

White lion shot dead near Canadian capital

February 29 2016



An African white lion, like this one pictured on December 23, 2015, escaped from its pen at a private zoo in Wendover, Ontario

An African white lion was shot dead after escaping from its enclosure at a small private zoo near Ottawa over the weekend, the facility's owner announced Monday.

The big male cat had gotten out of its pen Sunday afternoon.

Although the zoo on the outskirts of Wendover, Ontario is closed to the

public over the winter, for safety reasons staff "made the decision to euthanize the [lion](#)," Papanack Park Zoo owner Kerri Bayford said in a statement.

"The risk to the public of trying to sedate the lion was simply too high as the sedative takes too long to kick in and this would have put everyone at risk," Bayford said.

Zoo officials blamed "human error" for the lion's escape. They are conducting an internal investigation into the incident.

Animals from the [zoo](#) have been featured in a popular Canadian children's television show and another African lion had reportedly been a model for production sketches for the main character in the animated film "The Lion King."

New owners took over two years ago after a former staffer accused the facility of keeping animals in substandard conditions.

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