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Stray Dogs Kill Eight Zoo Inhabitants

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INDIANAPOLIS -- A pack of stray dogs found their way onto the grounds of the Indianapolis Zoo Sunday, killing eight Australian birds.

Officials believe the birds were killed about 6 a.m. They aren't sure how the dogs got into the zoo, RTV6's Jennifer Carmack reported.



Exotic birds, such as this black swan, were killed.

Images: Dogs Kill Zoo Birds

The zoo delayed opening by about three hours following the discovery. Staff members double-checked security at the facility and mourned the animals lost.

The dogs attacked the birds in an exhibit that sits alongside the elephant and giraffe exhibit.

The zoo lost all of its emu population. Two black swans and three magpie geese were also killed by the dogs.

"There's no question that they were on a spree," zoo president Mike Crowther said. "The animals in that area were definitely devastated. We're obviously saddened by the loss of these birds. There are a number of staff in tears today."

Sunday morning, zoo employees examined the entirety of their perimeter fence looking for any area that the dogs may have exploited to get into the facility.

"If we find something, my suspicion is we'll find the dogs have damaged the fence in some area in their attempt to get in," Crowther said.

The zoo has several surveillance cameras that helped employees find the dogs while the attack was going on. Animal control and Indianapolis police were called, but the damage had already been done.

Four of the dogs, three lab/chow mixes and a terrier mix, were shot and killed by IPD officers. One dog escaped and another was captured.

The captured dog was a male pit bull. He was taken to a humane shelter.

Zoo officials and animal control officers hope this tragic event can help them send a message to all pet owners.

"Spaying and neutering is the single-most important step to stop pet overpopulation, which is what leads to this kind of problem," Media Wilson, of Indianapolis animal control, said.

Because of his show of aggression, the dog that was caught will likely be euthanized later this week.

The exhibit that held the birds also housed kangaroos. They have been moved to another location for

now.

Officials said if they can find out who owned the dogs involved in the attacks, they plan to file charges against them.

Anyone with information concerning the attacks is asked to contact the zoo or Indianapolis police.

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