



REPORT FOR ACTION

Prohibited Animals Review

Date: May 31, 2017

To: Licensing and Standards Committee

From: Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349, prohibits certain animals from being kept in Toronto. Some examples of prohibited animals include: snakes greater than three meters, tigers, and all poisonous and venomous animals, among others.

In 2016, City Council directed staff to undertake a broad review of prohibited animal regulations, including stakeholder and public consultation on the extent prohibited animals are used in education programs. During the spring of 2017, staff conducted research, public and stakeholder consultations on both the prohibited animals list, and the use of prohibited animals for education programs.

This report establishes six new criteria that will be used to manage the prohibited animals' list and help to evaluate if certain animals should be added or removed from the list. The process to add and remove animals from the prohibited animal list will remain the same and require staff to report to Committee and City Council. The criteria includes:

- Determining if animal is on federal or provincial protected, at-risk, endangered or prohibited lists;
- Determining if animal is venomous or poisonous;
- Determining if animal will present an undue danger to human health or safety;
- Determining if animal care and welfare needs can be reasonably met by owner;
- Determining if animal presents an invasive threat to local animals or environment; and
- Determining if animal will cause public nuisance problems (noise, odour or significant garbage or waste).

In reviewing the existing prohibited animals list staff considered Council's direction to add specific bird species and reviewed the existing restrictions on reptiles. This report recommends adding birds such as, cranes, flamingos and penguins to the prohibited animals list.

A review of reptiles and examination of other jurisdictions confirmed that the existing prohibitions were reasonable and included most reptiles that may present a significant risk to public health and safety. In addition to the prohibited animals list, there are provincial and federal lists that protect animals and prohibit the possession of certain animals without required permits.

This report also recommends delaying the come into force date for the deletion of the prohibited animals' exception for educational programs from July 1, 2017 to January 1, 2018. During consultations, stakeholders raised issues with the current timeframe for the deletion. Companies that use prohibited animals through this exemption stated that many were booked for events through the summer and fall and would need time to communicate with clients and make business changes. This would mean that after January 1, 2018, prohibited animals would not be permitted to be used for private or public events, such as school visits, birthday parties or camps in Toronto. Organizations could still provide animals for private or public events, however only with animals not listed on the prohibited animals list.

The report includes a recommendation to develop a public education campaign that Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S) will create with relevant City divisions, agencies, boards, and external stakeholders to strengthen public awareness of animals permitted to be used and best practices for public health and safety and animal welfare and care.

Toronto Public Health and Legal Services were consulted in preparation for the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommends that:

1. City Council amend Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349, Animals, by:
 - A. Adding the following birds to the Prohibited Animals list in Schedule A: Gruiformes (cranes, rails), Phoenicopteriformes (flamingos), and Shenisciformes (penguins).
 - B. Delaying the come into force date for the deletion of the prohibited animals' exception for educational programs to January 1, 2018.
2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to work with relevant City divisions, agencies, boards and external stakeholders to strengthen public educational efforts on animals permitted to be used for mobile live animal programs and best practices for public health and safety and animal care and welfare.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of December 13, 2016, City Council adopted [LS15.2 Chapter 349, Animals: Exceptions for Prohibited Animals](#), and directed the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to conduct stakeholder and public consultation, including consultation with the Toronto Zoo, on the extent of the use of prohibited animals in education programs in Toronto and to report to the Licensing and Standards Committee by July 1, 2017 on the outcome of the consultations.

At its meeting of October 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2013, [City Council adopted LS23.5 Chapter 349, Animals - Status Update](#), and requested the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to conduct further research, public consultation and report back to the Licensing and Standards Committee on issues dealing with prohibited animals.

At its meeting of May 27, 2013, the Licensing and Standards Committee referred [LS21.2 Amendments to Municipal Code, Chapter 349, Animals](#), to the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, for a report back to the Committee on policies that could be codified and adopted immediately; policies that require further research and consultation; and adding flamingos to Schedule A of Chapter 349, Prohibited Animals.

COMMENTS

Prohibited Animals in Toronto

The City of Toronto has prohibited the possession of certain animals through Chapter 349, Animals. The current list of prohibited animals can be found as Attachment 1.

The prohibited animals list was developed in order to protect public health and safety, address concerns around animal care and to restrict animals that may result in significant public nuisance problems such as noise and/or odour for neighbouring residents.

Animals on the prohibited animals list are organized by three broad taxonomic groups of Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles and contain specific prohibited species within each. The species are listed by their scientific name followed by some of their common names. A fourth category of "Other" prohibits all venomous and poisonous animals.

The prohibited animals list includes what are commonly referred to as "exotic animals" which are wild animals that are typically bred in captivity and not native to Canada. Some mammals prohibited include tigers, kangaroos, non-human primates, bears, elephants, some birds (flightless birds such as ostriches and emus, geese, etc.), reptiles such as alligators and crocodiles, snakes that reach an adult length of greater than three metres, lizards that reach an adult length of greater than two metres, and all venomous and poisonous animals. Any animal not listed on the prohibited animal list is permitted in the City, including dogs, cats, rabbits, sugar gliders that are derived from self-sustaining captive populations, and ferrets as a few examples.

Enforcement of Prohibited Animals List

Toronto Animal Services (TAS) staff enforces the prohibited animals list in Chapter 349. The Executive Director of Municipal Licensing and Standards can, if necessary, seize and impound any prohibited animal found in the City and charge a per diem impoundment fee to the owner. To secure a prohibited animal from a dwelling a warrant is required. The Executive Director also has the authority to transfer the animal to a person in a jurisdiction in which ownership and possession of the animal is lawful or to provide necessary veterinary care and is entitled to charge the owner of the prohibited animal the cost of veterinary care. If necessary, the Executive Director may also euthanize for humane reasons any ill or injured prohibited animal that has been seized.

Enforcement of the prohibited animals list is complaint-based. Over the past five years, Toronto Animal Services has received a total of 684 complaints related to prohibited animals. The most common complaints have been related to; chickens, snakes, birds, and livestock animals such as goats and sheep.

Table 1 below outlines the number of complaints over the past five years.

Table 1: Complaints about Prohibited Animals

Year	Number of Complaints
2012	137
2013	158
2014	134
2015	103
2016	130
2017*	22
Total	684

*Data up to May 10, 2017

Exceptions for Keeping Prohibited Animals

Chapter 349, section 4, provides for exceptions that allow for keeping prohibited animals. These exceptions are for various premises, including; premises of a City animal centre, any affiliate or branch of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, accredited veterinary hospital under the care of a licensed veterinarian, Toronto Zoo, Ripley's Aquarium, Toronto Wildlife Centre, and Royal Ontario Museum. Exceptions are also provided for keeping specific species at various City parks and facilities such as Riverdale Farm, Sunnybrook Stables, Animal Paddocks on Deer Pen Road at High Park, and Exhibition Place.

Exceptions are provided for Toronto Police Service animals, premises registered as research facilities pursuant to the Animals for Research Act, and premises of slaughterhouses licensed pursuant to the Meat Inspection Act.

There are also temporary exceptions provided for areas of the City in which professionally produced films are being made by film professionals and film production companies. A permit is required for any filming from the Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Office.

Federal and Provincial Regulations

Possession of animals listed on the Chapter 349 prohibited animals list may also be restricted by federal and provincial laws. The federal government enforces international agreements and controls on wild animals and plants through the Canadian Border Services Agency and Environment Canada. They also oversee the safeguarding of food, animals and plants through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The following are key federal and provincial regulations that protect and limit the possession of animals.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES is an international agreement signed by Canada to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Some species of wildlife can be legally traded, but many require permits to cross international borders. Over 5,000 animal species, subspecies and populations and over 29,000 plant species, subspecies and populations are listed under CITES. In Canada, in order to import or export a CITES-listed plant or animal, a CITES permit may be required from Environment Canada.

Health of Animals Regulations

The Health of Animals Regulations is part of federal legislation under the *Health of Animals Act*. It is intended to protect animals and animal health through the control of diseases and toxic substances that may affect animals or that may be transmitted by animals to persons. The Act sets out requirements for the transportation of animals entering, leaving, or within Canada and their inspection.

Species at Risk Act

The *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* is federal legislation and its purpose is to prevent wildlife species in Canada from disappearing, support the recovery of wildlife species

that no longer exist in Canada, manage and protect endangered or threatened wildlife as a result of human activity.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA)* is provincial legislation that is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Act governs the lawful hunting and trapping of wildlife (mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians) and fish in the province of Ontario and provides for protections of wildlife and the environment they inhabit. The Act outlines protected local wildlife that are not permitted to be hunted or trapped without a license issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. However, the *FWCA* does not currently include any regulations on non-native, exotic animal ownership.

Endangered Species Act

Endangered Species Act is provincial legislation enforced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and protects up to 200 identified endangered and threatened plants and animals in Ontario. It sets out how species can be classified as a species at risk; categories of risk; protection and recovery strategies for species; and requirements for issuing permits to allow activity that may harm or harass protected species and/or may cause damage or destruction to their habitat.

Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) Act

The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) is responsible for protecting animals including wildlife from inhumane treatment. The *OSPCA Act* permits OSPCA inspectors and agents the powers of a police officer for the purposes of the enforcement of the *OSPCA Act* or any other law in force in Ontario pertaining to the welfare of or the prevention of cruelty to animals. OSPCA has the authority to conduct inspections on premises where animals are kept for the purpose of exhibit, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale. They also have the authority to impose orders on individuals or companies and if necessary charge them under the Act.

Prohibited Animal Regulations in Other Jurisdictions

Staff have examined how prohibited animals are restricted and how their use for mobile live animal programs (MLAPs) are regulated in other jurisdictions. A total of 22 cities in Canada and the United States were reviewed. The following are some of the key findings and approaches learned:

- All eleven researched jurisdictions in Ontario maintain a prohibited animals list. Municipalities in British Columbia, Alberta, and New Brunswick have limited prohibited animals list or none at all as most provincial governments outside of Ontario control the possession, import, export of exotic animals through legislation.
- Majority of jurisdictions have prohibitions on venomous and poisonous animals as well as restrictions on the size of snakes and lizards.
- Some jurisdictions have a limit on the number of domesticated ferrets and chinchillas that may be possessed per premise.
- Chickens are permitted in some jurisdictions with various restrictions. No permit is required in Victoria, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City. A permit is required to keep chickens in Vancouver, Fredericton, and Las Vegas. Limits on

the number of chickens permitted vary from two in Brampton to four in Vancouver.

- In some cities exemptions are provided for premises to keep prohibited animals for accredited veterinary clinics or hospitals, pounds, medical or educational institutions, persons holding a license issued by the provincial or federal government, for professional filming, exhibit, public show or zoo.
- Some jurisdictions require a permit for the use of prohibited animals for mobile live animal programs (MLAPs). In jurisdictions outside of Ontario, MLAPs are required to secure a permit for possession of prohibited animals from the provincial government. Some cities in Ontario provide a temporary permit and may include restrictions on where the MLAPs can take place. All American cities researched permit MLAPs and require them to secure a permit.
- Winnipeg prohibits the use of prohibited animals for MLAPs, exhibit and circuses and only allows permitted animals to be used. In addition they require a special permit for prohibited animals transiting the Winnipeg area.

Public Consultations and Stakeholder Feedback

The consultation process included two public meetings, one of which was live-streamed on Facebook and had over 1,600 views. Separate stakeholder meetings were organized with animal welfare groups, businesses who use prohibited animals for mobile live animal programs (MLAPs), and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. An online survey was made available that received over 2,500 responses. The following are key findings and comments from the survey, public meetings, and stakeholder meetings.

Key Survey Findings

In April, the City provided a survey for the public and stakeholders that sought input on whether any animals should be added or removed from the current prohibited animals list; what criteria should be considered when adding or removing animals from the list; and how mobile live animal programs (MLAPs) that use prohibited animals should be regulated. The following are a summary of key feedback in the survey:

- 53% of respondents indicated that the City should not permit the use of prohibited animals for public or private events.
- When asked what type of events should the City allow the use of prohibited animals, the top three answers were: Animal assisted therapy with 73%, school visits with 62%, and nursing home visits with 53%.
- Respondents identified the following as the most important criterion the City should consider when adding or removing animals from the prohibited animals list: 87% identified animal care and welfare needs can be reasonably met, 84% identified ability to maintain adequate habitat for animal, and 76% identified animal does not present a risk to human health or safety.
- Respondents identified the following as "very important" regulations the City should consider for companies that use prohibited animals for public or private events: 88% identified consideration of animal welfare and safety, 82% identified a requirement of long-term plan for each animal so that animal is cared for after it is no longer used as a program animal, 80% identified safe transportation of prohibited animals.

- When respondents were asked what animals should be removed from the prohibited animals list the most frequent responses were: chickens, to keep the list as it is, allow only domesticated animals (i.e. cats, dogs, rabbits)
- When respondents were asked what animals should be added to the prohibited animals list, the most frequent responses were: the prohibited list is fine as it is and prohibit venomous and poisonous animals.

Public Consultations

Staff organized two public consultations held in April and May. At the consultations the public was invited to share their thoughts on the prohibited animals list and their use for educational programming in mobile live animal programs (MLAPs).

At the consultations staff heard that instead of a prohibited list the City should use a positive list that would outline permitted animals. Similar lists are used currently in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and several Quebec municipalities. Most of the feedback centred on MLAPs and their use of prohibited animals. The majority of consultation participants did not support permitting MLAPs to use prohibited animals and outlined concerns around animal welfare and questioned their educational value. Some consultation participants had a divergent view and felt MLAPs should be permitted to operate with prohibited animals but be required to have Canadian Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) accreditation to ensure minimum animal welfare standards.

Stakeholder Feedback

Separate stakeholder meetings were held with animal welfare groups and businesses who operated MLAPs with prohibited animals. In addition, staff at the Toronto Zoo were consulted and provided feedback on their MLAP. These perspectives are summarized below:

- Animal Welfare Groups
Animal welfare groups expressed strong opposition to MLAPs with prohibited animals. They expressed concerns for animal welfare, public health and safety, as well as how these programs may normalize captivity and may misinform the public that it is ok to keep exotics as pets. Furthermore, animal welfare groups questioned the ability of CAZA, which is member funded, to serve as an independent check ensuring minimum animal welfare standards on its members.
- Businesses offering mobile live animal programs (MLAPs)
Businesses that offer MLAPs highlighted the educational value of their programming and how exposure to exotic animals could inspire conservation efforts and empathy with animals, especially in children. They acknowledged that regulations are needed over MLAPs and that there were some companies that did not operate with a high standard of care for animals and consideration of public health and safety. They felt that the City should impose a permitting process or only permit MLAPs that have Canadian Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) accreditation to ensure minimum animal welfare standards. Businesses also expressed a concern that if the use of prohibited animals for MLAPs were not allowed there would be companies that had poor animal welfare standards that would continue to operate illegally.

- Toronto Zoo
The Toronto Zoo as part of its public outreach programs offers to bring permitted and prohibited animals to schools, for filming and television, and at public events such as World Cup of Hockey event, Parks Canada learn to camp event, and private corporate events such as Symcor Ecofair. They have done an average of 13 MLAPs per year over the past four years. The zoo has developed policies for their MLAPs outlined in their Outreach Animal Handling Guidelines that highlight standards for animal care and welfare, staff safety, public safety and guidelines for interaction with animals. The zoo has expressed a desire to continue their MLAP and outlined their extensive policies in place to ensure animal welfare and public health and safety.

Criteria for Managing the Prohibited Animals List

Staff reviewed the process for adding or removing animals to the prohibited animals list. This review included consideration of other jurisdictions and best practices. The process currently requires City Council approval to add or remove an animal with staff providing reports with stakeholder input. This is consistent with many jurisdictions. Staff recommend strengthening the process by clearly defining the criteria for adding or removing animals.

In order to ensure a transparent and consistent process for managing the prohibited animals list, staff have developed the following six key criteria to assess animals that should be added or removed from the prohibited list. The criteria is meant to be a framework by which staff would assess any animal and does not limit staff from considering other criteria as they may arise. The six criteria are summarized below:

1. Determine if animal is on federal or provincial protected, at-risk, endangered or prohibited lists
The federal and provincial governments may restrict the possession of animals and require permits for importation, ownership or other matters pertaining to animals in Toronto. These restrictions might be in place because the animal is at-risk or endangered, poises an invasive threat, or requires monitoring to protect population numbers. In considering if an animal should be added or removed from the prohibited animals list, staff will review federal and provincial regulations to see if animal is identified on any list that places regulations, protections or other prohibitions on the animal in Toronto.
2. Determine if animal is venomous or poisonous
Public health and safety is paramount when considering if an animal should be added or removed from the list. Venomous or poisonous creatures are prohibited because they pose a risk of danger to the public. In considering if an animal should be added or removed from the prohibited animals list, staff will review if the animal is venomous or poisonous.
3. Determine if animal will present an undue danger to human health or safety
Some animals pose a serious risk of physical injury and spread of diseases to humans and other animals. This may be as a result of the animal's size, strength, temperament or unpredictability, animal naturally carrying diseases or being susceptible to spreading diseases to humans. These factors highlight that

some animals may not be suitable to be kept as pets and need to remain on the prohibited animals list.

4. Determine if animal care and welfare needs can be reasonably met by owner
An analysis for adding or removing an animal to the list will include consideration of the animals' welfare. This would include evaluating if the needs of the animal for veterinary services, easy access of suitable food, adequate shelter and environment can be reasonably met by owner.
5. Determine if animal presents an invasive threat to local animals or environment
Invasive species are animals or micro-organisms introduced outside their native ecosystems and may cause irreversible damage on the environment, local wildlife and plants. Federal and provincial governments provide oversight to regulate invasive species threats. Staff would review these to consider whether the animal has been identified as a threat.
6. Determine if the keeping of animal will cause public nuisance problems (noise, odour or significant garbage/waste)
The keeping of some animals may result in significant noise, odour, cleanliness, unruliness, or may pose significant impact in a dense urban environment not just to the owner but others.

Consideration of the existing Prohibited Animals List

In reviewing the existing prohibited animals' list staff considered Council's direction to add specific bird species and reviewed the existing restrictions on reptiles. In addition, staff heard through public feedback the request to remove chickens from the prohibited animals list and examined its appropriateness to be on the list. Staff consulted with the public and various public health and animal experts at the Toronto Zoo, Toronto Public Health, and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, as well as with animal welfare groups, CanHerp, and Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC).

- Maintaining existing reptiles restrictions

Existing prohibitions on reptiles in Chapter 349 include no venomous or poisonous snakes or lizards. There is also a three metre limit on adult length for snakes and two metre limit on adult lizards. A jurisdictional scan determined these prohibitions were in line with many other municipalities. In addition, key stakeholders like the Toronto Zoo, CanHerp and PIJAC confirmed the prohibitions were reasonable and captured reptiles that may present a significant risk to public health and safety or whose keeping may negatively impact animal's care and welfare.

- Adding several bird species

Staff reviewed bird species that are not currently on the prohibited animals list and determined that the following should be added: Gruiformes (cranes, rails), Phoenicopteriformes (flamingos), and Sphenisciformes (penguins). The keeping of these birds as companion animals is unlikely and would require provincial and/or federal permits to possess one of them. The concerns with possessing one of these birds is that animal care and welfare needs will not be met. These birds are difficult to

accommodate, have limited veterinary services available, and possession may negatively impact the animal's health and wellbeing.

- Maintaining chickens on the prohibited animals list

Staff do not recommend removing chickens from the prohibited animal list. Currently Chapter 349 prohibits all domesticated birds of the species Galliformes (chickens and other birds such as pheasants, grouse, guinea fowls and turkeys). In reviewing the restriction on chickens, three major criteria remain problematic: ensuring public health and safety, ensuring keeping of hens will not cause public nuisance problems, and animal care and welfare needs can be reasonably met.

Research indicates that the primary human health risk of keeping chickens is infectious disease transmission, such as Salmonella. Avian influenza, or bird flu, is another potential concern although this is currently not considered by animal health or public health experts to be a significant risk in chickens. Another important consideration is the potential public nuisance problems that might arise from the keeping of chickens. Some of these concerns arise from noise and odour. Lastly, keeping of chickens outdoors in poor enclosures and coops may present animal care, welfare risks for chickens and attract pests such as flies, mice, rats, skunks and raccoons, and coyotes. After reviewing these risk factors, staff do not recommend removing chickens from the prohibited animals list.

Mobile Live Animal Programs and use of Prohibited Animals

An exception for the keeping and use of prohibited animals has existed in Chapter 349 that allowed prohibited animals for education programs, provided that the programs were limited to a maximum of three days at any one location and the animals were owned by facilities accredited by Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums or the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. This exception was deleted by City Council at its meeting on December 13, 2016, and the deletion is scheduled to come into force on July 1, 2017 where after this date, no exception will exist for the use of prohibited animals for education programs.

There are a number of businesses offering mobile live animal programs (MLAPs) with various animals including prohibited animals. MLAPs can be privately-owned and include private exotic animal keepers or collectors as well as publicly operated organizations such as the Toronto Zoo.

Animals are used by MLAPs at various locations for private or public events such as birthday parties, schools, nursing homes, daycare centres, corporate functions and community-events. There is a variety of ways animals are handled by MLAPs. At some MLAPs the animals are exhibited or used for live animal presentations and only handled by a trainer. However, some MLAPs have an interactive component that allows for touching, petting and handling of animals by the public. The types of animals used by MLAPs for events include those that are permitted and prohibited. Permitted animals used by MLAPs include and are not limited to; domestic ferrets, rats, chinchillas, hedgehogs, rabbits, non-poisonous frogs, parrots, snakes and lizards that are non-venomous and reach an adult length of less than three metres and two metres respectively.

Prohibited animals used by MLAPs include and are not limited to; caiman, lemurs, armadillos, kangaroos, opossums, bald eagle, kinkajou, foxes, lizards and snakes that reach an adult length greater than three metres such as Burmese python, and boa constrictor.

Unclear Standards of Animal Care and Welfare

Research by City staff indicate there are at least 61 companies operating in Ontario that run mobile live animal programs (MLAPs). It is difficult to determine exactly how many of these companies exist as there is no central registry. The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) requires any organization that keeps animals for the purpose of exhibits, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale to register with them and undergo inspections of their facilities. No publically available information exists on how many of the 61 companies identified by the City operating MLAPs have registered with the OSPCA. In addition, of the 61 companies identified by the City only six are accredited with the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), which is an industry self-regulating and accrediting organization that represents zoos and aquariums. It sets out standards of conduct for animal care, animal transport, and human and animal contact and conducts pre-arranged inspections once every five years or interim inspections with members to ensure standards are being adhered to.

Public Health and Safety Risk of using Animals for MLAPs

Guidance documents released by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as well as Toronto Public Health outline that the use of animals in mobile live animal programs (MLAPs) can pose public health and safety risks including exposure to allergens, injuries and infections. These risks are heightened for some at-risk groups.

Many MLAPs provide an opportunity to interact, pet and handle animals both permitted and prohibited. This creates a risk for zoonotic disease transmission through direct (feeding, touching, handling of animals) and indirect contact (exposure to animal bedding, flooring, barriers, bowls/dishes and clothing/shoes that have been contaminated by the animal).

Animals may be a source of a number of zoonotic diseases from pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi. Gastrointestinal infections are among the most common infections resulting from animal contact and these include Salmonella and E. coli, causing diarrhea and/or vomiting and in some cases more serious illnesses. Reptiles and amphibians, frequently used by MLAPs, naturally carry Salmonella as part of their gut flora without ill effect on the animal itself. But reptiles and amphibians shed these bacteria into their environments, which contaminate their bodies, enclosures, and areas they roam.

Another concern is the risk animals can cause a range of physical injuries such as bites, bruises and scratches. This risk is particularly heightened when some MLAPs allow for interaction with the animal. Animal bites can cause puncture wounds, cuts, scrapes or crushing injuries.

Populations identified by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Toronto Public Health as being at risk of zoonotic disease transmission include children, particularly those under the age of five. Children are more vulnerable than adults of acquiring

infections from animals because of several factors including their lack of awareness of the risk of disease transmission, less than optimal hygiene practices, propensity to put their fingers in their mouths, and their immune systems are not fully developed. Other populations at risk include pregnant women, people 65 years of age and over, and immune-compromised persons are considered high-risk adult groups because they may have reduced ability to fight off infection or may be more at risk for complications from these infections. Persons with cognitive disabilities are also considered high-risks as they may engage in high-risk behaviour.

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Toronto Public Health has identified some animals that may present a higher risk of disease transmission or more prone to aggressive behaviour and should not be invited to child care centres or be exposed to at risk population groups. These animals include wild and stray animals; inherently dangerous animals (lions, cougars, bears), venomous or toxin-producing spiders and insects; and exotic animals (lemurs, hedgehogs, primates), reptiles (turtles, snakes, lizards), amphibians (frogs, toads, newts), live poultry (chicks, ducklings, and goslings), ferrets, and farm animals (calves, goats and sheep).

Recommendations and Next Steps

This report establishes six criteria staff have developed that will be used to manage the prohibited animals list and help to evaluate if certain animals should be added or removed from the list. The criteria is intended to serve as a framework that will guide staff review and the process will still require staff to report out to Licensing and Standards Committee and City Council to consider any animals to be added or removed from the list.

After reviewing the prohibited animals list and examining other jurisdictions' approaches, this report recommends adding birds such as, Gruiformes (cranes, rails), Phoenicopteriformes (flamingos) and Sheniscioformes (penguins) to the prohibited animal list. A review of reptiles and examination of other jurisdictions confirmed that our existing restrictions were reasonable and included most reptiles that may present a significant risk to public health and safety.

This report also recommends delaying the come into force date for the deletion of the prohibited animals' exception for educational programs from July 1, 2017 to January 1, 2018. During consultations, stakeholders raised issues with the current timeframe for the deletion. Companies that use prohibited animals through this exemption stated that many were booked for events through the summer and fall and would need time to communicate with clients and make business changes. This would mean that after January 1, 2018, prohibited animals would not be permitted to be used for private or public events, such as school visits, birthday parties or camps in Toronto. Organizations could still provide animals for private or public events, however only with animals not listed on the prohibited animals list.

In order to ensure all organizations that use animals for MLAPs and the public are informed of these changes and to strengthen awareness of animals that are permitted to be used for MLAPs, ML&S staff will lead public education efforts that include:

- What kind of animals are permitted to be used for MLAPs
- Before booking a MLAP what to know

- Hand hygiene and public health tips for handling animals
- Importance of supervising all children interactions with animals during MLAPs
- Importance of keeping food and drinks out of animal areas
- How to report any animal care and welfare concerns

Staff will work with organizations who operate MLAPs to provide them information on permitted animals, standards of animal care and welfare, as well as how to ensure public health and safety.

Various public awareness strategies will be used including providing information on ML&S website, creating a social media outreach campaign, and working with key stakeholders such as school boards to inform them of the changes.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Schedule A, Chapter 349- List of Prohibited Animals