

January 26, 2021

Ray Kline, President
 Union County Sportsmen's Club

Dear Mr. Kline:

As a wildlife veterinarian with over 12 years of clinical and research experience working with a variety of domestic and wildlife species nationally and internationally, I'm writing on behalf of PETA to urge the Union County Sportsmen's Club (UCSC) to close down the wildlife exhibits and prioritize the well-being of the remaining animals by allowing PETA to assist in placing them in reputable facilities.

A year ago, Dillan the Asiatic black bear was transferred from UCSC to The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Colorado. Since his arrival, Dillan underwent crucial dental surgery, has never engaged in the rocking stereotypy that consumed his days at the club, and has lost extensive weight thanks to receiving a nutritionally balanced diet and the opportunity to explore, dig, climb, swim, rest, and play with another rescued bear in his vast naturalistic habitat. Now that you can appreciate Dillan's drastic transformation, I hope you'll consider the remaining animals' quality of life.

Multiple birds at UCSC have been documented with serious health and welfare conditions, including quail with feather loss, chukars with overgrown beaks, and pheasants exhibiting abnormal pacing behavior. A peahen of particular concern has had progressive worsening of swelling of her feet, consistent with bumblefoot (or pododermatitis) a painful, progressive inflammatory condition that, when left untreated, can lead to infection of the bone, severe lameness, and in some cases, death. This condition likely developed as a result of poor nutrition and husbandry.

Different birds have unique and complex physical, behavioral, social, and mental adaptations to thrive in their natural habitats. Understanding each species' ecology, social dynamics, foraging strategies, lifestyles, and behaviors is fundamental to creating an appropriate environment to promote their well-being. Yet UCSC simply confines birds to small, barren cages with wire flooring or dirty rocky ground, allowing mounds of fecal waste to accumulate and algae to contaminate their drinking water. None of the birds have sufficient space to fly or roam, adequate perches, dust or water baths, appropriate social groupings, adequate substrates for nesting or foraging, or natural vegetation. These conditions fail to meet birds' *basic* needs, predisposing them to illness and disease, as well as behavioral frustration, which often leads to abnormal and self-injurious behaviors.

PETA is ready to assist in placing the remaining animals at UCSC in reputable facilities where they'll receive expert veterinary care and a drastically improved quality of life. Please make the compassionate decision to permanently close down your menagerie.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Monica K. H. Bando, MS, BVSc, PhD, MRCVS
 Wildlife Veterinarian, Captive Animal Law Enforcement

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