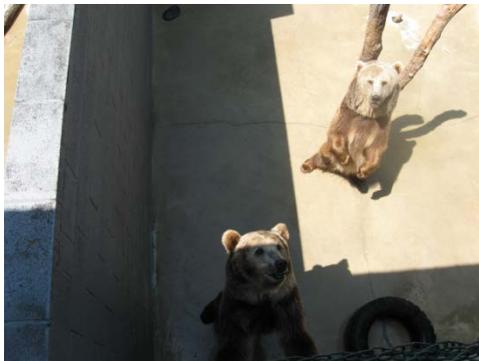


Site Visit to Cherokee Bear Zoo, Cherokee, NC

June 2 and 3, 2010

Report prepared by Laurie J. Gage, DVM, Dipl. ACZM

I accompanied ACI Andrea D'Ambrosio on a site visit to the Cherokee Bear Zoo on June 2, 2010. We posed as tourists and paid for entrance and purchased food to feed the bears. We were there to answer a complaint regarding the conditions in which the bears are held and to evaluate the behavior of the bears. At this zoo there was one Grizzly bear cub born in January to "Marge" and "Elvis". The cub appeared bright and alert and appeared to have good body condition. It appeared slightly underweight. It was fed a diet of Esbilac mixed 3:1 (water to powder) and apparently got 4 -5 8 oz bottles per day. This bear cub was used for photo shoots. While we were there we saw about 15 members of the public. We did not see the cub used for photos. We observed the behavior of all of the bears. The bears are all housed in "pit" type enclosures. The two Grizzly bears "Lucky" and "Layla" had the smallest enclosure with a small pool and a tree trunk for them to rub on. Lucky had hair loss on the proximal medial side of both forelegs and across the chest. I was later told by ACI Cindy Lisle that this was seasonal, thought to be due to allergies, and the hair grew back quickly after a month or two.



The bears Elvis and Marge had a larger enclosure with a small pool but no upright tree to rub upon. The Black bears "Jenny" and "Jake" showed the most stereotypic behavior; pacing in a set pattern when the public was not present. The four Black bears housed together in the largest enclosure also exhibited some stereotypic pacing behavior when the public was not present.

There was a young adult white tiger housed in an approximately 80 square foot enclosure in the upper area where the public viewed the bears. The only water available to this tiger was in a "Lixit" type water bottle fixed to the cage. I observed the tiger

drinking from the water bottle. He spent about 4 minutes licking and biting at the metal tube that delivered the water.

We went downstairs to a small zoo that housed some primates, goats, alpacas, a donkey, a calf, lemurs, and two adult orange "Bengal" type tigers. The male tiger appeared to be declawed and was lame (favoring) his right rear leg. He was pacing and about half of his tongue was protruding. He was moderately overweight. The female appeared to have a moderate neurologic problem. The female appeared to be moderately overweight and did not appear lame. They were housed in an approximately 300 square foot enclosure with a shallow pool at one end and no elevated resting areas. The enclosure had a complete top, appropriate shade, and an accessible denbox.



Two of the three lemurs were grossly overweight and the other was overweight. The goats and donkey had an excessive accumulation of feces on the ground in their pen. The young alpacas and calf had poor quality hay covering their enclosure, which needed to be cleaned. Both alpacas had their full hair coat and were both dirty and had mud accumulated on their legs and abdomens.

We visited the facility again on June 3 with ACI Cindy Lisle as an official USDA inspection and site visit. We toured the facility with Mr. Cooper, the licensee. We recommended to the licensee that a water bucket be placed in the enclosure with the white tiger. ACI Lisle stated that while the lemurs were overweight, they had lost some weight since her last visit. We recommended they continue to make efforts to keep the animals on appropriate diets to encourage weight loss. We examined the diets and found the hay stored for the hoofed stock to be damp, of fair-poor quality, and in some samples I removed from the bale, I could smell mold. We asked about the diet for the bears which consists of bread (wheat and white), apples, lettuce, and a small amount of dog food. We were told the bears get meat during the winter, but not in the summer. The tigers are fed a combination of a variety of meat (with no bones) and whole chicken. There were some tubes of Nebraska brand food at the bottom of the freezer but it did not appear as if these tubes had been disturbed in some time, and it seems

doubtful that the tigers are fed Nebraska very often. I asked the licensee what he feeds the tiger cubs when he has cubs. He stated he usually gets cubs when they are about 8 weeks old (stating that he thought it was not legal to ship them before that age). He said he fed them Esbilac mixed 4parts water : 1 part powder and he bought the Esbilac in 22 pound bags. He said over time (2 months or so) he gradually increased the strength of Esbilac to 2:1 (water: powder). We spoke with his wife who stated they also mix in rice baby cereal into the Esbilac (to correct stool problems). They stated they knew people who had cubs that had died from aspiration pneumonia. I informed them that the diet was too dilute at 4:1 and that rice baby cereal was not an optimal diet for these animals. They stated that they rice cereal made the formula “thicker’ and improved their stool. I suggested added chicken or turkey baby food to the bottle. They stated they used beef baby food (which may be contributing to the stool problems). I told the licensee I would send him some information about hand rearing cubs and general tiger nutrition. Powered Esbilac should be made up to approximately 2 parts water to 1 part powdered Esbilac. This may be done gradually over 2 to 3 days (not 1 – 2 months) I believe their formula is too dilute during a significant time they are feeding the tiger cubs. I believe it is likely too dilute for the bear cub as well. They need to have the formulas approved in writing by their veterinarian.

In general we felt the bears could be provided with more enrichment and made some suggestions. The diet for the bears was not optimal but the condition and demeanor of the bears suggested the diet was adequate. They should make an effort to replace some of the white bread they feed with a more nutritious diet approved in writing by their veterinarian.

The diet for the tigers was adequate but I informed the licensee about how much calcium is needed to balance the diet if boneless meat is being fed (5 grams calcium carbonate for every pound of ground meat fed).

The licensee stated he plans to move the two older tigers to his home in the next month, and the white tiger housed in the smaller enclosure could then be housed in the concrete enclosure in the lower zoo area. The licensee is aware that concrete is not an optimal surface to house tigers. We also suggested he try to make the tiger pool deeper, as it was only a very shallow pool for them to sit in. We pointed out the hooped stock needed to be cleaned daily.

The facility, while not optimal, meets AWA standards.

Site Visit to Chief Saunooke Bear Park, Cherokee, NC

June 2, 2010

Report by Laurie J. Gage, DVM, Dipl. ACZM

I accompanied ACI Andrea D'Ambrosio on a site visit to the Chief Saunooke Bear Park in Cherokee, North Carolina on June 2, 2010. We posed as tourists and paid to get into the facility. Later that day we did a site visit/inspection with ACI Cindy Lisle.

The only animals housed at this facility are bears. The three Asiatic bears are overweight but ACI Lisle stated they had lost weight since her last visit. One of these bears had a sparse haircoat over its hind end, and another had a slightly patchy haircoat. One of these bears exhibited some stereotypic behaviors when the public was not present. There were two Cinnamon bears, both in good body condition. The lighter bear exhibited some stereotypic pacing when no public was present. There was one Grizzly bear held by itself, and this bear exhibited the most stereotypic pacing behavior when the public was not present. All of the bears had medium-sized pools and elevated rock platforms. They all had tree trunks inside their enclosures and other items of enrichment. There were three juvenile bear cubs, and two younger cubs on display, and two small cubs used for photo shoots and held away from the general public and held in an approximately 200 square foot inside enclosure.

The diet for the bears consisted of mostly bread (white and wheat), apples and lettuce. Trays of food (bread, apples, lettuce) were sold to the public to feed the bears. There were also dog food dispensers where the public could buy a small handful of dog food to feed the bears. It was unclear but the bears may have also received dog food in their evening meal. I examined the dog food they had stored on site, which was milled locally. It did not contain any animal protein and it was made of primarily corn. I suggested a corn diet was fattening and a higher quality dog food with some animal protein (chicken or beef) would be better. The food trays sold to the public were made of a soft cardboard material and were reused. There was no protocol for how many times a food tray could be reused and we recommended the food trays be disposed of when they appeared soiled. We found several excessively soiled food trays in the recycle bins.



Soiled Food Trays in "recycle" bin

White and wheat bread in night quarters

While some bears exhibited some stereotypic behaviors, they would break out of these behaviors frequently to interact with the public or to do other normal behaviors. This facility appeared to have adequate shade and the bears were not forced to look into the sun to get their food rewards.

The diet for these bears is not optimal but the bears appear to be in fairly good condition. Some of the bears were overweight and need to be placed on a diet to allow for weight loss. I believe that bread, especially white bread, and corn-based dog food is a poor diet for bears. They should try to replace much of the white bread they feed with a more nutritious diet, and purchase a higher quality dog food.



Overweight Asian bears

The young cubs appeared bright, alert and active. Their body weight appeared to be within expected range. They were fed a formula of fresh goat's milk, applesauce, and oatmeal baby cereal. This appears to be an adequate diet for these animals.

Site Visit to Cherokee Bear Zoo, 55-C-0118, Cherokee, NC

June 2 and 3, 2010

Report prepared by Andrea D'Ambrosio, ACI

Here is my summary of my visit with Dr. Laurie Gage and Cindy Lisle to the Cherokee Bear Zoo (55-C-0118) in Cherokee, NC. We visited the facility over a two day period (June 2-3 2010) to answer a complaint and evaluate the behaviors and living conditions of the bears.

Dr. Gage and I arrived at the Cherokee Bear Zoo at 11:30 on June 2, 2010. We paid the facility admission and went in as "tourists" to observe the bears from a guest perspective. I purchased three trays of food for public feeding and purchased dog food from the coin machines on the observation platform. The food trays consisted of a slice of white bread, one leaf of romaine lettuce and ¼ apple sliced. The food all appeared in good condition. Of the food items offered, the apple slices and dog food were the most sought after from the bears and therefore probably the most reinforcing. This facility has four bear "pit" style enclosures and ten adult bears. There was a five month old cub in a wire enclosure at the top of the observation platform.

The cub is used for photo shoots and is on a bottled formula several times a day. I observed the cub running around and actively playing in the enclosure, but it would also sit at the front of the enclosure and bite at its paws and arms.

Almost all of the bears at the facility have learned to offer various behaviors or "tricks" for the food items being thrown in by the public. These behaviors include standing up and "clapping" their paws together; sitting back on their hindquarters and holding their feet up; laying back full stretch on the ground etc. As soon as the first Grizzly bear saw me with food, he (Lucky) stood up and began to "clap" his paws together. Which, I reinforced with an apple slice. While all the bears stand up, each behavior observed was specific to an individual bear. Only the Grizzly bear would stand up and clap his paws, and only two of the Black bears (Marge and Elvis) sat back and held their paws. This indicates to me, that these behaviors were not "trained" by the zoo staff, but these behaviors were "captured" and then reinforced unknowingly through public feedings. This means that at one time, the Grizzly bear stood up and started to "clap" his paws together, and more than likely a guest saw this and gave the bear a food item which then reinforced and "captured" what the bear had just done. The bear then begins to "clap" more often only to be reinforced more with food items. This became a very rewarding behavior to the bear and the bear now continues to offer this behavior frequently when guests are seen with food trays. Because the public is associated with

food items, public feeding of the bears at this facility appears to be a highly enriching and rewarding experience for them.

During my “public” feedings of the bears, we observed one of the black bears (Ping, Pong, Billy Jean, or Boomer) was lying down and when bread or lettuce was thrown towards the bear, the bear did not get up and showed no interest in those food items. It took several slices of apple to get the bear up and interested in food. There was no evidence of lameness in the bear, so this indicates to me that this bear is given an ample diet which has allowed him/her to become a picky eater and choose not to get up for less desirable food items. The largest enclosure housing four bears (Ping, Pong, Billy Jean and Boomer) had recently been cleaned and there was evidence of cleaning chemicals (odoban) still on the ground of the enclosure. There were a few times that even though I and others tried to get the food item (bread) directly in the bears mouth, it would fall on the ground, in the chemical area and then get consumed by the bears. There is a concern for potential contamination for the food items in this regard. The facility should clean and rinse the area prior to opening to the public to avoid this issue.

The bear pits at this facility are not uniform in size and do not have the same or equivalent enrichment items in each enclosure. There is a shallow water pool in each pit and I did witness multiple bears getting into the water. Several of the concrete floors were wet from the bears getting in and out of the pools. There is a tire or a log in each pit and I also witnessed the bears interacting with these items in and out of the water. Three of the four pits had a vertical log in the middle of the enclosure that acted as a scratching post for the bears in those enclosures and the bears actively used them as such.

When the bears were not actively seeking food from guests or interacting with items in the pit, almost all of the bears would begin to pace or move in a stereotypic pattern. Stereotypic pattern behavior was slightly different in different bears. One of the black bears (Jake/Jenny) would do a walk pattern with a slide to his gait and at the back corner would turn/sway his head toward the right each time. There was an obvious loss of paint on the concrete at the back corner indicating this is where the bear turns frequently. Another black bear (Ping, Pong, Billy Jean, or Boomer) would walk in a tight circular pattern around a tire and log in its enclosure. There was also an obvious loss of paint in the far left corner of the enclosure indicating the bears frequently rub against this area. Stereotypic patterns usually develop in captive animals that do not have adequate mental stimulation or enrichment. These bears will break from their stereotypic pacing for food items and it is possible that some of the stereotypic patterns have also been reinforced through food items making them more likely to engage in these pattern behaviors. Additional enrichment items will help reduce the amount of stereotypic pacing in these bears, but because this pacing is self reinforcing and has

been reinforced by the public with food items, it is very unlikely that the behaviors will ever completely diminish.

This facility was inspected the following day and I was able to see that all of the pits have den areas that are accessible throughout the day, allowing the bears to get out of the elements or get away from each other if needed. I was also able to get a good visual of their paws and did not observe any irritation from being on damp concrete. Two of the bears (Elvis/Marge) were shifted into their den and we were able to walk into an enclosure. The noise heard from people above along with traffic and water seemed to blend together as a white noise to me. The bears did not appear stressed due to the sound, probably due to habituation that would naturally occur over time. While talking with the facility owner and home inspector, several suggestions were made for additional enrichment at this facility to encourage natural behaviors:

Nesting/Bedding down- Adding hay or straw to the den area or in the main part of the enclosure.

Foraging- Using large plastic tubs and cutting holes in for food items. Closing the tubs and allowing the bears to knock the tubs around for the food items to come out randomly.

Olfactory- Using fruit flavored chap sticks and marking the walls and floor area, using various scents (vanilla, cinnamon, cherry etc) to mark on the walls or food items encouraging the bears to move around the exhibit and stimulating sense of smell.

We also encouraged the facility to add vertical logs to every pit to allow the bears to stand up and scratch themselves. Boomer-balls and other enrichment items were also suggested for “play” and a widening or deepening of the pool area was also suggested. I also encouraged the facility to put signs educating the public on what enrichment tools and items were used.

Site Visit to Chief Saunoke Bear Park, 55-C-0125 Cherokee, NC

June 2, 2010

Report by: Andrea D'Ambrosio- ACI

Here is my summary of my visit with Dr. Laurie Gage and Cindy Lisle to the Chief Saunoke Bear Park in Cherokee, North Carolina on June 2, 2010. That same afternoon we conducted an inspection with ACI, Cindy Lisle.

This facility has 16 bears (Black, Grizzly, Cinnamon and Asiatic bears) and comprises adult's, cubs and juveniles. We entered the facility as "tourists" paying the admission and receiving food trays with admission. I also purchased dog food from the vending machines at the top of the observation platforms. There was a mix of two different types of dog food in the machines but the food was in good condition and palatable. The trays consisted of wheat bread, lettuce and apple pieces. These food trays are being re-used multiple times and there is a concern for contamination. A few of the trays were heavily soiled from previous feedings. In addition several of the bears at this facility appear overweight and it is difficult to regulate how much they consume from public feedings.

A few bears have learned behaviors that will earn them food reinforcement from the public. One Asiatic bear would stand up and turn around in tight circles when he/she saw a guest with food. This is the only bear that would do this, which indicates to me that the behavior was not "trained" by the zoo staff, but was "captured" and then reinforced unknowingly through public feedings. This means that at one time, this particular Asiatic bear stood up and started to turn, and more than likely a guest saw this and gave the bear a food item which then reinforced and "captured" what the bear had just done. The bear then begins to "turn" more often only to be reinforced more with food items. This became a very rewarding behavior to the bear and the bear now continues to offer this behavior frequently when guests are seen with food trays.

Several of the bears at this facility appeared overweight and they showed more interest in the apples and dog food rather than the bread and lettuce. Because the public is paired with food, people are reinforcing and enriching for the bears. Each bear pit at this facility had a water pool and several of the pools had rock work embedded in cement that went up the back side of the pool in a step fashion. Several of the bears would get in the pool and walk up the rocks to the top step. Most of the bear pits at this facility also had other enrichment items such as logs or tires or branches from overhead trees. This facility had a good amount of shade from the guest platform and from the natural trees hanging over the enclosures. Leaves and other natural items from the trees would fall into the exhibit that are naturally enriching.

I did witness some stereotypic behaviors in the Asiatic bears with one bear swaying at the water bowl nine times and then walking backward seven steps to make a curve around and start the pattern again. Another black bear would walk in a circular pattern multiple times. A Grizzly bear that was housed alone seemed to engage in the most stereotypic behavior and was walking along the front wall and swaying its head prior to turning and starting that pattern again. This bear is in an area of the facility that limits guest viewing and food items from the guests. The stereotypic behaviors were limited to the adults and not seen in the younger bears. The juveniles and cubs were very active in play behaviors chasing each other, play fighting and engaging with enrichment items in their enclosures. The juvenile's had a long enclosure and would get to almost a full run as they chased each other. Although the bear dens appeared closed, all of the enclosures had a second area of shelter for inclement weather. In addition because of the large pool areas with rock work, the bears were able to get out of visual range of each other if they desired.

During the inspection in the afternoon, we suggested putting live fish in the pools to encourage foraging behaviors.



Inspection Report

KOLE CLAPSADDLE

Customer ID: 3347

Certificate: 55-C-0125

Site: 001

(b)(2)High, (b)(7)f

CHIEF SAUNOOKE BEAR PARK

PO BOX 296

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION

WEBSTER, NC 28788

Date: Jun-02-2010

3.125 (a)

FACILITIES, GENERAL.

(a) Structural strength. 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.

***The first black bear enclosure has multiple cracks in the floor that are wide and several feet long. The enclosure housing the three yearling cubs has large wide cracks in the floor as well as concrete chunks flaking off the wall. The pool for the Asiatic bears has sections of the concrete chipped off. Cracked and chipping concrete does not allow for proper sanitizing of the enclosures. Feces and urine can become trapped in the openings causing odors and possible disease hazards. Sections of chipped or cracked concrete must be replaced or repaired. This affects 7 animals. To be corrected by: 2 Jul 2010.

***The enclosure housing the black bear cubs has wire over the left side wooden wall. There are multiple wire points from the chin link and 2 x 4 wire. Some of these points stick approximately 3 inches into the enclosure. These sharp points are at about head height for the bears increasing the potential the animals could injure an eye. All sharp points must be removed from the enclosure to prevent injury. This affect two animals. To be corrected by: 9 Jun 2010.

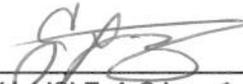
3.129 (b)

FEEDING.

(b) Food, and food receptacles, if used, shall be sufficient in quantity and located so as to be accessible to all animals in the enclosure and shall be placed so as to minimize contamination. Food receptacles shall be kept clean and sanitary at all times. If self-feeders are used, adequate measures shall be taken to prevent molding, contamination, and deterioration or caking of food.

***The facility is using heavy paper feeding trays to allow the public to feed the bears. These trays are being reused.

Prepared By:

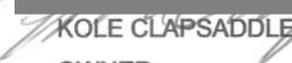

CINDY ELISLE, A C I USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:
Jun-02-2010

Title:

ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR Inspector 1064
(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Received By:


KOLE CLAPSADDLE
Title: OWNER

Date:
Jun-02-2010

JUN 16 2010



Inspection Report

Several of the trays on the counter ready to give to the public have food debris stains on them. Food absorbed into the paper can contaminate food placed on it during subsequent feedings. A method should be developed to determine how often trays are being reused and contaminated ones should be discarded. This affects 16 animals. To be corrected by: 12 Jun 2010.

An exit briefing was conducted with the licensee.

Prepared By: 

CINDY L LISLE, A C I USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Title: ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR Inspector 1064
(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Date:
Jun-02-2010

Received By: 

KOLE CLAPSADDLE

Title: OWNER

Date:
Jun-02-2010

JUN 16 2010



Inspection Report

BARRY COGGINS

Customer ID: 3281

Certificate: 55-C-0118

Site: 001

CHEROKEE BEAR ZOO

CHEROKEE BEAR ZOO

PO BOX 1187

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION

BRYSON CITY, NC 28713

Date: Jun-03-2010

3.125 (a)

REPEAT

FACILITIES, GENERAL.

(a) Structural strength. 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.

***The wooden supports for the adult tiger enclosure are rotten. The center support is not structurally sound. The enclosures must be structurally sound to contain the animal. Supports must be repaired or replaced. This affects two animals.

3.129 (a)

FEEDING.

(a) The food shall be wholesome, palatable, and free from contamination and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain all animals in good health. The diet shall be prepared with consideration for the age, species, condition, size, and type of the animal. Animals shall be fed at least once a day except as dictated by hibernation, veterinary treatment, normal fasts, or other professionally accepted practices.

***The hay is stored in the basement on the floor. The bales are damp and smell moldy. Moldy food can be hazardous to the animals health. Hay should be stored appropriately up off the floor to prevent contamination. The hay in the enclosure being fed to the goats is of marginal quality. Food should be wholesome, free from contamination, and of sufficient nutritional value to maintain the health of the animals. This affects 12 animals. To be corrected by: 10 Jun 2010

3.131 (a)

SANITATION.

(a) Cleaning of enclosures. 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. When enclosures are cleaned by hosing or flushing, adequate measures shall be taken to protect the animals confined in

Prepared By:

CINDY L LISLE, A C I

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

Title:

ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR

Inspector 1064

Jun-03-2010

(b)(6), (b)(7)c

Received By:

BARRY COGGINS

Date:

Title:

OWNER

Jun-03-2010

JUN 16 2010



Inspection Report

such enclosures from being directly sprayed with the stream of water or wetted involuntarily.

***The petting zoo area has an excessive amount of feces accumulated. Some of the animals have feces caked on their hair coat. The excessive feces is attracting flies. Excessive feces accumulating in the enclosures can cause disease. Enclosures must be cleaned often enough to prevent contamination of the animals and to minimize disease. This affects 12 animals.

To be corrected by: 10 Jun 2010.

3.131 (c)

REPEAT

SANITATION.

(c) Housekeeping. Premises (buildings and grounds) shall be kept clean and in good repair in order to protect the animals from injury and to facilitate the prescribed husbandry practices set forth in this subpart. Accumulations of trash shall be placed in designated areas and cleared as necessary to protect the health of the animals.

***The enclosure housing Lucky and Lala has chipped area in the pool. There are several dens that have the concrete chipped at the den entrance. The enclosure housing the tiger Bonita has large wide cracks in the floor. Cracked and chipped concrete can absorb feces and urine and cannot be sanitized appropriately. Proper sanitation is necessary for the health and well being of the animals. Concrete needs to be replaced or repaired. This affects 6 animals.

An exit briefing was conducted with the licensee.

Prepared By:

CINDY L LISLE, A C I

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

Title:

ANIMAL CARE INSPECTOR

Inspector 1064

Jun-03-2010

Received By:

BARRY COGGINS

Date:

Title:

OWNER

Jun-03-2010

JUN 16 2010