

Barry R. Kirshner Wildlife Foundation

4995 Durham-Pentz Rd., Oroville, CA 95965

The Barry R. Kirshner Wildlife Foundation, operated by Roberta Kirshner, has failed to meet minimum standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has repeatedly cited Kirshner for numerous infractions, including failing to provide the animals with adequate veterinary care, failing to maintain the facility in a sanitary manner, and failing to handle animals in a way that would keep them and the public safe. She has repeatedly allowed members of the public to interact with dangerous animals, including an adult lion, an adult tiger, an adult bear, and a young snow leopard who was deemed too large and mature to be handled by the public. She failed to provide a lion cub who was severely lame, uncomfortable, and unwilling to stand with adequate veterinary care. In 2015, the USDA assessed her a penalty of over \$5,000 for multiple violations of the AWA. In February 2021, a volunteer was attacked by a leopard and was hospitalized for her injuries, and Kirshner was cited and fined by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA). Contact PETA for documentation.

June 6, 2024: The USDA issued Kirshner an official warning for an alleged violation on February 12, 2024 for failing to provide a young tiger named Shyra with appropriate nutritional supplements. Shyra was

suspected of having metabolic bone disease, a condition commonly caused by diets deficient in calcium.

May 14, 2024: The USDA issued Kirshner a repeat citation for failing to maintain the macaw enclosure in good repair. Two wooden nest boxes there had been chewed down, exposing the sharp edges of screws. Kirshner was also cited for failing to have adequate “pest” control measures in the macaw enclosure. Two songbirds nesting on top of the enclosure were able to enter it freely, contaminating the food and water for the macaws.

February 14, 2024: The USDA issued Kirshner a repeat citation for failing to follow veterinary instructions regarding the treatment of Shyra the tiger cub’s disease and injuries. After she was evaluated at the University of California–Davis for apparent metabolic bone disease, the veterinarians advised that she should be provided with safe bedding that had adequate padding and no materials that posed a risk of ingestion. During the inspection, however, her bedding was found to consist of a carpet with two or three sheets and a fleece blanket, which posed a risk of ingestion and didn’t provide adequate padding. Shyra had previously been given a pillow, which she shredded, also posing a risk of ingesting foreign materials.

February 12, 2024: The USDA issued Kirshner a direct citation for failing to provide a young tiger named Shyra with appropriate nutritional supplements. During the inspection, she displayed abnormal ambulation and progressive weakness, walking a few steps with her hind end lower than her front and then dragging her hind legs behind her. She was evaluated at UC-Davis, and the findings suggested that she had metabolic bone disease, which is commonly caused by diets deficient in calcium. As a result, she had sustained

several fractures, likely causing the weakness and muscle loss in her back legs. Her radiology report showed fractures of the right femur, right ilium, and right metacarpal as well as chronic fractures in both tibias and bone deformities. The facility provided inspectors with the supplement it fed Shyra, which appeared to be expired. It didn't have records documenting the amount of supplement or meat that Shyra was fed but demonstrated that she was given 2 grams of supplement per meal, even though the recommended amount was 18 to 27 grams per meal.

Kirshner was issued a repeat citation for failing to maintain the macaw enclosure in good repair. There were sharp points on metal nest boxes that could injure the birds. The facility was also cited for failing to observe animals on a daily basis and to alert the attending veterinarian about any animal health problems. A lion-tiger hybrid named Isaac had a wound on his left front leg that had progressed over a period of five days into two wounds with liquid discharge, and the facility didn't report this development to the attending vet. Additionally, a lion named Leyah had a wound on her face and a deer named Trixie had reopened previously treated wounds, neither of which had been reported to the attending vet.

January 8, 2024: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care. A male deer had significantly overgrown front hooves that were affecting his stance, and a young female tiger named Shyra appeared to have decreased muscle mass and instability in her hind end. The facility was also cited for failing to have inventory records for all animals, failing to provide two cats with sufficient elevated resting surfaces to allow them to engage in species-typical behavior, storing bottles of cleaning solution in the bird food prep area, and failing to have a

documented environmental enhancement plan for the birds. In addition, Kirshner was cited for failing to maintain outdoor housing facilities in good repair. Den boxes in six of the exotic-cat enclosures had damaged surfaces with protruding splinters, exposed screws, and holes. Furthermore, sharp points were found in the large outdoor macaw enclosure.

August 16, 2023: Kirshner submitted a permit renewal application to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife listing the deaths of five animals since the previous year's renewal submission: 2-year-old and 6-year-old snow leopards, a 6-year-old serval, a 7-year-old clouded leopard, and a 21-year-old ocelot.

July 21, 2023: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to have an adequate 8-foot perimeter fence around all enclosures, including those for lions, tigers, hybrid big cats, and wolves. Another citation was issued for failing to update the contingency plan so that it addressed hazards, including fires and natural disasters. The plan only addressed animal escapes and human emergencies.

July 25, 2022: Kirshner submitted a permit renewal application to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife listing the deaths of eight animals since the previous year's renewal submission: a 15-year-old coatimundi, a 9-year-old male ring-tailed lemur, an 11-year-old male mule deer, an 11-year-old female clouded leopard, a 7-year-old female snow leopard, a 10-year-old female African lion, a 10-year-old female northern lynx, and a 6-year-old tammar wallaby.

June 15, 2022: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to address special considerations in the environmental enhancement plan to promote the psychological well-being of primates. The facility housed a ring-tailed lemur alone after the death of another

lemur, leaving the animal unable to see or hear members of their own or compatible primate species.

April 22, 2022: Cal/OSHA issued Kirshner a citation for “fail[ing] to ensure employees were not exposed to hazards to include hands on contact with wildlife contradicting policies and procedures implemented by the [e]mployer.” The citation, which resulted in a \$125 penalty, came after PETA submitted a complaint to the agency alerting it to several social media posts showing Kirshner employees handling a leopard.

March 30, 2022: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to control tall grasses and weeds, some of which were up to knee height, around enclosures and the perimeter fence and failing to maintain den boxes in good condition. Den boxes in seven enclosures housing large cats and a bear had damage to the exterior surfaces, leaving large protruding splinters, exposed screws, and holes that could lead to injury.

January 4, 2022: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to handle a snow leopard in a way that minimized the risk of harm to the animal and the public. On November 3, 2021, a volunteer took an approximately 5-month-old snow leopard to a juvenile detention facility for an “educational exhibit.” While at the event, two employees of the detention facility were photographed holding the snow leopard, who was too large and too mature to be safely handled by members of the public.

November 1, 2021: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to provide the attending veterinarian with timely and accurate information about animal health and behavior problems. The licensee failed to notify the veterinarian of a coati’s increasing hair loss on the tail, a wound on the animal’s left back leg, and a wolf who was continuously pacing around the enclosure in

a stereotypic pattern, wearing a deep track into the ground. Kirshner was also cited for failing to have accurate and complete records available for review and failing to maintain the required effective height of the perimeter fence surrounding the larger carnivores. Several items were adjacent to or leaning up against the fence, decreasing the effective height of the fence.

September 28, 2021: Kirshner submitted a permit renewal application to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife listing the deaths of four animals since the previous year’s renewal submission: an 11-year-old female coyote, a 10-year-old female clouded leopard, an 8-year-old female African lion, and a 21-year-old female serval.

August 13, 2021: Cal/OSHA issued Kirshner a citation for a serious violation of workplace safety regulations after a leopard attacked a volunteer. A Cal/OSHA narrative summary of the attack explained that the leopard had jumped on the volunteer after she fell down and started biting her around the neck, which caused injuries that required hospitalization. Kirshner was ultimately required to pay a penalty of \$1,800.

August 11, 2021: The USDA issued Kirshner a repeat citation for failing to ensure the comfort of all animals during hot weather. During the inspection, the temperature reached 100 degrees and there was an extreme heat warning in effect, as the temperature was forecast to reach 106 degrees. The temperature reading around the enclosures was 99.4 to 99.8 degrees. The inspector observed that many of the animals appeared uncomfortable and hot, especially the overweight ones (a tiger, tiger/lion hybrid, leopard, lynx, and clouded leopard). The inspector observed open-mouth breathing and visible respiratory effort in the clouded leopards, the snow

leopards, and several tigers. The facility had cooling protocols for temperatures above 90 degrees, but none of the measures were being implemented. Kirshner was also cited for failing to provide a deer with overgrown hooves with adequate veterinary care. The animal's front hooves were significantly longer than normal, and the hooves were starting to cross and touch at the front, which could affect the stance and ambulation of the deer, cause discomfort, and lead to injuries or lameness.

June 22, 2021: The USDA cited Kirshner for housing a leopard in an enclosure without a lockout, which required a volunteer to enter the enclosure with the animal. In February 2021, an incident occurred at the facility in which a volunteer was injured by the leopard while in the enclosure with the animal. The leopard was then able to exit the primary enclosure. Kirshner was also cited for failing to adequately clean an enclosure housing two tigers. The enclosure had a small lockout area that appeared to be heavily used and had a damaged and dirty water container, dried-out food that was attracting flies, and a layer of fur and puddles on the floor. The tigers were held in the lockout while staff cleaned the primary enclosure, and both tigers were unable to avoid the saturated areas of the lockout. After the animals were moved back into the primary enclosure, the lockout was not properly cleaned, because there was no way for staff to enter it and safely clean it. The USDA also cited Kirshner for failing to have all the records required by the AWA available for examination at the time of inspection.

January 7, 2021: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to have a valid written program of veterinary care as a result of not designating an attending veterinarian.

August 15, 2019: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to take additional measures to

prevent overheating and ensure the comfort of all animals during hot weather. At the time of inspection, the temperature was around 104 degrees. The majority of the enclosures did not have pools, and only drinking water was supplied with no ice. Many animals were panting and appeared uncomfortable and hot. The surface temperature was around 106 degrees inside the den box in which a clouded leopard was seen panting, and the temperature reached 110 degrees under the deck in the ringtail enclosure.

June 26, 2017: The USDA issued Kirshner a repeat citation for failing to provide Lucie, a lion cub, with adequate veterinary care. At the time of the inspection, the attending veterinarian hadn't seen Lucie for two weeks. She could only stand for a brief period, with great reluctance, and could only move by crawling. She had difficulty swallowing and was only able to eat when fed by hand. Previously, the veterinarian had completed blood work and radiographs, but the results were deemed inconclusive. At the request of USDA officials, two radiologists specialized in "zoo animals" reviewed the radiographs and determined that Lucie's bones showed thinned cortices, "typically seen in metabolic bone disease, which can be caused by a dietary deficiency." (See the June 7, 2017, and April 26, 2017, entries.)

June 7, 2017: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to provide a lion cub named Lucie, who was severely lame, uncomfortable, and unwilling to stand, with adequate veterinary care. She was also cited for a repeat violation of failing to follow the diet plan correctly for this lion cub. She was giving the animal about 30 grams of calcium gluconate daily, whereas the dose needed was actually 100 grams daily.

April 26, 2017: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to provide adequate veterinary

care to a lynx and a lion cub. A Eurasian lynx, who had a history of seizures since the age of 8 months, suffered from back-to-back seizures. When seen by the attending veterinarian, he was said to “still [be] adjusting to the meds.” The next day, he had another seizure and the attending veterinarian instructed Kirshner to “keep a close eye on him.” At 9 p.m., he was found dead in his enclosure. The inspector noted, “The only treatment regimen ever attempted was phenobarbital alone, which was not sufficient to adequately control the seizures in this animal.” Lucie, an approximately 5-month-old lion cub was found to be lame in her hind legs. Records noted that she had been experiencing intermittent lameness but that no diagnostics had been performed since she had arrived at the facility. The veterinarian claimed that she “would grow out of” the condition and had not considered metabolic bone disease or other orthopedic problems. Another citation was issued for failing to provide Lucie with an adequate diet. At the time of the inspection, she had a pan of food that consisted entirely of muscle meat without bone. When asked about calcium supplements, the licensee claimed that an unopened, unlabeled bag of white powder kept in her house was a calcium supplement. It wasn’t clear whether the cub was getting an appropriate balance of minerals, as no feeding plan was available.

October 20, 2016: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to maintain the following items in good repair: Tarps on top of a tiger and a leopard enclosure, which had become so tattered and shredded that pieces of them were hanging down into the enclosure where they could have been ingested by the animals; and the perimeter fence, which had a gap in it. She was also cited for failing to drain accumulations of standing water in a timely matter to prevent health risks. The facility had two large containers to collect water drained from an enclosure housing bears. The water was very dark, putrid-

smelling, and contained aquatic insects. A wheelbarrow had accumulated more than 6 inches of rainwater, which was dark and foul smelling.

July 20, 2016: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to handle a male lion cub named Atlas properly. During a cub encounter, a member of the public held the lion without a harness or leash. A gate into the facility, which was approximately 130 feet from the exhibition, was left open. According to the inspector, the lion cub was of sufficient size and strength to harm a member of the public or escape.

November 17, 2015: The USDA assessed Kirshner a penalty of \$5,464 for violations of the AWA occurring between November 1, 2011, and August 1, 2014. These included allowing members of the public to come into direct contact with juvenile and adult lions, allowing a member of the public to conduct a photo shoot with an unrestrained adult tiger and two tiger cubs, allowing a member of the public to come into direct contact with a bear, failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care, and failing to take appropriate measures to cool animals who were panting and appeared uncomfortably hot and lethargic when temperatures exceeded 100 degrees.

August 27, 2014: The California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Occupational Safety and Health cited the Barry R. Kirshner Wildlife Foundation for failing to provide a written injury and illness prevention program and failing to train workers on heat-illness prevention. The facility was assessed a penalty of \$150.

August 1, 2014: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to take measures to prevent overheating and discomfort of the animals when the temperature reached 106 degrees on the day of the inspection. An infrared thermometer showed the surface

temperature of the decks to be around 127 degrees. According to the inspector, many of the felines were panting and some appeared uncomfortably hot and lethargic.

April 3, 2014: The USDA cited Kirshner for failing to provide the following animals with adequate veterinary care: a tiger whose eye appeared red and painful, with a protruding third eyelid, and who had staining on the face from discharge; a grossly obese serval and bobcat; and a lynx who appeared to move very cautiously, as if suffering from leg pain. She was also cited for not having a written program of veterinary care, or a written program of environmental enhancement for two lemurs. Kirshner amassed further citations for failing to remove accumulations of clutter from a food storage garage and a food preparation area, failing to clean food receptacles, and failing to control a mouse infestation in the food storage area.

The facility was cited for failing to follow feeding guidelines in the following instances: Defrosted meat was left without refrigeration, bears had been fed moldy fruit and Cheez-It crackers, a volunteer indicated that bears and coyotes could eat items from an unrefrigerated box of food (which included deli meats, tandoori chicken burritos, Lunchables, and crackers), produce was left without refrigeration and had become moldy, the wooden planks on which food was served weren't adequately cleaned, the food preparation area had worn surfaces and rusty knives, chemicals were stored next to food, many food bags were open (and some had spilled food), three freezers had accumulated meat juice and needed to be cleaned, and there was no veterinarian-approved feeding plan.

September 3, 2013: The USDA cited Kirshner for allowing a member of the public to be in an enclosure with and touch a large cat.

June 25, 2011: Butte County Animal Control reported that a kinkajou owned by Kirshner bit and broke the skin of someone who had worked for her for three years.