

Exotic Pets Exist

"Certainly there are precious few exotic animals which make good pets!" - That sounds like someone opposed to that profitable aspect of the business of dealing in pets. Actually it is a successful businessman in the pet industry, pleading with pet dealers to make the first move in establishing standards by which trade in exotic pets may be regulated.

"Many times our first reaction to pending legislation or to any pressing problem is emotional rather than rational," according to H. Dale Piatt, in an article entitled "A New Look at Exotics" - *Pets/Supplies/Marketing*, June, 1972. Piatt believes that "Few people can offer valid arguments that such animals as ocelots, sun bears, coatimundis, grissons, jaguars, or even raccoons make good pets, a good pet being one which remains tame and can be safely handled throughout its life."

Piatt points out that few people are "financially or emotionally equipped" to cope with the problems involved in caring for an exotic animal. His suggestion for a standard is guided by the following policy proposal: Those which make good pets should be promoted; those which do not should be blacklisted. Just the high mortality rate of some animals being imported demands this action he reasons, and the industry should make research funds available to appointed zoologists to locate new species which are readily adaptable as pets.

Richard K. Matthews, in his highly definitive and comprehensive work, *Wild Animals as Pets*, offers a picture of why people desire exotic animals for pets. One example is an accidental arrival, when the animal is found by the roadside, or in the wild, or literally wanders into one's life or camp. Then there is the ugly example of Ostentation, that sadistic twinge of delight a human achieves by dragging an ocelot on a leash down Park Avenue, successfully acquiring the attention of passersby.

In some people, a genuine quest for knowledge motivates the interest in a strange, wild animal. Others are stimulated by the search for companionship, and even surrogate children. But the most important, according to Matthews, is that people keep wild pets because they [find] them appealing in themselves (e.g. - the cat's beauty or the monkey's mental and physical agility).

A *Reader's Digest* reprint from *Outdoor World* uses the coatimundi as an example of an unfortunate pet experience. Robert Gannon tells about the New York couple, thoroughly pleased with their acquisition at first, then awakening to the reality of the mature coatimundi, which "tore up the kitchen linoleum, pried off huge sections of wall-paper," and "When the man of

the house tried to restrain her, she bit him so severely that eight stitches had to be taken in his forearm."

John Walsh, field officer for the International Society for the Protection of Animals, is correct when he theorizes "Nobody should keep an exotic pet who doesn't know how. And that eliminates practically everyone." And, yet, Gannon reports that more than 5,000 Americans now own exotic cats alone. Matthews cautions, "A wild pet, like a wild place, must be accepted on its own terms."

Most of the experts agree on one result of the inexperienced pet owner's folly in acquiring an exotic pet - when the animal has failed to maintain its appeal - either by damaging property or a human being - the pet is offered to the nearest zoo. Zoos receive enough of these offers that most are turned down, thus, the animal must be "turned loose" or returned to his habitat, a grim prospect for the pet which has been declawed, defanged, or deprived of survival training from an early age.

Perhaps the most irritating and regular surprise for the exotic pet owner is care and feeding, with few prospective buyers recognizing that some young animals require feeding every three or four hours, or in the care of a rare bird, every fifteen minutes! Could the average pet owner handle the adult tiger's requirement of 10 pounds of beef a day? And the health concerns top the list, with some animals

becoming ill even with the best of care, not to mention the worry that some humans may be infected with a rare disease, such as that transmitted to seven persons fatally by two green monkeys in Germany.

The United States just recently banned commercial imports of all species of live pets and exotic birds, as reported in the August 25, 1972 issue of *The Washington Post*. The ban was imposed in an effort to eradicate Newcastle disease, a deadly virus that affects poultry but is not harmful to humans, according to the Department of Agriculture. Scientists in California believed that a commercial shipment last year of imported birds was the source of infection which has caused the death or destruction of almost four million chickens and other birds.

But aside from the threat to health, the government is not overly concerned about exotic or wild animals unless they are truly classified as "endangered species" as opposed to "peripheral mammals"

As long as someone is willing to pay the price, someone will probably be willing to supply the demand. Education may be the key to this problem, making people aware of the problems they face in acquiring exotic pets, as well as the problems they cause. Richard Matthews offers a final observation: "when all is said and done, the best place to observe wild animals is in the wild."



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Gynecological Service Now!

by Mopsy NeSmith and Marie Bisette

We decided that maybe Salem College needed gynecological services for their 620 female students. The next step was to ask for student opinion on this subject. Two hundred and forty-four students answered our poll. Of these students, 95.5% said we needed free, confidential gynecological services at Salem. 85.6% said birth control devices should be prescribed. 94.5% said venereal disease tests should be given. 93.2% said pregnancy tests should be given. 93% said other personal examinations should be given also. The Salem College Infirmary was ahead of us! The infirmary now offers complete physicals as well as pap smears, V.D. tests, and pregnancy tests. The infirmary also councils, and the records kept at the infirmary are completely confidential. No one can look at them except Dr. Pennell and Mrs. Casstevens without a *court order*. How much more confidential could our Infirmary be? The personal at the infirmary are willing and well equipped to help you with any problem you have.

We do feel that Salem needs to prescribe birth control devices to its students. 37% of the people polled have used birth control devices for some reason. 30% have been on the pill for some reason. 16.8% see a private

gynecologist in Winston-Salem. 13.5% take advantage of the services offered by the Family Planning Center. 6.6% of the people use other such services. In his interesting discussion with the students, Dr. Pennell stated his ideas on this subject. He believes that the condom is the best method of birth control since it caused no side effects and protects against infectious diseases. Also, he thinks that Salem Health Services does not need to prescribe birth control services. He feels it is the responsibility of the student, not the school, to see that she has adequate birth control. However, Dr. Pennell will gladly refer a student to a private, competent gynecologist for the prescription of birth control devices. After interviewing Dr. Chandler, Dean Johnson, Mrs. Casstevens and Dr. Pennell, our only major breakthrough is that now the school will strongly recommend a complete physical, with tests for entering students. Since 44.7% of the students polled had never been to a gynecologist, we consider this a breakthrough. In conclusion, we feel our efforts accomplished nothing. We are glad that the infirmary offers these confidential services, even if the much needed birth control is not prescribed. Do you feel "a good brand name condom" is adequate birth control for Salem students?

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