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NSPCA removes 3 illegally kept lions in Randfontein, person could face fine of R10m



The animals were removed and taken to a sanctuary. Picture: Supplied

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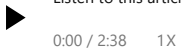
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Durban - A Randfontein homeowner who was charged with illegally keeping three lions on his property could face jail time or a fine of up to R10 million.

The NSPCA said they been contacted by the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) regarding the illegal possession and captivity of three lions at a property in Randfontein.

Keshvi Nair, NSPCA public relations officer, said they and Randwest SPCA carried out an inspection at the property on March 22.

“A joint operation between the NSPCA, Randwest SPCA, Isindile Big Cat and Predator Sanctuary and GDARD, the three lions were successfully darted, captured and moved from their illegal confinement to the sanctuary.



The NSPCA condemned the keeping of wild animals in captivity.



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“Dr Peter Caldwell, a wildlife specialist veterinarian, performed a basic health check on each lion, and also microchipped, vaccinated and de-wormed them before their departure.

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“The NSPCA arranged for the three lions to be moved to the Isindile Big Cat and Predator Sanctuary, which is an NSPCA accredited facility.”

Nair said the keeping of any wild animal in captivity compromises the welfare of that animal.



“Wild animals removed from captivity should be afforded the opportunity to either be released safely back into the wild or, in cases where that is not possible, they should be placed into the care of an accredited sanctuary that does not exploit the animals by allowing public interaction.”

The GDARD opened a case for the illegal possession of the lions, which is a contravention of the National Environmental Biodiversity Act and the relevant Threatened or Protected Species regulations.

Nair said if found guilty, the accused faces a penalty of imprisonment, a fine of up to R10m, or both.

This year there have been incidents where tigers had escaped from private properties.

Sheba the tigress made headlines after she escaped from a farm enclosure.

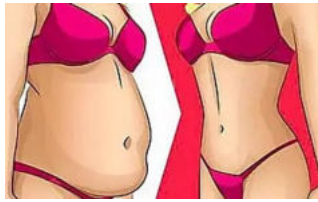
After being missing for five days and having mauled a 39-year-old man, killed two dogs and a pig, she was shot dead by her owner.

And in January, a tiger was caught on CCTV footage in an office parking lot in Edenvale.

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Controversy was sparked following the tiger's recapture that same day, with the SPCA saying they had no knowledge about it.

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