



toronto
1974 **ZOO** 2024

361A Old Finch Ave.
Toronto, ON. M1B 5K7
www.torontozoo.com

Tel: 416-392-5900
info@torontozoo.ca

May 22, 2024

Dear Mayor,

I am writing to you today to support the campaign by World Animal Protection and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) calling on Municipalities to support and adopt a resolution (attached) to urge the Ontario government to address the longstanding issue around the lack of regulations related to the public display and keeping of exotic wild animal species and the (financial) burden this causes to municipalities.

As one of Canada’s leading zoos we are committed to animal wellbeing and welfare *and* public health and safety we want to ensure headlines like the ones below, disappear.

“Woman attacked by loose one-armed baboon in Ontario, and the push for laws to change”

Global News, December 13, 2023

“Search for runaway kangaroo in Ontario continues”

CP24, December 2, 2023

“Woman shocked when she sees a lion while walking her dog in Ontario”

CTV News March 17, 2023

“Secretly recorded footage exposes conditions at Ontario's roadside zoos”

CTV W5 November 8, 2022

Kangaroo injured in road incident dies, sparking call for more zoo inspections

Ottawa Citizen May 3, 2021

We need your help to protect not only non-native (exotic) wild animals being held in unsuitable facilities and private ownership, but also your residents. We are encouraging the Ontario government to restrict the possession, breeding, and use of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals and license zoos to support municipalities and guarantee the fair and consistent application of policy for the safety of Ontario’s citizens and the captive wild animal population.

Ontario is the only province that does not licence or control the keeping of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals. Anyone can keep a tiger, lion, venomous snake or other dangerous animals in their home or start a zoo without professional training, adequate financing, or appropriate facilities. Unfortunately, we have seen firsthand some of these very troubling unsafe, unsanitary, and dangerous situations in Ontario with animals being held in private ownership and at roadside (backyard) zoos. These circumstances were not only unsafe for the animals but posed a significant public safety threat as well.

Since 1974, your Toronto Zoo has played a critical role in saving and protecting species locally and globally and we need your support to further protect captive exotic species in Ontario for animal welfare, public health and safety and environmental reasons.





toronto
ZOO
1974 2024

361A Old Finch Ave.
Toronto, ON. M1B 5K7
www.torontozoo.com

Tel: 416-392-5900
info@torontozoo.ca

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary this year, we are proud to support World Animal Protection's campaign. I strongly urge you and your council to support and adopt the resolutions to urge the Ontario government to act. I also want to thank those Municipalities who have already taken steps by passing by-laws restricting exotic animals and/or written to the Government of Ontario supporting provincial regulations.

Thank you in advance for your support and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at ddejong@torontozoo.ca or Jennifer Tracey, Senior Director Strategic Communications & Guest Experience at jtracey@torontozoo.ca

Dolf DeJong
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

6.5.1

Provincial regulations needed to restrict keeping of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals

Moved by Councillor Mulcahy

- Recommendation:

Whereas Ontario has more private non-native (“exotic”) wild animal keepers, roadside zoos, mobile zoos, wildlife exhibits and other captive wildlife operations than any other province; and,

Whereas the Province of Ontario has of yet not developed regulations to prohibit or restrict animal possession, breeding, or use of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals in captivity; and,

Whereas non-native (“exotic”) wild animals can pose very serious human health and safety risks, and attacks causing human injury and death have occurred in the province; and,

Whereas the keeping of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals can cause poor animal welfare and suffering, and poses risks to local environments and wildlife; and,

Whereas owners of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals can move from one community to another even after their operations have been shut down due to animal welfare or public health and safety concerns; and,

Whereas municipalities have struggled, often for months or years, to deal with nonnative (“exotic”) wild animal issues and have experienced substantive regulatory, administrative, enforcement and financial challenges; and,

Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) and the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (MLEOA) have indicated their support for World Animal Protection’s campaign for provincial regulations of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals and roadside zoos in letters to the Ontario Solicitor General and Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry.

Now Therefore, be it Resolved:

1. That the Town of Whitby hereby petitions the provincial government to implement provincial regulations to restrict the

possession, breeding, and use of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals and license zoos in order to guarantee the fair and consistent application of policy throughout Ontario for the safety of Ontario’s citizens and the non-native (“exotic”) wild animal population; and,

2. That this resolution will be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, Ontario Solicitor General, Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry, Region of Durham MPPs, all Durham Region municipalities, AMO, AMCTO, and MLEOA.