

# BORN FREE, LET THEM BE

AN ARGUMENT FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND  
AGAINST THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF EXOTIC ANIMALS



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# OUTLINE



**ANIMAL RIGHTS VS. ANIMAL WELFARE**

**WILD ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY**

**RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH OWNING WILD ANIMALS**

**ECOLOGICAL IMPACT**

**WHY PEOPLE KEEP WILD ANIMALS AS PETS**

# THE RIGHTS VS. WELFARE DEBATE



## ANIMAL RIGHTS

Humans should not be allowed  
to own or use animals.

No meat, milk, fur, animal research, or pets

Advocates Veganism

“The abolitionist approach to animal rights maintains that all sentient beings, humans or nonhumans, have one right: the basic right not to be treated as the property of others.”

-Animal Rights:  
The Abolitionist Approach

## ANIMAL WELFARE

Promotes the humane treatment of animals

The Animal Welfare Act of 1966  
was passed:

“(1) to insure that animals intended for use in research facilities or for exhibition purposes or for use as pets are provided humane care and treatment;

(2) to assure the humane treatment of animals during transportation in commerce;

and

(3) to protect the owners of animals from the theft of their animals by preventing the sale or use of animals which have been stolen.”

-The Animal Welfare Act

# WILD ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY



**AZA ACCREDITED ZOOS**

**ROADSIDE ZOOS**

**PRIVATE OWNERSHIP**

# AZA ACCREDITED ZOOS



- Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- Accredited Zoos must maintain high standards of Care
- Strict regulations to protect employees, public, & animals
- Benefits of AZA accredited zoos:
  - Educates public about wildlife
  - Encourages conservation
  - Breeding programs
  - Rehabilitation Programs
  - A place for animals not fit to be released back into the wild



The Red Panda is just one of the species in Roger William's Park Zoo's  
**Species Survival Program**

# ROADSIDE ZOOS



- Not accredited
- No regulation of animal care
- Often inhumane





# PRIVATE OWNERSHIP



State regulations vary

Dangerous to owner, public,  
animal itself & other animals

Often Inhumane

Private owners usually cannot  
provide sufficient living space, or  
meet animals' nutritional &  
psychological needs

Owner's acquire animal when it is  
young and are not prepared to keep  
it when it is full grown



# THEY DON'T STAY LITTLE FOREVER...



Awwww...



Arghhh!



# ANIMAL CRUELTIES ASSOCIATED WITH PRIVATE OWNERSHIP



- Declawing
- Removing teeth
- Stunting growth
  - Purposely or because the owner cannot supply proper nutrition
- Confinement in small enclosures
- Isolating animals that would naturally live in groups
- Lack of Enrichment
- Lack of proper vet care as finding a vet to work on these animals can be difficult



Miniature pig created by artificially stunting its growth

# STATE REGULATIONS

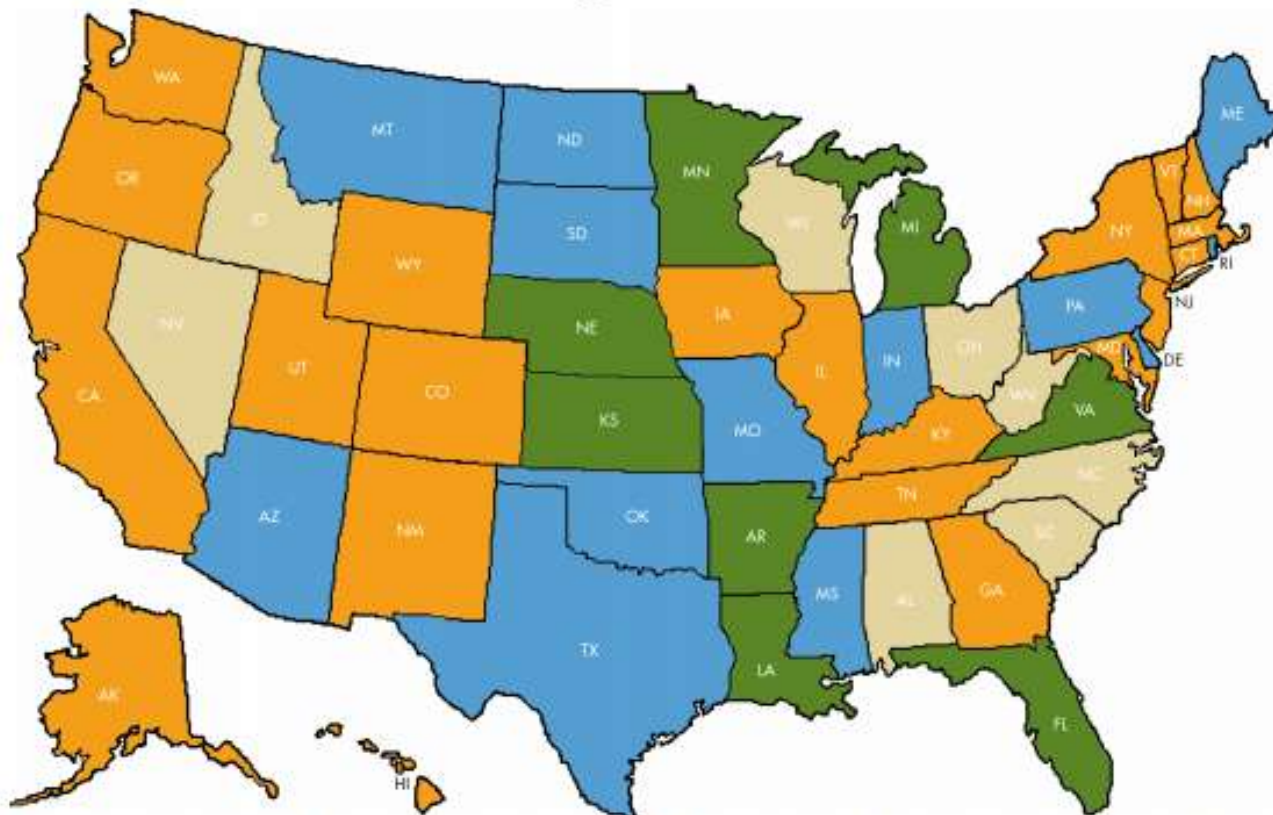


- Full Ban
- Partial Ban
- Permit Required
- No/Little Regulation
  - Ohio was in this category in 2011 when 56 privately owned animals were set loose.
  - Ohio is now in the process of passing new laws to regulate the possession of wild animals
  - Hopefully this will encourage other lax states to reexamine their laws.





## Summary of State Laws Relating to the Private Possession of Exotic Animals



**21 states** have a ban on private ownership of exotic animals — at least large cats (some of them ban all wild cats), wolves, bears, reptiles and most non-human primates: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming

**8 states** have a partial ban on private ownership of exotic animals — allowing ownership of some exotic animals but precluding others: Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Virginia

**13 states** require the "owner" of the exotic animal to obtain a license or permit from the relevant state agency to privately possess the animal (excludes states only requiring import permits): Arizona, Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas

**8 states** have no license or permit requirements, but may regulate some aspect thereof (entry permit, veterinary certificate, etc.) or have no state statute governing this issue: Alabama, Idaho, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wisconsin



# Here in Rhode Island



- The Department of Environmental Management requires all exotic pet owners to be **licensed**
- Rarely – if ever – does the DEM approve of an exotic animal ownership license for a private party
- If an unlicensed exotic animal is discovered in private hands, DEM will exercise seizure rights



Environmental Police have the same authority and rights of search and seizure as a  
**STATE TROOPER**

# RISKS



**PERSONAL & PUBLIC**

**SAFETY & HEALTH**



# EXOTIC ANIMALS CAN BE TAMED, NOT DOMESTICATED



- A **tame animal** is one that comes to trust a particular human or set of humans, usually because it associates them as a food source provider
- A **domestic animal** is one whose line has been tamed over hundreds or even thousands of years and countless generations



A Rottweiler is a tame dog; a **dingo** is not

- People will cross-breed a **dog** with a **wolf** and think it domesticated. **It is not.** It is still a wild animal, and will **never** be domesticated

# TAMING AN ANIMAL DOES NOT GUARANTEE OBEDIENCE



- Just as a child will misbehave in spite of parental instruction so will an **exotic animal**

Example: Tiger attack on Roy Horn of Siegfried & Roy

He insists that the animal  
Was “just playing”  
with him, but it  
**almost killed him**

- Pack animals only look to **one person** as the **alpha** of the group  
All others are viewed as members of **equal standing**  
and the animal **will not obey them.**



# ANIMALS OFTEN BECOME HARDER TO HANDLE WHEN THEY REACH SEXUAL MATURITY



- According to Dr. Attila Molar, DVM, Dipl ABVP:

“After **eight to ten years of age** [chimpanzees] become difficult to handle” and should not be privately kept.

- Monkeys become aggressive and attempt to establish dominance **at the age of 2**
  - Biting
  - Throwing feces
  - Loud screeching and other **aggressive behaviors**



Travis the chimp with Carla Nash, who would later end up being the victim of a violent attack by the 15 year old chimpanzee.

# ZOONOSIS

## WHEN HUMANS BECOME INFECTED WITH ANIMAL DISEASES



- Reptiles, such as iguanas, snakes, and turtles carry **salmonella** on their bodies
  - Approximately 7% of all U.S. salmonella cases can be traced to **handling a reptile**
  - Salmonella infections among very young children have increased accordingly with increased **exotic pet ownership**

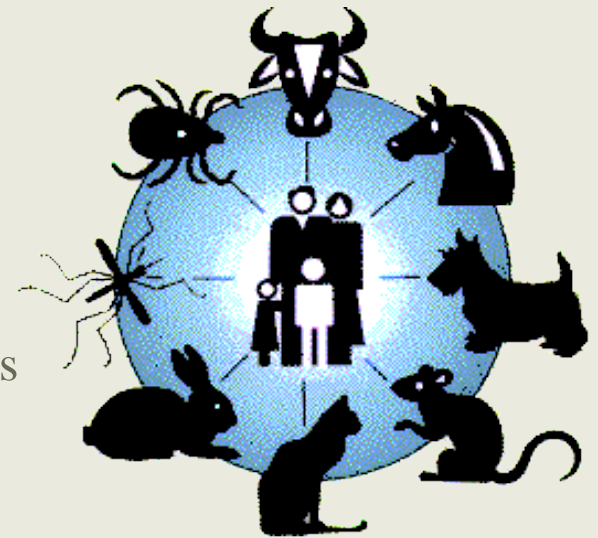


- 80 to 90 percent of all macaque monkeys are **infected** with Herpes-B (aka Simian B) virus which is harmless to monkeys but **deadly to humans**

# ZOONOSIS AND YOU



- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, **75%** of emerging infectious diseases are **zoonotic** and are likely to be **animal borne**
  - Monkeypox in prairie dogs
  - M. tuberculosis from captive elephants
  - M. bovis (bovine tuberculosis) in pet monkeys
  - Lyssaviruses and encephalitis from bats
  - Ringworm infections from hedgehogs and chinchillas
  - New strains of rabies from marmosets
  - Herpes-B (Simian-B) from macaque monkeys
  - Salmonella from reptiles
  - Infectious and/or physically deforming bites from large cats and primates





# WHY DO PEOPLE INSIST ON OWNING EXOTIC ANIMALS?

- The **thrill** of owning an illegal animal.
- Humans have a need to connect to another living being in a spiritual way.



- Most people don't realize the dangers behind exotic animal ownership.

# WHAT THE EXPERTS ARE SAYING



- U.S.D.A.  
“Large wild and exotic cats such as lions, tigers, cougars, and leopards are **dangerous** animals...Because of these animals’ potential to **kill** or **severely injure** both people and other animals, an untrained person should not keep them...Even an animal that can be friendly and loving can be very **dangerous**”
- Jane Mahlow, DVM; Director of the Texas Department of Health, Zoonosis Control Division  
“Buying or giving exotic pets...can be **dangerous** to both humans and the animals themselves”
- Michael Cranfield, DVM, Baltimore Zoo; Primate Expert  
“My opinion is primates make **very poor pets**”



# SOURCES



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