

Is it legal to sell exotic animals such as monkeys or tigers as pets in Australia?

RSPCA Australia receives many enquiries about exotic animals such as monkeys, tigers and lions for sale over the internet. These animals are often advertised as babies using 'cute' photos with little information about the seller or the origin of the animal. Information on the location of the seller is usually limited to a general region or State, and the only way to contact the seller is by email. In most cases, these advertisements are hoaxes - there is no animal available and the advertisement is just a means of obtaining money under false pretences.

If you see an advertisement like this and you are concerned that it there may be a real animal involved, you need to contact the relevant government authority so they can check it out. Please click on the links below to find the relevant agency:

State/Territory agencies responsible for exotic animals: [ACT](#) [NSW](#) [NT](#) [QLD](#) [SA](#) [TAS](#) [VIC](#) [WA](#)

Can exotic animals be kept as pets in Australia?

The keeping of exotic animals is controlled by State and Territory laws which set out the type and number of animals that can be kept and stipulate the conditions under which such animals can be kept. Exotic animals such as monkeys, lions and tigers can only be held by licensed persons and usually only for exhibition or conservation purposes - they cannot be sold for commercial purposes or kept as pets by private owners.

Can exotic animals be imported into Australia?

The importation of exotic animals into Australia is controlled by laws administered by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEWHA), and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). These laws apply to all importers of live exotic animals. You can find out more about the legal requirements for importing wildlife from the [DEWHA website](#).

Unfortunately there is an ongoing and highly lucrative illegal international trade in exotic wildlife which has serious animal welfare and conservation consequences. Because of the high prices some animals can fetch, many people attempt to smuggle these animals illegally into Australia using ever more inventive means. Animals regularly seized by Australian Customs include live birds and eggs, turtles, tortoises, snakes, lizards. Smuggled animals suffer stress, dehydration, or starvation and many animals die during the process.

If you see an animal for sale in Australia, or advertised for sale, and you suspect that it has been illegally imported, you can check it against the [DEWHA exotic animal guide](#) which indicates those exotic species that can or cannot be imported legally, and then report it to the relevant agency.

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