



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congresswoman Bordallo Introduces Bill to Protect People and Native Wildlife by Addressing Exotic Animal Importation

(Jan. 27, 2009) — The Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International welcomed the introduction yesterday of the Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act (H.R. 669) in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-Guam).

The bill is designed to prevent the introduction and establishment in the United States of nonnative wildlife species that may harm the economy, the environment, human health or native wildlife. H.R. 669 would require the federal government to assess the risk of nonnative wildlife species proposed for importation and, with public input, decide if the importation of these animals should be allowed or prohibited.

“Each year, millions of wild animals are captured overseas and imported into the United States,” said Michael Markarian, executive vice president of The HSUS. “This trade results in the suffering and death of large numbers of animals, poses unnecessary risks to public health and jeopardizes native wildlife populations here and abroad. We are grateful to Congresswoman Bordallo for working to address this global problem.”

Imported wild animals may escape or may be let loose by owners who cannot properly care for them. These animals sometimes die from starvation, predation or exposure. Sometimes, however, they thrive — putting people, domestic pets and native wildlife at risk.

Facts

- Under current regulations, the Fish and Wildlife Service can declare species “injurious,” making it illegal to import these animals or sell them over state lines as pets. However, this process typically takes years to complete and occurs after species are established, when eradicating them can be expensive, inhumane and nearly impossible.
- Congresswoman Bordallo represents the island of Guam, where brown tree snakes accidentally introduced after World War II have decimated native bird and lizard populations.
- According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2005 the United States imported the following numbers of live, wild animals: nearly 88,000 mammals; 259,000 birds; more than 1 million reptiles; more than 5 million amphibians and more than 200 million fish.

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora aims to ensure sustainability and humane treatment in the international wildlife trade, but many species are not covered and even covered species may be harmed by trade.

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization — backed by 10.5 million Americans, or one of every 30. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty — On the web at humanesociety.org.

Humane Society International is the international arm of The Humane Society of the United States, one of the world's largest animal protection organizations — backed by 10.5 million people. HSI is creating a better future for animals and people through advocacy, education, and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty worldwide— On the web at hsi.org.

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