



## ZOOCHECK NEWS & VIEWS! JULY - AUGUST 2024

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

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### Zoocheck promotes new municipal resolution urging the Ontario government to finally regulate exotic wildlife in captivity

Zoocheck has recently partnered with World Animal Protection Canada to promote a new municipal resolution, supported by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), urging Ontario to finally regulate exotic wildlife in captivity. Both groups were at the 2024 AMO conference in Ottawa this month.

It's long been known that Ontario is Canada's hotbed for exotic animals in roadside zoos, private menageries, mobile zoos and for the keeping of exotic, wild animals by private individuals as pets. Today Ontario is the only province that does not regulate exotic wild animals in captivity in any way, so it's a free for all and the animals suffer for it.

The lack of exotic animal regulation in Ontario has left the onus for dealing with exotic animals on the municipalities in which the animals are kept. Most municipalities don't have the expertise or capacity to deal with exotic animals, especially the larger, more dangerous animals such as big cats, bears, primates and giant constricting snakes to name just a few. For years, municipalities across the province have petitioned or made other requests to the Ontario government urging it to establish laws and regulations governing exotic animals but, to date, the province has not acted.

At the present time anyone, regardless of knowledge, experience or the finances required to keep animals safely and humanely, can keep exotic wild animals, even dangerous species, in Ontario.

We have recently partnered with World Animal Protection Canada to promote a

new municipal resolution, supported by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), urging Ontario to finally regulate exotic wildlife in captivity.

More than 25 municipalities have already endorsed the resolution and the goal is to add at least 75 more municipalities to the list, a number that will be politically significant to the Ontario government. Reaching that goal is something you can help with.

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP US REACH 100 SIGNATORIES

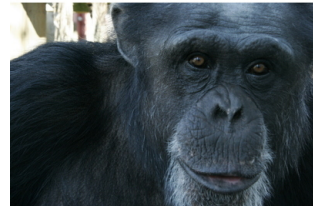
1. Familiarize yourself with the resolution and the background information in the briefing note. [Links to both are available here.](#)
2. Contact your municipal councillor or Mayor and request a meeting (phone or Zoom is good, but in-person has the most impact) to discuss the municipal resolution aimed at convincing the Ontario government to properly regulate the keeping of exotic wildlife, including dangerous species.
3. Meet with your municipal representative, share some key points, and give them a copy of the proposed resolution. Ask them to take steps to have the resolution endorsed by your municipality.

ENDORISING THE RESOLUTION IS AN EASY ASK FOR COUNCILS, SO PLEASE DO YOUR PART TO HELP REACH THE 100 MUNICIPALITY ENDORSEMENT GOAL.

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## Update: Bill S-15 moves on from Senate Committee!

We are very pleased that the report of the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, regarding *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 tabled in the Senate chamber on June 20th.



If passed, Bill S-15 will end the suffering and exploitation of elephants and great apes used for display and entertainment purposes. It would ban the new captivity of these animals and provide a path forward for protecting other animals as well.

The Committee report supports Bill S-15 and includes a number of amendments that will substantially strengthen it, including the addition of a Noah Clause that will allow additional animals to be considered for protection in the future. The Committee also recommends that non-native big cats be addressed next as a priority issue should Bill S-15 become law.

The full Senate will deliberate and vote on the report in September. More news

will be forthcoming on Bill S-15 at that time.

## Read the Senate Committee report



### Public left in the dark about London agreement with Reptilia

### Will past progress for exotic animals be erased?

Reptilia is a small commercial reptile zoo business with two locations in the Greater Toronto Area. Since 2017, Reptilia has been working to set up a shopping mall zoo in London and in April 2023 they succeeded in opening in the city, but they did so without securing an exemption from London's animal control bylaw that would allow them to keep the prohibited and restricted exotic animals they brought in.

On three previous occasions, in 2018, 2022 and 2023, London City Council chose not to make any changes to their animal control or business licensing bylaws to accommodate the Reptilia business, but Reptilia chose to open with animals not allowed in the city regardless.

Since Reptilia was in violation of the animal control bylaw, in June 2023 the City of London launched a legal action against them. 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 erroneously 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 London's by-law.

Eventually, a trial date of March 18 2024 was set but there was no trial when that date came, because the City lawyers asked the presiding judge for an adjournment saying there was an "offer to settle" between the two parties. No details were provided. The proceedings were adjourned until April 26th. The whole thing lasted less than 5 minutes.

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. On April 26th, the City lawyer confirmed to the court that the City was accepting the offer.

This seemed to be a complete reversal of the City position to not allow zoos and animal attractions and it occurred with no public consultation, public

deliberations and no explanation. The zoo issue in London has been ongoing since the mid-1990s and the City has proactively acted over the years to safeguard exotic animals and reduce their presence in the City. Hundreds of citizens, numerous organizations and multiple London City Councils have worked over the years to bring London to this point, but their views seem to have been ignored.

At the rescheduled April 26th court date the parties requested another adjournment until May 24th as they had not yet worked out the terms of the agreement. On May 24th they adjourned until July 12th. On July 12th they adjourned again until August 9th. And then on August 9th they adjourned to September 6th.

During all this time, not a wit of information has been provided to the public. The Reptilia London issue has been ongoing since 2017 and has attracted a great deal of public interest. A lot of Londoners want to know what's going on.

For the past five months, the offer to settle has been discussed in secret behind closed doors with no public scrutiny, even though it may result in years of progress being erased. We believe this is not in the public interest or the interest of the animals. The City of London should be defending its own bylaw instead of capitulating to the wishes of a small business that ignored Council decisions.

More news forthcoming after the September 6th court date. In the meantime, send a short email to previously supportive London City Council members urging them not to loosen up Animal Control By-law PH-3. See link below.

[Email London City Council](#)



**Zoocheck is pleased to be supporting the WeHowl's**

## heARTwork for wolves mural project

As part of the larger WeHowl public awareness effort aimed at increasing support for wild wolves in British Columbia and elsewhere, the murals are done in association with the Vancouver Mural Festival. The two murals are complete and can be viewed by members of the public.

More information about this project can be found at [WeHowl murals](#).

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### A myopic view of success: Killing wolves is not the answer

By Sadie Parr  
June 28, 2024, National Observer  
[www.nationalobserver.com](http://www.nationalobserver.com)



A recent publication in the journal *Ecological Applications* by 34 authors provides a myopic view of success in the recovery efforts of an endangered species, and what defines “success.” Briefly, it describes that caribou numbers in western Canada are finally beginning to increase due to the slaying of thousands of wolves and suggests that this action must continue. There is grave danger in the “glossing over” of important ethical concerns that verges on callousness, in addition to a blatant disregard for ecological considerations that go unmentioned or are perhaps wilfully ignored

I am not contesting the scientific rigour of the paper in question, but I am stating that critical moral considerations, as well as ecological concerns, have been disregarded, and that these are not inconsequential.

The article, and the media coverage it has gained, have serious “sins of omission” that should not be neglected by society at large. Specifically, I am referring to the inference of the “success” of caribou recovery due to the en masse killing of highly sentient beings, most of which are wolves. While the authors do mention that the practice of killing wolves is controversial and somewhat uncomfortable, they leave it at that and move on to describe the necessity to kill thousands more for decades to buy time for caribou habitat to recover.

There is no mention that caribou habitat continues to be disturbed, destroyed and impoverished by ongoing industry and recreation. Little mind is paid to the changing climate that involves fires, floods, snow levels, and changes in forest composition (plant and animal) or the fact that we are on a fast track to becoming a vastly different planet. We can not, and will not, be returning to the previous state of the world in which caribou evolved, especially if we continue to degrade what remains. Critically, there is no thought given to how killing

wolves impacts other species or ecological processes they influence. Read the full article at the link below.

[Read the full article](#)

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Unique Insights of the Past and Present

## **Shadows of wild selves and other forms of animal abuse: Guest post by Shubhobroto Ghosh**

Published June 5, 2024 - <https://kateonconservation.com>

This guest blog post (for [kateonconservation.com](https://kateonconservation.com)) was written by Shubhobroto Ghosh, author of 'Dreaming In Calcutta and Channel Islands'. Shubhobroto is the former coordinator of the Indian Zoo Inquiry project and has attended the Principles and Practice Training course at Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Shubhobroto completed his Masters thesis on British zoos at the University of Westminster and has worked at the Wildlife Trust of India, TRAFFIC India and is currently Wildlife Campaign Manager at World Animal Protection.

On the occasion of World Environment Day, 2024, reading the current discourse on wildlife conservation and environmental protection, makes me realise that captive animals have been given short shrift in most cases. Patronisingly considered in many cases, taken for granted in others, wilfully misrepresented by a great many institutions that keep them and ignored in vast cases, for me, they remain the unsung representatives of creatures who have lost their essential characteristic of wildness. Since I like to treat animals as individuals, some memories that cross my mind right now will illustrate how the plight of one life can reveal many aspects of animal behaviour, human animal relationships and depict ideas on animal welfare and conservation. Click link below to read more.

[Read the full blog](#)

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"This early chapter book is delightful: Georgia is an engaging young protagonist with a huge heart, a curious mind, and an impulsive streak that reminded me a little of the wonderful Ramona Quimby. An engaging and inspiring story for young readers."

—Robin Stevenson, award-winning author for kids and teens

# TIZZY

Fifteen Ways  
to Love  
a Mink

&  
ME



Novel by N.M.L. Hazard  
Illustrations by Alice Priestley

**Zoocheck's Nadja Lubiw-Hazard has a new children's book *Tizzy & Me, Fifteen Ways to Love a Mink* Coming Out Soon ---- Now Available for Pre-Order!**

A fabulous pro-animal story for children aged 7 -9 years.

On the first snowy day of school, seven—year—old Georgia is upset to discover that her best friend Winona is wearing a coat made with real fur. What comes next is a battle, and Georgia — with the comforting presence of her dog, Tizzy — must find a way to make things right with her best friend. As the two girls learn more about the animals that live in fur farms, they realize they must stand up for them — but how?

[Pre-Order Tizzy & Me](#)



## Eco-Literature Webinar Online

If you're an aspiring writer and missed Eco-literature, Creative Writing as Advocacy with author, advocate and veterinarian Nadja Lubiw Hazard, the event is now available online at the link below.

[Watch Eco-literature](#)

## 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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