



*Planning for  
the  
Unexpected*

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*4.7 million households in the U.S. owned a reptile in 2008*

*Most households have at least 2 reptiles*

*That's roughly 9.4 million reptiles*

American Pet Products Association (APPA)



WHAT PERCENT OF KEEPERS HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE?  
DO YOU PERSONALLY KNOW ANY?

*What Happens to Your Pet  
When you Die?*

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# 3 Scenarios from Best to Worst Case

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## Best Case Scenario

- You have someone already in place to be your pet's next caregiver
- You have a legal document (a will or trust) that includes detailed instructions for each of your pets and may include money to cover their expenses.

## Good Case Scenario

- You may or may not have an individual person in place, but you have something on paper that outlines your wishes.
- For example, a non-legal arrangement in writing

## Worst Case Scenario

- If there is nothing in writing when you die, then your property (pets included) are subject to your state's intestacy laws.
- Unfortunately, in this situation, pets are often thrown into the nearest (most convenient) shelter, posted on craigslist, or traded in facebook rehoming groups where they could be resold



# *Choosing a guardian for your pet.....*



#1 Your Spouse



#2 Family Member



#3 Trusted friend

# *Important Points to Consider:*

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Owning a reptile is a **HUGE** responsibility.

Make sure whomever you designate knows about your decision **BEFOREHAND**. In other words, don't surprise them, make sure they have agreed to take on this responsibility.

# *Important Points to Consider:*

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How many animals/which species are they willing to take responsibility for?

If you have several pets, you may need to find them different homes (some species are easier to rehome than others).

# *Important Points to Consider:*

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Make sure you choose someone you trust and who will care for your pets like you would!

Make sure to have a backup plan or another person/agency listed in case circumstances change for that person or they change their mind.

*What if  
you don't  
know  
anyone?*



#1 Your local herp society



#2 A Rescue



#3 Animal Sanctuaries

# *Important Points to Consider:*

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Make sure to clear your plans with the organization **FIRST!** They will probably want to know what species you have.

Discuss your wishes (i.e. will they be able to be adopted out with their enclosure?)

# *Important Points to Consider:*

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Consider leaving a donation to offset the costs, especially if leaving more than one animal.

Make copies of the correspondence between you and the organization that shows the organization's consent (written documentation is preferred)

*Brief Overview of Pet Trusts,  
Living Wills, and Non-Legal  
Arrangements*

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# *Living Will*

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## What is it?

- A legal document where you can gift your pet and/or money to a designated person.

## Pros

- You can nominate a temporary/permanent caretaker
- Money can be left to the caretaker
- Relatively inexpensive

## Cons

- No legal requirement for the caretaker to honor your requests
- Only applicable if you die, does not cover other situations
- Wills can take weeks to be probated in court
- Legal disputes can prolong settlement, leaving your pet stuck in a grey area until everything is settled.

# *Living Will Scenario*

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- I've named my sister as my ball python's next caretaker. He will be given to her after my will is probated in court.
- I have expressed my wishes in writing. For example: I want my ball python to continue to receive an annual wellness checkup each year at his exotic vet
- I have left my sister a total of \$500.00 to go towards his care.

*“It is my hope that.....”*

# Pet Trust

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## What is it?

- A detailed legal document that allows you to leave money and instructions specifically for your pets care
- It is a legally binding obligation to care for your pet (as described in the trust)

## Pros

- A trust protects your pet if you're unable to care for them
- You can leave money to care for your pets
- Trusts provide for your pet quickly. Certain assets can be excluded from the probate process, making them available immediately.

## Cons

- Some trusts have a time limit and could expire before your pet dies
- More expensive than a will
- Not really needed if you trust your named caretaker (If there is a possibility of a disagreement about who should own your pet, you may still want one)



# *Pet Trust Scenario*

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- I've named my sister as my ball python's next caretaker. He goes to her immediately without having to wait on the courts.
- It is my expectation that my ball python continues to receive an annual wellness checkup each year at his exotic vet and receives the basic necessities they are accustomed to. My pet shall not be subjected to any environment where they might be neglected, harmed, or maltreated and may not be rehomed.
- I am leaving my sister a total of \$500.00 to go towards his food, care, vet expenses, etc.

**“You have a legal obligation to .....”**

# *Non-Legal Arrangements*

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## What does it look like?

- A non-legal verbal or written document that may or may not be notarized. (Written is still preferred)
- Rocketlawyer.com has a free “pet trust” template you can print and sign

## Pros

- It is an easy and flexible arrangement
- Won't cost you anything
- Can include the same directives as a will or trust

## Cons

- It is not legally binding

*What should you include  
with your arrangements?*

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# General Information Sheets

- What species is the animal?
- What is their name?
- How old are they?
- What is their personality like?
- Breeder contact information.



HI, MY NAME IS

Ivar

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Species:** Ball Python (Lesser GHI)

**Breeder:** Rubicon Reptiles

**Sex:** Male

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Birthdate:** September 10, 2021

**E-mail:** rubiconreptiles@gmail.com

## ABOUT ME

I am arguably the sweetest snake in the world, but you probably won't see me much during the day because I'm a night owl. During the day I enjoy hiding in my cave as it helps me feel safe and secure while I sleep. I live in a fully bioactive enclosure that replicates my environment in the wild! There are isopods (roly-polys) that live with me that help aerate my soil. They act as a clean up crew, and while they do eat some of the waste I create, my tank still needs to be spot cleaned daily (poop and urates) to ensure I stay healthy. The good news is, besides misting my enclosure (for plants and humidity), replenishing biodegradables as needed (leaf litter and sphagnum moss), and pruning my plants, my tank really doesn't need any maintenance and my soil should never have to be replaced (unless something out of the ordinary comes up like mites). I do need fresh water every day (my mom uses purified bottle water or you can use repti-safe to treat your tap water). Mom says I need my humidity to be between 45-75%, to make sure I stay hydrated and don't have issues shedding. Unlike you, I'm cold-blooded, therefore I need a temperature gradient in my enclosure too. The cool side should be between 72-80°F and the warm side should be between 86-90°F, at night my temps can be between 72-78°F. But please, don't let my temps go above 95°F or I could get burnt and never let my temps fall below 65°F or I could get a respiratory infection. Lastly, I love frozen/thawed rats and while I'd prefer live rats, mom says they could bite or scratch me and so its safer for me to eat frozen ones. Just make sure you warm them up or I might not eat them. I'm lucky to have a mom who loves me so much, don't you think? I don't know what I'd do without her!

## VET INFORMATION

Lake Norman Animal Hospital

Dr. Derrick Pinney



# Housing

- What kind of heating do they have?
- What kind of substrate?
- How do you clean their housing?
- If Bioactive, provide details on upkeep (mention the cuc, not everyone likes bugs).

## Ball Python (*Python regius*)

**Difficulty:** Easy - Intermediate

Ball pythons (also known as royal pythons) are a terrestrial species of constricting snake native to regions of western and central Africa. They are most often found in semi-arid grasslands, forests, and near agricultural areas. Although frequently found in burrows, they are known to hunt in trees.

Ball pythons are 3-5' long snakes, with males tending to be significantly smaller than females. Ball pythons typically have a thick, muscular body, a peanut-shaped head, a brown and black pattern outlined by white, and a pale belly. However, due to enthusiastic "morph" breeding in the reptile hobby (the practice of breeding for specific colors and patterns), captive-bred ball pythons are now available in an extremely diverse array of colors and patterns. At the moment, there are about 6500 known morphs!

Ball pythons are some of the most popular pet snakes in the United States, as they're manageably-sized, are fairly tolerant of being housed in sub-ideal conditions, are slow-moving, and generally tolerate human interaction well. Ball pythons are known to live upwards of 30 years with good care.

### Shopping List

- 48"x24"x24" reptile enclosure (preferably front-opening)
- Dual dome heat lamp with ceramic sockets
- 90w PAR38 halogen flood bulb, x2
- Large piece of flagstone or slate tile, for basking
- Plug-in lamp dimmer, x2
- Digital thermometer/hygrometer device with probes
- Infrared thermometer ("temperature gun")
- 22" T5 HO forest UVB bulb (Arcadia or Zoo Med brand)
- 24" T5 HO light fixture with reflector
- Pressure sprayer
- Surge protector with digital timer
- 4-6" of moisture-retentive naturalistic substrate
- Sphagnum moss
- Black plastic hide box, x1
- Other reptile hides/caves (at least 1)
- Environmental enrichment items (hollow logs, sturdy branches, live/fake plants, etc.)
- Large water bowl
- Feeding tongs, at least 12"

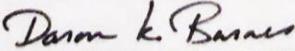
### Housing

Leading modern ball python husbandry experts recommend keeping ball pythons in no smaller than a 120 gallon (48"L x 24"W x 24"H) enclosure. There are many outdated sources which claim that ball pythons don't need a lot of space, and even prefer small enclosures no larger than a 40 gallon tank or



# Permits and other supporting documents

Copies of any restricted species permits and other supporting documents. (Renewal Reminders)

Restricted Species Permit		AUTHORITY	
 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Regulated Activities Permits Section 1707 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1700 Phone: (888) 248-6834 Fax: (919) 707-0292	STATUTES GS 113-273		Page 1 of 1
	RULES		
PERMITTEE/LICENSEE 	PERMIT NUMBER 		
	EFFECTIVE 08/01/2022	EXPIRES 12/31/2022	
	COUNTY	DISTRICT	
<b>TYPE OF PERMIT:</b> Private			
<b>SPECIES AUTHORIZED: COMMON NAME</b> - Lizard, Argentine Black and White Tegu			
<b>CONDITIONS AND AUTHORIZATIONS:</b> Permittee is authorized to possess, retain, transport, transfer, or export live specimen(s) of Argentine Black and White Tegu Lizard(s), including their color morphs and hybrids, that were in possession prior to August 1, 2022. Permittee shall maintain control of the specimens at all times. Permittee shall not import live specimens. All specimens must be possessed and housed in an escape-proof facility. The permittee must employ adequate safeguards against accidental escape, at all times, during possession and transportation of specimens. Specimens held under this permit shall not be released into the wild at any time for any purpose. This permit was issued based on the requirements of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. It is the duty of the permittee to ensure that they are in compliance with all additional applicable local, state, and federal laws.			
This permit/license is non-transferable and expires at midnight on the above specified expiration date.			
ISSUED BY: 	TITLE: Program Manager WI & RAPS		

2/2/20XX

PRESENTATION TITLE



# Summary

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Regardless of whether you want to go the legal route or if you decide to make non-legal arrangements, it's important that you have some type of plan in place for your animals.

My hope is that you will at least begin thinking about some of the topics we discussed today, as they could greatly affect your animal's care and well-being in the future.

Remember that they have no one to advocate for them but YOU and when you are gone, it is important that you continue to be their voice by leaving detailed instructions to ensure they find good homes to live out the rest of their days.

