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**Objet :** Follow up information on SARS-CoV-2 confirmed in a tiger and now also in a group of lions held in a Zoo in Sweden

Dear colleagues,

As you have already been informed about, on 13 January 2021, the National Veterinary Institute (SVA) confirmed SARS-CoV-2 in a tiger held in a Zoo in Sweden. Samples from the same animal were simultaneously sent to IDEXX laboratories, Germany, where SARS-CoV-2 also was confirmed 14 January. Whole-genome sequencing at the SVA showed that the virus belongs to the global lineage B1.177.21. Necropsy was performed at the SVA on 16 January. Macroscopical lesions of the respiratory tract were mild and unspecific. Convincing signs of pneumonia were not seen. Some blood-tinged mucus was present in the lower part of the trachea and bronchi. Findings in other organs were preliminary considered to be age related and thus probably not related to SARS-CoV-2. Results from histological examinations are pending.

The tiger was a 17-year-old female, which was euthanised 11 January for animal welfare reasons due to severe respiratory and neurological symptoms, high age, and low possibilities for recovery. The symptoms started with loss of appetite 9 January, but rapidly worsened 11 January in the morning and the animal was euthanised and sampled the same morning. A male tiger kept in the same enclosure as the female has shown moderate respiratory symptoms, but no neurological symptoms.

In addition, a group of lions, consisting of two adults and three subadults, kept in the same house, have also shown mild respiratory symptoms but no neurological symptoms and are otherwise clinically unaffected with normal appetite. Fecal samples from the lions, received at a later date, have now also been confirmed positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Staff taking care of these groups of animals also had symptoms: one of the sick persons tested positive for SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19, while three more are awaiting their results.

The Zoo is closed for the season, and further internal biosafety measures have been taken by the responsible veterinarian on site.

I will keep you informed about any further developments of the situation.

Best regards,  
Lena Hellqvist Björnerot  
Deputy CVO  
Sweden