



Captive wildlife in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan has modernized and strengthened its rules related to the import and possession of native and exotic wildlife, including those kept as pets, cared for by wildlife rehabilitators and held in zoos.

The Captive Wildlife Regulations, 2021 have been updated to help protect native wildlife and ecosystems, and to ensure that public health and safety are maintained.

These changes ensure our province has standards that align with current animal welfare expectations for captive wildlife.

The growing interest in exotic wildlife as pets and the rehabilitation of native species has raised new public safety concerns, and increased focus on maintaining the integrity of the province's ecosystems.

The province engaged with an expert panel and stakeholder groups to help modernize various aspects of the legislation. The review resulted in the modernization of an Allowed list of species that can be kept for personal possession without a permit, and a Restricted list for species that may only be held by qualified individuals or in appropriate facilities.

The amended regulations focus on areas of highest risk to people and the environment.

People with wildlife species listed on the Restricted list needed to notify the ministry by November 30, 2021. These species fall into one of two categories:

Division 1 species. These animals have never been legal pets in Saskatchewan or are considered overtly dangerous. They may not be held for personal possession.

Division 2 species. These animals are currently pets, and may be kept for the remaining life of the animal - if the ministry was notified of their presence by November 30, 2021.

Pets such as domestic dogs, cats and agricultural animals are not regulated as wildlife. Owners of these animals will see no change.

Also included in the regulations are stricter requirements for native wildlife rehabilitation, zoos, the import and export of live wildlife and general improvements that align with other provincial legislation and regulations.

Information, species listings and notification procedures on the province's new Captive Wildlife Regulations, is available online at saskatchewan.ca/captive-wildlife.

Risk criteria and species considerations Info

The captive wildlife expert panel developed and used the following risk criteria and considerations to evaluate the appropriateness of species of wildlife to be kept in captivity. It includes the following factors:



Poses a **risk** to public health and/or safety



Insufficient information available for the panel to make a determination



Significant risk of establishment as an **invasive species** in Saskatchewan



Native Saskatchewan **species taken from the wild**



Poses a **disease risk** to domestic animals and wildlife

Other factors include:



Species is of **conservation concern** in Saskatchewan, Canada or its country of origin



Lengthy history of a **stable captive bred source** of animals



Risk of **improper care** as the species requires specialized care and management



If the species is a **well-established pet** in Saskatchewan

The review of hundreds of species resulted in the modernization of an Allowed list of species that can be held for personal possession without permitting requirements and a Restricted list for species that may only be held by qualified individuals or facilities appropriate for the species.

Frequently asked questions

Q: What is considered wildlife?

A: Wildlife means native and exotic vertebrate species, excluding fish.

The ministry does not regulate domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, cattle, horses, pigs, chickens, etc.

Invertebrates, such as insects and spiders (tarantulas), are not included in the definition of wildlife and are not covered by these regulations.

Q: What should someone do if they need to remove a Restricted species.

A: Options to remove include relocating animals out of the province using an export permit or transferring animals to a licensed facility.

Q: What is the penalty for illegal possession and import/export of restricted wildlife?

A: The fine for illegal possession of an animal of a restricted species is \$1,000. The fine for illegal import or export of a restricted species is \$400.

Q: What is the role of government in regulating wildlife in captivity?

A: Under *The Wildlife Act*, government has the responsibility to regulate the import and captivity of wildlife to address concerns about safety, disease, illegal importation of rare species and impacts on Saskatchewan's native biodiversity.

Q: Are hybrids allowed? (e.g. wolf/dog crosses, serval/domestic cat crosses, zebra/donkey crosses)

A: Hybrid animals (wild species crossed with a domestic animal) that have an ancestor, within and including four generations of a wild species, are restricted (i.e. F1-F4).

Hybrids that are at least five generations from wild stock (F5, F6, F7, etc.) are not regulated as wildlife and do not require a provincial licence to import or hold in Saskatchewan. Examples of hybrids include Bengal, Savannah, Chausie Cat, Safari Cat, and wolf/dog crosses. It is recommended that documentation on the proof of ancestry be maintained and available to wildlife officials should they request to see it.

Q: Why are only some exotic wildlife species suitable for personal possession?

A: The negative impacts of exotic animals introduced as pets and escaped from homes has been documented in multiple jurisdictions across all continents.

These exotic animals often survive the new climate conditions and severely impact native species and the local economy.

Knowledge on the requirements of exotic animals has evolved over time that illustrates that animals require more than food, water and a small sterile living space to achieve good welfare.

Q: What happens if I don't want to or cannot keep my Division 2 species?

A: Division 2 species cannot be sold to other individuals within the province, but can be sold and exported to a person outside of the province. The animal may also be transferred to a family member within the province, however notification to the ministry of the change in ownership and location (address) of animal is required.

Q: What happens if I possess a Division 2 species that may outlive me?

If the owner of Division 2 species passes away before the animal, the ministry will allow the animal to be transferred to a listed beneficiary, if the ministry has previously been notified.

Q: Can the public request to have an exotic species reviewed that they would like to possess in the future?

A: The Ministry of Environment will first review unlisted species that have been declared and submitted for review in late 2021, or early 2022.

The ministry is not accepting requests to add new species to the Allowed list at this time, but will establish a submission process once the review of declared species is complete to determine if additional amendments should be made to the allowed list.

Q: What if the animal is not on the Allowed list?

A: Only animals on the Allowed list and/or were declared to the ministry by November 30th are allowed in the province after November 30th. Only species on the Allowed list may be imported into the province as pets.

Q: I notified the ministry of my unlisted species. What happens next?

A: The ministry will review all of the unlisted species that were declared to determine their suitability for inclusion on the Allowed list.

Q: What laws apply to the ownership of wildlife as pets?

A: In addition to *The Captive Wildlife Regulations, 2021*, federal authorities such as the Canadian Wildlife Service issue CITES permits (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora) if importing species of conservation concern into Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) maintains restrictions on importing wildlife that pose risks to human or non-human health concerns.

There may be local bylaws that also apply to the possession of wildlife as pets.

In addition, *The Animal Protection Act* is the provincial legislation enforced to ensure humane treatment of all non-human animals in Saskatchewan.

Q: What are the new requirements for native wildlife rehabilitation and zoos?

A: For wildlife rehabilitation, it means that all large predatory species will be prohibited from rehabilitation and release. This includes the following species: black bear, cougar, lynx, bobcat, wolverine, wolf, coyote and prairie rattlesnake.

Cervid rehabilitation will only be allowed for pronghorn, white-tailed deer and mule deer less than one-year old. Adult cervid rehabilitation will not be allowed.

A: For zoos, requirements for enclosures have been amended to remove historic/antiquated enclosure size requirements for native species. The Canadian Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) is considered the authority in Canada that sets Canadian standards for implementing best practices in animal welfare, conservation, science and education.

CAZA accreditation will be required for any new zoos in the province.

Existing zoos not already accredited by CAZA will be granted a transitional period to develop an operating plan that meets expectations for animal care that are drawn from CAZA certification.

Ministry officials will work with individual zoo licence holders to meet the new expectations.