



Letter to the Editor

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Contact: Christy Martin, CGAPS Public Information Officer
Ph: (808) 722-0995
Email: christym@rocketmail.com

Use Tip Lines to Protect Environment

Two recent stories about invasive species smuggling (Owner of boa constrictor, piranhas found by firefighters is indicted, 8/28/12; Veteran pilot pleads guilty to airlifting deer, sheep 8/21/12) highlight the need for everyone to take crimes against agriculture and the environment seriously. Pets, including illegal ones, are being found loose in our environment—Things happen and pets escape or are illegally released. Many snake species climb trees, eat birds, and would have the same damaging impacts as the brown treesnake has had on Guam. Axis deer eat crops, forage grass, and native plants, costing millions of dollars and the viability of local food production. And does anyone remember the piranha caught in Lake Wilson in the 90's? People in our community knew about the pet snake and piranhas, while others knew about the plot to smuggle deer to the Big Island, yet they did not take these crimes seriously enough to take action and provide anonymous tips. Take advantage of the possible rewards offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for these crimes. For information related to the illegal wild animal transport or abandonment, callers may be eligible for a reward of up to \$2,500 (1-855-DLNR-TIP), recently announced by the Humane Society of the United States. Please report illegal pets to Crimestoppers (955-8300 on Oahu). Owners of illegal pets can turn them in with amnesty by calling the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture at 643-PEST. Mahalo to the authorities, courts and entire legal system for sending the message that these crimes are serious.

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