

**“THE KINGS AND QUEENS OF
PROMISE:” DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN WHITE TIGERS’ AND
YELLOW TIGERS’ MATING
BEHAVIORS IN CAPTIVITY**

Carmen M. Cusack

In 2013, Leonardo DiCaprio donated \$3 million through the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF) to build watchtowers and other structures to help save wild tigers. Their comprehensive conservation plan focuses on breeding. His funds helped to save both white tigers and yellow tigers and provide World Wildlife Fund (WWF) with a greater stake in their longstanding commitments to receiving and investing donations for beloved white tigers. This great leadership caused the public to fortify its interest in humane treatment of white tigers in the wild and captivity.

White tigers may be bred in captivity through zoos, sanctuaries, and breeding programs. They may be afforded ideal conditions for their species. Many are treated according to survival plans and other regimens. While white tigers often are treated humanely under relevant laws, such as Animal

Welfare Act and Endanger Species Act, they may be deprived of circumstances that are ideal because captors misunderstand their distinctions from other animals, including yellow tigers. Yet, like others, their offspring may be subjected to mistreatment for entertainment. This paper argues that white tigers should be permitted to breed naturally and with necessary human intervention. Section II discusses relevant laws, including those requiring cubs to be humanely treated. This section advocates for increased protection. It addresses blatantly inaccurate rumors that white tigers are inbred and deformed. Section III presents data documenting how white tigers mating in captivity may differ from yellow tigers, who mate in captivity. Therefore, their accommodations, such as enclosures, enrichment, and meals, should conform to their special needs, which may be individualized. Methods and analyses are discussed in Section III. Section IV concludes that increased education about white tigers is necessary and helpful for the proliferation and comfort of the captive species. Distinctions between yellow tigers and white tigers, who mate in captivity, demonstrate speciation or personality differences that should receive attention and resources from human caretakers and the public (e.g., donors).