

FOR MORE INFORMATION ...

To learn more about "Don't Let it Loose, Wyoming" please visit the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website at:
wgfd.wyo.gov/AIS

To report an exotic pet species seen in the wild,
Call **1-877-WGFD-AIS** (877-943-3247)
or email ReportAIS@wyo.gov



Conserving Wildlife
Serving People

Photographs – Front Panel and Bookmark: Burmese Python, Cellofish, Snakehead, Chungking; Red-eared Slider; Ledges: American Alligator, Eric Isselers; American Bullfrog, Jiang Hongyan; Goldfish, Andrew Burgess; 3rd Panel: Red-eared Slider, Birute Viskelene; 3rd Panel: American Bullfrog, Wilkes-Cole; Tadpoles, Dabole; Goldfish, Alexander Strasseltzen; Snakehead, Chungking; 4th Panel: American Alligator, Liviu Todor; Burmese Python, Heiko Kiern; Red-eared Slider, Simon J; Background Image: Cattails, Jorg Rose-Oberreth; Design – JB Hardwick / N43 Services

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THE PROBLEM WITH SOME PETS ...



BEFORE YOU BUY

Before you buy or adopt a pet, consider the size and age the pet may become over its lifetime. Make sure you can accommodate all sizes of your pet and are ready to care for it for the long term. Also be aware of laws that make certain species illegal to have, such as the Snakehead fish and the Hydrilla plant.

DON'T LET IT LOOSE

Pets can become an invasive species problem when owners let them loose. When pets get too large or difficult to keep, some people think that letting them loose is the kind thing to do. That's not the case, releasing plants and animals into the wild can have serious harmful impacts to other species and may even be illegal. Releasing pets is not a good option because they can harm the ecosystem that other animals live in, they can cause problems for your neighbors, and it can be cruel to the animal.

ECOSYSTEM TROUBLE – When exotic pets are released into the wild, they may survive and reproduce to form new populations. They can compete with native species already in that ecosystem for food and other resources, decreasing native populations.

NEIGHBORHOOD PESTS – Abandoned pets can seek shelter and food near humans or domestic animals, and can lead to problems in your neighborhood. They can also spread disease and parasites to the area.

CRUELTY – Most released pets will die in the wild. To avoid this, never release pets into the wild and be sure to **C.A.R.E.** for all pets.

DON'T LET IT LOOSE!

Wyoming

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Wyoming



EXOTIC AMPHIBIAN & FISH PETS



AMERICAN BULLFROG

Native east of the Continental Divide in Wyoming, American Bullfrogs are commonly released by schools and pet owners. Unfortunately, Bullfrogs have successfully colonized some aquatic areas in western Wyoming. They are voracious predators and may eat

native reptiles, amphibians, fish, mammals, and birds. Bullfrogs can also spread diseases to native amphibians. Bullfrog tadpoles or eggs should also not be released into the wild.



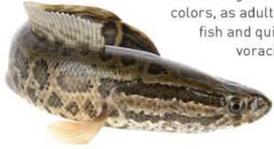
GOLDFISH

Very common as pets, goldfish are often released into the wild and have established breeding populations in Wyoming. Goldfish may grow much larger when released into the wild and reproduce quickly, disrupting the ecosystem. They may compete with native fish for habitat and spread diseases.



SNAKEHEAD

Often bought as aquarium fish for their bright colors, as adults they are aggressive toward other fish and quickly outgrow their tanks. This voracious fish has been introduced into several U.S. waters and has caused problems for other fishes. Snakehead are illegal to buy or sell in Wyoming.



EXOTIC REPTILE PETS

AMERICAN ALLIGATOR

Living 50 years or longer in captivity and growing up to 15 feet long, American Alligators can be difficult pets. If released into the wild, American Alligators may not survive a winter in Wyoming, but they could pose a dangerous threat for humans and native wildlife.



BURMESE PYTHON

Many species of python snakes are bought as pets. The Burmese Python has been released into Florida and is now causing large-scale damage to the Everglades ecosystem, where they prey on a number of threatened and endangered species. The Burmese Python is native to Asia, and may grow up to 20 or more feet long and become difficult to care for.



RED-EARED SLIDER

An aquatic turtle native to southeast and south-central United States, Red-eared Sliders may live up to 42 years. Once released into ponds or lakes they may compete with native turtles and transmit diseases and parasites. Several released Red-eared Sliders have been found in Wyoming.



WHAT TO DO

Make sure you know what animals are legal to keep as pets and what plants you can have in your aquarium. Never release a plant or animal into the wild. If your pet gets too much to handle or you need to get rid of your aquarium plants, always remember to **C.A.R.E.** for them.

WHAT IS C.A.R.E.?

CONTACT ...

the place where you purchased the pet to see if they will take it back.

ACT RESPONSIBLY ...

by never letting animals or plants loose into the wild.

RESEARCH ...

other places that may be able to provide a new home for your pet. Pet stores, zoos, aquariums, science centers, animal shelters, and humane societies may be able to help.

EUTHANIZE ...

the animal in a humane way. It may be hard to consider, but this option is far kinder than letting it starve to death in the wild or destroy the homes of native animals. Always freeze unwanted plants and throw them out in the trash.



RELEASED PETS CAN HARM THE ECOSYSTEM AND EVEN PEOPLE. PLEASE DON'T LET THEM LOOSE.



Click here to make a "Don't Let It Loose" bookmark.



Releasing plants or animals into the wild can cause harm to the environment and even to other people. If you can no longer keep your pet or aquarium plants, make sure you **C.A.R.E.** enough to do the right thing.

C.A.R.E.

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