



## **WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER/JANUARY 2023-2024 EDITION OF ZOOCHECK NEWS & VIEWS!**

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

---



### **GREAT START TO 2024!**

**WE'RE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT  
WHITBY TOWN COUNCIL DENIED THE  
NOVA'S ARK PROHIBITED ANIMAL BY-  
LAW EXEMPTION REQUEST**

## **THANK YOU TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, TOWN STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS INITIATIVE**

Nova's Ark, a special needs children's camp in Whitby, Ontario, applied for an exemption to the Town of Whitby's Prohibited and Regulated Animals By-Law #7392-18, so they could keep dozens of prohibited wild and exotic animals they had accumulated in past years.

Nova's Ark keeps a wide variety of animal species, including many prohibited animals that pose a health hazard or are dangerous to humans. They also use the animals, including dangerous species, for interactions with children and youth, both in and out of their cages and enclosures.

The various camp programs at Nova's Ark do not require prohibited wild or exotic animals. Their use is a "preference" of Nova's Ark's operators and not a necessity.

Town of Whitby staff studied the issue and consulted with a variety of stakeholders. Zoocheck has a wealth of experience with municipal campaigns of this kind, so we provided a considerable amount of information, expert

consultants and other resources to help inform the investigative process. In their December report staff recommended that an exemption NOT be provided to Nova's Ark, citing human safety, municipal liability and other reasons for their recommendation.

Zoocheck, other animal welfare organizations, independent experts and local residents supported the staff recommendation and lobbied for the Mayor and Members of Council to do the same at their January 8th Committee of the Whole meeting.

On Sunday January 7th (one day before the Committee meeting), Nova's Ark submitted a letter to the Town of Whitby rescinding their request for an exemption to Whitby's Prohibited & Regulated Animals By-law.

The Nova's Ark letter resulted in a Memorandum to Council, from Legal and Enforcement Services, at the January 8th Committee meeting, with a new recommended motion to consider. It read:

1. That Council receive and accept Correspondence #2024-22 from Nova's Ark withdrawing its request for an exemption to the Prohibited & Regulated Animals Bylaw: and,
2. That Council refers Correspondence #2024-22 and Report LS 12-23 to Staff to manage in accordance with the July 13, 2023 Order to Comply.

The motion was supported by the Committee and staff has indicated it has already received preliminary information from Nova's Ark regarding moving the prohibited animals out.

Thanks go out to Whitby Town Council and Town Staff for making a reasoned, appropriate and positive decision based on facts and not emotion. It is a decision that will protect children and animals, and one that will be noticed by other jurisdictions throughout Ontario and across the country.

---

## LONDON ONTARIO REPTILE COURT CASE COMING SOON

The City of London (Ontario) filed an application with the Superior Court of Ontario last year regarding the presence of prohibited animals in the Reptilia shopping mall zoo that the company opened in April.

Reptilia had sought City of London permission to keep prohibited animals several times, but Council rejected making changes to their bylaw to accommodate the business each time they did. The case is scheduled to be heard on March 18th. Zoocheck has indicated its intent to apply for intervenor status in the case. More news will be forthcoming in future newsletters





## ONTARIO STILL CANADA'S WILD WEST OF EXOTIC ANIMAL TRADE - ONE- ARMED BABOON BITES WOMAN IN NORTHERN ONTARIO SHORTLY AFTER ESCAPED KANGAROO LEADS CAPTORS ON CHASE NEAR TORONTO

### One-armed baboon escapes Ontario home, bites local resident

During the second week of December, a one-armed baboon escaped from a residence in the northern Ontario Town of Latchford, crossed Highway 11 and bit a woman. The incident has prompted the municipality to move toward implementing its own regulations for exotic animals.

Reportedly, during the incident the baboon's owner was calling the animal and was finally able to get the baboon back into the house. The owner has had exotic animals for years and operated a small, now defunct, animal exhibit.

According to Town of Latchford Mayor Sharon Gadoury-East the incident was a "big eye opener" for them to realize there are no provincial laws and that municipalities have to make their own and assume the costs of enforcement. "If we find a baboon or other kinds of prohibited animals, then what? Where do these animals go to be taken care of if it's John Doe in your municipality with a bear in this basement? I think this is crazy. I'm sure I'm not the only place that has exotic animals showing up."

The Mayor's comments are 100% correct. They are not the only one. In fact, Ontario has a very long list of incidents involving exotic animals, including tigers, lions, jaguars, servals, bears, wolves, tapirs, monkeys, cobras and a wide range of other animals escaping, with some being on the lam for months. There have also been numerous animals killed while loose, as well as human injuries and several deaths. Just prior to the Latchford incident, a kangaroo was on the loose near Toronto.

### Escaped kangaroo big news in Ontario

Earlier in December, a kangaroo that escaped from the Oshawa Zoo in Ontario, during a nighttime stopover during the animal's transport to a zoo in Quebec has generated a great deal of public interest and concern.

According to media reports, staff from the Oshawa Zoo and other local citizens were trying to track and capture the kangaroo who had been on the loose for days. Eventually the animal was captured, but not before "punching" a police officer in the face.

Many people expressed surprise that a kangaroo would be on the loose in Ontario but the reality is that kangaroos and a seemingly endless array of other wild and exotic animals are still kept as pets, as well as in animal menageries and unregulated roadside zoos in the province. Ontario remains the only province in Canada that still does not regulate the keeping of exotic wild animals, despite nearly 15 attempts starting back in the early 1980s to control the proliferation of exotic animals and regulate their housing and welfare.

The numbers of some exotic animals, especially the most dangerous species like big cats, being kept as pets has decreased but many have been replaced by equally inappropriate exotic wildlife like kangaroos.

The Province of Ontario desperately needs strict laws that prevent unqualified individuals and businesses from keeping exotic animals. It's important that every concerned resident of Ontario let their own Member of Provincial Parliament know that the exotic animal issue is like a festering sore on Ontario and should be dealt with once and for all.

Click the button below to find your Ontario MPP.

[Find your Ontario MPP](#)

---

## DOORS CLOSE AT ANOTHER PRIVATE ZOO

Late last year Oaklawn Farm Zoo in Nova Scotia closed for good. It is the latest private zoo to permanently close its doors as the Canadian trend away from these kinds of establishments continues. Several decades ago, the number of zoos in the Maritime provinces was substantial, but today they are few in number. That's a trend that has been seen across the country, although less so in Ontario because of the province's lack of regulation of zoos and exotic animal species.



---

## CORMORANTS TO BE RETURNED TO EAST SAND ISLAND, 8 YEARS AFTER CATASTROPHIC CULL

*(Animals 24-7 - December 19, 2023)*



Zoocheck Note: The *Animals 24-7* magazine article below describes how the slaughter of thousands of cormorants in Oregon was all for nothing. Things went from bad to worse, until the architects of the slaughter realized just how ill-informed and misguided their original plans to reduce cormorants were.

The fall Ontario cormorant is also a fool's errand. A hunt that isn't a hunt but a slaughter that doesn't give the birds a chance, with no initial census of cormorant numbers in Ontario, no target population numbers the government wants the birds reduced to, no monitoring and no idea how many birds are being killed. And, most importantly, no legitimate reason for doing it in the first place. Called by some experts the worst wildlife management decision in Canadian history.

Other decisions have also been just as misguided. In the 1990s Zoocheck fought to stop the round-up of 1,200 wild horses on Canadian Forces Base Suffield near Medicine Hat, Alberta. The horses were filling an ecological role on the landscape and were benefitting other wildlife. The Department of National Defence (DND) said the horses were destructive and cruelly removed them all but several years after doing that, DND had to introduce elk to perform the same ecosystem functions the horses had been providing previously. So much of wildlife management in Canada today cherry picks from the science to support biased, outdated views about wild animals and the ecosystems in which they live.

## ANIMALS 24-7 ARTICLE

PORTLAND, Oregon—Eight years after massacring 5,576 double-crested cormorants and smashing 6,181 cormorant nests at East Sand Island, ostensibly to protect 12 million migrating salmon smolt per year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and allied agencies are grudgingly admitting it was all a stupid mistake, harmed the salmon more than it helped, and urgently needs to be undone.

The admission that cormorants need to be restored to East Sand Island, however, is coming not on behalf of the birds, though the Columbia River salmon runs and double-crested cormorants are both federally protected species, but on behalf of the Astoria-Megler Bridge.

The longest continuous steel truss bridge in North America, completed in 1966, the Astoria-Megler Bridge crosses the lower Columbia River from Oregon to Washington state. More than 7,300 vehicles per day traverse the bridge, or as many as 2.7 million per year. [CLICK LINK BELOW FOR MORE]

[Read the Full Article](#)

---

## SUPPORT ZOOCHECK'S EFFECTIVE WILD ANIMAL PROTECTION WORK!

Join with us as we continue to push forward and win victories for animals held in captivity and free-roaming in the wild by making a tax-deductible contribution today!

[Donate](#)



©2024 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](#)®