



What To Do With Classroom Animals At The End Of The School Year

Animals in the classroom can be a great teaching tool – but when the year is over, many teachers are faced with the question of what to do with these critters.

Intentional release of animals can be environmentally disruptive:

- Non-native invasive species may compete aggressively with California natives for survival
- Even though an animal may be native or endemic to your area, it may harm the existing gene pool if released.
- Individuals from one area may harbor diseases or pests to which local populations (or other local species) are vulnerable



Do not release classroom animals into nature. While this may seem humane at the time, most animals released into the wild become dinner for something larger in a very short amount of time. You will also be in violation of state law.

Here are some suggestions on what to do with your classroom animals:

- Send the animal home with a student to babysit for the summer
- Call local pet stores to see if they will take the animal
- Call your local animal shelter or humane society
- Keep the animal at your home for the summer, ready for a new batch of students in the fall

It is important that you follow your local, state, and federal guidelines and regulations for handling and caring for live organisms in your classroom—and for dealing with them after your use. Make sure it is legal to acquire any animal you intend to display in your classroom. Teachers involved in the Classroom Aquarium Education Program are able to hatch and release salmon or trout under permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Here are some additional resources that may be helpful:

- [CDFW Invasive Species Program](#)
- [Habitattitude](#) – Adopt a conservation mentality. Protect our environment by not releasing un-wanted fish and aquatic plants
- [California Invasive Species Action Week](#)

