



3. European rabbit of the genus Oryctolagus.
4. Indian wild dog, red dog, or dhole of the genus Cuon.
5. Multimammate rat or mouse of the genus Mastomys.

Importation of all other species of animal life would be allowed without a permit, but with several conditions. One requirement would prohibit any release into the wild without authorization from the appropriate State or Federal conservation agency.

Another key condition would require the listing of the scientific name of each species imported on a declaration filed with the Bureau of Customs.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife said the use of scientific names is essential to effective enforcement of the regulations.

A single species often has different common or colloquial names, or the same name is applied to several different species, sometimes within the same country. Scientific names are the same worldwide.

Director John S. Gottschalk of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife said no enforcement agent could be trained to identify positively all species of foreign wildlife.

Piranha fish and poisonous snakes could continue to be imported, but release into the wild would be strictly controlled. Many persons believe these species should not be imported because they fear piranhas and snakes might become established in the wild in the United States.

Director Gottschalk said this concern is not justified by facts. All species of snakes have been imported in large numbers for many years. Many have escaped or have been released, and there is no evidence that a single species has been able to adapt itself.

Scientific opinion varies on the possible adaptation of piranha in this country. Many believe the possibility is extremely remote; others believe there is a slight possibility the piranha could survive in very limited areas of Florida. However, there is general agreement that even if the piranha could survive in this limited habitat, its chances of reproduction would be virtually non-existent, Director Gottschalk said.

Even if piranha should manage to survive and reproduce, Bureau scientists are convinced they could be eliminated with the same methods now used to control other species of undesirable fish. A recent study in Brazil showed that piranha are highly susceptible to the chemical, rotenone, now used to eliminate rough or "trash" fish.

Requiring permits for importation of piranha would also pose difficult enforcement problems, Director Gottschalk said. There are several species, four of which are potentially harmful to man. In addition, there are approximately 30 species of related tropical fish that so closely resemble piranha that the positive identification of live specimens is virtually impossible under import conditions.

The piranha-like fish are regularly imported for the pet fish trade. Any restrictions applicable to piranha would have to apply to all piranha-like species. This would seriously interfere with the operations of commercial pet fish dealers, Director Gottschalk added.

The new regulations would not affect the importation of dead natural history specimens of wildlife or eggs for museum or scientific collection purposes. The new rules similarly would not apply to the importation of game animals from Mexico, to migratory birds, psittacine birds (such as parrots), and bald and golden eagles. Importation of these live animals and birds are governed by other regulations.

The proposed regulations, being published in the Federal Register, provide for a period of 60 days in which public comments will be received and reviewed by Director Gottschalk's office. After this period, the new regulations will be established. The Department plans to make the new regulations effective January 1, 1966.

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