

Thursday, August 5, 2004

Tigers saved; room to roam in Texas

By T.A. Badger
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — Nearly nine months after being rescued from squalid conditions in a New Jersey suburb, seven Bengal tigers finally have some room of their own.

One by one, the big cats sent to the Wild Animal Orphanage in November were released Wednesday into an enclosed two-acre area in the hills northwest of San Antonio.

They joined two others who went into the area, surrounded by a 25-foot-high steel mesh fence, on Tuesday night.

"Now they have the proper care and the space they deserve," said Carol Asvestas, who owns the animal sanctuary.

Another 13 tigers, some of them in poor health, remain in the 300-square-foot quarantine cages they've occupied since being trucked to San Antonio in November. Asvestas says she plans to fence in some acreage for them as well.

Wild Animal Orphanage, which spreads across more than 100 acres, took possession of 24 tigers following a five-year custody battle between the state of New Jersey and Joan Byron-Marasek, who bred the cats on her property in Jackson Township. The custody fight began in January

1999, when a 430-pound Bengal tiger was found roaming around Jackson, terrifying residents until it was killed by sharpshooters.

State officials never proved the tiger belonged to Byron-Marasek, known by the nickname "Tiger Lady," but criticized conditions at her facility and later denied renewal of her permit to keep the animals.

Officials with the International Fund for Animal Welfare, which played a key role in getting the tigers away from Byron-Marasek, said some of the tigers were housed for months or even years in 4-foot-high chutes covered with plastic tarps.

Once in Texas they had to be treated for a variety of ailments, including malnutrition, parasites, foot sores and dehydration.

The first one released into the enclosure Wednesday, a female named Madhya, had to have her back left leg amputated below the knee.

She bounded out of her small transport cage after the door was slid open, and started pacing through the salt cedar and live oak trees to get familiar with her new home.

The cost of the move and the tiger enclosures is estimated at nearly \$300,000. IFAW and the state of New Jersey each contributed \$120,000, and Asvestas will raise the remainder.



GARY LAWSON • THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Texas Department of Public Safety Troopers place a sheet over the wreckage of a single-engine airplane that crashed shortly after takeoff from the municipal airport in Olney, Texas, Wednesday. All three occupants of the

plane were killed. A second crash occurred 50 miles southeast of Olney on its approach to Mineral Wells Municipal Airport, killing two people. Both planes were performing go-arounds attempts.

Five people die in two North Texas plane crashes

By Sheila Flynn
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Five people died in two separate fiery plane crashes in North Texas on Wednesday, officials said.

The first plane went down in Olney around 9 a.m., killing three people, Young County Sheriff Carey Pettus said.

The dead were identified as pilot Max Ray, 65, of Longview; David Hancock, 38, of Gladewater; and Joel Smith, 69, of Kerrville, said Texas Department of Public Safety spokesman Tom Vinger.

The aircraft was a single-engine Mooney registered to an owner in Gladewater.

The plane crashed and burned at the end of the runway at Olney Municipal Airport, said Federal Aviation Administration spokesman John Clabes.

The plane "was doing a go-around at the time," Clabes said. "It stalled out, crashed and exploded."

Pilots perform go-arounds when they can't make a landing, so they make a second attempt, Clabes said.

He said the second accident — 50 miles southeast of Olney — also likely resulted from a go-around attempt. A single-engine Piper PA-32 crashed and exploded around 11:40 a.m. upon approach to Mineral Wells Municipal Airport, killing two people, Clabes said.

The victims were identified as pilot Martin Oswald, 43, of Mineral Wells, and Donald Brooks of Willow Park, Vinger said.

"The pilot, apparently, had overflown the airport," Clabes said. The aircraft was registered to an owner in Seymour, Ind.

A DPS spokeswoman said the plane went down about a half-mile northwest of the airport, hit power

lines and exploded. Vinger said the crash sparked several large grass fires in the area.

Gailee Cardwell, a spokeswoman for TXU Electric Delivery, said 3,500 customers lost power when the plane hit. She said power was restored to those customers a little more than an hour later.

Clabes said both the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board were investigating the Olney and Mineral Wells crashes.

There have been four small plane crashes in Texas since Sunday. On Monday, five Texans died in a plane crash at Point Lookout, Mo.

In Texas, six people were killed when a small plane crashed into a mansion near Austin on Tuesday. A father and son died Sunday when their small experimental plane crashed into the yard of a home in the North Texas town of Collinsville.



ERIC GAY • THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A rescued Bengal tiger roams its new home at the Wild Animal Orphanage in San Antonio, Wednesday. The tiger, who spent nearly nine months in a 300-square-foot quarantine cage, was released in an enclosed two-acre natural area.

Worship Directory

Catholic

St. Mary's Catholic Center
603 Church Avenue in Northgate
(979) 846-5717
www.aggiecatholic.org

Student Summer Fellowship
Every Tuesday at 7:30 PM

Daily Masses
Mon.-Fri.: 5:30 p.m. in the Church

Weekend Masses
Sat: 2:00 p.m. (Korean),
5:30 p.m. (English), 7:00 p.m. (Spanish)
Sun.: 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 7:00 p.m.

Confessions
Wed. 8:30-9:30 p.m., Sat. 4:00-5:15 p.m.
or by appointment..

Episcopal

St. Thomas Episcopal
906 George Bush Dr. • College Station, TX
696-1726

Summer services - 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Next door to Canterbury House,
the Episcopal Student Center

Christian

First Christian Church
900 South Ennis, Bryan
823-5451

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Robert D. Chandler, Minister

Non-Denominational

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Church of Christ

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