

## May 2008 Editor's Note

**Releasing pets into nature is a very bad thing.**

*By Russ Case*

I'm writing this on Feb. 8 at the end of a week that saw a fair amount of turmoil in the reptile world. Online forums, letter-writing campaigns and other lines of communication exploded into action after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) in the Federal Register requesting information about snakes in the Boa, Python and Eunectes genera. For further details, including a Q&A session between the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and the USFWS, [click here](#).

The fact that Burmese pythons have been discovered in the Everglades played a role in the USFWS notice. This focuses attention on pet owners who, whether they tire of their pets or can no longer care for them properly, decide their best (or easiest) option is to release their unwanted pets into the wild.

Never release unwanted pets into the wild. Doing so may have adverse effects on the environment and could result in laws that restrict reptilekeeping. REPTILES frequently explains the need for people to learn about animals before purchasing them. Some of the cute little herp hatchlings that you see in stores and at expos, often available for bargain prices, possess the capacity to grow into large and difficult-to-maintain animals that the average hobbyist may not be able to keep properly. This can eventually lead to the bad decision to release pets.

Burmese pythons fall into this category. That's not to say these animals can't make fine captives, but they can be demanding, and they are best left to people who know they can provide proper long-term care.

By being educated and not releasing pets into the wild, you do a lot to help the hobby, the industry and the environment!