife**

In a dedicated effort to better protect public safety, the Florida Animal Control Association (FACA) (<http://floridaanimalcontrol.org/>) has sent a detailed list of recommendations to the Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) regarding Dangerous Captive Wildlife such as lions, tigers, large primates, venomous snakes, large pythons, and more.

Most Floridians do not realize that a FWC licensed captive wildlife permittee may move in next door and legally house hundreds of poisonous snakes or giant constrictors in that home. This has frustrated local governments and residents who do not believe that dangerous wildlife should be allowed in their neighborhoods or next to schools.

Similarly, a wildlife permittee may locate cheetahs, wolves or other large dangerous animals on a mere 2.5 acre parcel of land next to an elementary school. Local governments cannot regulate these dangerous creatures because the FWC has exclusive jurisdiction over captive wildlife in Florida.

FWC Commissioners will consider new proposed regulations on February 7, 2007 in Destin, Florida (<http://myfwc.com/commission/2007/Feb07/index.html>). While several of the new rules proposed by the FWC staff will clearly help reduce the risk posed by these dangerous animals to our citizens, they do not go far enough in protecting the public.

There has been significant media coverage of the environmental threat posed by Burmese Pythons released into the wild by pet owners. However, there has been little focus on the real risk that dangerous captive wildlife can pose to nearby residents. Coupled with increases in population and urban growth, the detrimental effects on both the environment and public safety are obvious.

FACA believes the time has come for the FWC to take a more aggressive stance in both policy and enforcement to better protect Floridians. The attached paper identifies captive wildlife recommendations FACA strongly believes need to be enacted. (Link to FACA Position Paper <http://floridaanimalcontrol.org/files/postion%2001252007.pdf>)

Some of these proposed changes are meeting with opposition from wildlife breeders and entertainers. Meanwhile, most Floridians are completely unaware of dangerous captive wildlife being located next to their homes or schools. FACA believes it is high time the people had a voice.

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