

# ***SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS***



16 June 2017

Mr Mathew Pereira  
Forum Editor  
The Straits Times

Dear Mr Mathew Pereira,

I refer to the letter dated 11 June 2017, “Expand list of animals allowed as pets”. The SPCA strongly opposes such a move, and contrary to the writer’s opinion, we believe there is every reason to keep the ban. Some species may have been domesticated, or long recognized by the international pet industry, but this does not justify Singapore (a highly urbanized city) following suit. That “the pet trade needs to evolve to suit the lifestyles of people today”, shows a lack of consideration for the animals themselves, and their long term welfare in a domestic environment. The wildlife pet trade, much of it conducted illicitly, has been shown to cause extensive distress, suffering or death to many of the animals involved.

As wild animals, whether wild caught or bred in captivity, have very specific needs that are challenging to meet, housing them in urban dwellings with novice owners could result in a poor quality of life and prolonged suffering.

The letter writer states that, “there are no allergy issues.. and there is less risk of zoonotic disease transmission” for reptiles kept as pets. This is not true. Allergies to reptiles have been documented. Reptiles can also transmit a number of diseases, including life threatening ones, to the human members of the household.

Furthermore, wild animals that are not endemic to our local environment can upset the balance of our fragile ecosystem if they escape or are abandoned.

The behaviour of wild animals can be unpredictable and some species may cause serious harm to a human. Keeping them as pets significantly elevates this risk, especially when inexperienced owners are involved.

The SPCA therefore strongly supports the present regulations prohibiting the sale and keeping of wild animals as pets.

Yours sincerely,

Jaipal Singh Gill (Dr)  
Executive Director  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals