



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

Office of the County Administrator, Public Affairs and Communications

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Board Adopts Addition to Animals Ordinance

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has adopted a new section of Chapter 612, Dogs and Other Animals, of the Codified Ordinances of Loudoun County that prohibits ownership of certain exotic and venomous species of animals that present a risk to public health and safety.

The revised ordinance prohibits private ownership of certain types of exotic and venomous animals, such as wolf hybrids, kangaroos, scorpions, baboons, alligators, venomous snakes and other venomous reptiles, and non-native venomous spiders.

The new section of the ordinance also prohibits the breeding of such animals. Virginia law already restricts private ownership of many other wild and exotic animals, such as big cats and bears. The ordinance does not impact entities that are licensed or permitted through the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources or other state or federal agencies to house restricted species, such as zoos, exhibitors or rehabilitators.

The amended ordinance allows current owners of the listed animals to keep them but would require those animals be registered through a process the county will establish to ensure awareness by first responders in the event of an emergency. Once it is established, information about the registry will be posted on the Loudoun County government website.

Adoption of the ordinance on March 7, 2023, came after an extensive public process, which included a public information meeting hosted by Loudoun County Animal Services, an online comment form on the county website and a Board of Supervisors public hearing.

Background

In November 2022, the Board of Supervisors' Animal Advisory Committee voted unanimously to support the staff proposal for a new section of the ordinance, which was proposed by Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS), whose humane law enforcement officers have encountered venomous animals when responding to routine calls for service. LCAS identified a public safety concern after learning anti-venom for non-native snakes is not readily available in Loudoun County. Informing the new section of the ordinance is LCAS officers' collective experience investigating complaints involving wolf-hybrids, scorpions, monkeys and venomous snake species, which indicates that exotic and venomous species are present in Loudoun County residential settings.

Similar ordinances exist in the Town of Leesburg; Arlington, Fairfax and Prince William counties; the District of Columbia; and jurisdictions in Maryland.

For More Information

More information on the development of the new ordinance section is available at loudoun.gov/Chapter612addition.

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