

# **Pet Industry Initiatives to Minimize the Introduction of Invasive Species**

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**on behalf of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory**  
**(PIJAC)**

# The Human-Animal Bond

**Many people would not consider their family complete without a pet**

- In US @90% of live animal imports associated with pet/hobby
- 63% of US households have at least one pet
- There are more than 360 million pets in the US
- The annual market value of the pet industry is approximately \$40.8 billion in the US alone



# The Human-Animal Bond

**Pets have the potential to breed better people:**

- Joy and security
- Physical health benefits
- Responsibility, social skills, self esteem, empathy



# The Human-Animal Bond

**Pets are increasingly the only animals with which people have the opportunity to interact...**



- Children exposed to pets are more likely to build empathy and a sense of connectedness to “creatures”
- The level of pet owner attachment is + correlated with concern for the next generation

# The Human-Animal Bond

Unfortunately, circumstances do arise that prevent people from caring for their pets...

- A family member develops **allergies**
- The owner's **lifestyle changes** unexpectedly
- **Housing** location and/or policies change
- The pet **outgrows** its housing
- The animal's **behavior** becomes problematic
- The **pets reproduce** and are too many to care for
- The animal becomes **sickly** (and costly)
- The pet's needs are **not compatible** with the owner's wants
- **Children** leave home or develop other interests
- **Fear** of zoonotic disease transmission



# The Human-Animal Bond

## What people do with unwanted pets...

**Blue Tounge Skink** (Charlottesville)

Reply to: [comm-XXXX@craigslist.org](mailto:comm-XXXX@craigslist.org)

Date: 2008-04-08, 4:25PM EDT

Beautiful Adult Blue Tounge Skink, very very sweet, gives kisses on command. Eats really well (even likes scrambled eggs) and loves to be handled and loves to lay out in the grass on a sunny day. Rex even likes to sleep in your sweatshirt pocket. My teenage son no longer has the time Rex really deserves to have. Comes with 40 breeder tank/ light and heater and feeding/water dish. \$150/OBO

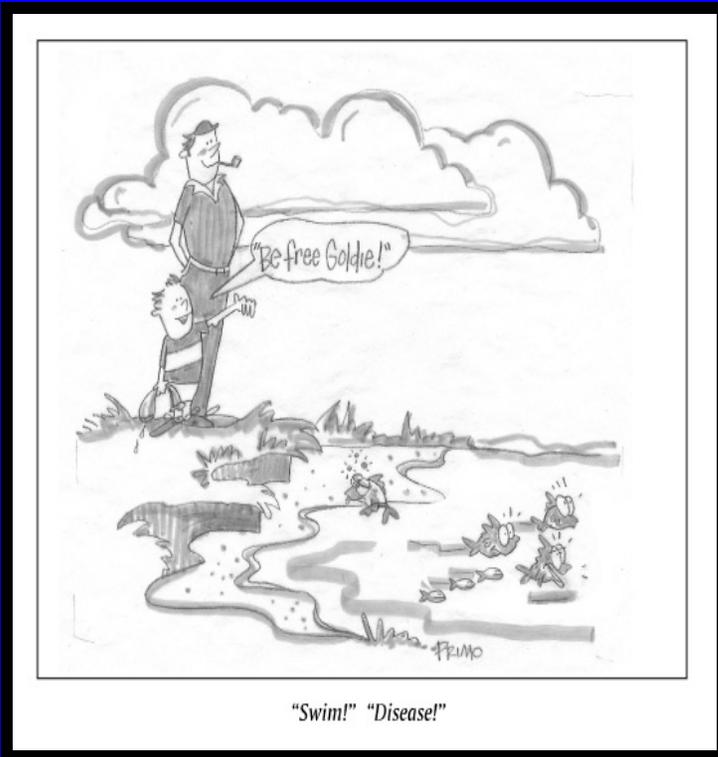
Call 434-825-XXXX or 434-409-XXXX

- Give to a friend/relative
- Bring to humane society
- Give to a school
- Other (e.g., sell)
- Bring to vet's office
- Put to sleep
- Abandon (release)

(APPMA 2007-2008)

# The Pet Release Pathway

## Introduction Concerns



- Escape or release of pets
- Spread of pathogens, parasites, or other “hitchhikers” associated with pets
- Escape/release live pet food (e.g., crickets, feeder fish)
- Release of aquarium or terrarium plants
- Escape/release water garden plants and animals

# The Pet Release Pathway

**The riskiest aspects of the pathway are likely associated with:**

- Consumers (pet owners)
- Non-regulated direct sales – (e.g., internet & hobbyist shows)
- Pets that are free or inexpensive
- Species which grow large, reproduce in large #, have specialized needs & aggressive temperaments
- Species ecologically suited to the geographic region

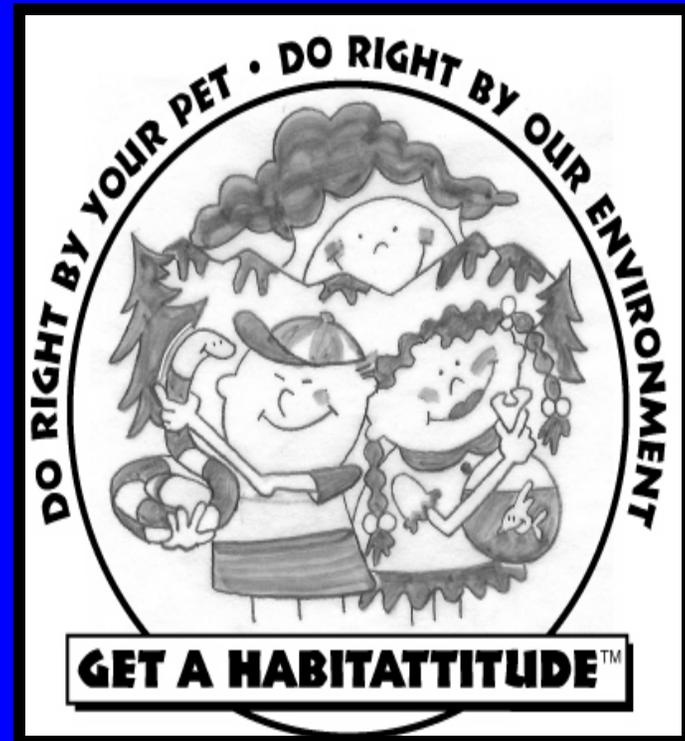




# Habitattitude™



- Partnership-based (70+)
- US and Canada
- Industry and consumer focus
- **Three goals** (behavior-oriented):
  - Ensure proper pet choice and care (Habits)
  - Promote alternatives to release (Attitudes)
  - Protect the environment (Habitats)



# Habitattitude™

## Implementation



- Website
- Posters displays
- Public events
- Magazines ads
- In store signage
- Fish bags
- Newspaper inserts
- Care sheets
- Aquarium kits

# Habitattitude™

**Effectiveness:** 2004 survey by MN SeaGrant

• Based on exposure to campaign's logo and messages, consumers reported that the campaign is very to somewhat likely to:

- ✓ Increase awareness (89%)
- ✓ Increase knowledge (85%)
- ✓ Change attitudes (72%)
- ✓ Change behavior of others (70%)
- ✓ Change their behavior (84%)



# Nat. Reptile Improv. Plan

- **Multi-stakeholder process**
- **Industry focused**
- **Housing & inspection for parasites/pathogens**
- **Accreditation**
- **Allows for inspections by regulators**
- **75%+ major US importers & distributors members**



# Additional Opportunities



- Assistance from Burm. hunters in native range
- Collaboration with Burm. breeders in the US
- Assistance in with python patrols – training, handling, surveying
- Expanding campaign partnerships

# Bd-Free 'Phibs Campaign



- Limit the spread of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*
- Industry & consumer focused
- + Behavior-focused education messages
- Inspection, testing, quarantine & treatment plan
- Website, magazines, trade and hobby shows, etc.

# Pathway Toolkit



- Recent decision under the CBD re invasive species
- PIJAC identified as lead
- Comprehensive
- Global Application
- Case Studies
- Co-sponsors