

# TRAFFICKED ANIMALS: THE ROUGH ROAD TO RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION IN THE UNITED STATES

20th International Wildlife Law Conference

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April 2020

# ROADMAP

- Catching animal smugglers at ports
- Scale of confiscations
- Short-term care
- Permanent placement
- Challenges to placement

HEY THERE



# SMUGGLING OF LIVE ANIMALS

- Shipped through the mail (DHL, UPS, FedEx)
- Checked baggage
- Cargo
- Airline Passengers (on-person)

# SNAKES IN STEREOS



Credit: USFWS

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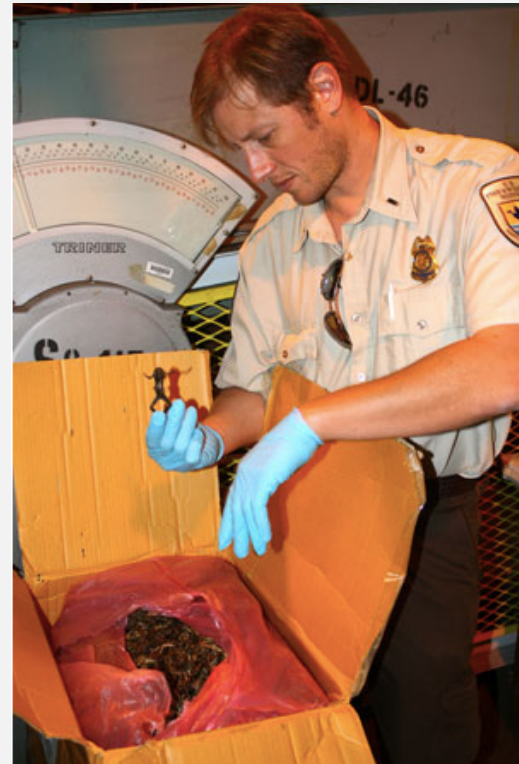
# SNAKES IN STEREOS



Credit: USFWS

# PORTS OF ENTRY INSPECTIONS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- 123 Wildlife Inspectors
- 77 Ports of Entry
- 7 Canine Teams
- X-rays
- Viewing Tubes



Credit: USFWS

Credit: San Diego Union-Tribune



## SCALE OF U.S. SEIZURES

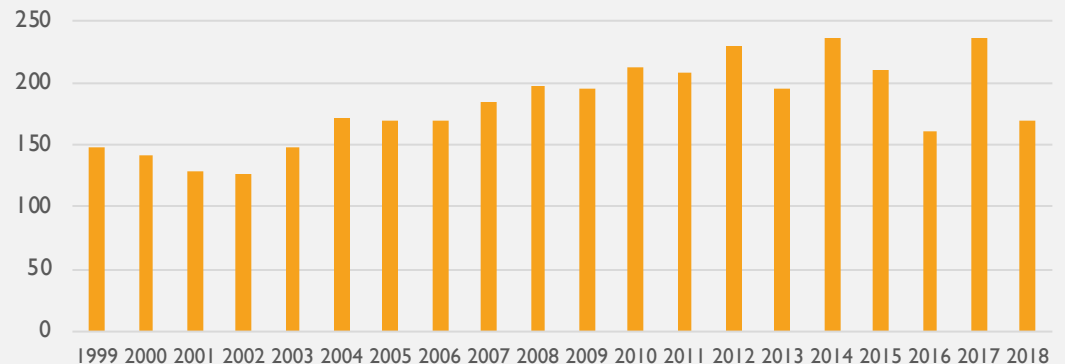


Credit: USFWS

From January 1999—February 2019:

- Approx. 407,500 illegally trafficked individual animals seized
- Approx. 6,600 animals dead on arrival
- Approx. 40% of live animal seizures are corals
- Frequent seizures in Florida ports, especially Miami

Shipments of Live Animals Seized by USFWS 1999-2018





# INITIAL DETERMINATION

- Refused Shipments
- To Seize or Not to Seize
- Importer Care
- Injurious Species:

deemed to be harmful “to human beings, to the interests of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, or to wildlife or the wildlife resources of the United States.”

Source: Lacey Act (U.S. Federal Statute)

# SHORT-TERM CARE DURING PROSECUTION

- Fish and Wildlife (FWS) Vendors
- Charged Per Animal Per Day
- Large quantities of animals
- 60-Day Evidence Hold
- Length of Litigation



# PERMANENT HOMES

- Vendors
- AZA-Accredited Zoos and Aquariums
- Educational Outreach Programs
- Conservation Missions
- Repatriation or Release (Rare)



Credit: U.S. Customs and Border Protection



# CHALLENGES TO PLACEMENT

- Species Too Common
- No Chain of Custody Info
- Large Number of Animals in Shipment
- No Money in Budget for Care
- Time for recovery
- Sad State of Animal

2015 USFWS Confiscation Species	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Blue coral	Heliopora
Brain coral	Lobophyllia
Brain coral	Trachyphyllia
Branch-capped coral	Euphyllia divisa
Branching frog spawn	Euphyllia paradivisa
Brush coral	Pocillopora damicornis
Colt coral	Cladiella
Coral	Nemenezophyllia
Coral	Acanthastrea
Corky sea fingers	Briareum
Crescent coral	Euphyllia
Crescent coral	Euphyllia ancora
Day coral	Goniopora
Elegance coral	Catalaphyllia
Flower tree coral	Scleronephthya
Golden colonial anemone	Palythoa
Horn coral	Hydnophora
Indonesian cup coral	Cynarina
Ivory coral	Galaxea
Luminescent colonial anemone	Parazoanthus
Montipora coral	Montipora
Mushroom coral	Fungia
Mushroom corallimorph	Rhodactis
Mushroom Leather Coral	Sarcophyton
Organ-pipe coral	Tubipora
Pineapple coral	Blastomussa wellsi
Pink cauliflower coral	Stylophora pistillata
Prism	Favia
Red cauliflower coral	Dendronephthya
Scroll Coral	Turbinaria reniformis
Sea Mat	Zoanthidae
Soft coral	Acanthogorgiidae
Soft corals, blue coral, sea pens and gorgonians	Sympodium
Umbrella false coral	Discosoma
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# AFTER DONATION

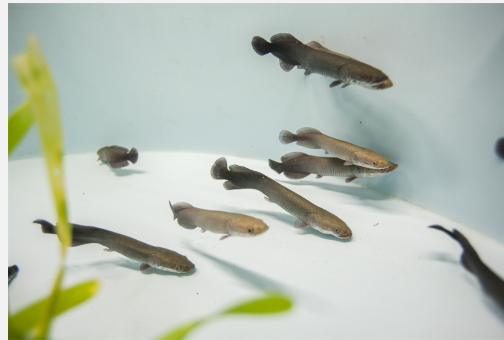
- Quarantine
- Possible Transfer and Restrictions
- Cost of long-term care
- Proof of Death



Corals in Quarantine

Credit: Florida Aquarium

# AFTER DONATION—SHEDD AQUARIUM, CHICAGO



Arapaima



Credit: Animal Planet

Thai Catfish



Credit: ©Shedd Aquarium/Brenna Hernandez

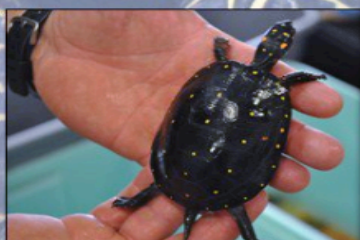


Credit: Mega Fishing Thailand



## TAKE-AWAYS

- High Death Rates
- No Resources for Long-Term Care
- Common animals hard to find homes for
- Animals Rarely Freed



## FLORIDA SUCCESS STORY

- More than 600 turtles returned to the wild
- 300 of those freed turtles now part of long-term monitoring & research project
- Two dozen more turtles released after quarantine for illness
- Small number of non-native turtles retained by captive wildlife licensee

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING EXPERT SOURCES:

- **Rhyan Tompkins**, Wildlife Inspector  
**U.S. Fish and Wildlife**, North-Central Florida
- **Andrew Pulver**, Director of Husbandry  
**National Aquarium**, Baltimore, Maryland
- **Keri O'Neil**, Coral Nursery Manager  
and **Kathryn Kisner**, Registrar & Animal Resource Manager  
**Florida Aquarium**, Tampa, Florida
- **Kelsey Ryan**, Conservation Communications  
**Shedd Aquarium**, Chicago, Illinois