

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release May 10, 1974

McGarvey 202/343-5634

TIGER AND CHEETAH IMPORT PERMIT SOUGHT

Applications to import 24 tigers and 10 cheetah from Canada and Germany to a commercial, drive-through zoo park in New Jersey were published in the Federal Register on May 3rd, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

Public comments are invited on the proposal. All comments received through June 2, 1974, will be considered.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires the Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate all such applications and to insure that such importations do not further jeopardize the continued existence of the species. Except in limited instances involving severe economic hardship, the law permits importation of endangered species only for scientific or propagation purposes. Moreover the Service is also obliged to insure that the handling and care given animals meet acceptable standards. Public comment is sought as part of this evaluation.

The three applications deal with 10 cheetah, 11 Siberian tigers, and 13 Bengal tigers, all endangered species in the wild. The cheetah and Siberian tigers presently are on display at an animal park Great Adventure, Inc., owns and operates in Canada. The Bengal tigers are located at a wild animal preserve in Alsed Park, Germany. If the permit is granted, these Bengal tigers will be purchased by Great Adventure, Inc., and transported by commercial air carrier to Jackson, New Jersey, where Great Adventure, Inc., is opening a 1,500-acre commercial "safari park."

The cheetah are wild-caught animals. The tigers are reported to have been born in captivity.

The applicant indicates he intends to breed these cats. Their staff includes specialists in animal husbandry and two veterinarians.

The proposed display areas are separate, fenced plots within the 1,500-acre safari park. All three plots contain grass, trees, and shrubs with shade, shelter, and water sources for the animals. The 10 cheetah would be displayed on an 8-acre plot, the 11 Siberian tigers on a 20-acre site, and the 13 Bengal tigers on a 15-acre tract. The public would drive through these areas in automobiles and observe the animals.

Persons interested in commenting on these applications may write to the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ATTN: Law Enforcement Division, Washington, D.C. 20240. Documents submitted in connection with this application are available for public inspection during normal business hours at Suite 600, 1612 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

x x x