

# Capital of Texas Zoo

376 A Jenkins Rd., Cedar Creek, TX 78612

Capital of Texas Zoo has failed to meet minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Capital of Texas Zoo for over 90 violations, including repeatedly failing to provide adequate shelter to protect animals from inclement weather, failing to provide wounded and too-thin animals with adequate veterinary care, repeatedly failing to maintain enclosures in good repair, failing to provide sanitary water for drinking and swimming, repeatedly failing to maintain adequate perimeter fencing, failing to have an updated and adequate veterinary-care program and primate enrichment program, failing to supply visual barriers for wallabies to prevent them from becoming frightened to the point of death, and failing to dispose of trash and feces properly. On October 30, 2013, the USDA issued Capital of Texas Zoo an official warning for numerous violations that occurred in January, February, and August 2013. On July 29, 2014, the USDA assessed the roadside zoo a penalty of \$2,929 for numerous violations that occurred in December 2013.

Contact PETA for documentation.

**June 1, 2021:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain sufficient public barriers around two enclosures to ensure that the public cannot reach the primary enclosures. The wire fence of the enclosure for 14 mouflons, two blackbucks, and four nilgais was sagging so that it was

only 2 feet high, which would allow people to step over easily. The barrier fencing near the wallaby enclosure was only a single chain, which could easily be stepped over. A second citation was issued because the food-preparation building had numerous food-contamination issues. Two cans of bug spray were on the food-prep sink, a can of WD40 was stored on open shelving above food supplies, there was an uncovered can of dog food, a plastic bag of liquefied greens was in the refrigerator door, moldy carrots were mixed in with fresh ones, produce for animal consumption was in an open bin on the bottom shelf, and liquid coming from black bananas was dripping onto a piece of cardboard on a lower shelf.

**August 28, 2018:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain weeds and grasses to keep them from growing over the electric fence wire by the gate. A snapping sound could be heard near the enclosure, indicating that there was a short somewhere along the electric fence. The USDA inspector noted that a short could result in a weak or an absent current that may no longer serve as an effective secondary containment method.

**November 27, 2017:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain the lion exhibit in good repair. A small section of wire panel next to the new dens had pulled away from the lower board, creating a space large enough for the lion to stick his leg out of the exhibit. There were sharp edges on the panel that could injure the lion.

**July 18, 2017:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to dispose of trash and allowing several piles of building material and discarded items, such as a tarp and an empty bleach bottle, to accumulate near the hippo and camel exhibits.

**September 28, 2016:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to have an

updated veterinary-care program and failing to follow the program. The program didn't list the medications used on certain species or the drug used for euthanasia. It stated that the sheep and goats would be vaccinated for *Clostridium perfringens* types C and D with tetanus annually (to aid in the prevention of enterotoxemia), but the licensee said that he had not done this. A citation was issued because the barrier fence of the dingo exhibit was bending, which could allow a member of the public to step over and come close to the enclosure. A critical citation was issued for failing to provide secure enclosures following an incident that occurred eight weeks prior to the inspection, when three of four wallabies in one exhibit died after becoming frightened by stray dogs running along the perimeter fence adjacent to their exhibit. The inspector noted that wallabies are easily frightened by predators to such an extent that they may run into objects or run excessively and become overheated, as these animals apparently did. The one surviving wallaby continued to be housed in the same exhibit, and no visual barrier was provided to prevent another similar incident. The facility was also cited for failing to provide a camel with adequate shelter. The structure was not high enough for the animal to provide proper shelter from inclement weather. The hump on the camel's back was taller than the shelter's doorway by approximately 3 inches.

**May 3, 2016:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to an elderly fossa who had a chronic eye condition in which both eyes were very cloudy and the left eye had red blood vessels on the surface, failing to provide a secure water supply that could not be tipped over (the porcupines didn't have water at the time of the inspection and began to drink immediately when given some), and failing to clean enclosures properly. The hippo's pool water was dark-green and had floating material on the top.

The pool's water filter was broken, and the pool was said to be drained and cleaned at least once every two weeks. The floors of the Asiatic black bear shelter were wet from recent rains, causing the bedding material to be wet and have an odor.

**January 7, 2016:** The USDA issued Capital of Texas Zoo a repeat citation for failing to maintain a structurally sound hippo enclosure. There was a space between the bars of the gate large enough that the hippo may be able to reach through the gate and lift it up off the post pin hinges. A piece of hot wire was on the ground by the gate, and the inspector noted that it could cause the system to fail. A citation was issued because the hippo shelter did not adequately protect the hippo from cold weather. Another citation was issued for allowing water to collect by the gate of the hippo enclosure, which could compromise the strength of the support post of the gate. A fourth citation was issued for an inadequate diet plan for the tiger, lion, and leopards. The plan didn't state the amount of meat to feed each felid or the amount or method of application of vitamins. It mentioned the feeding of guinea pigs and chicken to the leopards but didn't state how many guinea pigs or how much chicken should be fed each day.

**December 9, 2015:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair. The fence between the goat, sheep, and llama enclosure and that of the nilgai and oryx was in need of repair. A metal T post was leaning, the top wire and fence line were sagging, and the support cable between two fence posts in the goat, sheep, and llama enclosure was loose and not secured tightly to the fence post. Another citation was issued because weed-eaters, gas cans, many containers of repair supplies, cotton gloves, and tools were being stored on the floor of the feed room, leaving the potential for food contamination and rodent



infestation as a result of the clutter.

**October 28, 2015:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to supply adequate veterinary care and daily observation for two male guinea pigs who had old wounds that appeared to be scabbed over on their hindquarters. The facility had apparently not noticed the wounds before. The licensee speculated that they were from fights between the two male guinea pigs and was cited for failing to separate incompatible animals. The USDA also cited the facility for listing “Blunt Force Trauma” as a form of euthanasia for the guinea pigs in its veterinary-care program. Blunt force trauma is not a USDA approved method of euthanasia for guinea pigs. The program of veterinary care didn’t state the method of euthanasia that would be used for each species the facility had. A fourth citation was issued because a dead rat was found inside the water receptacle in the dingo enclosure.

**April 13, 2015:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to have approved variances for guinea pigs with access to an outdoor enclosure. Another citation was issued for an excessive amount of feces buildup in multiple locations. Bear feces had been piled up 15 to 20 feet away from the bear enclosure and were producing a foul odor. A third citation was issued for old feces in the shelter box of Kiki, a coatimundi, that had become grayish in color. The licensee said that the shelter box had not been cleaned out in several days. The shelter box in the zebra enclosure also had an excessive accumulation of feces built up past the bottom of a 2-foot-by-6-foot wood frame. The hippo pool was also dirty, with excessive feces floating on the top, and had a foul odor. The licensee said that the water pump broke a week and a half before the inspection, and the facility had not attempted to drain the pool and clean it out. Another citation was issued for excessive amounts of rat feces near bags of feed and on the windowsill of the bear shelter as well

as because the ring-tailed lemur and bettong enclosures had red ant mounds formed near the shelter.

**December 17, 2014:** During the second pre-license inspection, the USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to have a current animal inventory that reflected all the animals. The inventory was missing information for a raccoon, a wildebeest, an oryx, a vervet monkey, two bearded pigs, 10 bettongs, and two palm civet cats.

**October 7, 2014:** During the first pre-license inspection after a change of ownership, the USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for 15 violations of the AWA, including the following:

- Having two bottles of Telazol (anesthetic) that expired in October 2013 and one bottle of Ketamine (anesthetic) that did not have an expiration date or an appropriate prescription label from an attending veterinarian.
- The current program of veterinary care did not list the drug for intravenous euthanasia, indicate who would perform methods of euthanasia, or indicate the species to be euthanized.
- The applicant had not submitted a letter to the USDA describing experience and knowledge regarding large cats at the facility.
- The brown lemur enclosure was lacking light throughout the building, reducing the effectiveness of the inspection and observation of the primates.
- The primate enrichment plan did not address the needs of an individually housed vervet monkey.
- An attending veterinarian had not approved the primate enrichment plan.
- A bag of primate food kept in a food storage container had a hole in it.
- There was a rotting pumpkin inside the lion enclosure.
- There was no shade structure over the

- pool of the hippo enclosure to protect the hippo from extreme heat.
- The fossa shelters were not secured to the ground and had been overturned, leaving the animals without shelter.
  - The guillotine door to the lion shelter was only half-open, causing the lion to have to flatten his body in order to enter. The owner had trouble keeping the door completely open, which would allow the lion to enter comfortably. The black leopard enclosure did not have adequate climbing posts or elevated resting surfaces for the leopards to make normal postural movements.
  - The only water available to the kinkajou and red-rumped agouti was in a receptacle that allowed animals to enter it. The agouti was observed sitting in the water, which had a brown material and dirt throughout it. The capybara did not have water available.
  - The muntjac deer enclosure had excessive amounts of weeds growing inside it. There was also an excessive amount of trash and debris on the ground behind the bear enclosure.
  - The hippo enclosure had an excessive number of flies and gnats in and near the food receptacle. The bearded hog shelter had a red wasp nest on the ceiling, and the inspector noted that the wasps could sting the hogs. In the wallaby enclosure, there were ants in the food receptacle, and the inspector noted that the ants could sting the wallabies.
  - Eight enclosures failed to be maintained in good repair.
    - Cavy exhibit—A hole had been dug underneath the fence inside the enclosure. The inspector fell through the hole when standing outside the enclosure. A section of fence was coming off a wooden post, exposing sharp ends.
    - Muntjac deer exhibit—A tree had fallen and was leaning on the separation fence located inside the enclosure.
    - Petting zoo—Fence wire had loosened and was sagging, allowing a llama to stick his or her head through the large gap. The entrance gate had sharp points from fence wire facing inward toward the animals.
    - Fruit bat exhibit—The wire mesh on the ceiling for bats to hang from was not structurally secured to the ceiling.
    - Bearded hog enclosure—A fence panel inside the shelter was not secured to the ground, allowing the edges to protrude upward.
    - European boar enclosure—Fence paneling was not secured to the ground, allowing the edges to protrude upward.
    - Fallow deer enclosure—Brush and tree limbs were growing into the fence, causing it to protrude outward, creating a large gap in it.

**July 29, 2014:** The USDA assessed Capital of Texas Zoo a penalty of \$2,929 for six violations of the AWA occurring on December 9, 12, and 17, 2013.

**January 22, 2014:** The USDA issued Capital of Texas Zoo a repeat citation for failing to maintain an 8-foot perimeter fence around the bear, tiger, and hippo enclosures.

**December 17, 2013:** The USDA issued Capital of Texas Zoo repeat citations for failing to provide a hippo with adequate shelter to protect against cold weather and for failing to maintain an 8-foot perimeter fence around the bear enclosure.

**December 12, 2013:** Capital of Texas Zoo was issued a repeat direct citation by the USDA for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to a camel whose ribs and hips were visible. The food receptacle only had a small amount of hay mixed with dirt.

The facility was instructed to have the camel examined by a veterinarian within two days.

Capital of Texas Zoo was also issued a repeat citation for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair:

- Bearded hog exhibit—A metal fence panel that was bowed with sharp points was still on the ground.
- Jungle cat exhibit—Sharp points were still on the chain-link fence at the shelter entrance.
- Off-exhibit fossa enclosure—Fencing on the ground had pulled up and had sharp edges protruding. The door that divided the enclosure was on the ground, and a section of mesh was torn and sticking up.
- Camel exhibit—A metal cable had sharp edges protruding into the enclosure, and the cable was sagging again in one section.
- Hippo exhibit—Cement was added to the fence posts, but they were still unstable. Chewed fence posts were still present. An electrical cord for the heater was hanging close to the fence post of the shelter where the hippo could reach and chew the cord. Two strands of baling wire were present in the pen.
- Zebra, oryx, and gnu enclosure—The hay feeder had loose baling wire and a long piece of wire sticking out of it.
- Deer exhibit—Baling wire was still around hay that was fed to the deer.
- Bear exhibit—Nailheads were protruding from a support pole that a bear was seen clawing during inspection.

Another repeat citation was issued because the hippo shelter didn't protect the hippo from wind and cold weather. A heater had been added, but the shelter still did not have sides. The USDA also issued a repeat citation for failure to maintain an 8-foot perimeter fence around the bear enclosure. The facility was also cited for an unsanitary pool for the hippo. The water was chocolate brown, the filter had not been operating, and

the pool had not been drained and refilled with clean water for about two to three weeks.

**December 9, 2013:** The USDA issued a repeat citation to Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair. A metal fence panel on the ground in the bearded hog exhibit was bowed and had sharp points, and the hippo fencing was loose and moving because the hippo had pushed and chewed on the posts. Another repeat citation was issued because the facility failed to maintain an 8-foot perimeter fence at the bear exhibit. A citation was also issued for failing to provide a hippo with a shelter that could adequately protect the animal from wind and cold weather. During the inspection, the temperature outside was 39 degrees, nights were dropping to or below 32 degrees, the pool surface read 35 degrees with the infrared gun, and the hippo's skin read 35 degrees with a mouth temperature of 86 degrees. The inspector noted a great concern that the hippo would become hypothermic if not able to warm up and with continued exposure to cold air and water.

**October 30, 2013:** The USDA issued an Official Warning to Capital of Texas Zoo for direct and repeat violations of the AWA that occurred on or about August 21, 2013; August 14, 2013; February 21, 2013; and January 31, 2013.

**August 21, 2013:** The USDA issued four repeat citations to Capital of Texas Zoo: A bettong was kept in a plastic dog crate that was held together with rusted wire and had broken edges in need of repair, food and supplies were stored improperly and risked contamination by animal waste, and a mobile home confining baby animals was unsanitary—hay and shavings littered the floor of the room, and flies were swarming inside the room. The facility was also cited for allowing trash, discarded cages, and building materials to accumulate at the back

of the mobile home, which was sitting in the center of the roadside zoo grounds, near the camel and wild hog exhibits. The inspector noted that the facility had a rat infestation and that the accumulation of trash exacerbated the risk of contamination to exhibited animals.

**August 14, 2013:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to six coatimundis, who were seen scratching and chewing at their skin and fur from apparent flea irritation. Workers had applied flea control to the animals but had not consulted with a veterinarian to develop a more effective treatment, despite the animals' continual scratching. Capital of Texas Zoo was also cited for failing to maintain secure enclosures to protect guinea pigs from predators at night. Several weeks before the inspection, a volunteer failed to secure the night house door and a raccoon killed two guinea pigs. The guinea pigs' outdoor enclosure had not been previously approved by the agency to ensure that the climate was appropriate for these temperature-sensitive animals. A citation for failing to prevent spoilage of food was issued for a bag of guinea pig pellets stored on the floor of a metal food storage trailer. The trailer had an ambient temperature that was approaching 100 degrees at the time of the inspection. The inspector noted that vitamin C in guinea pig food might degrade with high temperatures. The facility was also cited for failing to have the required 8-foot perimeter fence around the tiger, lion, leopard, and Asiatic bear enclosures. The fence was sagging, causing it to be less than 8 feet high. Two separate citations for unsanitary conditions were issued because a toxic plant called pokeweed was growing in several enclosures and because of inadequate "pest" control. Many flies were seen in the diet kitchen—they were present on the fruit and cutting boards. Rat droppings were also present on the roof of the rabbit enclosures, and raccoons were a

problem at night. A repeat citation was issued to the facility for failing to maintain enclosures in good structural strength:

- Petting zoo—Fencing between the guanaco enclosure and the petting zoo was sagging. During the inspection, a goat was observed going underneath the fence.
- Deer exhibit—Space between the gate and the support post was large enough that deer could get their heads caught. There also were sharp points on the cattle panel on the opposite side of the gate.
- Wallaby exhibit—A plastic fence that was attached to the main fence was loose, and two areas were torn and had large enough openings to allow a wallaby to get between the plastic and the main fence.
- Asiatic black bear exhibit—The bears had dug holes under the cattle panel on the ground next to the fence line.

**March 18, 2013:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to have disposition records for the donation of four bats to an unlicensed individual for the purpose of exhibition.

**February 21, 2013:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to sanitize and clean the kitchen area properly. There was spilled feed on the floor of the kitchen, and the table used for diet preparation was covered with old food and debris.

**January 31, 2013:** The USDA issued a direct citation to Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to six fallow deer who were so thin that their pelvic bones were visible. The facility was issued a repeat citation for failing to provide these animals with adequate nutrition. Because of their thin appearance, there was concern that the feeding practices did not allow the deer to access enough food. The animals were fed hay every day by staff, but the pelleted ration was only fed to animals



by the public. The feeder for two deer, 18 goats, and seven sheep was one black trough that was approximately 5 feet long and did not offer enough feeding space for the 27 animals. The camel also appeared to be underweight—his hips were visible.

Capital of Texas Zoo was also cited for failing to provide shelter that was large enough to protect 18 goats, seven sheep, and two fallow deer from inclement weather. Another repeat citation was issued for failing to maintain the structural strength of several enclosures:

- Petting zoo—Boards on the wooden privacy fence were pulling away, leaving an open area, and a section of fencing was on the ground in the corner of the exhibit.
- Camel exhibit—The lower cable on a section of fence was sagging, and the top board of the shelter had fallen off, leaving the wall of the shelter low enough for the camels to step over.
- Lion exhibit—The shelter had a metal stop at the bottom of the guillotine door that was broken.
- Borneo hog and wild hog exhibits—Animals in both exhibits had rooted up the metal panel next to the fence line, and the panel was on the ground, bowed and broken, with sharp edges.

**July 16, 2012:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain a rabbit enclosure in good repair. The door to it had a large chewed area at the edge, leaving a hole large enough for a snake to enter.

**September 22, 2011:** The USDA issued Capital of Texas Zoo a repeat citation for failing to maintain structurally sound enclosures in good repair. The camel exhibit again had an issue with the fence line. The top wire at one section of the fence had broken, and the remaining fence was too low to contain the animals. The USDA inspector noted a concern that the camel could step over the fence at this section. In

addition, Capital of Texas Zoo failed to supply a secure enclosure for two prairie dogs, who had been able to dig out of their exhibit.

**June 8, 2011:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to maintain the structural strength of multiple enclosures:

- Capybara exhibit—The right side of the fence was bowing out, creating a gap underneath.
- Camel exhibit—Fence wire was loose and sagging, and there was loose haywire in the exhibit.
- Coatimundi exhibit—The animals had dug along the bottom of the fence, and one was sticking his or her head out of the hole.
- Kinkajou exhibit—The door to the shelter wasn't flush with the door frame.
- Goat/ungulate exhibits—Numerous pieces of loose haywire were scattered around in both exhibits. The gate to the goat area and the fence next to the gate had been patched with wire that was starting to fall apart.
- Russian wild boar exhibit—Boars rooted next to the fence, causing it to bow outward.

The USDA also cited the facility because several fallow deer appeared to be underweight. The inspector noted a concern that the current feeding program did not allow the deer access to enough food. The deer were housed with zebras, and the zebras may have been pushing the deer away from the feeder, not allowing them to get enough food. The hay was also put either on the ground or in a receptacle, which appeared not to allow the deer easy access to it.

**January 13, 2011:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to provide a shelter box tall enough for the four new lemurs to sit in a comfortable position when in it and failing to clean the water receptacle for the Asiatic black bears adequately. The

receptacle had green algae coating the sides. Another citation was issued for failing to maintain enclosures in good repair. The lion enclosure had a plywood ramp to the climbing structure that had fallen and splintered. The tiger enclosure had several trees growing close to the side of it, which could serve as an escape route. There were also several dead trees in and next to the enclosure that could fall over, damage the sides, and allow the tigers to escape.

**June 29, 2010:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for failing to clean the rabbit enclosure and allowing fur matted with feces to build up in the corners. Another citation was issued for failing to cover electrical cords of heating pads and lamps in or near primate enclosures to prevent chewing and electrocution and failing to maintain a vervet monkey enclosure in good repair, allowing it to become uneven and unstable. The facility was also cited for failing to maintain exhibits in good repair. A door in the coatimundi exhibit did not fit tightly, leaving a space that the animal could stick a leg out of or that unwanted animals could enter. Tree branches had also grown close to the top of the fence line at the tiger enclosure, which could allow animals to escape. The mammal building was also in need of repair—the floor and ceiling had areas of rotten wood and was no longer impervious to moisture, making cleaning difficult, and the only ventilation was via a door left open, which left the area exposed to flies and other “pests.” A fourth citation was issued for failing to provide seven potbellied pigs with sufficient shelter that could accommodate all the animals. The shelter for the sheep, goats, and guanaco was also not large enough for all the animals nor tall enough for the guanaco.

**April 8, 2009:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for allowing five deer, including a buck in hard antler, to roam the zoo grounds freely, putting other animals as well as the public at risk of injury. Another citation was

issued because the only available shelter for two European wild boars was a brush pile that did not provide adequate protection from the elements. The facility was also cited for failing to keep feline enclosures in good repair. The perimeter fence surrounding the small-cat (bobcat and servals) and cougar exhibits was sagging in several places, making it less than the required 8 feet high. The perimeter fence surrounding the lion and tiger exhibits was sagging and had pulled away from two support poles in that same area. The perimeter fence gate in front of the lion exhibit had an approximately 1.5-foot gap underneath it. The inspector noted a concern that a small child or animal may gain access to the lion and tiger exhibits through the gap.

**January 21, 2009:** The USDA cited Capital of Texas Zoo for housing two marmosets in a cluttered office. The office had a large stack of discarded items and three sacks of pig feed stored next to the enclosure. Another citation was issued for failing to clean the marmoset enclosure—the perches and nest box were coated with foot and body oils, and the inspector noted a concern that this issue was causing the marmosets to be matted and oily. Capital of Texas Zoo was cited for failing to provide a kinkajou with adequate shelter from the elements. Only one small piece of sheet metal was covering the roof of the enclosure. Another citation was issued because a plastic flap covering the shelter box for two kinkajous in the main zoo was covered with body oil. A repeat citation was issued because the facility failed to construct a barrier to keep the public from interacting with a brown lemur—the new exhibit had a barrier that was less than knee height.