



Wildlife groups denounce MNR for killing two baby raccoons

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EMC News - Wildlife organizations denounce the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) for killing two baby raccoons, who were seized from an Ottawa area property.

Ministry staff are quoted as saying that the young raccoons had to die because they were grouped together, because there was no record of where the animals originated and because there was a potential threat of disease.

The MNR raided the Constance Creek Wildlife Refuge near Dunrobin Oct. 11 with a warrant and seized the two juvenile raccoons. The raid came as a result of a report filed to the MNR by the Ottawa bylaw enforcement department, after they investigated a mishap that led to two domestic donkeys briefly escaping.

"This tragedy simply confirms what we have been saying all along," said Liz White, spokesperson for the Ontario Wildlife Coalition and Director of Animal Alliance of Canada. "The Ministry mandates the inhumane care for orphaned wildlife. Raccoons need to be raised with others of their own species but the ministry would require these two babies to be raised in isolation of each other." In a press release, she wondered why the MNR did not seek to observe the animals, rather than kill them.

"In fact, if ministry staff thought there was a disease risk, why wouldn't they have placed the two raccoons in isolation with an authorized rehabilitator for observation," White continued. "The casual disregard with which these two infant animals were killed by ministry staff is shocking." "People across the province want to see humane help for wildlife," said Donna DuBreuil, spokesperson for the Ontario Wildlife Coalition. "Ontarians expect the Ministry of Natural Resources to protect wild animals, not simply dispose of them as they did with these two animals. Ontarians do not want the heavy hand of the Ministry of Natural Resources killing baby wildlife because of unnecessary and arbitrary regulations. As we have stated repeatedly putting young animals, after months of rehabilitative care, back into busy areas as is now required by the ministry is irresponsible and inhumane. We have made it clear from the outset that orphaned wild animals be raised with others of their own species and that they be released generally within the city or county-of-origin, with transitional care for those species who require it." "I deal with people all day long who are looking for help for wildlife," said Barry MacKay, spokesperson for the Ontario Wildlife Coalition and Canadian representative for the Born Free USA. "Many go to extraordinary lengths to find help for animals in distress. They call the ministry expecting help. Instead they are told to euthanize the animals or to leave them and let nature take its course. This is the ministry that implemented punitive and inhumane regulations against wildlife rehabilitators and has steadfastly refused to take corrective measures. This is a ministry who claims to be worried about disease threat from two infant wild animals and yet has done nothing about the unregulated wildlife removal companies who release wild animals all over the place." "The fight for humane regulations for wildlife rehabilitators has gone on long enough," said DuBreuil. "We call upon Premier McGuinty and the Liberal Party to keep its promise and fix this problem so that more infant wild animals seized by the ministry don't have to die."

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