

# Report of the Exotic Animal Task Force

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Presented to the Minister of Natural Resources  
The Honourable Denis Landry



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# Foreword

On August 5, 2013, Noah and Connor Barthe, aged 4 and 6 years old, were killed by an African rock python in an apartment located above a pet store in Campbellton, New Brunswick. This tragic event drew international attention and called into question the laws that govern exotic pet possession in the Province.

On December 5, 2013, the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Dalhousie-Restigouche East, Mr. Donald Arseneault, brought a motion to the floor of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick “urging the Alward government to conduct a complete review of the *Fish and Wildlife Act* and other relevant legislation related to exotic animals and bring forward a detailed action plan to the Legislature including any recommended changes to the legislative and regulatory framework” (the text of the resolution can be found in Appendix D)

This motion was resolved in the affirmative and the Exotic Animal Task Force was struck with the above noted mandate. The report contained herein is in response to the ascribed mandate and is not intended as a commentary or investigative account of the circumstances surrounding the tragic deaths of the Barthe brothers.

## Dedication

This report is dedicated to the memory of Noah and Connor Barthe.

# 1. Executive Summary

The regulatory framework regarding ownership of exotic animals varies from one provincial or territorial jurisdiction to the next. The Task Force examined the management systems of exotic animals in all ten provinces and three territories as well as frameworks in other countries to arrive at what would be the best recommendations for the Province of New Brunswick as it pertains to public health and safety and animal welfare.

There are varying perspectives on how exotic animals should be regulated and managed within the Province of New Brunswick. In order to arrive at the recommendations contained in this report we talked to a variety of stakeholders from those in the pet retail trade, regulatory agencies, captive animal professionals, exotic animal enthusiasts and non-governmental organizations.

The Task Force felt that the system for the management of exotic animals that is currently in place in New Brunswick is basically sound. Regulating who can possess an exotic animal and what exotic animals can be possessed without permit is an effective way to minimize the health and safety risks that they may pose. Despite this, significant gaps exist in how the system in New Brunswick is implemented, accordingly the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

## I. Interagency Coordination

- 1- An Implementation Committee be formed to develop a process/protocol clarifying and communicating the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in the care and control of exotic species in the Province and to guide the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## II. Inspection and Enforcement Framework

- 2- Government coordinate and participate in an immediate Province-wide round of inspections of all sites involved in public display, retail activities, research and scientific study, and commercial farming, to include permit review, species identification, general education and enforcement of non-compliance. The Task Force strongly feels that this would be an important and readily achievable first step towards greater oversight of exotic animals in the Province;
- 3- Inspection standards containing frequency and inspection criteria for all categories of exotic animal stakeholders be formally established and included in enforcement staff and manager work plans;
- 4- Government ensure adequate resources are allocated to support species identification and enforcement specific training relevant to exotic animal control and safe handling practices;
- 5- Government develop a strategy to address animals that are seized or surrendered resultant from enforcement and public education initiatives. Options to consider include: transfer to an accredited facility; and humane euthanasia;
- 6- Members of the New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association (NBVMA) be made aware of the exempted list of exotic animals permissible in New Brunswick as per the *Fish and Wildlife Act* and that the Association consider amending its by-laws to ensure that when members become aware of any exotic animal not on the exempted list, that it must be reported immediately to the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources;
- 7- All members of the NBVMA must have the exempted list of exotic animals permissible in New Brunswick as per the New Brunswick *Fish and Wildlife Act* near at hand for referral; and

- 8- Improved enforcement of the current mechanisms to ensure that any animals entering the Province have required permits.

### III. Education and Communication

- 9- Government develop a comprehensive public education initiative that addresses the laws, associated dangers, species that are legal to own, and challenges of owning an exotic species; and
- 10- Government provide support to those private owners that have questions about the exotic species in their possession and what their options are should a species not be legally permitted to be in New Brunswick.

### IV. Documentation of policies and procedures

- 11- Government categorize and create oversight requirements for all groups in possession of exotic animals participating in the following activities: public display; retail activities; research and scientific study; commercial farming; and private ownership (a recommended approach is presented in Appendix A), and that oversight standards be identified, be set in place through official policy, regulation or legislation for each of these stakeholder groups similar to the policy and procedures adopted in British Columbia; and
- 12- Quarantine requirements within all stakeholder groups be reviewed, amended as necessary and communicated by Government to stakeholder groups and regulatory/enforcement agencies.

### V. Legislation

- 13- Government establish an Advisory Committee with a mandate including, but not limited to, periodic review of the exempted list found in regulation under the *Fish and Wildlife Act*. This Advisory Committee should be formed within six months and be comprised of six to seven individuals. The committee should meet as necessary to review the exempted list and make recommendations to Government;
- 14- The Advisory Committee would develop and document criteria for adding/removing animals from the exempted list;
- 15- The Task Force specifically recommends that the Advisory Committee review turtles and the nine species of boa constrictors that are on the list;
- 16- The Advisory Committee should be tasked with developing a strategy to deal with issues that will arise in the event that animals are removed from the exempted list;
- 17- Recommended membership on the Exotic Animal Advisory Committee includes: a person with reptile expertise; a person with captive animal management expertise; a representative from the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries; a representative from the Department of Natural Resources; a representative from the Department of Health; a veterinarian, preferably one with exotic animal expertise; and a representative from the NB SPCA;
- 18- The mandate of the Exotic Animal Advisory Committee, the membership, and the criteria for examination of the exempted list should be specified in regulation.
- 19- Permits for the possession of exotic animals not on the exempted list contained in the *Exotic Wildlife Regulation* continue to be issued only to those possessing CAZA or equivalent accreditation;
- 20- Government formalize in regulation specific requirements needed in order to obtain an exotic animal permit;

- 21- The fine structure for contravention of legislation governing exotic animals be reviewed and amended as needed;
- 22- Law enforcement personnel be able to exercise the option of issuing a ticket on the spot in response to incidents of offences related to exotic animals;
- 23- It be clearly stated on a pet establishment licence that the possession, distribution, and/or sale of any exotic species not on the “exempted list” found in *Exotic Wildlife Regulation* is prohibited unless a permit is received from the Department of Natural Resources; and that a copy of the exempted list must be kept in every retail outlet and be produced upon request by an enforcement official;
- 24- Licensing conditions be added to all licences for pet retailers wishing to possess, distribute and/or sell exotic species found on the “exempted list” to include staff training and a requirement to supply buyer education materials;
- 25- Public safety components regarding the keeping of animals be specified in provincial legislation and not in municipal by-laws unless a municipality desired more restrictive controls on the keeping of animals to further enhance public safety;
- 26- That Government ensures the *Public Health Act* and its Regulations reduce health hazards related to the possession of exotic animals, this would include the ability for the Act to prescribe standards for the safe possession, display, and handling of exotic animals
- 27- Government consider legislating the control of exotic invertebrates;
- 28- The reporting structure and reporting requirements for zoonotic diseases be reviewed (i.e., *Public Health Act*, and the *Reporting and Diseases Regulation*). This would include a reporting requirement for veterinarians for any suspected zoonotic disease; and
- 29- The diseases associated with exotic animals be included in the periodic review of communicable diseases required to be reported. This review should include representation the New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association.



## 2. Introduction and Mandate

The Exotic Animal Task Force was established in August, 2014 by then-Minister of Natural Resources, the Hon. Paul Robichaud, with the following mandate:

- i- to review current legislation, regulations, programs and policies that pertain to the import, export, possession and trade of exotic animals in New Brunswick;
- ii- identify gaps and weaknesses that pertain to public safety and human health;
- iii- make specific recommendations as to how the management and control of exotic animals can be modified to address gaps related to public safety, human health and animal welfare; and
- iv- to produce a report with recommendations.

In addition to the above mandate, the Task Force felt it was essential to include a component of animal welfare in its deliberations as not referencing animal welfare demonstrates a lack of understanding of the public health and safety issue related to where and how animals are kept.

From August 2014 to May 2015, the Task Force met regularly, conducted research, and compiled information from meetings with pet industry stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, and public/government agencies.

### I. History of Legislation and Approach in NB Regarding Exotic Animals

New Brunswick has been very proactive in regards to legislation addressing exotic animals, having developed specific *Fish and Wildlife Act* amendments and regulations as far back as 1987. This legislation prohibits the importation, exportation, possession, trade and release of any exotic wildlife without a permit from the Minister of Natural Resources. The legislation also exempts a list of approximately 700 species of exotic wildlife from the requirement to have a permit (referred to in this report as the “exempted list”). These 700 species are generally common in the pet trade and are considered to pose minimal threat to public health and safety, and are also considered to be of minimal risk to native wildlife and ecosystems should they escape into the wild.

In 2010, the *Pet Establishments Regulation* under the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* came into force creating a licensing requirement for pet stores, kennels and animal shelters. This Regulation establishes standards and allows for inspections of these facilities. The program is overseen by the New Brunswick SPCA.

The *Municipalities Act* provides broad by-law making authority regarding the keeping of animals, however few municipalities have incorporated any provisions surrounding the keeping of exotic pets.

The *Public Health Act* contains authorities for public health protection. The Act defines a “health hazard” as “a substance, thing or plant or animal other than man...” “... that has or is likely to have an adverse effect on the health of a person”. The Act creates a duty to report health hazards and an obligation on the part of a medical officer of health or public health inspector to investigate. A medical officer of health or public health inspector may make an order in respect of a health hazard. Also, where a health hazard exists, a medical officer of health or a public health officer “may seize or cause the seizure of ...[an] animal.” While these authorities exist, it is the understanding of the Task Force that they have not been used in instances involving exotic animals.

There is also an agreement between the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries which allows for the keeping of some exotic species in captivity for commercial agricultural purposes such as the sale/trade of breeding specimens, off-spring and by-products such as meat.

Despite the proactive legislation currently in place, the Exotic Animal Task Force has found gaps in the implementation of the overall exotic animal program in New Brunswick. These gaps are addressed in this report through recommendations captured under the following categories: I) interagency coordination; II) inspection and enforcement framework; III) education and communication; IV) documentation of policies and procedures; and V) legislation.

## II. Perspectives on Exotic Animals

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) opposes keeping any native or exotic wild animal species, or their hybrids as pets. Doing so may compromise animal welfare, pose unnecessary risks to human and other companion animal health and safety, and may adversely impact the ecosystem.

The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) is opposed to the trade and keeping of wild or exotic animals as pets. Therefore, the CFHS supports all steps, including the passage of progressive legislation, which affords a greater degree of protection for wild animals and their habitats, and which reduces the infliction of pain and suffering upon them.

The position of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) is that exotic animals have complex behavioural, social, nutritional and psychological needs that require expert care to ensure their welfare as well as the health and safety of their keepers. Moreover, many non-indigenous species can, if inadvertently introduced to a foreign ecosystem, disrupt ecological balance and create long-term habitat damage.

The American Zoo Association (AZA) notes that “wild animals have complex behavioral, social, nutritional and psychological needs. Most people cannot meet the needs of wild animals kept as pets.”

The Emergent Disease Foundation states that “ownership of exotic pets involves special risks to the health of animal keepers and to the health of those around them.”

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council notes that “most species available through pet retailers enjoy proven track records as pets, [with] more and more of these species, ...becoming available through the efforts of established captive breeding facilities.”

Despite these varying perspectives, the reality exists that exotic animals are kept in captivity in a variety of circumstance as pets, in agriculture and in zoos. The keeping of exotic animals can play a role in education and as a portal to conservation awareness about animals.

One of the most challenging areas of enforcement is the keeping of exotic animals that are in private hands. In discussions with the Province of British Columbia and in reviewing the framework that is in place in such countries as Belgium and Norway we found that education offered the most success in reducing illegal private ownership of exotic animals.

### III. Task Force Members

The Task Force was chaired by Bruce Dougan, Manager of the Magnetic Hill Zoo since 1989, a former president of Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums and an advisor to its board of directors, the co-founder of the volunteer fundraising group, Friends of the Magnetic Hill Zoo. Other members of the task force included:

- Hilary Howes, Executive Director of the New Brunswick SPCA;
- Dr. Nelson Poirier, retired Veterinarian from Moncton with 35 years' experience;
- Mike Sullivan, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch, NB Department of Natural Resources;
- Kenneth Bryenton, Policy Advisor, NB Department of Environment and Local Government; and
- M.W. (Mike) Johnston, Executive Director of Inspection and Enforcement, NB Department of Public Safety

The invaluable support of Kevin Craig, Marc Belliveau, and Tara Holland of the NB Department of Natural Resources was very much appreciated.

### IV. Consultations

Consultation in the form of presentations, written submissions and telephone conferencing was completed with several associations, government organizations, and non-governmental organizations including:

- Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA)
- Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada
- Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada (PIJAC Canada)
- Enforcement Manager, New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources
- British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
- New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
- Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, New Brunswick Department of Health
- Zoocheck Canada

Groups contacted:

- NB First Nations Communities
- NB Municipal Associations
- NB Veterinary Medical Association
- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Canadian Council on Animal Care
- Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
- R.C.M.P.
- Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
- British Columbia SPCA

Additionally, several other groups and individuals with an interest in exotic animals contacted the Task Force. Issues were raised ranging from concerns about the restriction of ownership of some reptiles to animals that should be added to the exempted list of animals in Regulation under the New Brunswick *Fish and Wildlife Act*.

# 3. Recommendations

Following a review of the current situation in New Brunswick, a review of other jurisdictions, and hearing from numerous interested parties and agencies, the Task Force has developed a set of recommendations grouped under the broader themes of:

- i- Interagency coordination;
- ii- Inspection and enforcement framework;
- iii- Education and communication;
- iv- Documentation of policies and procedures; and
- v- Legislation

## I. Interagency Coordination

There are many agencies that are involved in the oversight and care of exotic animals in captive situations. It is crucial that effective communication and coordination occur amongst the appropriate agencies. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 1- An Implementation Committee be formed to develop a process/protocol clarifying and communicating the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in the care and control of exotic species in the Province and to guide the implementation of the recommendations in this report. This Implementation Committee would include representatives from:
  - i- New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources;
  - ii- New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries;
  - iii- New Brunswick Department of Health;
  - iv- New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government;
  - v- New Brunswick Department of Public Safety
  - vi- Canadian Wildlife Service – Environment Canada;
  - vii- Canadian Food Inspection Agency;
  - viii- New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association; and
  - ix- New Brunswick Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

## II. Inspection and Enforcement Framework

Enforcement is a critical component of an effective regulatory regime and must be the focus of the management of captive exotic animals. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 2- Government coordinate and participate in an immediate Province-wide round of inspections of all sites involved in public display, retail activities, research and scientific study, and commercial farming, to include permit review, species identification, general education and enforcement of non-compliance. The Task Force strongly feels that this would be an important and readily achievable first step towards greater oversight of exotic wildlife in the Province;
- 3- Inspection standards containing frequency and inspection criteria for all categories of exotic animal stakeholders be formally established and included in enforcement staff and manager work plans;
- 4- Government ensure adequate resources are allocated to support species identification and enforcement specific training relevant to exotic animal control and safe handling practices; and

- 5- Government develop a strategy to address animals that are seized or surrendered resultant from enforcement and public education initiatives recommended in this Report. Options to consider include: transfer to an accredited facility; and humane euthanasia.

Private ownership of exotic animals is difficult to control and monitor. The New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association (NBVMA) is well positioned to aid in the monitoring and reporting of illegal exotic animal species, therefore it is recommended that:

- 6- Members of the NBVMA be made aware of the exempted list of exotic animals permissible in New Brunswick as per the *Fish and Wildlife Act* and that the Association consider amending its by-laws to ensure that when members become aware of any exotic animal not on the exempted list, that it must be reported immediately to the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources; and
- 7- All members of the New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association must have the exempted list of exotic animals permissible in New Brunswick as per the New Brunswick *Fish and Wildlife Act* near at hand for referral.

The Task Force has found that regulations between the provinces and federal agencies to be noticeably uncoordinated resulting in situations where animals may be entering the Province that are not on New Brunswick's exempted list. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 8- Improved enforcement of the current mechanisms to ensure that any animals entering the Province have required permits.

### III. Education and Communication

Informing the general public, pet owners and industry stakeholders about rules regarding the possession and trade of exotic animals will help reduce instances of unsafe and illegal activities. Additionally, through a comprehensive education program, the public can become the eyes and ears of enforcement. Disseminating information on the challenges of owning exotic animals will also help reduce impulse buying. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 9- Government develop a comprehensive public education initiative that addresses the laws, associated dangers, species that are legal to own, and challenges of owning an exotic species; and
- 10- Government provide information to those private owners that have questions about the exotic species in their possession and what their options are should a species not be legally permitted to be in New Brunswick.

### IV. Documentation of policies and procedures

In many instances, stakeholders involved in the keeping or exhibiting of captive exotic animals should be licensed, certified or accredited. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 11- Government categorize and create oversight requirements for all groups in possession of exotic animals participating in the following activities: public display, retail activities, research and scientific study, commercial farming, and private ownership (a recommended approach is presented in Appendix A) and that oversight standards be identified, be set in place through official policy, regulation or legislation for each of these stakeholder groups, similar to the policy and procedures adopted in British Columbia.

Policy Manual: [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlifeactreview/cas/docs/cas-regulation-policy\\_20110401.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlifeactreview/cas/docs/cas-regulation-policy_20110401.pdf)

Procedure Manual: [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlifeactreview/cas/docs/cas-regulation-procedure\\_20120305.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlifeactreview/cas/docs/cas-regulation-procedure_20120305.pdf); and

- 12- Quarantine requirements within all stakeholder groups be reviewed, amended as necessary and communicated by Government to stakeholder groups and regulatory/enforcement agencies.

## V. Legislation

During its deliberations and in discussions with stakeholders, the Task Force concluded that the list of exotic animals exempted from the permitting requirements of the *Fish and Wildlife Act* should be reviewed periodically. It may be that animals should be either added or removed from the exempted list. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 13- Government establish an Advisory Committee with a mandate including, but not limited to, periodic review of the exempted list found in regulation under the *Fish and Wildlife Act*. This Advisory Committee should be formed within six months and be comprised of six to seven individuals. The committee should meet as necessary to review the exempted list and make recommendations to Government;
- 14- The Advisory Committee would develop and document criteria for adding/removing animals from the exempted list such as:
  - i- the animal husbandry and welfare needs can be reasonably met;
  - ii- does not present an undue danger to human health or safety;
  - iii- does not present an invasive threat;
  - iv- biological data on keeping the species is available;
  - v- implications to the status of wild populations of the animal; and
  - vi- sufficient data exists to assess the animal for the above criteria.
- 15- The Task Force specifically recommends that the Advisory Committee review turtles and the nine species of boa constrictors that are on the list;
- 16- The Advisory Committee should be tasked with developing a strategy to deal with issues that will arise in the event that animals are removed from the exempted list;
- 17- Recommended membership on the Exotic Animal Advisory Committee:
  - i- a person with reptile expertise;
  - ii- a person with captive animal management expertise;
  - iii- a representative from the Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries;
  - iv- a representative from the Department of Natural Resources;
  - v- a representative from the Department of Health;
  - vi- a veterinarian, preferably one with exotic animal expertise; and
  - vii- a representative from the NB SPCA
- 18- The mandate of the Exotic Animal Advisory Committee, the membership, and the criteria for examination of the exempted list should be specified in regulation.

The *Fish and Wildlife Act* authorizes the Minister to issue permits for the possession of exotic wildlife for those animals not on the exempted list. The Task Force has been advised that few permits are issued annually and that permits are only issued to those with accreditation from Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA). The Task Force feels that this practice should continue, and therefore recommends that:

- 19- Permits for the possession of exotic animals not on the exempted list contained in the *Exotic Wildlife Regulation* continue to be issued only to those possessing CAZA or equivalent accreditation; and
- 20- Government formalize in regulation specific requirements needed in order to obtain an exotic animal permit.

### **Sanctions/Deterrents**

The current structure of fines (e.g., *Fish and Wildlife Act*, *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*) is cumbersome and ineffective and will require legislative change to act as a greater deterrent. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 21- The fine structure for contravention of legislation governing exotic animals be reviewed and amended as needed; and
- 22- Law enforcement personnel be able to exercise the option of issuing a ticket on the spot in response to incidents of offences related to exotic animals.

### **Pet Establishments**

Currently, pet retail operations are regulated through the *Pet Establishment Regulation* under the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*. The Task Force has identified pet retail outlets as a key component in the care and control of exotic species in New Brunswick. To more fully address concerns related to exotic animals, it is recommended that the *Pet Establishment Regulation* be amended such that:

- 23- It be clearly stated that possession, distribution, and/or sale of any exotic species not on the "exempted list" found in *Exotic Wildlife Regulation* is prohibited unless a permit is received from the Department of Natural Resources; a copy of the exempted list must be kept in every retail outlet and be produced upon request by an enforcement official; and
- 24- Licensing conditions be added to all licences for pet retailers wishing to possess, distribute and/or sell exotic species found on the "exempted list" to include:
  - i- that retail outlets provide staff training relating to animal welfare, husbandry and safe handling of exotic animals; and
  - ii- that buyer educational material is on-site, available and discussed in advance of any purchase, and that this educational material include information relative to animal physical and emotional welfare and safe handling practices (zoonotic disease precautions).

Given that municipalities currently have by-law making authority regarding the keeping of animals, the Task Force recommends that:

- 25- Public safety components regarding the keeping of animals be specified in provincial legislation and not in municipal by-laws unless a municipality desired more restrictive controls on the keeping of animals to further enhance public safety.

## Health Hazards

The *Public Health Act* is broad in its scope in defining health hazards, it creates an obligation to report health hazards and that they be investigated. Also, the Act enables orders to be made regarding health hazards. In the case of exotic animals, while these authorities exist, they appear to be reactive in nature and oriented toward individual or specific events and perhaps do not lend themselves to being used as a tool with respect to the keeping of exotic animals. Given the authorities contained in the Act, the Task Force recommends:

- 26- That Government ensures the *Public Health Act* and its Regulations reduce health hazards related to the possession of exotic animals, this would include the ability for the Act to prescribe standards for the safe possession, presentation, and handling of exotic animals.

Invertebrates such as scorpions and spiders should be brought to the attention of any Advisory Committee created as a result of these recommendations for their consideration and to provide recommendations to government. An approach that could be considered would be to add several exotic invertebrates that are currently being used for food for animals and making all other invertebrates permissible upon receipt of the appropriate permit. An impediment to adding insects to the current exempted list is that invertebrates are beyond the scope of the *Fish and Wildlife Act*. Therefore the Task Force recommends:

- 27- Government consider legislating the control of exotic invertebrates.

## Zoonosis and Reporting

It is important to note that maintaining an exotic animal in captivity increases risks to human health. Of particular concern is the risk of zoonosis, (infections and diseases which can be transmitted to humans from animals). Knowledge of the associated risks and a good protocol of hygiene as well as keen observation will be paramount to mitigating these risks. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that:

- 28- The reporting structure and reporting requirements for zoonotic diseases be reviewed (i.e., *Public Health Act*, and the *Reporting and Diseases Regulation*). This would include a reporting requirement for veterinarians for any suspected zoonotic disease; and
- 29- The diseases associated with exotic animals be included in the periodic review of communicable diseases required to be reported. This review should include representation the New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association.



## 4. Conclusion

Exotic animals in general do not make good pets as they are difficult to properly house, feed and handle. Additionally, proper veterinary care may be difficult to obtain. Exotic animals can pose significant health and safety risks to people, other animals, and ecosystems. Also, the trade in exotic animals can impact wild populations of species.

This Report fulfills the Exotic Animal Task Force's mandate to: review the framework in place for the management of exotic animals in New Brunswick; identify gaps and weaknesses vis-à-vis public safety and human health; and to make recommendations to address any deficiencies.

The Task Force felt that many of the building blocks were already in place in New Brunswick for the proper oversight of exotic animals and has provided a number of recommendations for improvement. The recommendations are grouped under the themes of: interagency coordination; inspection and enforcement; education and communication; policies and procedures; and legislation. We propose that an Implementation Committee of key organizations be formed to guide the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

The Task Force concludes that the best approach is to regulate the possession and trade of exotic species through permitting with the exception of a list of species exempted as appropriate. Further, this list should be reviewed on a regular basis by a committee with the experience and knowledge to make decisions that would include or exclude animals from this list.

It also was important to the Task Force that an enforcement / educational action be initiated to visit all stakeholders in order to provide them with the rules and regulations in the Province as well as to inform them about the exempted list.

An area that the Task Force felt could be improved is zoonosis reporting requirements.

If we are to truly provide protection to the general public and in particular those that tend to be the most vulnerable, we must ensure that the best control measures to minimize risk are in place and functioning properly.

# Appendix A – Categorizing Exotic Animal Groups or Individuals (Stakeholders)

## **Category one (public display)**

- 1- Zoos
- 2- Circuses
- 3- Travelling exotic animal shows
- 4- Museums (displaying live exotic species)
- 5- Science Centres
- 6- Insectariums/Lepidopterics\*

### **Recommended Oversight Requirements:**

- To be permitted annually by the NB Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Must be accredited by the Canadian Accredited Zoos and Aquariums or equivalent.
- Department of Natural Resources staff will communicate with the NB SPCA when exotic animals are entering the Province.

\* if a requirement is established to obtain a permit for the possession of exotic invertebrates

## **Category two (Retail Activities)**

- 1- Pet stores
- 2- Private breeders
- 3- The film industry

### **Recommended Oversight Requirements:**

- To be inspected and licensed annually by the NB SPCA
- In the case of the film industry permits must be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources

## **Category three (research and scientific study)**

- 1- Research centres\*
- 2- Universities\*

\* for those facilities that house exotic animals

### **Recommended Oversight Requirements**

- Required to have Canadian Council on Animal Care GAP (Good Animal Practice) certification

### **Category Four (commercial farming) for species that the Minister of Natural Resources has deemed permissible for commercial farming such**

**as:**

- 1- Red deer, elk, fallow deer and bison ranching
- 2- Fur farming
- 3- Ratite farming

### **Recommended Oversight Requirements:**

- It is recommended that permit criteria be developed to facilitate inspection and permitting of these facilities so as to address animal welfare, public safety and human health
- Inspections and permitting done annually by government.

### **Category five (private ownership)**

- 1- Exotic service animals

### **Recommended Oversight Requirements:**

- Annual permit with conditions (would only apply to animals not on the exempted list).

# Appendix B – Acronyms and Definitions

**accredited facility:** a zoo or aquarium that has undergone a rigorous inspection that examines financial stability, animal care standards, education, involvement in conservation and safety by the Canadian Accredited of Zoos and Aquariums and has passed the inspection and been deemed accredited.

**animal husbandry:** the science of breeding and caring for farm animals.<sup>1</sup>

**animal welfare:** the avoidance of abuse and exploitation of animals by humans by maintaining appropriate standards of accommodation, feeding and general care, the prevention and treatment of disease and the assurance of freedom from harassment, and unnecessary discomfort and pain.<sup>2</sup>

**communicable disease:** a disease able to be passed on.<sup>1</sup>

**euthanasia:** an act of painlessly killing an animal.<sup>1</sup>

**exotic animal / exotic wildlife:** any bird, mammal or other vertebrate that is not indigenous to the Province and is of a species of wildlife that in its natural habitat is usually wild by nature, whether or not the bird, mammal or other vertebrate is bred or reared in captivity, and includes any hybrid offspring of any such bird, mammal or other vertebrate and any part of any such bird, mammal or other vertebrate.

**exotic animal permit:** a permit issued by the Minister of Natural Resources under the authority of the *Fish and Wildlife Act* authorizing a person:

- i- to import into the Province exotic wildlife and prescribe the terms and conditions under which exotic wildlife may be imported into the Province;
- ii- to keep exotic wildlife in captivity and prescribe the terms and conditions under which exotic wildlife may be kept in captivity; or
- iii- to release exotic wildlife from captivity and prescribe the terms and conditions under which exotic wildlife may be released from captivity.

**exempted list:** the list of animals contained in the *Exotic Wildlife Regulation* under the *Fish and Wildlife Act* which do not require an exotic animal permit to possess.

**furbearing animal:** a furred animal, especially one whose fur is of value in the marketplace.<sup>1</sup>

**health hazard:**

- i- a condition of a premises;
- ii- a substance, thing or plant or animal other than man;
- iii- a solid, liquid, gas or combination of any of them; or
- iv- a noise, vibration or radiation, that has or is likely to have an adverse effect on the health of a person.

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1 The Canadian Oxford English Dictionary – 2nd Edition, 2004

2 [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) (accessed April 29, 2015)

**hybrid:** the offspring of two animals of different species or varieties.<sup>11</sup>

**invertebrate:** an animal not having a backbone or spinal column.<sup>1</sup>

**medical officer of health:** a medical officer of health appointed under the *Public Health Act* and includes the chief medical officer of health.

**public health inspector:** a public health inspector appointed under the *Public Health Act*.

**pet establishment:** an animal shelter, a pet retail store and a kennel.

**stakeholder:** a person with an interest or concern in the trade, display or possession of an exotic species.

**pet retailer / pet retail store:** a premises where dogs, cats, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, pet fish, pet and exotic birds, or other exotic animals are kept for sale

**zoonosis/zoonotic:** any of various diseases which can be transmitted to humans from animals.<sup>1</sup>

## List of Acronyms

AZA - American Zoo Association

CAZA - Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums

CVMA - Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

CFHS - Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

DNR – New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources

NB SPCA - New Brunswick Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

PIJAC - Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

R.C.M.P. – Royal Canadian Mounted Police / Gendarmerie royal du Canada

SPCA – Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Oxford English Dictionary – 2nd Edition, 2004

# Appendix C – Motion 14

December 5, 2013

*Journal of Assembly*

WHEREAS the improper housing of exotic animals can result in serious public safety, animal welfare and environmental issues;

WHEREAS the housing of exotic animals is a highly specialized undertaking;

WHEREAS the current legislative and regulatory environment may result in the proliferation of unaccredited roadside zoos with attendant animal welfare, public safety and environmental concerns as well as the exploitation of exotic animals for profit;

WHEREAS accredited zoos and aquariums can bring significant economic, education and conservation benefits to their communities;

WHEREAS Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) wants to create a more uniform and adequately resourced policy, legislative, regulatory and enforcement regime governing exotic animals in the Atlantic provinces and in all other provinces and territories;

WHEREAS the Cities of New Brunswick Association passed a motion urging the government of New Brunswick to work with the other Atlantic provinces to create a joint task force to study the issue and report to the Council of the Federation with a recommended way forward;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urges the Alward Government to conduct a complete review of the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Act and other relevant legislation related to exotic animals and bring forward a detailed action plan to the Legislature including any recommended changes to the legislative and regulatory framework;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as part of this review, the Government consult with Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, the Cities of New Brunswick Association, law enforcement and other appropriate stakeholders.

And the question being put, Motion 14 as amended was resolved in the affirmative.



