

March 26, 2023

Robert Gibbens, DVM
Director, Animal Welfare Operations
USDA/APHIS/Animal Care

Via email: [REDACTED] ac.complaints@usda.gov

Dear Dr. Gibbens,

I am writing on behalf of PETA to request that the USDA promptly investigate Wild Animal Safari (license no. 57-C-0221) for the escape of two tigers, in apparent violation of the AWA.

At 8:31 a.m. this morning, the Troup County Sheriff's Office [posted on Facebook](#) that a tiger was "unaccounted" for at the Pine Mountain facility. Wild Animal Safari [posted](#) at 11:58 a.m. that several enclosures had been breached and **two** tigers had "briefly escaped" following tornado damage.

This incident is in apparent violation of 9 C.F.R. § 3.125(a), which requires that the facility "must be constructed of such material and of such strength as appropriate for the animals involved. The indoor and outdoor housing facilities shall be structurally sound and shall be maintained in good repair to protect the animals from injury *and to contain the animals.*" [emphasis added.]

Pursuant to 9 C.F.R. § 2.134, licensees are required to "follow an appropriate plan to provide for the humane handling, treatment, transportation, housing, and care of their animals in the event of an emergency or disaster," which was required to be in place no later than July 5, 2022. According to publicly available reports, Wild Animal Safari has not been inspected since September 29, 2021, so it is possible that it has not complied with this requirement.

As you investigate these apparent violations, please keep in mind that Wild Animal Safari has a lengthy history of violating 9 C.F.R. § 3.125(a), including on September 20, 2010 when it was cited for only having a 10 foot high fence for an enclosure confining tigers and ligers. In 2016, the USDA issued a "letter of information" asking the facility to correct non-compliances regarding the extensive list of enclosures that were in disrepair from 2014 to 2016 (*see* enclosed). It appears no enforcement action was taken for these issues, despite the licensee receiving 16 citations between 2005 and 2016 for this repeat non-compliance, many of which were for multiple enclosures.

Please ensure that animals at Wild Animal Safari are provided with adequate veterinary care, shelter, secure enclosures, and are otherwise handled in accordance with the AWA. Please also hold the licensee 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,



Debbie Metzler, M.S.
Director of Captive Animal Welfare
[REDACTED]

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