



## USA: Large Captive Exotic & Wild Mammal Related Human Fatalities by the Type of Facility and Animal, 2000 - 2012

**SYNOPSIS:** In the last 13 years since 2000, 25 people died in the USA (1.92 per year) by captive exotic & wild mammals. Non AZA-USDA facilities accounted for 13 (52 %) human fatalities, AZA-USDA zoos had 6 (24%), sanctuaries 3 (12%) and pet owners also 3 (12%).

**Table 1: Captive Bear, Big Cats, Elephants, Killer Whales, Exotic Canines and Non-Human Primates Related Human Fatalities, 2000 – 2012**

FACILITY/ ANIMAL	AZA ZOOS: all are USDA	NON AZA EXHIBITORS & BREEDERS: all are USDA licensed	NON - PROFIT SANCTUARIES: most are USDA licensed	PET OWNERS: no USDA license needed	TOTAL
BEARS	0	3	0	2*	5
BIG CATS	2	7	2	1	12
ELEPHANTS	2	3	1	0	6
KILLER WHALES	1	0	0	0	1
NON HUMAN PRIMATES	0	0	0	0	0
EXOTIC CANINES	1	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE OF FATALITIES</b>	<b>24 %</b>	<b>52 %</b>	<b>12 %</b>	<b>12 %</b>	<b>100%</b>
AVERAGE HUMAN DEATHS PER YEAR (2000-2012)	0.46	1	0.23	0.23	1.92

\*In the 2010 Ohio case, the owner just lost his USDA license, but was still state licensed

- AZA, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, is a private group accrediting big city zoos. It is expensive to join, but AZA accreditation so far guarantees the zoo an exemption from wild and exotic animal bans. AZA facilities are required to be USDA licensed.
- USDA, US Department of Agriculture, requires a federal license needed for anybody engaging in public display and/or in any commercial wild and exotic mammal breeding, selling, trading and exhibiting. Examples would be circus, small private zoo, magic acts, etc...Some nonprofit wildlife sanctuaries are not USDA licensed, which is legal in some states, but only IF they do not exhibit to the public.
- USDA regulations do not require non commercial aka 'pet' owners to be licensed, but many states and localities mandate a USDA license for wild & exotic animal ownership.
- The larger number of fatalities at USDA only licensed facilities as opposed to AZA facilities doesn't necessarily mean the AZA facility is safer. Majority of facilities are USDA only, and not accredited by AZA, which explains larger number of fatalities occurring at non AZA facilities. Also, the majority of large mammals like big cats, bears and elephants (except killer whales) are in non AZA facilities.



**Table 2: Captive Bear Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State, Year and the Type of the Bear, 2000 - 2012**

YEAR/ STATE	RELATIONSHIP TO BEAR	COMMENTS
2012 - MT	Employee/trainer at a state & USDA licensed facility was killed by a Syrian brown bear	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2010 - OH	Employee/volunteer at a state licensed facility, that recently lost its USDA license, was killed by a black bear	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2009 - PA	Woman killed by her pet black bear. Her husband is an exotic pet dealer operating on an expired state license at the time of the attack	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2008 - CA	Movie trainer in the USDA licensed facility was killed by a male grizzly bear during a training session.	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2006 - IL	Formerly USDA licensed, now closed to the public zoo's worker killed by a black bear out of his cage	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public; the bear never left the zoo property

**Table 3: Captive Elephant Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State and Year, 2000 – 2012**

YEAR/ STATE	RELATIONSHIP TO ELEPHANT	COMMENTS
2011 - TN	Knoxville Zoo worker dies after African elephant pushes her into stall, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2010 - PA	Circus worker was accidentally killed when the elephant got spooked by an electric wire, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2006 - TN	A female Asian elephant killed its female handler at a Tennessee elephant sanctuary, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2005 - IN	Elephants being loaded onto a truck trampled a circus animal trainer to death after the man fell down inside the trailer, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2002 - PA	An elephant at the Pittsburgh Zoo killed one of her handlers when she pinned him to the ground during a routine walk, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2000 - FL	Circus African elephant knocked her female handler to the ground and stomped her to death on their family property, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public



**Table 4: Captive Killer Whale Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State and Year, 2000 – 2012**

YEAR/ STATE	RELATIONSHIP TO KILLER WHALE	COMMENTS
<b>2010 - FL</b>	A Sea World (AZA) trainer was killed during a show by a whale that had killed a human before. All US captive killer whales are in AZA facilities	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolvled public

**Table 5: Captive Big Cats Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State, Year and the Type of the Cat, 2000 – 2012**

YEAR/ STATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CAT	COMMENTS
<b>2008 - OK</b>	Handler killed by sanctuary liger, USDA	Occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolvled public
<b>2007 - CA</b>	Visitor killed by a tiger out of her cage, but still on the SF Zoo property, 2 visitors injured, AZA, USDA	The surviving victims and family of the man killed reached a settlement with the zoo. The zoo director resigned, and is now working at the Honolulu, HI, zoo.
<b>2007 - CO</b>	AZA zoo keeper killed by a jaguar, USDA	Occupational hazard. It was not clear why she was in the jaguar's cage which is against the zoo's rules
<b>2006 - MN</b>	USDA licensed professional owner/trainer killed by her tiger	Occupational hazard. MN has regulations on exotics; no risk to uninvolvled public
<b>2005 - KS</b>	17 year old volunteer at the USDA sanctuary had her picture taken with an adult tiger, which is against existing USDA rules	Parents should be held responsible. Parents sued, exhibitor lost his USDA license and KS enacted tough regulations compared by many to a ban. No risk to uninvolvled public
<b>2004 - IL</b>	Man killed by his lion, USDA	Occupational/hobby hazard, no risk to the public
<b>2003 - IL</b>	Man killed by his tigers at his own federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard-no public risk. Illinois already regulates private possession of "dangerous animals"
<b>2003 - NC</b>	10 year boy old killed by his uncle's pet tiger	Parents should be held responsible. Death by a tiger shouldn't be treated any differently than accidental death involving other activities. No risk to the public
<b>2003 - OK</b>	Tiger killed the handler, USDA	Occupational hazard - no risk to uninvolvled public
<b>2001 - FL</b>	Tiger killed a worker doing a tiger cage repair at a federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard. FL already has regulations on exotic animals-no risk to uninvolvled public not on property. Exhibitor lost his USDA license
<b>2001 - NV</b>	Tiger killed handler, federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard, no public risk, facility is not in business anymore
<b>2001 - TX</b>	3-year old boy killed by his family's tiger at their USDA licensed facility	Parents should be also held responsible. Being killed by a tiger shouldn't be treated any differently than death by accidents involving other activities. No risk to uninvolvled public



**Table 6: Captive Exotic Canines Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State and Year, 2000 – 2012**

YEAR/ STATE	RELATIONSHIP TO PAINTED DOG	COMMENTS
2012 - PA	A 2-year-old boy fell into an exhibit of African wild painted dogs and was fatally mauled by the animals, AZA, USDA	Still under USDA investigation

**CONCLUSION:**

Between 2000 - 2012, there is no record of a member of the general public in the USA dying as a result of a captive bear, elephant, big cat, non-human primate, exotic canine or killer whale at large, meaning, unsupervised and OFF the property where the animals were kept. An animal out of the cage, but still on owner's or zoo property, (as in San Francisco, CA, AZA Zoo incident) is not considered AT LARGE for our analysis.

Instead, all victims were voluntarily on the property where the animal was kept, be it owner(s), handlers, employees, friends or visitors wanting to see the animals.

Captive keeping of wild and exotic mammals might be a slight voluntarily accepted hobby/occupational hazard in the USA, but it is NOT a public safety issue. On average a total of 1.92 people die in the USA per year as a result of all captive bear, big cat, elephant, painted dogs and killer whale related incidents, which accounts for a total of 25 deaths in the last 13 years.

There are no human fatalities attributed to the captive non human primates in the USA. To give perspective, dogs kill 20-30 people per year, traffic accidents up to 125 people each day.

In the last 13 years, since 2000, non AZA-USDA facilities accounted for 13 (52 %) human fatalities by captive exotic & wild mammals, AZA-USDA zoos had 6 (24%), sanctuaries accounted for 3 (12%) and pet owners also 3 (12%).