



Submitted by Nathalie Karvonen,
Founder and Executive Director,
Toronto Wildlife Centre, to the
Infrastructure and Environment
Committee on July 6, 2022



About Toronto Wildlife Centre

- Open every day since March 28, 1993
- The busiest wildlife centre in the country, admitting almost 6,500 wild animals last year alone
- Over 40 staff, several hundred volunteers, thousands of donors and tens of thousands of social media followers



The staff report is suggesting amendments to “help Toronto Animal Services meet its mandate of ensuring...**the welfare of Toronto’s wildlife and domestic animal population.**” It further states that “Toronto is considered **a progressive leader** in this area and it is **important to continuously improve** our approach...”



We are here today to urge you to do these things by adopting the recommendations in our letter:

- 1.) Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.
- 2.) Keep the requirement for Toronto Animal Services staff to retain nuisance animals, including cats.
- 3.) Require mandatory microchipping of all cats.
- 4.) License Wildlife Removal Companies.
- 5.) Create a positive list of pets people can keep.
- 6.) Strengthen the “no feeding of wild animals” section of the bylaw.
- 7.) Launch a comprehensive public awareness campaign.

Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

Free-roaming cats are a massive issue for Toronto's wildlife...

A 2013 Environment Canada study concluded that cats kill **200 million birds** a year in our country, more than all other causes of songbird mortality combined.



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

Baby songbirds have no defenses against cats.



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

At Toronto Wildlife Centre, the call volume was so high for baby songbird / cat concerns that we can no longer even respond to these calls.



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

And it's not just birds...



Free-roaming cats are a huge conservation issue worldwide.
Let's be a leader in helping to find solutions.



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

Cats are also at great risk when they are allowed to roam...



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

In one year Toronto Animal Services picked up 1,300 dead cats from roads.



Approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.

There are great options to allow cats to enjoy the outdoors, like dogs do. We ask that you join over 90 other municipalities across Canada and the GTA and approve an anti-roaming bylaw for cats.



License Wildlife Removal Companies.

- There are dozens of companies operating in Toronto, and members of the public assume they are regulated, that someone is overseeing what they do
- Many companies rip people off, cause suffering and death to wildlife, and don't provide solutions to the problems
- A very common practice is trapping and relocating mother wild animals, leaving dependent young behind
- If a wildlife rehabilitator cannot admit the babies, residents must call Toronto Animal Services to pick up and euthanize the babies, at great expense to the city



Strengthen the “no feeding of wild animals” section of the bylaw.



Strengthen the “no feeding of wild animals” section of the bylaw.

We support the staff recommendation to ban the feeding of wildlife, but suggest the provisions be strengthened so that **no food can be left outdoors when people are not present.**

Exemption: *“A person participating in a cultural, religious or spiritual practice outdoors, provided the person cleans all food from the outdoor location **at the conclusion of the practice**”*





In conclusion, I ask you to support our seven recommendations – showing leadership, improving your approaches and ensuring the welfare of Toronto’s wild and domestic animals.

I would also like you to know I am aware of the letter Mr. De Baeremaeker has submitted to the Committee and are supportive of his letter and recommendations.