

P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 19.09.17

Dear Hannah,

Thank you for forwarding the correspondence between Mike Hedges AM and Lesley Griffiths AC/AM Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs. I am also grateful for the opportunity to contribute further to the debate on the trade and keeping of exotic pets in Wales.

Worldwide tens of thousands of wild animals, including reptiles, large felines, primates, and others, are kept in private possession. Globally the trade in exotic animals is a multi-billion-pound-a-year industry. However, exotic “pets” are wild animals that do not adjust well to a captive environment. They require special care, housing, diet, and maintenance that the average person cannot provide. Animals enter the exotic “pet” trade from a variety of sources. Some are stolen from their native habitat; some are “surplus” from zoos or menageries; some are sold at auctions or in pet shops; while others come from backyard breeders. The Internet has dramatically increased the ease with which people can find and purchase wild animals for their private possession.

There are many instances of exotic “pets” purchased as infants being abandoned by their owners as they age and become impossible to control. Unfortunately, the majority of these animals are euthanized, abandoned, or doomed to live in deplorable conditions. Furthermore, many exotic “pets” can transmit deadly diseases — including herpes B, monkeypox, and salmonellosis — to humans. An estimated 90% of all reptiles carry and shed salmonella in their faeces. In the United States alone The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 93,000 salmonella cases caused by exposure to reptiles are reported each year. As many as 90% of all macaque monkeys are infected with herpes B virus, which although harmless to monkeys can be fatal in humans.

Wherever exotic “pets” are kept there are health risks. The Welsh Government in taking unilateral action to end the sale in exotic “pets” will not only be doing its duty to protect the people of Wales from the health risks associated with it, but also be adding its weight, and conscience, to the fight against the decline of species and the destruction of their habitats, threatened by it.

I believe the committee will find the following BBC article of great interest, as it specifically addresses the issues and concerns brought about by the trade in the UK.

Further to that, the link following it will take those interested to the RSPCA's report: Exotic Animals as Pets.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36356363>



Wild animals at UK homes include lions, zebras and ...

www.bbc.co.uk

Wild animals including lions, crocodiles, rattlesnakes and zebras are being kept legally on private property across the UK, licensing figures reveal.

<http://politicalanimal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ExoticsDec15WHdebate.pdf>

Once again, I am grateful for the opportunity to bring my concerns to the committee's attention, and I hope, by so being able to do, that a consensus for change will result, for the sake of humans and animals alike. The Government of Wales can bring an end to the cruel trade in exotic wild animals, and in so doing show the rest of the UK the way forward. All that is required is the conviction of the need to do it, and the will to carry that conviction out.

Best regards

David Sedley