

## **Reptile and Amphibian Roommates? What to Consider When Preparing Your Home with Other Pets!**

There should be little to no doubt by now that reptiles and amphibians, or collectively known as herptiles, have been increasingly popular in many different types of households and living conditions, and are perhaps the fastest growing segment of the pet industry for the past several decades or more. We have previously written a lot about the proper knowledge, preparation and planning, and education that is required before bringing one of these animals into your home in the first place, and will most definitely continue to strongly push this important component to our mission of education. But what about other, existing pets which may already be in one's household or other living space. Perhaps you may be looking at adding one of these more traditionally kept animals after you've acquired your star reptile or amphibian. How do you go about maintaining, or "pet-proofing" your household with reptiles or amphibians in mind to make sure all animals involved can be kept happy, healthy, and safe? Should you allow these very different animals to normally come into contact with one another, or interact? Well, in this educational article, many of our best tips, information, and recommendations will be given for better being able acclimate all of our scaly, furry, or feathered companions will indeed be given!

It should be important to keep in mind the ecological and environmental roles many of our different species of pets may play or serve a part in, and reptiles and amphibians are no exception! More specifically, it is important to remember that many species of reptiles and amphibians can be prey species for many other animals, and likewise, can also be predator species of others in other cases. This all depends on each individual species of animal, the circumstances, and living conditions and environment when kept in captivity. Even the most tame, lovable, well-known, docile, well-mannered, or acclimated animals or pets have the potential to react unpredictably to other pets, and there is always a risk involved when these different animals are allowed to come into close contact with one another or interact. This is likewise the case for our other, more traditional pets as well, as our beloved dog and cat companions are indeed predator species, while others, such as birds, rodents, and other small mammals, are indeed prey species. These reasons are perhaps the most important reason why the vast majority of interactions between these animals and other pets should be prevented, or at the very least, very closely monitored and controlled, and only when common sense is used. But what about most other times when these animals are not out of their enclosures or are being handled? Here are even more tips and information for better preparing and "pet-proofing" your home with reptiles and amphibians!

### **Reptile and Amphibian "Pet Proofing" Housing Tips!**

-It is always important that, no matter the species of reptile and amphibian being maintained, that they always be housed in sturdy, secure, and escape proof enclosures as to prevent their escape, while also preventing any unauthorized entry or access by any kids, and/or yes, any other pets in the household.

-Some reptiles which may have, or require very large, room sized, or walk in enclosures, or otherwise are allowed to free-roam under the proper heating, lighting, and humidity are another important consideration when other pets may be present. While in some cases, such as with large, free roaming

tortoises, are probably fine, common sense should still be used, and conditions still monitored. In most other cases, however, access to, and contact between these animals should generally be prevented, especially when there may be predator-prey relationships, and/or higher propensities for injury to one another.

-While specific temperatures, lighting, and humidity are seldom issues for many of our more traditional pet companions, being able to maintain these proper and much more specific and specialized husbandry requirements for each individual reptile or amphibian species one might be owning is much more of an important consideration for their happiness and health.

-Cats especially are inquisitive animals with high prey drives, and their oftentimes love of climbing and/or jumping up onto high places can pose potentially troublesome risks to many smaller amphibians and reptiles, or other pets. In order to prevent, or mitigate many of these cat related issues with other caged pets, the best solution, whenever possible or practical, would be to simply maintain them separately while preventing them from accessing the rooms or areas of the home where your reptile or amphibian is to be housed. If however, this is not possible or practical, there may be other solutions which might work.

-Reinforcing the tops of any enclosures with a sturdier material such as plywood or other building materials, or double screen lids, especially if there is a screen top prone to breaking or becoming damaged as a result of your cat jumping up on, or sitting on top of the enclosure, might be another solution while also still maintaining adequate ventilation for your amphibian or reptile. Likewise, some cats may also dislike the feel or sensation of crumpled aluminum foil, outward mounted tape, rolled up carpet protector, motion activated deterrents, or other humane deterrents to prevent them from jumping up on, and/or sitting on the tops of enclosures. It is also important, however, to also prevent any accidental contact with any heating or lighting devices for the enclosure if there are cats in the household that engage in this behavior in order to prevent any possible burns or other injuries to them.

-It should go without saying that many species of birds, rodents, rabbits, and other small mammals are potential prey species for many reptiles, and interactions between these animals are not a good idea and should be avoided. Please use common sense and do not allow these animals to interact with one another, or come into contact if they are other pets. Even if there may be no predator-prey relationship between these species, these animals can still become unnecessarily stressed by, and/or potentially injure and harm one another as a result, especially when beaks, teeth, or claws may be involved.

-Fish and other marine and aquatic pets are another group of pets which have important considerations to keep in mind in some cases. While in most cases, these pets are normally housed separately in their own aquariums anyway, there are not many instances where they can be housed with most reptiles or amphibians. Most species of aquatic to semi-aquatic reptiles and amphibians are predators of smaller fish and aquatic life, while vice versa, larger fish can also be predators of some reptiles and amphibians. Only in a very few circumstances where there may be size and diet similarities may some fish or other aquatics be housed with reptiles or amphibians.

