

ZB9.1.5

23 November 2011  
New Delhi

Most Urgent

Dear Mayor and Members of Council, City of Toronto :

We write to you regarding the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) sanctuary in California. I understand some people have expressed concern about the transfer of the Toronto Zoo elephants to the PAWS sanctuary. We have only just recently visited the PAWS elephant facility a few weeks ago and would like to convey our impressions on the same.

We are the founders of Wildlife SOS, an international wildlife protection and conservation organization head quartered in India. We operate four sanctuaries housing nearly 600 rescued sloth bears and are currently collaborating with the Haryana Forest Department for the establishment of an Elephant Rehabilitation and Research Center. Wildlife SOS has formal 'co-operative' agreements in place with state Governments and forest departments in more than nine states in India.

First, we wish to state that we were highly impressed by the facilities available for elephant care and rehabilitation at the PAWS Sanctuary. The elephant habitats are exceptionally large, well laid out while giving the animals access to water, shade and enrichment, a key consideration when housing these highly mobile, wide-ranging mammals (mega fauna). The PAWS sanctuary spread over hundreds of acres also provides ample room for the elephants to satisfy their behavioral and biological need to forage, graze, move about and engage in exploratory behaviours. The enclosure topography (e.g. hills, valleys, ponds etc) guarantees a level of exercise and activity not achievable in perhaps most elephant enclosures.

In addition, the elephants are free to socialize with other elephants, forming their own relationships and bonds, and they have the option of obtaining privacy by moving to another part of their sprawling habitat.

The various other facets of the PAWS elephant management regime were equally impressive. Their expansive, purpose-built, well planned, well designed and sophisticated elephant barns combined with their highly trained team of elephant keepers and veterinarians and comprehensive health care program make PAWS a superior facility to any other specialised elephant facility we have seen in the world.

We are very familiar with elephant biology, behaviour and their needs in captivity. Having visited the PAWS sanctuary, we have no hesitation in saying that it is the right choice for the Toronto Zoo elephants and request you to make the right decision for these animals who do deserve nothing but the best now.

Thank you for your intervention and for helping these Elephants.

Sincerely,  
For Wildlife SOS, India

Kartick Satyanarayan      Geeta Seshamani  
Founder Chairman.      Founder Secretary



cc. Toronto Zoo Board of Management



Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011

To the Mayor and Council and members of Toronto Zoo Board of Management  
c/o City Clerk's Office Secretariat  
Toronto City Hall  
2nd, 100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

Dear Sir or Madam,

Last April, I wrote to Toronto Zoo's Board of Management on behalf of the *World Society for the Protection of Animals* (WSPA) concerning Toronto Zoo's elephants. A Canadian registered charity, WSPA is one of the world's foremost animal protection organizations, with Special Consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the Council of Europe, active animal welfare projects in more than 50 countries and more than 1000 partner organizations in more than 100 countries.

We applaud and support Council's recent decision to retire these elephants to the Performing Animal Welfare Society's California-based sanctuary just as we are grateful that the Board of Management first recognized the pressing need to retire and relocate the zoo's remaining elephants, as being in the best interests of the animals' health and well-being.

It is disappointing to learn that the Board of Management may now be considering a motion to ignore Council's decision, on the sole basis that the sanctuary has not been accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA).

As part our efforts to end the abuse of captive bears, WSPA has during the past few decades been pleased to establish, partner with and fund quite a number of sanctuaries the world over. Under their auspices, many animals, including bears, orangutans, *bonobos* and others, have been either rehabilitated and released or, in cases where their former captivity made them poor candidates for release, provided them with permanent homes. None of these sanctuaries was or is accredited by any zoo association for the simple reason that they are not zoos: they are sanctuaries.

At the Performing Animal Welfare Society sanctuary in California, the elephants would receive a level of care that easily exceeds the standards of care laid out by the AZA. The PAWS sanctuary is 80 acres, and features a 20,000 square foot state-of-the-art elephant barn. The elephants would receive 24-hour care from a team of more than 30 well-trained and compassionate keepers, wildlife specialists, and veterinarians, ensuring optimal animal health maintenance, disease prevention, behavioural enrichment and constant monitoring for all animals.

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Both PAWS and founder Pat Derby have been the recipients of numerous awards, including this year's Elaine La Russa Founders' Award, presented by the Animal Rescue Foundation and In Defense of Animals' Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

We can't think of a better home for these elephants. We respectfully urge that Council's decision to send the elephants to the PAWS sanctuary be upheld. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrick Tohill  
Senior Manager, Legislative and Public Affairs, WSPA Canada