



Blue Ridge Reef & Pet
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Animals We Don't Carry... And Why

Reptiles

Red-Eared Slider Turtles

These cute green baby turtles are sold at curio shops all over the country. They lay up to 30 eggs per clutch and 5 clutches a year is not uncommon. They are common, so they are cheap. In the pet trade, cheap often equals "disposable." Add to that, this turtle can grow to over a foot across. Aquatic turtle tanks require a lot of filtering and cleaning to keep sanitary. We believe the salmonella scare is vastly overhyped, but a dirty turtle tank is prime real estate for bacteria to live. These little green turtles are an impulse buy for kids with five bucks in their pocket, but they do not stay small and easy to care for long!!!

Green Iguanas

Second verse, same as the first. Green Iguanas are prolific and cheap, grow very large (6 ft. including tail), and most make poor pets. Few people are equipped to house and care for an adult Iguana. We have a few customers who keep and love them, but they are the exception to the rule and we don't need more Iguanas being imported.

Burmese pPthons, Retics, Rocks, Anacondas (the Giants)

Selling these animals as pets to novice keepers is possibly the greatest disservice a pet shop could do. The most horribly abused animals we have ever seen rescued have been big snakes. We believe that it is cruel to sell an animal that will inevitably end up being moved from one ill-suited environment to another because it is difficult to care for and/or expensive to keep. The ones that don't die as a result of abuse or neglect all too often end up being put in situations where they act aggressively and cause harm to someone. The unfortunate end result is that someone gets hurt, the animal is killed/euthanized and more laws are created to limit keeping reptiles. Every year the reptile community is subjected to another city passing another law that dictates what animals can and can't be kept. It is always the same animals that are cited as reasons for the new laws and it is always irresponsible keepers that are ultimately to blame.

African Spurred Tortoise

Again, this species gets just too large for almost any keeper. A tortoise whose shell can weigh 150 pounds has no place in most people's homes. In some climates, they can be kept outdoors in pens; Western North Carolina is not such a climate.

Alligators and Crocodilians

We will sum this one up in one word: Dangerous.

Venomous Snakes

There are experienced keepers who are qualified to responsibly keep “hot” species of snakes. The vast majority of the buying public is not.

Commercially-collected Reptiles

There are many reptiles that are still regularly imported. Green Iguanas and Ball Pythons are still imported or captive hatched (from eggs of wild-caught gravid females) by the tens of thousands. They cost a fraction of captive bred animals but there are downsides:

- they almost always come in with parasites.
- they are generally less healthy and (especially with Ball Pythons) many refuse to eat and slowly starve.

We feel the practice is abysmal and no longer needed with almost any species.

Puppies and Kittens

The owner of Blue Ridge Reef and Pet worked at two large chains in the early 90s. Both sold puppies and kittens. We feel that moving a puppy or kitten into a cage as soon as it is weaned from its mother is no way to start life. In the case of puppies, they are pack animals and suffer from getting so little time to bond with humans. In the case of puppies and kittens, there are so many out there needing homes that we feel the community would suffer from our selling them. We encourage adoptions; we will refer customers to good breeders of pure-bred animals.

Wild-caught Birds

We believe there is no need to import birds in today’s market. There are US breeders of every species of bird commonly kept in the hobby. Wild-caught birds are generally traumatized from being taken out of their native environment and make poor pets. We believe the ONLY upside of wild-caught birds is that they are cheaper.

Fishes

Pacu

These fish are the Burmese Pythons of the aquarium world. Prolific and cheap, they can reach over 60 pounds. They do not “grow to the size of their aquarium” –nothing does! When nitrogen levels build up enough, the toxicity will slow fish growth, but the size of the glass enclosure has no effect on fish size. None. No reputable store should ever stock babies of this species; they will outgrow even a 300 gallon aquarium. When they are tiny, they look like a cute little piranha. They don’t stay that way.

Scorpionfish

This saltwater fish is highly venomous. Add to that, the fact that they basically look like a rock, and you have a potentially deadly and ugly addition to your tank! Couple the low price point with the venomous factor, and these appeal to exactly the wrong crowd. Some of the more exotic varieties are an exception for obvious reasons.

Dyed/injected/Tattooed Fish

These fishes do nothing for my eye, but the reason we don’t carry them is the practice is inhumane. Most perish during and right after the “color job,” and we refuse to support this ugly part of the industry. The tattooed fishes are literally tattooed with a needle. We believe that ink is for people who want it, not fish!

Oscars

Oscars aren't giants; they top out at around 16 inches. We will order these for customers who keep big fish, but carrying them in the store is asking for people with small aquariums to buy and irresponsibly care for them. I have seen far fewer full-size healthy Oscars than stunted ones with pits in their head.

Additional Species

There are also a number of less-popular species that do not thrive in aquariums that we do not stock in our store. Among them are Cleaner Wrasses, Blue Ribbon Eels, and other wild-caught consistent poor feeders.

- Chip Bridges