

The Mobile Zoo

15161 Ward Rd., Wilmer, AL 36587

The Mobile Zoo, which is owned by John Hightower, has repeatedly failed to meet minimum federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has continually cited The Mobile Zoo for numerous violations, including failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care, failing to provide animals with water in temperatures exceeding 90 degrees, failing to provide animals with shelter from inclement weather, failing to handle all animals in a manner that does not cause physical harm, failing to keep the premises clean and in good repair, failing to store food properly, and failing to remove food waste and debris from enclosures. On December 26, 2011, a pack of dogs entered the facility and attacked and killed three deer, including one who was pregnant, and several birds. A breach in the perimeter fencing allowed the dogs to enter the facility. On January 19, 2016, PETA filed a federal lawsuit against The Mobile Zoo for violations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) related to Joe the chimpanzee. The lawsuit alleges that displaying Joe by himself in a barren enclosure constitutes an unlawful take, in violation of the ESA. Please contact PETA for documentation.

March 2, 2016: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to remove an excessive accumulation of feces from the floor of the enclosure housing the mangabey and failing to replace the wooden floor in the enclosure housing the macaques, which had moisture damage, stains, and a pungent odor. The facility was also cited for a repeat violation for failing to repair a hole beneath the fence surrounding the enclosure housing the cavies.

December 8, 2015: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for repeat violations for failing to replace rotten wood in the walls of two enclosures housing big cats and failing to repair a fence that had a loose wire hanging into an enclosure housing a tiger. The Mobile Zoo was also cited for having a perimeter fence with a gap in it surrounding the enclosure housing a leopard. The fence wouldn't effectively contain the leopard if the animal escaped the primary enclosure.

September 25, 2015: The USDA filed an AWA complaint against The Mobile Zoo for continually failing to comply with the AWA, including for repeatedly failing to handle animals carefully and to provide them with veterinary care.

September 22, 2015: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for repeat violations for failing to have a perimeter fence of sufficient height surrounding the outdoor enclosures housing primates, failing to keep the food-preparation room clean (it had a foul odor, flies, and maggots), and failing to maintain the following in good repair: the enclosure housing the cavies, which had chewed and ragged surfaces, a hole beneath the fence, and an exposed nail; enclosures housing tigers that had trees growing along the fence that could allow the tigers to climb up and out of the enclosures; an enclosure housing four bears that had protruding metal and broken, jagged surfaces that could injure the bears; enclosures housing two tigers and a leopard that had weak plywood structures that could break from pressure and pose a risk of injury or escape; a fence with a loose wire hanging into the enclosure housing a tiger; and the enclosure housing the leopard, which had a fallen tree limb extended across the fence, posing a risk of injury or escape.

The Mobile Zoo was also cited for failing to refrigerate produce, failing to remove food waste from two enclosures, failing to have an adequate number of employees to carry out an acceptable level of maintenance for the facility, and failing to store meat properly. Chicken was being stored in a freezer with a temperature of 63 degrees, and fluid containing maggots was leaking from the freezer.

June 25, 2015: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for repeat violations for failing to have a perimeter fence of sufficient height surrounding the outdoor enclosures housing primates, failing to clean an excessive accumulation of debris and dust from the enclosure housing Joe the chimpanzee, failing to repair the shelter for the cavies (exposed nails were poking out), failing to remove an overgrowth of bamboo surrounding the enclosure housing a lion that was pushing down on the perimeter fence and could allow the animal to escape, failing to clean the PVC piping used to feed the bears (it had a brown and green film on it), failing to remove feces and debris from the cage holding the chinchilla, and failing to keep the food-preparation room clean. Old insulation from the ceiling was falling all over the room. The Mobile Zoo was also cited for failing to remove dusty linen piled up next to the enclosure housing Joe the chimpanzee.

May 20, 2015: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide the following animals with veterinary care: a tiger who was underweight and had several flying insects biting her ears and bears who were vomiting and had diarrhea. The facility was also cited for failing to provide big cats with the required nutritional supplements, failing to follow the veterinarian-approved dietary plan for the big cats,

failing to remove excessive cobwebs and debris from the enclosure housing Joe the chimpanzee, and failing to have an adequate number of employees to carry out an acceptable level of maintenance for the facility. The Mobile Zoo was also cited for having construction material sitting on the roof of an enclosure, causing the roof to bow down; having a barbed-wire fence surrounding the enclosure housing deer, causing a direct hazard to the deer; failing to repair a rusty fence; failing to repair a large hole under the fence surrounding the cavies; failing to remove overgrown bamboo from the enclosures housing bears, tigers, and lions; failing to provide both the deer and cavies with adequate shelter from inclement weather; and failing to repair a gap in the fencing surrounding the leopard that allowed enough space for someone to stick a hand in.

The Mobile Zoo was also cited for the following sanitation violations: failing to remove a large pile of bamboo and brush from the enclosure housing the deer; discarding a large marlin carcass that was infested with insects near the enclosures housing the bears and tigers; failing to remove piles of discarded waste from the premises; failing to remove a pile of twigs and brush on the battery for the electric fence, posing a fire hazard; failing to control an abundance of flying insects throughout the facility; and failing to keep the food-preparation room clean. Old insulation from the ceiling was falling all over the room.

The Mobile Zoo was cited for repeat violations for failing to remove accumulations of feces from the enclosures housing both the bobcats and the bears, failing to repair rusted metal posts in the enclosure housing the lemurs, failing to have a perimeter fence of sufficient height surrounding the outdoor enclosures housing primates, and failing to clean the food bowls in the enclosures housing the raccoons and the bears as well as the PVC pipes used to transfer food into the enclosures, all of which had a buildup of brown residue.

January 13, 2015: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for allowing the public to feed the tigers using metal tongs, putting the public and the tigers at risk; failing to replace rusted metal in the enclosure housing the lemurs; failing to remove excessive accumulations of feces in the enclosures housing a gray fox and a lion; failing to clean the water bowl for the gray fox, which had brown residue on the surface and yellow water; failing to clean the food bowl in the enclosure housing the raccoon, which was covered with a brown residue; failing to have a perimeter fence of sufficient height surrounding the outdoor enclosures housing primates; and failing to clean the toys and floors in enclosures housing primates. They had a green growth on them.

September 30, 2014: The USDA cited The Mobile

Zoo for failing to provide a snow macaque with adequate enrichment. The facility was also cited for a repeat violation for failing to repair part of the fence surrounding the enclosure housing the bobcats, which had rusted through, leaving a gap in the fencing that could potentially allow the animals to escape.

July 15, 2014: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for multiple repeat violations for failing to replace toys for the primates that were soiled and worn, failing to repair holes in the enclosures housing bears and tigers, failing to remove excess water from enclosures housing tigers and bears, and failing to provide a tiger, who had a bloody cut on her left cheek, with veterinary care.

June 4, 2014: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide a bear, who was seen panting and salivating excessively, with veterinary care; failing to keep the bear den cool (its metal roof was 150 degrees); failing to repair a rusted fence surrounding the macaques; failing to replace toys for the primates that were soiled and worn; failing to repair a rusted platform in the enclosure housing Joe the chimpanzee; allowing the public to throw peanuts into the enclosure housing Joe; failing to remove discarded items from the enclosure housing Joe; failing to control swarming flies near the enclosure housing Joe; failing to remove excess water from enclosures housing tigers and bears; failing to keep feeding bowls clean; failing to remove feces from the enclosure housing the foxes; failing to remove trash and discarded items from the premises; and failing to repair the following: holes in the primary fences for the bears and tigers, jagged pieces of wood in the enclosure housing the tigers, a rusted fence surrounding the enclosure housing a leopard, a degraded platform in the enclosure housing the coatimundi, a rusted fence post in the enclosure housing the foxes, and exposed, rusted wire in the enclosure housing the bears.

The Mobile Zoo was also cited for repeat violations for failing to remove feces from enclosures housing primates and failing to remove food waste from an enclosure housing a cavy.

December 17, 2013: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to clean toys for the primates that were covered with a green biofilm, failing to remove mud and debris from enclosures housing primates, and failing to remove excessive amounts of old meat and feces from the enclosure housing the foxes.

August 28, 2013: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for repeat violations for failing to control roaches in the enclosure housing macaques, failing to remove excessive amounts of debris from the enclosure housing the black bears, failing to close the door to

the enclosure housing the tiger in a way that would properly contain the animal, failing to clean the enclosure housing the black bears, failing to keep the food-preparation room sanitary (old insulation from the ceiling was all over the room), and failing to control the growth of bamboo around the enclosures housing the bears, tigers, and lions. The Mobile Zoo was also cited for failing to clean the water receptacles for the leopard and bobcats. The water for the bobcats had feces in it.

July 24, 2013: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide a leopard, who had hair loss and a crusty appearance around both eyes, with veterinary care; failing to observe the health and well-being of the black bears, who had loose stools, on a daily basis; failing to follow the program of veterinary care for the felids and canids; failing to maintain accurate acquisition and disposition records for all animals; failing to provide bears with adequate cooling measures during hot weather; failing to replace surfaces in the enclosures housing primates that were no longer able to be properly sanitized; failing to have a veterinarian-approved enrichment plan for the primates; failing to provide a chimpanzee, who was showing signs of psychological distress, with adequate enrichment; failing to keep food receptacles clean for the bonnet macaques; failing to remove roach feces and food waste from enclosures housing primates; failing to control roach infestations in enclosures housing primates; failing to remove a shredded blanket from the enclosure housing the bobcats (it could be ingested and cause illness); failing to lock the feeding door securely for the enclosure housing tigers; failing to have a secure fence around an enclosure housing tigers; failing to remove overgrown bamboo around the enclosures housing bears, tigers, and lions; failing to store food properly; failing to have proper drainage in enclosures housing tigers; failing to remove standing water and green algae from the floor of the enclosure housing the fox; failing to have an updated, veterinarian-approved feeding plan for the big cats; failing to remove feces and debris from the enclosure housing the bobcats; failing to remove excessive hair, dust, and cobwebs from the enclosure housing the black bears; failing to clean the enclosure housing the coyote more frequently; failing to remove scrap pieces of bamboo from the enclosure housing the covies; failing to control a roach infestation in the enclosure housing the black bears; and failing to repair the following: an exposed nail in the enclosure housing the bobcats, a rusted metal bar and exposed wire in the enclosure housing the black bears, a chewed door in the enclosure housing the prairie dogs, and rusted metal postings in the fence surrounding a tiger and lion. The Mobile Zoo was also cited for a repeat violation for failing to repair a wooden plank that was cracking in the enclosure housing the chimpanzee

and failing to repair climbing structures in the enclosure housing macaques.

January 10, 2013: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for repeat violations for failing to repair rotten wooden climbing structures in the enclosure housing the macaques, failing to repair structures with jagged edges in enclosures housing primates, failing to have a proper primary fence around the enclosure housing the deer, failing to provide a sufficient amount of light in the barn stall housing a fawn, failing to have a perimeter fence of sufficient height surrounding the tigers, and failing to keep the food-storage room clean and free of clutter.

November 28, 2012: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for repeat violations for failing to provide a deer, who had a leg wound, with proper veterinary care; failing to repair a broken platform in the enclosure housing the chimpanzee; failing to repair rotten climbing structures in the enclosure housing the macaques; failing to repair a structure with jagged edges in the enclosure housing a macaque; failing to repair a rusted, jagged door frame in the enclosure housing a bear; failing to secure the fence and feeding gates properly in the enclosure housing tigers; failing to have a proper primary fence around the enclosure housing the deer; failing to have a perimeter fence of sufficient height surrounding the tigers; failing to repair a 10-inch-wide hole in the fence surrounding the tigers; and failing to keep the food-storage room clean and free of clutter. The facility was also cited for failing to provide the inspectors with access to records and failing to house two male deer separately who were fighting.

July 18, 2012: The USDA issued an official warning to The Mobile Zoo for violations committed between June 2011 and June 2012, including failing to provide animals with proper veterinary care, failing to handle all animals in a manner that does not cause physical harm, failing to keep the premises clean and in good repair, failing to maintain enclosures in good repair, failing to remove food waste and debris from enclosures, and failing to provide animals with potable water.

June 28, 2012: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide a 15-year-old tiger, who had not eaten for at least two days and was suspected of having an abdominal mass, with veterinary care. The facility was also cited for multiple repeat violations for failing to remove an accumulation of trash from the yard surrounding the chimpanzee, failing to provide two leopards with a sufficient amount of water during temperatures that exceeded 90 degrees, failing to repair a rusted area of tin with sharp edges in the enclosure housing a bear, failing to repair corroded posts in the enclosure housing the serval, failing to

have a proper primary fence around the enclosure housing the deer, failing to repair a sagging fence around the enclosure housing the tigers (the tigers could become entangled and injured), failing to remove two plastic buckets from the enclosure housing the tigers that were excessively chewed and shredded, failing to maintain a proper perimeter fence around the facility, and failing to remove clutter and debris from the area around the enclosure housing the cavies.

May 31, 2012: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for an incident that occurred on December 26, 2011, in which a pack of dogs entered the facility and attacked and killed three deer, including a pregnant one, and several birds. A breach in the perimeter fencing allowed the dogs to enter the facility. The zoo was also cited for failing to provide a coatimundi with water in temperatures that exceeded 90 degrees, failing to keep water receptacles clean for the serval and leopards, failing to replace rusted structures in the enclosure housing the chimpanzee, failing to remove an accumulation of trash from the yard surrounding the chimpanzee, failing to remove two plastic buckets from the enclosure housing the tigers that were excessively chewed and shredded, failing to have a perimeter fence that adequately protects the animals in the facility and prevents the entry of unwanted animals and people, failing to keep the food-storage room clean and free of clutter, failing to remove roaches from the food-storage area, failing to dispose of a sack of potatoes with maggots, and failing to keep the food cooler clean. It was dirty and had a bloody floor with several stains.

The facility was also cited for a repeat violation for failing to repair the following: shredded shade cloths hanging into the enclosure housing the bear; rusted, sharp areas of tin on the side of the building in the enclosure housing the bear; a structure in the enclosure housing tigers that had fallen flat and was no longer at the appropriate 45-degree angle; a hole in the chain-link fence surrounding an enclosure housing two tigers; a sharp, rusty wire fence surrounding four bears; and corroded posts in the enclosure housing the serval.

June 14, 2011: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide enclosures of sufficient height and with sufficient kick-ins to contain a lion and three tigers adequately.

August 10, 2010: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to have a complete barrier fence for the enclosure housing the cavies and for a repeat violation for failing to repair a hole in the roof of the den box for a leopard.

January 13, 2010: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo

for failing to provide an emaciated pig, who had a large mammary mass, with veterinary care; failing to dispose of expired medications; failing to remove a broken-down wooden doghouse from the enclosure housing the cavies (the broken wood and exposed nails could injure them); failing to remove a loose wire that was hanging down into the enclosure housing the llama; failing to provide cattle and bison with a shelter from the cold wind and rain; failing to have proper drainage in the enclosure housing the cattle and bison; and failing to have adequate perimeter fences around the enclosures housing the raccoons, opossums, and coatimundis.

January 6, 2010: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to allow officials to inspect the facility.

June 25, 2009: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide the following animals with veterinary care: a fox who had ocular discharge and a droopy eye and a bear with hair loss and skin abrasions who was continually scratching against a fence. The facility was also cited for failing to have a written environmental enhancement plan for singly housed primates, failing to remove clutter and rodent feces from the food-storage room, and allowing university students to conduct research studies on animals without having a valid research registration.

April 30, 2008: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to have a complete barrier around the enclosure housing the cavies, failing to provide a tiger with adequate shade from the sun, failing to keep the meat freezer clean, failing to wrap meat properly to protect it from freezer burn, and failing to repair the following: exposed wire points in the enclosure housing the coatimundi, a resting platform that was falling off the wall in the enclosure housing a leopard, a roof that was caving in in the enclosure housing the raccoon, and holes underneath the fence surrounding the bears.

January 8, 2008: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to allow officials to inspect the facility.

November 20, 2006: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to repair a fence with rusted and broken wires.

November 2, 2006: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to allow officials to inspect the facility.

July 25, 2006: The USDA cited The Mobile Zoo for failing to provide the following animals with proper veterinary care: a tiger who was exhibiting severe weight loss and labored breathing, a tiger who was having difficulty walking, a cougar who appeared very thin, and a tiger with a swollen abscess. The facility was also cited for storing medications in the same

area as chemicals, such as pesticides; failing to repair a fence with broken posts; improperly storing produce; failing to provide adequate shelter in the enclosure housing the llamas; failing to remove debris from the enclosure housing the llamas; and failing to drain standing water in the enclosures housing the tigers and the hoofstock, leading to mud and swarming mosquitoes in the enclosures.