

Ministry of the Solicitor General
Public Safety Division

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Ministère du Solliciteur général
Division de la sécurité publique

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2021-06-0003
By Email

July 28, 2021

Alexander Donald
Sandy@ontariowildliferescue.ca

Dear Alexander Donald,

Thank you for your email.

As you are aware, the [Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019](#) (PAWS Act) came into force on January 1, 2020. Enabled by the PAWS Act, Ontario's new animal welfare system includes a provincial enforcement model comprised of a Chief Animal Welfare Inspector and teams of locally deployed and specialized animal welfare inspectors who have powers to conduct inspections/investigations and help animals in distress. The PAWS Act also empowers police officers and First Nations Constables to take action when an animal is in distress. Ontario now has the strongest penalties in Canada against animal cruelty.

The PAWS Act and its regulations ensure that all animals are protected and treated in a humane manner. Safeguards include setting out basic standards of care that apply to all animals covered under the Act, as well as specific standards of care that apply to captive wildlife and enclosures for captive wildlife.

With respect to your specific concerns, the PAWS Act provides general inspection powers to animal welfare inspectors to enter and inspect any place to determine compliance with the standards of care including if the animals are kept for a charitable purpose.

Please be advised that an animal welfare inspection or investigation may occur concurrently with a Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry investigation and exceptions outlined in section 15(4)(a) of the PAWS Act, pertain to wildlife in the wild and not to wildlife in captivity. Further, a wildlife custodian authorization issued under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act does not make the person exempt from the PAWS Act.

Further, pursuant to [section 27](#) of the PAWS Act, animal welfare inspectors may request veterinary records.

Once again, thank you for your email and please be assured that we endeavour to sustain a robust and accountable animal welfare system in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Milne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "P".

Paula Milne
Chief Animal Welfare Inspector

