

PRESS RELEASE

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Hawaii Agencies and Pet Stores Work to Prevent Pet Dumping

Federal and State government agencies and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council are pleased to announce Hawaii's participation in a national campaign to encourage pet owners to turn in unwanted aquarium fish and plants instead of dumping them in streams or the ocean.

The goal of the "Habitattitude" campaign is to reduce the possibility of released plants and animals becoming established in our oceans, streams, or lakes. Instead, agencies have partnered with the Waikiki Aquarium, pet stores and animals shelters to be drop-off locations for unwanted aquatic plants and animals.

Over the past few years there have been several major news stories about the problems caused by the release of unwanted aquarium pets and plants.

Lionfish, (also known as turkeyfish) popular aquarium fish from Pacific waters, have been sighted more and more in the Atlantic along eastern states since the mid-1990s. Their long pectoral fins and dorsal spines contain venom that can injure unwary aquarists and ocean-goers, and there are few predators in the Atlantic that are willing and able to feed on these fish. As the numbers of these fish increase, scientists expect an impact on the smaller fish and invertebrates that lionfish feed on.

Here in Hawaii, the floating water fern *Salvinia molesta* created a \$1.2 million dollar mess as it covered Lake Wilson in 2003. The lake and spillways looked more like a golf fairway as the thick growth prevented water access by waterbirds, and decaying plants used all available oxygen, killing fish. While that infestation was eventually controlled, several other populations of *Salvinia* have been documented in other waterways across the state, all believed to be the result of aquarium dumping.

DLNR chairperson Peter Young says, "*Salvinia* in Lake Wilson brought this to the forefront. For years, DLNR has asked people not to dump their aquarium contents into streams and lakes. Many of these introductions pose a threat to our native stream animals and unique freshwater ecosystems, and are due to lack of understanding by people of their consequences. Now, our reefs are also at risk from marine aquarium pet introductions. These problems can be prevented by people simply using common sense. We appreciate the support from pet stores who are cooperating in this aquarium pet return program."

The Hawaii Habitattitude program is being sponsored by the DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Sea Grant, and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, with generous support from the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, Hawaii Department of Agriculture, Waikiki Aquarium, Maui Ocean Center, Humane Societies on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai, Waimea Valley Audubon Center and participating pet stores statewide.

Do what's best for the fish in your tank and the fish in the wild. Don't dump unwanted aquarium pets into streams or the ocean. Instead:

1. Contact one of the drop-off locations listed below (location list also at www.cgaps.org) or the

- retailer for possible returns and proper handling advice.
2. Consider giving or trading with another aquarist, pond owner or water gardener.
 3. Consider donating unwanted aquarium pets and plants to a classroom or aquarium society.
 4. Seal aquatic plants in plastic bags and dispose in greenwaste or trash.

Drop-off Locations

You can drop off any unwanted fresh water or saltwater aquarium pets and plants at the following locations:

Island	Name	Phone Number	Address	Location	Type
Oahu	Waikiki Aquarium	808-923-9741	2777 Kalakaua Ave	Honolulu	Fresh and Saltwater (fish and inverts)
Oahu	Hawaiian Humane Society	808-946-2187	2700 Waialae Ave.	Honolulu	Fresh and Saltwater
Oahu	Hawaii Department of Agriculture	808-837-8413	1849 Auiki Street (Plant Quarantine Bldg.)	Honolulu	Fresh and Saltwater
Oahu	Waimea Valley Audubon Center	808-638-9199	59-864 Kamehameha Hwy	Waimea	Freshwater
Maui	Hawaii Department of Agriculture	808-873-3555	635 Mua St.	Kahului	Fresh and Saltwater
Maui	Maui Humane Society	808-877-3680	Mokulele Highway (between Puunene & Piilani Highway)	Puunene	Freshwater
Molokai	Molokai Invasive Species Committee	808-553-5236 ext. 204	23 Pueo Place (TNC office)	Kalamaula	Fresh and Saltwater
Big Island	Stockley's Pets	808-329-5100	74-5484 Kaiwi St.	Kailua-Kona	Fresh and Saltwater
Big Island	Hawaii Department of Agriculture in Kailua-Kona	808-326-1077	73-302 Kupipi St.	Kailua-Kona	Freshwater
Big Island	Hawaii Department of Agriculture in Hilo	808-974-4140	16-E Lanikaula St	Hilo	Freshwater
Kauai	Hawaii Department of Agriculture	808-274-3069	4398A Pua Loke St.	Lihue	Fresh and Saltwater
Kauai	Kauai Humane Society	808-632-0610	3-825 Kaumuali'i Highway	Lihue	Freshwater
Kauai	Lihue Pet Shop	808-245-1939	4303 Rice St.	Lihue	Freshwater

More information on Habitattitude can be found at: <http://www.habitattitude.net/>

More information about aquatic invasive species can be found at:

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatics/main.shtml>

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