



FACA Policy Statement

Exotic & Wild Animals as Pets

The Florida Animal Control Association is opposed to the keeping and sale of exotic animals and wildlife as pets for public safety and humane reasons. Frequently, problems associated with the keeping of these animals require the intervention of animal care and protection agencies. Common complaints include inadequate housing, insufficient medical attention, improper diet, removal of natural defenses, and confinement-related stress.

The high mortality rates associated with the capture and transport of wild animals and the serious depletion of wild populations are reasons enough to prohibit the keeping of wildlife as pets. Once the owner of a wild animal is no longer willing to care for it, the animal is usually unable to adapt to a wild environment, if released. With very few exceptions, formerly owned wildlife must be destroyed because of inadequate facilities to maintain them.

FACA urges animal control and protection agencies whenever possible to discourage the selling or keeping of exotic and wild animals by the general public. FACA urges that agencies not adopt out any dangerous or invasive exotic species.

In today's urbanized society, the preferred pet is the domestic dog or cat. However, there are individuals whose interests and needs move them towards ownership of exotic and wild animals. The more popular exotic or wild animals are:

- 1) Wild/Domestic Feline and Canine Hybrids – FACA is opposed to the keeping, breeding, or selling of any canine hybrids such as wolves, wolf-hybrids, coyote hybrids, or any feline wild/domestic hybrids. They are unsuited as family pets since there is no approved rabies vaccine or established quarantine periods available for these animals, and there are large number of human injuries associated with their keeping.
- 2) High risk rabies species – Florida continues to be a rabies-endemic state. FACA is opposed to the keeping, breeding, or sale of high-risk rabies species to include raccoons, foxes, skunks, bobcats, and bats. There is no known incubation period or approved rabies vaccine for these specific animals. FACA considers them unsuitable for family pets and urges animal control and protection agencies to urge owners to familiarize themselves with regulations concerning bites from these animals.
- 3) Pot-belly pigs – FACA does not recommend pot-belly pigs as companion animals, unless the owners familiarize themselves with, or are advised on, the local and state laws and information on the care, keeping and problems associated with ownership.
- 4) Giant & venomous snakes and exotic reptiles – FACA opposes the keeping or sale of venomous snakes and giant snakes, many of which exceed ten feet in length. FACA also opposes the keeping of other exotic or invasive reptiles which pose a threat to indigenous species and/or to public health and safety.

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