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Patrick Cain, Global News : Monday, November 14, 2011 02:12 PM

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The number of dog bites reported in Toronto has fallen since a ban on pit bulls took effect in 2005, public health statistics show.

A total of 486 bites were recorded in 2005. That number fell generally in the six years following, to 379 in 2010.

Provincial laws that banned 'pit bulls,' defined as pit bulls, Staffordshire terriers, American Staffordshire terriers, American pit bull terriers and dogs resembling them took effect in August 2005. Existing dogs were required to be sterilized, and leashed and muzzled in public.

Bites in Toronto blamed on the four affected breeds fell sharply, from 71 in 2005 to only six in 2010. This accounts for most of the reduction in total bites.

The fall in bites blamed on the four breeds tracks a reduction in the dogs themselves, data obtained separately by globalnews.ca under access-to-information laws shows. Some 1,411 Toronto dogs were in the four breeds in 2008, as opposed to 798 in mid-2011.

"It is encouraging to hear that fewer people are victimized by dangerous dogs," Ontario Attorney-General John Gerretson said in a statement.

NDP MPP Cheri DiNovo, who opposes breed-specific bans, called the data "not accurate in terms of the larger picture of what's happening in Ontario" in an interview with Global Toronto reporter Laura Zilke.

"It's the deed, not the breed. The owner should be held responsible, not the dog. We're in favour of a

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dangerous dog act, but one that's reasonably written and well-researched, and this one isn't. Our law would hold the owner liable, because it's the owner that trains the dogs."

About 1,000 Ontario pit bulls have been put down since the ban took effect.

With totals of Toronto dogs by breed and ten years of bite data, it is possible to see which dogs are most likely to bite in Toronto based on a ratio between dogs of a given breed in 2011 and reported bites over the decade between 2000 and 2010. Below are the 20 most bite-prone dogs. The four prohibited breeds all appear in the top eight slots.

	Breed	Dogs, 2011	2000-10 bite reports	Dogs per 2000-10 bite report
1	PIT BULL	473	384	1.23
2	STAFFORDSHIRE	177	97	1.82
3	ST BERNARD RGH	19	10	1.90
4	FINNISH SPITZ	32	15	2.13
5	AM PIT BULL TER	43	20	2.15
6	ROTTWEILER	538	245	2.20
7	GERM SHEPHERD	1926	772	2.49
8	AMERICAN STAFF	105	40	2.63
9	CHOW CHOW	203	76	2.67
10	DALMATIAN	73	27	2.70
11	JINDO	36	13	2.77
12	COLLIE SMOOTH	69	24	2.88
13	AKITA	60	18	3.33
14	BELG MALINOIS	39	11	3.55
15	ALASK MALAMUTE	86	20	4.30
16	BULL TERRIER	91	21	4.33
17	BOUV FLANDRES	164	36	4.56
18	BULLMASTIFF	93	20	4.65
19	MASTIFF	77	16	4.81
20	PARSON RUSS TER	1911	396	4.83

(Breeds with fewer than 10 dogs excluded from the calculation)

Toronto dog bites, 2000-10

Total bites in blue, pit bull bites in red



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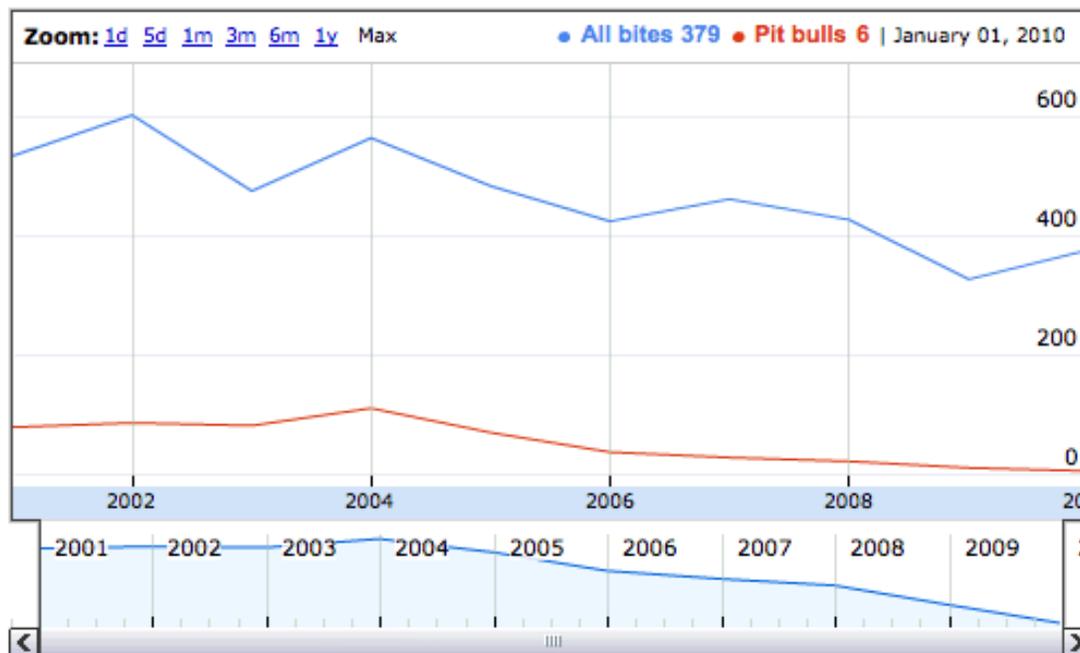
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