



Inspection Report

Houston Interactive Aquarium and Animal Preserve
5440 N Sam Houston Parkway East
Houston, TX 77032

Customer ID: **6002705**
Certificate: **74-C-1129**
Site: 002
Houston Interactive

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION
Date: 16-APR-2026

2.40(b)(2)

Attending veterinarian and adequate veterinary care (dealers and exhibitors).

While reviewing the Program of Veterinary Care, it was discovered that the otters and kinkajous were not up to date on their required vaccinations – distemper and rabies annually. Failure to maintain adequate vaccination procedures can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. Each exhibitor shall establish and maintain programs of adequate veterinary care that include the use of appropriate methods to prevent, control, diagnose, and treat diseases and injuries.

Correct by: May 11, 2026

2.40(b)(3) Direct

Attending veterinarian and adequate veterinary care (dealers and exhibitors).

When the ostrich sustained injuries from the contractors' attempts to corral her earlier in the morning of April 16, 2026 (prior to the start of the inspection), the facility did not immediately contact veterinarian. Upon discovering the distressed status of the ostrich, whereby she was laying down (in an upright position), panting, and going back-and-forth between resting her neck on the ground and raising it back up, I asked the facility representative about the animals' condition and if the veterinarian was contacted. Later in the inspection it was discovered that the facility was aware of the severity of the animals' injuries and did not contact the veterinarian until sometime in the afternoon, after my inquisition.

When the ostrich sustained injuries from the introduction of the emu to her enclosure in March 2026, the facility did not notify the veterinarian of this incident.

When inspecting the Patagonian cavy enclosure, one of the animals was found to have a healing wound measuring approximately 2 inches in length and ¼ inch wide along to top aspect of its right lower leg. The attending veterinarian and facility representatives confirmed the veterinarian was not contacted regarding the injury.

Failure of direct and timely communication to the veterinarian regarding animal healthcare issues and behavior can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals, possibly resulting in an exacerbated condition and unnecessary suffering. Each exhibitor shall establish and maintain programs of adequate veterinary care that include daily observation of all animals to assess their health and well-being; provided, however, that daily observation of animals may

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
28-APR-2026

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Inspection Report

be accomplished by someone other than the attending veterinarian; and provided, further, that a mechanism of direct and frequent communication is required so that timely and accurate information on problems of animal health, behavior, and well-being is conveyed to the attending veterinarian.

Correct by: April 29, 2026

2.75

Records: Dealers and exhibitors.

The facility was unable to give me an accurate count of some of the bird species in their collection, as well as address the discrepancies in numbers for their current inspection as compared to their bird inventory at their last routine inspection. Failure to maintain adequate records and counts of animals can result in inaccurate inventory, gaps in care and hinder the ability to ensure proper oversight of animal care. Every exhibitor shall make, keep, and maintain records or forms which fully and correctly disclose the information concerning animals other than dogs and cat, purchased or otherwise acquired, owned, held, leased, or otherwise in his or her possession or under his or her control, or which is transported, sold, euthanized, or otherwise disposed of by that exhibitor as required in this section. The records shall include any offspring born or hatched of any animal while in his or her possession or under his or her control. Furthermore, Records of Animals on Hand (other than dogs ad cats)and Records of Acquisition, Disposition, or Transport of Animals (other than dogs and cats) are forms which may be used by exhibitors to keep and maintain the information required by paragraph (b)(1) of this section concerning animals other than dogs and cats except as provided in section 2.78.

Correct by: May 10, 2026

2.131(b)(1) Critical

Handling of animals.

In April 2026, contractors were making repairs to the armadillo pit-style enclosure when they left a water line on, causing most of the enclosure to flood (approximately 2 feet high) and the animal to have to swim for an extended period. By the time contractors were aware of the issue, the animal was no longer able to swim, lethargic, unresponsive, cold (purple skin color), and breathing abnormally. He was placed under a heat lamp, curled into a ball, and remained this way while repetitively sticking his tongue in-and-out (indicating high stress). His condition prompted facility staff to rush him to the attending veterinarian (AV). The animal was later medically cleared by the AV. This information was confirmed with facility staff and the AV.

In responding to an anonymous complaint (from the complaint portal), it was discovered and confirmed (during the inspection) that in March 2026, management instructed the staff to move the emu into the enclosure with the ostrich without an appropriate compatibility assessment prior to the change. The ostrich reacted by running along the perimeter of the exhibit and crashed into the fence multiple times resulting in trauma (a wound measuring approximately 4 inches in diameter and feather loss) to the upper front chest.

On the morning of April 17, 2026, I noticed the ostrich was panting and laying in the same spot as she was the day before (on April 16, 2026) and seemed uninterested in ambulation. I asked the facility representative to see if she would move and that is when I saw she had two fresh flesh wounds along the top of her left foot and was non-weight bearing on the

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
28-APR-2026

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Inspection Report

same limb. The facility indicated on the morning of April 16, 2026 (prior to the start of the inspection), contractors were trying to corral the bird using a cattle panel – in the absence of animal care staff - to modify her enclosure when the bird injured herself by kicking the cattle panel.

While inspecting various food preparation areas and refrigerators throughout the facility, it was discovered that the facility is utilizing leftover food (including, but not limited to produce) that has been sitting out in an exhibit throughout the day, to feed the animals the next day and/or until gone. The matter was also discussed with the Attending Veterinarian, who indicated the animals should not be fed leftover food. Food that sits out on exhibit is exposed to heat, humidity, pests, and contamination, which are condition that favor rapid bacterial growth, which can cause severe illness or death if eaten by the animals.

Failure to handle the animals carefully can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. Handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible on a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort.

Correct by: April 29, 2026

2.131(c)(1)

Handling of animals.

Complaint videos and pictures received by Animal Care show a female and a male (confirmed to be “Peaches” and “Captain Hooks” by facility staff) Linnaeus's two toed sloth being exhibited (public encounters) by the facility in ways that pose a risk to both the animals and the public. The perch that is used for sloths during periods of public encounters, was placed in the open doorway just outside of their enclosure, with a bench (about a foot in width) placed in front of it (between the sloths and the public). In one of the videos, one of the sloths can be seen traversing their enclosure door without an attendant or facility employee present, with a large TV within in the animals reach just above it. In a separate video, the male sloth can be seen hanging from the door header (top of the doorway seal) of the enclosure and reaching outward towards the opened door for something to grab on when he is tapped on the hand by an attendant – in an effort to prevent the sloth from doing so – and the sloth regroups looking for somewhere else to go. In a photo, there is a little girl on the same side of the bench where the sloths are, touching one of the animals, and another little girl reaching across the bench to touch the same animal. The facility stated the bench was meant to serve as a barrier between the animals and the public and that an attendant was on the opposite side of the perch at the time. Facility staff also stated the animals are supposed to be exhibited to the public one at a time, and not simultaneously as can be seen in the videos and photos. The handling practices displayed in these videos and photos pose a risk of bites to the public and potential injury to the animals. During public exhibition, any animal must be handled so there is minimal risk of harm to the animal and to the public, with sufficient distance and/or barriers between the animal and the general viewing public so as to assure the safety of animals and the public.

Correct by: April 30, 2026

2.134(a)

Contingency planning.

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
28-APR-2026

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Inspection Report

During record review, it was discovered that the facility had parts of contingency plan, but it was incomplete as it was missing plans for some of the species maintained – including, but not limited to, certain species of birds. The plan was also missing an outline of specific tasks that would be carried out in relation to the animals for some of the identified emergencies or disasters, as well as a plan to address response and recovery. Failure to maintain an adequate contingency plan could negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. Exhibitors must develop, document, and 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 (one of which could reasonably be anticipated and expected to be detrimental to the good health and well-being of the animals in their possession). Such contingency plans must address sections 1-4 (2.134(a)(1-4)) under this subpart.

Correct by: May 16, 2026

3.81(b)

Environment enhancement to promote psychological well-being.

The facility is not following the Environmental Enhancement Plan (EEP) that was developed and approved by their attending veterinarian for their collection of lemurs (Red Ruffed, Black and White Ruffed, and Ringtail lemurs). During the inspection, including the exit briefing, the facility did not have records or any way to prove the plan was being implemented and followed, nor were there any daily logs to review as required in the EEP. Failure to implement and follow the EEP as outlined can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals; including but not limited to stereotypic behaviors. Exhibitors must develop, document, and follow an appropriate plan for environment enhancement adequate to promote the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates. The plan must be in accordance with the currently accepted professional standards as cited in appropriate professional journals or reference guides, and as directed by the attending veterinarian.

Correct by: April 30, 2026

3.82(a)

Feeding.

When inspecting the refrigerator in the non-human primate (NHP) food preparation area, an expired 10-ounce, plastic container of “HEB Baby Spring Mix” was found. Facility representatives confirmed the produce was intended for use for the NHP’s. The container had a receive date of March 31, 2026, a best use by date of April 10, 2026, use date of April 15, 2026, and the lettuce inside was deteriorating - as indicated by its wilted and discolored status, and the collection of brown, watery liquid at the bottom of the container. Feeding deteriorating food to the animals can negatively impact their health and well-being by causing foodborne illnesses. The diet for nonhuman primates must be appropriate for the species, size, age, and condition of the animal, and for the conditions in which the nonhuman primate is maintained, according to generally accepted professional and husbandry practices and nutritional standards. The food must be clean, wholesome, and palatable to the animals. It must be of sufficient quantity and have sufficient nutritive value to maintain a healthful condition and weight range of the animal and to meet its normal daily nutritional requirements.

Correct by: April 29, 2026

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
28-APR-2026

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Inspection Report

3.84(d)

Cleaning, sanitization, housekeeping, and pest control.

When inspecting the nonhuman primate food preparation area, there were fruit flies (too numerous to count) congregated on and around the cantaloupe and other fruits contained in a plastic container. In the upstairs nonhuman primate storage area, there was a large quantity of rodent poop along the floor near the metal food storage containers and bedding material for said animals. Failure to control pests and maintain an effective pest control program can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. An effective program for control of insects, external parasites affecting nonhuman primates, and birds and mammals that are pests, must be established and maintained so as to promote the health and well-being of the animals and reduce contamination by pests in animal areas.

Correct by: May 16, 2026

3.127(c)

Facilities, outdoor.

While inspecting the warthog enclosure, it was found to have an excessive amount of standing water, puddles, and mud affecting approximately half of the enclosure. The animal was unable to access its shelter without walking through thick mud and a large puddle of water. Failure to maintain adequate drainage for outdoor enclosures can negatively impact the health and well-being of animals contained therein. A suitable method shall be provided to rapidly eliminate excess water. The method of drainage shall comply with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations relating to pollution control or the protection of the environment.

Correct by: May 11, 2026

3.131(a)

Sanitation.

During the inspection, approximately half of the giraffe and petting zoo yards were covered in feces. Failure to remove excess feces in primary enclosures can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals contained therein as it can attract pests and lead to illnesses. Excreta shall be removed from primary enclosures as often as necessary to prevent contamination of the animals contained therein and to minimize disease hazards and to reduce odors.

Correct by: April 30, 2026

3.131(d)

Repeat

Sanitation.

During the inspection the camel was repetitively kicking and nipping at his legs to thwart off flies that were surrounding and landing on him. In addition, complaint videos that were submitted to Animal Care displayed excessive flies around the otters as well. Facility staff confirmed that the otters shown in the videos were housed at the facility. Failure to control pests and maintain an effective pest control program can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. A safe and effective program for the control of insects, ectoparasites, and avian and mammalian pests shall be established and maintained.

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
28-APR-2026

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Inspection Report

Correct by: April 30, 2026

3.154(b)

Environment enhancement to promote psychological well-being.

The facility is not following the Avian Environmental Enhancement Plan (EEP) that was developed and approved by their attending veterinarian. During the inspection, including the exit briefing, the facility did not have records or any way to prove the plan was being implemented and followed, nor were there any daily logs to review as required in the EEP. Also, during the inspection, the macaw that was housed in a cage in the outdoor aviary lacked species-appropriate enrichment. Lastly, complaint videos that were submitted to Animal Care showed the aforementioned macaw and an Umbrella cockatoo, displaying stereotypic behaviors in cages in the outdoor aviary. Facility staff confirmed that the birds shown in the complaint videos - the macaw is "Sammie" and the Umbrella cockatoo is "Paloma" - were animals housed at the facility. Failure to implement and follow the EEP as outlined can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. Exhibitors must develop, document, and follow a species-appropriate plan for environmental enhancement adequate to promote the psychological well-being of birds.

Correct by: April 30, 2026

3.155(a)

Feeding

When inspecting the refrigerator in the bird food preparation area, a container filled with green, leafy produce, was found to have a foul-smelling odor after removing the lid, whereby the produce was discolored and wilted. Facility representatives confirmed the produce was for use for the birds. Feeding deteriorating food to the animals can negatively impact their health and well-being by causing foodborne illnesses. The diet for birds must be appropriate for the species, size, age, and condition of the bird. The food must be wholesome, palatable to the birds, and free of contamination. It must be of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain a healthy condition and weight range of the bird and to meet its normal daily nutritional requirements.

Correct by: April 29, 2026

3.158(d)

Cleaning, sanitization, housekeeping, and pest control.

When inspecting the food storage trailer, there were small black bugs (too numerous to count) crawling around in bits of food/dust on the floor, and an excessive amount of rodent poop along the floor and on bags of shelved bird food. There was also mold growing on the floor underneath where the bags of food were stored. Failure to control pests and maintain an effective pest control program can negatively impact the health and well-being of the animals. A safe and effective program for the control of insects, ectoparasites, and avian and mammalian pests must be established and maintained so as to promote the health and well-being of the birds and reduce contamination by pests in animal areas.

Correct by: May 16, 2026

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
28-APR-2026

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Inspection Report

This inspection and exit interview were conducted with facility representatives.

Prepared By: GERVAIS EDMONDS-WIGGINS
USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Date:
28-APR-2026

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:
28-APR-2026



Species Inspected

Cust No	Cert No	Site	Site Name	Inspection
6002705	74-C-1129	002	Houston Interactive	16-APR-2026

Count	Scientific Name	Common Name
000001	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	GIRAFFE
000001	<i>Camelus dromedarius</i>	DROMEDARY CAMEL
000001	<i>Sus scrofa domestica</i>	DOMESTIC PIG / POTBELLY PIG / MICRO PIG
000002	<i>Lama pacos</i>	ALPACA
000002	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	AFRICAN CRESTED PORCUPINE
000001	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	WARTHOG
000010	<i>Capra hircus</i>	DOMESTIC GOAT
000001	<i>Osphranter rufus</i>	RED KANGAROO
000001	<i>Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris</i>	CAPYBARA
000013	<i>Dolichotis patagonum</i>	PATAGONIAN CAVY / MARA
000004	<i>Varecia variegata</i>	BLACK-AND-WHITE RUFFED LEMUR
000007	<i>Lemur catta</i>	RING-TAILED LEMUR
000007	<i>Varecia rubra</i>	RED RUFFED LEMUR
000001	<i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>	SOUTHERN TAMANDUA
000001	<i>Tolypeutes matacus</i>	SOUTHERN THREE-BANDED ARMADILLO
000002	<i>Choloepus didactylus</i>	LINNAEUS'S TWO-TOED SLOTH
000001	<i>Coendou prehensilis</i>	PREHENSILE-TAILED PORCUPINE
000003	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	DOMESTIC RABBIT / EUROPEAN RABBIT
000004	<i>Aonyx cinereus</i>	ORIENTAL SMALL-CLAWED OTTER
000002	<i>Potos flavus</i>	KINKAJOU
000002	<i>Ovis aries aries</i>	SHEEP INCLUDING ALL DOMESTIC BREEDS
000001	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	COMMON OSTRICH
000002	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	AFRICAN SACRED IBIS
000002	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>	DEMOISELLE CRANE
000022	<i>Columba livia domestica</i>	DOMESTIC PIGEON INCLUDING ALL DOMESTIC BREEDS
000005	<i>Netta peposaca</i>	ROSY-BILLED POCHARD
000002	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	MANDARIN DUCK
000001	<i>Pavo muticus</i>	GREEN PEAFOWL / INDONESIAN PEAFOWL / PEAHEN / PEACOCK
000001	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	EMU
000001	<i>Chrysolophus amherstiae</i>	LADY AMHERST'S PHEASANT
000002	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	INDIAN PEAFOWL / COMMON PEAFOWL / PEAHEN / PEACOCK
000008	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	WOOD DUCK / CAROLINA DUCK
000001	<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>	CRESTED DUCK
000007	<i>Pyrrhura molinae</i>	GREEN-CHEEKED PARAKEET / GREEN-CHEEKED CONURE
000038	<i>Gallus gallus domesticus</i>	DOMESTIC CHICKEN (INCLUDING ALL DOMESTIC BREEDS / TURKIN / COCK / HEN / ROOSTER)
000001	<i>Ramphastos sulfuratus</i>	KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN
000001	<i>Cacatua alba</i>	WHITE COCKATOO / UMBRELLA COCKATOO
000001	<i>Cacatua moluccensis</i>	SALMON-CRESTED COCKATOO / MOLUCCAN COCKATOO
000001	<i>Amazona farinosa</i>	MEALY PARROT
000001	<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	CONGO AFRICAN GREY PARROT / GRAY PARROT
000025	<i>Agapornis fischeri</i>	FISCHER'S LOVEBIRD
000036	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	BUDGERIGAR / BUDGIE / COMMON PARAKEET / SHELL PARAKEET
000001	<i>Tauraco leucotis</i>	WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO
000001	<i>Ara macao</i>	SCARLET MACAW
000001	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET



Species Inspected

Cust No	Cert No	Site	Site Name	Inspection
6002705	74-C-1129	002	Houston Interactive	16-APR-2026
000001	<i>Ara, Anodorhynchus, Primolius, Diopsittaca</i> <i>spp hybrid</i>		MACAW HYBRID	
000002	<i>Anas spp. / Cairina spp. hybrid</i>		DOMESTIC DUCK HYBRID (OFFSPRING W/ AT LEAST ONE PARENT IS MUSCOVY OR DOMESTIC)	
000004	<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>		AFRICAN PENGUIN / CAPE PENGUIN	
000001	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>		NORTHERN BOBWHITE	
000237	Total			