

January 19, 2017

Robert Gibbens, D.V.M.  
Director, Animal Welfare Operations  
USDA/APHIS/AC Western Region

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]; [acwest@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:acwest@aphis.usda.gov)

Re: Supplement to 2017-01-09 Request for Investigation of Apparent Animal Welfare Act Violations at Spring River Park & Zoo (License No. 85-C-0005)

Dear Dr. Gibbens:

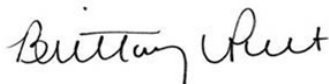
I am writing on behalf of PETA to supplement the group's request on January 9, 2017, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) investigate the City of Roswell, dba "Spring River Park & Zoo" (license no. 85-C-0005), for the following apparent Animal Welfare Act (AWA) violations, detailed in the attached appendix, which were documented by a concerned citizen on January 9:

- Bears had thinning hair and hair loss, which may be a sign of more serious health concerns or stress. (See Photos 1 and 2.)
- A mountain lion and a coyote exhibited stereotypic pacing behavior. (See [Video 1](#), [Video 2](#), [Video 3](#), and [Video 4](#).)
- Lemurs were confined to a barren cage with no enrichment. (See Photo 3.)
- Birds were confined to small barren cages with few perching opportunities and inadequate shelter. (See Photos 4–7.)

Please also ensure that all animals at Spring River Park & Zoo are otherwise handled in accordance with the AWA and hold the facility fully accountable for any and all violations that you discover during your investigation.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please inform me of the complaint number that your agency assigns to this correspondence.

Very truly yours,



Brittany Peet, Esq.  
Director, Captive Animal Law Enforcement  
[REDACTED]

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## Appendix

### **a. Bears With Thinning Hair and Hair Loss**

A concerned citizen observed and documented that both black bears, Ursula and Sierra, had thinning hair and hair loss on both their hind ends and the caudal regions of their legs. (See Photos 1 and 2.) Wildlife veterinarian Dr. Christine Capaldo opined that this thinning hair and hair loss could be caused by ectoparasites, a bacterial or fungal infection, or allergies or could possibly be self-inflicted because of stress and/or excessive rubbing.

Please examine these bears, as well as their veterinary records, and ensure that they are receiving adequate veterinary care pursuant to 9 C.F.R. § 2.40.

### **b. A Mountain Lion and Coyote Exhibited Stereotypic Pacing Behavior**

The concerned citizen observed and documented that a mountain lion and a coyote exhibited apparently stereotypic pacing behavior. (See [Video 1](#), [Video 2](#), [Video 3](#), and [Video 4](#).) These repetitive movements indicate psychological distress. Abnormal pacing is likely caused by a lack of sensory stimulation and suggests poor welfare and suffering,<sup>1</sup> in apparent violation of 9 C.F.R. § 2.131 (d)(1) and *id.* § 3.128, requiring that "[i]nadequate space may be indicated by evidence of malnutrition, poor condition, debility, stress, or abnormal behavior patterns." Wild carnivores are naturally far-ranging animals, and their stereotypic pacing—an "abnormal behavior pattern"—is a sign of stress. Please inspect the mountain lions and coyotes, as well as their veterinary records, and ensure that these animals are receiving adequate veterinary care and treatment pursuant to 9 C.F.R. § 2.40.

### **c. Lemurs Confined to a Barren Cage With No Enrichment**

The concerned citizen observed and documented that three ring-tailed lemurs were confined to a barren cage devoid of any object enrichment. (See Photo 3.) These animals are highly intelligent primates who require various items of environmental enrichment to keep their minds stimulated. This lack of environmental enrichment violates 9 C.F.R. § 3.81(b), which requires that exhibitors "must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan for environment enhancement *adequate* to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates" and that "primary enclosures must be enriched by providing means of expressing noninjurious species typical activities." Failure to provide primates with adequate enrichment may lead to the development of abnormal behavior if their minds and senses are not consistently engaged.

### **d. Birds Confined to Small Barren Cages With Few Perches and Inadequate Shelter**

The concerned citizen documented that several of the cages holding birds of prey<sup>2</sup> were barren and offered few perching opportunities. Many of the cages also lacked adequate shelters. (See Photos 4–7.) The cages confining an owl, vultures, and a peregrine falcon contained only one branch for the birds to perch on. The citizen observed that the peregrine falcon's only perch was high up and covered by the roof, affording no view, and the citizen never observed the falcon on that perch. Dr. Capaldo opined that raptors should have perches that allow them to scan the landscape and offer a

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<sup>1</sup>R.R. Swaisgood and D.J. Shepherdson, *Scientific Approaches to Enrichment and Stereotypies in Zoo Animals: What's Been Done and Where Should We Go Next?* *Zoo Biology* 24, 499–518 (2005).

<sup>2</sup>Although the USDA has not yet developed specific standards for birds, these warm-blooded animals are covered by the plain language of the AWA (see 7 U.S.C. § 2132(g); see also 9 C.F.R. § 1.1) and AWA regulations, including the general AWA standards set forth in subpart F, 9 C.F.R. §§ 3.125–142.

variety of views and that this type of visual enrichment is crucial for birds of prey. The citizen also observed that the owl attempted to fly but would immediately land, apparently because of the lack of space.

These small, barren cages appear to violate 9 C.F.R. § 2.131(d)(1) and *id.* § 3.128. The lack of shelter for many of the birds fails to provide adequate protection from the wind or other elements and appears to violate 9 C.F.R. § 3.127(b), which requires that "[n]atural or artificial shelter appropriate to the local climatic conditions for the species concerned shall be provided for all animals kept outdoors to afford them protection and to prevent discomfort to such animals."