



## ZOOCHECK NEWS & VIEWS! APRIL / MAY 2024

Our periodic e-newsletter featuring news, events and more!

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### **Is London (Ontario) poised to abruptly change course by allowing prohibited wild animals back into the city after years of saying NO to Reptilia?**

Another court postponement to May 24th as City and Reptilia not yet agreed on terms of "offer to settle" in City initiated legal action

After waiting more than 9 months for the March 18, 2024 trial date in the City of London vs. Reptilia case, the court appearance lasted less than 5 minutes after City lawyers asked for an adjournment and said there was an "offer to settle" between the two parties. No details were provided.

The "offer" was then discussed in a subsequent closed door session of London City Council with no information about the "offer" being made public and no official announcement about how Council voted or what they voted for. While we believe London City Council probably voted in favour of approving the

"offer to settle" and that it involves dismissal of the City's lawsuit, there has still been no official verification from the City.

The intent of the City's legal action against Reptilia was to seek a declaration that the City's own Animal Control By-law PH-3 applies to Reptilia (who has claimed it is exempt from the by-law because it holds a provincial license to keep a small number of native reptiles) and, if so, an order requiring that Reptilia comply with the by-law (presumably by removing the prohibited and restricted animals they brought in, despite not having permission to do so).

The fact that the City of London initiated legal action against Reptilia and that City Councils in 2018, 2022 & 2023 said no to changing city by-laws to accommodate Reptilia makes it remarkable that any kind of "offer to settle" could even be on the table.

To date, we are not aware of Reptilia even submitting legal arguments to the court or to the city, so we are left wondering why the city would be considering an "offer to settle."

Undoing 25 years of effort?

If Council, for some reason, pursues dismissal of the legal action, we believe it would effectively turn back the clock and undo more than 25 years of effort by residents, animal welfare groups and previous London City Councils to make London free of commercial zoos and animal attractions.

London's Animal Control By-law PH-3 was developed to protect public safety, animal welfare and for other reasons. It is there for a purpose. No business of any kind should be allowed to come to town and ignore local by-laws. If they are, then why have those by-laws in the first place?

Read more at link below and send email to London City Councillors.

[Read full blog and send email to City Council](#)

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## **Support Bill S-15 and Better Protection for captive wild animals in Canada**

Second reading Senate hearings on Bill S-15 completed last week

Elephants and great apes (chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, orangutans) are highly sentient animals who have very advanced cognitive, emotional, social and welfare needs. Their lives in the wild are complex and stimulating and can never be meaningfully replicated in captive settings.

Bill S-15, legislation that was introduced late last year into the Senate of Canada, would effectively phase out the captivity of elephants and great apes purely for display, entertainment or profit in Canada! It's a law that would finally recognize that elephants and great apes (and other animals in future) require far greater recognition and protection than they have been given in the past.

While Bill S-15 is a long overdue and necessary law, Zoocheck and other animal welfare organizations and some zoos are also pushing for the inclusion of big cats (lions, tigers, leopards, snow leopards, jaguars and cheetahs) into the current bill's framework and a "Noah Clause" that would allow the government to add more species to this legislation in future as scientific understanding evolves and public attitudes change.

Canada currently has a patchwork of laws and regulations that provide only loose protections for wildlife in captivity. In some jurisdictions in Canada, a wide range of wildlife species can be kept for display, business or personal amusement as pets. The worst jurisdiction by far is Ontario where exotic wildlife in captivity is completely unregulated by the province, but there are many significant deficiencies in laws elsewhere across the country as well.

Please lend your voice to support and strengthen Bill S-15. Ask the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs to pass Bill S-15 and amend it to include big cats and a "Noah clause."

Our colleagues at Humane Society International have an online letter that only

takes a minute to send. See the link below and send your letter ASAP.

[Online Letter to Sign and Send](#)

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### **Anne Innis Dagg - (1933-2024)**

We were saddened to learn of the passing of pioneering zoologist, biologist, author, animal rights activist, feminist and teacher Anne Innis Dagg at the age of 91.

Anne became the first person in the world to study giraffes in the wild when, as a 23 year old woman, she traveled to Africa on her own to begin her studies. She eventually became recognized around the world as the premier giraffe biologist and was featured in the 2018 award-winning documentary film *The Woman Who Loves Giraffes*. Throughout her life she never gave up on her efforts to protect them and the other wild animals she loved.

Anne Innis Dagg was a long-time friend of Zoocheck and many other organizations and we will miss her greatly. Our condolences go out to her family and friends.

[Read more about Anne Innis Dagg](#)

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## An inspiring new book about the life of Pei Feng Su

*I've been a friend of Pei Su for many years, so I know she's a tireless and effective advocate for animals around the world. Her book is fascinating and inspiring and I urge anyone who cares about animals to read it. - Rob Laidlaw, Zoocheck Director*

Life of Pei: the Battle for Compassion is the inspiring story of Pei Su, whose passion for animal welfare and environmental sustainability helped her overcome her harsh upbringing under military rule in Taiwan, pursue a career in animal welfare overseas, and ultimately create a multi-award-winning international humane education charity called ACTAsia .

Life of Pei is a story of resilience, commitment to justice and a fervent belief in the transformative power of compassion. Pei writes candidly of the heartaches, the headaches and the uncertainty of managing an Asia-focused charity on a shoestring budget. She highlights the sacrifices her family made as she spent weeks at a time on the road, meeting sponsors and working around the clock to drive ACTAsia's work in Asia.

Life of Pei: The Battle for Compassion is available for order through all online and traditional booksellers.

# Eco-literature

## Creative Writing as Advocacy

A READING & DISCUSSION  
WITH AUTHOR, ADVOCATE,  
AND VETERINARIAN:  
NADJA LUBIW-HAZARD

WEDNESDAY  
MAY 29, 2024  
7 - 8PM ET ONLINE

Learn more and register:  
[www.zoocheck.com](http://www.zoocheck.com)



Canada Council  
for the Arts  
Conseil des arts  
du Canada

## Eco-literature: Creative Writing as Advocacy

Wednesday May 29th, 7 - 8 pm EST

Join author, advocate and veterinarian Nadja Lubiw-Hazard for a reading, discussion, and Q&A.

Nadja will read from her recently published short story, "Captive", based on Yupi, a polar bear held captive in a tropical zoo in Mexico for over twenty years. She will also read from her upcoming children's chapter book, a tender, humorous and heartwarming story about two children who become advocates for minks when they learn about fur farming.

Nadja will focus on the role of storytelling (including poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction) as a medium for social change, especially as it relates to animals and nature. Our stories can educate readers, build empathy for animals, and help us envision peaceful relationships with our animal kin. Nadja will consider how to choose the story you want to tell, how to hone your writing craft, the role of research, publication avenues, and more.

Prior to turning to full-time writing, Nadja worked as a veterinarian, most recently at the Toronto Humane Society. She is the author of the novel *The Nap-Away Motel*, and the upcoming children's chapter book *TIZZY & ME: Fifteen Ways to Love a Mink*. Nadja has facilitated writing workshops with CAMH (Centre for Addictions & Mental Health), The Writers Collective of Canada, Workman Arts, and more. She has volunteered for several animal

advocacy groups, including Zoocheck and The Jane Goodall Institute.

This event is presented with the financial assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts through The Writers' Union of Canada.

To register, send your name and email to [zoocheck@zoocheck.com](mailto:zoocheck@zoocheck.com) and put Register for Eco-Literature in your email subject line.

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## Support Zoocheck's Wildlife 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](#)

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