**The Stripes Will Survive** *by* Jacqueline Adams

A hundred years ago, no one worried that the world might run out of tigers. Eight different subspecies prowled the forests and jungles of the world. But today three subspecies—the Balinese, Caspian, and Javan—are now extinct, and a fourth—the South China tiger—is almost extinct.

In 1981, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) started the Species Survival Plan (SSP) to make sure that threatened and endangered animal species don’t disappear. The members of the Tiger SSP teach the public about the plight of tigers do research and take action to help tigers survive. As an example, the Tiger SSP’s computer program matched four-year-old female Gaia, from the Minnesota Zoo, with fifteen-year-old male Tatja, from the Milwaukee Zoo. The tigers met at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, and Danya and Dasha were born a few months later. Tatja, whom zookeeper Steve Gove describes as “a mellow tiger,” gets along well with Gaia and likes watching his cubs play. Gaia had never had cubs before, but Gove says, “She’s been an absolutely perfect mother—tolerant, loving, and protective.”

But what about the 400 Siberian tigers left in their natural habitat? How will they survive? The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and other organizations are working with the Russian government to set aside protected areas for these big cats. Rangers patrol for poachers, and educational programs help the local people understand the need to protect Siberian tigers. The WWF believes that the tigers in the wild has doubled since the anti-poaching patrols began, bringing the numbers from around 200 in 1994 to about 400 today.

*The Stripes Will Survive by Jacqueline Adams from Spider Magazine’s Vol. 11 No. 4 April 2004 issue.*

**The Zoos Go Wild from *No More Dodos*** *by* Nicholas Nirgiotis and Theodore Nirgiotis

The lowland gorilla was just three years old when caught by poachers, people who illegally kill or capture wild animals, and sold to a zoo. He spent the next 27 years alone in an indoor cage. Zoo personnel named him Willie B. To keep Willie happy, zookeepers hung an old tire in his cage and put a television set in a corner. Gorillas are gentle, shy creatures, despite their size and fearsome appearance. But confinement in a cramped cage and lack of exercise made Willie restless and bad-tempered. Finally, in 1988, his zoo opened an ‘African Rainforest’, a large open-air enclosure designed, resembling Willie’s native central Africa rainforest.

In this more natural home, Willie found himself in a large grassy area leading to a gradually rising, rock-covered slope. Willie acted like a different animal, no longer bored or easily angered. Willie’s story has a happy ending. But the best part is that he is not alone. Thousands of other zoo animals throughout the world have been moved into new homes that replaced the old, cramped cages in which they lived before.

Zoos no longer felt their primary mission is simply to collect and display as many different species of animals from around the world as they possibly can. Instead, zoos are changing into conservation parks that cooperate to help save animals threatened with extinction. The first step toward this goal was to get rid of the cages and change the way zoo animals lived.

*Excerpt from No More Dodos: How Zoos Help Endangered Wildlife by Nicholas Nirgiotis and Theodore Nirgiotis, copyright* ***©*** *1996.*

**Lion Video Transcription**

Great Cats Curator Craig Saffoe Discusses His Work Caring for the National Zoo’s Seven Frisky Lion Cubs

My name is Craig Saffoe. I am the curator of great cats at the Smithsonian’s National Zoo. The national zoo has been breeding Lions since the early nineteen hundreds. We try to breed for the most genetically stable population possible. Luke, Naba and Shira came in from a sanctuary in South Africa and their genes were not represented in our population at all. So breeding them was very, very important. Shira gave birth in late August to a litter of one male [and] three female cubs, four cubs total. Naba gave birth at the end of September to a litter of three cubs—two males and one female. We have gone from having two females together and one male to having ten cats altogether in one big pride. Caring for the cubs can be pretty challenging in that we have to stay away. The initial desire of everybody is to run and put your hands on them to see how they feel, to see what their health is like. When in reality the best thing for the cubs, especially just after they’re born, is to leave them with mom. Let mom do all the work that she is supposed to do, and let nature take its course. One of my jobs as the curator is to work very closely with veterinarians. Once they turn four weeks of age we began with a very simple visual exam. You know, is everything in place? Do you have five digits on each paw? Are you in good health? You know, ears nose, throat, are they nice and clean? We just finished or last round of exams for the cubs. The youngest litter of cubs just received their twelve-week exam with their rabies vaccination, and they’ve been given a clean bill of health. So we think they’re about ready to go outside, all seven cubs. One of our containment aspects of our yard is a water moat. And so, we know lions aren’t typically big swimmers. They don’t gravitate towards water. But cubs will be cubs, and we feel that inevitably somebody’s going to play around and knock somebody else into the moat. So we took them outside to make sure that they could swim and that they reliably find their way back to the shore. We just put the cubs out for the first time. And they had a trial run out in the yard. They were very nervous when they first came out and not sure of what this new terrain was that they were walking on, but they did exactly what we wanted them to do. They followed the mom’s lead. They did almost everything that their moms could do. There were some things that they couldn’t do, like getting up to different tiers of the yard because of their size. They stayed away from areas that we wanted them to stay away from, and we think they are about ready to meet the public. I think the National Zoo is extremely lucky in the situation that we’ve had unfold here. We’ve had not only one litter of lions born, but we’ve had two litters of lions born. You just feel like, wow, this is what it’s supposed to look like. This is what a pride looks like. Only a handful of people on the planet have seen things that we’re seeing, and it’s pretty unbelievable.

**Prompt: You have read two texts and viewed one video that claim that the role of the zoos is to protect animals. Compare and contrast the evidence each source uses to support this claim. Be sure to use evidence from all three sources to support your response.**