



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPNR TO CELEBRATE 'EXOTIC PET' AMNESTY WEEK

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) announces that the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) will celebrate **Exotic Pet Amnesty Week** from Monday, February 20th – Monday, February 27th, to bring attention to the impact of invasive species on the Virgin Islands natural environment.

Residents are invited to bring in their rare, non-native animal species from birds to snakes for a **FREE PERMIT AND MICROCHIP** without penalty, to the Division of Fish & Wildlife. The list does not include livestock such as chickens, ducks, and other farm animals permitted through the Department of Agriculture.

This year's observance will kick off at the 51st Virgin Islands Agriculture and Food Fair on St. Croix at the DPNR tent. "We are excited to educate visitors who can interact with our educational animal ambassadors like Trouble, our red-tailed boa. Guests to the tent will also get a chance to help pick a name for our new red-eared slider. DFW continues to encourage the public to register their exotic animals free of charge and legally possess them in a responsible manner," said Dr. Nicole Angeli, Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife. "The following week, the public can continue to visit the offices Territory-wide to register their pets and learn about the free microchip program," continued Director Angeli.

Permitting stations will be open from Feb. 18th to Feb. 20th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the DPNR tent at the Ag Fair or throughout the week at the Mars Hill and St. Thomas Tropical Marina offices from February 21st to February 24th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The public may also visit the Cruz Bay, St. John office on Thursday, February 23rd from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Pets must be brought in a secure carrier, otherwise photos should be brought instead. Live animals will be microchipped and/or photographed. The initiative is funded through a grant from the Department of Interior. For more information, call the office at 340-773-1082 or visit www.dpr.vi/fish-and-wildlife.