

# California Living Museum

10500 Alfred Harrell Hwy., Bakersfield, CA 93306

**The California Living Museum (CALM) has failed to meet minimum federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has repeatedly cited this facility for failing to observe animals daily to assess their health and well-being, to have a sufficient number of adequately trained employees to care for the animals at the facility, to maintain enclosures in good repair, and to provide animals with adequate veterinary care and notify the attending veterinarian of problems regarding animal health, behavior, and well-being. Since 2016, multiple animal deaths related to a lack of adequate veterinary care or daily observation from staff have occurred at the facility. In 2017, the USDA issued an official warning to CALM for violations of the AWA.**

**April 16, 2019:** The USDA cited CALM for a critical, repeat violation for failing to provide a skunk with adequate veterinary care. In February 2019, the skunk was found dead in an enclosure. The necropsy report stated that the animal had a body condition score of four out of nine and that his or her “[s]tomach and intestines [were] empty, [with] no ingesta or stool present.” The histopathology findings were consistent with a viral infection. After the necropsy was performed, the attending veterinarian contacted a facility employee and commented that the caretakers had failed to notice that the skunk was not eating. The animal lived in a shared enclosure, and both the facility curator and skunk caretaker stated that there was no procedure in place to ensure that all animals in a shared enclosure were eating. CALM was also cited for a critical violation for failing to have a sufficient number of adequately trained employees to care for the animals. During the inspection, records revealed an

uncharacteristically high mortality rate at the facility since January 2018. In addition to the skunk, two fishers died, apparently as a result of severe flea infestations that were noticed by staff but left untreated.

**February 12, 2019:** The USDA cited CALM for a critical veterinary care violation for failing to treat two fishers for severe flea infestations. Both animals died. On April 3, 2018, a caretaker noted that the two fishers were seen scratching a lot and suggested a flea prevention treatment, which was not given. On April 23, 2018, one of the fishers was found dead in the enclosure. No necropsy was performed. On May 3, 2018, the second fisher was found dead and was submitted for a necropsy. The report stated that the fisher’s body was infested with thousands of fleas and had multiple insect bites, white mucous membranes, and marked pallor of the abdominal organs. The USDA concluded that CALM’s failure to treat health conditions in these animals led to their deaths.

**February 28, 2017:** The USDA issued an official warning to CALM for AWA violations cited during a June 13, 2016, inspection. These violations included: failing to maintain enclosures in a manner that ensured that they were structurally sound and in good repair to protect animals from injury, housing incompatible animals together, failing to observe animals daily to assess their health and well-being, and failing to maintain direct and frequent communication with the attending veterinarian regarding issues with animal health, behavior, and well-being.

**June 13, 2016:** The USDA cited CALM for failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care and failing to observe animals on a daily basis. In January 2016, a kit fox was seen walking on three legs. The curator took radiographs, found that the animal had either a bone spur or a broken toe, gave him or her an injection for pain relief, but failed to notify the attending veterinarian of the issue. On January 22, 2016, another kit fox, who was being treated with eye medication, developed inflammation in the eye and was seen pawing at it. The staff failed to notify the veterinarian of this issue and continued administering the eye medication. Caretakers noticed that the animal’s eye looked enlarged on February 5 and 7, 2016. The fox

was finally seen by a veterinarian on February 9, 2016. Four kit foxes burrowed under the cement pool in the enclosure. Starting in January 2016, staff failed to observe two of the foxes for days or weeks at a time. The decomposed bodies of two of the animals were found in the burrow in late May 2016. One of the foxes had not been observed by staff for at least a month, and the other had not been observed for an unspecified, longer period. On May 15, 2016, staff noticed that a deer had injuries from fighting, including a swollen ankle and a broken hoof. Management told staff to clean the wounds and administer antibiotics and pain medication. Staff stated that the deer was very sore. On May 17, 2016, the deer's condition had not improved. Staff claimed that they were waiting for a return call from the veterinarian regarding a different pain medication.

The facility was also cited for failing to maintain the kit fox enclosure in good repair. The foxes burrowed under the cement pool, and one of the animals who died in the burrow appeared to have become entangled in pipes leading to the pool. The curator speculated that the burrow may have collapsed on the foxes. Staff had reported being unable to find the animals in the burrow on several occasions, but repairs were never made to the enclosure. CALM was also cited for housing incompatible animals together. Three of the kit foxes were housed with a fourth who behaved aggressively toward them for several months. In the caretaker logs, staff repeatedly noted injuries to the foxes and incidents in which the dominant fox blocked the others inside the burrow. Staff also had difficulty determining which animals were eating.