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2012 Canadian Animal Protection Laws Rankings™

Based on a detailed comparative analysis of the animal protection laws of each jurisdiction, the 2012 Canadian Animal Protection Laws Rankings recognizes the provinces and territories where laws protecting animals have real teeth, and calls out those like Quebec and Nunavut—the worst in Canada this year for animal protection laws—where animal abusers get off easy.

ALDF's fifth annual report, the only one of its kind in the nation, ranks every province and territory on the relative strength and general comprehensiveness of its animal protection laws. Manitoba, British Columbia, and Ontario take top honors in 2012 for providing strong protections for animals.

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Top Tier:

1. Manitoba
2. British Columbia
3. Ontario
4. Nova Scotia

Middle Tier:

5. Newfoundland & Labrador
6. New Brunswick
7. Yukon
8. Alberta
9. Saskatchewan

Bottom Tier:

10. Prince Edward Island
11. Northwest Territories
12. Quebec
13. Nunavut

Ontario and Manitoba continue to occupy the top tier, but are now joined by British Columbia, which made considerable improvements to its animal protection legislation since last year's report. Most notably, the province enacted stiffer penalties, with animal abusers now facing up to two years imprisonment and a \$75,000 fine. It also extended the scope of prohibitions to include abuse perpetrated by anyone—not just an animal's owner. Additionally, British Columbia now specifically targets animal

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fighting, and requires veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse or neglect. Nova Scotia, the fourth province in the top tier, also made changes to its animal protection legislation, but these were minor and did not affect the province's relative ranking.

Newfoundland and Labrador showed significant improvement this year, moving a number of spots up to the very top of the middle tier. The province broadened its range of protections, made veterinarian reporting of suspected abuse mandatory, enacted new animal fighting provisions, and drastically increased maximum penalties (the maximum fine went up from \$500 to \$50,000). A remarkably progressive change in Newfoundland and Labrador's animal protection law relates to use-based exemptions, i.e. exemptions based on the purpose for which an animal is kept (e.g. food production, scientific research). It is currently the only province or territory to circumscribe use-based exemptions to practices consistent with specific standards set out in regulations.

Despite some improvements to its animal protection law since last year's report, including a broadening of species coverage and the promulgation of new standards of care for dogs and cats, Quebec held its position as the province with the weakest animal protection legislation. It was joined in the bottom tier by Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, which remains the worst jurisdiction in Canada when it comes to animal protection.

Since ALDF began publishing these rankings in 2008, there has been a marked improvement in the laws of many provinces and territories, and more advances are on the way. However, there continues to be a wide range of disparity across the country, with some jurisdictions making substantial steps forward, and others lagging behind. Irrespective of where each province or territory currently ranks, every province and territory has ample room for improvement. It is ALDF's hope that these ongoing reviews continue to shed light on this important issue and garner support for both the strengthening and enforcement of animal protection laws throughout the country.

ALDF encourages those who care about the welfare and protection of animals to contact their elected officials about the importance of having strong, comprehensive laws in this field, and to alert law enforcement should they ever witness animal abuse or neglect.

For additional information, see our [Model Animal Protection Laws](#) collection and [Animal Protection Laws of the USA & Canada](#) compendium.

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