



The Manitoba Canary & Finch Club has launched this petition against the City of Winnipeg's alarming proposal to ban the ownership of almost all species of parrot and greatly limit what finch and canary species may be owned. In addition to the species bans, individuals and households would be prohibited from owning more than 5 birds. Other groups such as reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, fish and small mammals are also impacted with a large number of arbitrary species bans and possession limits.

If approved by council, this by-law amendment would mean that for parrots, only budgies and cockatiels could be owned in Winnipeg as early as January 2022. All other common parrots such as parrotlets, lovebirds, conures, caiques, quakers, amazons, cockatoos, African greys, and macaws would be illegal to own and rehome. For aviary hobbyists, the variety of species would be limited to just 26 of over 52 species of finches and 1 variety of canary. The practice of breeding any exotic animal would be prohibited. Current owners of banned species under this proposal would see their animals grandfathered. However, it would be illegal to rehome animals within city limits, presenting very real challenges that could threaten the safety and wellbeing of both people and animals.

The stated purpose of the by-law proposal is to "keep both pets and the community safe" and "ensure that pets are properly cared for and not placed in at-risk scenarios." The city has disingenuously attempted to do this by banning species and limiting the number of animals that may be owned rather than focusing on what is actually important: setting out minimum standards of care and promoting public education. Banning species and placing arbitrary limits on the number of birds that may be owned does nothing to address the principles of animal welfare quoted by the city, which include the provision of food, water, and shelter and to ensure that pets are kept in good health, are able to express natural behaviors, and are not subjected to mental suffering.

Main reasons why the by-law proposal for exotics should be rejected:

1. Appropriate consultation with affected stakeholders and the public has not taken place and the short amount of time for feedback is unacceptable (public engagement period ends on August 31st).
2. Pet birds are considered companion animals very much like cats and dogs. They interact abundantly with people and enjoy doing so. Parrots are excellent, highly interactive, affectionate, and entertaining pets.
3. Banning all parrot species except for budgies and cockatiels implies that budgies and cockatiels require less care and have fewer needs than any other species of parrot. This is abjectly false!
4. The limit of five birds per household would effectively end the lifestyle of keeping aviaries of domestic finches and canaries, a hobby that has existed since the 15th century.
5. Pet parrots, finches, and canaries in Winnipeg are not sourced from the wild. The reputable captive breeding of these birds across Canada ensures that black-market demand for illegal trade in wild-caught birds is very low to non-existent. However, this could change under the proposed by-law if captive breeding and sale is banned, thereby increasing black-market demand and threatening wild populations.
6. There is no evidence that there is an overabundance of pet birds in Winnipeg. Parrots, finches, and canaries do not frequently end up in animal shelters and current levels of breeding help meet demand both within Winnipeg and across Canada. The breeding of most bird species is a specialized skill that requires dedication and is therefore only done by a small subset of bird owners.
7. Like cats and dogs, cases of hoarding birds are very rare and should not reflect negatively on the majority of good bird owners.
8. Local businesses and vets that specialize in bird care and husbandry will be greatly impacted, resulting in fewer services and resources for grandfathered birds.