

Dealing with Other Animals as Pets: Excerpts from PIJAC Canada's Exotic Animal Policy

Introduction

The fate of exotic animals in captivity has been the subject of intense debate for a long time. This issue is now being addressed at the municipal level across the country. Our suggested approach reflects the different changes experienced in areas such as animal husbandry, captive breeding, veterinary care, public health and safety, and consumer demand. We believe our approach provides municipalities with the most efficient and economical approach to animal control, when it comes to this specific issue.

A prohibited versus a permitted species list?

PIJAC Canada favors a prohibited species list. Most of the species available through pet retailers enjoy proven track records as pets and are available through the efforts of established local captive breeding programs. Prohibited species lists are much shorter and easier to enforce by your local by-law officers. These prohibited lists are the preferred format by most Provincial and Federal agencies.

Threats to Public Health and Public Safety

Dangerous species and their potential threat to public health and safety are well documented. Exotic pets presently available to consumers **do not** pose a greater risk to the safety and health of their owner. Certainly not more than the threats already associated with the keeping of a dog or cat. We feel the prohibited species list submitted to you by PIJAC Canada takes into account all the concerns found under this heading.

A growing interest in exotic pets has led to a steady growth in the amount of information pertinent to their veterinary care, nutrition and proper housing requirements. Exotic pet owners are better informed and more responsible than ever before, as evidenced by the very low amount of exotic pets ending up in local pounds and shelters. Realizing the importance of education in promoting responsible pet ownership, pet industry players and consumers have access through PIJAC Canada, to a variety of care sheets, training manuals and certification programs. Owners of exotic pets enjoy access to a large amount of information through specialized clubs and societies, specialty magazines and scientific publications. Exotic animal veterinarians, hobby groups and associations are well structured, catering not only to the educational and technical needs of their colleagues, but to the ones of the pet owners themselves.

Our organization encourages and promotes the sale of captive-bred animals. It is common knowledge that through this approach, pet retailers are able to provide their customers with animals that are healthier, easier to handle and a lot friendlier towards their prospective owners. This benefits everybody: the animal, the pet owner, the retailer and the by-law officers. Today, pet retailers have access to an increasing variety of captive-bred animals for their clients. Most pet birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians available to pet retailers come from captive breeding facilities.

For further information on [PIJAC Canada](http://PIJACCanada.com) and its Exotic Animal Policy, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Louis McCann, B.Sc., Executive Director, at (800) 667-7452 or executiveoffice@pijaccanada.com.

SUGGESTED LIST OF PROHIBITED SPECIES

All artiodactylous ungulates, except domestic goats, sheep, pigs and cattle
All canidae, except the domestic dog
All crocodylians (such as alligators and crocodiles)
All edentates (such as anteaters, sloths and armadillos)
All elephantidae (elephants)
All Erinacidae (except the African pigmy hedgehog)
All felidae, except the domestic cat All hyaenidae (hyenas)
All marsupials (except sugar gliders)
All mustelidae (such as skunks, otters and weasels) except the domestic ferret
All non-human primates (such as gorillas and monkeys)
All pinnipeds (such as seals, fur seals and walruses)
All perissodactylous ungulates, except the domestic horse and ass
All procyonidae (such as raccoons, coatis and cacomistles)
All pteropodidae (bats)
All raptors, diurnal and nocturnal (such as eagles, hawks and owls)
All ratites (such as ostriches, rheas and cassowaries)
All ursidae (bears)
All venomous reptiles
All viverridae (such as mongooses, civets and genets)

Examples of animals of a particular prohibited group are given in parentheses. They are examples only and shall not be construed as limiting the generality of the group.

This list is subject to review according to the accepted criteria.

Revised June 1997