

## Bowmanville Zoo - Promoting Awareness and Understanding

Bowmanville is the largest community in Clarington, in the Durham region of Ontario, Canada. The community itself has a population of around 32,000 people, and has been noted in the past for its role as a Prisoner of War camp for Germans captured in Africa during World War Two. Today, one of the most interesting spots in Bowmanville is the city's zoo, the largest privately owned zoo to be found anywhere in Canada.

### The History of the Bowmanville Zoo

The Bowmanville Zoo is located on what was originally public park land, which included a pool, a petting zoo, tennis courts and a few cottages. The Connell family, who ran the petting zoo, purchased the plot of land in the 1950s. The family renamed the park the Bowmanville Zoo in 1964, and sold the entire package in 1988, when it underwent yet another name change and became the Bowmanville Zoological Park.

Under the new owners, the zoo received accreditation from the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums in 1993. In addition to other awards and achievements, the zoo received the Thomas Baines award for outstanding excellence and achievements. The park is committed to its role as a voice for conservational education and the promotion of viable captive populations of endangered animals, and has undertaken a role as educator in this regard. Among other things, the zoo puts on many orientation programs each year teaching children and adults alike about the importance of animals within their ecosystems and ways in which we can care for our environment.

### Other roles of the zoo

The Bowmanville Zoo has been noted internationally for supplying Hollywood with some of the world's finest animal actors. Among these are the lions from *The Ghost and the Darkness*, the panther from *Amazon*, and Maggie the Macaque, a TSN sports forecaster during the National Hockey League Playoffs.

Not only is the Bowmanville Zoo committed to promoting an awareness and understanding of the natural world; it often brings that natural world to the community itself. The elephants that make the zoo their home, sometimes take strolls through the community or appear at season opening football games, while the zoo makes them available for rides almost all year long.

All in all, the Bowmanville Zoo represents a truly unique way for a menagerie to bring environmental education to people.

## About the Author

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