

Jason Clay

4324 W. Highway 79, Franklin, TX 77856

Jason Clay owns Franklin Drive Thru Safari in Franklin, Texas, and formerly owned East Texas Zoo and Gator Park in Grand Saline, Texas. Clay has repeatedly failed to meet minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Clay for, among other things, failing to provide adequate veterinary care, failing to contact the attending veterinarian for two young animals who died, failing to maintain adequate records, failing to maintain enclosures in good repair, allowing rough handling of a zebra during filming of a television show, and failing to clean enclosures properly. Contact PETA for documentation.

August 31, 2022: The USDA issued Jason Clay a citation at East Texas Zoo and Gator Park for failing to house six ring-tailed lemurs securely. The lemur enclosure was constructed of 2-inch-by-4-inch horse panel, and juvenile lemurs were observed entering and exiting the enclosure through the panel holes. Two lemurs were observed on the enclosure roof and in a tree that overhung the roofs of the lemur and alligator enclosures.

August 30, 2022: The USDA issued Jason Clay a repeat citation for having more animals than he was authorized to possess.

June 28, 2022: The U.S. Department of Justice indicted Jason Clay for allegedly trafficking a chimpanzee and making false records in violation of the Lacey Act and the Endangered Species Act.

June 6, 2022: The USDA issued Jason Clay repeat citations at East Texas Zoo and Gator Park for various violations.

- He had failed to provide safe housing:
 - A wooden shelter in the capybara enclosure had a bent nail head that was approximately 18 inches off the ground and protruding approximately 2 inches.
 - A screw was approximately 6 inches off the ground in the petting zoo area where goats were commonly seen. It wasn't screwed in all the way and was protruding approximately 1.5 inches.
- He did not have an effective fly-control program in the petting zoo area containing 14 goats and two zebu. A large number of flies were on and around a feed trough containing feed pellets.

March 23, 2022: The USDA issued Jason Clay a repeat citation at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for failing to provide completed records of acquisition and disposition for nearly 50 animals.

November 10, 2021: The USDA cited Jason Clay at East Texas Zoo and Gator Park for failing to provide adequate veterinary care to two servals with hair loss. Clay was also cited for failing to clean primate enclosures. The lemur enclosure had monkey biscuits and old, dry, smashed feces on a platform. A baboon enclosure had several areas with old, dried feces, and one of those areas had a picnic table with pieces of monkey biscuits on it. A repeat citation was issued for failing to clean the otter enclosure sufficiently—a large accumulation of feces was inside the holding area and outside in the viewing area.

The agency issued Clay another repeat citation for failing to have a complete plan for environmental enhancement adequate to

promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates. The current plan lacked guidance on facilitating cognitive or sensory enrichment, and there was no indication that the current environmental enrichment plan was being followed. As the agency stated, “There were minimal enrichment items in the primate enclosures, and all the cage furniture, platforms, and swings were unchanged from the previous inspection.”

September 23, 2021: The USDA issued Jason Clay a direct citation at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for failing to provide pigs with water as often as needed for their health and comfort. During inspection, the pigs did not have water in their enclosure, and when provided with water, they drank until the bowl was empty. A repeat citation was issued for failing to provide acquisition or disposition records for 57 animals. Another repeat citation was issued for failing to clean the primate enclosures adequately. A mangabey enclosure had a dead rat that “appeared desiccated, indicating it had been there for several days. ... The Celebes and Squirrel monkey enclosures had an accumulation of old food material and/or an excessive accumulation of feces.” A further citation was issued for failing to clean the pig and fossa enclosures adequately. The pig enclosure had a large accumulation of feces in one corner, and the fossa enclosure had an accumulation of old bones that appeared completely clean and bleached white, “indicating they had been there for a while.”

August 16, 2021: The USDA issued an official warning to Jason Clay for the alleged violations committed on June 15, 2021, by failing to provide multiple animals with adequate veterinary care.

August 4, 2021: The USDA issued Jason Clay citations at East Texas Zoo and Gator Park for each of the following:

- Failing to notify an attending veterinarian of two noticeably thin capybaras. (Both animals had “readily noticeable” backbones. The female was still nursing two babies at the time, and staff were aware of her weight loss but did not contact the veterinarian. The male’s condition went unnoticed until inspection.)
- Failing to provide acquisition and disposition records for 61 animals
- Failing to have adequate barriers or attendants during public interactions to avoid risk of injury. (Members of the public were observed to be feeding animals through the fence during inspection. In the “baby room,” two coatimundis “continuously crawled up the inspector’s legs. The facility representative made the comment ‘the animals crawling on people and scratching people are part of the experience.’” The inspector noted a risk of injury and/or death to members of the public and the animals from these interactions.)
- Failing to have a written environmental enrichment plan for the facility’s primates
- Failing to maintain enclosures to be structurally sound and in good repair. (The giraffe enclosure’s fence was 8 feet tall in some areas and 6 feet in other areas. One area of fence was leaning outward, and another was curled down as if the giraffe had leaned on it. The inspector noted that as the young male giraffe “grows and increases in weight it is very likely he will be able to push this fence down.” There was also a gap in the fence of an ungulate enclosure that was big enough for an animal to get their head or horns caught in.)
- Failing to clean the otter enclosure. (During inspection, the pool had “a greenish ring around the top of the water indicating the water had not been changed recently,” rocks surrounding

the pool had a large amount of black material that could have been dirt or feces, and the holding area had dirt that was wet and packed down, “indicating it had not been raked or cleaned recently.” One corner of the holding area had an accumulation of feces, and there was a “very strong ammonia odor in this area.”)

- Failing to store food adequately to avoid contamination. (A dog food bag and a bag of “unidentified substance” were found to have been torn open. The facility stated that “it was probably a [raccoon].”)
- Failing to have an effective method to control a large number of flies in the food preparation area. (The inspector noted that flies can transmit disease and in excess numbers can irritate the animals. The facility was also cited for failing adequately to clean this area, where there were open bags of food sitting on shelves, medications and cleaning products stored near food, dirty shelves and floors, and a large amount of clutter.)

June 15, 2021: The USDA issued Jason Clay a critical citation at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for the following issues:

- An aardvark’s tail was missing the tip, and the attending veterinarian had not been contacted to diagnose or treat the animal.
- A young giraffe died from an alleged “twisted gut,” but Clay was unable to provide any medical records for review and the attending veterinarian was unable to be contacted for confirmation.
- A pygmy hippo who had recently been acquired died shortly after arriving. The attending veterinarian was never contacted.

Additional citations were issued for the following issues:

- Failing to produce a formal arrangement with an attending veterinarian during inspection
- Failing to maintain adequate acquisition and disposition records. (Over 130 animals’ acquisition records and 73 animals’ disposition records were missing.)
- Failing to keep enclosures in good repair. (The brown spider monkey enclosure had a wooden den that was in disrepair, and the housing structure in the lemur island enclosure was sagging and showing signs of deterioration and disrepair.)
- Failing to clean enclosures properly. (The interactive room that housed various species of lemur had “benches that were covered in a layer of dark organic material and excreta. Sections of the walls and climbing structures had a film of bedding dust and brown splashes of the same organic material.”)
- Failing to have direct control over lemurs when they had contact with the public to avoid risk of injury to the animals or the public
- Failing to keep enclosures structurally sound and in good repair to prevent injury to the animals. (The enclosure holding two fossas had sections of wooden branches that were loose or had fallen down with 1-to-2-inch screws sticking out of them.)

May 10, 2018: The USDA cited Jason Clay at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for failing to provide a male kangaroo with adequate veterinary care. The kangaroo had been declining in health since March 2018, losing weight and showing little improvement in response to prior treatment. During inspection, he was thin with his hip bones protruding, had little visible muscle mass and body fat, was reluctant and slow to get up, and appeared unsteady in a standing position. The attending veterinarian had not seen him in three weeks. A second citation was issued for allowing guinea pigs to have

outdoor access when temperatures exceeded 85 degrees. The inspector noted that guinea pigs do not tolerate extreme temperatures well and are susceptible to heat stroke.

May 8, 2018: Jason Clay was charged with felony exploitation of a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual by the District Court of Robertson County, Texas. The grand jury determined that on or about February 5, 2015, "for monetary or personal benefit, profit or gain, [Clay] intentionally or knowingly cause[d] the exploitation of Joe Sims, a disabled person ... by opening [a] checking account for Joe Sims and making himself an account co-owner, wherein \$187,501.25 belonging to Joe Sims was deposited and then ... withdrew over \$187,000.00 without Joe Sims' consent." A \$10,000 bond was set.

January 10, 2018: The grand jury of the District Court of Robertson County, Texas, indicted Jason Clay with felony aggravated assault causing serious bodily injury in an incident that occurred on December 29, 2017. Clay, while a customer at Louie's Icehouse, assaulted James Brown by striking him multiple times before and after Brown became unconscious with his fists and stomping on him at least twice, causing severe injuries. A \$10,000 bond was set.

January 11, 2017: The USDA issued a settlement agreement to Jason Clay with a penalty of \$1,750 for the alleged violations that occurred on the filming of the TV show *Call of the Wildman* when "an actor ... caught and threw a sedated zebra to the ground, causing unnecessary discomfort and stress."

December 4, 2014: The USDA cited Jason Clay for failing to have a written program of veterinary care and for failing to have records of acquisition and disposition while exhibiting animals at an event. A third citation was issued for using clothespins to

close the top of a bag of sweet feed, which could lead to contamination.

July 8, 2014: The USDA cited Jason Clay at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for failing to have a complete written program of veterinary care. Another citation was issued for failing to maintain adequate records. Records of the bottle-fed animals off the property were not being kept. A third citation was issued for failing to have an attendant present at the petting zoo.

February 24, 2014: The USDA cited Jason Clay at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for allowing an actor to grab a drugged zebra and pull the animal to the ground during the filming of the TV show *Call of the Wildman*. The inspector noted that this rough handling could lead to trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort to the animal.

December 5, 2013: The USDA cited Jason Clay for failing to provide the USDA with an itinerary for exhibiting animals at an event over several days.

September 3, 2013: The USDA cited Jason Clay at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for failing to have records for all of the animals that were sold or purchased at exotic-animal auctions. Another citation was issued for failing to supply enough shelter for all 11 ring-tailed lemurs. The lemurs were housed in an enclosure that contained only one shelter box that was "large enough for about three animals." Clay was also cited for failing to have an adequate public barrier fence around the spider monkey enclosure that would restrict physical contact between the public and the monkey.

August 29, 2012: The USDA cited Jason Clay at Franklin Drive Thru Safari for housing rabbits with other species (guinea pigs, baby capybara, and baby potbellied pigs). Clay was also cited for failing to have a written environmental enrichment plan for

primates, including six ring-tailed lemurs, three spider monkeys, and one black-and-white lemur.