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INVESTIGATION SOUGHT OVER SHADY DEALINGS AT OSWALD'S BEAR RANCH

PETA Calls On Authorities to Investigate Michigan Roadside Zoo for Purposely Misleading Lawmakers, Illegally Transferring Bears, and More

Newberry, Mich. — This morning, PETA [sent a letter](#) requesting that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) investigate Oswald's Bear Ranch—which is owned and operated by notorious animal exhibitor Dean Oswald—in Newberry for numerous apparent violations of Michigan law, including for discrepancies in the facility's bear-acquisition records and for intentionally misleading lawmakers.

In the letter, PETA notes that in the past 22 years, Oswald's Bear Ranch has bred 13 cubs and purchased or received 60 others for use in photo ops, including three who were acquired just this year from a breeder in Wisconsin. PETA's meticulous review of MDNR and Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development records also revealed that there was no documentation for a 2016 transfer of three cubs from a facility that Oswald's referenced on Facebook and that acquisitions that Oswald's claims to have made weren't corroborated by monthly inventory reports. Additionally, at least three bears who were placed at the facility by government agencies were moved to a breeding facility in Arizona, and despite misleading authorities into believing that it functions solely as a rescue facility, Oswald's hasn't taken in a single orphaned cub from government agencies since lawmakers amended the Large Carnivore Act in 2013.

"Dean Oswald's lip service to animal welfare can't hide the fact that he's stockpiling bear cubs, who should be with their mothers, to use as moneymaking machines in cruel photo ops," says PETA Foundation Director of Captive Animal Law Enforcement Brittany Peet. "PETA is calling on authorities to investigate our findings and, if warranted, throw the book at this sham operation."

PETA—whose motto reads, in part, that "animals are not ours to use for entertainment"—points out that Oswald's Bear Ranch has a history of federal animal-welfare violations and was cited in 2010 for using physical abuse to handle an animal after a U.S. Department of Agriculture inspector witnessed a handler strike a bear cub twice during a photo op. [Video footage](#) taken just last year shows three bear cubs used for photo ops pacing and crying out, and one was observed repeatedly chewing on the caging—all signs of severe psychological distress.

For more information, please visit PETA.org.

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