

April 12, 2010

Public Comments Processing
Attn: Docket No. FWS-R9-FHC-2008-0015
Division of Policy and Directives Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Ste. 222
Arlington, VA 22203

To Whom It May Concern:

PETA is a nonprofit organization with more than 2 million members and supporters dedicated to the protection of animals. **We are submitting these comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in support of proposed rule FWS-R9-FHC-2008-0015.** The proposed rule would add the boa constrictor, four species of pythons, and four species of anacondas to the list of injurious reptiles.

The U.S. Geological Survey risk assessment has identified nine species of snakes who would pose the greatest threats if they were to be released into the wild. The addition of these species to the injurious reptiles list would be a significant step toward safeguarding native U.S. wildlife, preventing human injury, and reducing the suffering that snakes endure during capture and transport as well as in the possession of inexperienced caretakers.

As presented in the risk assessment, these snakes have the ability not only to survive but also to thrive in regions such as Florida. If released into the wild, these snakes can forever change regional ecosystems since they feed on local wildlife and have no natural predators. These species of snakes also have the potential to cause human injuries and illness. All reptiles can harbor and spread salmonella, and because of their size and strength, these snakes also have the ability to cause bodily harm and even death. Inexperienced or inattentive handlers and pet owners as well as innocent bystanders have been injured and killed by these muscular wild animals. Finally, what is not considered in the risk assessment is that the lives of thousands of snakes will be spared as a result of the proposed rule. The majority of reptiles die during capture from the wild or subsequent transport or within the first year of captivity. Banning the importation of these species will reduce the threat to humans and ensure that many snakes will not fall victim to the harsh conditions of being shipped overseas.

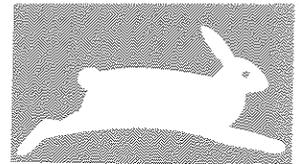
PETA urges the USFWS to accept proposed rule FWS-R9-FHC-2008-0015, which would add nine species of snakes to the injurious reptiles list and ban them from being imported to the U.S.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Jason Clark
Captive Wildlife Specialist



PETA

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