

# Please *Don't* Abandon Your Animals



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Red-eared sliders and soft-shelled turtles are not native to this area, and have displaced the native Sonoran mud turtles that are now very rare.

Dumping your aquarium fish and plants can introduce disease and result in infestations that harm native habitats.



Domestic ducks are not equipped to survive in the wild. They can also transmit diseases to the wild ducks who do belong here.



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This brochure was made possible with a grant from the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Heritage Fund.



PIMA COUNTY  
NATURAL RESOURCES,  
PARKS AND RECREATION

# Protect nature's balance

KEEP YOUR PARKS

*Wild!*

## Instead of Abandoning Your Pet – What Can You Do?

- Be responsible and find your pet a new home if you no longer want it.
- Take your pet to an animal rescue center, sanctuary, or pet store.
- Return it to where it was purchased.
- Ask your school to not raise animals unless permanent homes can be identified for them.

*Some of the animals commonly seen in our park do not belong here. Domestic ducks, common geese, red-eared sliders, snapping turtles, gold fish, Koi, aquarium fish, and bullfrogs have been abandoned by their owners. While most people recognize that it is wrong to release their dogs and cats into the wild, it often comes as a surprise to learn that it is equally destructive and unethical to release other pets or classroom animals.*

## Do the right thing: Don't abandon your animal.

- Releasing non-native animals can displace native wildlife and destroy valuable habitat. Dumping “one little animal” may seem harmless, but that action can have serious effects.
- Released pets increase competition with native/resident wildlife species for food. Dumped ducks, turtles, and aquarium fish impact migratory ducks and native fish that inhabit the pond.
- Your pet does not know how to survive in the wild and may become an easy target for predators. Dumped ducks and rabbits usually do not survive for very long. Released pets can die a miserable death by starving or exposure to extreme temperatures.
- Releasing a domestic pet is inhumane. Illegally dumped ducks are often attacked by wild ducks. People “release” ducks with the misconception that they are returning them to their natural environment.
- Released animals can introduce diseases to wildlife. Many outbreaks of duck plague in wild ducks have been linked to domestic ducks. Releasing turtles or tortoises can harm native pond turtles.
- Removing and relocating abandoned domestic animals comes at a cost. For example, there is an increase in the dumping of domestic ducks and geese following Easter. These animals must be removed from the park.
- Some domestic ducks breed with wild ducks. Resulting hybrids alter the gene pool and are undesirable for the conservation of wild populations.

**Be a responsible pet owner.  
Don't turn it loose.  
Show you care.**