



BANNING THE SALE OF CAGED BIRDS IN ST. PETE, FLORIDA

An estimated 20 million birds are currently living as confined pets across the U.S.

Problems Associated with Caged Bird Ownership

Birds typically live in groups and can inhabit a range of 2-4 miles, some with the ability to travel 50 miles or more in a dayⁱ. To keep a bird confined and alone in a cage is simply incompatible with the nature of these complex, intelligent animals.

Birds in pet stores come from mass-breeding operations providing insufficient living conditions. Birds are bred in empty cages, suffer from health complications, and are separated from their parents after hatching before being sold to uninformed buyersⁱⁱ. They often display neurotic behaviors like self-mutilation due to being unsocialized and unstimulatedⁱⁱⁱ.

The growing popularity of birds as pets also promotes the exotic caged bird trade. Although U.S. laws minimize illegal trafficking, this is a global problem that decimates bird populations^{iv}. Some species lose 20% of their populations to trafficking annually, while an estimated 60% of trafficked birds die before ever reaching their destination^v.

In Florida, birds are particularly common as pets, and have a negative impact on the environment: becoming invasive species. Florida currently has over 150 non-native bird species causing detrimental imbalances in Florida's ecosystems, as these invasive species continue to breed and displace native birds^{vi}.

The Solution: A Municipal Campaign

St. Petersburg, Florida is a progressive city with existing local laws and programs that could form a foundation for a two-part municipal campaign with the purpose of increasing legal protections for caged birds.

Expanding St. Pete's PAWS Initiative^{vii}

- PAWS was created to facilitate projects and education that promote healthy pets and informed pet owners
- By integrating information on responsible bird ownership, resources for exotic pet owners, and statistics regarding bird breeding and the exotic caged bird trade, St. Pete bird owners can improve the life of their avian pets and voters can make an informed decision on expanding Sec. 4-9 to include birds

Modifying St. Pete City Ordinance Sec. 4-9^{viii}

- Sec. 4-9 bans the sale of cats and dogs in pet and retail stores, and on public property.
- This ordinance could be modified to include bird sales through an initiative petition and vote by either St. Pete's city council or the city's residents
- To be certified for a vote, the petition would require the signatures of 10% of St. Pete voters (approx. 19,000)

ⁱ Rezman, Mitch. "How Far Can a Parrot Fly?" *Windy City Parrot*, Dec. 2017, <https://www.windycityparrot.com/blog/2017/12/22/far-can-parrot-fly/>.

ⁱⁱ "Captured or Captive Bred Birds." *PETA*, 20 Nov. 2019, www.peta.org/issues/animal-companion-issues/animal-companion-factsheets/captured-captive-bred-birds/.

ⁱⁱⁱ Id.

^{iv} "Bird Trade." *Animal Welfare Institute*, awionline.org/content/bird-trade.

^v International, BirdLife. "Grey Parrot; *Psittacus Erithacus*." *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, 7 Aug. 2018, www.iucnredlist.org/species/22724813/129879439#.

^{vi} Aronson, Virginia, and Allyn Szejko. "Iguana Invasion." *Iguana Invasion - Exotic Pets Gone Wild in Florida - Exotic Birds*, 2010, iguanainvasion.com/exotic_birds.html.

^{vii} "St. Pete PAWS." *City of St. Petersburg*, 2019, www.stpete.org/government/initiatives___programs/st_pete_paws.php.

^{viii} "St. Petersburg, Florida-Code of Ordinances." *Municode Library*, 2016, library.municode.com/fl/st._petersburg/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIISTPECO_CH4AN.

(20 million estimate- Kelly, Denise, and Eileen McCarthy. "Avian Welfare Issues: An Overview." *AWC - Avian Welfare Coalition - Issues - Overview*, 2016, www.avianwelfare.org/issues/overview.htm. (wouldn't let me cite in a textbox)

Draft of Ordinance Modification

Initiative Petition Title: REGULATION OF DOGS AND CAT SALES AMENDMENT

Initiative Petition Summary: This amendment would expand the scope of an existing city ordinance that governs the sale of cats and dogs in St. Petersburg pet stores, to include avian species sold as pets, and would regulate the standard of care to be provided to the birds that are displayed by any exempt person or entity pursuant to this section.

City Ordinance Being created or Amended: Sec. 4-9 Regulation of dog and cat sales ; (Ord. No. 235-H, § 1, 7-21-2016)

Full Text of Ordinance Being Amended:

Section 4-9 of the St. Petersburg City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

(a) *[Definitions.]* For the purposes of this section:

(1)The term "pet store" shall mean any retail establishment, including any use known as, a pet shop, dog beauty parlor, pet hospital, flea market, which is open to the public and engaging in retail sale of pet supplies or services, or dogs or cats or birds or any combination of dogs, cats, and birds.

(2)The term "retail sale" includes display, offer for sale, offer for adoption, barter, auction, or otherwise transfer for compensation of dogs, cats, birds, or any combination of the three.

(3) The term "rescue or humane organization" means a pet shelter or pet foster home, a publicly owned animal control facility or animal shelter, or other duly incorporated nonprofit organization devoted to the rescue, care and adoption of stray, abandoned or surrendered animals, which does not breed animals.

(b)*Prohibition.*

(1)No pet store shall offer for retail sale any dog, cat, or bird in the City.

(2)No person shall make or offer for retail sale any dog, cat, or bird on or in any street, public property, or commercial parking lot.

(c)*Exemptions.* The retail sale prohibition shall not apply to:

(1)A person who engages in hobby or home breeding and sale of dogs, cats, or birds at their residence;

(2)A rescue or humane organization;

(3)A pet store which only displays dogs, cats, or birds in accordance with an agreement to display animals for retail sale or adoption on behalf of a rescue or humane organization.

(d)*Display of dogs, cats, and birds.* Any dog, cat, or bird displayed or available for retail sale by an exempt person or entity pursuant to this section shall comply with the following:

(1) All dog, cat, and bird displays must include a placard or other identification including the breed or type of animal (if known), approximate age, source of the dog, cat, or bird and any known health issues of the animal.

(2)All identification information and records, including the source of the dog, cat, or bird and the buyer's contact information must be kept on file for at least 365 days after the sale or transfer of ownership of the dog, cat, or bird.

(3) All dogs or cats must be a minimum of eight weeks old, and all birds must be a minimum of twelve weeks old.

(4) All dogs, cats, and birds on display for retail sale must have access to fresh water.

(5) All display areas shall be kept clean and free of waste.

(6) Each dog, cat, or bird available for retail sale must be accompanied by a current health certificate of veterinary inspection dated not more than 45 days before the retail sale of any dog, cat, or bird.

(7) The seller of any dog or cat shall advise the buyer of Florida law that requires all dogs and cats four months of age or older receive a rabies vaccine.

(e) *Penalties.* The fine for each violation of this section shall be \$500.00 per violation. Each dog, cat, or bird or offered for sale in violation of this section shall constitute a separate offense.

(Ord. No. 235-H, § 1, 7-21-2016)