



NEWS RELEASE

City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services
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LA ANIMAL SERVICES CRACKING DOWN ON TURTLE TRADE

Sending a strong message to illegal Santee Alley pet merchants, LA Animal Services Officers handcuffed, arrested, and transported in an LAPD black & white unit a suspect for selling animals without a permit on public property in violation of Los Angeles Municipal Code 53.42. Animal Control Officers Perea and Perez, with the cooperation of LAPD Officers Guillen and Tejada, conducted the undercover plain-clothes investigation.

LA Animal Services rescued twenty Red Eared Slider turtles from the Santee Alley Fashion District. In the 1970s, the US government banned the sale of turtles less than 4 inches long when the connection was made between turtles and *Salmonella* infections, especially in children. Children are more likely to contract *Salmonella* from turtles because they are more likely to handle the smaller turtles (and/or put them in their mouths!).

Many turtles are still illegally sold in the Santee Alley district to people who have little idea of the public health risk they represent. Information on illegal pet selling should be reported to LA Animal Services.

Often aquatic turtles die due to stress and neglect - and sometimes they suffer so much stress, overcrowding and neglect during transport and in the Santee Alley shops that even after they are rescued turtles may be so ill they die anyway.

If you purchased a turtle unaware of the health risks to your family and children, don't just release it or flush it down the toilet. Releasing or disposing of a captive turtle is not an acceptable or humane decision. If you can no longer keep your turtle, you should search for a nearby turtle keeper, rescue operation or re-homing organization. LA Animal Services can may be able to provide referrals if needed.

Questions may be directed to Officer Gil Moreno at 213.485.5767

For more information or assistance call LA Animal Services at

1-888-452LA-PET1/1-888-452-7381

(TTY Hearing impaired: 877-875-8205)

or visit the website at www.LAAnimalServices.com.

We create happiness by bringing pets and people together!