

**DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS
(NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2004**

S.I. 2004 No. 1993 (N.I. 16)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

4. The purpose of the Order is to introduce regulatory controls over dangerous wild animals kept by private individuals in Northern Ireland.
5. In 1997 concerns were raised about a collection of ‘large cats’ kept in Northern Ireland in the care of a private owner. The incident attracted significant attention and resulted in concerted pressure upon government to introduce legislation in Northern Ireland to control the keeping of dangerous wild animals (DWAs). Given a continuing trend for keeping DWAs as pets, concerns about the risk to public safety and the welfare of the animals remain.
6. In Great Britain the keeping of DWAs is controlled by a licensing system operated by local authorities under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (the 1976 Act). The Act’s provisions do not apply to Northern Ireland. While a number of enactment’s in Northern Ireland deal with wildlife and animal welfare issues generally, none deal sufficiently with the issue of public safety as a consequence of anyone keeping DWAs in a private capacity, and it is this gap in the law that the Order aims to address.