



Inspection Report

BARN HILL PRESERVE INC.

11342 Hwy 955 E
ETHEL, LA 70730

Customer ID: **329414**

Certificate: **72-C-0238**

Site: 001

Barn Hill Preserve Inc.

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION

Date: 16-JUN-2021

2.131(c)(1)

Repeat

Handling of animals.

10 middle-school-aged children and 4 staff members were observed interacting and swimming with 3 adult Asian soft clawed otters for 30 minutes in an approximately 25 foot by 10 foot swimming pool which was approximately 4.5 feet deep. At the beginning of the encounter, staff members instructed the children to stay near the edges of the pool, not to grab or crowd the otters, and staff stated that the "otters can bite but it's playful, like a dog or cat you have at home" and went on to instruct students to tell staff members if they were badly bitten or bleeding. The otters were brought out to the pool and were observed to swim and interact with the children and staff in the pool.

One boy was sitting in the water on the steps at the end of the pool with 2-3 other boys and interacting with an otter. The boy said, "Ouch, he bit me!" and then said, "he bit me on my leg, and there's a piece of skin hanging off!". Staff members did not hear or did not respond to the boy's exclamations. A few minutes later the boy lifted his right leg out of the water and pointed to an area on his calf, and said, "one bit me right here" and tried to show a male staff member, but the staff member began talking to another adult and moved away. The boy soon resumed swimming and was not heard to complain any further about the otter bite. USDA personnel did not note any bite marks, broken skin, or blood from the affected child.

Prepared By: SIMONE TOMLINSON

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

21-JUN-2021

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
OFFICER

Received by Title: Manager

Date:

21-JUN-2021



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At the end of the encounter the children sat along the deck and placed their towels on their laps. The otters came onto the children's laps and rubbed themselves against the towels to dry off. The children were petting and scratching the otters while they were drying off, often 2-3 children touching one otter at the same time. One tall shirtless boy with brown hair said, "Ow! He bit me on my finger!" and held up his left index finger. He repeated, "He bit me on my finger!" and looked at his finger again, then looked at a staff member. The staff did not hear or did not respond to the boy's exclamations. The boy held his finger for a while and then appeared to resume the animal encounter. After he exited the area, USDA personnel asked the boy if his finger was okay and he stated that it was fine. USDA personnel did not notice any evidence of bite marks or broken skin on the affected children.

The otters were then loaded into a pet carrier with a wire door, and the children were told to give the otters a "high five" by sticking one finger in through the door of the crate. One boy stepped back after sticking his finger in the crate and said, "ouch, it bit me! It gave me a bite-five!". Many children and staff were moving and talking in the area and it was not clear if staff acknowledged the boy's exclamation.

While the observed bites to people did not appear to break skin or show any bite marks, the occurrence of animal bites does demonstrate a dangerous behavior and therefore shows that the animals were not handled in a manner that minimizes the risk of harm to the public. People who are bitten by animals may suffer from stress, pain, discomfort, or infection. Animals who bite humans may be injured or stressed if the person is startled or reacts suddenly. Public health authorities may require animals who have bitten humans to undergo quarantine or euthanasia for rabies testing.

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Correct by handling animals so that there is minimal risk of harm to the animals and to the public, to assure the safety of animals and the public.

3.125(a) **Critical** **Repeat**

Facilities, general.

Employees stated that an adult Mexican hairy dwarf porcupine of unknown sex escaped from its primary enclosure on May 1, 2021 and has been lost. The enclosure is a large outdoor enclosure made of wood and wire with a two door entry system and a natural earth floor.

Animals that escape may suffer from stress, hunger, thirst, predation, injury, or death.

Correct by housing animals in structures that are structurally sound and maintained in good repair to protect the animals from injury and contain the animals. At the time of this inspection, the area around the door of the enclosure had been reinforced, as this was suspected to be the area from which the animal may have escaped.

This inspection and exit interview were conducted with facility personnel.

Additional Inspectors:

DIANA CARE, VETERINARY MEDICAL OFFICER

Prepared By: SIMONE TOMLINSON
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Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL
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Species Inspected

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Count	Scientific Name	Common Name
000004	<i>Capra hircus</i>	DOMESTIC GOAT
000002	<i>Lynx lynx</i>	NORTHERN/EURASIAN LYNX
000002	<i>Arctictis binturong</i>	BINTURONG
000003	<i>Caluromys philander</i>	BARE-TAILED WOOLLY OPOSSUM
000003	<i>Tolypeutes matacus</i>	SOUTHERN THREE-BANDED ARMADILLO
000006	<i>Osphranter rufus</i>	RED KANGAROO
000001	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	AFRICAN CRESTED PORCUPINE
000002	<i>Camelus dromedarius</i>	DROMEDARY CAMEL
000001	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	GIRAFFE
000007	<i>Aonyx cinereus</i>	ORIENTAL SMALL-CLAWED OTTER
000004	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	SERVAL
000005	<i>Choloepus didactylus</i>	LINNAEUS'S TWO-TOED SLOTH
000001	<i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>	SOUTHERN TAMANDUA
000001	<i>Sphiggurus mexicanus</i>	MEXICAN PORCUPINE
000001	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	STRIPED HYENA
000006	<i>Echinops telfairi</i>	LESSER MADAGASCAR HEDGEHOG
000001	<i>Lama pacos</i>	TENREC
000050	Total	ALPACA



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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