



• the •

WONDERMNT



the sanctuary



Tigress Callie

they will never
know freedom.

will they at
least know
compassion?

An aerial photograph of The Wildcat Sanctuary in Minnesota. The image shows a large, green, open area with several white buildings and a parking lot. The surrounding landscape is filled with trees, many of which have yellow and orange autumn foliage. A dirt road runs along the right side of the property.

overview

There are ***more tigers*** in backyards across the U.S. then in all **zoos combined**.

The Wildcat Sanctuary is working to change that.

With a new campaign permitting “amnesty surrender” from both roadside zoos and private owners during the COVID pandemic and plans for an on-site animal hospital, this docuseries centers around Tammy Thies, Founder and Executive Director, and her team of caretakers at *The Wildcat Sanctuary* in Minnesota.

Funded solely by private donations and with nearly 3 million Facebook followers, *The Wildcat Sanctuary* primary goal is the lifelong care of these animals as close to the free and wild habitat they will know.



Bobcat Cooper



[2.8 Million Followers](#)

TWS Facebook Live:

[NYC Surrender of Logan](#)

[4.27.20 Amnesty Program Surrender](#)



[33.5k Followers](#)

Media Attention to the Cause:
[After 'Tiger King,' Celebrities Rally Around
Passage of Big Cat Public Safety Act](#)

TWS Accreditations:



“we do what we do for their benefit, not ours.”

- Tammy Thies
Founder & Executive Director



A former full-time advertising executive, Tammy Thies became aware of the big cat crisis while on many photo shoots and advertising campaigns. She soon discovered tens of thousands of big cats were privately owned as pets, used as performers or for-profit breeding, with many outliving their usefulness with nowhere to go.

In 1999, she founded *The Wildcat Sanctuary*.

Tammy is now a sought-after speaker on captive wildlife crisis, leading spokesperson and expert witness for the big cat crisis and protection nationally. She works with governmental agencies and private organizations to strengthen regulations protecting the welfare of big cats in captivity.

Tammy is also the subject of numerous features: *Best Friends Magazine*, *Lavender Magazine*, on Animal Planet's *Fatal Attraction: Big Cats*, The History Channel, CNN, and the international documentary: *The American Tiger* to name a few.



Griffen

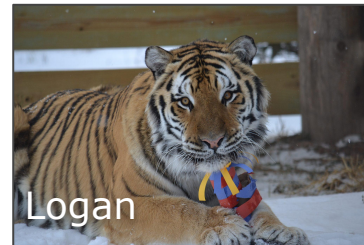
Dimitri

the cats: life in captivity

Current residents: 117 animals

Think of *The Wildcat Sanctuary* as a retirement home for big cats.

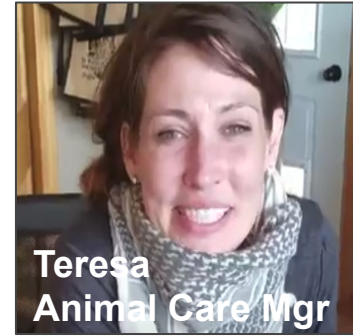
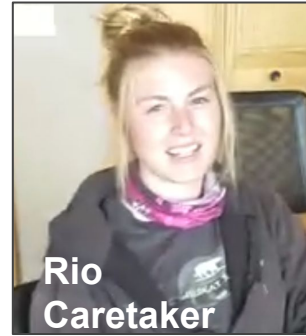
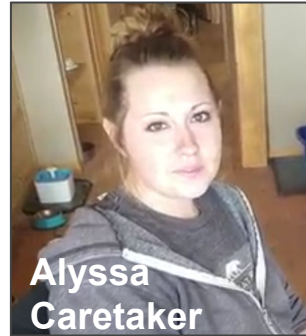
Whether these cats are seized as court appointed rescues from a life of abuse, surrenders from loving but naive private owners, or transferred from another facility due to lack of space, one thing remains common with big cats at TWS - positive operant conditioning, overcoming neurological and physical challenges and often dealing with a lifetime of distrust.



An aerial photograph of The Wildcat Sanctuary, showing a large green field, several white buildings, and a dirt road winding through a forest of trees with yellow and orange autumn foliage.

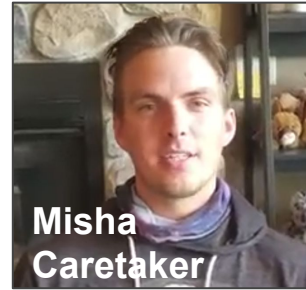
the caretakers

The amount of time and sacrifice that goes into dedicating your life and work to big cat rescue and care means that you spend not only all day everyday with the cats, but with your coworkers too.



The Wildcat Sanctuary consists of a team of 7 caretakers, two dedicated vets who visit twice a week and several interns.

With teamwork and personal dynamics sometimes being tested, work life blends into home life, the grounding storyline will be in the bigger cause - the cats well-being.





story approach

Each wildcat has a journey that is just as important as the caretakers of *The Wildcat Sanctuary* and each episode will feature different wild cats to show their journey as the viewer understands their progress from intake to present day. We will also follow “day-to-day” activities of TWS caretakers to offer variety each episode:

Cat transfers/ New surrenders: We’ll see how caretakers plan and strategize best practices to transfer cats, set up a cat playdate or take in a new surrender.

Contractor Meetings: Tammy meets with the contractors for the next phase of the on-site animal hospital expansion - they’re over budget and need to stay on schedule as we follow the progress of construction.

Weekly Vet Check Ups: Vets, Dr. Joanne Kamper, DVM and Dr. Lori Ballinger, DVM on site visits. Everything from check ups to minor surgery.

Caretaker Meetings: Tammy and caretakers meet to discuss cats with progress reports, planning live events and fundraisers as well as onboarding new team members.



story approach

Day-to-day Activities:

Individualized care: We follow the caretakers as they ensure each cat receives what it needs – both physically and emotionally. As the caretaker's gain trust through positive operant conditioning training, providing fun and stimulating enrichment items and even the one-on-one time during medication rounds.

Habitat enhancements: Not only do the caretakers care for the big cats, but they do a lot of heavy lifting in the habitats – from building new habitats to constructing multi-level structures, hammocks and pools to maintenance of the safety doors and fencing.

Sharing the sanctuary – As a nonprofit located in a rural wooded community, it takes work to bring the cats and daily work to donors in 46 countries. The fundraising staff works alongside the caretakers as they photograph, capture live posts and ensure donors feel like there at the sanctuary every day.

Making change – On top of caring for 117 wild cats, Tammy's ultimate goal is to end the pipeline of cats needing rescue through education and legislation. The viewer will experience what it takes to place cats around the world in other accredited sanctuaries, phone calls with local authorities on how to handle a seizure or big cat situation, media and influencing legislation. They will also follow as Tammy gives expert legal testimony.

season arc



Following Tammy Thies and her team of caretakers and veterinarians, we see how a \$2.5 million dollar a year big cat sanctuary works on a day-to-day basis, and how no two days are ever the same.

A typical day in the life could contain a number of the story lines outlined in the "story approach" all interwoven or touched upon in episodes to showcase the exciting, heartwarming and sometimes dramatic life of a big cat sanctuary.

Often times the right approach is not the easiest, and when the caretakers earn the cat's trust, it is a huge win that we can all rejoice in.



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