

Florida Expands Reptile Animal Amnesty

Florida gives owners of non-native species that require permits more options if they can't keep their reptiles or animals.

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Hoping to prevent illegal wild releases of non-native fish and wildlife, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) adopted new rules to give owners of non-native species that require permits more options if they can't keep their pets.

Under these rules already in effect, non-native wildlife owners who don't have the appropriate permit can surrender their pets at FWC-sponsored amnesty events, and adopters can accept the animals without penalty. This replaces a rule that prohibited wildlife transfers of any kind when permits are required.

The new rules also allow state and county animal-control agencies, such as zoos, to accept unpermitted non-native animals. Owners can surrender their pets to these agencies without penalty, but a FWC spokesman said amnesty events might be the best way to give up the animals.

The FWC requires a captive wildlife permit to own many non-native species, such as Class II and III wildlife, venomous reptiles and Burmese pythons. For more information, view the law and code manual at www.myfwc.com.

The next FWC-sponsored amnesty event will be held in Miami in early 2009.