



destea

department of
Economic, Small Business Development,
Tourism and Environmental Affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Media Statement

01 February 2023

Regulation and keeping of large Predators in the Free State

The Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA) is making a plea to persons who wish to keep wild animals, including large predators, in captivity to apply for a captivity permit (annually renewed) and adhere to the permit conditions as well as the Facility Management Plan. This applies to indigenous predators (such as Lions, Leopards, Cheetah, hyenas, etc.) and alien species: Tigers, Pumas, Jaguars, Wolves, etc.

In a bid to reinforce adherence to the regulation of keeping large predators in the Province, DESTEA shall not issue permits for the keeping of any large predator within an urban area. The Free State Environmental Management Inspectors (EMIs) will continue to conduct regular inspections, in close cooperation with the SPCA on large predator facilities, and persons found to be in transgression of the law will be prosecuted and face severe penalties.

Therefore, community members are encouraged to report persons or share information regarding the keeping of any large predator within urban areas, in the Free State, or if it is suspected that animals in other facilities are been kept in cruel conditions or without the necessary permits, or not adhering to the strict enclosure specifications. All information received will remain confidential and anonymous.

Any facility with intentions to keep large predators should be in possession of a Facility Management Plan that will be evaluated by the department for possible approval. The said plan must include, *inter alia*, enclosure construction specifications, safety aspects, welfare aspects, as well as emergency response measures. Only after the approval of the Plan may the construction of the enclosures commence.

All animals kept in captivity will be regulated through the permitting system, which is an online-based system that deals with biodiversity-related permits in the province (www.eservices.gov.za).



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Members of the public who need further information or wish to report an incident may contact:

- **Mr. Dave Hayter** (Acting Director for Biodiversity Management and Conservation) on 0795078820.
- **Mr. Leepile Garekoe** (Deputy Director Compliance and Enforcement) on 0799510200.

The effective implementation of the regulations on keeping large predators in the Free State is a high priority for the Department and the Biodiversity Environmental Management Inspectors are committed to ensuring that there is compliance with the applicable laws and regulations.

END

**Issued by the Department of Economic, Small Business Development,
Tourism, and Environmental Affairs.**

For media inquiries, please contact:

MOJALEFA MPHAPANG, 0727126617

mphapangm@destea.gov.za OR mpmphapang@gmail.com

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