·EDINBVRGH·
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Date: 17 July 2026

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
134 Corstorphine Road
EDINBURGH
EH12 6TS

Dear

ZOO LICENSING ACT 1981 (AS AMENDED)
HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC ACT 1974
EDINBURGH ZOO, 134 CORSTORPHINE ROAD, EDINBURGH

I refer to the annual inspection of Edinburgh Zoo on 15th June 2026 by FRCVS (Edinburgh Council's) and myself.

The annual inspection did not cover all areas of the Zoo but included many parts of the premises and discussions with Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) representative on a range of veterinary, animal collection and health and safety matters.

The only significant mortalities related to Gentoo penguins. This was discussed with the vet team. The majority of cases being related to ingestion of visitor originated small intestine foreign body ingestion. A smaller incidence was related to aspergillosis and non-haemolytic E coli septicaemia

One of the main issues noted during the inspection was that, following a recent accident involving a strike on an underground electrical cable, some areas of the Zoo are without power and are reliant on generators to provide electricity. This needs to be addressed, and mains electrical supply needs to be restored to all areas as a matter of urgency.

I would also like to remind you that at the time of the next formal inspection, the new SSSMZP (2027) will be in force, preparedness for the new standards is important.

A summary of progress and completion of Actions Required from the 2025 Report and matters noted during the inspection are included below:

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Matters from previous report

1 Zebra enclosure and stand-off barrier- The new Zebra enclosure was viewed and is deemed satisfactory.

2 Giraffe crush use and foot care - whilst a document for training and prospective use of the giraffe crush is prepared, the crush is still not in use and at least two of the giraffes now have deformed hooves, that require trimming, sooner rather than later. In these times, the use of a high-risk procedure (e.g. general anaesthesia) cannot be justified for regular hoof trimming.

3 Emergency Drug dosage sheet – the print on this must be significantly larger.

4 Lone Animal Policy- Asiatic lions — still a problem if lions need to be separated (as at present), Although time in the smaller enclosure can be alternated, there must be better provision for two large spaces, to avoid use of inadequately sized areas when separation is mandated. A plan for this situation has been advised for several years.

5 Escape Drills – Only two escape drills have taken place in the last 12 months. The drill reports still require far more details. Whilst two drills per year must be Cat I species, they can still be staged to test the system and optimise the learning outcomes. The standards require four drills per year, but Inspectors always expect to see 4 in the previous 12 months.

Matters noted during Inspection on 15th June 2026

1 Penguin Feeding - Defrosting frozen fish for feeding to penguins cannot occur at room temperature.

2 Armadillo was asleep at the time of Inspection and will be checked for stereotypic behaviour in 2027.

3 Preventing capybara escape - An internal low-level gate has been installed above capybara enclosure inside turnstile leading to Kaimes Road. This must be fitted with heavy purpose self-closing spring.

4 The edge protection on some steps is in disrepair. These should be repaired. Some of the pathways are also in a state of disrepair. These need to be reviewed.

5 A regular review and update of all Risk assessments needs to be carried out and a risk assessment for the filling of the Lucerne baskets in the Giraffe house needs to be carried out. Please forward a copy of the risk assessment to this department for review.

6 Signs need to be provided at food outlets and on picnic tables advising members of the public to wash their hands before eating food.

7 'No public access signs' are currently ineffective as noted twice whilst in the grounds during inspection.

8 Wee Beasties back of house area. This area is impossible to keep clean due to inappropriate floor substrate and state of disrepair of backside of some

enclosures. Revamp required, into a state where infestations can be prevented and the area maintained in a hygienic manner.

9 Firearms training is currently inadequate. Every' member of the firearms team, must be trained at least annually (preferably every 6 months, in the use of every weapon that they might be expected to use. Records of all training must be maintained.

10 Veterinary care facility- not currently fit for use for abdominal or orthopaedic surgeries. Improved hygiene and mains electricity required.

11 Penguin filtration room — There are now metal slides in place to bridge the gap in the handrails. However, this metal rod slides all too easily. These need to be fitted with a device to prevent the rod slipping accidentally but are equally easy to remove when necessary.

12 Public railings maintenance- there is a small area of public hand railing, at the top of the stairs on the right side, leaving the armadillo enclosure, which is very rotten and need of replacement.

13 The floor covering in the Budongo Trail building is loose and in disrepair in areas. This needs to be repaired.

14 There is a lock on the inside of the door of the gent's toilet in the Budongo Trail building. This needs to be removed to prevent children from locking themselves in. Also, the new Virtual Reality experience is very close to the door of the disabled toilet. You need to ensure that adequate space is provided for disabled people, especially wheelchair users, to use these facilities unencumbered.

15 Diet sheets - a number of diet sheets were examined. Diet sheets were not available in all food preparation areas which is a short coming. Also diet sheets for herbivores (as an example) currently list 6-8 constituent parts, but does not dictate how much of each is provided. The Inspectors were informed that the amounts of different vegetables did vary by week and according to season and that such variation is not recorded. This is contrary to requirements. Detailed diet sheets must be available on site where animal meals are put together. Any variation from the diet sheet in meal content must be recorded.

Recommendations

1. Create two engaging pictorial signs for posting on the public facing boards either side of the penguin exhibit, explaining the risk of dropped foreign bodies into the penguins and asking the public to be careful and to notify staff if any items are dropped into the enclosure

2. Aspergillosis in Penguins- this is likely stress related. Advise to tests blood serum itraconazole levels when birds are on itraconazole, as serum levels can vary greatly depending on formulation. Whilst itraconazole tends to work well for prophylactic therapy it is advised to use Voriconazole for all clinical cases, due to the vastly improved efficacy.

3. At the time of any inspection, it is prudent to ensure that four drills (including at least 2 category 1drills), have been conducted in the previous twelve months (mandatory that four are done a year). The purpose of drills is to stress test the integrity and resilience of your escape procedures. The procedures should be recorded with detail such that the reports can be used for training purposes. Anyone reading the report should be able to gain a thorough understanding of all aspects of the escape and recovery process, akin to a forensic report.

4. Emergency drug reference doses kept in the gun safes, is still in a font that in a cramped situation, at a stressful time could be easily misread. It is possible that there is too much data on this sheet, or simply not a large enough font. It must be able to be easily visualised and interpreted, when in situ in the gun safe.

5. Edge safety in the penguin water filtration room. This is health and safety at work issue rather than a Zoo Licensing issue. It is strongly recommended that the 'slip bar' positioned over the gap in the fence around the water filtration reservoir, is fixed in position by a half pin (similar to those used on agricultural tractors), to be safe and strong but easily removed in the event of an emergency (H&S Issue)

6. The floor covering in the Budongo Trail building is loose and in disrepair in areas. This needs to be repaired. (H&S issue)

7. Remove the lock on the inside of the door of the gent's toilet in the Budongo Trail building. The new Virtual Reality experience is very close to the door of the accessible toilet. Ensure that adequate space is provided for disabled people, especially wheelchair users, to use these facilities unencumbered (H&S Issue)

Conditions

1. In accordance with the SSSMZP (2012) points l. 12, l. 13, 3.3 diet sheets must be developed, with specialist advice e.g. from the vet or a nutritionist, recorded and implemented. To avoid dietary drift it is a good idea to have these displayed in the food preparation area, to ensure that they are being adhered to. Diet sheets should be sufficiently detailed to record what is actually delivered and where seasonal or weekly drift occurs this needs to be recorded. (6 months)

2. Penguin E coli cases — greater care with food preparation hygiene may be efficacious in reducing the incidence of these. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012), point 1.3 improved staff training is required in respect of food hygiene in particular during preparation. At any time 85% of microbes on any surface are held in the biofilm. and once there, they are said to be 1000 times more resistant to the effect of disinfectants. It is suggested that a biofilm removing product e.g. Health & Hygiene F919, is used on all penguin kitchen work surfaces once a month and on the floor every two months. In accordance with SSSM7P (2012) points 1.3.d, good hygiene practice in food preparation is essential. In respect of food hygiene whilst preparing raw fish this will always be a particular risk and a common cause of individual and group mortalities in zoo penguins. Furthermore, the use of ATP testing to scientifically quantify kitchen hygiene levels on a once monthly basis would be beneficial. (3 months)

3. It is appreciated that the current generator electricity supply to the veterinary facility is 'temporary — however, the inspectors are aware there is no time given as management are awaiting a decision by insurers, prior to continuing repair

work. It is also acknowledged that many surgical procedures take place 'in exhibit', for safety reasons. However. the hygiene and cleanliness of the operating room, does not meet the standards required for its use for orthopaedic or abdominal surgeries.

The inspectors recognise that has been a plan for a novel veterinary facility since at least 2021 and that no plan has apparently yet been developed, established or funded. The current theatre can be Improved greatly, by removing extraneous equipment, boxing in equipment that cannot be removed, preventing build up of dust on cupboard tops by boxing these in etc.In accordance with SSSMZP (2012) Appendix 5 point 5.12 the veterinary services and facilities must be consistent with the welfare needs of the animals held in the Zoo, thereby being adequately equipped for the reasonable and foreseeable veterinary needs of the collection. To this end the sterile operating theatre space must be rendered such that it can be cleaned and maintained in a suitably hygienic state for sterile surgical procedures. (2 months)

4. A documented maintenance audit process must be devised and implemented that ensures senior staff review the whole site on a minimum of a monthly basis to ensure that any defects, health and safety risks to the public or animals, or other infrastructure or maintenance needs are identified, a process of rectifying the noted problem is implemented and that the works are reviewed in a documented fashion to ensure the safety of both the public and the animals on the site as per SSSMZP (2012) sections 8.9, 8.13, 8.14 and 8.15. Specifically, the yellow step edge trip hazard on the rock hopper ice cream parlour steps, the old owl walkway pathway and the hand-rail on the right at the top of the stair exit from the building housing the armadillo. (2 months)

5. As per SSSMZP (2012) sections 3.7 (and 3.9) a documented zoonosis policy that includes a review of zoonotic pathogens considered risk from the collection, surveillance programmes in place to monitor for such pathogens, risk assessments specific to zoonosis management and the mitigation strategies deployed to reduce risk to staff and visitors, including hand washing (recommended to include at food outlets and picnic benches) and sanitation strategies (recommended to include prevention or monitoring and regular cleaning of wild bird faecal deposits on public access surfaces e.g. exhibit railings, picnic tables and benches (specifically benches on the walkway up the hill, railings around the banteng and picnic tables generally).

6. As per SSSMZP (2012) sections 8.47& 8.48 areas where public access is not permitted, should be clearly defined, e.g. by means of barriers and warning notices; or, where access is allowed to vehicles operated by zoo staff, by notices and road markings. Zoos should consider the use of symbol-based signs wherever practicable to assist, for example, foreign visitors and children. Specifically, the 'staff access only' above the Wee Beasties, where although there is a sign and a tape cordon that could be pulled across, public were seen entering this area on occasions during the inspection. Either the cordon must be across, or signage such that the visiting public are fully aware that it is a no entry area. (1 month)

7. As per SSSMZP (2012) controlled environments (for reptiles) must provide all of the animal’s needs for heat, humidity, light and photoperiod, air and water quality, creating high environmental temperatures, attention to hygiene and disease control is especially important. Specifically, the backroom area in Wee Beasties, must be maintained in a cleanable and hygienic manner to prevent pathogen or pest

ingress. In this respect the floor substrate in this area is inappropriate as cleaning is impossible, likewise damaged wood units, permitting cockroaches etc to enter and breed in warm dark wooden cavities must be prevented. A change to the floor substrate and refurbishment of wooden structures is required. (9 month)

8. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012) sections 8.19a, 8.34, 8 20 where a zoo holds any primate, carnivore, elephant, or hoofed mammal, listed in category 1 of Appendix 12, appropriate firearms must be available, unless a risk assessment has shown that a firearm would not provide the most appropriate means of protection to the public from that animal, and other arrangements have been made. Firearms, ammunition and darting equipment, where provided, must be available for immediate use by licensed and trained operators. Such operatives must undergo regular training and or darting equipment, which must be documented. All firearms team members must undergo training at least annually, preferably every 6 months using all weapons that they might be obliged to use on site. (6 months)
9. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012) point 8.42 the low-level swing door by the turnstile above the capybara enclosure, must be maintained shut, by a strong self-closure spring, such that it remains closed and secured to prevent the escape of animals, but readily openable to allow the public to escape if required. (1 month)

10. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012), point 8.38, the zoo is required to undertake four escape drills each year, two of these must involve Category 1 species, at least one should be done when the public are present and at least one when the public are not present. Escape drills must be recorded and regularly reviewed. (1 month).

    (It is advised that the next Escape Drill report, should be submitted to the LA for approval).

Directions

1. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012) 1.3b, and in line with current best practice on food hygiene, frozen meat and fish must be thawed in a refrigerator. **Frozen fish must be defrosted in refrigeration in line with requirements of Direction 1 of Zoo Inspection Report of the 13/03/2024 Zoo Inspection**. The zoo has been under notice in respect of this issue since at least 2021. It has been listed in the ZIR as a Direction since the formal inspection of 2024, with a time limit of six months. The inspectors were informed that the zoo believed they were now compliant, whilst it is readily apparent that frozen fish are still being defrosted at room temperature. **The decision is to revoke the prior Direction and to now issue an alternative Direction with a 12-month timeline.**

2. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012) 3.7 and 3.9, a documented veterinary health programme must be produced, in conjunction with the veterinarian, that reviews the practices undertaken on site and reflects what is appropriate best practice for the collection. This must include, but is not limited to: (i) a routine health surveillance programme including vaccination, parasite and microbiology screening, including anthelmintic selection and parasite management options; ii) quarantine, isolation and import policies and procedures for each taxonomic group including species specific recommendations; (iii) a process of documented review of clinicopathological records: (iv) post mortem examination (PME) procedures and rational when it is not carried out; (v) nutritional and dietary review processes; (VI) pharmaceutical dispensing, storage and management policies, and (vii) a

documented zoonosis policy that includes a review of zoonotic pathogens considered a risk in the collection, surveillance programmes in place to monitor for such pathogens, risk assessments specific to zoonosis management and the mitigation strategies deployed to reduce risk to staff and visitors, including hand washing and sanitation strategies. Specifically, this direction relates to the routine hoof health care provided for the giraffes. This point has been flagged since 2021, in respect of effective design, siting, training and use of the giraffe crush. At least two of the giraffes are now in need of routine hoof care, which should be able to be achieved conscious in an appropriate giraffe crush (**9 Months**)

3. On inspection on 15th June, it was noted that again the Asiatic lion pair had had to be separated for a considerable period, on this day the male lion was outside in the paddock and the female shut away in a small enclosure. This situation has been repeatedly raised sine at least 2021. In accordance with SSSMZP (2012) Section 4, any enclosure must provide opportunity to express most normal behaviour. In view of the high chance that periodic separation of a lion pair will be necessary, it is essential that there exist two suitable lion paddocks, such that when separation is required no lion is restricted to an unreasonably small enclosure. **This Direction must be met within 9 months.**

<u>Items carried forward from previous inspection or due to be rechecked</u>

1 Lone animal policy, spatial and welfare assessments (Lion and Rhino)
2 Policy document for steps to be taken in the event of staff exposure to a harmful substance
3 Inspection of all visitor-permitted feeding procedures
4 Recorded escape drills, and escape reports within the previous year
5 Accident reporting
6 Display of the ZOO licence
7 Records of electric fence checks — in situ
8 Firearms training records
9 Penguin fish defrosting (including records of biofilm removal)
10 Wee Beasties back section
11 Diet sheets
12 Hand wash signs at food outlets / picnic tables.
13 Gentoo FB risk awareness signs
14 Stereotopic behaviour check of armadillo.
15 Check etorphine toxicity antidote check document and training

Yours sincerely



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