

Why USARK?... Why Now?

USARK has created a vehicle to oppose the destructive trend in the reptile industry.

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There has long been a culture of individuality among the keepers of reptiles and amphibians. In light of mounting organized political opposition, this has become a crisis of apathy. Today there are forces acting to remove our rights to work with our animals. The Animal Rights Industry, led by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Born Free USA/Animal Protection Institute (API) and The Defenders of Wildlife (DOW), has collectively impacted the Reptile Nation at the local, state and federal level and critically curtailed our ability to own, trade in and advance education in reptiles and amphibians.

The Animal Rights Industry has pooled their vast financial resources and powerful grass roots support to get reptiles and amphibians out of public school classes nationwide based on misleading studies regarding Salmonella. Over the past 10 years, the Animal Rights Industry has used the politics of fear to characterize reptiles as dangerous. They have effectively lobbied municipal, county and state governments to drastically restrict their ownership and trade. At this time there are serious efforts to end the import/export and interstate transport of boas, pythons and anacondas that are unrecognized by most of the herp community.

Realize that with little opposition from the herp community, the Animal Rights activists present these issues to legislators and government agencies in their biased point of view. In fact, there is very little real evidence to support their positions, but with their masterful use of organized grass roots politics and the media, they are able to make these issues seem relevant and important.

There has been an inability on the part of the Reptile Nation to give perspective from our point of view. In that vacuum the Animal Rights movement has been building on one successful campaign after another while we sit and watch our hobby and business disappear. At this rate, if the Reptile Nation does not stand up for itself, in five more years the business and hobby will lay in ruins.

The United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) has created a vehicle to oppose this destructive trend in our industry. It is time for us all to put aside our differences and work together to secure our collective future. We have already brought together many of the best minds and biggest players in our industry, but we need everybody's help.

The underlying infrastructure is in place. We are incorporated as a nonprofit organization and are filing for 501c6 tax exempt status. We have elected officers and a Board of Directors. Our website www.usark.org offers dynamic tools that have never been employed in defense of our industry in the past. We are bringing in the best attorneys, lobbyists and scientists. Our Database and Communications function have helped us to build a massive grassroots support system in order to quickly and efficiently disseminate information and call for political action when needed. Many who are paying close attention to these issues have contributed to our unprecedented success addressing the threats to the Reptile Nation. We all need to reach out to our friends and spheres of influence and bring more people to this fight. There is Strength in Numbers. Help USARK Protect Your Rights!

With your help USARK will: Articulate our positions through our attorneys and lobbyists, supported by good solid science, to legislators and government agencies. Reinforce these positions with a groundswell of grassroots support by activating our base.

This is an equation that has proven to be successful over and over again ... This is the "1-2 Punch of Grassroots Politics." It is time for us all to start taking responsibility for ourselves.

We will focus on the most pressing issues first: Invasive Species Public Safety - Big 5, Hots and Crocodylians Public Health - disease (Salmonella, etc.) Import/Export CITES Interstate Transport/Shipping

We are asking all of the community and industry to 'Join the Reptile Nation!' There is strength in numbers' and only together can we protect our right to own and trade in reptiles and amphibians'. Not everyone is involved at the same level in our industry, so we have created a tiered membership system. Student- \$20 Bronze (hobbyist) - \$40 Silver (small business) - \$250 Gold (industry leaders) - \$1000+



Many of the leaders of our industry have pledged and donated. They understand the seriousness of the threats that face us and want to do as much as possible to help secure our future.

We simply ask that you donate at a level that is comfortable and appropriate for your level of investment and involvement in the industry. Memberships can be done on the website membership page. If you wish to join above the Small Business level, call or email Andrew Wyatt. Not everyone can contribute at the same level, but everyone can contribute. USARK needs your support, and, if you like and keep reptiles, you need USARK.

Thank you for your support,
Andrew

Andrew Wyatt is the President of the United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) and has been an avid herp enthusiast for more than 35 years. He has traveled the world and has had his animals featured in a number of television productions. For more information about USARK, [click here](#) .

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