

Pet and Aquarium Retailer Program

Retailer Booklet



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

The Pet and Aquarium Recognized Retailer Program is voluntary, self-regulated and FREE. Program partners include Pet and Aquarium Retailers committed to promoting responsible pet ownership and, where possible, suggesting alternative options to releasing pets into the wild.

The Impact of Invasive Species

Across Alberta, Canada and the world, invasive species pose the greatest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. Invasive species out-compete native species for food and space, damage ecosystems, disrupt food sources and introduce parasites and diseases. These plants, animals and insects also harm local economies by discouraging recreation, decreasing property values, damaging infrastructure, reducing the productivity of forest or agricultural lands, and interfering with navigation and water control structures. Invasive species are estimated to cost Alberta over \$2 billion per year. Some of the most damaging invasive species were sold as pets or plants in water gardens and aquariums. Pet owners sometimes release these species thinking it is a humane way to get rid of an animal or plant they no longer want or can no longer keep. Many of these species can thrive and reproduce in their new environment.

About the Don't Let It Loose Program

Don't Let It Loose is a program that promotes responsible pet ownership. Some people believe that when they can no longer care for their pets, the best thing to do for the animal is to release it into the wild. Others may not know how pets can impact native species and wildlife habitats. Educating pet, aquarium and terrarium owners about these impacts, an animal's lifespan and the long-term needs of a pet before they adopt or purchase, helps prevent the spread of invasive species.

Code of Conduct

The voluntary code of conduct aims to provide the pet and aquarium industry with principles and practices that make a business a Recognized Retailer.

Commitment to the following principles and practices will reduce the introduction and spread of invasive plants and animals into aquatic and terrestrial habitats:

- » Comply with federal, provincial/territorial and regional regulations and bylaws ***It is mandatory to comply with regulations and bylaws**
- » Stay up to date on best practices to avoid purchasing or moving invasive species
- » Educate customers on responsible ownership
- » Identify invasive species in your business by both common and Latin names
- » Dispose of invasive species responsibly and ask for support when needed
- » Offer alternatives to known invasive species

The Program aims to foster cooperation between pet and aquarium professionals and invasive species specialists and encourage the industry's support in educating customers on making sustainable and responsible choices.

What's Next?

Thank you for signing and submitting the Code of Conduct and becoming an industry partner with AISC. We want to help you inform your staff and customers on the importance of responsible pet ownership and provide them with alternatives to releasing pets they can no longer care for into the wild. We also want to provide you with tools you can use to promote your business as being responsible.

You will soon receive a Pet and Aquarium Recognized Retailer Kit from AISC that includes:

- a. Recognized Retailer Program Implementation Guide
- b. Retailer Recognition Program Social Media Toolkit
- c. List of 52 prohibited Aquatic Invasive Species in Alberta
- d. Aquatic Invasive Species Pocket Guide
- e. Window decal to indicate that your business is a Recognized Retailer
- f. Don't Let It Loose, Goldfish, and Prussian Carp rack cards
- g. Don't Let It Loose posters
- h. Don't Let It Loose stickers
- i. Don't Let It Loose window/tank clings
- j. Clear Don't Let It Loose branded fish bags (sizes include: 5x3x15 and 8x4x18)