



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

January 5, 2015

Testimony on Assembly Bill 333

Thank you Chairman Krug and members of the committee for hearing this bill today. Assembly Bill 333 (AB 333) is written to prohibit private possession of wild animals and to keep Wisconsin communities and their residents safe from dangerous nonnative species.

Currently, Wisconsin is one of only five states that does not have some form of statewide regulation in statutes regarding ownership of wild animals as pets. Certain dangerous species of animals simply do not belong in homes throughout Wisconsin's communities. Some exotic pet owners may eventually realize that they cannot provide a suitable habitat, or that the animal has simply grown to be too big for them to handle. In other cases these types of animals may escape. These situations pose a serious threat to neighborhoods. Since police, animal control, and other emergency personnel are usually the first ones called to the scene, this drains already limited resources from local governments. Recently in Pleasant Prairie, law enforcement were called to a scene and removed a crocodile and two alligators. As we've seen in Milwaukee, when a dangerous nonnative animal is spotted in a neighborhood tremendous local efforts and resources are diverted to the address the situation.

Municipalities, in recognizing the threat these animals pose to communities, have taken it upon themselves to enact prohibitions at the local level. This creates a hodgepodge of inconsistent laws. AB 333 would fix that by creating a statewide law that will bring uniformity and make Wisconsin consistent with other states.

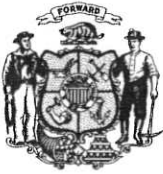
This bill also creates reasonable exemptions for entities that are accredited by various zoological organizations or are registered with, or licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture. In order to acquire a license, the facility must meet a series of guidelines and maintain standards that cover quality care, adequate living space, and sanitation among many others. This bill **does not** require that individuals currently in possession of these dangerous animals give them up. It does, however, require that they register their animal with their municipality.

Animals that fall under this prohibition are nonnative big cats including lions and tigers; nonnative bears, including brown bears and polar bears; apes, including gorillas, chimpanzees, and gibbons; and crocodylians, including alligators, crocodiles, and caimans.

This is a common sense bill that will keep Wisconsin's communities and their first responders safe. It has received wide support from law enforcement and local government groups including

Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21

League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Milwaukee Police Association, Wisconsin Professional Police Association, Wisconsin Realtors Association, and the Wisconsin Animal Control Association. I encourage you to support this legislation as well. Thank you for your consideration.



PRELIMINARY DRAFT - NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION
SENATE AMENDMENT ,
TO SENATE BILL 241

1 At the locations indicated, amend the bill as follows:

2 **1.** Page 5, line 22: delete lines 22 to 25 and substitute:

3 “(2) PROHIBITIONS. Except as provided in sub. (3), no person may possess, import
4 into this state, sell, transfer, or breed a dangerous exotic animal.”.

5 **2.** Page 6, line 1: delete “Subsection (2) (a)” and substitute “Subsection (2)”.

6 **3.** Page 6, line 5: after that line insert:

7 “1m. An entity that is an accredited member of the Zoological Association of
8 America.”.

9 **4.** Page 6, line 19: after that line insert:



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Terry C. Anderson, Director

TO: SENATOR VAN H. WANGGAARD

FROM: ^{MQ} Michael Queensland, Staff Attorney

RE: Description of 2015 Senate Bill 241, Relating to the Possession of Certain Wild Animals and Providing a Penalty, and LRBa0786/P2

DATE: October 1, 2015

2015 Senate Bill 241, "the bill," makes changes to the laws relating to the possession of certain wild animals. This memorandum describes the bill and LRBa0786/P2, "the draft amendment."¹

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AUTHORITY TO REGULATE CAPTIVE WILDLIFE

Current Law

Under current law, the buying, selling, and possession of **native** wild animals is regulated by the state under the captive wildlife law, ch. 169, Stats. The buying, selling, and possession of **non-native** animals, such as lions, tigers, and elephants is generally not prohibited by state law unless the animal is an endangered or threatened species, or is included in the listing of "harmful wild animals," which currently includes bears, cougars, feral hogs, mute swans, and wolf-dog hybrids. With certain exceptions, a person may not possess, take, propagate², sell, purchase, transfer, exhibit, or rehabilitate a harmful wild animal without specific authorization by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In addition, a person may generally not introduce, stock, or release, or import into Wisconsin, any harmful wild animal without specific authorization by the DNR.

¹ A wide variety of federal, state, and local restrictions regulate activities related to wild animals. A discussion of these laws is beyond the scope of this memorandum.

² "Propagate" means "to breed, encourage, or facilitate for the purpose of generating offspring." [s. 169.01 (27), Stats.]

Senate Bill 241

The bill prohibits the DNR from regulating "dangerous exotic animals" as "harmful wild animals" under Wisconsin's captive wildlife law and instead provides that dangerous exotic animals are regulated as described below.³ Under the bill, a "dangerous exotic animal" is a live animal that is any of the following:

- One of the following animals of the family felidae: a lion, tiger, jaguar, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, Sunda clouded leopard, or cheetah, or a hybrid of any of these species.
- One of the following animals of the family ursidae: an Asiatic black bear, brown bear, polar bear, sloth bear, sun bear, giant panda bear, or spectacled bear, or a hybrid of any of these species.
- One of the following animals of the family hominidae: a gorilla, orangutan, chimpanzee, or bonobo.
- One of the following animals of the family hylobatidae: a siamang or gibbon.
- One of the following animals of the order crocodylia: an alligator of any species, crocodile of any species, caiman of any species, or gharial.

PROHIBITION ON THE POSSESSION OR SALE OF DANGEROUS EXOTIC ANIMALS

Senate Bill 241

The bill, with certain exceptions, prohibits the possession, importation into Wisconsin, sale, transfer, or breeding of a dangerous exotic animal (prohibition on the possession or sale of dangerous exotic animals). A person is subject to a forfeiture of up to \$1,000 per animal for violations of this prohibition.

The bill provides that certain persons and entities are exempt from this prohibition, including the following:

- An entity that is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums or that has a contract under a species survival plan of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums for the breeding of species listed as threatened or endangered under 16 U.S.C. s. 1533 (c).
- A zoo that is operated by a municipality or county.
- A circus.⁴

³ The bill also generally eliminates the DNR's authority to regulate non-native bears under Wisconsin's captive wildlife laws that pertain to the exhibition of live wild animals, propagation of wild animals, and captive animal farm licenses.

⁴ Under the bill, "circus" means an entity holding a Class C license as an exhibitor under the federal Animal Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. s. 2131 to 2159, who conducts scheduled events performed by a traveling company that uses

- Circus World Museum.
- A wildlife sanctuary.⁵
- A person operating a research facility that is registered under the federal Animal Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. s. 2131 to 2159.
- A veterinarian licensed under ch. 453, Stats., who is providing treatment to a dangerous exotic animal.
- An individual performing his or her duties as a humane officer or law enforcement officer, a political subdivision on whose behalf a humane officer or law enforcement officer takes a dangerous exotic animal into custody, or a person providing services for the care, treatment or disposal of animals under a contract with a political subdivision.
- A person transporting a dangerous exotic animal through Wisconsin if the dangerous exotic animal is in this state for no longer than 72 hours.

LRBa0786/P2

The draft amendment expands the list of persons and entities that are exempt from the prohibition on the possession or sale of dangerous exotic animals to also include the following:

- An entity that is an accredited member of the Zoological Association of America.
- A person who holds a license from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that allows the person to possess, import into Wisconsin, sell, transfer, or breed a dangerous exotic animal.

APPLICATION OF THE PROHIBITION ON THE POSSESSION OR SALE OF DANGEROUS EXOTIC ANIMALS TO CURRENT OWNERS

Under the bill, a person who owns a dangerous exotic animal on the bill's effective date⁶, but does not qualify for an exemption, may continue to possess that animal if the person does the following:

mobile facilities in which entertainment consisting of a variety of performances by acrobats, clowns, and trained animals is the primary attraction or principal business.

⁵ Under the bill, "wildlife sanctuary" means a nonprofit entity to which all of the following apply:

1. The entity operates a place of refuge where abused, neglected, unwanted, abandoned, orphaned, displaced, or impounded dangerous exotic animals are provided with lifelong care.
2. The entity does not conduct any commercial activity involving a dangerous exotic animal, including the sale, trading, or leasing of dangerous exotic animals or the dead bodies or parts of bodies of dangerous exotic animals or the use of dangerous exotic animals in a for-profit operation.
3. The entity does not use dangerous exotic animals for performances or in a traveling exhibit.
4. The entity does not breed dangerous exotic animals.

⁶ "Every act and every portion of an act enacted by the legislature over the governor's partial veto which does not expressly prescribe the time when it takes effect shall take effect on the day after its date of publication."

- Maintains documentation showing that he or she owned the animal on the bill's effective date.
- Registers the animal with the city, village, or town and pays a registration fee no later than the first day of the seventh month after the bill's effective date.

A person authorized to possess a dangerous exotic animal by this method may transfer the animal to another person who is legally authorized to possess the animal.

LOCAL REGULATION OF DANGEROUS EXOTIC ANIMALS

Current Law

Under current law, a city, village, town, or county may enact and enforce an ordinance that prohibits the possession or selling of live wild animals. [s. 169.43, Stats.]

Senate Bill 241

The bill requires cities, villages, and towns to begin accepting registrations of dangerous exotic animals by the first day of the fourth month after the bill's effective date. Under the bill, a city, village, or town must charge a fee for registering a dangerous exotic animal.

The bill also provides that a city, village, town, or county may enact an ordinance relating to dangerous exotic animals. Such an ordinance must be at least as strict as the requirements provided in the bill that restrict the possession, importation, sale, transfer, or breed of a dangerous exotic animal and the above-mentioned registration requirement.

PROHIBITION ON ALLOWING PUBLIC CONTACT WITH A DANGEROUS EXOTIC ANIMAL

Senate Bill 241

The bill prohibits allowing a member of the public to come into direct contact with a dangerous exotic animal. A person is subject to a forfeiture of up to \$1,000 per animal for violations of this prohibition.

LRBa0786/P2

The draft amendment removes the prohibition against allowing a member of the public to come into direct contact with a dangerous exotic animal.

[s. 991.11, Stats.] The date of publication is the day after the date of enactment. [s. 35.095 (1) (b), Stats.] The bill does not specify an effective date. Therefore, the 2015 Senate Bill 241's effective date is two days after the date of enactment.

ESCAPED DANGEROUS EXOTIC ANIMALS

The bill requires the owner of a dangerous exotic animal to immediately notify local law enforcement if the animal is released or escapes. Under the bill, the owner of a dangerous exotic animal that is released or escapes is liable for the expenses incurred to recapture the animal. The bill also provides that a person is subject to a forfeiture of up to \$1,000 per animal for violations of this prohibition. If the dangerous exotic animal causes property damage or attacks an individual, the person may be required to forfeit up to \$2,000.

TAKING CUSTODY OF DANGEROUS EXOTIC ANIMALS

Current Law

Under current law, a humane officer or law enforcement officer may take custody of an animal if he or she has reasonable grounds to believe that the animal is an abandoned or stray animal, an unwanted animal, a dog that is not tagged, an animal not licensed in compliance with any ordinance, an animal not confined as required by a quarantine order relating to the control of any animal disease, an animal that has caused damage to persons or property, a participant in an animal fight intentionally instigated by any person, an animal mistreated in violation of ch. 951, Stats., or an animal delivered by a veterinarian under certain conditions. [s. 173.13, Stats.]

Senate Bill 241

Under the bill, a humane officer or law enforcement officer may take custody of a dangerous exotic animal that has been possessed, imported into this state, sold, transferred, or bred in violation of the prohibition on the possession or sale of dangerous exotic animals.

HOLDING ANIMALS FOR CAUSE

Current Law

Current law permits a political subdivision to withhold, or direct a person contracting with the political subdivision to withhold, an animal in custody from an owner who makes an otherwise adequate claim for the animal, as described below, on any of the following grounds:

- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the owner has mistreated the animal in violation of ch. 951, Stats.
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the animal poses a significant threat to public health, safety, or welfare.
- The animal may be used as evidence in a pending prosecution.
- A court has ordered the animal withheld for any reason.

The owner of an animal withheld under this provision is not liable for any costs of custody, care, or treatment except as provided by court order. [s. 173.21, Stats.]

Senate Bill 241

The bill permits a political subdivision to withhold an animal from an owner, who makes an otherwise adequate claim for the animal, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the animal that has been illegally possessed, imported into this state, sold, transferred, or bred.

REVIEW OF SEIZURE OR WITHHOLDING

Current Law

Under current law, a person claiming that an animal that he or she owns was improperly taken into custody on the grounds that it is a dog that is not tagged, it is not licensed in compliance with any ordinance, it has caused damage to persons or property, or it has been mistreated, or is wrongfully withheld may seek return of the animal by petitioning for an order from the circuit court for the county in which the animal was taken into custody or in which it is held. The court must hold a hearing on the issue of whether the animal was improperly taken into custody or is wrongfully withheld. [s. 173.22, Stats.]

Senate Bill 241

The bill provides that the petition process provided under current law is available to a person claiming that an animal that he or she owns was improperly taken into custody on the grounds that it is a dangerous exotic animal that has been possessed, imported into this state, sold, transferred, or bred in violation of the prohibition on the possession or sale of dangerous exotic animals.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at the Legislative Council staff offices.

MQ:jal



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

SAMANTHA KERKMAN

**Assembly Bill 333
Wild/Exotic Animals**

Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection
Tuesday, January 5, 2016

Chairman Krug and committee members; thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly 333.

Assembly 333 is common-sense legislation that limits the possession, sale, and propagation of exotic animals in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is currently one of only a handful of states that does not have a state law regulating the private possession of dangerous wild or exotic animals.

Private individuals are most often not equipped to keep lions, tigers, bears, chimpanzees, alligators and other wild or exotic animals as pets. That has not stopped individuals from purchasing these species via the internet. In many cases this results in undue stress or harm to the animals, risk of injury or death to neighbors and community members, and a burden on local law enforcement and municipal resources in responding to exotic animal control calls and managing the interim and long-term placement of captured animals.

A statewide, rather than municipal approach to wild or exotic animal possession regulation is needed to provide consistency and the best possible public safety outcome.

It is not our intention to prevent zoos and other already-regulated entities in Wisconsin from continuing to possess these animals and an amendment to make this clear has been prepared.

In your consideration of AB 333, you may find of interest the additional materials provided: clippings from the Kenosha News of two separate exotic animal incidents within a week, and an article from the Pew Charitable Trusts that contains a map of exotic animal laws by state.

The Pew Charitable Trusts / Research & Analysis / Stateline / Lions, Tigers and Bears Attract State Scrutiny

Stateline

Lions, Tigers and Bears Attract State Scrutiny

September 25, 2015

By Jenni Bergal



Mack Ralbovsky, left, of the Rainforest Reptile Shows, gets assistance from state game wardens Timothy Carey, center, and Wesley Butler as they remove a python from a Vermont home. Many states ban the private ownership of exotic animals or require that owners get licenses or permits.

This summer, Milwaukee residents were captivated by reports of what appeared to be a lion-like creature roaming city neighborhoods. Authorities set up a dragnet and traps, but the big cat was never located.

Wisconsin state Sen. Van Wanggaard, a Republican, wasn't surprised to hear of a wandering wild feline. He already was so concerned about the threat posed by dangerous exotic pets that he'd been crafting a bill to limit private ownership of them.

Wanggaard wants his state to join dozens of others that have passed laws banning or regulating big cats, bears, apes and other exotic pets, which animal welfare advocates say can threaten public safety when they escape and are at risk of being poorly cared for by private owners.

Although it's difficult to determine exactly how many exotic creatures are privately owned, the Humane Society of the United States says they are part of a multibillion-dollar industry. Born Free USA, a wildlife conservation and animal welfare group opposed to private ownership, estimates that between 10,000 and 20,000 big cats alone are in private hands in the U.S. And because the federal government largely leaves it to the states to regulate exotic animals, legislatures have been grappling with the issue.

Since 2013, legislation that deals with exotic pet ownership has been proposed in more than a dozen states, including Wisconsin, according to Born Free. Of the 22 measures filed, 18 have failed and two have passed, including one that created an exemption allowing the owner of a Louisiana truck stop to keep his tiger, Tony, as a roadside attraction. Two remaining measures are pending, including Wanggaard's in Wisconsin and another in Pennsylvania.

Opponents say many owners are ill-equipped to house and care for exotic pets, putting them in cages and enclosures that don't meet the creatures' basic needs.

"Wildlife belongs in the wild. It's risky for everyone involved," said Kate Dylewsky of Born Free. "It's cruel to the animals to keep them in confinement, often isolated from members of their own species. And most people don't have knowledge or the resources to care for these animals properly."

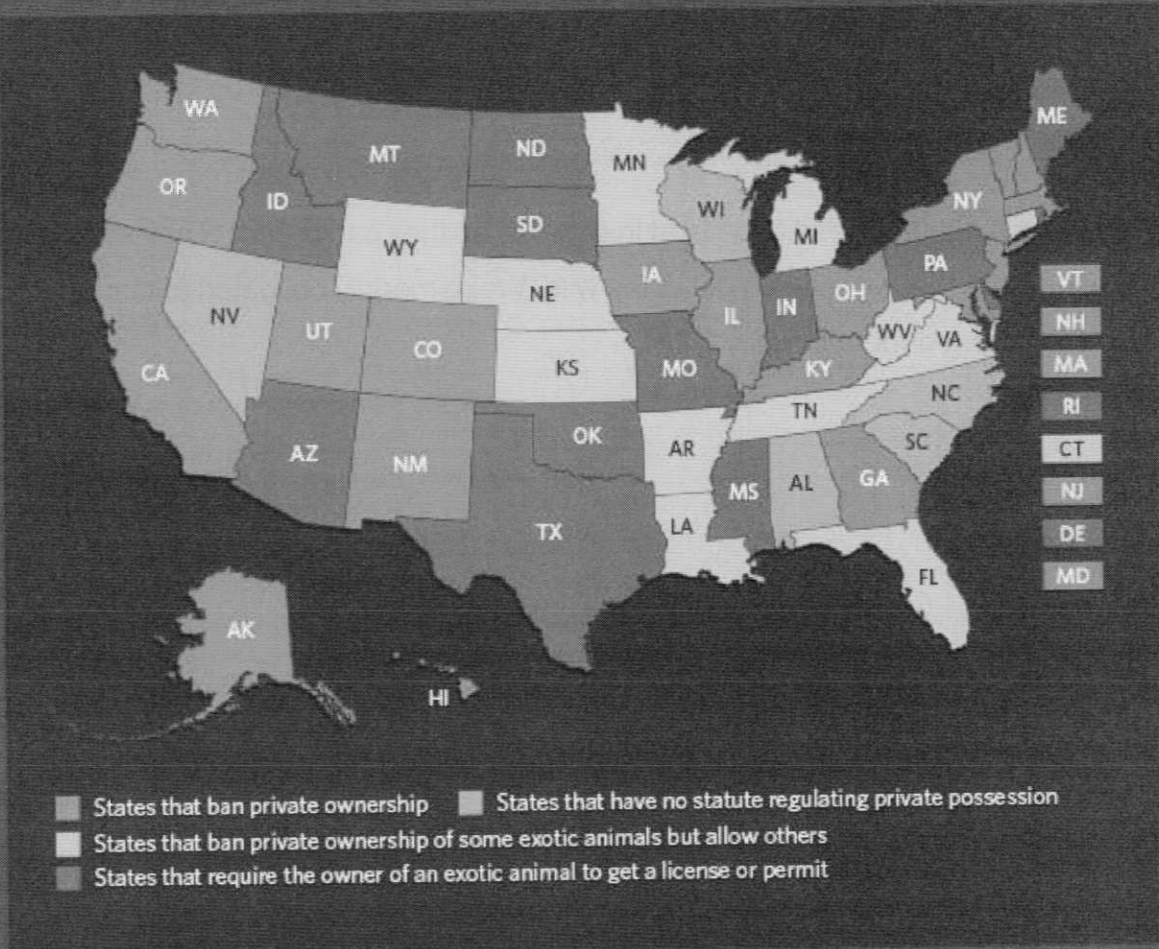
Many exotic pet owners, breeders, private zoos and sanctuaries disagree. They say that state bans can hurt efforts to protect animals. And, some argue, the states shouldn't meddle with an individual's decision about what kinds of pets to keep.

Good regulations could help protect these animals, said Lynn Culver, executive director of the Feline Conservation Federation, which represents owners, breeders, private zoos and sanctuaries that keep wild cats. "But these [ban] laws are designed to stop future generations and clamp down on current populations."

Culver said exotic animals need to be kept in captivity so they can breed. "They are the offspring of animals that were taken out of the wild. We're morally obligated to manage them responsibly for future generations."

Exotic Animal Laws

Nineteen states ban private ownership of dangerous exotic animals. Others have partial bans or allow owners to keep them if they get licenses or permits. Five states have no law regulating ownership.



Source: Born Free USA
© 2015 The Pew Charitable Trusts

States React

Federal laws restrict the sale and transportation of some exotic and wild animals, but don't generally address private ownership. That falls to the states, which take a variety of approaches.

Some state laws specify which species are banned or regulated. The Wisconsin proposal lists several types of exotic animals that would be considered dangerous—including non-native big cats and bears, gorillas, chimpanzees, alligators and crocodiles. Others are more general, said David Favre, a professor at the Michigan State University College of Law and director of the Animal Legal & Historical Center, a website devoted to animals and the law.

“It usually takes some horrible event in a state, where people say, ‘How did you let this happen?’ for the legislature to act,” Favre said.

That’s what occurred in Zanesville, Ohio, after a suicidal man released more than 50 big cats, bears, primates and wolves in 2011. Police and animal control officers tried to use tranquilizers, but couldn’t control the situation and were forced to kill most of the animals.

At the time, Ohio had no law dealing with dangerous exotic pets. After the Zanesville incident, the Legislature in 2012 banned their possession or acquisition. Those who already owned such pets were allowed to keep them, but they had to apply for permits and comply with safety and care standards.

In Connecticut, the Legislature amended its law in 2009 to ban the private ownership of some primates after an incident that year in which a woman was blinded, lost both hands and had much of her face ripped off by her friend’s 200-pound pet chimp.

Wisconsin is one of five states without a law regulating the private ownership of dangerous exotic animals, according to Born Free. Fourteen states require licenses or permits. Twelve allow ownership of some exotic animals but prohibit others. And 19 have bans on a number of species.

Last year, West Virginia, which had not had a law, passed a measure that prohibited private possession of lions, tigers, bears, elephants and most primates. Owners were grandfathered in, provided they are registered. The rules went into effect earlier this year.

“When you don’t have any checks and balances in place, it was wide open for people bringing these exotic animals into our little state,” said former Democratic Del. Randy Swartzmiller, who introduced the bill. “The majority of the Legislature saw this as a bill that was not only going to protect people but also the well-being of these animals.”

But bills restricting or regulating exotic animal ownership often die in state legislatures. This year, six measures failed—in Indiana, Kansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia and Wyoming—according to Born Free.

“In some of these states, it’s very hard to have a conversation about it,” said Born Free’s Dylewsky.

To pass laws, legislators and the public often must be educated about the potential threats to public safety and the animals’ well-being, said Nicole Paquette, vice president of wildlife for the Humane Society. Also, debates about which animals should be covered by new laws are usually heated.

Zuzana Kukol, co-founder of REXANO, or Responsible Exotic Animal Ownership, a nonprofit that advocates for exotic pet owners’ rights, opposes bans, saying they don’t really work. “Do bans on drugs or prostitution work? If people want it, they’re going to get it.”

Kukol, who with her fiance lives in rural Nevada and owns lions, tigers, bobcats, cougars and other exotic animals, dismisses the public safety argument. “The regular population isn’t getting killed by tigers and lions on the way to the store,” she said. “They’re much more likely to be killed by a drunk driver.”

Kukol said that many counties and cities already have regulations governing exotic animal ownership. In her area, she said, the county does an inspection every year and requires her to get an annual permit.

“I don’t think states should micromanage,” Kukol said. “They should take care of the roads, not worry about exotics. They are not telling me how many dogs or horses I can have.”

Strain on Resources

Wanggaard, who introduced the Wisconsin measure last month, points to a case in Kenosha two years ago. Police were called to a house where they found five rattlesnakes, a crocodile, two alligators and a poisonous Gila monster, and, dead in the backyard, an alligator and a snake. While these types of incidents have cropped up over the years, Wanggaard said, the recent Milwaukee lion scare might be the impetus needed to pass legislation.

Under his proposal, private possession of many dangerous exotic animals would be prohibited. Those who already own them would be able to keep them—but not to acquire any others—if their municipality allows it and they are registered. The proposal would exempt accredited zoos, wildlife sanctuaries and circuses.

A police officer for 30 years, Wanggaard said that he recalls times when police would respond to domestic violence calls and, arriving at a home, find a bear or an 8-foot alligator. “Not only is it dangerous for the officer, but these animals often aren’t being maintained in a humane way.”

Wanggaard said that exotic pets also put a strain on emergency services, noting that in Milwaukee this summer, 30 or 40 officers were busy trying to corral the lion.

Wanggaard, who is vice chairman of the Senate majority caucus, said that if his bill becomes law, authorities will have a better handle on where exotic animals are located and whether they’re legally allowed.

“We have hours of discussion in our towns and villages about somebody raising five chickens in their backyard,” he said. “We’re regulating that, but we won’t regulate it if you have a lion or a baboon in your basement.”

[NEXT POST >](#)

[Editor's Picks From Around the Web](#)

[< PREV POST](#)

[Editor's Picks From Around the Web](#)

Sunday night stroll? Alligator found loose, captured in Kenosha

BY JESSICA TUTTLE
jtuttle@kenoshanews.com

An alligator found loose in Kenosha Sunday night was later captured.

A Kenosha resident reported seeing a large lizard in the 4600 block of 19th Place around 11 p.m. on Sunday, according to Kenosha police reports. He was able to take a photo of the animal, and police determined it was an alligator.

Officers responded to the area and found the alligator in a ditch

line along 47th Avenue south of 19th Place. It was captured and held in a crate before it was transported to the Racine Zoo.

Zoo staff identified the reptile as an American alligator, approximately 4 to 7 years old. It measured about 3 feet long and was approximately 20 pounds.

Gianna O'Keefe, marketing and resource development manager for the Racine Zoo, said the facility is temporarily housing the alligator

with the reptiles that were removed from an apparently abandoned Kenosha residence last week.

O'Keefe said there is a need for education on how to safely surrender animals. The Racine Zoo plans to meet with an animal conservation team and veterinarian today to provide education and options for owners in need of help.

"We're happy to take the animals, but it's important for people who can't care for their pets to find the

right outlets in those situations," O'Keefe said.

Police were unable to identify where the alligator found Sunday came from and do not believe it is related to the recent investigation of reptiles found at 1404 53rd St. on May 14.

The live animals taken from the site included five rattlesnakes, two 4- to 5-foot American alligators, a crocodile, an alligator snapping turtle and a Gila monster.

O'Keefe said a veterinarian will be conducting an in-depth checkup on all the reptiles from Kenosha today. They are not expecting to find any surprises, but they hope to verify the species and good health of the animals.

O'Keefe said the other reptiles are doing well and started eating again this weekend. The alligator snapping turtle has especially shown improvement, as it seems much happier and less stressed, she said.



KENOSHA NEWS PHOTO BY SEAN KRAJACIC

With help from the Racine Zoo, a Kenosha Police officer takes reptiles from a home in the 1400 block of 53rd Street on Tuesday morning.

KENOSHA NEWS - WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2013 - A1

Dangerous reptiles found

Animals removed include Gila monster, crocodile

BY JESSICA TUTTLE
jtuttle@kenoshanews.com

Several live and potentially dangerous reptiles were removed from a Kenosha home Tuesday during an animal cruelty investigation.

Kenosha Police Department officers who went to the residence at 1404 53rd St. at 4:19 p.m. Monday after a complaint of possible animal cruelty found several dead and living reptiles.

While investigating, officers found what appeared to be a 3- to 4-foot skeleton of an alligator in a large aquarium, the body of a large, burned snake lying in some weeds, a dead 4- to 5-foot alligator and the carcass of a fawn, according to police.

Inside the home, officers found several aquariums of various sizes, one of which contained a live, large Gila monster. Another aquarium

contained a live 4- to 5-foot crocodile. Police said several live snakes also were located in other containers in the residence.

In the basement, officers found two 6- to 8-foot live alligators in a homemade, indoor pond and a very large snapping turtle in a tub, according to police.

Among the items removed from the property were three large rubbermaid totes sealed with tape and a large open tub. The bins contained two alligators and a crocodile, and the tub held the large alligator snapping turtle.

Lt. Brad Kemen of the Kenosha Police Department said Tuesday that no one had been charged for any crime related to the case and it is unclear whether there will be charges.

"It depends on what kind of animals were in the house and what kind of conditions

they were in," he said.

Jay Christie, president and CEO of the Racine Zoo, said owners may potentially face local ordinance violations.

Small, nonpoisonous reptiles are among the domesticated or wild animals defined in Kenosha's city ordinance. However, a Gila monster would not be allowed in the city under the ordinance because it is poisonous. In addition, the animals measuring up to 8 feet in length would probably not be considered small.

Some live animals removed from the property were taken to the Racine Zoo on Tuesday, including five Central American rattlesnakes, two alligators, a crocodile, the large male alligator snapping turtle and the venomous Gila monster, Christie said.

"Their overall general health appeared to be adequate," he said. "There was nothing in there that

appeared to be critically endangered."

Christie said the Racine Zoo will care for the animals as long as it can, but the fate of the animals will be decided by the courts. It was unlikely the animals would be displayed at the zoo, he said.

Brian Berthelsen, who lives in the 5300 block of 14th Avenue, said he was bringing in groceries when he saw several squads pull up to his neighbor's home. He immediately turned on a police scanner on his phone and heard word of dead animal carcasses and exotic animals in the home.

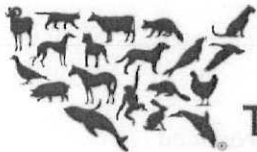
He said two police squads parked outside of the house all night and caution tape around the house.

"It's amazing what your neighbors can be doing without you knowing," Berthelsen said. "Nobody knew what he was doing in there."

In addition to the Racine Zoo, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is helping with the live animals recovered from the property.

The investigation is ongoing, police said.





**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Wisconsin State Senate
Committee on Consumer Protection – AB 333**

Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.
Chair of the Board

Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Vice Chair

Jason Weiss
Second Vice Chair

Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.
Board Treasurer

Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO

Michael Markarian
Chief Program & Policy Officer

G. Thomas Waite III
Treasurer & CFO

Andrew N. Rowan, Ph.D.
*Chief International Officer
& Chief Scientific Officer*

Roger A. Kindler
*General Counsel
Vice President & CLO*

Amy C. Rodgers
Secretary

DIRECTORS

Jeffrey J. Arciniaco
Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.
Erika Brunson
Jerry Cesak
Anita W. Coupe, Esq.
Neil B. Fang, Esq., CPA
Jane Greenspun Gale
Amanda Hearst
Cathy Kangas
Paula A. Kislak, D.V.M.
Charles A. Laue
Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.
John Mackey
Mary I. Max
Patrick L. McDonnell
C. Thomas McMillen
Judy Ney
Sharon Lee Patrick
Marsha R. Perelman
Marian G. Probst
Jonathan M. Ratner
Joshua S. Reichert, Ph.D.
Walter J. Stewart, Esq.
Andrew Weinstein
Jason Weiss
David O. Wiebers, M.D.

January 5, 2016

Chairman Krug and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Melissa Tedrowe and I am the Wisconsin State Director for The Humane Society of the United States. On behalf of HSUS and our supporters in Wisconsin, I urge the committee to support Assembly Bill 333, as introduced, and without adding any amendments that would compromise public safety.

A.B. 333 will prohibit the future private ownership of certain dangerous exotic animals – namely, non-native big cats and bears, apes, alligators, and crocodiles. The bill has reasonable exemptions for zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), municipal zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, research facilities, and circuses. People who currently possess the handful of species named in the bill can keep them until the animals die, but they will not be allowed to acquire replacements.

Dangerous exotic animals can cause death, inflict serious injury, and spread deadly diseases. They require substantial space, specialized husbandry, safe handling, escape-proof housing, and costly care during lifespans that can run several decades. Keeping these animals in substandard environments not only poses a danger to people, it places animals who can live 20, 30, or even 60 years in sad and miserable conditions. The average person simply does not have the knowledge or resources to provide proper, safe, and humane long-term care for species such as tigers, lions, and chimpanzees.

An element of A.B. 333 that my organization especially supports is its prohibition on public contact. Public contact with certain dangerous wild animals is unsafe especially for children; it's also harmful to animals and leads to excessive breeding of species like tigers, which are commonly used in photo ops when they are young. A tiger exhibitor that offers year-round public handling with cubs produces an estimated three dozen tigers annually, contributing to the enormous surplus of captive tigers in the U.S. The more captive big cats kept in a state, the greater the chances of an escape or attack.

Besides obvious physical dangers associated with public contact, there are hidden dangers as well. Wild animals can spread deadly viral, bacterial, fungal, and parasitic infections that pose serious health risks to humans. The HSUS has documented diseased animals, such as tiger cubs with parasitic and fungal infections, being used for public contact. Rabies is another concern, since rabies vaccines are not legally approved for use in wild animals.


The ban on public contact with certain dangerous wild animals included in A.B. 333 as introduced has widespread support, including from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, the Wisconsin Hospital Association, and numerous agencies that represent law enforcement and emergency responders.

The bill as a whole is endorsed by a long list of Wisconsin organizations including the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Public Health Association, Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards, Wisconsin Realtors' Association, Wisconsin Professional Police Association, Milwaukee Police Association, Milwaukee Professional Firefighters Association, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Milwaukee County Zoo, Racine Zoo, Henry Vilas Zoo, NEW Zoo, International Crane Foundation, Wisconsin Animal Control Association, and Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies. Other supporters include the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Born Free USA, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, and Performing Animal Welfare Society.

Wisconsin is currently one of only five states with almost no laws concerning the private possession of dangerous exotic animals. In fact, Wisconsin is surrounded by states with stronger laws and will likely attract a growing and expensive problem as the rest of the country continues to crack down on this issue.

A.B. 333 will finally put in place a state law that prohibits keeping dangerous exotic animals as pets. We urge you to support this bill and to preserve the bill's ban on public contact.

Thank you,



Melissa Tedrowe
Wisconsin State Director
mtedrowe@humanesociety.org
608-572-3122



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.
Chair of the Board

Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Vice Chair

Jason Weiss
Second Vice Chair

Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.
Board Treasurer

Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO

Michael Markarian
Chief Program & Policy Officer

G. Thomas Waite III
Treasurer & CFO

Andrew N. Rowan, Ph.D.
*Chief International Officer
& Chief Scientific Officer*

Roger A. Kindler
*General Counsel
Vice President & CLO*

Amy C. Rodgers
Secretary

DIRECTORS

Jeffrey J. Arciniaco

Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.

Erika Brunson

Jerry Cesak

Anita W. Coupe, Esq.

Neil B. Fang, Esq., CPA

Jane Greenspun Gale

Amanda Hearst

Cathy Kangas

Paula A. Kislak, D.V.M.

Charles A. Laue

Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.

Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.

John Mackey

Mary I. Max

Patrick L. McDonnell

C. Thomas McMillen

Judy Ney

Sharon Lee Patrick

Marsha R. Perelman

Marian G. Probst

Jonathan M. Ratner

Joshua S. Reichert, Ph.D.

Walter J. Stewart, Esq.

Andrew Weinstein

Jason Weiss

David O. Wiebers, M.D.

**Wisconsin State Senate
Committee on Consumer Protection – AB 333**

January 5, 2016

Chairman Krug and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Debbie Leahy and I am manager of Captive Wildlife Protection for The Humane Society of the United States. On behalf of HSUS and our supporters in Wisconsin, I urge the committee to support Assembly Bill 333, as introduced, and without adding exemptions that substantially weaken the bill.

This sensible legislation will protect public safety and promote animal welfare by limiting the future private ownership of dangerous exotic animals to qualified facilities, such as zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

We urge you to reject any amendments that would add exemptions for facilities accredited by the Zoological Association of America (ZAA) or for facilities licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. ZAA is an organization that accredits poorly-run roadside zoos that fail to meet AZA's more comprehensive and stringent standards. ZAA counts among its facilities and members individuals who have been convicted of felonies, wildlife trafficking, and cruelty to animals.

Attempts to exempt ZAA facilities from state dangerous wild animal laws were defeated in California, Louisiana, Michigan, Texas, and less than two months ago in Clark County, Nevada, where two ZAA backyard menageries have caused a significant burden to county officials over safety and code violations.

ZAA facilities offer unsafe public contact with 90-pound bears, as well as tiger and lion cubs and even chimpanzees and orangutans. People have been critically injured and suffered permanent disabilities from attacks by animals ranging from elephants to big cats to chimpanzees at facilities operated by ZAA members.

ZAA's deficiencies are clearly illustrated in one of the organization's own accreditation inspection reports. Included with this testimony is an example of a ZAA inspection of Wright Park Zoo, a facility with 126 animals that includes big cats, bears, and primates. The inspection was conducted by a ZAA co-founder and the zoo's own veterinarian, rather than an independent team with no affiliation to the facility. The inspection took just 2½ hours, which is an insufficient amount of time to conduct a thorough inspection of a facility's animals, enclosures and buildings, protocols and records, as well as

conduct staff interviews. Since ZAA's inadequate accreditation inspection, the USDA has cited Wright Park Zoo for 30 violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including 13 citations for cages in disrepair, 4 citations for failure to address the psychological well-being of primates, and 3 citations for poor sanitation. Despite these problems with both the ZAA and the USDA inspections, this facility continues doing business as usual. This is a clear example of the inadvisability of weakening AB 333 to exempt ZAA and USDA facilities.

Similarly, a blanket exemption for USDA licensees would render the bill ineffective since pet owners can easily acquire a USDA exhibitor license to circumvent the intent of the state law. Further, the federal Animal Welfare Act is weak and poorly enforced by an understaffed agency. With only 126 inspectors who are responsible for inspecting more than 10,000 facilities, there are not nearly enough USDA inspectors to provide regular oversight. USDA licensees can—and do—keep animals in inhumane and unsafe conditions, yet still be in compliance with federal standards. USDA licenses are easy to obtain, but difficult for the agency to revoke and licenses are automatically renewed every year, even when a licensee has had serious or repeated violations.

We have proposed an alternative amendment that would essentially grandfather all existing USDA licensees that currently exhibit dangerous exotic species and that meet some basic criteria relating to public safety and animal care. This compromise would mitigate opposition to the bill by a number of private owners while preventing the problem in Wisconsin from getting worse.

Restricting especially dangerous species to qualified, professionally-run, and fiscally-responsible facilities is fair, reasonable, and necessary. We urge your support for AB 333.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Leahy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Leahy
Manager, Captive Wildlife Protection
dleahy@humanesociety.org
630-393-9627

ZAA Accreditation Inspection Analysis Wright Park Zoo in Dodge City, Kansas

The ZAA accreditation inspection of Wright Park Zoo was conducted by ZAA co-founder Jim Fouts and Wright Park Zoo's veterinarian, Dr. Darin Huck. Since half of the 2-person inspection team was affiliated with Wright Park Zoo, there was a built-in bias to the inspection process. In contrast, AZA does not allow inspection team members to be affiliated with the zoo that is being inspected.

The ZAA inspection took just 2½ hours, which is an insufficient amount of time to conduct a thorough inspection of a facility's animal enclosures and buildings, animals, protocols and records, as well as conduct staff interviews. Even for a small facility, an AZA accreditation inspection would take a minimum of two days.

Inspectors with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and casual zoo visitors have observed more deficiencies at Wright Park Zoo than the ZAA inspectors. Since ZAA's accreditation inspection of Wright Park Zoo, the USDA has cited the zoo for 30 violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including 13 citations for cages in disrepair (such as a tiger cage with a broken weld), 4 citations for failure to address the psychological well-being of primates, and 3 citations for poor sanitation. And visitors to Wright Park Zoo who posted reviews on TripAdvisor describe the zoo as "Small, outdated, and not at all well kept," "with a lot of concrete and bars," "not organized," and "animals looking kinda grim."

The narrative from the ZAA inspection regarding safety procedures at Wright Park Zoo, which possesses big cats, bears, and primates, simply states, "While not the bible some zoos produce, [it] is to the point. Could be a bit more specific." This indifference to safety measures is consistent with ZAA's animal handling practices that allow unsafe public contact with 90-pound bears, tiger and lion cubs, chimpanzees and orangutans, and even elephants, the fact that ZAA does not require accredited facilities to have insurance protection for visitors, staff, and volunteers, and there is no review of staff training and protocols for the use of capture equipment.

In total, AZA inspectors review 56 items related to safety and security versus just four for ZAA's inspection of the Wright Park Zoo.

The ZAA inspection report for Wright Park Zoo would lead a reasonable person to assume that the zoo could not qualify for accreditation. In 19 of 20 categories the zoo was rated as merely satisfactory or in need of correction. The report clearly stated that the zoo was insufficiently staffed and even the medical care and nutritional needs of the zoo's animals—the very services provided by one of the ZAA inspectors—were considered only satisfactory. Yet, astoundingly, the zoo was granted accreditation.

ZAA's representations that the organization is comparable to AZA are misleading, at best. As Steven Feldman, a spokesman for the AZA, stated in a *Detroit Free Press* article, "You can't just rearrange the letters and expect it to have the same meaning. ... We [the AZA] are recognized by governments all over the world as setting the standard for zoos."

Zoological Association of America

Accreditation Program - Inspection Form

New Renewal

Facility Name: Wright Park Zoo

Address: P O Box 880

City: Dodge City

State: KS Zip: 67801

Owner/Manager: Tony Hornberger

Is this facility Public Private Educational

Inspection Date: 8/26/10

Inspector # 1: Jim Fouts

Inspector # 2: DR Darin Huck

Start Time/Date: 10:45

Finish Time/Date: 1:15

Recommendation of Inspection Team:

Approve: Deny: Table:

Remarks We recommend approval

J Fouts 8/26/10

Darin Huck 8/26/10

1.) Physical Facilities:

A.) How are the animals maintained? Describe the physical facilities, islands, aviaries, pastures, buildings, etc. Attach photos.

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks photos enclosed. Overall some facilities are old - (tigers, bears etc) but are well maintained & clean. A variety of other facilities for primates, sm mammals are well kept

B.) What is the overall condition and appearance of the facilities?

Need to correct * Satisfactory Excellent _____

(If this is a public facility, is it attractively laid out? Is it designed for people and animals?)

Remarks *I would suggest that the marmoset facility indoors be rebuilt to give animals & keepers more vertical space (both sides) of this room should be redone. New bison yard to be constructed should have a catch pen/alleyway to be able to handle & work on the bison.

C.) Is there a regular program for building, mechanical, exhibit, and ground maintenance?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks The facility is maintained by city crews and is reasonably well kept. Keepers mow grass & maintain exhibits.

2.) Collection type:

A.) Number of specimens: Birds 90 Mammals 34 Reptiles 0

B.) Number of species: Birds 21 Mammals 18 Reptiles 0

3.) Level of Animal Care:

A.) Are the number of specimens and/or species appropriate for the size of the exhibits?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Seem to be OK

B.) How many care for the collection? 2 Is this adequate? yes

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Actually 1 Fulltime, 1 3/4 time. While the zoo looks nice the keepers sometimes work 7 days a week partial days so not to exceed 40 hrs. The zoo really should have at least one other part time position -

C.) Knowledge of personnel actually maintaining the collection.

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Supervisor Tony has been at the zoo 3 1/2 yrs, assistant keeper working 5 years -

D.) Does the veterinary care provided for the animal collection appear sufficient?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Yes - Dr Huck has a special interest in the zoo and does alot of work pro bono as the zoo has a small veterinary budget.

E.) Is the institution's preventative medicine program adequate and implemented?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Practices regular deworming program ^{Vet} does regular walkthrus with supervisor, vacinates for prevention (west nile, rabies, et)

F.) In the event of an emergency, when the veterinarian is not on premises, is the response time adequate?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks 3 vet in clinic that serve the zoo + 24 on call service

4.) Collection Diets:

A.) Are the nutritional requirements of the collection being met?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks consults regularly with vet & zoo colleagues, attends conferences

B.) How are the nutritional needs of the collection determined?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks thru consultation with vet & other zoos, & conferences

C.) Food storage areas, pest control.

Remarks good storage & pest control, freezers clean

5.) Security - Risk Management Plan:

A.) Are there safety procedures for the animal collection, visitors and Staff? Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks attached - while not the bible some zoos produce is to the point. Could be a bit more specific

B.) Is there a safety plan for animal escapes?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks see above - attached

C.) Is there a safety plan for disasters both natural and man-made?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks see above - attached

D.) Is there a provision for the collection beyond the owner's life?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory _____ Excellent _____

Remarks N.A. City zoo

6.) Recorded Collection Data:

A.) Are animal health files maintained and up to date?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Dr Duck maintains health records at clinic, copies kept in zoo office

B.) Is acquisition and disposition information kept on file?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory _____ Excellent

Remarks files available in office and seem to be complete

C.) Is reproduction information of the collection recorded?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks Yes - breeding limited as zoo is small

D.) How are collection specimens individually identified?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks New animals (mammals) microchipped, birds mostly common/domestic species so no IDs given

7.) Licensing and Permits:

A.) Are all appropriate permits and inspections on file and current?

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks USDA permit 48-C-0140 attached - no other permits required

8.) Continuing Education:

A.) Membership in other organizations. Subscriptions to industry publications. Attendance at conferences, seminars or symposiums

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory Excellent _____

Remarks AAZK, ZAA Conference

B.) Involvement in environmental, educational, conservation programs.

Need to correct _____ Satisfactory _____ Excellent _____

Remarks No - very small zoo

9.) Educational Facilities:

A.) Are the programs held on-site , off-site _____, both _____?

B.) How many presentations are averaged a year? 10

C.) Who are the audiences? Mostly grade school, some developmental groups

D.) Who performs the presentations. (owner, paid staff, volunteers)

Supervisor

E.) How are presenters trained? no formal training, observing other zoo programs & working with educators

F.) If off-site presentations are done, how are the vehicles designed? Are they safe and provide comfort for the animals? How is food and water transported/stored for the animals?

NA

- G.) Is the public allowed contact with the animals? Yes , No
 If so, what are the policies and procedures when there is contact?
Goats/sheep/llama thru or over fence, No contact in enclosure
- H.) Are Class I animals used in presentations? Yes , No
 If so describe the safety policies.
- I.) For on-site presentations, are they performed in classrooms, arenas, outdoor stages? Tours of facility
- J.) What other educational materials are used in programs?
Only graphics & animal artifacts -

10.) Total number of employees: Full time 2 Part time 1-3/4 time

Remarks ① The Zoo could use a few more animals - has some empty enclosures.
② Certainly should have at least one more part time employee
③ Could work to develop & cultivate an education program.
This has NOT been done to date probably due to lack of time required due to short staffing

Questions may be routinely added or deleted from the above by the Board of Directors. Further, the Accreditation committee may add any information concerning the Applicant or their Inspection Evaluation that they deem important. The Accreditation Committee may, at its discretion, allow the Applicant time to correct/improve deficiencies.

Evaluations for Accredited Members shall occur every 5 years or as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

INSPECTORS- Please feel free to attach any additional materials, permits, licenses, brochures or narrative that you feel will be helpful in judging this facility.



January 4, 2016

Honorable Scott Krug
Room 207 North
State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

RE: AB 333

Dear Chairman Krug:

The Zoological Association of America in its current form is only eleven years old, but has earned a reputation which has allowed its accredited facilities to be recognized on the same basis as other usually exempted facilities from acquisition, possession and breeding restrictions in legislation designed to prohibit keeping wild animals as pets. We do not condone keeping of wild animals as pets. However we do have facilities managed by professionals which would be negatively impacted by the proposed legislation without amendment.

The clear trend in the states considering laws to curtail the possession of dangerous animals as pets is to exempt accredited facilities like the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) institutions, the ZAA accredited facilities (highest level of ZAA facility membership) circuses, research facilities, veterinary facilities, law enforcement, motion picture companies and so forth. Every state that has passed wild and dangerous animal legislation since the well-publicized disaster in Ohio in 2011 has included ZAA accredited facilities among the list of exemptions.

Arkansas, Arizona and a major county in South Carolina enacted our exemption last year, and there was not a single vote against it in committee in either house in Texas. Unfortunately, it became part of a much bigger package in a conference committee and died on the last day of session. The ZAA exemption was adopted into a bill written by animal rights activists by a vote of 78-34 in Illinois in May of last year. Our exemption was included during the 2015-16 legislative session in bills that have passed at least one house in North Carolina and Kansas. West Virginia adopted our caging standards by statute almost a year ago. In 67 hours of hearings in Ohio our exemption was in the initial draft of the exotic animal legislation put together by the governor's working group, and was never seriously questioned by the lawmakers.

Some highly acclaimed zoological facilities in the nation, like the Fort Worth Zoo, the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, Metro Richmond Zoo, Southwicks Zoo, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center and the Center for Conservation of Tropical Ungulates are ZAA members. The Downtown Aquarium Houston joined in November. Some of the most popular tourist attractions in the country, like Six Flags parks in New Jersey and California, Jungle Island in Florida, and Virginia Safari Park are ZAA members.

Wildwood Wildlife Park in Minocqua is an accredited facility, and would be gradually put out of business without the ability to possess, acquire and breed exotic animals. ZAA accredited facilities host over 10 million visitors a year and some of the best-known animal experts in the country like Jack Hanna and Jim Fowler are ZAA professional members.

Some of the animal rights activists have supported only an exemption for the larger and older AZA, and assert that our standards are in some nonspecific way not as effective. Since we have the best safety record in the industry and there are a handful of institutions that are accredited by both associations, this doesn't make sense; but we invite you to investigate this for yourself. Our policies and standards are attached, along with a brief comparison.

The ZAA is also recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for our efforts to improve and maintain animal welfare in collections throughout the country, and by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for our conservation programs for species such as cheetahs, mandrills and siamangs.

We have 64 accredited facilities around the country and members in 41 states and 5 countries. That is five more than we had in August when I testified in the Senate. None of them is creating or has created any problem with visitors or with the animals in their collections, and we have never experienced a single human fatality in our accredited facilities.

Please consider our case to be included with the other exemptions, and if there are questions that cannot be answered during tomorrow's public hearing, our staff is available any time night or day to answer them.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. B. Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan B Smith
Executive Director

Attachments (2)



January 4, 2016

Honorable Scott Krug
Room 207 North
State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

RE: AB 333

Dear Chairman Krug:

The Zoological Association of America in its current form is only eleven years old, but has earned a reputation which has allowed its accredited facilities to be recognized on the same basis as other usually exempted facilities from acquisition, possession and breeding restrictions in legislation designed to prohibit keeping wild animals as pets. We do not condone keeping of wild animals as pets. However we do have facilities managed by professionals which would be negatively impacted by the proposed legislation without amendment.

The clear trend in the states considering laws to curtail the possession of dangerous animals as pets is to exempt accredited facilities like the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) institutions, the ZAA accredited facilities (highest level of ZAA facility membership) circuses, research facilities, veterinary facilities, law enforcement, motion picture companies and so forth. Every state that has passed wild and dangerous animal legislation since the well-publicized disaster in Ohio in 2011 has included ZAA accredited facilities among the list of exemptions.

Arkansas, Arizona and a major county in South Carolina enacted our exemption last year, and there was not a single vote against it in committee in either house in Texas. Unfortunately, it became part of a much bigger package in a conference committee and died on the last day of session. The ZAA exemption was adopted into a bill written by animal rights activists by a vote of 78-34 in Illinois in May of last year. Our exemption was included during the 2015-16 legislative session in bills that have passed at least one house in North Carolina and Kansas. West Virginia adopted our caging standards by statute almost a year ago. In 67 hours of hearings in Ohio our exemption was in the initial draft of the exotic animal legislation put together by the governor's working group, and was never seriously questioned by the lawmakers.

Some highly acclaimed zoological facilities in the nation, like the Fort Worth Zoo, the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, Metro Richmond Zoo, Southwicks Zoo, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center and the Center for Conservation of Tropical Ungulates are ZAA members. The Downtown Aquarium Houston joined in November. Some of the most popular tourist attractions in the country, like Six Flags parks in New Jersey and California, Jungle Island in Florida, and Virginia Safari Park are ZAA members.

Wildwood Wildlife Park in Minocqua is an accredited facility, and would be gradually put out of business without the ability to possess, acquire and breed exotic animals. ZAA accredited facilities host over 10 million visitors a year and some of the best-known animal experts in the country like Jack Hanna and Jim Fowler are ZAA professional members.


Some of the animal rights activists have supported only an exemption for the larger and older AZA, and assert that our standards are in some nonspecific way not as effective. Since we have the best safety record in the industry and there are a handful of institutions that are accredited by both associations, this doesn't make sense; but we invite you to investigate this for yourself. Our policies and standards are attached, along with a brief comparison.

The ZAA is also recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for our efforts to improve and maintain animal welfare in collections throughout the country, and by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for our conservation programs for species such as cheetahs, mandrills and siamangs.

We have 64 accredited facilities around the country and members in 41 states and 5 countries. That is five more than we had in August when I testified in the Senate. None of them is creating or has created any problem with visitors or with the animals in their collections, and we have never experienced a single human fatality in our accredited facilities.

Please consider our case to be included with the other exemptions, and if there are questions that cannot be answered during tomorrow's public hearing, our staff is available any time night or day to answer them.

Yours truly,



Alan B Smith
Executive Director

Attachments (2)

January 5th, 2016
Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection
AB 333 Hearing Testimony
Renee Benell

Hello Representatives,

My name is Renee Benell and I'm from Fitchburg, Wisconsin. Thank you for the opportunity to share our opinions on Assembly Bill 333. I'm here to urge you to vote yes on the bill and as it was originally introduced. I oppose any amendments that would dilute the bill's original intent.

I have a degree in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin. I worked as animal keeper at an AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) accredited zoological institution for several years. During my career within the zoological field, I cared for a wide variety of African and South American species, including some of the species addressed within this particular bill.

Throughout my training and experiences as an animal keeper, I was made well aware of, and witnessed the danger these animals can pose to humans. They have instincts and behaviors that must be managed carefully and responsibly to avoid injury and incident. These animals require extreme standards of care and management that cannot be accommodated by the average person. They have evolved without human interference in nature and have needs that humans typically cannot replicate. Many accredited zoos are challenged to meet the needs of these wild animals in captivity. Diet, exercise, social interactions, enrichment and more can all be factors. Private ownership scenarios and roadside zoos typically face an even greater challenge meeting those needs.

Although I loved my job and as an animal keeper, I eventually came to see some downfalls to the animal's lives in captivity and I was fortunate to work at one of the most highly regarded AZA facilities. Many people might argue that animals who are born in captivity don't know a captive life any differently than a life in the wild, but I'd argue otherwise. Their DNA's foundation was built upon thousands and millions of years of evolution. Crocodillians have existed for over 83 millions years! Placing them in poorly confined environments is not in their best interest.

Currently the state of Wisconsin does not have any restrictions regarding the ownership of exotic species. This is not a responsible approach and there are dozens of documented situations, which demonstrate the public safety issues that arise. Exotic species are also sold through the wildlife trade, an industry filled with cruelty, inhumane methods and crime.

My support of AB 333 also stems from my experience working for two large animal welfare organizations (humane societies) within the Midwest – one right here in Wisconsin. Humane societies and animal control entities encounter exotic animal

ownership situations on a regular basis. When people choose to abandon, neglect or re-home exotic animals, these organizations and public services have to pick up the slack for the irresponsible behavior and choices of others, ultimately leading to costly endeavors for municipalities and tax payers.

Various local searches online can quickly demonstrate how serious of an issue irresponsible animal ownership is in our community. You'll find hundreds of posts a day from people looking to rehome their exotic animals including dangerous snake species, monkeys, and more. For example, on WisconsinSuperads.com an individual in Madison is selling Marmoset monkeys:

http://www.wisconsinSuperads.com/exotic_pets_and_reptiles_For_Sale/C52A1754576P2/Beautiful_registered_baby_face_Marmoset_Monkeys_available_.aspx

Another in Whitewater is selling Capuchin Monkeys:
[http://www.wisconsinSuperads.com/exotic_pets_and_reptiles_For_Sale/C52A1803749P8/Two_Capuchin_Monkeys_Text_or_call_\(843\)_608-1422.aspx](http://www.wisconsinSuperads.com/exotic_pets_and_reptiles_For_Sale/C52A1803749P8/Two_Capuchin_Monkeys_Text_or_call_(843)_608-1422.aspx)

To show how easy it is to buy one of these animals, you can go to BackwaterReptiles.com. You can see that Wisconsin is one of the easiest states to ship alligators to, as there are no regulations here:
<http://www.backwaterreptiles.com/alligators/alligator-for-sale.html>

Alligator Sales

We do not ship alligators to Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, or Virginia without a proper license, a copy of which must be furnished to us prior to shipment

In May of 2013 Kenosha police removed a menagerie of exotic reptiles Tuesday from a house that had a homemade indoor pond in its basement and dead animals in its backyard.

The well being of animals in our society and in their natural environment is something I've cared about and been involved with since I was a young child. These exotic animals do not need to be displayed in roadside zoos or housed in private homes for them to thrive or for the public to value them. We can do better. There are innumerable resources now available for us to gain knowledge and respect for wild animals, such as through TV, movies, various educational opportunities, online and at accredited institutions. Lastly, I feel that this bill is quite conservative in nature and Wisconsin could take a significantly more responsible approach and prohibit additional species.

I ask that you all choose to be on the right side of history with this issue and vote YES on the bill. With Wisconsin being one of five states left without little to no legislation on this issue, we have a long - awaited chance to do the right thing for these animals and for the general public. Our society has exploited wild animals for far too long and we can do better.

Thank you,

Renee Benell
4846 Maple Ave.
Fitchburg, WI 53711
608-628-6530

In Opposition of Assembly Bill 333
Possession of Certain Wild Animals

Public Committee Hearing 1/5/16
Ryan McVeigh – President and Founder
Madison Area Herpetological Society, Inc.
Pres.MAHS@gmail.com
(608) 658-4653
www.madisonherps.org

Removal of Crocodylians/Introduced Permit Amendment

- While these animals may not seem to be pets to many people, others have a real connection with them.
- In Wisconsin, there has NEVER been a death due to a crocodylian. In the past 24 years, there have only been 4 incidents in Wisconsin dealing with any animals included in AB 333, including NO DEATHS. Why make a law as a solution for a problem that doesn't exist.
- Looking at other states that have created more strict laws, such as Ohio, they have caused a worse problem of animals without homes, and millions of dollars in costs to their taxpayers that are severely higher than the costs of any incidents that may have happened, including a \$2.9 Million dollar holding facility for large exotic animals that may never be used.
- More recently, states such as West Virginia and Illinois have removed Crocodylians from their proposed bans, or implemented a permit system similar to what we are proposing today. This permit system allows for educational organizations and keepers with the means to properly house these animals to continue to do so, while keeping them out of the hands of irresponsible keepers and animal welfare situations. Isn't this how we should be reacting to the keeping of any animal? Allow those who provide them with proper care and in a way that protects the general public, to keep their pets, while keeping them out of the hands of irresponsible people.
- As the president of an educational organization that lectures at Madison's Colleges, including the UW-Madison Vet School, Globe University, and Madison College, as well as many local K-12 schools, community groups, and public events, this limits our ability to present these animals to the public and allow for us to educate them on their care, and the conservation of species within the family of crocodylians in the wild. Studies have shown, and I can attest to this, that contact with these animals has a much larger impact to learning and people's personal want to help conserve them, than a lecture with pictures, reading a book, or watching a show on TV.
- If there is a worry of any crocodylian escaping from captivity or being dumped, these animals can't survive a WI winter. In fact they would be dead by the end of October. The northern range for these animals doesn't even hit the southern tip of Illinois.

- In captivity Crocodilians typically grow very slowly. This is a natural occurrence because crocodilian biology is entirely different from mammalian biology. It has been shown that even in the wild in North Carolina, one of the northern most states for native crocodilians, it takes 18 years for one to reach 6 feet long.
- A complete ban is an overreach of legislation and is completely unreasonable. Many other states, such as Illinois and Indiana have specific regulations and in Indiana, only require a permit and specific secure caging for crocodilians 5 feet and longer.
- Attached is a proposed amendment. This amendment was written in cooperation with the input and expertise of the United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK), The Madison Area Herpetological Society (MAHS), and Dr. Brady Barr, and his wife Mei Len Sanchez-Barr. Brady Barr is a member of the Endangered Species Coalition of the Council of State Governments and the International Crocodilian Specialist Group, and also serves as a scientific expert for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Mae Len is a marine biologist and educator who runs an eco-educational program for kids including many crocodilians. Mei Len is currently the AZA's Crocodilian Advisory Group's Education Liaison and member of the Crocodilian Specialist Group.
 - From the Crocodilian Advisory Group website: "The Crocodilian Advisory Group (CAG) is the Association of Zoo and Aquarium's first and oldest taxon advisory group, sanctioned by the AZA's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in 1986. This elite group of zoo and aquarium professionals specializes in captive management, education, and conservation of the world's crocodilian species and provides their expertise in husbandry, breeding, educational programs, and captive management for zoo and aquariums worldwide. Captive breeding can be a powerful conservation tool for the critically endangered species. Our greatest challenge to date has been the marshalling of the necessary space and resources for the captive management of imperiled crocodilian species. Cognizant of this situation, the CAG feels compelled to redirect its attention to include more focus on education and the promotion of in-situ conservation efforts."
 - This amendment removes crocodilians from the same section as the other proposed animals, and puts them in a different section. This is because, while these animals can get large and be seen as dangerous, everything about them from their biology, metabolisms, enrichment, and captive care are completely different than the mammals listed. Also, they can easily be restrained, by taping their mouth shut, and become completely safe to be in close contact with the public for educational purposes.

people on conservation and proper husbandry. MAHS is made up of keepers, scientists, herpetologists, biologists, veterinarians, and many other people with decades of combined experience with these animals.

- For more information, visit www.humanewatch.org

AMENDMENT TO AB 333

1. ADD THE FOLLOWING SECTION TO AB 333:

SECTION 11. [new section X] of the statutes is created to read:

[new section X] **Crocodylians.** (1) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) "Crocodylian" means any one of the following live animals of the order

crocodylia:

1. an alligator of any species,
2. a crocodile of any species,
3. a caiman of any species, or
4. a gharial.

(2) PROHIBITIONS. Except as provided in subsection (3), no person may possess, import into this state, sell, transfer, or breed a crocodylian.

(3) EXEMPTIONS. (a) Subsection (2) does not apply to any of the following:

1. An entity that is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums or that has a contract under a species survival plan of the Association

of Zoos and Aquariums for the breeding of species listed as threatened or endangered under 16 USC 1533 (c).

2. A zoo that is operated by a municipality or county.
3. A circus as defined in subsection 173.50(1).
4. Circus World Museum.
5. A wildlife sanctuary as defined in subsection 173.50(1).
6. A person operating a research facility that is registered under the federal Animal Welfare Act, 7 USC 2131 to 2159.
7. A veterinarian licensed under ch. 453 who is providing treatment to a crocodilian.
8. An individual performing his or her duties as a humane officer or law enforcement officer, a political subdivision on whose behalf a humane officer or law enforcement officer takes a crocodilian into custody, or a person providing services under a contract under s. 173.15 (1).
9. A person transporting a crocodilian through this state if the crocodilian is in this state for no longer than 72 hours.
10. A person who possesses, imports into this state, sells, transfers, or breeds a crocodilian with a length of one (1) meter or less from snout to vent.
11. A person who registers their crocodilian pursuant to sub. (4) and complies with subsection (8).

(b) A person who owns a crocodilian on the effective date of this paragraph [LRB inserts date], and who does not qualify for an exemption in par. (a) may possess the crocodilian if the person maintains documentation showing that on

or before the effective date of this subdivision [LRB inserts date], the person owned the crocodilian.

(c) A person who is authorized to possess a crocodilian under paragraph (b) may transfer the crocodilian to another person who is legally authorized to possess the crocodilian.

(4) REGISTRATION. A municipality shall accept registrations of crocodilians for the purposes of sub. (2) (a) 11. beginning no later than the first day of the 4th month beginning after the effective date of this subsection [LRB inserts date].

A municipality shall charge a fee for registering a crocodilian not to exceed \$50 per crocodilian, or a total of \$250. A person shall register their crocodilian and pay the registration fee no later than the first day of the 7th month beginning after the effective date of this subsection [LRB inserts date]. A person who acquires a crocodilian after the effective date of this subsection who does not qualify for an exemption under subsection 3(a) 1 through 10 or who no longer qualifies for an exemption under subsection 3(a) 1 through 10. shall be register the crocodilian and pay the registration fee within 10 days of acquisition or failing to continue to qualify for an exemption under subsection 3 (a) 1 through 10.

(5) ESCAPES. (a) If a crocodilian is released or escapes, the owner of the crocodilian shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency.

(b) The owner of a crocodilian that is released or escapes is liable for the expenses incurred to recapture the crocodilian.

(6) ORDINANCES. A municipality or county may enact an ordinance relating to crocodilians if the ordinance is at least as strict as subs. (2) to (4).

(7) PENALTIES. (a) A person who violates this section may be required to forfeit not more than \$1,000. Each animal with respect to which the person violates this section constitutes a separate violation.

(b) If a person violates sub. (5) (a) and the crocodilian causes property damage or attacks an individual, the person may be required to forfeit not more than \$2,000.

(8) A person who registers a crocodilian pursuant to subsection (4) shall comply with the following requirements.

(a) Submit at the time of registration evidence of the proposed facilities having been inspected and found to be reasonably escape proof by a licensed veterinarian or a designated municipal official.

(b) Maintain all crocodilians in suitable, strong, impact resistant, escape-proof enclosures at all times.

(c) During any bona fide educational program involving crocodilians, ensure that physical possession and control of the crocodilian is maintained at all times if removed from a container or cage. Interiors of cages or containers used during educational programs may not be accessible to the public. Crocodilians removed from their cage or enclosure for educational programs must:

1. Have the mouth banded or taped shut; and
2. Be maintained under the control of qualified individuals.

(d) Make hand sanitizer available and recommend it for anybody who comes into contact with a crocodilian.

(e) During transport of any crocodilian, it must be kept out of sight of the public in an escape-proof manner at all times. Transportation of any crocodilian to any public venue, commercial establishment, retail establishment, educational institution or other public location shall only be for bona fide purpose, such as educational programs or veterinary care.

(f) Compliance with the guidelines for educational programs published by the American Zoological Association Crocodilian Advisory Group shall be sufficient to meet the standards for educational programs.

2. DELETE SUBSECTION (1)(b) 5.FROM AB 333:

~~[5. One of the following animals of the order crocodylia: an alligator of any species, crocodile of any species, caiman of any species, or gharial.]~~

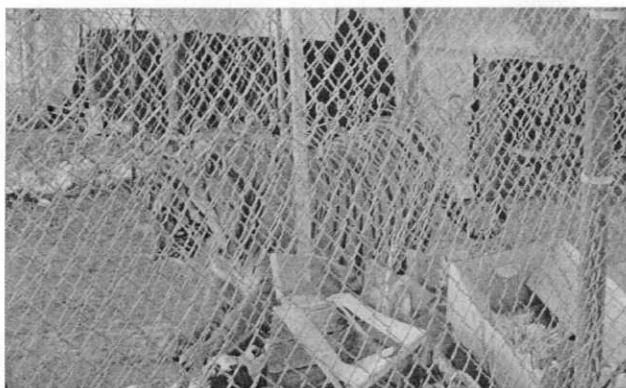
(END)

The Hidden Costs of Tiger Photo Ops

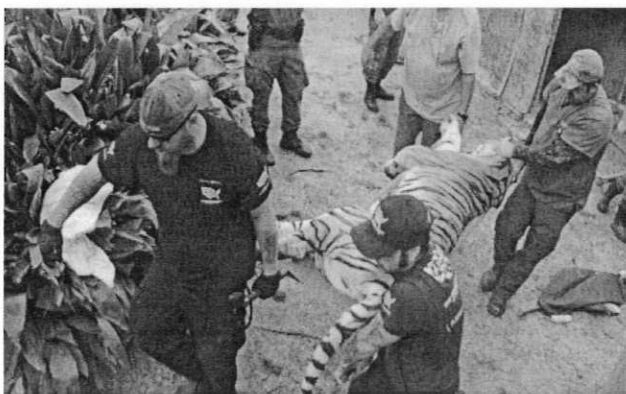
The tables below illustrates, among other things, how a single tiger exhibitor that offers public handling with cubs year-round contributes to the enormous surplus of captive tigers in the U.S. The more captive big cats kept in a state, the greater the chances of an escape or attack. Ultimately it is taxpayers, as well as the law-abiding sanctuary community, that end up footing the bill in the wake of attacks, escapes, or confiscations that inevitably occur due to the large numbers of captive tigers in the U.S.



A neglected, emaciated tiger who could barely walk was confiscated by the USDA.



This tiger, kept in a flimsy cage in a junkyard, was confiscated along with several other tigers and lions by a county sheriff.



Three tigers, along with numerous other exotic animals suffering from injuries and malnourishment, were confiscated by a state wildlife agency.

Costs related to providing appropriate, lifetime care to tigers

2 mos.	Approximate age of tiger cubs when public handling begins
3 mos.	Approximate age of tiger cubs when they can no longer be used for public handling
3	Average number of tiger cubs per litter
36	Number of tiger cubs needed by one exhibitor for one year of cub handling
\$10,000	Average annual cost to provide quality food and veterinary care for one tiger
\$360,000	Annual cost to provide quality food and veterinary care for all tigers used by one exhibitor for one year of cub handling
20 years	Average lifespan for a tiger
\$7,200,000	Lifetime cost to provide quality food and veterinary care to all tigers used by one exhibitor for one year of cub handling

How many surplus tigers and where do they go?

17	Number of tigers in non-AZA zoos in Kansas where public contact with tigers is banned
123	Number of tigers in non-AZA zoos in Oklahoma where public contact with tigers is allowed
5,000	Estimated number of captive tigers in the U.S.
338	Number of tigers in professionally-run zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums
2	Number of tigers a USDA-licensed roadside zoo in Wisconsin with 29 tigers offered to give to an undercover ABC news reporter with no big cat experience.
4	Number of tiger cubs found abandoned and wandering the streets in three separate incidents (Texas in 2003; North Carolina in 2005; California in 2015)
0	Number of federal agencies that monitor the disposition of tigers bred for public handling



This tiger was among nearly a dozen dangerous wild animals who had been abandoned in their enclosures without access to food or clean water.



A juvenile tiger weighing nearly 50 pounds is used for public handling.



Inches away from a baby, this juvenile tiger reaches out with his claws and knocks a bottle from a man's hand.

Dangers associated with captive tigers

720	Number of times a tiger is more likely to be involved in a fatal attack than a dog
16	Vertical height in feet that tigers can jump
0	Number of rabies vaccines legally approved for use in tigers and other wild cats
\$12,600	Amount a roadside zoo was fined by the USDA after a tiger killed a teenager during a photo op
\$80,000	Amount for the first five days of medical care for a 4-year-old boy whose arm was ripped off by his uncle's pet tiger in 2000

A sampling of the costs to taxpayers for a few of the 350 incidents involving captive big cats since 1990

\$2,000	Cost to Knox County, Ohio, taxpayers to care for two lions and four tigers abandoned by their owner
\$2,000	Cost to Morgan County, Missouri, taxpayers to provide veterinary care to an African lion who escaped from a roadside zoo and was loose for four days
\$8,500	Cost to Muskingum County, Ohio, taxpayers for law enforcement to track and kill 38 big cats, eight bears, and numerous other wild animals released by their owner
\$9,000	Cost to Bloomington, Illinois, taxpayers for police to locate and kill a 400-pound tiger who escaped at a truck stop while being transported by a roadside zoo
\$20,000	Cost to Atchison County, Kansas, taxpayers, animal protection organizations, and the Kansas City Zoo to care for and relocate a tiger and 10 other wild animals abandoned by their owner
\$30,000	Cost to Goodhue County, Minnesota, taxpayers to seize and relocate seven tigers after the owner was mauled
\$43,000	Cost to Bannock County, Idaho, taxpayers for law enforcement to track and kill 19 escaped lions and seize 27 other big cats from a private menagerie

BOTTOM LINE: *The use of tiger cubs for public handling has many hidden dangers for people and subjects the cubs themselves to stress, maternal deprivation, and even physical abuse. Once a cub becomes too large for handling, its fate is uncertain and often unknown.*

From: Joe Watson <joe.watson@petlandinc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 05, 2016 9:12 AM
To: Rep.Kerkman
Cc: Brian Winslow; Elizabeth Kunzelman
Subject: Assembly Bill 333

Dear Rep. Kerkman,

At Petland, we support responsible pet ownership and have been doing business in Wisconsin for many years. As the nation's leading pet retailer, we focus on the welfare of our pets. On a daily basis we introduce the benefits of the human-animal bond to our many loyal Wisconsin customers.

While this bill makes reference to "pets", at Petland we classify a pet as a companion pet such as a dog, cat, bird, fish, small animals and smaller companion reptiles. We do not permit our stores to sell primates, alligators or crocodiles. We believe such animals require a higher degree of care, education and protection.

We believe pets do make life better and through our pet education programs and breeder relationships, we are able to fulfill our mission of matching the right pet with the right customer and meeting the needs of both at a very high level. Many current zoo keepers, veterinarians and other animal professionals began their love for pets as a young child after obtaining a companion pet at a local pet store.

Animals that do not meet our definition of a companion pet - as defined in your bill - demand special attention. We appreciate your efforts and hope that the spirit of this initiative yields standards and safeguards that provide for the best protection and treatment for these wild animals while establishing sensible requirements for responsible keepers.

All the best,

Joe

Joseph J. Watson
CEO/President
Petland Inc.
250 Riverside Street
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

Office: 1-740-775-2464
Cell: 1-740-466-8116

www.petland.com

Thorson, Randy

From: Dustin Wells <dwslither@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 05, 2016 7:51 AM
To: Thorson, Randy
Subject: Opposition to AB333

I am writing in opposition to AB333. Wisconsin is a state where we still have our freedoms to own exotics. I am all for responsible ownership and not against licensing but we can't make it all out illegal. Large cats and bear ownership is monitored by USDA regulations we don't need state laws. Owning exotics does carry a risk but only for the owner. Public safety is not a concern if properly housed. The risks owners take should be our decision. As owners just like driving a car, snowmobile or ATV. There are so many deaths do to those items but we are not making them illegal. There is a far greater risk to public health with just about anything than exotic animal ownership. Passing laws just forces good responsible owners underground and made illegal. There will always be bad owners as there is with dogs but that doesn't mean that there are not great owners out there. There are more deaths and injures but cows, horses, and dogs a year than buy exotics. Please don't pass laws based upon no real danger and because there is a fear and misunderstanding. Why pass laws when there is no real examples of a problem. We can't pass laws do to pet lobbyist. There are real dangers out there in this world but exotic ownership is not one of them.

I do educational programs with my reptiles for schools and community events. The children love it and learn so much. They get a chance to get hands on experience with animals they may not otherwise get. If laws pass and make it illegal those kind of events stop and so does education. Please let the learning continue.

I ask you to consider not passing AB333

Thank you,
Dustin Wells

Thorson, Randy

From: Rep.Krug
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2015 9:16 AM
To: Thorson, Randy
Subject: FW: SB 241 & AB 333 = NO

From: Breton Gunn [mailto:bretong@cogeco.ca]
Sent: Friday, December 04, 2015 3:07 PM
To: Sen.Wanggaard <Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Vukmir <Sen.Vukmir@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Lasee <Sen.Lasee@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Risser <Sen.Risser@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Taylor <Sen.Taylor@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Larson <Sen.Larson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Lassa <Sen.Lassa@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Sen.Miller <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Kerkman <Rep.Kerkman@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Edming <Rep.Edming@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Spiros <Rep.Spiros@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Kremer <Rep.Kremer@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Stuck <Rep.Stuck@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Subeck <Rep.Subeck@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Novak <Rep.Novak@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Sinicki <Rep.Sinicki@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Spreitzer <Rep.Spreitzer@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Thiesfeldt <Rep.Thiesfeldt@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Murphy <Rep.Murphy@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Ohnstad <Rep.Ohnstad@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Ott <Rep.Ott@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Kitchens <Rep.Kitchens@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Hintz <Rep.Hintz@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Genrich <Rep.Genrich@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Heaton <Rep.Heaton@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Katsma <Rep.Katsma@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Neylon <Rep.Neylon@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Nerison <Rep.Nerison@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.VanderMeer <Rep.VanderMeer@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Pope <Rep.Pope@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Young <Rep.Young@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Krug <Rep.Krug@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: SB 241 & AB 333 = NO

Dear Wisconsin Legislator,

I write today to oppose SB 241 and AB 333, as introduced. However, I would support this bill with minimal changes, though I do feel since most municipalities already have ordinances in place, this is a waste of tax-payer money. I only ask that an additional amendment would allow private keepers willing to meet caging and care standards the opportunity to keep these species through a practical permit system. By allowing qualified private keepers to have these animals in the future, it will resolve any issues with finding permanent homes for any abandoned, surrendered or rescued animals. Also, it would be wise to add an exemption to those running a USDA licensed zoo.

While I understand your concerns over public safety, the exotic and reptile pet communities have evolved greatly and pet owners are much more responsible and educated. Unfortunately, as with any type of pet, including dogs and cats, there are a few irresponsible owners that give black eyes to the entire animal keeping community. Punishing all owners due to the few bad owners is collective punishment and is extreme overreach.

One of the reasons for instigating this bill, was the "Milwaukee Lion" incident. However, it was quickly found out that this creature was a slightly larger than average domestic house cat! How any witnesses extrapolated that into a lion sighting remains unknown. But, basing knee-jerk legislation on a mere farce is pointless, and harms the reputations of all legislators involved.

Also, this bill is authored by the Humane Society of United States (HSUS), a biased animal rights (not animal welfare) organization which seeks to eliminate the ownership of all non-traditional pets. This bill would just be

a starting point. And, The Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments passed a resolution in the summer of 2015 calling upon 11 states, including Wisconsin, to investigate HSUS for fraudulence. Considering that this private organization which you are allowing to authorize these bills are already on bad ground with the State of Wisconsin, I would advise you to pay heed on passing it.

These species should be considered "captive wildlife" rather than pets. Not all people are qualified for caring for these animals, but there are a very special few whom, with a proper permit system, would be able to safely keep their animals. To deny the majority who are responsibly keeping their animals based on the actions of the few, is unfair.

The species listed should certainly be considered captive wildlife rather than pets. Very few people are qualified or able to properly care for these animals, but these owners do exist. A simple permit and qualification program including a cage inspection would alleviate any fears of bad keepers. Wisconsin already has a permit system for keeping native wild animals. This permit process could be adopted by municipalities, since the intent of the bill is to remove authority for the Wisconsin DNR.

I applaud your efforts to protect animal welfare, but this bill doesn't protect these animals. With the initiation of the mentioned permit process, animal welfare would certainly be protected and properly addressed. Animal cruelty should definitely be confronted and abusers prosecuted, but banning and over-regulating animal ownership are not effective means to handle this concern. In fact, they often make matters worse, as we have seen in other states that have passed overbearing laws.

Animal ownership is a matter of personal responsibility and not government overreach. Bans simply are not the answer and have proven time and time again to cause more problems than they could ever solve, especially when addressing a public safety risk that doesn't exist. Please take time to protect both animal welfare and responsible Wisconsin animal owners. I implore you to consider my suggestions for SB 241 and AB 333 so I can fully support this bill.

Sincerely,

Breton Gunn

Concerns Regarding Assembly Bill 333 (2015)

- AB333 does nothing to protect the public. If the objective is truly to protect the public, the proper and effective way to do that would be to establish a State Animal Response Team with specialized training and a requirement for continuing education. Several states already have them. A listing can be found at: <http://www.redrover.org/animal-response-teams> Wisconsin actually has 2 listings on this site regarding animal emergency response teams, for domestic animals and livestock. These could be consulted regarding developing additional exotic animal protocols. In addition, there are also a number of other organizations that have experienced and knowledgeable members regarding specific species, such as the Feline Conservation Federation and the Zoological Association of America (these 2 have facility accreditation programs). AB333 would likely create situations which are not really addressed in the bill; i.e., what to do with and how to handle confiscated animals. That burden (as well as any financial burden) is placed at the local or county level.
- The list of “dangerous” animals is rather arbitrary. To my knowledge, Wisconsin has never had a problem with people owning pet gorillas, nor do I think it will become an issue in the absence of legislation banning ownership. Sunda Clouded Leopards are a newly discovered species (2006) that are not even in any AZA zoos at this time. Cheetahs have long been known as the easiest of the large cats to tame, and were used as hunting companions in Africa, the Middle East, and India thousands of years ago. Horses and cattle kill far more people annually than exotic animals do, but no one in their right mind would try to introduce a bill into Wisconsin to ban them.
- Concern over potential overzealous enforcement. Case in point: the 2013 incident in which a fawn named Giggles was killed by WI DNR officers. Nine armed DNR officers and 4 deputy sheriffs descended on an animal shelter to confiscate the fawn and later kill it, even though it was going to be transferred to a wildlife reserve where they do rehab. In the state of Ohio, there have recently been a number of allegations of overzealous enforcement by the ODA. Current owners of exotic animals that were supposed to be grandfathered in are commenting that the state is making it difficult or impossible to comply with the new regulations. Animals have been confiscated by armed persons that have no training or experience in animal handling. In one case, animals were tranquilized in brutally cold weather, with NO information being requested on the status of their health, dragged through the snow, and transported 3 hours in unheated trailers to a facility where they had no access to the outside, only cement floors and bars. They had been taken from a place where they once knew fresh air, sunshine, and the grass beneath their feet. I greatly fear the same sort of thing happening here in Wisconsin if AB333 and SB241 are passed into law. Many exotic animals form very strong bonds with their owners, and I feel it is cruel to both the animals and the humans to destroy that bond.

- The AZA Species Survival Plans® (developed in 1981, but not trademarked until 1998 – why did they feel a need for this?) do not cover all species. Due to space constraints at AZA accredited zoos, a limited number of species are chosen for SSPs®, leaving others to be managed to extinction. Allowances need to be made for other accrediting organizations and experienced and dedicated animal handlers that may have philosophical differences with the AZA.
- Comments have been made that Wisconsin will become a dumping ground for exotic animals when they are banned in other states. In reality, most exotic animal owners that have chosen to leave their states due to new regulations are choosing warmer destinations. Wisconsin is just too cold.
- Injury incidents involving exotic animals are actually quite rare, and almost never involve the general public. People injured virtually always have willingly placed themselves in proximity to the animals – volunteers and paid staff. In the few cases of injuries to members of the general public, those people either climbed into an enclosure, climbed over a safety barrier and got too close, stuck their hand in a cage, or in the case of the San Francisco zoo (an AZA zoo) tiger in 2007, the injured people (1 fatally) had harassed the tigress prior to her escaping from the enclosure. The tigress only targeted those persons that had harassed her before she was shot and killed by police.
- Regarding “(5) ESCAPES (b) The owner of a dangerous exotic animal that is released or escapes is liable for expenses...” What happens when animal rights activists purposely release animals? Shouldn't they be liable for endangering the public and the animals?

Respectfully submitted by:

Marsha Hague
PO Box 275
Hammond, WI 54015

Member of:

Feline Conservation Federation
Zoological Association of America

Completed course in Basic Wild Feline Husbandry by the Feline Conservation Federation