

Eagle Encounters 12 April 2023 @ 10h15 to 12h08

I would describe this facility as a combination of a **Rehabilitation Centre, Sanctuary, Zoo, and Petting Farm**.

This report will be based on the **Animals Protection Act No. 61 of 1972 (will include sections on photographic evidence)** and the **SPCA Statement of Policy** and **SPCA Rules**.

SPCA officials: Qualified Inspector Elani Graham and Cadet Inspector Jon Friedman.

Access Granted by: Josh Chalmers (son), later Hank Chalmers (owner)

Main Veterinarian used: Dr. De Beer from CARE Centre for Avian, Reptiles and Exotics in Klapmuts

(Tel: 021 875 5063)

Birds (more than 171 in total)

- 10 x African Wood Owls
- 29 x Spotted Eagle Owls
- 2 x Steph Harris Hawks
- 7 x Martial Eagle
- 6 x Verreaux's Eagle (Black Eagle)
- 1 x Wahlberg Eagle
- 1 x Pygmy Falcon
- 2 x Pearl Spotted Owls
- 12 x Barn Owl
- 1 x Yellow-billed Kite
- 2 x Jackal Buzzard
- Verreaux's Eagle Owl
- 1 x Bengal Eagle Owl
- 8 x Cape Vulture
- 5 x White Backed Vulture
- 1 x Lapped Face Vulture
- 1 x Stork
- 2 x Hadedu
- 5 x Gymnogonys
- 10 x Harris Hawks
- 1 x American Black Vulture
- 12 x Yellow-billed kite
- 4 x Secretary Birds
- 4 x African Hawk Eagle
- 2 x White Faced Owl
- 1 x Lanner Falcon
- More than 22 x Rock Kestrels
- 1 x Goshawk
- 1 x Southern Faced Scops Owl
- 1 x Black Crow
- 9 x Peregrine Falcons
- 1 x Cape Spotted Eagle Owl

- 3 x Fish Eagle
- 2 x Pied Crows

Reptiles

- 3 x Ball python
- More than 2 x Angulate tortoises
- 2 x Red Tail Boas
- 1 x Rock Python
- More than 9 x Leopard Tortoises
- 3 x Bearded Dragons
- 1 x Rock Monitor

Spiders

- 2 x Chaco Golden Knees Tarantulas
- 1 x Brazilian Tarantula

Mammals

- 2 x Porcupines
- 2 x Cape Fox
- 4 x Meerkats

General:

- In total, they have 4 cleaners/ caretakers of which two include trainers as well
- 2 birds were off-site at Schools including Ziggy (Barn Owl) and Lucky (African Wood Owl).
- They clean enclosures twice a week according to Josh
- They feed all animals except reptiles before and after cleaning time (only dead chicks observed).
- Reptiles such as snakes get fed twice a week.
- They own a Pig farm as well to supply feed to their birds. When asked how killed, they said they use an abattoir.
- They do not kill their feed but buy frozen rodents and chicks. Sometimes they find carcasses of rats and feed that as well.
- Most birds that are there they keep for either breeding, permanently as they are habituated, for training/shows/ films, confiscations from Cape Nature (2 Steph Harris Hawks), rehabilitation, old unwanted pets, etc.
- They have a five-year plan with Spier that will fund them to split the facility in two. One section will hold all the habituated, non-releasable birds. The Second section will be for Rehabilitation and release only. For the Non-releasable, they want to build a massive dome where they can fly freely and not use degradable wood structures, but rather steel. Mr. Hank Chalmers said Spier will fund this project.

Concerns Observed/ Noted:

- Enclosures that had a pungent smell included the 2 Martial Eagles on Runners in front, Mom Nursery with the Spotted Eagle Owls, The porcupine enclosure,
- Most birds kept there have old injured wings or legs such as angel wings etc.

- The veterinary records, PAPA licenses, documentation, and permits are all kept at their personal home on a database and were not presentable.
- They were unsure of how many animals they have in total.
- They have an enclosure with about 11 Spotted Eagle owls of which 3-4 are mothers that rear babies to be released into the wild again, this enclosure was extremely dirty with old faeces and had a pungent smell.
- Angulate- and Leopard tortoises were observed in one enclosure.
- Some animals mostly birds do not all have hiding spaces.
- **Isolation Area:** This was the one space where we were denied entry. I tried to take pictures as best I could and Joshua Chalmers did not share much information but the fact that they are there temporarily as it is an isolated area. I observed 3 enclosures for tarantulas kept separately. I also observed 1 Southern Face Scops Owl in a cage without water. I observed 1 Goshawk kept in a cat box with no perch or water. I observed 1 Spotted Eagle Owl on the floor in a dirty cat box without water. This area appeared to be very dirty with old faeces etc.
- **Falconry is still practiced and advertised.**

Recommendation concerns:

- No footbaths seen.
- Some F10 Spray bottles were seen but minimal.
- Hank suggested that Annelise, Leandi, and the SPCA sit around one table to discuss the concerns/ solutions going forward for this facility.
- They need to create a file with all their veterinary records, especially the permanent residents/ show birds.
- They are allowed to breed with everything they own by Cape Nature and accept everything even animals with permanent injuries.

Conclusion:

- At the moment in my opinion, the facility has massive cleanliness issues with most enclosures littered with old faeces between rocks, on perches, on shade cloth, on the netting/ fencing, etc.
- I also believe even though most animals are habituated here, that all of them need hiding spaces when they feel threatened as they are still wild animals.
- I believe there is more going on behind the scenes that we are not aware of, if concrete proof can be obtained, they can be shut down.

Photographic Evidence (this does not include all of the photographs taken):

NOTE: Some photographs include multiple concerns

Cleanliness (Section 2(1)(e)):



Figure 1 Pied Crow cage with old chicks/ food and excess faeces seen



Figure 2 Non-potable drinking water observed with algae



Figure 3 Porcupine enclosure with pungent smell, old food, old faeces.



Figure 4 Overview of Porcupine enclosure



Figure 5 Faeces in porcupine enclosure



Figure 6 Two old, dirty, enclosures that are kept far away at the back



Figure 7 Inside of Figure 6 enclosure



Figure 8 Parasitic conditions seen in Figure 6 enclosures



Figure 9 Old faeces seen on shadecloth, plants and ground

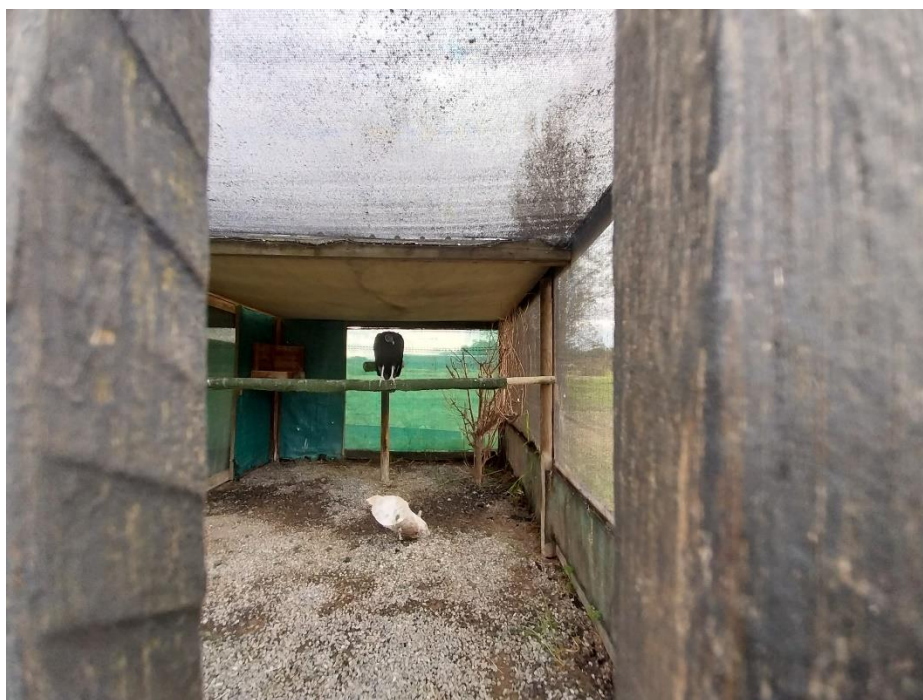


Figure 10 Parasitic Conditions, litter and no hiding space



Figure 11 Overcrowded "Mom Nursery" that had old faeces, no hiding spaces and a pungent smell



Figure 12 Overgrown grass



Figure 13 Old faeces on almost everything



Figure 14 Dirty environment at Petting Spotted Eagle Owl Enclosure by entrance



Figure 15 Parasitic conditions seen from afar



Figure 16 Parasitic Conditions seen and no hiding space observed



Figure 17 Parasitic Conditions seen and permanent handling rings around feet



Figure 18 Parasitic Conditions see with old feathers, old faeces, overgrown grass



Figure 19 Parasitic conditions observed with no hiding space



Figure 20 Parasitic Conditions and in my opinion overcrowding

Isolation area (denied access) (Section 2(1)(e), 2(1)(c), 2(1)(b), 8(4)):



Figure 21 Southern Faced Scops Owl seen on left with no water and two tarantula enclosures seen on right



Figure 22 Southern Faced Scops Owl on right and Goshawk kept in cat box on left without water and space.



Figure 23 Spotted Eagle Owl kept in the cat box observed with faecal matter, no water and on the floor which was full of old faeces.

Mixed Species (Section 2(1)(a) - terrify, 2(1)(e)):



Figure 24 Leopard tortoises and Angulate tortoises of all sizes and sexes kept together, and parasitic conditions.



Figure 25 Two Fish Eagles and a Secretary bird kept in one enclosure

Overcrowding – (Section 2(1)(e), 2(1)(c)):



Figure 26 Three different species of Vultures (1 x Lapped Face Vulture, 5 x White backed Vultures, 6 x Cape Vultures) kept together (12 in total) with little hiding space.



Figure 27 Overcrowded kestrel enclosure with no hiding spaces, excess faeces which create parasitic conditions.

Veterinary Concerns (Section 2(1)(e)):



Figure 28 Permanent resident Vulture with Angel Wings created through nutrient deficiency

Rat Problem (2(1)(e)):



Figure 29 The rat holes inside one of the enclosures. When seen by raptors they do eat them live, Rat control methods at a facility like this is risky.

Running Chain Birds (Section 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)):



Figure 30 African Wood Owl on running chain, allowed to be petted and according to their signs sleep free-roaming in the evenings, still have no hiding space



Figure 31 Martial Eagle kept on running chain, reason being he injures himself on the netting



Figure 32 Martial Eagle kept on running chain next to another, reason being the netting and they will fight

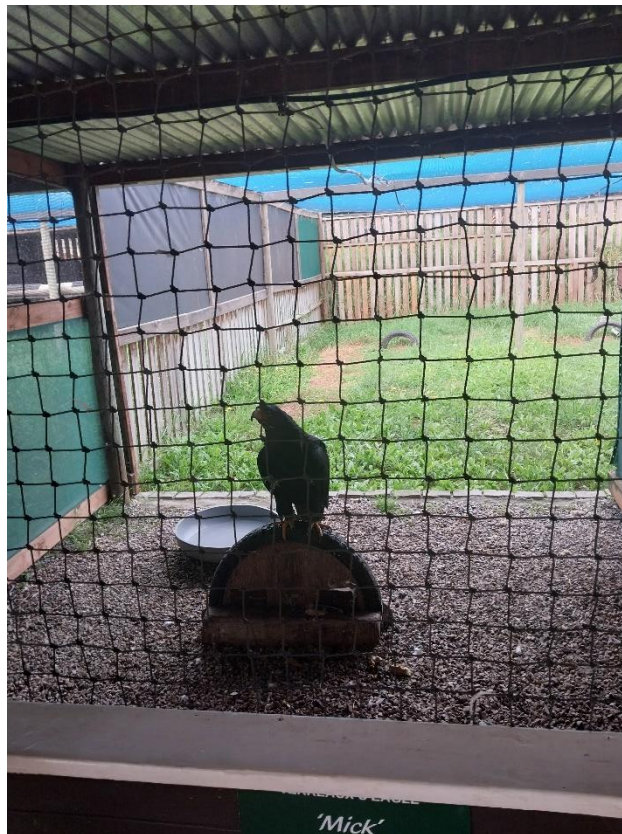


Figure 33 Martial eagle kept in same enclosure as Figure 32 for same reasons

Hiding Spaces (Section 2(1)(a) - terrify):



Figure 34 Example of enclosure with no hiding space



Figure 35 Example of Verreux's eagle enclosure with no hiding space



Figure 36 Example of Vulture enclosure with no hiding space and parasitic conditions and dirty environment



Figure 37 Example of Barn Owl enclosure with no hiding spaces



Figure 38 Example of enclosure with no hiding space



Figure 39 Example of Raptors with no hiding space and in my opinion overcrowded



Figure 40 Bearded Dragons with no hiding space and in my opinion overcrowded and needs more space

Falconry (Section 2(1)(h) and for incitement 2(1)(g) – See Minette’s attached statement from 2018:



Figure 41 Advertisement for Falcon Pest Control at the entrance of the facility

A vertical pamphlet for Falcon Bird Pest Control. At the top is a photograph of a bird of prey in flight. Below the image, the text reads: 'ALL NATURAL 100% ECO-FRIENDLY BIRD PEST CONTROL'. This is followed by a question: 'Are you tired of finding bird droppings all over your buildings, patios, walkways and vehicles?'. Then, it states: 'Did you know that, not only are these droppings unsightly, but they are also hazardous to human health?'. Next, it says: 'Bird Pest Control (Pty) Ltd can offer you a solution that is 100% eco-friendly and humane – no poisons, therefore no negative impact on any other species, or the environment.' Below this is the contact information: 'Contact us for more information or for a consultation.' At the bottom left is the Falcon Bird Pest Control logo, which features a stylized bird in flight within a circular frame. On the right side of the pamphlet, there is a list of locations where the service is offered: 'PIGEON, DOVE & STARLING MANAGEMENT, PERFECT FOR: Golf & Estates, Townhouse Complexes & Retirement Villages, Shopping Centres & Malls, Office Parks & Industrial Complexes, School, College, Technicon & Varsity Campuses'. At the bottom right, it says: 'BIRD PEST CONTROL (PTY) LTD t/as FALCON, HANK CHALMERS (082) 462-5463, TRACY CHALMERS (084) 584-3684, www.falconpestcontrol.co.za'.

Figure 42 Pamphlets at reception advertising "100% Eco-Friendly Bird Pest Control"

