

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS
FOUNDATION

August 19, 2021

Shane Richins
Owner and Founder
Scales and Tails

Washington
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Dear Mr. Richins:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide to urge you to release the animals at Scales and Tails to reputable, accredited facilities after the recent incident in which an alligator bit a handler, dragged her into the water, and locked her in a death roll. Your facility will likely see declining revenue in light of the horrific video of the episode, in which children attending a birthday party are heard crying and screaming. Shutting your animal exhibits will show that you're taking this incident seriously and taking steps to ensure that it never happens again.

Alligators are naturally fearful of humans, and they would rather flee than fight. For that reason, attacks in nature are rare and generally only occur when humans disturb the animals, pose a threat to their babies, or try to engage in unnatural interactions with them, such as feeding them. It's no wonder that when these animals are held in cramped pools, deprived of everything that's natural and important to them, forced into constant unwanted contact with humans, and imprisoned in miserably small enclosures where they have no opportunity to escape, they become aggressive. Continuing to exploit them is a recipe for disaster.

Staring at depressed, frustrated alligators confined to glass tanks teaches us nothing about these remarkable animals. They communicate over wide ranges and take part in elaborate courtship rituals. Alligator mothers nurture their hatchlings, sometimes carrying the vulnerable babies on their backs or even in their mouths. Babies often remain with their protective mothers for up to two years. And like all animals, alligators just want to be left alone.

May I please hear that you will do the right thing by safely transferring these animals to reputable facilities that can provide a more natural existence for them while keeping humans safe? Thank you for your time.

Very truly yours,



Debbie Metzler, M.S.
Associate Director of Captive Animal Law Enforcement

PETA FOUNDATION IS AN
OPERATING NAME OF FOUNDATION
TO SUPPORT ANIMAL PROTECTION.

AFFILIATES:

- PETA U.S.
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)