

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS — KEEPING LIST

5102. Hon Sally Talbot to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment

I refer to the Minister's responses dated 2 August 2011 and 20 October 2011 to Mr Stephen Wyndham, President of the West Australian Herpetological Society (WAHS), the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 and the Wildlife Conservation (Reptiles and Amphibians) Regulation 2002, and I ask —

- (1) Why does the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) continue to raise non-compliance as an issue of concern with regard to the expansion of the keeping list when documents 11 and 12 obtained under freedom of information application FOI 2011/6251 clearly state a very low level of non-compliance with only 36 cautions and one conviction in four years?
- (2) Has this misplaced concern influenced the DEC's decision to assess only six additional species to be added to the keeping list?
- (3) When will DEC assess the full list of species as submitted as part of the WAHS submission and revised at DEC's request in 2009?
- (4) Why does DEC continue to be involved in the export of rough scaled pythons to persons and organisations interstate that are actively involved in the pet trade, while at the same time denying Western Australian keepers the opportunity to keep this species under license?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

The Minister for Environment has provided the following response:

- (1) The FOI documents referred to show there have been 108 offences prosecuted and 882 offences subject to cautions under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 and Wildlife Conservation (Reptiles and Amphibians) Regulations 2002 between 1 January 2007 and 30 June 2011 related to reptile and amphibian keeping.
- (2) DEC does not consider its concern about non-compliance to be misplaced. Western Australia has avoided reptile diseases and significant illegal taking and keeping of reptiles because it has a regulated system where the source of animals is documented and where species and specimens illegally obtained have not been legitimised through trade. Reptile keeping is restricted to avoid risks to native species in the wild. Amateur herpetologists have access to 41 species of reptiles and amphibians as pets.
- (3) DEC advised the West Australian Herpetological Society in a letter dated 18 November 2010 that it would be prepared to consider the Society's four to six highest priority new species for adding to the herpetofauna keeping list, with supporting arguments/justifications. DEC will consider any submission from the Society in response to this advice.
- (4) A program to establish captive populations of wild-caught rough-scaled pythons was undertaken by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Australian Reptile Park between 1998 and 2000 and has since been discontinued. That program was undertaken before the establishment of the pet herpetofauna regulations in Western Australia. No rough-scaled pythons have been exported for the purpose of pet keeping. Interstate recipients of rough-scaled pythons have included scientific institutions, wildlife parks and zoos. Once a native reptile has been lawfully exported from Western Australia, it is no longer under the control of DEC.