



Why modernizing animal protection laws fail to pass

Description

Canada's antiquated animal protection laws do not meet today's changing expectations

By **Georges R. Dupras**

Taken from *The Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus: The secret group of MPs and Senators working to sabotage animal cruelty and wildlife protection legislation*, a briefing paper by the Animal Protection Party of Canada



Image: Matthieu Godbout [GFDL](#), [via Wikimedia Commons](#)

Have you ever wondered why almost every effort to modernize Canada's antiquated animal protection laws has failed? Present laws date back to 1892 and nothing has changed. In their defence, the Conservative Party,



under the leadership of the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, did increase fines for offenders. As for the Liberals, the last time they did anything The Right Hon. Louis Saint-Laurent was Prime Minister.

I'm compelled to wonder why the laws governing animal protection have failed to meet today's changing expectations. Perhaps a paper released by the Animal Protection Party of Canada (APPC) could shed some light on the politics governing the issue of animal cruelty laws in this Country. The briefing is entitled *The Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus: The secret group of MPs and Senators working to sabotage animal cruelty and wildlife protection legislation.*

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So what is the "raison d'être" of the Outdoor Caucus? One *Canadian Shooting Sports* article states: "The mission of the Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus (POC), is to entrench in law fishing, hunting, trapping and shooting sports as acceptable, traditional, environmentally-sustainable outdoor heritage activities with a safety credo and a conservation ethic as our highest priority." I won't challenge their interpretation of "environmentally sustainable" in the interest of my blood pressure, nor will I accept their use of "conservation ethic" when they really mean "conservation politicized".

Secret club

This clandestine, non-partisan, Parliamentary caucus has close ties with industry through the Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada (OCAC – lobbyists). The OCAC is chaired by an executive with Shimano, a major manufacturer of sport fishing equipment. Another article, this time in *The Fishing Wire* states: "The Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada (formed in 2006), serves as a liaison between the Canadian fishing, hunting trapping and recreational shooting community/related industry and non-partisan all party Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus (POC) in Ottawa".

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The problem here is that the Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus (POC), made-up of Members of Parliament and Senators, should represent the interest of "all Canadians" and not only those from special interests. In fact, the overwhelming majority of Canadians, when asked by the Federal Government, do not see wildlife as a resource to be exploited. In short, outdoor heritage activities are enjoyed by all Canadians regardless of political persuasions and the people have a right/expectation, to be represented in a non-partisan and apolitical manner in Parliament.

Lobbyists and special interests

The OCAC actively lobbies Members of Parliament and Senators as they did on June 7, 2016 at the Stittsville Shooting Ranges just south west of Ottawa. In cooperation with the Canadian Shooting Sports association, they hosted an event for POC members and a few of their senior aids.



Image: courtesy of CAFT

Guests included the Hon. Rona Ambrose (Conservative), the Hon. Kellie Leitch (Conservative), Christine Moore (NDP), Gurdie Hutchings (Liberal), and the Hon. Peter Kent (Conservative). Approximately 123 MPs and Senators are members of POC. Is your Member of Parliament included in this elite clandestine group? Other than the Caucus co-chairs, Yvonne Jones (Liberal MP, Labrador), and Bob Zimmer (Conservative MP, Prince George-Peace River), membership in POC is not made public. It is also to be noted that membership is voluntary and no membership list exists. According to Bob Zimmer, Chair of the POC, "This is by design. Many MPs want to be informed, but they don't want their participation or attendance used against them politically".

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The Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus is large and effective. In fact, Bob Zimmer says that POC came together and defeated Bill C-246 the most recent attempt to modernizing the animal cruelty laws in this Country. Now I could go on citing examples of misinformation, the use of politically corrupted terminology and politicized conservation rhetoric, but that isn't what this is about. My motivation is fuelled by the fact that, unknown to the general public, elected representatives in this country, as well as non-elected members of the Senate, are back-rooming deals without the knowledge or consent of those who placed their confidence in them on voting day.

If you are at all concerned about animal cruelty in this country, then I urge you to ask your MP if he/she is in any way associated with the Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus (POC).

Feature image: [William John Gauthier](#) via [StockPholio.net](#)



For over fifty years **Georges R. Dupras** has advocated for animals. He is a member of the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA), a Director of the Animal Alliance of Canada (AAC), Quebec Representative of Zoocheck Canada and past Board member of the Canadian SPCA. He worked on the original Save the Seal campaign in 1966 that culminated in the founding of the International Fund for Animal



Welfare (IFAW) in 1969. He has published two books including *Values in Conflict* and the eBook *Ethics, a Human Condition*. Georges currently lives in Montreal, Canada.



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