

To: Animal Welfare Western Division, USDA
2150 Centre Ave., Building B, Mailstop 3W11
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117

May 28, 2008

From: Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force
San Antonio, TX
(210) 322-7573

Formal Complaint

This complaint is against the San Antonio Zoo, located at: 3903 North St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, Texas 78212-3199. It is regarding five separate animals: the 48-year-old female, Asian elephant Lucky; the (deceased) 49-year-old female, African elephant Alport; two black eastern rhinoceros; as well as a grizzly bear. We have not seen the bear ourselves but have received requests from the public in the last two weeks with four separate complaints on this same animal.

It best to let you know upfront that our NGO, with consent from our chairman, Johnny Rodrigues in Harhare, Zimbabwe, has allied with Voice for Animals and In Defense of Animals in a fight to have Lucky transferred to the Elephant Sanctuary (TES) in Tennessee. However, this complaint is a separate issue to that.

Alport, a 49-year-old, female African elephant:

An orthopedic tear in Alport's leg caused her death, according to the zoo. We find this hard to believe and would like to know the true cause of death in this animal, given her emaciated appearance in photographs taken in 2006 and another taken 17 days prior to her death in 2007. Given these photographs, one would have assumed she was a geriatric elephant, not one in the prime of her life. She appeared wasted away, nothing but bones, and looked, to my untrained eye, very ill, something that started in late 2005 to early 2006 given photos and a video taken of both of Lucky and Alport, in which Alport is teased by a zoo visitor. (Which also begs the question of where zoo security and keepers were that allowed the teasing to occur.) It is easy enough to find on Youtube. Use keywords "Elephants San Antonio Zoo."

Lucky, a 48-year-old, female Asian elephant:

We observed Lucky on May 11, 2008, at 11:30 am. For about 25 minutes, Lucky appeared to be completely nonreactive to her environment. There is something wrong with her right, front footpad, as she appeared to be unwilling to put weight on it. She tends to lean into her left, front leg and did so for most of the observation period. There may also be issues with left, rear footpad as well. She has been observed having her feet soaked, and we have photos of such being done, as well as of her footpad.

In photos of foot soaking, you can observe some a stick brought in by zookeepers. According to Johnny Rodrigues, after reviewing the photographs, we have concluded that it is a bull hook used to get Lucky to submit by poking, tapping, and/or hitting her. Why this would be needed with such an obviously broken, depressed animal is beyond us.

On our observation, there was no feces in area; however, the water in her outdoor pool, if you can call it that, was low and had a greenish tint. There is hardly any shade available to her, and space seems very small and inadequate for this size mammal. All reports are sent to headquarters in Zimbabwe for analyzing by specialists and vets.

Two black eastern rhinoceros:

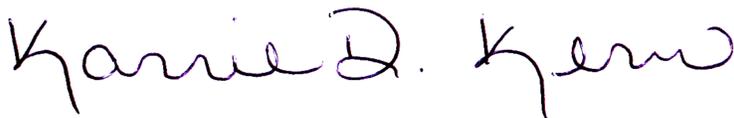
Photos were taken of them both in the week prior to May 11, 2008. There is an obvious need for medical intervention in both animals. They are both emaciated, and at first glance, they appear to be very malnourished. It could be age; it could be stressors from captivity. Given that these two animals are critically endangered, we ask for immediate intervention for these two.

Johnny Rodrigues has stated that he has never seen the like of their conditions in the wild, so something is seriously wrong with these two animals. We cannot stress enough the need for intervention on their behalves. We have not yet been able to obtain much information on these two, although we do believe the male is named Henry. What we can tell you is that we are horrified by this situation. We work with these animals in the wild and are shocked by their appearance. Mr. Don Elroy with Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation has also observed all of this. All of the photos of rhinos are his, as are many others.

We will be going back for further observations, including Lucky, both rhinos and an attempt to locate the bear and document observation and photos. We are sure there are several areas they are in violation of; however, we are new to zoos. Mr. Elroy would be much better at addressing those issues than our organization.

We can send photos; we know you will need them, but some places will not accept attachments, so please let us know how to get those to you.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Karrie D. Kern". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karrie D. Kern
CEO of US Operations
Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force

To: Animal Welfare Western Division, USDA
2150 Centre Ave., Building B, Mailstop 3W11
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117

June 2, 2008

From: Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force
San Antonio, TX
(210) 322-7573

Addendum to the Formal Complaint filed on May 28, 2008

Along with Rachel Wolf of Voice for Animals, we completed another observation on May 31, 2008, for a duration of three hours. It began at 3 p.m. and ended at 6 p.m. We observed Lucky, a 48-year-old female, Asian elephant and both black rhinos.

Lucky, a 48-year-old, female Asian elephant:

1. Weather was hot and muggy. Lucky had very little shade.
2. A growth was found on the inside of her rear right leg.
3. The pool was still unclean. Water was green and nasty looking. It had not been cleaned since my visit on May 11, 2008.
4. The pool interior appears to have numerous cracks inside of it, visible on the rim, above the water line.
5. Lucky was observed exhibiting stereotypical behavior for several minutes.
6. Her right, front footpad still appears to be an issue, as she is moving off of it frequently, and weight is placed primarily on her left, front leg.

Two black eastern rhinoceros:

We observed two black eastern rhinoceros, one named Henry, but the second rhinoceros' name is still unknown. I will refer to them as BR (black rhino) and HBR for Henry.

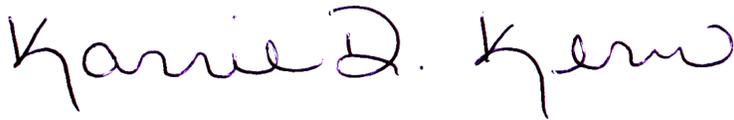
1. Exhibits are entirely too small.
2. BR was covered in feces, yellow in color, over most of her body.
3. BR was having difficulty breathing, breathing in fast, short labored breaths.
4. BR had no water in her exhibit at the time of observation; however, misters were up and functioning.
5. BR stayed in one area, seeking shade, as she, too, has very little shade.
6. BR appears to be in need of immediate medical attention.
7. BR's condition and the condition of her exhibit, which was filthy, is nothing short of animal cruelty.

HBR appears to be in better condition than BR:

1. Exhibit was filthy and small.
2. Hooves look rough and are in need of attention.
3. Horns are cracked in several places.
4. While not in as bad of shape as BR, HBR is also in need of immediate medical attention.

It is our firm belief that if intervention does not occur with these two rhinoceros, death will occur. Primarily BR, as her condition appears to be serious. We ask you, nay we beg of you, for her sake, remove her quickly. She needs help now. Please do not delay this with red tape. You must care for animals, or you would not be in this industry.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Karrie D. Kern". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karrie D. Kern
CEO of US Operations
Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force