

PUBLICATION OF CAPS ZOOS REPORT: 'LICENCE TO SUFFER'

From: **[redacted]**
Programme: Biodiversity
Date Submitted: 5 April 2012
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To: Lord Taylor

Lead PS: **[redacted]**

Issue

1. To note that:
 - a. on 8 April, the Captive Animals Protection Society (CAPS) are publishing their report on the inspection and licensing of zoos in England, and;
 - b. **[redacted]**
2. The CAPS report is separate from the Born Free Foundation's EU Zoo Inquiry Report which was published on Monday 2 April.
3. This submission is for information.

The CAPS report

4. The CAPS report is critical of the zoo licensing and inspection system. In CAPS view:
 - on inspections; inspections do not take place often enough, and in some cases have been missed altogether; and inspectors are not consistent in their approach to inspections or in their completion of inspection forms.
 - on action following inspections; CAPS say that a high percentage of inspection reports mention issues which were not addressed following an earlier inspection – signifying a lack of follow-up by local authorities, and that a high percentage of reports identified problems which should have led local authorities to take action to ensure compliance, but which did not.
 - on enforcement; CAPS claim that virtually no enforcement action has been taken despite inspection reports showing apparent failure. They allege that this in turn has led to failure to comply with the EC Zoos Directive in some cases, and have submitted a report of their findings to the Commission.
5. We will need to look at the detail of the report, but generally we have a good story to tell. Local authority implementation of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 has

been inconsistent and a number of errors have been brought to our attention, but we have no evidence of serious, widespread failure, and no evidence of serious animal welfare problems. To assist local authorities we have for example:

- published comprehensive guidance, an update of which is currently out for consultation;
- in 2008 the then Minister Joan Ruddock wrote to all local authorities in England reminding them of their obligations under the legislation;
- contracted ADAS to carry out research into local authority implementation of the legislation. This found an improving picture over the period 2008-2010, and also that there is room for further improvement;
- held a Seminar for the Secretary of State's zoo inspectors in November 2011. Its objective was to ensure a consistent approach to inspections. Follow-up work is underway.

6. We will work with Press Office to prepare robust lines to take.

7. **[Redacted]**

8. **[Redacted]**

9. **[Redacted]**

10. **[Redacted]**

Next steps

11. We will consider the CAPS report's findings and:

- a. ask the Zoos Expert Committee to discuss them at their meeting on 17 May;
- b. take them into account in our follow-up work to the Zoo Inspectors seminar held in November; and
- c. take them into account in our current consultation on the new Zoo Licensing Act 1981 guidance.

12. The consultation ends on 30 April. Once we have considered the responses we will submit further advice including on the extent to which we can further address CAPS concerns.

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Biodiversity Programme