

The Safety and Security of Ontario Wildlife in Captivity Facilities

Wildlife captivity is a complex issue with both benefits and risks. On the one hand, captivity can provide a safe haven for animals that are injured, orphaned, or otherwise unable to survive in the wild. Captivity can also provide opportunities for education and research, and can help to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation.



Wild Neighbours: The Safety and Security of Ontario's Wildlife in Captivity Facilities by Mark W. Sullivan

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On the other hand, captivity can also pose risks to animals. Animals in captivity may be exposed to diseases, parasites, and other health problems that they would not encounter in the wild. They may also experience stress, boredom, and other psychological problems. In addition, captivity can lead to the loss of natural behaviors and instincts, making it difficult for animals to be released back into the wild.

In Ontario, Canada, the keeping of wildlife in captivity is regulated by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA). The FWCA sets out strict

requirements for the care and housing of captive wildlife, and it also prohibits the keeping of certain species of animals in captivity.

This article provides an overview of the FWCA regulations and best practices for keeping wildlife in captivity in Ontario. It is intended to help wildlife rehabilitators, zookeepers, and other professionals who work with captive wildlife to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals in their care.

Regulations for Keeping Wildlife in Captivity in Ontario

The FWCA sets out a number of requirements for the keeping of wildlife in captivity in Ontario. These requirements include:

- A permit is required to keep wildlife in captivity. Permits are issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).
- The facilities in which wildlife are kept must meet certain standards of care and housing. These standards include requirements for the size of the enclosure, the type of substrate, the availability of food and water, and the provision of enrichment activities.
- Captive wildlife must be provided with a diet that is appropriate for their species and nutritional needs.
- Captive wildlife must be provided with veterinary care as needed.
- Captive wildlife must be handled and transported in a safe and humane manner.

The FWCA also prohibits the keeping of certain species of animals in captivity. These species include:

- Venomous snakes
- Big cats (lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, cougars)
- Bears
- Wolves
- Coyotes
- Alligators
- Crocodiles

These species are considered to be dangerous and are not suitable for keeping in captivity. If you encounter a wild animal in need of assistance, please contact the MNR.

Best Practices for Keeping Wildlife in Captivity

In addition to the FWCA regulations, there are a number of best practices that should be followed when keeping wildlife in captivity. These best practices include:

- Choose the right species for captivity. Not all species of animals are suitable for keeping in captivity. Some species are more adaptable than others, and some have specific needs that cannot be met in captivity.
- Provide a suitable enclosure. The enclosure should be the appropriate size for the species of animal and should provide the animal with enough space to move around, exercise, and engage in natural behaviors.

- Provide a variety of enrichment activities. Enrichment activities help to stimulate animals and prevent them from becoming bored or stressed. Enrichment activities can include toys, puzzles, food puzzles, and opportunities to interact with other animals.
- Handle and transport animals safely. Animals should be handled and transported in a way that minimizes stress and risk of injury.
- Provide veterinary care. Animals should be provided with regular veterinary care to prevent and treat diseases and injuries.

By following these best practices, you can help to ensure the safety and well-being of wildlife in captivity.

Wildlife captivity is a complex issue with both benefits and risks. By understanding the regulations and best practices for keeping wildlife in captivity, you can help to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals in your care.

If you have any questions about the keeping of wildlife in captivity in Ontario, please contact the MNRF.

References

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act

Keeping Wildlife in Captivity

Best Practices for Keeping Wild Animals in Captivity

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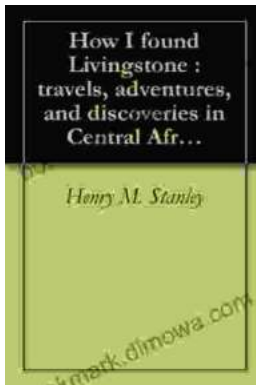
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