

8. ROYAL SWAN PROGRAM UPDATE

MISE À JOUR SUR LE PROGRAMME DES CYGNES ROYAUX

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That Council gift the Royal Swans to Parc Safari Incorporated to ensure proper care of the aging flock.

RECOMMANDATION DU COMITÉ

Que le Conseil fasse don des cygnes royaux au Parc Safari afin que ces oiseaux vieillissants reçoivent continuellement les soins dont ils ont besoin.

DOCUMENTATION/DOCUMENTATION

1. General Manager's report, Public Works and Environmental Services dated 10 June 2019 (ACS2019-PWE-GEN-0026).

Rapport du Directeur général, Direction générale des travaux publics et de l'environnement , daté le 10 juin 2019 (ACS2019-PWE-GEN-0026).

2. Extract of draft Minutes, Community and Protective Services Committee, 20 June 2019.

Extrait de l'ébauche du procès-verbal, Comité des services communautaires et de protection, le 20 juin 2019

**COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE
SERVICES COMMITTEE
REPORT 4
26 JUNE 2019**

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**COMITÉ DES SERVICES
COMMUNAUTAIRES ET DE
PROTECTION RAPPORT 4
LE 26 JUIN 2019**

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Community and Protective Services Committee
Comité des services communautaires et de protection
20 June 2019 / 20 juin 2019**

**and Council
et au Conseil
26 June 2019 / 26 juin 2019**

**Submitted on June 10, 2019
Soumis le 10 juin 2019**

**Submitted by
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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2019-PWE-GEN-0026

SUBJECT: ROYAL SWAN PROGRAM UPDATE

OBJET : MISE À JOUR SUR LE PROGRAMME DES CYGNES ROYAUX

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommend Council gift the Royal Swans to Parc Safari Incorporated to ensure proper care of the aging flock.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des services communautaires et de protection recommande au Conseil de faire don des cygnes royaux au Parc Safari afin que ces oiseaux vieillissants reçoivent continuellement les soins dont ils ont besoin.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ottawa has operated the Royal Swan Program since 1967, when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gifted the City with six pairs of Mute swans in celebration of Canada's Centennial. In 1974, the City received a pair of Australian Black swans in a trade with the Montreal Zoo. Since that time, the swans and their descendants have resided on the Rideau River during the spring and summer months each year. Due to Ottawa's climate, the swans are housed in an indoor/outdoor facility during the late fall and winter months.

In the past, the swans were housed at a facility located on Leitrim Road, which was leased from the National Capital Commission (NCC). Built in the late 1960s, the Leitrim Road winter facility had reached the end of its lifecycle. A Structural Condition Review conducted in 2015 found significant operational and safety concerns that needed to be addressed in order for the City to safely house the swans during winter on an ongoing basis.

In the absence of time and funding to build a new facility, Council was advised in 2015 that staff had entered into a two-year agreement with Parc Safari to provide a winter facility and care for the swans, following extensive vetting of potential facilities against care standards and other criteria. This agreement was extended for an additional two years, as no viable and acceptable alternative winter accommodation has been identified.

DISCUSSION

The City and Parc Safari continue to have a very successful partnership. Parc Safari is undergoing large capital investments in the next few years to upgrade the site, build new infrastructure for the animals, and increase the number of visitors it welcomes each year. The Royal Swans require a facility with continuous monitoring and care, and Parc Safari is able to offer these services to the flock with their existing staffing and facilities.

The main consideration to relocate the Royal Swans to Parc Safari on a permanent basis is the dwindling flock size as it had now reached a critical point with only five swans in the flock. Ensuring year-round oversight, with minimal disruption caused by factors such as transporting the birds long distances, is crucial to the longevity of the flock. Additionally, the flock size is well under the Council-approved Policy ([*Respecting the Management of the Mute \(Royal\) and Australian Black Swan Flock*](#)).

Table 1 summarizes the flock size requirements, as prescribed in the Policy.

Table 1: Actual Flock Size and Requirement by Policy

Swan	2019 Flock Size	Minimum Flock Size	Maximum Flock Size
Mute (Royal)	4	20	26
Black	1	4	6

Staff have concluded that the aging swans and their predators on the Rideau River – their summer habitat – have affected reproduction and overall flock size. Over the years, staff have observed nests with eggs, but the eggs did not survive due to predators or to the swans abandoning them. Further to this, staff have found remains of swans in recent years that are believed to have been caused by attacks from predators. The ongoing monitoring and control of the swans in a suitable facility such as Parc Safari may provide an opportunity to increase the size of the flock.

Gifting the Royal Swans to Parc Safari is the best option for the health and well-being of the flock. During the winter months, Parc Safari has provided optimum care for the Royal swans. The annual cost of this winter care has been approximately \$30,000. However, the biannual (spring and fall) transfer to and from the winter facility has put

significant stress on the swans. This is an opportunity to offer the best care and round-the-clock, protected oversight for the health of the swans.

The option that was explored by staff, but is not being recommended to Committee, is a three to five-year loan agreement for the flock, which would have allowed the swans to mate in a safe environment while the flock rebuilds. This option would have cost the City approximately \$200,000 over five years. In time, the reintroduction of the flock to the Rideau River during the summer months will lead to issues similar to those observed in recent years, and therefore is not recommended.

Gifting the Royal Swans includes an agreement with Parc Safari documenting the requirements for the continued care of the swans in accordance with relevant federal and provincial legislation. The agreement also includes a yearly update from Parc Safari on the health of the swans, along with a series of pictures of the swans in their habitat. A commemorative plaque will also be installed at Parc Safari, providing information on the history of the Royal Swans and recognizing the gifting by the City of Ottawa.

Upon approval of this report, staff will work with Legal Services to draft a gifting agreement with Parc Safari.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

This is a city-wide report.

CONSULTATION

There is no statutory requirement for public notification or consultation.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

No consultation was required.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to Committee and Council's approval of the recommendation of this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

All risks have been identified and mitigated in the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The gifting of the swans to Parc Safari will result in a net operating budget reduction of \$45,000 starting in 2020 as some costs have been incurred in 2019. It will also eliminate the need for \$600,000 in capital funding for a new facility.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility-related impacts associated with this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The staff recommendations outlined in this report align with the City's strategic priority of financial responsibility.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

There are no supporting documents for this report.

DISPOSITION

Upon Council approval, staff will work with Parc Safari Inc. to finalize the Royal Swan Gifting Agreement to gift the swans to Parc Safari.

Note: Minor corrections have been made to this report by the Office of the City Clerk and Solicitor, per the City Clerk and Solicitor's Delegated Authority, as set out in Schedule C, Subsection 36 of Delegation of Authority By-Law 2018- 397.