

For immediate release: September 24, 2008

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## FWC looking for good homes for unwanted nonnative pets

If you have an exotic pet you can't care for anymore, please don't just open the front door and set it free.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has a solution for you.

In an effort to keep unwanted exotic pets out of Florida's native ecosystems, the FWC and Jacksonville Zoo will host the fourth Nonnative Pet Amnesty Day Nov. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Jacksonville. Exotic reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish and mammals will be accepted; domestic pets (dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets) will not be accepted.

"It's illegal to release a nonnative animal into the wild in Florida, and it could be detrimental for the animal and the environment," said Jenny Tinnell, FWC biologist.

Right now, the FWC is looking for potential North Florida adopters, who will be recruited as part of the FWC's goal to prevent any new releases of nonnative species. All adopters must demonstrate knowledge and experience with the types of animals they would like to be eligible to adopt. A veterinarian will examine each animal, and every attempt will be made to place all animals that appear healthy with qualified adopters.

There is no fee to become an adopter, but there is an application process.

"We have adoption applications for several major types of animals. In addition, applications for some types of animals also require applicants to attach a husbandry form," Tinnell said.

Questions on the husbandry form can be answered with a standard care sheet for that animal, which should be included in the application packet.

"Care sheets are widely available. People can download them from the Internet or pick them up at pet stores," said Tinnell.

Anyone interested in adopting nonnative pets should download the relevant adoption applications and husbandry forms at

[MyFWC.com/nonnatives/AmnestyDayForms.html#Adoption\\_applications](https://myfwc.com/nonnatives/AmnestyDayForms.html#Adoption_applications).

“To be eligible to adopt animals at the Amnesty Day event in November, applications must be submitted by Nov. 10,” Tinnell said. “People whose applications are approved will receive a letter of acceptance. This letter will have further instructions for adopters and must be brought to the event in Jacksonville.”

Nonnative pet amnesty events help to increase awareness of nonnative species problems. More than 400 nonnative species have been observed in Florida, and more than 130 of those have reproducing populations.

For more information on nonnative species in Florida, visit [MyFWC.com/nonnatives/](https://myfwc.com/nonnatives/).