



MEDIA RELEASE

Territorians Reminded That Possessing Axolotls Is Prohibited

Recent sales of axolotls in Katherine have prompted the Parks and Wildlife Service to remind Territorians they are prohibited from possessing these exotic amphibians.

Senior Wildlife Officer Ray Chatto said axolotls, also known as the Mexican walking fish, are a prohibited entrant under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (2005).

Under section 67B of the Act a person could be fined 100 penalty units (one penalty unit is \$110) or imprisoned for up to 12 months if they are found guilty of importing, exporting or being in possession or in control of a prohibited entrant such as an axolotl without a permit.

Prohibited Entrants are defined under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act as all vertebrate animals that are not native to the Northern Territory, whether they are native to other parts of Australia or not.

People require a permit from Parks and Wildlife to possess, import or export prohibited entrants, unless they have been exempted from requiring a permit.

Exemptions include animals that are extremely commonly kept by people as pets such as cats and dogs, or as stock such as cattle and horses.

Other prohibited entrants will not be allowed to be imported or kept under a permit for a number of other reasons.

For example, permits will not be issued for species such as frogs not found in the NT because of known disease risks, while others, such as Axolotls and freshwater turtles are not allowed because of risks to wild populations should they escape, based on advice from the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines.

“At this stage we have managed to round up four axolotls sold at a Katherine pet store and we understand there are three that remain outstanding,” Mr Chatto said.

“I urge those people who have recently acquired axolotls in Katherine to contact our Katherine Parks and Wildlife Office on 8973 8888 who will then be able to handle the matter.”

Axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*) are also known as the Mexican walking fish. They are not actually a fish, they are the larval stage of the salamander, an air breathing, land dwelling, lizard-like amphibian. Hence they are dealt with under the Parks and Wildlife Act rather than the Fisheries Act.

These amphibians have a tadpole-like appearance with a long tail and are able to regenerate lost body parts over time.

Media Note _ For more information contact Ray Chatto on 0401110205.