

E-MAIL FROM: John F. Robins, Secretary, Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL), c/o Animal Concern, Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel 01389-841111. Mobile: 07721-605521. Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) is a recognised Scottish charity: No. SC030982. Animal Concern Advice Line was established in 2001 to take on the charitable work of Animal Concern which was founded as the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876.

E-MAIL: acal@jfrobins.force9.co.uk Website: <http://www.adviceaboutanimals.info>

Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) has welcomed the decision by Highland Council to rescind the Zoo Licence held by the owners of Black Isle Wildlife Park. The charity has offered to help find suitable new homes for the animals currently held at the Park and has called for a total overhaul of the Zoo Licensing system.

In the last two years this is the second Scottish zoo ordered to be closed after ACAL raised concerns about animal welfare issues. Following the closure of Fife Animal Park in 2014 the owner was found guilty of several counts of breaching animal welfare legislation. During that investigation a missing water buffalo was found in a kitchen freezer.

ACAL has been concerned about conditions at the Black Isle Wildlife Park since first being alerted to the situation by concerned members of the public in 2014. It has since emerged that the Zoo Licence for the Park had been given to someone who did not know how to house the reptiles kept at the zoo or even how to feed the donkey and goats kept on the premises. There have been instances of animals escaping their enclosures, dead animals not being disposed of properly and a meerkat being run over and killed by a tractor taking visitors around the Park.

John Robins of Animal Concern Advice Line said; "Yet again we see animals suffering because a Zoo License has been granted to someone who shouldn't be looking after a Victorian case of stuffed budgies. It took around two years to close the Fife zoo and the same for this one on the Black Isle. When animals are suffering and dying it should not take two years to make them safe. I do not think local councils have the resources and very specialised skills needed to deal with zoo licensing and the whole process should be dealt with at Scottish Government level."

EDITORS NOTES: Our latest e-mail to Highland Council is below. Re our astonishing claim that the Black Isle zoo owner did not know how to feed a donkey or keep reptiles. Please see the e-mail dated 5th November 2014 from Highland Council copied below.

E-MAIL dated 22/6/16 FROM: John F. Robins, Secretary, Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL), c/o Animal Concern, Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel 01389-841111. Mobile: 07721-605521. Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) is a recognised Scottish charity: No. SC030982. Animal Concern Advice Line was established in 2001 to take on the charitable work of Animal Concern which was founded as the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876. E-MAIL: acal@jfrobins.force9.co.uk Website: <http://www.adviceaboutanimals.info>

Alan Yates Esq.,
Environmental Health Manager,
Community Services - Environmental Health,
The Highland Council,

38 Harbour Road,
Inverness IV1 1UF

Dear Alan,

I have read press reports stating that Highland Council has issued Blackisle Wildlife Park with a Zoo Closure Notice and that depending on whether or not the Zoo Licence holder appeals that decision the Park will close in 28 days. I see Highland Council has offered to help with rehoming the animals at the Park. If Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) can be of any help at all in assisting you to find new homes for the animals let me know.

I understand the Park is run as a private business and, unless the owner is to be prosecuted under animal welfare legislation, the owner will be able to dispose of the animals by any legal means. If the owner tries to sell the animals he might find it difficult as many zoos have surplus numbers of the species owned by Blackisle Wildlife Park. However there are rescue centres and sanctuaries for most species of animal and, so long as the owner is willing to part with the animals free of charge, it may be possible to avoid having to euthanize any of them.

If you would like ACAL to put you in touch with possible rehoming options for specific species of animals please let me know ASAP.

Yours sincerely,

John

From: Alan Yates [mailto:Alan.Yates@highland.gov.uk]

Sent: 05 November 2014 12:51

To: john@jfrobins.force9.co.uk

Cc: Angus Hogg

Subject: RE: Blackisle Wildlife Park - complaint by ACAL

Dear Mr Robins

I have provided detail below of the actions taken to date by Environmental Health regarding the Black Isle Wildlife Park.

Following receipt on 7th October of letter and petition from Ms Hastings, Environmental Health on 10th October visited and discussed the petition with the Park owners and the specific concerns raised in it by members of the public and advised them that an inspection would take place by a veterinary surgeon with specialist knowledge in zoos.

The inspection of the Black Isle Wildlife Park by a veterinary surgeon took place on 15th October. Following receipt of the report Environmental Health sent a copy to the Park owners and then followed up with a visit on 27th October to discuss its contents.

The Park owners were happy to address the issues raised in the vets report and have proceeded to take measures to address them:-

The main issue concerned the lack of enrichment for animals and highlighted were the caged birds, the marmosets, wild cats and the lemurs. Immediate action requiring to be taken to improve the foliage and perches in the cages and introduce a variation in the feeding methods for these animals. This is currently being addressed. Also as recommended the proprietor has organised a visit to a similar establishment to seek expert advice on enrichment.

The animals in general were in good condition but the donkeys and some goats were in poorer condition and advice was given by the vet regards their nutritional needs. The animal pens were

found in in general to be clean but the pony shelter required a thorough mucking out and which is being done.

The heating requirements were discussed for a number of exhibits and before the winter sets in the proprietors are required to familiarise themselves with minimum acceptable temperatures and to ensure they are being met. This is currently being addressed.

It was suggested by the vet that the proprietors are given a month to demonstrate that they are taking steps to get advice on the temperature requirements of exotic species and modern enrichment practices and that the Council undertake regular monitoring.

It is our intention to follow up this inspection with visits to ensure items have been addressed and as noted above the Park owner has already taken steps to address these issues. A further veterinary inspection in accordance with the Zoo licensing regime will take place in April /May 2015.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further queries on this matter.

Thanks

Alan

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