

Escape from Confinement: Pet / Aquarium / Terrarium Species

Species that have escaped confinement or controlled environments where they were kept by private collectors or hobbyists for recreation, enjoyment, companionship and/or trading

This may include accidental or irresponsible release of live organisms, so in addition to true escapes this category also includes situations where animals are kept in facilities not sufficiently secure enough to prevent escape. Species may also be actively released by irresponsible owners, indeed the dumping or release of unwanted species by owners or collectors is a particularly common problem e.g. if they reach large sizes or have special requirements.

Similar or related pathways

- Botanical gardens/zoos/aquaria (excluding domestic aquaria)
- Live food and live bait
- Ornamental purpose other than horticulture
- Other intentional release



Species example

Pond sliders (*Trachemys scripta*), commonly traded as pet species, have often been introduced via this pathway (© Thibaut Bardy-Renard, CC BY-NC, iNaturalist).

How can we manage this pathway?

National level

- ✓ Enact legislation that bans the import, trade, keeping, and breeding of priority IAS that could be introduced through pet and aquarium trade.
- ✓ Strengthen capacity to undertake at-border and post-border inspections, including e-commerce monitoring, to identify import and trade in IAS.
- ✓ Promote awareness on IAS and relevant legislation among the pet industry and encourage them to pass this information to consumers.
- ✓ Encourage pet and aquarium operators to develop and adopt best practices or a code of conduct, which could include measures such as ensuring species are correctly identified with accurate labelling, providing detailed information on the needs and requirements of species sold - including their maximum size, life history and special requirements.
- ✓ Educate buyers/owners directly on the risks relating to IAS, and promote campaigns in relation to responsible pet ownership including effective containment, and not releasing unwanted pets in the wild.
- ✓ Provide options for pet surrender, e.g. animal shelters, to prevent intentional releases.

Regional level

- ✓ Jointly identify priority IAS in pet and aquarium trade and share risk assessments to support prioritisation.
- ✓ Share information on which pet and aquaria IAS are regulated, and their establishments and impacts, and on other species in trade (e.g. on 'replacement species' for prohibited plants).

Data source: IUCN. 2018. Guidance for interpretation of the CBD categories of pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species.

This document has been developed with the generous support from the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity fund

