

## Texas Incidents Involving Dangerous Wild Animals

Texas currently requires permits for, but does not ban big cats, bears, and some primate species. More children have been killed or injured by captive big cats in Texas than any other state, including a 3-year-old Lee County boy and 10-year-old Yorktown girl who were both killed by pet tigers and a Channelview 4-year-old who lost his arm and a 4-year-old Harris County girl who required \$17,000 in plastic surgery after being mauled by big cats. Dozens of people have been injured by primates, including a teenager and an elderly woman who were both attacked by an escaped chimpanzee, a game warden who was bitten by one of several escaped pet rhesus macaque monkeys, and a pet Java macaque who sent a woman, a child, and a firefighter to the hospital after attacking and biting all three.

Date Location	Incident
<b>October 16, 2011</b> <b>Odessa, Texas</b>	A 4-year-old boy was attacked and mauled by a 150-pound cougar who was kept as a pet by a relative. The child was standing near the cougar's cage when the animal reached out and grabbed him. The boy was taken to hospital with significant damage to the left side of his body. The cougar was seized by animal control officials and euthanized. <sup>1</sup>
<b>October 14, 2011</b> <b>Lake Hills, Texas</b>	One of five capuchin monkeys kept as pets escaped from a home and was on the loose for five days before being recaptured. The monkey reportedly attacked a dog and charged at a man, prompting three people to shoot at the animal. <sup>2,3</sup>
<b>September 11, 2011</b> <b>Plantersville, Texas</b>	A game warden with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was bitten by one of several pet rhesus monkeys who were on the loose as a result of forced evacuations because of wildfires in the area. The game warden suffered a puncture wound on her thumb. Game officials weren't sure if the owner released the monkeys or whether the animals somehow got loose. <sup>4</sup>
<b>November 19, 2010</b> <b>San Antonio, Texas</b>	A cougar escaped from the Wild Animal Orphanage while cages were being moved. Law enforcement officers searched for the animal for eight hours, during which time the cougar attacked and nearly killed a puppy. Area schools were put on alert, and recess was canceled at the elementary school. The cougar was ultimately tranquilized and recaptured. <sup>5</sup>
<b>April 21, 2009</b> <b>Corpus Christi, Texas</b>	A squirrel monkey bit a man who was transporting the animal to Michigan. Animal control officers planned to quarantine the monkey for three months to test for diseases. <sup>6</sup>
<b>March 2, 2009</b> <b>Mineola, Texas</b>	A woman was bitten on the hand by a capuchin monkey she had for eight years as she was placing a toy in the monkey's cage. She received 12 stitches and decided to place her monkey at a facility in Oklahoma. <sup>7</sup>
<b>February 2, 2009</b> <b>Flour Bluff, Texas</b>	An escaped or abandoned ring-tailed lemur was discovered when children were seen playing with the animal outdoors. The animal, who had an injured arm and was reportedly biting at the children, was seized by authorities and the owners were ticketed for illegally possessing an exotic animal. <sup>8</sup>
<b>January 18, 2009</b> <b>Ingram, Texas</b>	A 330-pound pet tiger owned by Anke Leitner escaped from her enclosure and was discovered in the residential backyard of a 79-year-old woman. The tiger was shot with a tranquilizer dart and recaptured. <sup>9</sup>
<b>November 19, 2008</b> <b>Crosby, Texas</b>	The Houston SPCA seized a sick and emaciated 23-year-old male pet chimpanzee named Henry who was living in a garage in a 15-square-foot cage littered with cigarette butts, soda cans, and other trash. He had been living in those conditions for 15 years and was suffering from malnutrition and ailments related to a lack of exposure to sunlight. <sup>10,11</sup>



# factsheet

Date Location	Incident
<b>April 5, 2008</b> Addison, Texas	Two lemurs at the Trager Snake Farm were quarantined after biting or scratching a child. <sup>12</sup>
<b>January 20, 2008</b> Cedar Creek, Texas	A volunteer at the Capital of Texas Zoo was bitten by a cougar when she reached into the pen to pet the animal. The cougar gripped her arm and the girl sustained a broken thumb and bites that required stitches. She was the second person to be bitten by this animal (see 2007/Cedar Creek, Texas). <sup>13</sup>
<b>December 25, 2007</b> Dallas, Texas	A 1-year-old, 180-pound tiger was found dead in a wooded area off the interstate. The female tiger was declawed and wearing a make-shift leash. Shell casings were found in the head and chest. The tiger had been shot five times. <sup>14</sup>
<b>November 6, 2007</b> Dripping Springs, Texas	A worker at Sunrise Exotic Ranch, a chimpanzee-breeding facility, was bitten by a chimpanzee named Ginny while she was handing blankets to the animals through a feeding tray. Ginny reached through a rusted hole in the tray and grabbed the worker's hand. When the woman was able to pull her hand out of the cage, one of her fingers was gone and two others were nearly severed. After multiple surgeries, including transplants and skin grafts, her hand is still disfigured and curls into a ball. The victim amassed more than \$100,000 in medical bills. <sup>15</sup>
<b>January 21, 2007</b> San Angelo, Texas	A woman was given a tetanus shot at a hospital emergency room after a 10-week-old African lion cub bit her right forearm and would not let go until a worker repeatedly hit the cub in the face. The cub, who was placed under quarantine, was being exhibited by GW Exotic Animal Foundation at a mall where patrons were allowed to pet and interact with the lion. <sup>16</sup>
<b>2007</b> Cedar Creek, Texas	A volunteer at the Capital of Texas Zoo was bitten by a cougar when she reached into the pen to pet the animal. <sup>17</sup>
<b>December 14, 2006</b> New Caney, Texas	Following a home burglary, police found human blood samples in the cage of two pet monkeys, which indicated that one or both of the animals apparently fought back against an apparent attempt to take them. At least one of the monkeys was injured during the burglary; he sustained puncture wounds and scabs and appeared to have been strangled. The injured monkey escaped from the home and was found at a nearby house the following week. <sup>18</sup>
<b>June 16, 2006</b> Kaufman County, Texas	A part-time employee at Zoo Dynamics, an animal facility owned by Marcus Cook, was chased and mauled by a 300-pound tiger who climbed out of an uncovered enclosure. The tiger grabbed the man and threw him down, ripped off his ear, and left severe claw marks all over his body. The man spent the weekend in intensive care and received some 2,000 stitches. The employee in charge took the victim to the hospital without notifying local authorities that a tiger was still loose on the premises and recaptured the animal upon his return. <sup>19,20,21</sup>
<b>March 8, 2006</b> Bell County, Texas	A person bitten by a pet rhesus macaque was taken to the hospital for treatment. The monkey was killed to be tested for rabies. <sup>22</sup>
<b>February 11, 2005</b> Cut and Shoot, Texas	A worker at Wildlife Extravaganza was hospitalized for several days after her arm was pulled through the feeding hole by a leopard as she prepared to feed the cat. Two animal control officers were stationed at the property around the clock to ensure there was no improper contact while the leopard was placed under a 30-day quarantine. <sup>23,24</sup>
<b>November 8, 2003</b> Frisco, Texas	A 4-month-old, 50-pound declawed tiger cub was abandoned and captured by police after a motorist spotted the animal roaming on the side of the road. <sup>25</sup>



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<b>April 6, 2003</b> <b>San Antonio, Texas</b>	A 350-pound lion from escaped from Wild Animal Orphanage and roamed through a residential neighborhood for several hours. An employee required hospital treatment for a fractured pelvic bone and bruised rib when the lion charged and knocked her down as she attempted to shoot the animal with a tranquilizer dart. The lion was tracked with a police helicopter and shot and killed by four police officers armed with handguns and shotguns. <sup>26</sup>
<b>October 4, 2002</b> <b>Leona, Texas</b>	A man was severely mauled by a 400-pound tiger at the Perrydise Exotic Animal Ranch when he stuck his arm in the feeding opening of the cage to touch the animal, resulting in amputation of his arm just above the elbow. <sup>27</sup>
<b>June 23, 2002</b> <b>Magnolia, Texas</b>	A pet Java macaque attacked and bit a 9-year-old boy and a woman and severely scratched a firefighter, sending all three to the hospital for treatment. <sup>28</sup>
<b>December 29, 2001</b> <b>Leona, Texas</b>	A 6-year-old boy was taken to the emergency room after being attacked by a tiger at the Perrydise Exotic Animal Ranch. The child sustained severe lacerations to his face and hand when a tiger reached through the cage and clawed him as he was photographing the animal. <sup>29</sup>
<b>October 10, 2001</b> <b>Lee County, Texas</b>	A 3-year-old boy was killed by one of three of a relative's pet tigers as he was about to have his picture taken with the animals. The 250-pound tiger snatched the boy from the arms of an adult, clamped down on his leg, and dragged him around the enclosure, causing head injuries. The tiger was beaten on the head until he released the boy's foot. <sup>30</sup>
<b>August 8, 2000</b> <b>San Angelo, Texas</b>	A capuchin "went crazy" and bit his owner. The owner shot the monkey seven or eight times, killing him. The monkey was originally acquired as a "helper" monkey. This is the same monkey who bit a neighbor on January 9, 1998. <sup>31</sup>
<b>March 15, 2000</b> <b>Channelview, Texas</b>	A 4-year-old boy had his arm torn off, mid-bicep, by his uncle's 400-pound pet tiger. Surgeons spent nine hours reattaching the arm and within just five days the boy's medical bills totaled \$80,000. The boy's uncle, Larry Tidwell, was fined \$500 for failing to have a permit for the tiger but was allowed to keep the animal. <sup>32,33</sup>
<b>November 1, 1999</b> <b>Eules, Texas</b>	A pet capuchin monkey attacked and bit an elderly woman. <sup>34</sup>
<b>June 7, 1999</b> <b>Yorktown, Texas</b>	A 10-year-old girl was killed when one of her stepfather's two pet tigers grabbed her by the neck and dragged her into a water trough. The girl's stepfather was sentenced to 10 years probation, fined \$5,000, and ordered to serve 800 hours of community service for recklessly causing serious bodily injury to a child. <sup>35,36</sup>
<b>March 31, 1999</b> <b>Tyler, Texas</b>	A woman's arm was nearly severed by a tiger at Tiger Creek Wildlife Refuge. A volunteer at the facility, she reached in to pet the tiger, when he attacked. Doctors were unsure whether they would be able to save her arm. <sup>37</sup>
<b>November 18, 1998</b> <b>Kaufman, Texas</b>	A Texas man was attacked by his pet lion and suffered serious injuries. The female lion jumped him from behind. <sup>38</sup>
<b>November 8, 1998</b> <b>Cut and Shoot, Texas</b>	Two pet tigers escaped their backyard cage and attacked a dog and a pig before being shot dead by police after charging pursuers. Security officers were posted at a local school while one tiger eluded searchers for more than 30 hours. In 1997, a pet cougar kept by the same man escaped and was never re-captured. <sup>39,40,41</sup>
<b>November 1, 1998</b> <b>Eules, Texas</b>	A spider monkey bit a student at an elementary school. <sup>42</sup>



Date Location	Incident
<b>May 2, 1998</b> Wylie, Texas	A pet cougar bit a 4-year-old boy on the leg. The boy required \$5,800 in medical care. <sup>43</sup>
<b>January 9, 1998</b> San Angelo, Texas	A pet capuchin bit a 19-year-old neighbor man, who underwent rabies shots. <sup>44</sup>
<b>1998</b> Harris County, Texas	A 4-year-old girl was mauled by a Bridgeport Nature Center tiger during photo ops at a county fair. The girl required stitches and \$17,000 in plastic surgery to her leg. The girl's family filed a lawsuit against Bridgeport. <sup>45</sup>
<b>May 8, 1997</b> Lubbock, Texas	One of five pet tigers mauled his owner. The man was admitted to the hospital in critical condition. The owner's son killed the tiger. <sup>46</sup>
<b>April 27, 1997</b> San Antonio, Texas	A man reportedly lost his finger and his friend was injured when they broke into Wild Animal Orphanage and tried to pet a tiger. <sup>47</sup>
<b>March 18, 1997</b> San Antonio, Texas	A 300-pound tiger climbed a 10-foot fence and escaped from Wild Animal Orphanage, killing a duck and an ostrich, wounding a llama, and pawing a sheriff's deputy before being tranquilized and recaptured. <sup>48,49</sup>
<b>March 12, 1997</b> Caldwell, Texas	A 13-year-old boy was hospitalized for a week after he was attacked by a pet tiger and a lion kept in a cage built into the side of his grandfather's house. The boy's father said, "My boy was not mauled, he was being eaten alive." <sup>50</sup>
<b>March 1, 1997</b> Houston, Texas	An 8-year-old capuchin turned on his owner and nearly killed her, severing her thumb and part of her index finger and slicing her legs. <sup>51</sup>
<b>1997</b> Kirbyville, Texas	A tiger bit two fingers off the left hand of Monique Woodard, owner of the Exotic Cat Refuge and Wildlife Orphanage. Doctors were able to reattach one of the fingers. <sup>52</sup>
<b>September 16, 1996</b> Crystal Beach, Texas	A declawed pet lioness died after she was shot and tranquilized by a deputy. The lioness attacked a man after a burglar had apparently set her free. <sup>53</sup>
<b>May 6, 1996</b> Midlothian, Texas	A 6-year-old girl suffered severe injuries to her head, neck, arms, back, and legs in an attack by a tiger, one of seven big cats at a private menagerie. Her mother was bitten as she tried to stop the attack. During the investigation it was found that these same cats had been involved in three previous documented attacks. The animals were seized and tiger's owner pleaded guilty to charges of child endangerment and was placed on probation. <sup>54,55,56,57</sup>
<b>December 26, 1995</b> Quinlan, Texas	A 3-year-old toddler was mauled by his family's pet cougar. His 6-year-old sister suffered minor injuries in the attack. The cougar was shot and killed. <sup>58</sup>
<b>October 12, 1992</b> Dripping Springs, Texas	A 180-pound chimpanzee bent the bars of his cage and escaped from Sunrise Exotic Ranch, a chimpanzee-breeding facility. The animal bit a 15-year-old boy and threw a 77-year-old woman to the ground. Sheriff's deputies and an animal control officer returned the chimpanzee to the ranch. The boy was treated for a bite to the hand at a minor emergency clinic, and the elderly woman suffered facial injuries. <sup>59</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Audrie Palmer, "Mountain Lion Mauls Boy," *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, October 17, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Zeke MacCormack, "Rules questioned after monkey's escape," *Express-News*, October 22, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Katrina Webber, "Missing monkey becomes talk of Medina Lake Town," *KSAT*, October 17, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> "Monkey bites game warden near Plantersville," *Associated Press*, September 13, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Brian New and James Muñoz, "Cougar caged after escape from northwest-side sanctuary," *KENS*, November 19, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> "Man bitten by squirrel monkey," *KRIS-TV*, April 21, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> "Mineola woman bitten by pet monkey, receives 12 stitches," *Longview News-Journal*, March 5, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Dave Fraser, "Animal Care Officers Respond To Exotic Animal Call," *KRIS-TV*, February 2, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Irene Van Winkle, "Pet tiger escapes, prowls Ingram area before capture," *West Kerr Current*, January 22, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> "Houston SPCA rescues emaciated chimp in Crosby," *Houston Chronicle*, December 11, 2008.



- <sup>11</sup> "Sick, malnourished chimp seized from Crosby home," KHOU, December 11, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection report, Trager Snake Farm, License #74-C-0755, April 15, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> Amy Johnston, "Volunteer bitten by mountain lion at Bastrop County zoo," KVUE News, January 23, 2008.
- <sup>14</sup> David Schechter, "Tiger found dead near I-35 on Christmas," WFAA-TV, December 28, 2007.
- <sup>15</sup> Jennifer Biundo, "Once bitten," *The Hays Free Press*, November 17, 2010.
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- <sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Inspection Report, License #74-C-0426, July 20, 2006.
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- <sup>24</sup> Sue Thackeray, "Owner will not face charges after leopard attack," *Courier*, February 15, 2005.
- <sup>25</sup> "Tiger found roaming in Collin Co.," KXAS, November 8, 2003.
- <sup>26</sup> Rosemary Barnes, "Lioness killed after escape from sanctuary," *San Antonio Express-News*, April 7, 2003.
- <sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Memorandum from Robert M. Gibbens, Director, Western Region, USDA, APHIS, Animal Care to Tim Fordahl, Western Regional Director, Investigative and Enforcement Services, October 15, 2002.
- <sup>28</sup> "Charges mulled in monkey attack," Associated Press, June 26, 2002.
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- <sup>30</sup> Claire Osborn, "3-year-old boy killed by pet tiger at grandparent's house," *Austin American-Statesman*, October 11, 2001.
- <sup>31</sup> "Ted E. Bear, infamous Texas 'death row' monkey, bites the grass," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, August 8, 2000.
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