

Toolkit: Get noisy for animals!



Read on for our tips on how to use your powerful voice to lobby your Ontario Provincial Candidate and change the lives of animals.



Learn more about the issues



Learn how to get a meeting with your representative and what to say



Learn other ways to get noisy at debates or in the media



Together, we CAN make a difference!

We must find better ways to protect animals.

Your political representatives have a role to play and so do you!

World Animal Protection is an animal welfare non-profit organization with local reach and global influence. Our Canadian office is in Toronto and staff work alongside our country offices with projects in over 50 countries around the world.

For more than 50 years, World Animal Protection has been preventing animal cruelty and inspiring people to change animals' lives for the better. Today we're working on projects with local partners, governments, and businesses to find practical ways to prevent animal suffering in Canada and worldwide.

Today we are asking you to speak up for captive wildlife in the province of Ontario. We want to:

- Phase-out of roadside zoos
- Prohibit inhumane and unsafe direct-animal-visitor interactions
- Restrict the breeding, possession, use and sale of wild exotic animals as pets

Find out how you can help captive wild animals in Ontario for the upcoming election.



Issue snapshot

- **Anybody in Ontario could open a zoo with exotic wild animals?**
 - No experience, expertise, or license is needed, and there are barely any standards that must be met to protect animals and the public.
 - **Selfies with dangerous animals like tigers, bears and wolves are still permitted?**
 - Animals are still taken away from their mom at a very young age to make sure they are tame enough to be a photo prop.
 - **There are no provincial regulations that determine which exotic wild animals a person can keep as pet?**
 - While no exotic wild animals should be kept as pet, in many places in Ontario it is not even prohibited to keep a tiger or lion in your backyard.
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Your support is critical



The upcoming Ontario election is THE opportunity for *action*.

This is scheduled to take place on June 2nd. This is the perfect opportunity to bring this issue in front of Candidates who represent you!

While World Animal Protection staff meet with candidates on a regular basis, they pay more attention to constituents who live in their riding. Your voice is more influential than ever in the lead up to an election.





Why talk to your Candidate?

1. Awareness building

Your candidate might not be aware that there are no protections for exotic wild animals in Ontario. Before they can care about an issue, they will need to hear about it. We need to make them aware that Ontario is one of the worst places in Canada for captive wildlife.

2. Candidates doing their part to protect captive exotic wild animals

Once you talked to your candidate you will know if they care about the issue. If they care, you can ask them to become a supporter of the issue within their own party.

3. Build support for the issue for after the election

The more candidates know about the issue, the more support we can get, the greater the opportunities will be to work with them after the election to make Ontario a better place for captive wildlife.



Tips to reach your Candidate

The best way to engage with your Candidate is to meet with them.



1. Finding your Candidate

You can find your candidate on the website of the individual parties.

2. Requesting a meeting



Send an email or phone their **constituency office** to request a meeting. The constituency office deals with the residents the Candidate represents. A couple of things to keep in mind:

- It's critical that you identify yourself as a constituent.
 - Explain briefly why you care about captive wildlife issues in Ontario.
 - Make sure to follow up with another email or phone call if you haven't heard a response within a week.
 - Always be respectful, patient, and polite. Constituency offices are usually very busy so it's not unusual to have to reach out to them a second or third time to get a meeting.
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Example email/phone meeting request



Email

Dear [Last Name]

I am a constituent and care deeply about protecting animals. Ontario is the only province without any regulations focused on the keeping of exotic wild animals. For example, we are the only province where roadside zoos are still common and where new ones are still opening up. It is also still possible to keep a tiger or a lion as a pet in the province.

I am also a supporter of World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity with an office in Canada. They are working hard to phase out roadside zoos, prohibit inhumane treatment of captive wildlife and curb parts of the exotic pet trade that are inhumane or pose a risk to people.

I would very much appreciate a brief meeting or phone call to discuss this with you. Please let me know when this could be arranged.

*Sincerely,
[Name, address, phone number]*



Phone

Hi there,

My name is [...] and I am a constituent of [last name].

I'm calling today to request a meeting with the candidate since I would like to share concerns and information, I have related to wild animals who are kept in the province of Ontario.

When would it be possible to speak to the Candidate [last name] about this?



Tips for meeting with your Candidate



3. You got a meeting! Now what?

Prepare for the meeting by writing down brief talking points. These can cover the following:

- Why did you request the meeting?
- Why does this issue matter to you?
- What would you like your Candidate to do?

We prepared a brief that you can send to your Candidate before the meeting and review with them during the meeting. You can download the brief [here](#).

Additionally, you can prepare a note taking document, like the example provided on the right.

Keep in mind, we are always happy to join your meeting, for support and to help out with answering any questions.

Attendees and job titles:	Date: Time: Location:
Goal of meeting: 1. ... 2. ... 3. ...	
What was discussed:	
Next steps and who will execute them:	

Tips for meeting with your MP



4. The meeting

A couple of things to keep in mind:

- It is ok to share personal experiences to explain why these issues matter to you.
 - If you met your Candidate before, remind them about that interaction.
 - It is possible that your Candidate hears about this issue for the first time and ask questions.
 - If you don't understand the question or would like to have it repeated just let your Candidate know.
 - It's ok to say you don't know the answer but that you'll look into it. You can always forward specific questions to us. We're here to help!
 - **Take notes!**
 - It is important to indicate if your Candidate is supportive, unsure or non-supportive. It would be great if you could share the notes from your meeting with us. It will help us to understand how to engage your Candidate.
 - **Before you leave, confirm with your Candidate what the next step will be. This could include:**
 - If your Candidate is supportive, ask them to become a champion for this issue within their party.
 - Follow up with answers to questions that were asked.
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Next steps after your meeting



5. Don't let them forget! Follow-up

If your Candidate showed interest in the issues you've raised, make sure you follow-up with them with relevant information (e.g., news articles). **If they are asking what specific actions they should take, feel free to put them in touch with us so we can strategize next steps with them.**

Positive encouragement is always best. If they did something that you liked, let them know. Let us know if and how your Candidate responded by emailing campaigns@worldanimalprotection.ca. If your Candidate has questions, we would be happy to follow-up with them.



6. Want to do more?

If you can demonstrate that there is additional support for these animal welfare commitments from more people who live in your riding, this will have more influence on your Candidate.

You can also be a voice for animals during the election in other ways by:

- building your own network of people who care about this issue and encourage them to meet with their Candidate.
 - asking your other local electoral candidates what they will do for animals if elected.
 - attending and asking questions about captive wildlife issues local debates.
 - writing and submitting letters to the editor to national or local newspapers.
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