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Zoocheck Canada

Zoocheck is opposed to the trade and keeping of wild animals as pets. This position is based on the fact that the wild animal pet trade depletes wildlife populations, disrupts ecosystems, causes widespread animal suffering and poses a significant risk to human health and safety.

Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

CFHS is opposed to the trade or keeping of wild or exotic animals as pets. Evidence shows that this trade causes suffering and death to a large number of animals through capture, transport and by insufficient provision for their satisfactory maintenance.

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

The CVMA is opposed to the capture of wild animals to be kept or sold as pets. A large proportion of wild animals captured for the pet trade are injured or die during capture and transportation to their eventual destinations. Some of these species are considered at risk, of being endangered or becoming extinct. In some cases, capture also involves extensive habitat destruction and the indiscriminate injury/deaths of huge numbers of non-target species (e.g., marine tropical fish and corals).

Those animals that survive capture and transport are often unable to acclimatize fully to captivity, and will not adapt and become good pets. Information on the optimum care and feeding of many wild animal species is not readily available; therefore, the keeping of these animals as pets often results in unnecessary suffering and premature death. For these reasons, along with potential danger and public health concerns with some exotic pets, the CVMA cannot condone the trade in captured wild animals as pets.

American Veterinary Medical Association

The AVMA opposes the keeping of wild carnivores species and those reptiles and amphibians that are considered inherently dangerous to humans and believes that all commercial traffic of these animals should be prohibited.

American Animal Hospital Association

The AAHA discourages people from possessing wild animals as pets. When wild animals, those not specifically bred over many generations to adapt to human confinement, company, and control, are kept in private possession, the outcome is often tragic for the animals and humans. Lack of knowledge about behavioral traits, social needs, and proper nutrition of wild animals leads to inadvertent abuse.

American Zoo and Aquarium Association

The AZA states that wild animals do not make good pets because it is virtually impossible for a wild animal to adapt to household living. Because the natural behavior patterns of wild animals are nearly impossible to alter, it is difficult to predict when dangerous or destructive behaviors will occur.



Animal Protection Institute

API opposes the private possession of exotic animals as "pets." By their very nature exotic animals such as lions, tigers, ocelots, servals, wolves, bears, alligators, venomous snakes, and non-human primates, are wild, potentially dangerous, and do not adjust well to a captive environment. Further, many exotic animals are carriers of such diseases as Herpes B, Salmonellosis, and rabies -- all of which are communicable to humans.

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Position Statements on the Private Possession of Wild Animals

British Columbia, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

The BCSPCA does not support the keeping of wild animals, commonly referred to as “exotic” animals, as pets. Captivity for any wild animal can lead to both psychological and physiological distress, making it unjustifiable to keep wild animals as pets. These animals often die prematurely because their physical care and habitat needs cannot be adequately met.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

The CDC states that, due to the extremely high prevalence of Herpes Virus-B and Salmonellosis, as well as aggressive behavioral characteristics, certain exotic animals such as non-human primates and reptiles make unsuitable pets.

Humane Society of the United States

The HSUS opposes the keeping of exotic and non-domestic wild animals as pets. By nature, wild animals quickly lose the need to be nurtured, by either an animal or a human “mother.” And as the animal grows, they often become larger, stronger, and more independent than their possessor had anticipated.

National Animal Control Association

NACA opposes the keeping, sale, or breeding of wildlife and wildlife hybrids as pets. Inadequate housing, insufficient medical attention, removal of natural defenses, and confinement-related stress are given as evidence for why wild, exotic, and hybrid animals should not be privately possessed.

Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

The Ontario SPCA strongly supports the banning of the sale or importation of any exotic creature or wildlife for use as a pet or display and joins the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies in urging the federal and provincial governments to bring in legislation banning the keeping of wildlife or exotic animals and to ban their importation and sale.

Progressive Animal Welfare Society

PAWS opposes the private possession of wild and exotic animals because of the inherent risks to human health and safety, and the cruelty involved in keeping such ani-

mals in unnatural environments. Wild and exotic animals, even those bred in captivity, still possess innate needs for social, physical, and mental stimulation, which are not met in private homes.

Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

Smithsonian discourages anyone from keeping non-local and/or poisonous animals as pets. Because so little is known about what is needed to ensure the well-being of these animals, they should not be kept in private possession.

Toronto Zoo


The TZ supports the policy of the AZA on keeping wild animals as pets. This policy states in part, “In view of the hazards both to animals and to man, and due to the specialized expertise required to properly care for captive wildlife, the Board of Directors of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association recommends that wild animals not be kept as pets, and further, that the general public keep only domestic animals as pets.”

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

APHIS believes that large wild and exotic cats such as lions, tigers, cougars, and leopards are dangerous animals, and thus should not be kept in private possession. In charge of enforcing the Animal Welfare Act, APHIS cites both human safety concerns and the well-being of the animals as reasons to oppose the private possession of certain exotic animals.

Winnipeg Humane Society

The WHS is opposed to the importation or sale of exotic birds and animals for use as pets and considers that both the federal and provincial governments should introduce legislation prohibiting such importations or sales. Exceptions to this legislation would be those domesticated species being bred for sale to the pet trade.



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