



ALDF Animal Law Symposium

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The Importance of Experts

“I agree that the judge’s findings of fact don’t look good based on the unopposed testimony from PETA experts. . . .”

Judge: ‘Filthy’ Zoo Must Give Up Animals, Zoo Appeals – Dec. 31, 2019,
<https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/judge-filthy-zoo-must-give-up-animals-zoo-appeals/> (last visited April 5, 2026)

The Importance of Experts

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, v. Tri-State Zoological Park of Western Maryland, Inc., et al., 424 F. Supp. 404 (D. Md. 2019)

Six Day Endangered Species Act Bench Trial Where Court Found – Tigers, Lions & Lemurs Had Been “Taken” Under the ESA

The Importance of Experts

- **PETA's Two Experts**

- Former Zoo Veterinarian with big cat and lemur experience
- Current Zoo animal husbandry expert with big cat and lemur experience

The Importance of Experts

Judge as factfinder cited to experts' testimony multiple times to find that zoo had "taken" lions, tigers, and lemurs under the ESA

"Tri-State's 'pattern of waiting until animals are very, very ill before either bringing it to the attention of the veterinarian or until the veterinarian actually comes out to look at the animals' has, according to PETA's experts, contributed to long and painful deaths of five endangered species."

The Importance of Experts

“The Court credits the testimony of PETA’s animal husbandry expert, Mr. Jay Pratte, whose over 25 years of training, education, and experience aided this Court in its fact-finding mission. As Pratte opines, Defendants exhibited a stunning ignorance as to how to provide the lemurs an environment remotely appropriate to their species. Pratte found that Defendants did not have “any process, information, research done...into how [to]...alleviate these [] problems, let alone that they were even aware that they were a problem to begin with.”

The Importance of Experts

“PETA’s experts opine that keeping a lion in solitude does not meet commonly accepted zoological practices.”

“It is also beyond dispute that Bandit exhibited signs of significant distress. Both Dr. Haddad and Mr. Pratte opine that Bandit’s ripping at his penis represented a long-term condition due to chronic stress and anxiety.”

The Importance of Experts

“PETA’s experts agree that Peka’s solitary confinement produces a constant source of stress and negatively impacts her physical and psychological health—conditions magnified by little to no enrichment”

“Dr. Haddad opines that India’s sepsis was likely brought about by exposure to contaminated food or water and perpetuated by poor sanitary conditions and a lack of preventative care.”

The Importance of Experts

“As Mr. Pratte aptly noted, a lion forced to live in solitude with a single ball for company is tantamount to confining a human in a single room with a single book for years on end.

“That’s all you get. That’s the only choice you have provided to you”
if you are a lion at Tri-State. ”

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