



Welcome to the November 2023 Zoocheck News & Views!

Zoocheck's monthly e-newsletter featuring campaign news, opinion pieces, interesting information, upcoming events and more.

The Jane Goodall Act is moving slowly

Bill S-241 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Inter-provincial Trade Act (great apes, elephants and certain other animals), short titled the Jane Goodall Act, will be moving to Senate of Canada hearings in the near future. There may be several different Senate Committees entertaining delegations from government departments, experts, non-governmental organizations, zoo industry members and others.



Bill S-241 aims to expand protections for a broad range of wild animal species and pays particular attention to elephants and Great Apes (gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans). If passed, the Bill will lead to a phase out of elephants in captivity in Canada and strict controls on Great Apes and many other animals.

Currently in Canada, there are 23 elephants held captive including 17 at African Lion Safari in Ontario, three at the Granby Zoo and two at Parc Safari in Quebec and solitary Lucy at the Edmonton Valley Zoo in Alberta.

There are 30 Great Apes currently in Canada and they reside at the Calgary Zoo, Toronto Zoo, Granby Zoo and the Fauna Foundation chimpanzee sanctuary.

In the past, there were many more elephants in Canada, including solitary youngsters in zoos and significant numbers of elephants in circuses and traveling shows. There were also many Great Apes held in roadside zoos, used in traveling circuses and novelty acts and kept as pets. Thankfully, those days are now largely a thing of the past.

Zoocheck and a number of other leading animal protection groups are pushing for passage of Bill S-241. We strongly support better laws and regulations and the phase out of certain animals in captivity. Public attitudes and values have changed over the years and most Canadians no longer support the keeping of elephants and many other animals simply for public display and entertainment.

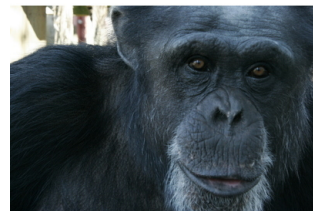


Senate hearings on Bill S-241 are pending but are expected to begin soon.

[Read the Blog & Bill S-241](#)

LATEST NEWS - Government introduces second Bill into process to control elephants and Great Apes in Canada

A second bill, titled Bill S-15, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act was introduced into the Senate on November 21, 2023. Second reading of the Bill is scheduled for November 23rd. If passed, Bill S-15 would, for all intents and purposes, eliminate the new captivity of elephants and Great Apes. This is similar to aspects of Bill S-241 mentioned in previous post.



Bill S-15 and Bill S-241 will move through the Senate process simultaneously.

Despite claims wild horse numbers rapidly increasing, government forced to acknowledge they've been stable for past

5 years

Alberta's entire wild horse population is just over 1,400 individuals, a remarkably small number of animals dispersed, some in isolated populations, over a number of Equine Management Zones (EMZs). The Sundre EMZ, roughly halfway between Calgary and Red Deer and east of the Town of Olds contains the largest number of wild horses, while one EMZ further north contains no wild horses at all.



Throughout the years the Alberta government and resource extraction and ranching special interests have made all kinds of erroneous, unscientific claims about the wild horses in support of their contention that the horses need to be controlled or removed. But the case against wild horses has been shown to be remarkably weak and Zoocheck, the [Help Alberta Wildies Society](#) and others are continuing to methodically dismantle it.

Government and industry information shows wild horses not damaging the environment

Zoocheck has been examining thousands of pages of rangeland reports and other information acquired through Freedom of Information legislation. The Alberta government and special interest groups fought for years to make sure Zoocheck didn't acquire the materials, but persistence paid off. The reports offer almost no evidence that wild horses are damaging the environment at all. It's an unsubstantiated claim that's been repeated again and again, but it's not true.

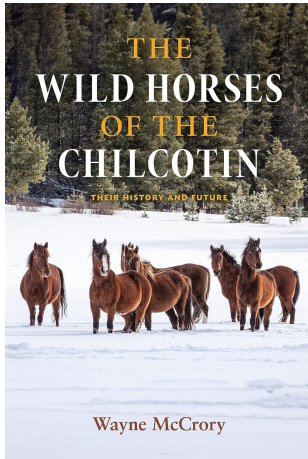
Just recently, the Alberta government released their most recent wild horse management plan and it's based on many of the old, disproven myths and misunderstandings. Zoocheck is currently preparing a response to the plan and will ensure the Albertan public is made aware of how the Alberta government and special interests are ignoring science and scapegoating the wild horses for no good reason.

Government conducts wild horse count resulting in inflated and misleading numbers (and they know it)

This year's annual Sundre EMZ wild horse count conducted by the Alberta government resulted in 969 wild horses being counted, 51% more than their count of 642 in 2022. However, the aerial horse count conducted by the [Help Alberta Wildies Society](#) and co-funded by Zoocheck, revealed that the horse numbers are pretty much the same as the previous year with only a 4% increase in their population. So why the difference in numbers?

CLICK LINK BELOW TO READ MORE

[Read the Full Blog](#)



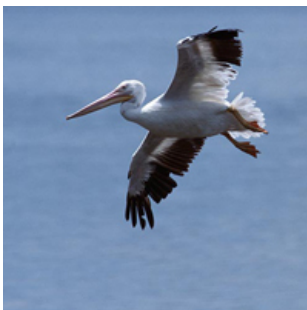
The Wild Horses of the Chilcotin: Their History and Future - Now available for pre-order from most booksellers.

In this compelling book, wildlife biologist Wayne McCrory draws upon two decades of research to make a case for the protection of these wonderful creatures, called qiyus in traditional T̓silhqot'in culture, a resilient part of the area's balanced prey-predator ecosystem. McCrory also chronicles the Chilcotin wild horses' genetic history and significance to the T̓silhqot'in, juxtaposing their efforts to protect qiyus against movements to cull them.

[More About the Book](#)

Upcoming in December

More news about elephants, great apes and the captivity of wild animals in Canada. Stay tuned.



What is Shifting Baseline Syndrome and Why is it Important?

More than 100 years ago John James Audubon observed a single cormorant flock he estimated to number one million birds. In later years, cormorant numbers were decimated by pesticide poisoning and human persecution.

Some people today think there are too many cormorants. They didn't see many cormorants in the 1960s, 70s and 80s (since they were nearly wiped out), so not

having them around was perceived as normal. These people see the return of cormorants as abnormal, when the reality is that the absence of cormorants is what is abnormal.

This perspective about what is normal is called Shifting Baseline Syndrome (SBS) and it has led some people, including wildlife managers, to support the reduction or elimination of cormorants.

It is also a factor in the persecution of innumerable other wildlife species throughout the years including bald eagles, loons, wolves, seals, wild horses and a vast array of other wildlife species.

There will more in future as well. American white pelicans are returning to the Great Lakes in significant numbers, due to a number of factors, including modified conditions that are the result of climate change. While they are protected at present, we fully expect the same stakeholders who want cormorants killed to call for similar actions to control pelicans as their numbers grow. The reality is that nature is dynamic and changing and that's the way it should be. Human activity may be a significant factor in some species' range expansions but that is not the fault of the animals and as long as conditions are favourable they will keep coming.

Learn more about SBS at the links below.

[Watch Are We Forgetting Nature?](#)

[White pelicans on Lake Erie](#)



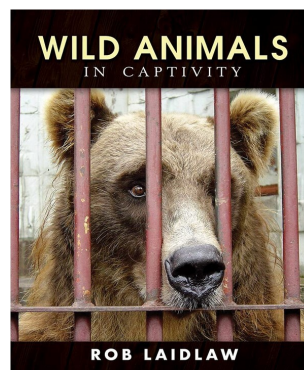
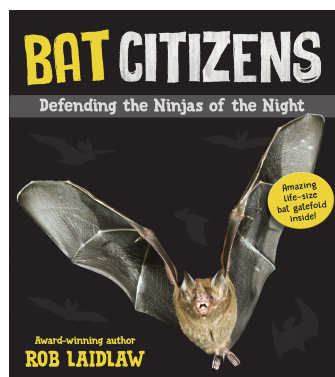
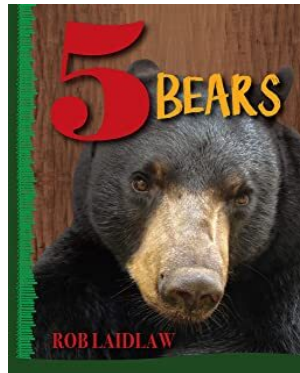
Thinking, feeling, living - Changing the way we think about fish

Fish are far more complex than previously thought. These two lectures will

change the way you think about these amazing animals.

Fish Cognition, Sentience and Welfare by Professor Culum Brown Presented by
Campbell Center for the Study of Animal Welfare, University of Guelph

**What a Fish Knows, The inner Lives of Our Underwater Cousins, by Dr.
Jonathan Balcombe** Presented by Zoocheck



Gift Ideas for the holiday season - Award-winning children's books by Zoocheck director Rob Laidlaw

Available through all regular and online booksellers

Zoocheck Director Rob Laidlaw is the author of ten award-winning books about animal welfare and wildlife protection. Aimed at the 8 - 12 age group, the books provide a great introduction to the lives, challenges and issues experienced by

so many animals. They can be found in public and school libraries across North America and have been published in countries around the world.

A great gift for any child (or adult) interested in animals, animal welfare or animal protection, the books are science and reality based but are not graphic.

[See the books](#)



More gift ideas from wildlife artist Barry Kent MacKay.

Barry Kent MacKay, renowned Canadian wildlife artist, writer, naturalist and conservationist has painted birds and other wildlife from around the world for decades. His works can be found in homes, offices, institutions and a multitude of other venues across the country. A portion of the proceeds of art sales will be donated to Zoocheck's wildlife protection campaigns.

[View the Artwork](#)

Invest in Wildlife Protection by Making a Donation Today!

Join with us as we continue to push forward and win victories for animals held in captivity and free-roaming in the wild!

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