



The hobby of keeping what are sometimes referred to as “Exotic Pets” is increasingly coming under attack from a number of very wealthy and very vocal animal rights campaign groups. These groups want to ban animals such as reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds as well as invertebrates from being kept as pets. Many of their campaigns focus on introducing bans on the importation and sale of wild caught and captive bred exotic species and more recently they have begun a push calling for Governments to set up positive lists to limit the variety of species available to the hobbyist.

Any such bans or controls would cover and effect nearly all of the Exotic species kept by hobbyists in the UK.

It's worth remembering that 'exotic species' means anything not native to the UK and this would even cover popular species like bearded dragons, corn snakes, zebra finches, gerbils and hamsters that are all captive-bred in the UK. It would of course also cover exotic pets that are wild caught or captive bred in their country of origin and imported to the UK.

If these groups are successful in their campaigns it would be disastrous, quickly bringing an end to many sections of the hobby, leaving just a small number of the more common species and their associated hobbyists still hanging on.

This small number of species would not be enough to keep the current industry going. Animals account for a relatively small proportion of sales but without them there's no need for vivarium's, cages, aviaries, tanks, lighting, heating, food, medicines, supplements etc., so no pets means no trade. It would spell the end for many exotic pet-keeping hobbyists in the UK and set the remainder into a steep decline as equipment and food became harder to obtain. This disruption to the supply chain of equipment, food and other sundry items would inevitably push standards of welfare back to the nineteen sixties.

In the run-up to the General Election in May 2015, we want all UK political parties to recognise that keeping exotic species is just as acceptable as having a dog, cat, rabbit or guinea pig as a pet and we want them to promise to oppose any future ban on exotic and wild caught species that would affect the many and varied UK exotic hobbyists.

A great many UK households keep some sort of exotic pet, so it's not just a fantastic hobby that brings great pleasure and enjoyment, but also supports the UK economy. Around 10,000 people are employed in the reptile and amphibian sector alone, with keepers currently spending about £300 million on their hobby every year. Importing exotic species for the pet trade also brings important environmental and economic benefits to remote communities across the world who supply the animals.

All of this could disappear if campaigns to ban or restrict the import or sale of exotic species were ever to be successful. So come on, it's time for all UK exotic pet keepers to join together and shout “**Hands Off our Hobby**”. Sign our petition, and get your friends and relatives to do so as well, by clicking on the logo (above) and asking UK political parties to safeguard the future of this popular pastime by recognising that exotic species make good pets too.

You can leave the politicians a message when you sign, so why not enlighten them with a list of the wonderful creatures you share your life with.