



Tips for Shelter and Housing at Drive-Through Animal Parks



Drive-through animal parks are often large with varied terrain and vegetation. Natural features such as trees or rock formations may not be enough in all weather conditions or for all animals to have access.

TYPES OF SHELTER

Here are a couple of things to think about when deciding on the right shelters for your facility.



WEATHER CONDITIONS: Extra shade structures may be all that's needed in warmer climates with mild winters, but in regions that have colder climates or extreme weather events, animals may need structures with sturdy walls for comfort and protection.



TYPE OF ANIMALS: Shelters need to be sturdy enough to house your animals safely. Size of the shelter is also important to accommodate each species comfortably.

HOW MANY SHELTERS ARE NEEDED?

Evaluate the natural features available to protect the animals from inclement weather. Make sure there are enough shelters with enough space for all animals to seek refuge. Less dominant, shy, or incompatible animals may need separate housing if they are excluded from shelter by the larger or more dominant animals.



Monitor your animals' interactions throughout the year. Seasonal hormonal fluctuations, such as those associated with breeding or rutting, can impact compatibility. Your park may need more shelters at certain times of the year to ensure all animals have the access they need.

Environmental Considerations

Parks with expansive natural habitats may also have environmental hazards that could prove challenging to geriatric, immature, or smaller species. This may include steep embankments, low-lying areas that are likely to flood, or muddy areas where some animals could get trapped.

Consider taking a few simple precautions to keep your animals safe:



- Place "bubblers" in lakes or ponds that tend to freeze in winter to help prevent animals from falling through the ice.
- Fill deep holes and remove excessive debris.
- Exclude animals that are not likely to thrive by housing them in separate areas or fencing off problem areas.

PRACTICAL TIP



Placing multiple feeders and water sources inside shelters, with sufficient distance between them, ensures the less dominant animals have access to food and water at all times.

ANIMAL CARE AID

This Animal Care Aid is part of a series developed to provide information about managing animals housed at drive-through parks.

Questions? Email us at CenterforAnimalWelfare@usda.gov

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