



## Inspection Report

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Friends of the Topeka Zoo  
635 SW Gage Blvd  
Topeka, KS 66606

Customer ID: **600073**

Certificate: **48-C-0184**

Site: 001

Topeka Zoo and Conservation  
Center

Type: FOCUSED INSPECTION

Date: 22-MAY-2024

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### 2.131(b)(1) Critical

#### Handling of animals.

An ostrich was euthanized on April 18th, thirteen days after it had grabbed and swallowed a set of keys from one of the animal care staff who came too close to its enclosure. On April 5th, the keeper was one of two staff members assigned to secure the zoo for the night. During those rounds, he stopped to take a picture of the ostrich at a section of the enclosure that is not accessible to the public and has no barriers. The enclosure is constructed with 4" x 4" wire mesh StaTite fencing. The keeper approached the enclosure fence with his phone in one hand and his set of keys in the other. The ostrich reached through the enclosure fence and grabbed the keys with its beak. It then lifted its head and swallowed the keys. The keeper was not part of the ostrich's care staff and violated zoo policy by closely approaching the ostrich in this area.

The keeper immediately reported the incident, but despite extensive veterinary care and surgical efforts, the keys were not retrievable. The animal's health declined, and she was euthanized.

Handling of zoo animals, which includes nearly every interaction between animals and zoo staff, needs to be carried out by trained and knowledgeable staff who prioritize animal welfare and safety during all interactions. The handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, excessive cooling, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort.

This inspection and exit interview were conducted with a facility representative.

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Prepared By: WILLIAM JANECKE

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care

Date:

28-MAY-2024

Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL  
OFFICER

Received by Title: Facility Representative

Date:

28-MAY-2024



**Species Inspected**

| Cust No | Cert No   | Site | Site Name                          | Inspection  |
|---------|-----------|------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 600073  | 48-C-0184 | 001  | Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center | 22-MAY-2024 |

| Count  | Scientific Name | Common Name |
|--------|-----------------|-------------|
| 000000 | NONE            | NONE        |
| 000000 | Total           |             |