

# Lions, tigers, bears on the loose in rural Ohio

October 19 2011

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Photo illustration. Dozens of animals, including lions, tigers, bears and wolves, were on the loose in the US state of Ohio Wednesday after apparently being released from an exotic farm, local media reported.

Dozens of animals, including lions, tigers, bears and wolves, were on the loose in the US state of Ohio Wednesday after apparently being released from an exotic farm, local media reported.

Police and [wildlife officials](#) scrambled to hunt down the animals, shooting 25 of them, ordering local residents to stay indoors and cordoning off the area around the [farm](#), where the owner was found dead near several open cages.

"Our first responsibility is to protect the public," Muskingum County Sheriff Matt Lutz was quoted as saying by the Columbus Dispatch newspaper, adding that area schools had canceled classes on Wednesday.

The incident began around 5:30 pm on Tuesday when police started receiving emergency calls about wild animal sightings.

Police said some 48 animals -- including grizzly and [black bears](#), wolves, and several species of large cats, including lions, tigers and [cheetahs](#) -- were kept in cages outside the house, while dozens more animals -- mainly primates -- lived indoors and had not escaped, the newspaper said.

The farm's owner, 62-year-old Terry Thompson, had been released from federal prison three weeks earlier after serving a one-year term on firearms charges, it said.

The newspaper added that federal agents raided the farm in June 2008, seizing more than 100 guns, and that Thompson had previously been fined for letting his [animals](#) wander.

Kate Riley, 20, whose family owns a nearby cattle farm, said Thompson would come and take their dead cows to feed his lions.

"He'd have claw marks all over him," she told the Columbus Dispatch. She added that she believed Thompson's wife had recently left him and moved out.

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