

## **TOMMY THOMPSON PARK NO PETS POLICY**

Tommy Thompson Park is a significant wildlife area and as such there is a strict **no dogs / no pets policy**. On duty service animals that are properly identified are permitted within the park, however may be excluded from certain sensitive areas if alternatives are provided. There are no other exceptions.

TTP is managed as an 'urban wilderness' and one of the objectives is to provide critical habitat areas for wildlife along the waterfront. Over 300 species of birds have been documented at TTP, many of which use the park as a summer breeding area. Several species at the park are ground nesting birds that would be in danger of having their nests destroyed by dogs if they were allowed in the park. In addition to ground nesting birds, fledglings from tree nesting birds are also at risk of being injured or killed as they practice their first flights or perch low to the ground.

In addition to birds, the park is home to many mammals. Coyotes have successfully denned in the park for many years and are observed on a regular basis. Coyote-dog interactions are rare, but can happen. Some incidents have been documented in other Toronto area parks such as High Park. Coyotes have approached and stalked dogs that were both on leash and off-leash, so walking your dog on a leash will not always insure its safety. Many small mammals such as rabbits, voles, groundhogs, beavers and muskrats also breed at the park are common targets of dogs.

The decision to not allow dogs in the park was not an arbitrary one. It was made in 1985 during the master planning process for TTP. The Natural Areas Committee, which was made up of naturalists, stakeholders groups and members of the public, felt that it was in the best interest of the park's wildlife to not allow pets. It is the position of this group that there are numerous other waterfront parks where one could walk their dog, while there are very few natural areas where there is the opportunity to see so many birds and other species.

While your dog may be well trained and can be easily controlled by you, many dogs are not. As managers of TTP we cannot pick and choose which dogs should and should not be permitted to enter the park. For the safety of the wildlife that use the park it is best that dogs are not permitted in TTP.