



PETA Factsheet

World Animal Studios (Sam Mazzola) Wildlife Adventures of Ohio

USDA License #31-C-0065, 9978 N. Marks Rd., Columbia Station, OH 44028

Sam Mazzola's World Animal Studios (also operates under the name Wildlife Adventures of Ohio) has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited World Animal Studios numerous times for failure to have a responsible person available for inspections as well as for housing incompatible species and poor housekeeping. The USDA issued an official warning to World Animal Studios for operating without a license. World Animal Studios' bear "wrestling" event has been canceled in several communities that considered it dangerous and inhumane. Bears with World Animal Studios have caused injuries to the public and property damage. Contact PETA for documentation.

Animals in recent inventory: tigers, lions, bears, ocelots, caracals, a cougar, a leopard, foxes, and lemurs.

May 26, 2006: According to the *Free Times*, Mazzola's bear, named Ceasar, who was forced to wrestle drunken contenders at a nightclub in downtown Akron, Ohio, appeared to be drugged and was "smacked in the face" when he nipped at a man's shoulder.

February 23, 2006: The USDA filed a Complaint and Order to Show Cause against Mazzola seeking revocation of his license. The complaint alleges that Mazzola handled and housed animals in a manner that risked the safety of the animals and members of the public and continually failed to comply with the Animal Welfare Act after having been repeatedly advised of deficiencies.

Between 2001 and 2005, the USDA cited World Animal Studios six times for making false statements and providing false records to the USDA, four times for violating safety regulations by allowing customers into enclosures with adult tigers and bears, one weighing over 700 pounds, and three times for failing to safely contain adult tigers, bears, and juvenile wolves.

The USDA's complaint states, "[R]espondent's conduct over the period covered by this complaint reveals a consistent disregard for, and unwillingness to abide by, the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act and the Regulations and Standards."

September 10, 2003: The USDA noted, "The safety risk to the public (persons being photographed with the animals) was discussed with the owner. Persons being close to the head of an adult bear while being photographed, with a trained handler controlling a leash attached to a collar around the bear's neck may be a risk to the person."

September 19, 2000: The USDA cited World Animal Studios for failure to have a responsible person available in order that an inspection could be performed.

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August 29, 1998: According to the *Dayton Daily News*, the Darke County Fair Board ordered World Animal Studios to leave the fair after it determined that having children and adults pose for pictures with wild animals is unsafe and inappropriate. World Animal Studios offered photo ops with a bear and a tiger. The humane society had also received several complaints that the bear appeared to be drugged.

May 7, 1998: The USDA cited World Animal Studios for housing predator and prey animals near each other.

April 1, 1998: The USDA cited World Animal Studios for failure to have a responsible person available in order that an inspection could be performed.

October 28, 1997: *The Plain Dealer* reported that a judge suspended a one-year prison term for illegal firearms possession on the condition that Sam Mazzola take classes to control his anger.

September 17, 1997: The USDA cited World Animal Studios for failure to correct a previously identified violation of poor housekeeping. The exhibitor was also cited for incomplete records for two 2½-week-old female lions and a 4-week-old male tiger acquired from Noah's Land.

April 21, 1997: Police seized an adult black bear and a 3-month-old cub from World Animal Studios at the Gibraltar Trade Center in Mount Clemens, Mich., where the bears were used for photo ops at a flea market. Mazzola was charged with violating a local ordinance against wild animals and arrested for disorderly conduct. Officers at the scene were appalled at the condition of the bear's trailer. The 6-foot-6-inch, 535-pound male adult bear was kept in a cage measuring only 7'x4'. The cage was littered with feces and urine. The bears were brought to the Detroit Zoo, where zoo officials said the adult bear could be dangerous and appeared to be overfed, and the cub, who was too young to be away from his mother, was found in a crate that appeared to lack proper ventilation.

February 7, 1997: Super Sales, a traveling flea market, "decided to terminate its contract with World Animal Studios." The exhibitor had been featuring a 4-year-old black bear, who was poked, prodded, and pulled in order to make him sit upright for the camera, in photo ops with the public.

November 4, 1996: World Animal Studios was cited by the USDA for poor housekeeping.

June 19, 1994: The USDA cited World Animal Studios for failure to have a responsible person available in order that an inspection could be performed.

May 18, 1994: Officials with the Department of Natural Resources in Winnipeg, Manitoba, warned that they would seize World Animal Studios' bear and charge handlers with illegally bringing a wild animal into the province if a scheduled "wrestling" match at the Continental Motor Inn took place.

February 3, 1994: The USDA cited World Animal Studios for failure to have a responsible person available in order that an inspection could be performed.

January 1994: Mazzola called 911 to report that former employees had taken his handgun and fired at him. Mazzola later pleaded guilty to charges of violating an Ohio law that prohibits convicted felons from possessing a firearm.

November 24, 1993: The USDA issued World Animal Studios an official warning for failure to obtain a license prior to engaging in USDA-regulated activities.

November 16, 1993: According to *The Columbus Dispatch*, B.K. Flyers Nite Club decided to cancel World Animal Studios' bear "wrestling" events in response to numerous complaints, which included a strong objection from the mayor. For \$10, customers could "wrestle" the bear and win \$1,000 for pinning him to the ground.

January 23, 1993: *The Courier-Journal* reported that a Jefferson Circuit Court judge in Kentucky decided that World Animals Studios' bear "wrestling" would violate a state law that prohibits an animal from being matched against another animal or a person. The bear had been scheduled to appear at the Toy Tiger Lounge. The judge also commented that the match would probably not be much fun for the bear.

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February 8, 1992: World Animals Studios' "wrestling" bear event was canceled at Gazander's in Chicago, Ill., after city officials determined that it would violate cruelty statutes as well as an ordinance that prohibits bringing animals in to establishments where food is served.

November 6, 1990: World Animal Studios' "wrestling" bear event was canceled at Gazander Restaurant & Lounge in Hickory Hills, Ill., after police warned of arrests for violating local ordinances that prohibit possessing dangerous animals and bringing animals in to establishments where food is served.

January 24, 1990: Sam Mazzola was sentenced to 18 months in prison for trafficking in cocaine.

April 15, 1989: *The Plain Dealer* reported that a six-month investigation led to an indictment against Sam Mazzola and nine others on charges of distributing cocaine and steroids. Authorities stated that some members of the drug ring were trading cocaine for anabolic steroids and others were selling cocaine. Approximately 150 kilograms of cocaine, valued at \$3 million, were distributed in the Cleveland area.

January 21, 1989: The Flash Gordon Bar in Kamms Corners, Ohio, was charged with allowing gambling and improper conduct on the premises in connection with featuring World Animal Studios' "wrestling" bear. The city council deemed the event "objectionable and dangerous."

April 1, 1988: Smokey, a declawed 7-foot bear belonging to Mazzola, escaped from a steel cage in Mazzola's barn and attacked a neighbor. The bear was used for "wrestling." Wildlife officials cited Mazzola for failing to have the proper state permits for Smokey and for a bear cub named Magnum who also lived in the barn. Mazzola was arrested and charged with obstructing official business after quarreling with the state game protector.

April 10, 1987: *The Plain Dealer* reported that a man who was injured during a "wrestling match" with a bear filed a \$300,000 lawsuit against Mazzola. The man received stitches for a bite wound to the arm and stated that promoters were taunting drunken bar patrons to wrestle the bear, claiming it was harmless.

1983: Mazzola was fined after his bear caused \$1,000 of damage to a North Royalton, Ohio, police cruiser.

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