

Oklahoma Court Orders “Tiger King” Huckster Jeff Lowe Must Relinquish All Tiger Cubs to the United States

Animal Wellness Action Leaders React to Court Order Directing Seizure of Tiger Cubs from Jeff Lowe’s Unlicensed “Tiger King Park” in Thackerville, Okla.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, January 16, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last night, U.S. District Court Judge F. Heil III, based in the Eastern District of Oklahoma, issued a devastating judgment in favor of the United States and against exotic animal exhibitor and dealer Jeff Lowe, who was prominently featured in the Netflix sensation “Tiger King.” The United States this summer initiated a series of legal actions against Lowe for his failure to comply with the Endangered Species Act and the Animal Welfare Act.



A big cat in captivity.

“

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Wayne Pacelle

In granting the motion from the United States for a preliminary injunction and a separate motion for a temporary restraining order, Judge Heil decided that Jeff Lowe must relinquish all of his tiger cubs (up to a year in age) and their mothers to the United States for subsequent placement at reputable sanctuaries and “shall immediately cease exhibiting animals protected by the ESA and the AWA without a valid USDA exhibitor’s license.”

The court's order, just the latest in a legal proceeding initiated in a sustained and careful set of legal maneuvers by the U.S. Department of Justice, is a tale of horrors recounting Lowe's mistreatment of animals at the Wynnewood facility that was featured in "Tiger King" and continuing at his unlicensed "Tiger King Park" in Thackerville.

"Based on the totality of the evidence presented regarding the alleged ESA violations at the

Wynnewood Location and at Tiger King Park ... the Court concludes that the United States can likely demonstrate that Defendants 'harmed' or 'harassed' numerous ESA protected animals," wrote Judge Heil. The court goes on to conclude that "the United States has demonstrated that Defendants are placing the health of their animals in serious danger by providing substandard care in violation of the ESA and by failing to comply with applicable AWA provisions and regulations. Defendants' habit, pattern, and practice of providing inadequate nutrition and timely veterinary care, and failure to employ an attending veterinarian, has resulted in injury - and even death - to a number of their animals, including ESA-protected animals such as Nala, Gizzy, Dot, Mama, Lizzie, Promise, Petunia, and Young Yi."

[Animal Wellness Action](#) president Wayne Pacelle and former Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson, the co-chairman of the National Law Enforcement Council for Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation, reacted to the decision.

"Jeff Lowe's serial acts of animal mistreatment have demonstrated that he's not fit to be an animal caretaker," said Pacelle. "The best course of action for him is to turn all of the animals at his Tiger King Park to reputable animal welfare groups and go into a different business that does not involve animal care."

"The judge's order in the federal case recounts in painful detail the misery that Jeff Lowe and his team have inflicted on animals under their care," said General Edmondson. "He's clearly unfit to operate the zoo he intends to open in 2021 in Thackerville."

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Big Cat Public Safety Act on December 3rds by a vote of 272 to 114, eight months after the salacious reality television series "Tiger King" put the animal welfare and public safety issues of private ownership of tigers and lions on the American radar screen. The legislation seeks to ban the trade in big cats as pets and to halt the exploitation of the animals for cub petting at roadside zoos — two forms of commerce that have been creating a stream of big cats who soon get too big and dangerous to handle and then are discarded by the industry and face subsequent peril.

Animal Wellness Action, the Animal Wellness Foundation, and the Center for a Humane Economy express their gratitude to federal inspectors who documented abuses at Lowe's facilities and to attorneys with the Environment and Natural Resources Division at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Marty Irby
Animal Wellness Action
+17024199410 ext.

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