

For Immediate Release:

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Contact: Don Elroy, Director of Captive Wildlife Advocacy, SAEN (865) 286-9082
cell: (865) 360- 6260

SAEN Calls for Immediate USDA Confiscation of Remaining Animals at Kaufman County Facility While Suffering Continues

Kaufman County, TX- Recent documentation obtained concerning Marcus Cook (AKA Zoocats) has shown recurring violations and total disregard for the Animal Welfare Act, its standards, rules and regulations at this facility. Recent documentation obtained by SAEN (Stop Animal Exploitation Now!) has shown this facility to be in non-compliance with the AWA as recently as Dec. 21, 2009.

Fifty eight pages document the continued suffering of animals at this facility even though an Administrative law judge ruled in 2008 to permanently revoke the license of this facility. Under appeal, the judicial review upheld the initial decision and continued the license revocation. The facility was charged with numerous violations including handling of animals, an attack at the facility, bites and scratches during exhibition, lack of proper veterinary care and improper nutrition and dietary needs. The facility also held a research designation without having met the criteria to be designated as such.

In 2009 after judicial review, USDA/APHIS/AC confiscated several large cats and placed them in another Texas facility. This was a positive step but, a reactionary response based upon the years of abuse. These animals were suffering from years of lack of nutrition based upon an all chicken diet, even though recommendations were in place from USDA for switching the diet to Nebraska prepared diet or a red meat diet. The facility refused to comply with these recommendations. The animals confiscated were suffering from ataxia, hair loss, and numerous diet related ailments. Several animals were non ambulatory and could not stand.

The most recent report states that none of the non-compliance issues have been addressed and the exhibitor continues to violate the AWA. At least 9 animals were cited for the same problems related to diet and poor nutrition on Dec. 21, 2009.

SAEN calls for the immediate confiscation of these animals and all other animals under the care of this exhibitor before they are placed under further suffering and/or death under this careless exhibitor.

SAEN has sent an urgent request to USDA/APHIS/AC to confiscate these remaining animals immediately.

“SAEN believes that due to the most recent inspection reports, it is imperative that USDA/APHIS/AC take immediate proactive action to protect the remaining animals at this facility through confiscation. All remaining animals in the care of Marcus Cook, his associates and/or the Zoocats facility under either the exhibitor’s license or research designation must be immediately removed to protect them from further abuse and neglect.” –Donald W. Elroy, Director, Captive Wildlife Advocacy, SAEN

USDA reports, SAEN letter to Drs. Gipson and Gibbens, Law Decisions and reviews are available from SAEN upon request.