



Maya

Maya is a beautiful cougar. She is also a shocking example of the exotic pet trade in this country. Maya was bought over the internet from a breeder in South Carolina. Because Maya was bred to be a “pet”, she was declawed at two months of age. She was shipped to her new “owner” in Phoenix, even though it is against the law in this state to own a cougar.

Unbelievably, Maya was living in an apartment in central Phoenix with a mother and three small children! Maya lived in the spare bedroom. Her owner took Maya for rides in the car and for walks on a chain. Mercifully, someone saw this and called Game and Fish. By law, Maya’s owner had to give her up.

Maya’s owner was going to place Maya in a roadside zoo in Kingman, where she would be condemned to living in a concrete-floored cell and exploited for human curiosity and entertainment. But Maya’s owner finally did something right. She called the American Sanctuary Association and they recommended she get in touch with Southwest Wildlife. Linda Searles, our Executive Director, worked with the owner and Arizona Game and Fish and offered Maya a home for life. Just before Arizona Game and Fish stepped in to seize Maya, the owner had placed an order for a second cougar!