

Legislate protection for Alberta's free-roaming horses, says group

Feral horses besieged by shootings, viewed as pests

By OMID GHOREISHI
Epoch Times Staff

EDMONTON—How long does an animal live and reproduce in the wild before it can be termed wild?

This question is being debated in Alberta, where an organization dedicated to the conservation and humane treatment of the province's free-roaming horses wants the animals given a special designation.

"They are not truly wildlife in one point, but they are not livestock either," says Bob Henderson, president of the Wild Horses of Alberta Society (WHOAS).

"They're wild, free-roaming horses and we should recognize them and acknowledge them the way the United States has, as part of our heritage and part of our Western culture."

WHOAS has sent DNA samples of the horses to the Equine Genetics Lab at the University of Texas to determine if the horses have developed into a distinct breed because of their isolation.

If the horses are afforded a distinct identification, Henderson believes WHOAS can lobby more effectively for better and more enforceable laws to properly protect the horses, which roam in the foothills west of Rocky Mountain House and Sundre, as well as south of there to the Alberta-U.S. border.

Alberta's free-roaming horses tend to be viewed as pests as they represent no financial value, Henderson says. They have also been blamed for eating cattle graze, a claim he says is unproven, leading to the mentality that they should be eradicated.

This mentality could have contributed to the fatal shootings or suspicious deaths of close to 30 free-roaming horses over the past decade.

In January, three adults and a youth were arrested in connection to the shooting of a horse sometime last year.

"The evidence we have points certainly to the one case and we're still investigating and gathering evidence with respect to all the other shootings," says Corporal David Heaslip, a livestock investigator for the RCMP.

There could be different reasons behind the shootings, says Heaslip. Some people are just "trigger-happy" and think that because they have a gun they should shoot something. Others might think the horses are encroaching upon grazing land, or want to use them as bait for wolves.

HORSES' ORIGINS

Before becoming extinct thousands of years ago, wild horse species once roamed throughout North America. Today, the horses found on this continent are descended from those brought by Spanish soldiers and explorers in the 16th century.

Dave Ealey, a spokesperson for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD), says some of the horses brought over to the Western Hemisphere were released and became free-roaming and established patterns of behaviour to survive separate from their former owners.

"There have been maps prepared of the gradual movement north of the introduction of horses into First Nations

culture about 300 or so years ago," says Ealey.

According to SRD, most of these horses were brought into the province in the early 1900s to be used for logging and mining operations; once the operations ended, the horses were turned loose.

The active component of the release of domesticated horses which sustained these free-roaming herds led to the province determining them to be feral animals, Ealey says.

In fact, the only true wild horse breed in the world today is the Przewalski's Horse found in Mongolia.

Feral horses in Alberta are protected under the Stray Animals Act and the Horse Capture Program. Shooting or hunting horses is illegal under the Criminal Code.

But Henderson believes referring to the horses as feral or stray feeds into the mindset that they are "just garbage" and anybody can harm them.

"We don't believe the regulations as they are now afford the horses proper and adequate protection," says the retired Calgary police officer.

WHOAS's research, conducted by studying archives and journals of early explorers, shows the herds of horses have existed in the province for at least 200 years.

"When the North-West Mounted Police arrived in Alberta, they documented thousands of wild horses roaming the prairies of Alberta. That was in the 1870s," Henderson says.

"When we went researching back we found early explorers and some missionaries documented the horses in the 1850s, and as early as 1805 was the earliest we could find any documentation of the white man of the horses in Alberta."

SOME MANAGEMENT NECESSARY

Henderson says a lot of preconceived notions exist about the horses, and there has not been any significant research done on the animals.

"It's based mostly on old prejudices and ideas of self-invested groups, how the government perceives the horses."

In 2008, WHOAS sought a moratorium on the province's seasonal capture of wild horses for a minimum of one year, but to no avail. They wanted to study the herds, believing the foal mortality rate was unusually high.

Ealey says some management of the horses is deemed necessary when their presence impacts other interests and values, such as wrangle and grazing by traditional livestock. But the province would not allow their capture unless surveys showed their population had declined to around 200, he notes.

"The number of horses has reached around 650 and clearly they are doing well in some parts of their foothills range."

Treating the horses as wildlife, adds Ealey, is not appropriate given that domestic horses continue to escape or be released from ranches and farms near and along the Eastern Slopes.

According to WHOAS, ranchers would like the horses cleared out so there is more grazing for the cattle that run free on grazing leases during the summer months. Logging companies also view them as a nuisance in the forest reserves, as do the oil companies, it says.

The organization is urging Albertans to engage in phone-call and letter-writing campaigns to the government and to forestry and oil companies to intervene for more protection for the horses.

Canadian fathers want quality family time for Father's Day

By CINDY CHAN
Epoch Times Staff

OTTAWA—With Father's Day just around the corner, the question of what to give dad is on the minds of many Canadian families. While looking for gift ideas, recent studies show that families may not need to look very far.

While a Statistics Canada report released this month says that today's dads are more involved in raising their children than the previous generation, a recent survey suggests that the vast majority of fathers in Canada simply want quality time with family as a Father's Day gift.

The survey of more than 850 Canadian fathers found that 80 percent just wanted quality time with their families for Father's Day—more than any other gift category. Results of the survey, commissioned by Future Shop and conducted by Leger Marketing, also suggested that 82 percent of women would prefer to give good quality time with family as a gift.

Meanwhile, "Making fathers 'count,'" a Statistics Canada compilation of results from a collection of studies done in recent years, summarized that both the representation of fatherhood and how it is practised in daily life have changed.

"Once considered only an authority figure and a breadwinner, today's father actively participates in the day-to-day care giving and emotional support of their children," said the report.

It notes that this has come about from major socioeconomic changes: "more people spending more time pursuing higher levels of education; weaker marital ties (with common-law unions becoming more common and marriage losing popularity); and increased participation of women in the labour force."

Research on parental involvement with children in recent years suggests that today's fathers are more involved with their children than their own fathers were with them, including during pregnancy, labour, childbirth, and children's early growing years.

Noting that fathers come in many



Research on parental involvement with children conducted in Canada in recent years indicates that today's fathers are more involved with their children than their own fathers were with them. PHOTOS.COM

forms, including biological fathers, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, lone fathers, and fathers who don't necessarily live with their children, the StatsCan report gave a number of snapshots of the current situation of fatherhood in Canada.

Just as the overall population is aging, the average age of fathers is rising, said the report. While it was 39.8 years in 1995, it jumped to 41.6 in 2006, an increase of 1.8 years over the study period.

Another finding is that fatherhood is starting later in life.

Over the past 20 years, the fertility rate of Canadian women in their twenties has dropped, while that of women in their thirties has steadily risen.

Similarly, the average age of fathers on entry into fatherhood increased from 27.8 to 29.1 between 1995 and 2006. This includes fathers who entered into fatherhood with the birth of their first child, or through adoption, becoming a step-

parent, or other means.

And while almost all children were born to and grew up with married parents 40 years ago, today many are either born outside of marriage or experience parental divorce at young ages.

Most fathers today are married, but the proportion of unmarried fathers—in common-law unions or without a spouse—has increased, especially in Quebec.

Nearly 40 percent of Quebec fathers were living common-law in 2006 compared to 26.4 percent in 1995. In other provinces, nearly 11 percent of fathers were living common-law in 2006 compared to 8.6 percent in 1995.

The report also said that in 2006 fathers were more likely to be the head of a lone-parent family than in 1995, due to separations and divorces becoming more common.

In addition, according to Statistics Canada's "Father's Day...by the numbers" webpage last updated on June

8, Canada had 8.1 million fathers in 2006, and 3.7 million fathers with children under 18 living with them, including biological fathers, adoptive fathers, and stepfathers. For mothers, the figures were higher at 9.2 million and 3.9 million, respectively.

The webpage also showed that men and women spent less time with family members on workdays in 2005 than in 1986. Men spent 250 minutes in 1986, with the figure dropping to 205 minutes in 2005. Women spent 248 minutes in 1986 compared with 209 minutes in 2005.

As for other Father's Day preferred gift ideas, 55 percent of the fathers in the Leger survey chose new electronic gadgets, 49 percent said they wanted a day off from household chores, and 49 percent said they would like new clothes. Sports items, home renovation tools, and movies were other gifts ideas selected by at least 40 percent of the fathers surveyed.

Ban energy drink sales to minors, say health officials

DRINK CONTINUED FROM P1

He said the level of caffeine in Red Bull equals that contained in a cup of instant coffee, adding that the 250-ml can label recommends consumption of no more than two cans per day, amounting to 160 milligrams of caffeine in total. He also noted that the label recommends against children drinking Red Bull.

Justin Sherwood, president of Refreshments Canada, which represents the country's non-alcoholic beverage sector, said energy drinks are "subject to tight controls" in Canada and have undergone extensive reviews and analyses by regulatory authorities worldwide.

"Without exception, these reviews have all confirmed the safety of these products," he said.

In a presentation to the P.E.I. Standing Committee on Social Development in March 2009, Dr. Scantlebury said that aside from what the drinks contain, there is also a concern with how they are being consumed.

"Adverse reactions occur when the energy drinks are consumed more than one at a time, and 'chugged' versus sipped as we would a coffee," he said.

"There is also the dangerous trend with youth and younger adults to mix energy drinks with alcohol. The effect of high doses of caffeine in combination with alcohol enhances alcohol's dehydrating effects. In short, the cocktail mix allows one to remain alert longer and therefore capable of consuming more alcohol."

Energy drinks are banned in France, Sweden, and Denmark, while Ireland is reviewing its policy on the beverages. In 2005, a teenager in Ireland died during a basketball game after sharing four cans of a popular brand of energy drink with friends.

A subsequent inquest found that the 18-year-old died as a result of sudden adult death syndrome, but nonetheless called for an inquiry into high-caffeine energy drinks.



Concerned about possible negative effects from energy drinks spiked with caffeine, health officials and the Canadian Home and School Federation have called for a ban on the sale of the drinks to minors. EARL S. CRYER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

As well as high amounts of sugar and a host of additives, some energy drinks contain as much as 500 milligrams of caffeine per can, while

"There is also the dangerous trend with youth and younger adults to mix energy drinks with alcohol."

—Dr. Lamont Sweet

the amount recommended by Health Canada for adults is no more 400 milligrams per day.

"When you think of the difference

in body size between an adult and a child, and that many milligrams of caffeine in the system—of course they'll be bouncing off the walls, coupled with the sugar and what-not," says Parkhouse.

He adds that while the amount of caffeine in energy drinks varies, "for the most part they're well above what Canadian doctors would say is safe for most children."

If Ottawa fails to ban the drinks to minors, he adds, P.E.I. should take the lead and become the first province in Canada to implement such legislation.

"I think more and more we're looking at Prince Edward Island leading the way in a lot of the issues that confront our country, and it's the easiest place in the country to perhaps do this. So instead of lagging behind I think there's a move afoot for Prince Edward Island to lead the charge."

PUZZLES⁴PEACE
Guess the hidden saying, phrase or word(s) suggested by the graphic below

30 LBS DUMBBELL

Presented By
FREE THE CHILDREN
children helping children through education

SOLUTION ON P7

QUEEN VICTORIA HOTEL & SUITES
WHALE OF A DEAL!

Enjoy a three and a half hour whale watching tour with Seafun Safaris! Seals, sea lions, orca whales, eagles, and porpoise, can all be seen from the wide-bodied zodiac.

Package includes:
• 1 night accommodation for two in a studio suite
• A 3.5 hour whale watching tour for two • Free parking
• Complimentary transportation within the downtown core

Hotel features:
• Studio, one, two bedrooms and specialty suites
• Kitchens, for a nominal fee
• Samuel's by the park restaurant
• Indoor pool, jacuzzi, sauna, and fitness centre
• Complimentary downtown shuttle, wireless internet and business centre

Only \$200/night
Based on double occupancy. Taxes not included. June 1 - 30, 2010

qvhotel.com 1-800-663-7007

stephen whipp financial

Curious about ethical investing?

250-405-3550
www.stephenwhipp.com

Manulife Securities
INCORPORATED