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Stray Dogs Attack Indianapolis Zoo Animals

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The Indianapolis Zoo delayed its opening by three hours Sunday after a pack of vicious dogs managed to get into the zoo and kill several animals.

The Australian Plains exhibit at the Indianapolis Zoo is closed indefinitely after a pack of stray dogs did irreparable harm.

"We're obviously very saddened by the loss of these birds; there are a number of staff in tears today," Indianapolis Zoo President Michael Crowther said.

Eight exotic birds including three emus, two black swans and three magpie geese were savagely attacked just after dawn Sunday morning.

"This is just one more reminder of what can happen if pet owners don't act responsibly, don't spay and neuter their animals and don't keep them in a controlled environment," Crowther told News 8.

Zoo officials say the dogs were only on the property for about five minutes, but that's all it took. They say the birds, which had spent their entire lives in captivity and did not know the fight of the wild, didn't stand a chance.

Crowther says if he finds out who owned these dogs he will press charges, "I'm pretty angry about this. Yes, I'm upset and saddened by the loss of our animals but I'm angry that people are irresponsible and acting this way."

"It's fine if you want to keep your animal but it should be on your property, fenced either electronically or a regular fence," zoo patron Tracey Flaherty said.

The Australian Plains exhibit is now quiet for the first time in years. Though the zoo is committed to reopening it, replacing what amounts to all of the birds in the exhibit may take sometime.

"We were really surprised and it's scary for children to think that dogs can hurt animals, especially large animals that you would find in a zoo," zoo patron Carrie Johnson explained.

Zoo officials says there were six dogs involved in the attack. They say they looked like shepherd-chow mixes.

Four of them were shot and killed on the scene. One was injured and then turned over to animal control. The sixth dog got away, but authorities are searching for the animal.



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