

Bearded Dragon *Pogona vitticeps*

Bearded Dragons are native to central Australia and are very popular pets. The name “bearded” refers to a large throat pouch that extends outward and looks like a spiny beard. Some species display this beard as a defense mechanism or to assert dominance. There are several closely related species of Bearded Dragons, *Pogona vitticeps* is the most common species in the pet trade.

In the wild, Bearded Dragons are semi-arboreal and occupy various habitats ranging from deserts to dry forests. They are diurnal, normally foraging in the early morning and late afternoon, and resting under shelter during mid-day. Domesticated Bearded Dragons typically live 5 to 15 years, weigh 10 to 18 ounces, and grow to 12 to 18 inches in length.

★ *Bearded Dragons breed well in captivity, so harvest of wild individuals is not necessary for the pet trade.*

**Did You Know?**

Domesticated Bearded Dragons typically live 5 to 15 years.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Cockatiels are small parrots native to the Australian outback. In the wild they travel in pairs or small flocks and nest in tree cavities near water. Mated pairs form strong, long-lasting bonds; some pairs stay together for life.

In captivity, Cockatiels should enjoy lots of attention from their owners. They are quite vocal, and can learn to whistle, mimic household sounds, and imitate human speech. Cockatiels can live for 15 to 20 years, with some birds reported to live up to 30 years.

★ *Cockatiels are easy to breed in captivity, and most birds available for sale in the U.S. are captive-bred. Importation of Cockatiels (and all parrots) to the U.S. is prohibited under the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992. Although some illegal importation may still occur, wild Cockatiel populations in Australia appear to be healthy and not in danger of exploitation from harvesting or habitat loss.*

**Did You Know?**

Mated pairs form strong, long-lasting bonds; some Cockatiels stay together for life.

Neon Tetra *Paracheirodon innesi*

Neon Tetras are tiny, brightly colored, tropical fish native to South America. Wild fish are found primarily in blackwater streams of Brazil, Peru, and Columbia. The fishes’ bright coloring may be important for finding mates in murky water.

Neon Tetras are one of the most popular aquarium fish in the United States. Neon Tetras are easily bred in captivity and 95% of the individuals available in pet stores are from breeding facilities in Southeast Asia. Some wild-caught Neon Tetras are still imported from South America.

★ *Wild populations of Neon Tetras may be declining due to habitat destruction. Neon Tetras in the pet trade are almost exclusively captive-bred, so the pet trade does not appear to significantly threaten native wild populations.*

**Did You Know?**

An estimated 20 million Neon Tetras are imported each year for the U.S. pet trade.

Island/Common Canary *Serinus canaria*

The Island Canary (or Atlantic Canary) is a small songbird native to Portugal, Spain, and the Canary Islands (for which the species was named). Wild birds are found in a variety of habitats and primarily eat seeds. Canaries are gregarious, usually nesting and feeding in small groups.

The Common Canary is the domesticated form of the Island Canary. It is a common household pet, popular for its bright color and sweet singing voice. Common Canaries are usually vibrant yellow but they have been bred for many different color variations.

★ *Wild Populations of Island Canaries appear to be thriving in the wild. There is some evidence that wild canaries are trapped for the pet trade, particularly on the Canary Islands. Canaries are extremely easy to breed in captivity. As a result, the vast majority of canaries sold as pets are captive bred.*

**Did You Know?**

Island Canaries have been successfully kept as pets since the 13th century.

To learn more, please visit www.PetWatch.net

Or contact us at **EcoHealth Alliance, 460 West 34th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10001**

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Chinese Fire Bellied Newt *Cynops orientalis*

The Chinese Fire Bellied Newt is a small (2 - 4 inches long) semi-aquatic black salamander with a bright orange belly. It is mildly poisonous, and the bright color is believed to warn potential predators of the salamander's toxicity. The Chinese Fire Bellied Newt is widely distributed in southern China, where it is abundant in ponds and streams.

Chinese Fire Bellied Newts are commonly sold in pet stores, where they are easily confused with the similar Japanese Fire Bellied Newt (*Cynops pyrrhogaster*). Japanese Fire Bellied Newts typically have smoother skin and rounder tails. Most Fire Bellied Newts in the pet trade are wild-caught and have an average lifespan of 10 to 20 years.

★ *The Chinese Fire Bellied Newt is listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), an organization that tracks the status of wildlife populations, as a species of Least Concern due to its wide distribution, tolerance of a broad range of habitats, and presumed large and stable population.*



Did You Know?

The bright orange belly is believed to warn potential predators of the salamander's toxicity.

Barramundi *Lates calcarifer*

The Barramundi is a large fish native to the Indo-West Pacific region from the Persian Gulf, through Southeast Asia to Papua New Guinea and Northern Australia. The species inhabits rivers but moves into estuaries and tidal flats to spawn. It feeds on crustaceans, mollusks, and smaller fishes.

Barramundi are commonly caught and sold for food and are highly prized by sport fishermen for their good fighting ability. Young Barramundi are also relatively commonly caught as aquarium fish. In the pet trade, Nile perch, a similar-looking fish from Lake Victoria, Africa is often mislabeled as Barramundi.

★ *Wild populations of Barramundi appear to be stable due their wide geographic distribution and ability to be farmed in aquaculture practices worldwide.*



Did You Know?

Nile perch, a similar-looking fish from Lake Victoria, Africa are often mislabeled as Barramundi.

Betta or Siamese Fighting Fish *Betta splendens*

Bettas, also known as Siamese Fighting Fish, are small (up to 3 inches long) rather plain-colored fish native to the Mekong River basin in Thailand and Cambodia. They feature a unique organ (the labyrinth) that enables them to breathe atmospheric oxygen and thus to live in very low-oxygen waters such as slow streams, paddies, and ditches. The name "fighting fish" refers to the aggressive behavior of territorial males.

After more than a century of captive breeding, Bettas in the pet trade are very different than their wild ancestors. Bred for beauty, pet Bettas come in a variety of bright colors and have long flowing fins.

★ *Bettas are almost exclusively bred in captivity, and therefore the pet trade does not pose a threat to wild populations. However, wild populations may be declining due to habitat loss, so it is important to only purchase captive-bred Bettas.*



Did You Know?

The name "fighting fish" refers to the aggressive behavior of territorial males.

Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*

The House Gecko is native to southern Asia and has established breeding populations in eastern Africa, New Guinea, Mexico, Madagascar, Australia, and other tropical areas. It is found in a variety of habitats and gets its name because it is common near human habitations. Like other geckos, House Geckos have specialized toe pads that enable them to cling and move effortlessly along walls and ceilings. They are frequently seen at night near light bulbs hunting for insects.

Common House Geckos are very popular among pet owners because they are small, inexpensive, and relatively easy to keep in captivity. They vary in color from yellowish tan with darker spots or blotches to pale grayish-white; they sometimes appear paler at night.

★ *House Geckos are believed to be common within their native range and are not at risk of extinction in the wild.*



Did You Know?

House Geckos have specialized toe pads that enable them to cling and move effortlessly.

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