



July 7, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Province is proposing to amend the Controlled Alien Species Regulation (CASR) to designate all cat species, except native wildlife and domestic cats, as Controlled Alien Species. This letter intends to share detailed information regarding the proposed amendments.

The CASR was enacted to control alien species that pose a risk to the health or safety of any persons, or pose a risk to property, wildlife or wildlife habitat. Approximately 1200 species are listed on the CASR. The CASR makes it illegal for anyone to possess, ship, transport, or breed controlled alien species (CAS) without a permit.

With respect to felines, currently only large cats (e.g., lions, tigers and panthers) are designated as CAS. None of the other cat subfamilies, which include animals such as servals, caracals and ocelots, are currently included on the regulation. These species may also pose a risk to the health or safety of any persons, or pose a risk to property, wildlife or wildlife habitat.

Serval cats in particular, have increased in popularity as pets since the CASR limited large cat ownership in 2009. As trends in exotic pet ownership change regularly, listing all non-native cat species will help prevent having new exotic cat species from becoming the pet of choice.

Under the current proposal, it is envisioned that:

- 1) Individuals who own one of the newly designated CAS prior to effective date of the CASR amendment would be allowed to apply for a permit to continue to possess the animal throughout its lifetime, provided they abide by specific conditions, which could include:
 - Providing proof of sterilization; and
 - Providing proof of identification (e.g. microchip or tattoo); and
 - Keeping the animal indoors or within an outdoor enclosure that meets humane standards
- 2) Breeding and sale of the newly designated CAS would be prohibited.
- 3) Savannah cats and other hybrid offspring that are commonly recognized as domestic cat breeds would be considered domestic breeds for the purposes of the regulation, and thus would not require permits. Hybrids animals that are not

widely recognized as domestic cats will be considered CAS, as per the *Wildlife Act*, and would be subject to the new rules.

The BC SPCA has offered to assist the Ministry in placing servals that are unable to meet permit conditions in accredited sanctuaries outside of Canada.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the proposed changes, please contact Christine Crockford at Christine.Crockford@gov.bc.ca by **September 30, 2025**.

Sincerely,



Logan Wenham
Executive Director, Wildlife Branch