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2023

# ADVOCACY REPORT



**BCSPCA**  
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS





# ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS



**192,000**

Caring people taking  
actions for animals



**30,300**

Actions taken for animals  
through BC SPCA campaigns



**8**

BC SPCA public action  
campaigns



**26**

Policy submissions by  
BC SPCA staff experts





# COMPANION ANIMALS

## Raising the bar for pet services

After years of surveying, consulting and researching, the BC SPCA published voluntary, evidence-based [AnimalKind standards](#) for companion animal services. The standards cover dog daycare and walking, as well as cat and dog grooming and boarding. The standards will help pet guardians ensure the safety of their pets while supporting pet service providers that prioritize animal welfare. A list of questions for guardians to ask when selecting a pet service can be found on the [AnimalKind website](#).

## Ban on dog debarking

In 2022, with the help of thousands of our supporters, the BC SPCA called on the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia to enact a [ban on canine devocalization](#) ('debarking'). Veterinarians across the province voted overwhelmingly in favour of the ban, which came into effect in November 2023. Debarking is the latest addition to the list of cosmetic procedures banned in B.C., including ear cropping, tail docking and declawing.





# FARMED ANIMALS

## **Working to ban live horse export for slaughter**

Through 2023, BC SPCA experts continued to work on this issue. Two new bills to ban the practice were introduced, one in the Senate and one in the House of Commons. More than 7,400 people joined our campaign and called on their representatives to act, which would fulfill a 2021 federal government promise. The House of Commons Bill C-355 is currently progressing through its second reading.

## **B.C.'s farmed animal welfare framework under review**

From 2022-2023, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food formed a committee to assess the farmed animal welfare framework in B.C. The BC SPCA welcomed this action, as we had raised concerns with government about the gaps that currently exist in farmed animal welfare and felt that a review was required. The BC SPCA participated as a member of the committee, which was tasked with making the framework more explicit and transparent, providing recommendations to promote high standards of farmed animal welfare, and supporting those involved in delivering these standards. The committee will submit their recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Food in January 2024.





## Better lives for dairy cows

An updated Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle was released in April 2023. The Code will improve the lives of more than 1.4 million dairy cows on farms in Canada. The BC SPCA submitted comments on the draft Code and encouraged supporters to do the same. Fifty organizations and 5,834 individuals submitted feedback. The updated Code includes improved requirements for housing, handling, pain control and health, among others.



## Preventing octopus farming

Highly intelligent cephalopods, such as octopuses, squids and cuttlefish, could, sadly, be farmed in the future. There are no cephalopod farms currently in Canada. However, without a ban, cephalopod farms could be opened. A federal petition to preventatively ban cephalopod farming received support from 17,294 Canadians.

## Speaking out against rodeo

The BC SPCA continues to speak out about animal suffering during rodeos and encourages people not to attend animal events, but rather enjoy the other fun activities that country fairs may provide. We encouraged British Columbians to reach out to local governments, asking for a bylaw to prohibit rodeos in their community.

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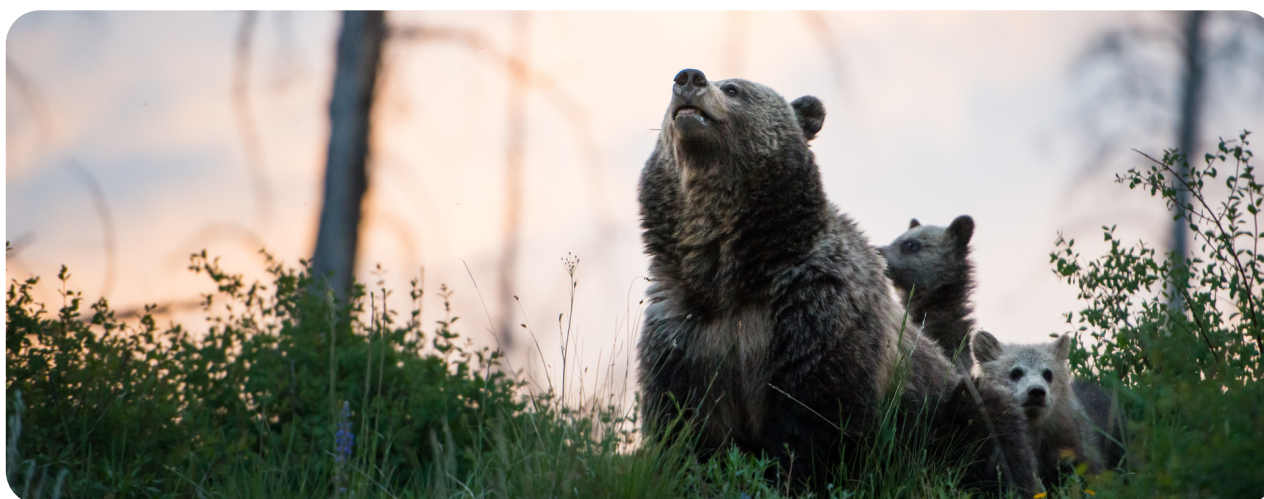
# WILD ANIMALS

## **Creating a better life for grizzly bears**

Five years after a provincial ban on commercial grizzly bear hunting, the BC SPCA and our supporters took action on a new opportunity to provide feedback on the [Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework](#). Grizzly bears face many threats, including urban expansion, climate change, disease and human disturbance. The framework is a significant step to promote coexistence and stewardship of grizzly bears. The BC SPCA believes a continued ban on trophy hunting and the consideration of animal welfare should be a priority in the framework.

## **Prohibiting exotic and wild-domestic hybrid pets**

The BC SPCA has long advocated against importing, breeding, selling and keeping exotic pets and wild-domestic hybrid animals. Sadly, there were several tragic incidents involving these unsuitable pets across B.C. in 2023. The BC SPCA partnered with the Regional District of Nanaimo on an exotic animal resolution that was endorsed by the Union of B.C. Municipalities. The provincial government was also asked to act quickly to prohibit all exotic and wild-domestic hybrid animals under the Controlled Alien Species Regulation.





# GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

## Canada to phase out animal toxicity testing

The federal government passed [Bill S-5](#) to amend the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) and begin phasing out testing toxic chemicals on animals. CEPA is now the first piece of Canadian legislation to recognize the importance of eliminating animal toxicity testing. With these amendments, the government has begun to fulfill its promise to phase out chemical toxicity testing on animals by 2035.

## Canada finally bans cosmetic testing on animals

The federal government also passed [Bill C-47](#) to amend the *Food and Drugs Act*. This finally bans cosmetic testing on animals in Canada, selling cosmetics that rely on animal testing, and false or misleading labelling about cosmetic testing on animals. The BC SPCA has long opposed the use of animals for testing inessential substances like cosmetics, and supported the development and use of non-animal alternatives for all types of testing. The BC SPCA is grateful for the dedicated individuals, businesses and organizations who advocated for this change for almost a decade.





## Including animals in emergency management

In 2020, over 23,000 British Columbians joined the BC SPCA to ask the provincial government to include animals in modernized emergency management – and they listened! The *Emergency Management and Disaster Act*, enacted in November 2023, mandates that animals be included in risk assessments, emergency management and evacuation plans. The BC SPCA called upon our supporters to provide input as the provincial government develops regulations to implement the new Act. Almost 400 British Columbians shared their own experiences in emergencies and supported this modernized legislation.







# OUR WORK BEHIND THE SCENES

Public action campaigns are not the only way we create positive change for animals. The BC SPCA's Science & Policy team is comprised of animal welfare and policy experts that provide evidence-based recommendations to governments and industry.

In 2023, the Science & Policy team submitted 26 policy recommendations. Highlights include:

- Worked with 12 local governments to endorse animal-friendly policies or enact humane bylaws covering topics such as animal control, rodeos, petting zoos, backyard hens, bees and animal care.
- Worked at the provincial and federal levels to speak up for animals on farms and in the wild by serving on committees and providing evidence-based feedback.





## Companion animals

- Provided feedback to the Canadian Council on Animal Care to improve the welfare of dogs used in science.
- Emphasized to local governments the importance of dog-friendly public spaces and respectful coexistence with other people, pets and wildlife.
- Advocated for pet-friendly housing and partnered with the City of Port Moody to introduce a pet-friendly housing resolution endorsed by the Union of B.C. Municipalities.





## Farmed animals

- Encouraged the provincial government not to provide funding for rodeos.
- Provided evidence-based recommendations to improve fish welfare in the Aquaculture Stewardship Council's Fish Welfare Standard.
- Supported federal Traceability Regulations to improve farmed animal health.
- Submitted evidence-based suggestions to improve farmed animal welfare in the Canadian Organic Standards.
- Provided feedback to the Canadian Council on Animal Care to improve the welfare of fish used in science.





## Wild animals

- Submitted feedback to the provincial government to protect thorn sheep habitat and populations.
- Supported federal action to combat wildlife trafficking.
- Offered support to several municipalities for goose management strategies and advocated for humane methods of coexistence.
- Provided feedback to the federal government asking for stronger regulations to restrict elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn trade.
- Encouraged federal action to protect endangered spotted owls.
- Provided feedback to the provincial government to protect bear populations and their ecosystems in bear-viewing activities.





# THANK YOU

What a year to celebrate! Thank you for taking the time to speak for animals when they needed you most. One person can make a difference, and thousands working together move us closer to a world where animals are protected from suffering and have lives worth living. None of this would be possible without passionate people like you!



JOIN US IN 2024

**SIGN UP FOR  
ACTION ALERTS**

Questions about this work?  
Email [advocacy@spca.bc.ca](mailto:advocacy@spca.bc.ca)

