

Aliens of Kamayca

A newsletter on non-indigenous species in Jamaica

THE PET TRADE PATHWAY

The annual trade in exotic animals as pets is a multi-billion dollar business, which sees thousand of species being traded internationally in order to satisfy the global demand. The growth of the global market has great implications on native biodiversity and the emergence of invasive species. It is documented that the pet trade pathway have already contributed to the establishment of several hundreds non-native and invasive species and is forecast to increase substantially in the coming years.

WILDLIFE TRADE

The wildlife trade involves thousands of species and exotic animals such as parrots, lizards, snakes and fish which are being caught, bred and shipped around the world. Some of which are destined for the pet trade here in Jamaica. Others will merely pass through the island's borders on their way to being sold as pets in other countries (The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals , 2023).



Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals , 2023

Figure 1: Exotic parrots being transported during the pet trade

The act of capturing wild animals is extremely stressful to the animals. Equipment such as snares, buckets and nets are used for such acts. These animals may also become injured during the process. In many cases, it is illegal to capture wild animals. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) aims to protect species by preventing or controlling trade. Species listed on Appendix I of the Convention are threatened with extinction and can't be traded commercially, while those on Appendix II can only enter the trade under specific circumstances (The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals , 2023).

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IMPACTS OF WILDLIFE CAPTURE

The capture of wildlife not only impacts the species involved but also their associated habitats. This can result in decimation of the local wildlife populations and cause serious and lasting harm to their habitats. Many species have become endangered or even threatened with extinction as a result of this, for example the Yellow-billed parrot (*Amazona collaria*) (Figure 2).



Figure 2: The threatened and endemic Yellow-billed parrot

It is documented that the marine aquarium industry takes up to 41.5 million animals from the wild each year. Mortality can range from less than 5 percent to more than 90 percent depending on the species, according to a 2012 report by Defenders of Wildlife. Additionally, reef fish are sometimes stunned with cyanide or forced to the surface with explosive blasts to make them easier to collect (Nuwer, 2023).

Avian species are also at risk. A case study in the United States (US) revealed that prior to 1992, when the U.S. banned the import of many wild-caught birds, conservationists estimated that of the 700,000 wild birds were brought into the country each year, 3.5 million more have died. For countries that continue to trade in wild-caught birds, there's no evidence that the situation has improved (Nuwer, 2023).

TRANSPORTATION OF CAPTURED WILDLIFE

The transportation of exotic animals is also considered a stressful process for the captured animals and may also result in the death of some individuals. These animals are shipped via containers, including boxes, bags, buckets,



Figure 3: Transporting reptiles to be sold as pets.

wooden crates and plastic tubs, many of which are completely unsuitable. Animals are oftentimes crammed tightly together in these containers (Figure 3). Animals who become sick or injured usually don't get the medical care they need (The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2023). The conditions under which the animals are transported also makes them more susceptible to infections and can endanger the people and animals who come in contact with them.

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References

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LINKAGE BETWEEN THE PET TRADE AND IAS IN JAMAICA

Invasive Alien Species have become one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide, across all ecosystems (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2021). There are several ways introduction can occur however the pet trade pathway has been identified as one of the major pathways through which alien species are introduced intentionally or accidentally in Jamaica (Reaser, 2014).

Accidental introduction entails species spreading via hitchhiking in or on ships and airplanes whilst during intentional pathways, animals are a commodity. The latter group, has been exemplified by the exotic pet trade and have garnered great attention as a market for live plants and animals which also have resulted in an increase in IAS arriving via this pathway (Lockwood, 2019). For animal groups such as reptiles and amphibians, the pet trade have contributed the most to the establishment of non-native species worldwide.

In Jamaica, the pet trade is a new but expanding sector of the economy. A number of species have been introduced and established as IAS within Jamaica via the pet trade namely inter alia, the Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*), Yellow-naped Amazon (*Amazona auropalliata*) and Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) (Figures 4 & 5).

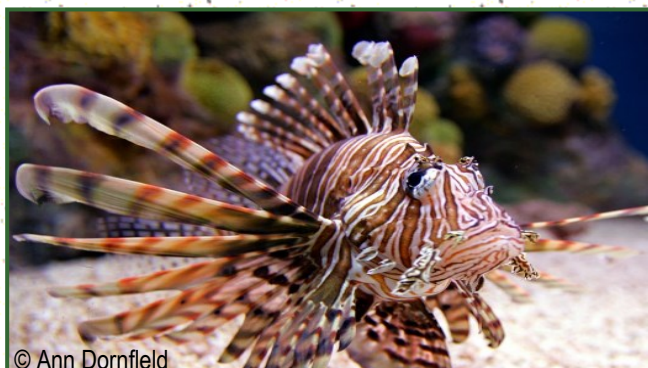


Figure 4: The invasive Lionfish



Figure 5: The invasive Green iguana and Yellow-naped parrot.

Pet Trade Pathway Toolkit

To minimize the impact of Invasive Alien Species on Jamaica's environment and natural resource-based economy, a pet trade pathway toolkit was produced under the Jamaica's 2014–2020 National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan, 2013 (NIASSAP). This toolkit offers a variety of solutions to provide guidance for protecting pets, biodiversity, and human livelihood.

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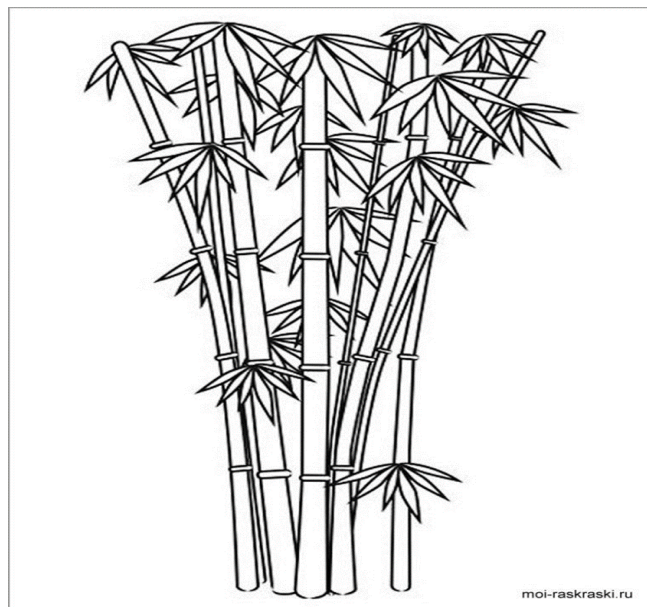
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Children's Corner



Mongoose
White-tailed Deer
Strawberry Guava
Wild Hog
Ackee
Breadfruit
Chicken
Sorrel
Dog
Cat
Rat
Eucalyptus
Pig
Goat
Ginger Lily
Cattle Egret
Neem
Mango
Apple
Jackfruit
Cotton
Logwood

Colour and learn a little about me, I am an Invasive Alien Species to Jamaica
<https://coloringbay.com/bamboo-coloring-pages/bamboo-tree-coloring-pages>



The Aliens of Xamayca is a quarterly newsletter that features non-native species in Jamaica.
Persons interested in writing articles for the newsletter may submit them to the editor at samantha.grant@nepa.gov.jm.