



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

-----0-----

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

No. 45 Estate Mars Hill, Frederiksted
St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00840

CONTACT: Jamal Nielsen, Media Relations Coordinator

TEL: (340) 773-1082

FAX: (340) 713-2430

jamal.nielsen@dpr.vi.gov

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPNR'S FISH AND WILDLIFE HOSTS EXOTIC PET AMNESTY

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resource announces that the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) will hold **EXOTIC PET AMNESTY**, from Wednesday, May 19 to Saturday, May 22, 2021, to bring attention to the impact of invasive species on the Virgin Islands natural environment.

Instead of releasing an exotic pet into the wild, residents are invited to bring in their rare, non-native animal species from birds to snakes for a **FREE PERMIT** without penalty to the Division of Fish & Wildlife. Permitting stations will be staffed with DFW biologists from Wednesday, May 19 to Friday, May 21st from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday, May 22nd 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Coral World Parking Lot on St. Thomas; at the National Park Visitors Station on St. John; and at the La Reine Fish Market on St. Croix.

Pets must be brought in a secure carrier, otherwise photos should be brought instead. Live animals will be microchipped and or photographed. Individuals participating in these events are asked to always wear a mask. The initiative is funded through a grant from the Department of Interior as part of National Invasive Species Awareness Week, held from May 17-23, 2021. During this week, activities are hosted to educate decision makers and the public on how to help protect communities from non-native plants or animals introduced to areas that tend to reproduce and spread easily usually to the detriment of native species and ecosystems.

Exotic pets include turtles, parrots, parakeets, sugar gliders, catfish, eels, swordtails, conures, foxes, betas, monitors, snakes, guinea pigs, ferrets and chinchillas. The list does not include livestock such as chickens, ducks, and other farm animals which are permitted through the Department of Agriculture.

For more information, call the office at 340-773-1082 or visit www.dpr.vi.gov/fish-and-wildlife.