

Seventh big cat dies at Texas animal refuge from virus

August 26 2013

A tiger described as the "soul" of a North Texas animal sanctuary has become the seventh big cat to die from an outbreak of a fatal virus.

A spokeswoman for In-Sync Exotics Wildlife Rescue and Education Center in the Dallas suburb of Wylie said Tacoma died Sunday night. Lisa Williams says Tacoma, a 15-year-old who weighed in excess of 400 pounds, is the sixth tiger killed by canine distemper. A lioness also had died.

More than a dozen other [big cats](#) are still suffering from the virus. Experts believe [raccoons](#) likely started the [outbreak](#) by crawling around the large outdoor cages.

Williams says the death of Tacoma is particularly difficult because he had been with the sanctuary for more than a dozen years.

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