

# Barn Hill Preserve

11342 LA-955, Ethel, LA 70730

Barn Hill Preserve has locations in Ethel, Louisiana, and Frankford, Delaware. The facility also conducts mobile off-site animal exhibitions in various states. Barn Hill Preserve has failed to meet minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibitions as established by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited the facilities for failing to handle an 8-month-old Asian small-clawed otter properly—resulting in the death of the animal—failing to provide safe enclosures and clean water, repeatedly failing to have an effective perimeter fence, and repeatedly failing to have an adult available to accompany USDA officials so that an inspection could take place. In 2023, Barn Hill Preserve was assessed a civil penalty of \$5,200 to settle several alleged AWA violations.

Contact PETA for documentation.

**March 30, 2023/Off-site exhibition:** The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve for failing to use an appropriate enclosure to transport a three-banded armadillo. The facility transported the animal in a plastic tote box with a screened top. The inspector noted that this box didn't allow enough ventilation to transport animals safely. A citation was also issued for failing to transport an armadillo and a tenrec in enclosures labeled "Live Animal" or "Wild Animal" and marked with upright position arrows. Lastly, a citation was issued for failing to have a contingency plan for traveling with animals.

**January 11, 2023/Ethel, Louisiana, and Frankford, Delaware:** The USDA issued Barn Hill Preserve a penalty of \$5,200 for 11 alleged violations that had occurred between March 2018 and June 2021. These included failing to keep records, failing to provide adequate veterinary care, failing to provide water, failing to maintain enclosures in good repair, and failing to handle animals in a way that minimized the risk of harm, which resulted in injuries to an 8-month-old Asian small-clawed otter when an employee dropped a metal tub on the animal.

**June 16, 2021/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA issued Barn Hill Preserve a repeat citation after three middle school-aged children stated that they had been bitten during a 30-minute "swim with otters" interaction involving three adult Asian small-clawed otters and 10 children. The agency also issued a repeat critical citation after employees stated that a Mexican hairy dwarf porcupine had escaped on May 1, 2021, and had not been found.

**February 23, 2021/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA issued Barn Hill Preserve a critical repeat citation for failing to provide the following animals with adequate veterinary care:

- Kujo, a two-toed sloth, received a "10-lb" dose of Metacam daily for the previous 10 to 12 days to treat an injured claw. The medication had expired five months prior. The attending veterinarian was contacted and stated that she had instructed the facility to give "a dose" of Metacam and had not intended it for long-term use. Barn Hill Preserve had apparently also failed to keep the attending veterinarian updated on the condition of Kujo's injury.
- Koda, an approximately 1-year-old two-toed sloth, died in January after suffering from diarrhea for three weeks. She was being housed at the owner's home in the days before she died. The

attending veterinarian at that time stated that she had not examined Koda or provided any medical treatment prior to Koda's death, beyond possibly conducting one fecal exam for parasites.

- An adult dromedary camel had a large amount of loose feces on his hind legs and the underside of his tail. Spots of similarly colored feces were observed in the pasture. According to an employee, it had not been observed the day before and the camel had had diarrhea intermittently in the past when needing to be dewormed. A fecal sample was taken and examined by the attending veterinarian that day, and the camel was given medication.

The facility was cited for failing to handle otters properly in order to ensure the safety of animals and the public on two past occasions: A guest participating in the otter swim program was bitten on the thumb by an otter, breaking the skin, and in a separate incident, a woman was bitten in the otter pool, causing her to bleed.

The USDA also issued Barn Hill Preserve repeat citations for failing to have an adequate and complete perimeter fence to act as a secondary containment system and to keep animals and unauthorized humans out and for failing to have acquisition records for 13 animals.

Barn Hill Preserve also received a repeat citation for failing to maintain safe enclosures:

- Three outdoor enclosures, which held a total of seven Asian soft-clawed otters, consisted of chain-link fences with a covering on top. Chicken wire and green plastic tarps covered parts of each enclosure. The otters were seen chewing on the tarps. Small metal wires were used to keep parts of the enclosure together, and an otter was seen chewing and pulling at them.

Chewing on or ingesting these materials poses a risk of serious, painful, and potentially deadly digestive problems, such as a gastrointestinal obstruction.

- Outdoor enclosures holding an African crested porcupine, a hyena, and an Asian small-clawed otter had exposed underlying wire fencing on the floors that could result in serious injury to the animals if a leg became entrapped.
- A badly chewed power cord from an unplugged wall-mounted air conditioning unit was hanging in the enclosure holding two Mexican hairy dwarf porcupines. Ingestion of the plastic casing and exposed wires posed a risk of serious, painful, and potentially deadly digestive problems such as a gastrointestinal obstruction.

**January 28, 2021/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA issued Barn Hill Preserve a direct citation for failing to provide a juvenile two-toed sloth with water. The water bowl in the enclosure was empty. Water was provided by an employee at the inspector's direction, whereupon the sloth drank continuously for five minutes.

Barn Hill Preserve was also cited for failing to provide a shelter with adequate heat for a 10-month-old giraffe and failing to maintain safe enclosures:

- An otter was able to escape an enclosure. He was recaptured the following day.
- Three outdoor enclosures, which held a total of seven Asian soft-clawed otters, consisted of chain-link fences with a covering on top. Chicken wire and green plastic tarps covered parts of each enclosure. The otters were seen chewing on the tarps. Small metal wires were used to keep parts of the enclosure together, and an otter was seen chewing and pulling at them. Chewing on or ingesting these materials poses a risk of serious, painful, and

potentially deadly digestive problems, such as a gastrointestinal obstruction.

- Three juvenile red kangaroos and three goats were housed in an enclosure in which the only shelter was a covered patio and two unfinished rooms that were under construction. A table saw and construction materials were on the patio, and the two unfinished rooms held tools, a box of screws, and a large amount of exposed insulation and wires, risking injury to the animals. Feces were on the floor of the rooms, and animals were seen resting on the patio near the tools.

The USDA issued Barn Hill Preserve a repeat citation for failing to have an adequate and complete perimeter fence to act as a secondary containment system and to keep animals and unauthorized humans out.

The facility was also cited for failing to have a veterinarian-approved written program of veterinary care, failing to have records of acquisition for 16 animals, and failing to disclose the location of a juvenile sloth, who was housed at the owner's residence.

**March 4, 2020/Frankford, Delaware:** The USDA issued Barn Hill Preserve a Teachable Moment for failing to clean out wet bedding that affected one-third of a crab-eating raccoon enclosure.

**April 10, 2019/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve for failing to reduce the risk of harm and injury to a hyena by failing to maintain the floor of the animal's enclosure properly. There was an exposed wire bed within the dirt floor of the enclosure.

**March 18, 2019/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve for failing to have an adult available to accompany

officials so that an inspection could take place.

**December 7, 2018/Off-site exhibition:**

According to the *Miami Herald*, a sloth provided by Barn Hill Preserve bit a secretary during a photo op at Camelot Elementary School in Orlando, Florida. The secretary was treated for a hand injury.

**November 8, 2018/Frankford, Delaware:**

The USDA issued a repeat citation to Barn Hill Preserve of Delaware for failing to have an effective perimeter fence around the lynx enclosure. The fence had not been anchored in the ground to prevent contact with the animal contained within.

**November 7, 2018/Frankford, Delaware:**

The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve of Delaware for failing to have an adult available to accompany officials so that an inspection could take place.

**June 21, 2018/Ethel, Louisiana:**

The USDA issued a repeat citation to Barn Hill Preserve for failing to have a perimeter fence around several enclosures to contain the regulated species and prevent unwanted entry by animals and unauthorized persons.

**March 8, 2018/Ethel, Louisiana:**

The USDA issued a critical citation to Barn Hill Preserve after an employee dropped a circular tub on an 8-month-old Asian small-clawed otter, who died as a result of the injuries sustained in the incident. The employee was washing and filling the tub when it occurred.

Barn Hill was also cited again for failing to have a perimeter fence around several enclosures to contain the regulated species and prevent unwanted entry by animals and unauthorized persons.

**March 1, 2018/Frankford, Delaware:** The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve of Delaware for failing to have a perimeter fence to

contain the regulated species and prevent unwanted entry by animals and unauthorized persons.

**June 15, 2017/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA issued a citation to Barn Hill Preserve for failing to have a perimeter fence around several enclosures to contain the regulated species and prevent unwanted entry by animals and unauthorized persons. It was also cited for failing to provide clean water in the Asian small-clawed otter enclosure—the water in the pool, used for both drinking and swimming purposes, was cloudy and green with larvae present on the surface.

The USDA also cited Barn Hill Preserve for failing to reduce the risk of harm and injury to a goat and two potbellied pigs by failing to maintain the floor of the animals' enclosure properly. There was an exposed wire bed within the dirt floor of the enclosure.

**February 15, 2017/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve for failing to have an adult available to accompany officials so that an inspection could take place.

**September 18, 2014/Ethel, Louisiana:** The USDA cited Barn Hill Preserve for failing to submit itineraries for animals on overnight journeys.