



## Zoocheck News & Views

August 2023

### Welcome to the August 2023 Zoocheck News & Views!

Coming out approximately once each month, this communication features current news, interesting information, upcoming event notices and, perhaps most importantly, details about Zoocheck's wildlife protection work throughout Canada and around the world.

---

**RECEIVING MORE THAN ONE EMAIL:** We're in the process of cleaning and updating our email list. If you're receiving more than one newsletter email, please let us know at [zoocheck@zoocheck.com](mailto:zoocheck@zoocheck.com), so we can remove the duplicate.

---



### Zoocheck win will boost Alberta wild horse protection efforts

**7 year battle to obtain rangeland reports that show wild horses are scapegoats for impacts caused by human activities**

People often say they think that campaigning for animals seems like a fun job, but in truth about 90% of it is gathering and assessing information to support or lobby for good policy decisions for animal protection. A perfect example of this "less glamorous", behind the scenes work can be found in Zoocheck's campaign to protect the wild horses of Alberta.

As our supporters know Zoocheck has a long history with wild horse issues in Alberta including an intensive campaign in the 1990s to try to protect the wild horse population that once existed on Canadian Forces Base Suffield near Medicine Hat.

In more recent years, Zoocheck has worked with Help Alberta Wildies Society (HAWS) and other organizations and experts in Alberta to stop the culling of the remaining wild horse populations in the Rocky Mountain foothills. In 2015 Zoocheck released an extensive expert technical report outlining how the Alberta government had ignored relevant science in developing their wild horse management program. Zoocheck also helped facilitate and participated in a W5 expose on the mismanagement of the wild horses. Since that time...

[Read the Full Story](#)



## Zoocheck funds publication of important paper on wild horse predation by wolves

For many years, a myth has been perpetuated by people, businesses and other special interests that wild horses have few natural predators. While both bears and cougars are known to predate on wild horses, this paper now shows that wolves can be major predators of wild horses as well. Zoocheck is pleased to have funded its publication.

Read Wild horses are an important component of the diet of wolves in the BC Chilcotin by Sadie Parr and Wayne P. McCrory, RPBio at the link below.

*From the paper:*

Studies in various parts of the world have shown that where horses roam freely, they are a dietary item for large carnivores that still survive in those ecosystems. Wolves are flexible and opportunistic predators adapted to feeding on a variety of diverse species including wild horses where they coexist...

[Read the Full Article](#)

---

## WILD HEARTS - Zoocheck's award-winning documentary about the wild horses of Alberta

Watch Wild Hearts, Zoocheck's stunningly beautiful, award-winning documentary short to learn more about the Alberta wild horse issue. **There are no graphic scenes in the video.**

[Watch Video](#)

---



## Looking Back! Alberta's Suffield Wild Horses

Zoocheck first started working on wild horse issues in the 1990s when the Department of National Defence (DND) wanted to remove 1200 wild horses from Canadian Forces Base Suffield near Medicine Hat, Alberta. Like the ranching and resource extraction special interest groups today, the DND claimed the horses shouldn't be there and were damaging the environment but they couldn't produce any evidence that what they were saying was true.

They also ignored the fact that horses evolved in that region of North America, that modern horses are genetically equivalent to the wild horses that existed there previously and that they served a very beneficial ecological function.

Unfortunately, after a protracted and complicated campaign by Zoocheck (in cooperation with several local NGOs) that involved a multitude of meetings, public consultations, reports, briefs, press conferences and a Zoocheck legal challenge in federal court, the DND saw a window of opportunity and quickly captured the entire wild horse population in just a couple of weeks (a process they claimed would take more than a year) using cruel protocols that had been long

abandoned in the US.

The horses had no acclimation period and most didn't adjust to captivity. The result was catastrophic for the horses and it's believed that most of them ended up being slaughtered. Just a couple of years later, elk were introduced to provide the ecological benefits that the horses had provided previously. The free-roaming wild horses had been scapegoated and exterminated for no valid reason.

---



## Zoocheck pushes for better treatment of snakes and other reptiles

**Imagine being in a tiny tank, drawer or container where you can't even stretch out.**

While understanding of the basic biological, behavioural and social needs of wild animals in captivity has grown substantially in recent decades, some animals are still subjected to longstanding, outdated, inhumane husbandry conditions and management, often called folklore husbandry. Many folklore husbandry practices and beliefs are widespread in reptile keeping and exist because they're "tradition" or because they are cheaper and more convenient for animal keepers.

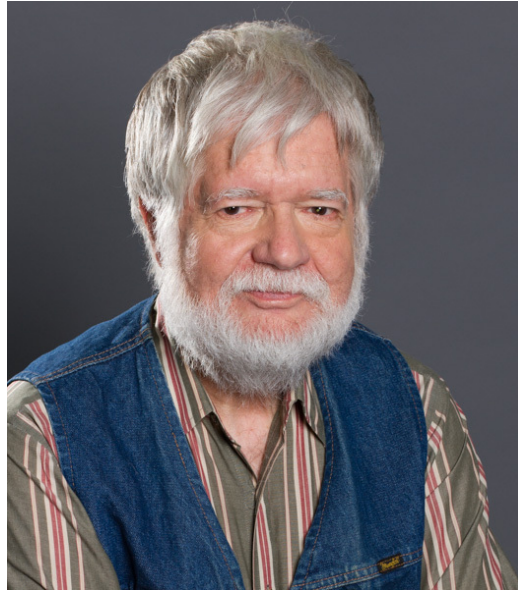
We now know that reptiles and many other so-called lower creatures possess cognitive, emotional and social capabilities that were not recognized or understood in the past. Today, it's established that reptiles are not biological robots that live entirely by instinct, but are complex, thinking, feeling, sentient animals with lives and interests of their own.

Unfortunately, however, reptiles, and particularly snakes, are routinely kept in folklore husbandry situations, one of the more egregious of those folklore practices being their keeping in spaces that deny them an opportunity to achieve normal postural adjustments (such as stretching out for snakes) or to move naturally. Snakes are unique in that they are one of the few, perhaps the only, animal that is routinely not allowed to stretch out, even though there is overwhelming scientific evidence that stretching their bodies is one of their basic biological needs ...



[Read the Full Story](#)

---



## Amazing wildlife art by Barry Kent MacKay

### A portion of the proceeds in support Zoocheck's wildlife protection work!

Barry Kent MacKay, renowned Canadian bird and wildlife artist, writer, naturalist, conservationist and long-time Zoocheck board member has painted birds and other wildlife from around the world. Working in oils, watercolours, and acrylics, Barry's work can be found in popular and scientific books, magazines and displayed in a multitude of public and private settings. He was named Artist of the Year by Bird Studies Canada and has won numerous other awards and honors for his work as an artist, conservationist and writer.

Barry is donating a portion of the proceeds from all art sales to support Zoocheck's wildlife protection work.

If you would like to purchase reproductions and other items, check out the link below to see what's available. If you see original artwork (also at the link below), please email [zoocheck@zoocheck.com](mailto:zoocheck@zoocheck.com) and we'll put you in touch with Barry directly as original works are not sold through the website.

[See Barry's artwork](#)

---

## Support Zoocheck's Animal Advocacy

Help us as we work to improve wildlife protection, and end the abuse, neglect and exploitation of

wild animals in Canada and around the world. We can't do it without you!

[Donate](#)



©2023 Zoocheck | P.O. Box 1389, Gravenhurst, Ontario, P1P 1V5, [zoocheck@zoocheck.com](mailto:zoocheck@zoocheck.com) [www.zoocheck.com](http://www.zoocheck.com)

[Web Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by  
[GoDaddy Email Marketing](#)®