

where capturing and poaching occurs, valuable conservation efforts of species are undermined. A prime example of this, is the illegal tarantula pet trade, a multibillion-dollar commerce that's harming tarantula populations around the globe. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) assesses how animals are faring in the wild. Sergio Henriques, chairman for the ICUN spider and scorpion specialist group said: "It takes them quite a while to recover from a harvest event. They don't bounce back quickly." Each time individuals are removed from their wild populations, it takes decades to recover, causing knock on effects for prey and predator species' populations.

### CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS AND ONLINE MARKETPLACES

Many welfare issues result from poor advertising of exotic animals. In 2001, The Pet Advertising Agency Group (PAAG) formed to combat fears over the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale, rehoming, and exchange. Whilst the group's original aim was to look at problems associated with traditional print advertising of companion animals, today, more focus is given to online classified adverts. The ease of internet shopping means that impulse buying of pets has become rampant, and the temptation of a speedy, unregulated sale also attracts unscrupulous breeders and dealers to websites.

In 2013, PAAG launched the Minimum Standards for Online Classified Advertisements, in an attempt to improve the quality of online pet advertising and to influence the behaviour of internet pet browsers. Whilst the scheme was initially thought to have worked well, PAAG reported that there is much more that websites should do to improve their advertisements. During PAAG's monitoring period of the scheme, they found it difficult to distinguish the exact species of the animal advertised, and

inconsistent advice on how to look after animals. Some websites advised that primates could be housed in a parrot cage, or a garage.

Unfortunately, PAAG's standards are only voluntary and websites are under no legal obligation to guarantee that the standards are met. There are also a number of websites who have failed to work with PAAG, and are still a harbour for illegal and unethical advertisements.

### THE EFFECT ON ANIMAL ORGANISATIONS

As a result of the industry, zoos, vets, animal charities, and sanctuaries are suffering. The American Zoo and Aquarium Association says: "Zoos are being asked by irresponsible owners to relocate unwanted animals, but because most zoos do not accept donations, there are thousands of exotic animals who remain in unsuitable conditions." In some cases, people sneak animals into zoo exhibits or leave animals in front of gates, which risks infecting zoo populations with diseases — these animals are usually euthanised.

The majority of rehoming charities, including the RSPCA and Blue Cross, do not have adequate facilities or infrastructure in place to deal with the needs of exotic animals. Blue Cross outsource exotic animals in need of a new home to the RSPCA, and other specialist organisations. The RSPCA built a dedicated reptile rescue centre to cope with the influx of neglected and stray reptiles they receive, but it cannot deal with the high numbers in need of rehoming. The case is the same for many UK rehoming facilities — with many reaching saturation point, animals are at serious risk.

The Born Free Foundation and Blue Cross make the following recommendations:

#### 1 A complete review of the exotic pet trade:

Westminster and devolved administrations must undertake a full review of the exotic pet trade. This should cover all aspects of ownership, including breeding, trade and keeping.

**2 Review of the Pet Animals Act 1951:** The Government need to update the Pet Animals Act 1951 to reflect the increasing internet sales of animals. There should be greater clarity given to the criteria that must be met, in order for premises to be licensed under the Pet Animals Act 1951.

**3 Improve enforcement of legislation:** Better implementation of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and EU Wildlife Trade Regulations. Sellers should be required to state if any species they are advertising require a Dangerous Wild Animals licence, or an endangered species certification.

**4 Ensure stricter criteria for sellers:** Listed online adverts should contain specific information, including exact species, and sellers should state how many animals they are advertising, the animal's sex and age. Basic welfare requirements that must be met by buyers and sellers, should also be listed. ■

### HOW CAN I HELP EXOTIC ANIMALS IN THE WILD AND IN CAPTIVITY?

- If you choose an exotic companion animal, always adopt from a reputable rescue, and take all precautions to ensure the animal cannot harm humans, themselves, or other animals.
- Follow all laws regarding the ownership of exotic pets.
- Never release exotic species into the wild.
- Inform your friends and family members about the problems associated with the exotic pet trade.

## SIMPLY Delicious

Make afternoon tea special with a tasty scone

### BUTTERNUT SQUASH, CINNAMON AND PECAN SCONES

Makes 4 scones

GF SF

These nourishing and fragrant scones are the perfect treat for a winter afternoon tea. Serve hot or cool with chia jam or a little coconut oil.

- 225g ground almonds
- 2 tsp of coconut oil
- 1 tsp of apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp of ground cinnamon
- 100g roasted butternut squash (peeled)
- ½ tsp of bicarbonate of soda
- 40g ground flaxseed
- 40g arrowroot powder
- 30g chopped pecans
- 2½ tbsp maple syrup

- ¼ tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp ground mace

**1** Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas 2, and line a shallow oven tray with baking paper.

**2** Add the ground almonds, ground flaxseed, arrowroot, cinnamon, mace, bicarbonate of soda and salt to a food processor. Pulse to combine.

**3** Add the roasted squash, apple cider vinegar and maple syrup and blend to combine.

**4** Add the chopped pecans to the food processor and briefly pulse to combine until evenly distributed throughout the dough.

**5** Add the coconut oil and blend until you have a slightly tacky dough. The dough should not be dry or too sticky.

**6** Scoop the scone dough from the food processor, roll into a large ball and place on the lined baking tray.

**7** Press the dough down slightly so that it is of an even thickness — about 1¼ inches — and use a scone cutter to cut 4 scones from the dough. You can make more, or less, dependent on the size of your cutter, or simply shape the dough with your hands.

**8** Transfer to the oven to bake for 25-30 minutes, until golden brown all over and cooked through.

**9** Leave to cool a little before serving.

#### Per Serving (127g)

**Calories:** 551, **Carbohydrates:** 28g, **Sugars:** 11g, **Salt:** 0.95g, **Fat:** 43g, **Saturates:** 5.2g, **Protein:** 15g

Recipe from:

**the CNM Natural Chef Kitchen at the College of Naturopathic Medicine. You can study at CNM to become a Natural Health Practitioner, a Natural Chef or a Vegan Natural Chef. [naturopathy-uk.com](http://naturopathy-uk.com)**