

Exotic animal trade laws argumentative essay

Countries, United States



When considering the problems of importing exotic animals from foreign countries, it is necessary to evaluate the laws that currently exist, and determine whether or not they provide an effective means of safeguarding the animals in question. In this essay, it will be argued that the laws that are in place at this time do not protect animals from mistreatment in an adequate manner, nor do they effectively prevent the occurrence of disease.

One of the biggest reasons for importing exotic animals into the country is for private ownership, which is an ethically dubious practice that places the welfare of both pet and owner at risk. In terms of the ownership of big cats such as lions and tigers, there are only twenty one out of the fifty states in America that ban private ownership; there are many others that require an owner to merely have a permit for them. (Glausierrez, 2008)

There are very good reasons for having appropriate animal trade laws in place; exotic animals often develop eating problems, stress and behavioral disorders when kept as pets (ASPCA, 2011). They are not sufficiently domesticated or suited for that role, and as a result, their welfare can become very much endangered; this necessitates stricter regulations, such as the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture's laws preventing the future purchase of exotic animals as pets. (Mann, 2010) Groups such as Born Free USA seek to prevent such animal exploitation, and work to make private ownership of exotic animals more strictly regulated. (Born Free USA, 2011)

The Captive Wildlife Safety act is a federal law that prohibits big cats being sold between states, and has the potential to lower the number of wild animals that are sold as pets. However, the biggest hurdle towards these

types of laws is Article I of the Constitution; it restricts regulations of wild animal possessions to state and local laws. Federal laws, as a result, cannot properly regulate the trade of wild animals.

This is a substantial setback for many people who wish to protect endangered and wild animals from irresponsible ownership and unethical trade. California, for example, has a ban on possession of many wild animals, unless one has a permit. The biggest problem with these permits is that they do not properly ensure the adequate and humane treatment of the exotic animal, and as such, if someone merely goes through the paperwork, they can get their hands on an exotic animal in California. States such as Massachusetts have similar laws. (Liebman 2004)

It is clear that there are a plethora of environmentally conscious organizations and laws in place to prevent the spread of disease in exotic animals, mostly by preventing their legal ownership in America. However, many of these laws do not keep the animal's welfare in mind; even when they do, it is often at the expense of the environment they came from or where they are going. A greater concern for the safety and well-being of the animal and its intended habitat must be taken when creating new legislature and forming new organizations, as well as changing the direction of existing organizations to fit that new goal. The basic tenets of these laws is to make sure that the native environment is protected; the safety and welfare of the animals is a secondary concern. As a result, these laws need to be amended to place a greater emphasis on the animal's well-being and their staying or

being sent back to their native habitat. This is the best way to prevent exotic disease as well as preserve the native ecosystem of that exotic animal.

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