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Two-hour root canal surgery relieves big cat of dental woes

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A dental surgeon for big cats, arrived from South Africa, to perform the two-hour surgery on the 180 kilogramme tiger, who was tranquillised during the operation.

By Dina El Shammaa, Abu Dhabi Deputy Editor
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GULF NEWS



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RAVINDRANATH/Gulf
News

Root canal surgery being performed on Caesar, the white Bengal tiger.

Abu Dhabi: Caesar — who had just recovered from heart-break after being rejected by Maya, a five-year-old Bengal Tiger — has had a trying few weeks as he has now had to undergo a two hour root canal procedure.

The nine-year-old white Bengal Tiger, was suffering from horrendous tooth pain. A carer noticed — as Caesar was chewing on a bone in his designated air-conditioned camp at Abu Dhabi Wild Life Centre (ADWLC) — that two of his lower front canines had chipped off.

Fortunately for him, Dr Gerhard Steenkamp, a dental surgeon for big cats, arrived from South Africa, to perform the two-hour surgery on the 180 kilogramme tiger, who was tranquillised during the operation.

Throughout the surgery an intravenous drip helped Caesar stay hydrated, while a blanket helped him stay warm.

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His long pink tongue stuck out during the whole process.

"The intravenous drips help keep his heart-rate and blood pressure stable. "I can tell that Caesar was in a lot of pain prior to surgery; tooth is a living structure and can cause a lot of pain, especially when there's abscess, which results in the animal eating less and losing weight.

"In the days and months to come, Caesar will be closely monitored, to see if he puts on some weight," said Steenkamp,

Once the permanent root canals and silver amalgam fillings were done, Caesar was given a reversal drug to wake him up.

He was then moved to a designated camp, that will allow him to rest and recover at his own pace.

Fast Facts: Bengal Tiger

Type: Mammal

Diet: Carnivore

Average life span in the wild: 8 to 10 years

Size: Head and body, 5 to 6 ft (1.5 to 1.8 m); tail, 2 to 3 ft (0.6 to 0.9 m)

Size relative to a 6-ft (2-m) man

Weight: 240 to 500 lbs (109 to 227 kg)

Protection status: Endangered

Did you know?: A tiger's roar can be heard as far as 2 miles (3 km) away.