

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

February 4, 2021

The Honourable Anutin Charnvirakul
Minister of Public Health
Ministry of Public Health

Via e-mail: moph0200@saraban.mail.go.th

Dear Minister:

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm writing to you with an urgent appeal to ban photo opportunities with exotic animals because of the serious risk that the novel coronavirus will be transmitted from humans to other animals and vice versa. These opportunities are still available in many facilities in Thailand and are undermining efforts to control the pandemic.

The risk of infection between captive animals and humans has been documented in other parts of the world. Captive tigers, who were infected by asymptomatic zoo employees, have tested positive for COVID-19 at zoos in Spain and the U.S. Primates, such as chimpanzees and gorillas, are also susceptible to infection, and recently, several gorillas at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park in California were also infected with the virus. The captive primates and tigers at the Samutprakan Crocodile Farm and Zoo, Tiger Kingdom, and Safari World are at greater risk, as they are handled by numerous visitors who use them as photo props. If they catch the virus, it can mutate and another new strain might be unleashed on the human population.

The risk to captive animals, staff, and members of the public who interact with captive wildlife is quite real and very serious. PETA has confirmed that the Samutprakan Crocodile Farm and Zoo, Tiger Kingdom, and Safari World are allowing visitors to come in close contact with tigers, orangutans, monkeys or other animals for photos. Places like these have numerous guests every day, and it would take only one infected person to start another coronavirus disaster.

I respectfully ask that you immediately ban all photo opportunities with exotic animals to help avoid more coronavirus outbreaks. I can be reached at JasonB@PETAAsiaPacific.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

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