



Habitattitude™

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS

Great Lakes Sea Grant Network: Habitattitude Surrender Network

Doug Jensen
PI and AIS Program Coordinator
University of Minnesota
Sea Grant Program
djensen1@umn.edu, 218/726-8712



Thanks to Tim Campbell!

Get Habitattitude™

- Launched in 2004, a national education campaign created by a unique partnership of industry, academia and government
- Focuses on raising public awareness, engaging people, promoting unifying environmental messages with corresponding beneficial actions
- Provides opportunity for business, industry, agencies, NGOs, and associations in partnership
- Since 2010, 3.5 M impressions
 - 225 partners
 - 90% increase in awareness
 - 90% acceptable, easy, attractive and clear
 - 84% no longer release pets



Habitattitude™

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS



www.Habitattitude.net



Water Garden and Aquarist Guidelines

Get Habitattitude!

Do right by your pet. Do right by our environment.

Water garden fish, snails and plants can become harmful if they escape to our lakes, rivers, ponds and wetlands.

How can you help?

- ✓ Build water gardens well away from other waters.
- ✓ Check aquatic plant orders for seeds, plant fragments, snails and fish.
- ✓ Give or trade unwanted pets and plants with another water gardener, environmental learning center, aquarium or zoo.
- ✓ Seal aquatic plants in a plastic bag and dispose in the trash.
- ✓ Contact a veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance on humane disposal of animals.



Habitattitude™

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS

WWE • US FOR A WATERWORKS • WE'VE GOT THIS

www.Habitattitude.net

For more information, visit:
www.seagrants.umn.edu/ais





Comparison of Awareness Before & After Direct Exposure at 8 Events

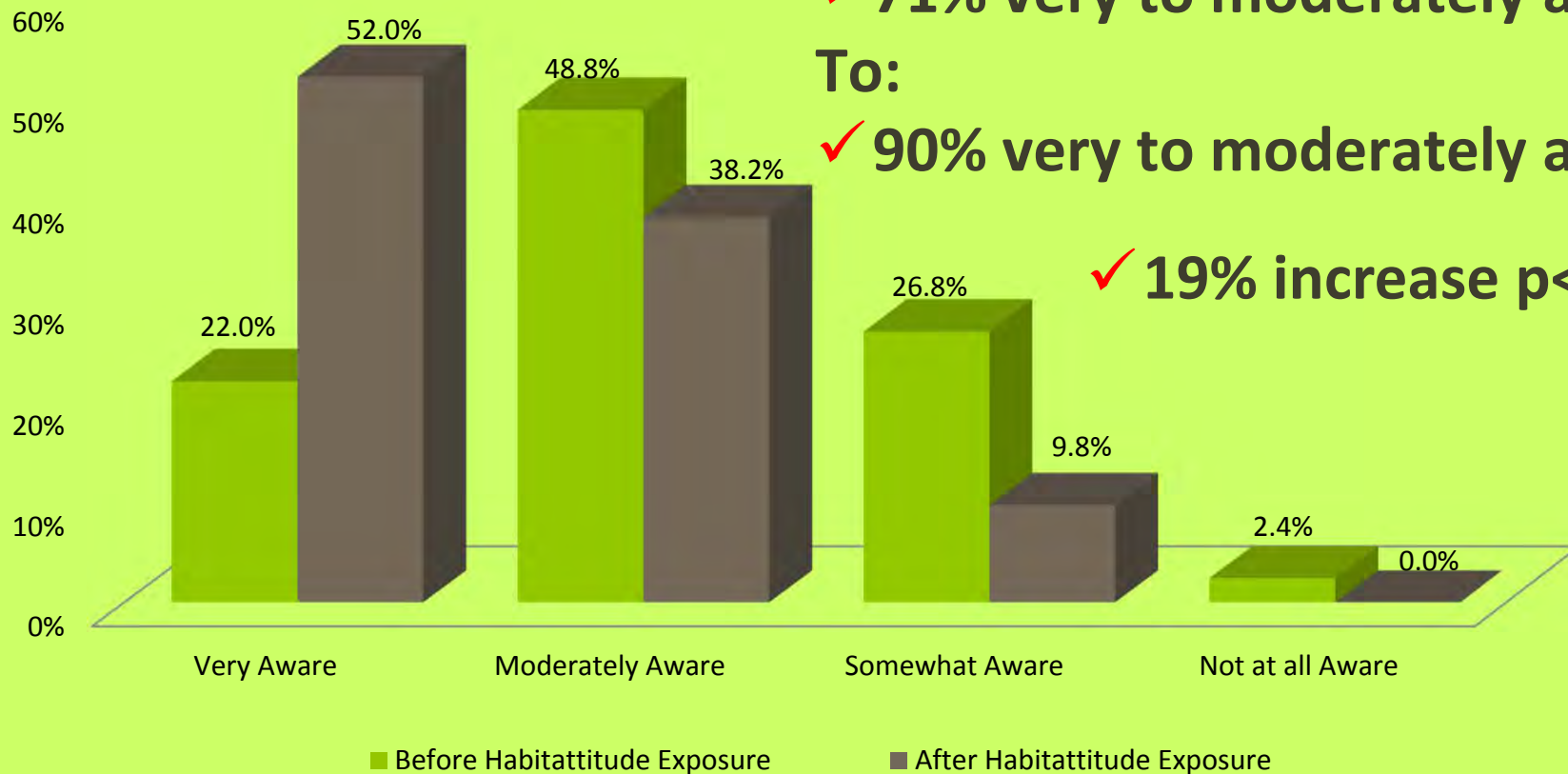
From:

✓ 71% very to moderately aware

To:

✓ 90% very to moderately aware

✓ 19% increase $p < 0.05$



N = 123 (before & after)





Comparison of Behavior Before & After Direct Exposure at 8 Events

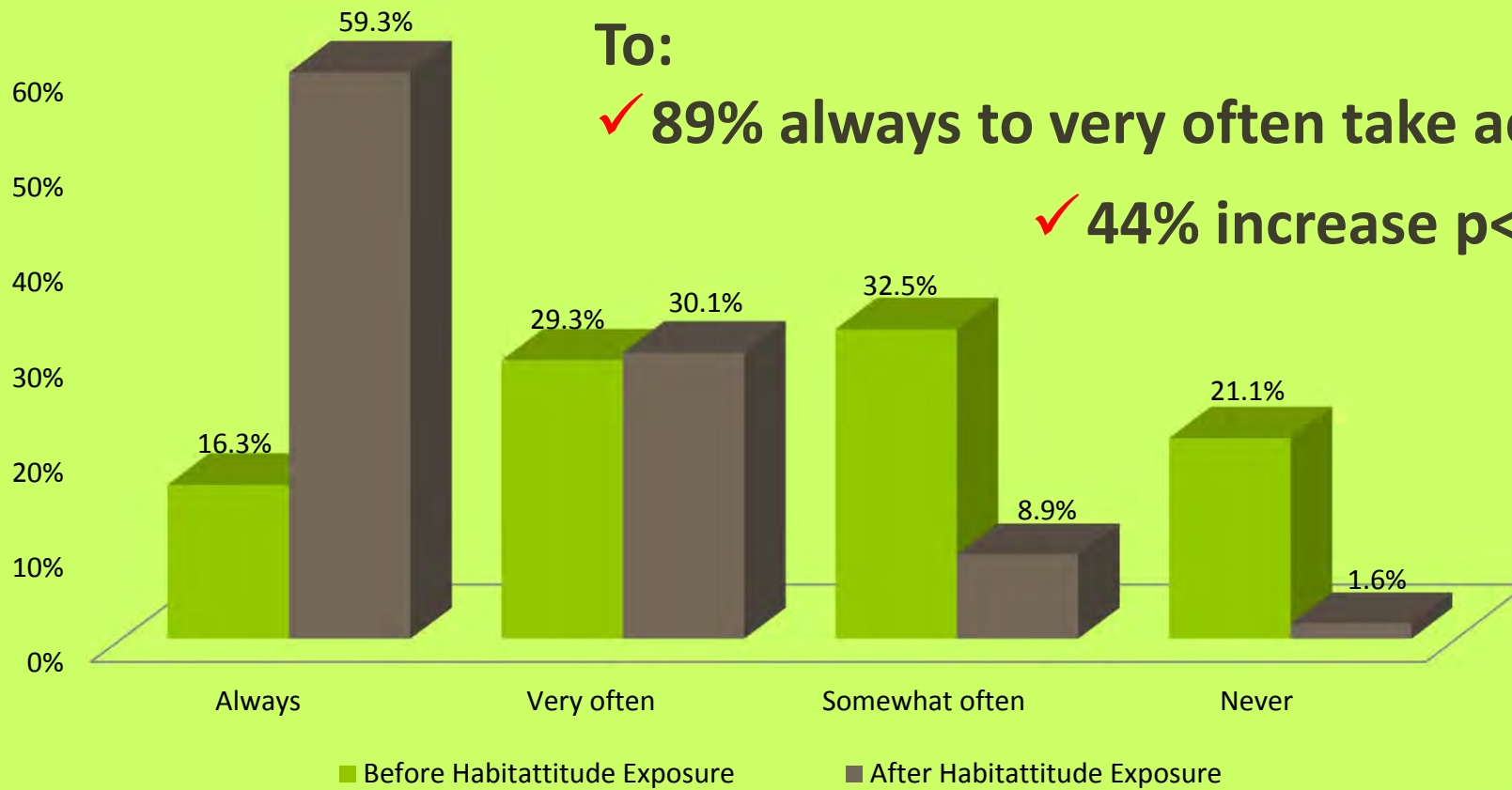
From:

✓ 45% always to very often take action

To:

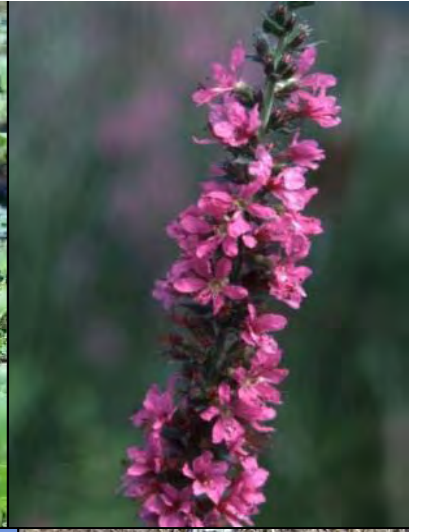
✓ 89% always to very often take action

✓ 44% increase $p < 0.05$



N = 123 (before & after)





Gator found in Snake River near Pine City!

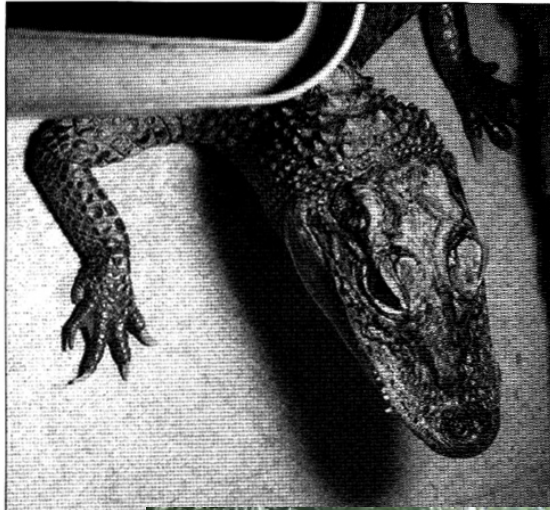
On the evening of August 10th, WCCO News (Channel 4) aired a story about a man who apparently grabbed an alligator out of the Snake River a few days earlier.

WCCO's article reported that "Steve Dorion of Pine City, Minn. was fishing on the Snake River about a week ago when he spotted the reptile. In disbelief, Dorion jumped in the water and went after it."

Dorion contacted the Pine County Sheriff's office. Luckily, Dorion had previous experience capturing reptiles when he lived in Arizona. He had to wrestle with it for a while before getting it to shore. It is a good thing Dorion was able to rescue the reptile, not only for its own safety, but for the safety of children and adults.

It is believed that this was someone's unwanted pet that was dumped in the river. At the moment, Dorion is unsure about what they will do with the reptile. For the full news story, please go to link on WCCO's website at http://wcco.com/topstories/local_story_223123007.html http://wcco.com/topstories/local_story_223123007.html

Editor's Note: This story is a good reminder about making proper arrangements for unwanted pets. Your sewer system, lake, river, stream, woods, road-



*side, or pond are def
Contact your local P
bring your unwant*

*I definitely think
I feel much better
instead of being left*

2016 Brainerd



Proof of Concept Kick Start Exceeds Expectations



April 2015, Madison, WI



HSC Regional Initiative:



Habitattitude[™]
PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS

- *Habitattitude Surrender Collaborative* will prevent pet and plant releases by aquarists and water gardeners
- A *GLBIOTIC II* Symposium will advance understanding for AIS pathway management
- New *Habitattitude Curriculum* (grade 6-12) and *Teacher Day Camps* will prevent live study specimen releases
- New *Habitattitude* tools will prevent release
- New *SAH!* outreach will prevent release of live bait by anglers

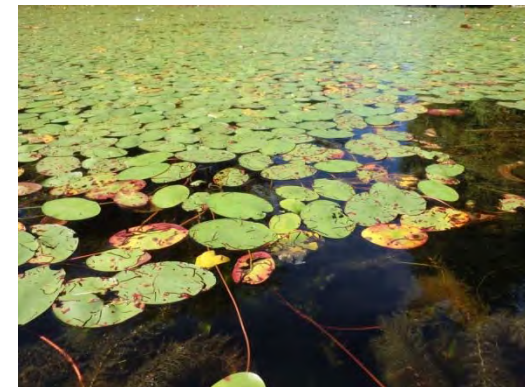


Purpose:

- Create a new regional *Habitattitude Surrender Collaborative* to prevent pet and plant releases by aquarists and water gardeners
- Multi-organizational collaboration will engage work:
 - Large* and small retailers
 - Humane societies
 - Water garden societies
 - Aquarium clubs
 - Environmental learning centers
 - Zoos and public aquariums
- Build capacity by providing events for bring their unwanted pets and plants (MN, WI, IL-IN and OH?)



Habitattitude[™]
PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS



*IL-IN leading efforts with PETCO to develop surrender protocol

Proof of Concept

- **Response:** MSG collaborated with Minnesota Aquarium Society (MAS) to provide aquarium owners with alternatives to releasing pets and plants
 - Proposed a collaborative would provide a volunteer network for holding events where unwanted aquarium pets and plants could be rehomed
 - SG gathered perceptions of the proposed Surrender event from MAS members



Kick Start Exceeds Expectations

1st MN Habitattitude Surrender

Twin Cities - January 2016

Results: A needs assessment guided the MN Surrender Event

- Respondents (N=25) thought event:
 - Valuable = 88%
 - Protect MAS interests = 72%
 - Suitable alternative to release = 92%
 - Prevent releases = 72%



Habitattitude Surrender and Auction Kick Start Exceeds Expectations

- **Recap:** New owners for over 100 fish, and indicated a true desire for more opportunities to surrender aquarium pets rather than release.
- **Relevance:** Raised awareness to an underserved audience who may be familiar with AIS through boater-related activities, but may not have thought about pet ownership as being a part of the issue.



1st MN Habitattitude Surrender

- 200 attended - double amount for auction
- Media coverage: Mpls Star Tribune, Amazona Magazine, MN Public Radio, Fox9 Duluth, KUMD Radio, and social media
- TCs Park & Rec officials contacted us about holding a similar event in urban parks, where aquarium dumping ... its consequences ... are problematic





1st MN Habitattitude Surrender Twin Cities - January 2016

- Win-Win-Win-Win:
 - Sustainable event for consumers
 - Prevent release into the environment
 - Auction proceeds supported MAS's efforts to promote "excellence in fish keeping" and commitment to providing a solution
 - Media exposure generated 290k exposures
- Recent Events:
 - September in Duluth
 - October in Green Bay



2nd MN Habitattitude Surrender Duluth – September 2016

- Hosted by Animal Allies Humane Society in collaboration with World of Fish, The Snake Pit and Minnesota Traditions

- 42 to
- Reho
- 5 r
- 25 Ju
- New

Minnesota Traditions
21 hrs · 🌐

Great idea from Minnesota Sea Grant! Mother Nature highly encourages everyone to find homes for pets/fish you can't care for anymore! #dontflush #dontrelease

'Habitattitude Surrender' offers alternative for disposing of...
Finding an oversized goldfish in the St. Louis River might sound cool, but the Minnesota Sea Grant says it is definitely not — it's another aquatic invasive...
DULUTHNEWSTRIBUNE.COM

Like Comment Share

- Du
- lin
- W
- Facebook: MSG, Animal Allies, Minnesota Traditions
- Twitter: MSG

ures):
plus on-

2nd MN Habitattitude Surrender Duluth – September 2016

- Surrender flier (600), poster (30) and DNT advertisement (models)
- Surrender of Animal Form completed by owner
- Surrender Animal Adoption Form offered
- Lawn Banners strategically placed around neighborhood

**SURRENDER
EVENT**

*Surrender
Unwanted
Pets Instead
of Releasing
Them*



Habitattitude
PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS

SEPT 24, 2016
Saturday | 10AM to 4PM

ANIMAL ALLIES
4006 Airport Rd., Duluth, MN

**Unwanted
pets?**
*Give your fish,
aquatic plants
and reptiles a
healthy home.
The Snake Pit,
World of Fish,
and Animal
Allies in partnership
with Minnesota Sea Grant
invites you to a
surrender event.*



Sea Grant
Great Lakes Network

Animal Allies
The Snake Pit
World of Fish

Minnesota Sea Grant's mission is to facilitate interaction among the public and scientists to enhance communities, the environment and economies along Lake Superior and Minnesota's inland waters by identifying information needs, fostering research, and communicating results. Minnesota Sea Grant is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sea Grant Program. For more information go to www.seagrant.umn.edu or call 218-726-8106.

**SURRENDER
EVENT** *Surrender Unwanted Pets
Instead of Releasing Them*

**Unwanted pets? Give your fish,
aquatic plants and reptiles a healthy
home. The Snake Pit, World of Fish,
and Animal Allies in partnership with
Minnesota Sea Grant invites you to a
surrender event.**

SEPTEMBER 24, 2016
Saturday | 10AM to 4PM

ANIMAL ALLIES
4006 Airport Rd.
Duluth, MN



Habitattitude
PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS



Sea Grant
Great Lakes Network

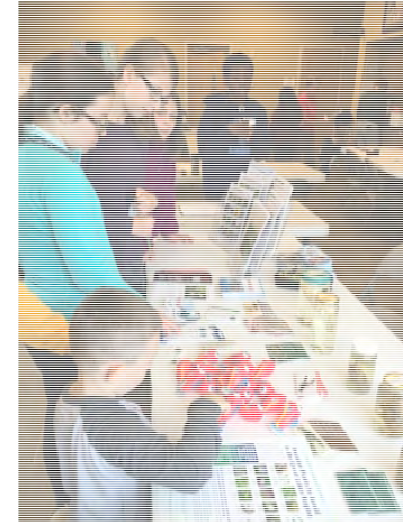
Animal Allies
The Snake Pit
World of Fish

Minnesota Sea Grant's mission is to facilitate interaction among the public and scientists to enhance communities, the environment and economies along Lake Superior and Minnesota's inland waters by identifying information needs, fostering research, and communicating results. Minnesota Sea Grant is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sea Grant Program. For more information go to www.seagrant.umn.edu or call 218-726-8106.

Sea Grant
Great Lakes Network

**Great Lakes
RESTORATION**

Habitattitude Surrender Duluth





Habitattitude Rehoming Events in Wisconsin

- Hosted a rehoming event on October 1st in partnership with the Green Bay Aquarium Society, Steve the Snake Man, & the Fox Valley Humane Society
- Seventeen fish were rehomed at the GBAS auction the next day.
- 50+ contacts made since event was at a nature center
- Hosting a similar event in March



Habitattitude[™]
PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS



www.Habitattitude.net

What Do We Know About Pet Rehoming in Green Bay?

- How big of an issue is pet rehoming?
- Who is most concerned with it?
- Who is willing to help?
- Survey administered to 45 retailers, nonprofits, & nature centers across the Fox Valley
- 31% return rate (36/116)

Habitattitude Project "Pet Rehoming" Survey



Sometimes **unwanted pets are released into the wild** and can potentially cause problems. People might want to look for an alternative to releasing their unwanted pet. This is often called "**pet rehoming**," but also "**pet rescue**" or "**surrender**." This survey is intended to gather information on this type of pet rehoming.



Creating alternatives to pet release

1 Have you ever been asked about rehoming a pet? Yes No → skip to question 4
(if Yes, then please answer at least one of these questions, whichever is easiest for you)

- a) How many times in the last year?
- b) In a typical month, how many times are you usually asked about rehoming a pet?

2 Do you ever refer people (who ask about rehoming a pet) to an organization or other place? Yes No

If Yes, where do you refer people? (check ALL that apply)

Go to an organization ...which one?

Go to a certain pet store...which one?

Call a veterinarian

Trade with a friend

3 Do you do any of these when someone asks you about rehoming a pet?
(check ALL that apply)

- Give them information about a place they can bring their pet to rehome it
- Call a place for them (or with them) where they can bring their pet to rehome it
- Take in the pet they want to rehome
- Tell them you are not sure about where they can rehome their pet
- Give them information about invasive species
- Other (please describe)

Preliminary Findings

Habitattitude Project *"Pet Rehoming"* Survey



Sometimes **unwanted pets are released into the wild** and can potentially cause problems. People might want to look for an alternative to releasing their unwanted pet. This is often called *"pet rehoming,"* but also *"pet rescue"* or *"surrender."* This survey is intended to gather information on this type of pet rehoming.



- People everywhere get asked about pet rehoming often
 - Once a week most common answer
 - Most people are getting referred places, almost always an organization
 - Are people always getting referred to places that have the capabilities to help them?
 - Oversight – our survey did not differentiate between dogs/cats & exotics
- Reasons and timing for pet rehoming vary
 - Reasons – health, moving, time
 - Timing – end of spring or end of summer (college students moving)
- Respondents indicated knowledgeable about invasive species
 - Unclear whether that will inspire so stakeholders to take action

Open Ended

Habitattitude Project *"Pet Rehoming"* Survey



Sometimes **unwanted pets are released into the wild** and can potentially cause problems. People might want to look for an alternative to releasing their unwanted pet. This is often called *"pet rehoming,"* but also *"pet rescue"* or *"surrender."* This survey is intended to gather information on this type of pet rehoming.



"Sometimes it is a cost issue and there are time when we can work with people + help them out. All types of animals are surrendered."

"They usually call wanting to release their animals here at the preserve."

"This is something to be addressed" + "Thank you for tackling this issue! I hope you can find a solution. "

Most common non-native fish released into the environment are goldfish, common carp-koi and Oriental weatherfish



Complements Efforts

- MSU led efforts by Jo Latimore
 - RIPPLE program
 - Explore surrender event
 - Promote Habitattitude in Classroom curriculum
 - Distribute Habitattitude tools
- WIDNR Science Services efforts focusing on NR40 policy outreach to retailers



Lessons Learned

- Habitattitude Surrender Collaborative working - prevented releases!
- Communities have very willing partners – generated excitement
- One size does not fit all – partnerships will vary among states
- Various partnerships serve as models
 - Big box vs small retailers
 - Reptile partner (or not)
 - Humane society (or not)

Next Steps

- IL-IN Sea Grant developing draft protocol with PETCO
- Promotion during 2016 Northern Green, Mpls., Jan. 11-13
- Habitattitude Surrender and Auction, TCs, Jan. Jan. 28
- Habitattitude Surrender, UM-Duluth, Apr. 29(?)

Questions?



Learn More & Develop Solutions!



G R E A T L A K E S
B I O T I C
S Y M P O S I U M

II

Thank you! Questions?