

# Special Memories Zoo (Gene Wheeler)

W7013 Spring Rd., Greenville, WI 54292

**Special Memories Zoo, owned by Gene Wheeler, has repeatedly failed to meet minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibitions as established in the federal Animal Welfare Act. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Wheeler for failing to provide animals with water, failing to train an employee properly (she sustained a bear bite requiring stitches), failing to have a written environmental enrichment plan for singly housed primates, failing to have an effective perimeter fence (in one instance, five animals were stolen), failing to provide animals with clean enclosures, failing to have effective “pest” control, and failing to have an adult available for an animal-welfare inspection. Contact PETA for documentation.**

**April 12, 2016:** The USDA issued an official warning to Gene Wheeler for failing to provide primates with potable water, failing to use a sufficient number of adequately trained employees to maintain a professionally acceptable level of husbandry practices, failing to have an adequate perimeter fence, and failing to remove excreta from primary enclosures as often as necessary to prevent contamination of confined animals.

**February 25, 2016:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have properly trained an employee who required stitches after she was bitten on the hand by a black bear. She was attempting to lure a bear out of a den

after the animal had awakened from hibernation so that she could put fresh food inside. She failed to notice that the other bear sharing the enclosure had approached from the other side to try to get the food, and she was bitten.

**May 11, 2015:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have an effective perimeter fence, which resulted in the theft of a baby red kangaroo and four Nigerian pygmy goats.

**May 4, 2015:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to provide primates with water. The inspector noted, “After the water bottles were filled, we observed that each affected animal immediately went to the water bottles and were drinking non-stop for more than a minute each. Some animals (patas monkeys and two spider monkeys) were observed to empty the filled water bottle and then continue to drink after it was filled a second time.”

Wheeler also received citations for failing to remove six inches of soiled material from underneath an enclosure holding two Japanese macaques, having a strong ammonia odor around the enclosure, failing to clean a barn housing white-tailed deer properly (the bedding was completely soiled with no dry area for the deer to lie down on), housing a capybara in a stall with two large piles of excreta that had what appeared to be mold growing on them, and failing to keep the primate and hoofstock feed-storage area clean. (There were mice in the feed-storage area and rodent droppings on and around feed sacks.)

**April 29, 2015:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have a responsible adult available to conduct an animal-welfare inspection.

**August 13, 2014:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to remove excreta from a

fisher enclosure—the barrel intended to serve as the animals' shelter contained a pile of excreta approximately a foot wide and at least six inches tall, and the straw bedding appeared wet and soiled. The zookeeper reported that the enclosure hadn't been cleaned since the spring because the fishers were aggressive.

Wheeler was also cited for failing to have a complete perimeter fence around a number of enclosures, including for two Japanese macaques, two oryxes, a zebra and a camel, and the North American species exhibit.

**September 19, 2013:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have a written environmental enrichment plan for five singly housed monkeys, including a juvenile rhesus macaque.

**January 17, 2013:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have a written environmental enrichment plan for two singly housed monkeys.

**August 23, 2012:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have an effective "pest"-control program, because of an excessive accumulation of dead flies in the kitchen prep area and an accumulation of live flies on a dirty countertop and an adjacent sink stacked with dirty dishes.

**December 7, 2011:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have a responsible adult available to conduct an animal-welfare inspection.

**March 5, 2007:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have a responsible adult available to conduct an animal-welfare inspection.

**February 14, 2007:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for failing to have a responsible adult available to conduct an animal-welfare inspection.

**July 19, 2006:** The USDA cited Gene Wheeler for obtaining a camel and three wallabies from an unlicensed individual.