

From: Ross, Brent (SOLGEN)
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 3:39 PM
To: Derrick, Chad
Subject: [EXT]RE: Roadside Zoos story

Hi Chad,

Here you go, attributable to me.

Please confirm under what circumstances or how often PAWS conducts inspections of unaccredited (or accredited) zoos. For instance, do these inspections only occur after a complaint is made by the public, or do they occur at every zoo-type facility on an annual or bi-annual basis?

Municipalities are responsible for creating by-laws related to owning exotic animals in their jurisdictions. Animal Welfare Services provides effective and efficient enforcement of the PAWS Act to strengthen animal welfare and build public trust across the province.

Both reactive (complaints-based) and proactive inspections are conducted by our provincially appointed inspectors and follow well-defined processes. If charges are laid, the matter may proceed to court.

Anyone who has concerns about the welfare of an exotic animal in captivity, such as the welfare of an animal at a zoo, can call the Ontario Animal Protection Call Centre at 1-833-9ANIMAL (1-833-926-4625).

**Is there a forthcoming plan for Ontario to introduce a licensing or regulatory system for zoos (accredited and unaccredited)?
Are there any new forthcoming animal welfare or public safety standards being introduced in Ontario for zoos?**

The PAWS Act sets out general basic standards of care that apply to animals that are subject to the Act, which includes standards related to providing adequate and appropriate food, water, medical attention, and care necessary for the animal's general welfare. Specific standards of care are also set out under [Ontario Regulation 444/19: Standards of Care and Administrative Requirements](#) in relation to captive wildlife, enclosures for captive wildlife, captive primates and marine mammals.

Any future prohibitions and restrictions on possessing or breeding of certain animals would be developed in consultation with stakeholders as appropriate. The ministry would also provide an opportunity for public feedback on any proposed regulations by posting them on Ontario's Regulatory Registry.

I understand that a formal complaint regarding 11 zoos was recently submitted by World Animal Protection to the PAWS Inspectorate. Can you tell me if any of

these complaints were investigated, if any violations were deemed to have occurred, any charges laid or convictions rendered?

Animal Welfare Services has received the complaints raised in this report and is investigating. Given the ongoing investigations and inspections, it would be inappropriate to provide further detail.

Can you confirm if there have been any PAWS or OSPCA Act violations, charges or convictions at the following (now closed down) zoos: Ringtail Ranch and Rescue in Wainfleet, Ontario; Highland Big Cat Adventures in Maynooth, Ontario; and Roaring Cat Retreat in Grand Bend, Ontario?

The ministry can confirm that Animal Welfare Services has laid charges related to the operation of Highland Big Cat Adventures.

Mark and Tammy Drysdale of Hasting Highlands have been charged by Animal Welfare Services with one count each for permitting distress under the PAWS Act and four counts each for failing to comply with the standards of care under Regulation 444/19 of the PAWS Act. For further information, we recommend you contact the court clerk at Bancroft Court Office.

Given this matter is before the court, we cannot provide further comment.

How many charges and convictions have there been in relation to unaccredited zoos since the PAWS Act came into effect?

Ontario's PAWS Act is one of the toughest provincial animal welfare legislations in Canada. Since the Act was passed, there have been 47,500 inspections or investigations provincewide; over 6,000 orders and over 500 charges being laid. A total of 3,200 animals have been removed.

The ministry does not track the number of charges related specifically to roadside zoos. Any charges that proceed to court are generally a matter of public record and can be requested via the court clerk of jurisdiction.

Brent Ross
Spokesperson
Ministry of the Solicitor General