

Name _____

ReadWorks

From Pet to Threat

Back in 2005, a wacky photo made headlines. It looked like a joke, but it was the real deal: A 13-foot Burmese python had burst open after trying to swallow a 6-foot alligator in Everglades National Park in Florida.

Thirty years ago, people never would have seen such a clash of predators (animals that capture and eat other animals). Burmese pythons are native to Asia. But over the last few decades, many pet snakes have escaped or been set free in Florida by owners who were tired of caring for them.

Todd Hardwick rounds up troublesome animals—both native and exotic. He runs Pesky Critters Wildlife Control, a business in southern Florida. At least once a week, Hardwick gets a call to catch a strange animal. Many of those animals started out as somebody's pets.

"When they're no longer the 'in thing,' people let them go, or they escape," Hardwick says. "For me, it seems like Miami is a large open-air zoo."

Hardwick has wrangled iguanas, lizards, hedgehogs, potbellied pigs, and plenty of pythons. Many imported animals thrive in Florida's tropical weather.

But the introduction of exotic animals into the wild isn't happening only in the South. A species of wild parrot native to Argentina now lives in New York City. Foreign fish have been dumped from aquariums into rivers and lakes across the United States.

Exotic creatures, such as pet tigers, can be dangerous to people. Many foreign animals damage the environment. Pythons, for example, dine on the local wildlife.

Keeping exotic pets isn't bad for just native animals; it's bad for the exotic animals too. Many of these pets are brought illegally from their home countries, to where they may be threatened in the wild.

Pet owners may not realize it, but wild pets are often illegal. About two dozen states ban some kinds of foreign pets. Python imports were banned in 2012. "Obviously," says Hardwick, "they don't belong here."

Diseases that jump from animals to humans are called zoonoses (zo-AHN-uh-seez). About 70 people in the Midwest became infected with monkeypox after handling pet prairie dogs. Before those people bought their pets, the prairie dogs had been stored with a rat from Africa. The prairie dogs probably caught monkeypox from the rat.

The people who caught monkeypox recovered after being treated by doctors. But other zoonoses can be more serious. In some parts of the world, people who have had contact with birds have contracted **bird flu**, a deadly virus. So far, the disease hasn't shown up in the United States. But government officials are still preparing to protect us from new zoonoses.

Write your answers for the following questions on notebook paper.

1. After reading this passage, what can you conclude about exotic pets? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
2. Give 2 examples of zoonoses.
3. What is the main idea of this passage?

5th Grade AMI Packet Day 4

Name _____

Date _____

1. Write the following in exponential form and as a multiplication sentence using only 10 as a factor (e.g., $100 = 10^2 = 10 \times 10$).

a. 1,000 = _____ = _____

b. 100×100 = _____ = _____

2. Write the following in standard form (e.g., $4 \times 10^2 = 400$).

a. $3 \times 10^2 =$ _____

c. $800 \div 10^3 =$ _____

b. $2.16 \times 10^4 =$ _____

d. $754.2 \div 10^2 =$ _____