

Tiger seized in Ohio animal crackdown euthanized in Colorado

December 13 2016, by John Seewer

One of six tigers seized nearly two years ago in a crackdown on exotic animal owners in Ohio has been euthanized just months after it was found in poor health and removed from a South Dakota sanctuary.

The tiger seized from a roadside sanctuary near Toledo in 2015 was among a dozen [animals](#) removed from the Spirit of the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary in South Dakota and sent to another sanctuary in Colorado.

Federal inspectors said this fall that the tiger had a bleeding mass in her mouth that affected her ability to eat.

Ohio Department of Agriculture [officials](#) said last month the tiger had been getting better in Colorado, but she had to be euthanized on Sunday because she was suffering from an aggressive form of cancer, said Mark Bruce, a department spokesman.

Ohio took custody of 11 animals from Kenny Hetrick's sanctuary outside Toledo after officials said he ignored warnings about needing a permit for the [exotic animals](#). Inspectors also reported that his cages weren't secure enough to prevent an escape.

His lion named Leo was euthanized a few months after the state seizure because Ohio officials said it was in failing health, and the other animals were moved to sanctuaries in other states.

Ohio officials hauled away the animals under a new state law that came

about after a man in eastern Ohio released dozens of his exotic animals before killing himself in 2011.

Hetrick and his family have been fighting the state in court, arguing that his animals were improperly taken and should be returned.

A county judge in November ruled the state unfairly denied a permit to Hetrick, who first began taking in abused and unwanted animals during the mid-1970s.

The judge initially told [state officials](#) to return the tigers, bear and three other big cats within a week, but he later put a hold on the order while the state appealed.

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