

## **Habitattitude for Wisconsin: Providing an Alternative to Pet Release**

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Organism in trade (OIT) invasion pathways are of increasing concern in Wisconsin. Discoveries of pacu, snakehead, and boa constrictors in Wisconsin waters are evidence that nonnative organisms are being released into the wild. Efforts to eradicate red swamp crayfish and yellow floating heart, both species thought to be introduced via OIT pathways, show that efforts to contain and eradicate these species can be costly. The Habitattitude campaign is a community based social marketing approach to prevent pet releases and water garden escapes by promoting responsible consumer behavior and providing alternatives to pet release. However, through working with retailers it became clear that some of the options are not feasible in Wisconsin. To help make these alternatives possible, UW Sea Grant partnered with Kingdom Animalia Exotic Animal Rescue and East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to host pet amnesty events. These efforts received media coverage while also accepting surrendered pets. We hope that these events can be a model that can be used to address these pathways in other communities.