



Exotic Pet Ownership in the United States

for World Animal Protection
produced by Northstar Research Partners

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Research Background & Objectives

- World Animal Protection is looking to understand the incidence of exotic pets in the United States, including better determining: the most popular exotic pet species, how many exotic pets are owned in the US, and in which regions exotic pet ownership is most prevalent.
- In order to measure this, Northstar conducted an online quantitative study across the United States, approximately 5 minutes in length, attaining interviews among **n=1012** Exotic Pet Owners.
 - In order to qualify, respondents must be adults over 18 years of age who currently own an exotic pet, as defined in collaboration with WAP.
- However, in order to provide projections, we attained basic demographic data among **13,742 nationally representative Americans**. These individuals were first screened for pet ownership and then for exotic pet ownership – only those who owned an exotic pet completed the full survey.
- Coloring has been used to distinguish results which are statistically significant:
 - Findings that are statistically **higher** (calculated at a 95% confidence level) than the total sample are shown in **green**.
 - Findings that are statistically **lower** (calculated at a 95% confidence level) than the total sample are shown in **red**.
- Bases are shown unweighted; all gen pop data has been weighted to be representative of the US population by age, gender and region.



Exotic Pet Species Projection Calculation

First, we calculate the average number of pet for each given species. This is accomplished by taking the answers from Q8 (number of pets owned for each species) and then dividing this number by all respondents. So, for example:

$$170.8 \text{ Cockatiels} / 13,742 \text{ Respondents} = 0.012428$$

Using this average, we then calculate the total number of pets for a given species in the United States by multiplying the average number (attained above) by the number of households in the United States (via 2018 Census data). So, for example:

$$0.012428 \text{ Cockatiels per household} * 121,520,180 \text{ Households in the United States} = 1,510,264 \text{ Cockatiels in the United States}$$

Once we have attained the number of each individual species of exotic pets in the United States, we sum those to attain the total.

The entire process is repeated for each region.

Executive Summary

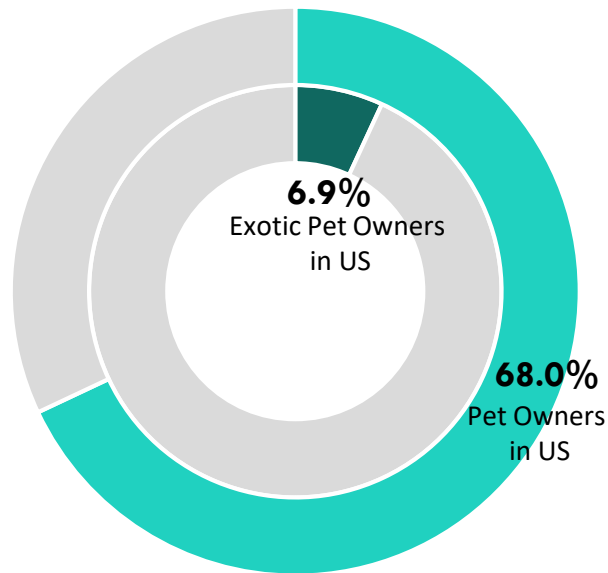
- * **Currently, nearly 9 million American households own an exotic pet, with there being approximately 17.6 million exotic pets across the United States.**
 - The incidence of exotic pet owners in the US is 6.9%.
 - Among exotic pet owners, the most popular types of exotic pets are reptiles (51%), and birds (26%).
 - Arachnids and mammals (excluding non-domesticated cats and dogs) are the least popular, with only 3% of exotic pet owners owning at least 1 of these species.
 - Across all types of pets (not just exotic pets), dogs and cats are the most popular among both exotic and all pet owners.
- * **38% of exotic pet owners do not consider any of their pets to be exotic.**
 - Owners of non-domesticated cats and dogs are the least likely to consider any of their pets an exotic species.
 - Reptile and arachnid owners are the most likely to consider their pet to be an exotic species.
- * **For nearly all species, the 'pet store' is the top location where these individuals purchased their exotic pets.**
 - The exception is non-domesticated cats, with nearly one-third receiving this pet from a friend/neighbor, and only 15% purchasing it from a pet store.
- * **The cockatiel is the most popular exotic pet species in the United States, followed by conures and tarantulas.**
 - There are nearly 1.5 million cockatiels owned by Americans.
- * **Exotic Pet Owners are significantly more likely to be young (18-34 years of age) compared with the general population (41% vs. 30%).**

Incidence of pet and exotic pet owners in the United States

- Two-thirds of Americans own pets, while approximately 7% own EXOTIC pets.
- Those living in the Midwest are slightly less likely to own an exotic pet compared with those Americans living in other regions.

Pet Ownership in the United States

Base: Gen Pop (n=13,742)



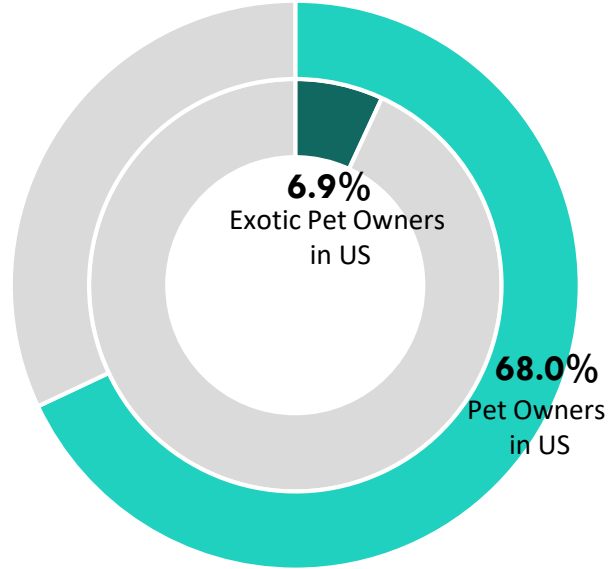
	Pet ownership among Gen Pop	Exotic pet ownership among Gen Pop	Exotic pet ownership among Pet Owners
n=	13,742	13,742	9,555
Overall Incidence	68%	7%	10%
Incidence by Region			
West	68%	8%	12%
Midwest	67%	5%	8%
South	68%	7%	10%
Northeast	66%	8%	12%

Incidence of pet and exotic pet owners in the United States

- 70% of females own a pet, significantly higher than men (65% of men own a pet).
- Those over 55 years of age are the least likely to own any type of pet, and especially exotic pets, while younger Americans (18-34) are the most likely to own an exotic pet.

Pet Ownership in the United States

Base: Gen Pop (n=13,742)



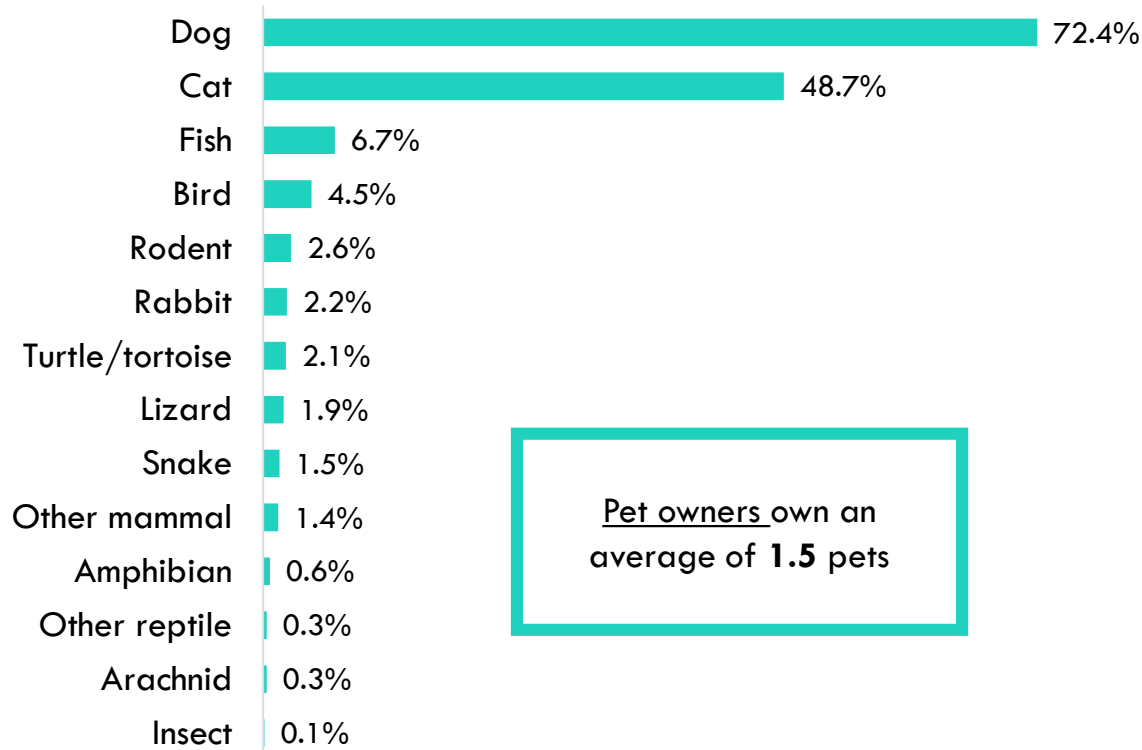
	Gender		Age		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
n=	4,141	9,576	5,341	4,901	3,500
Incidence of Pet Ownership among Gen Pop	65%	70%	70%	73%	61%
Incidence of Exotic Pet Ownership among Gen Pop	7.1%	6.7%	9.4%	7.8%	3.9%

Types of pets owned

- Dogs and cats are the most popular types of pets among both exotic and all pet owners.
- One-third of Exotic Pet Owners own birds, the next most common pet following dogs and cats. Turtles, lizards and snakes are also very popular species among Americans, albeit to a far lesser degree than dogs, cats and birds.

Any Type Of Pet Owned

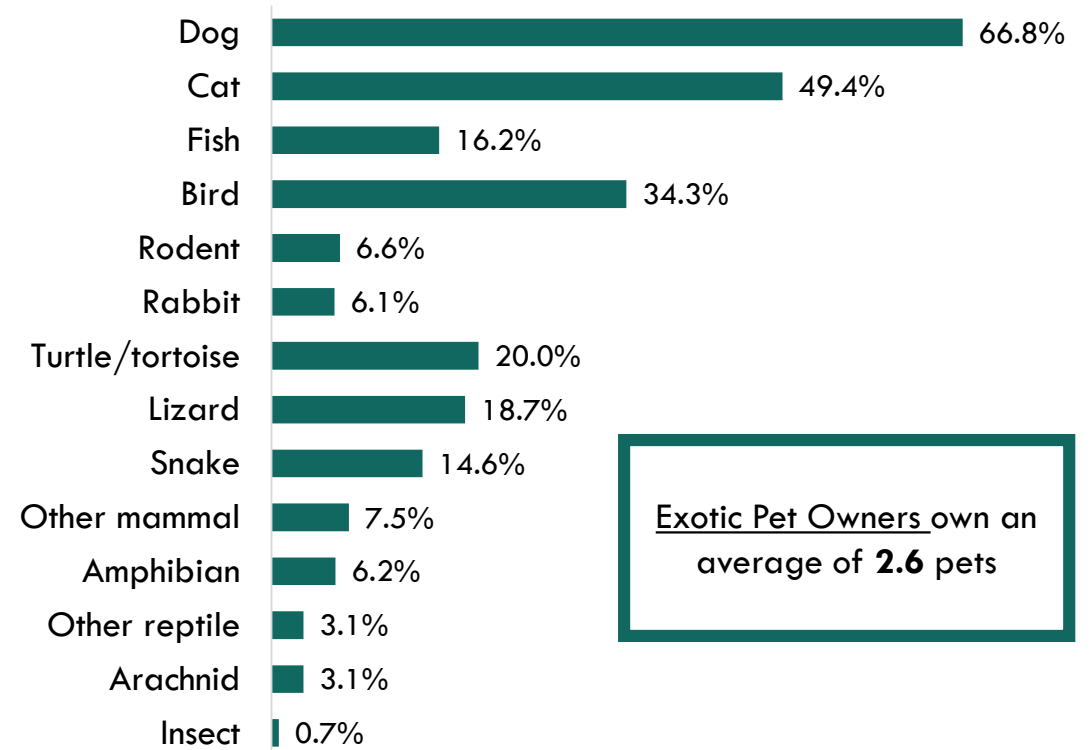
Base: All Pet Owners (n=9,538)



Pet owners own an average of **1.5** pets

Any Type Of Pet Owned

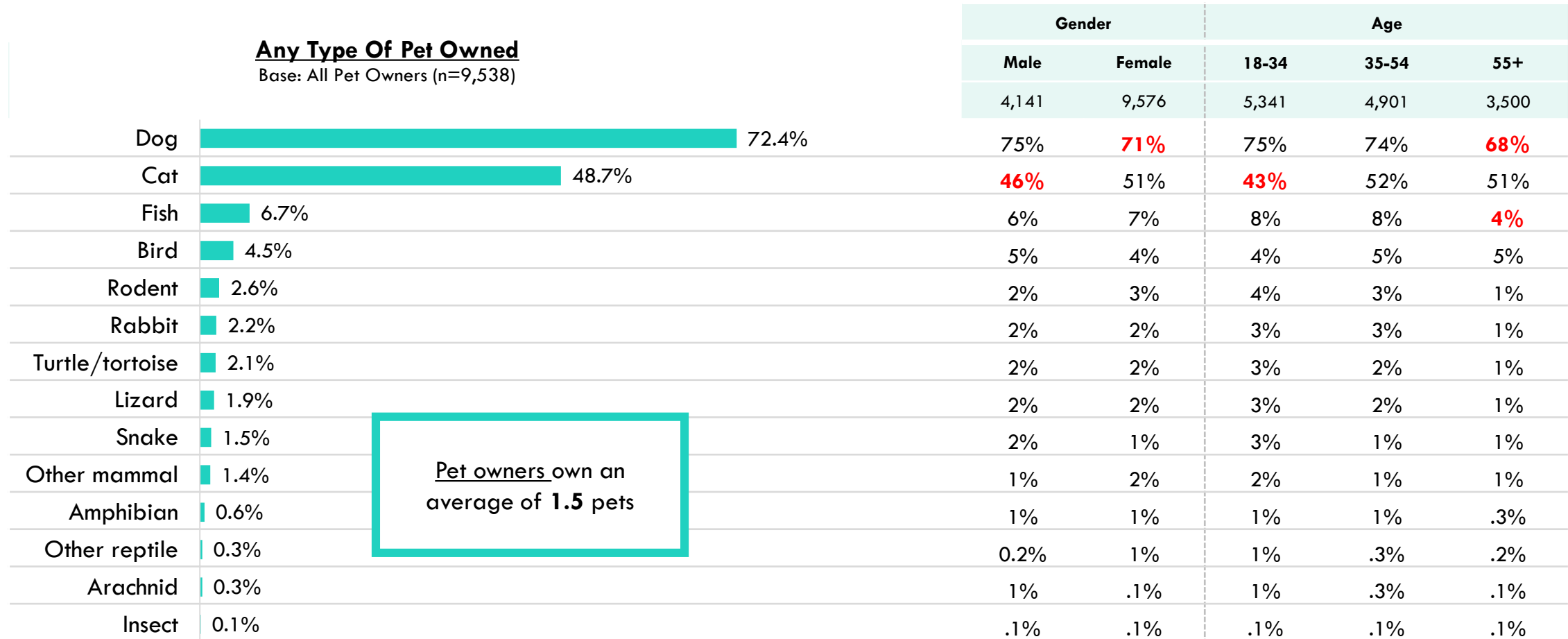
Base: Exotic Pet Owners (n=1,012)



Exotic Pet Owners own an average of **2.6** pets

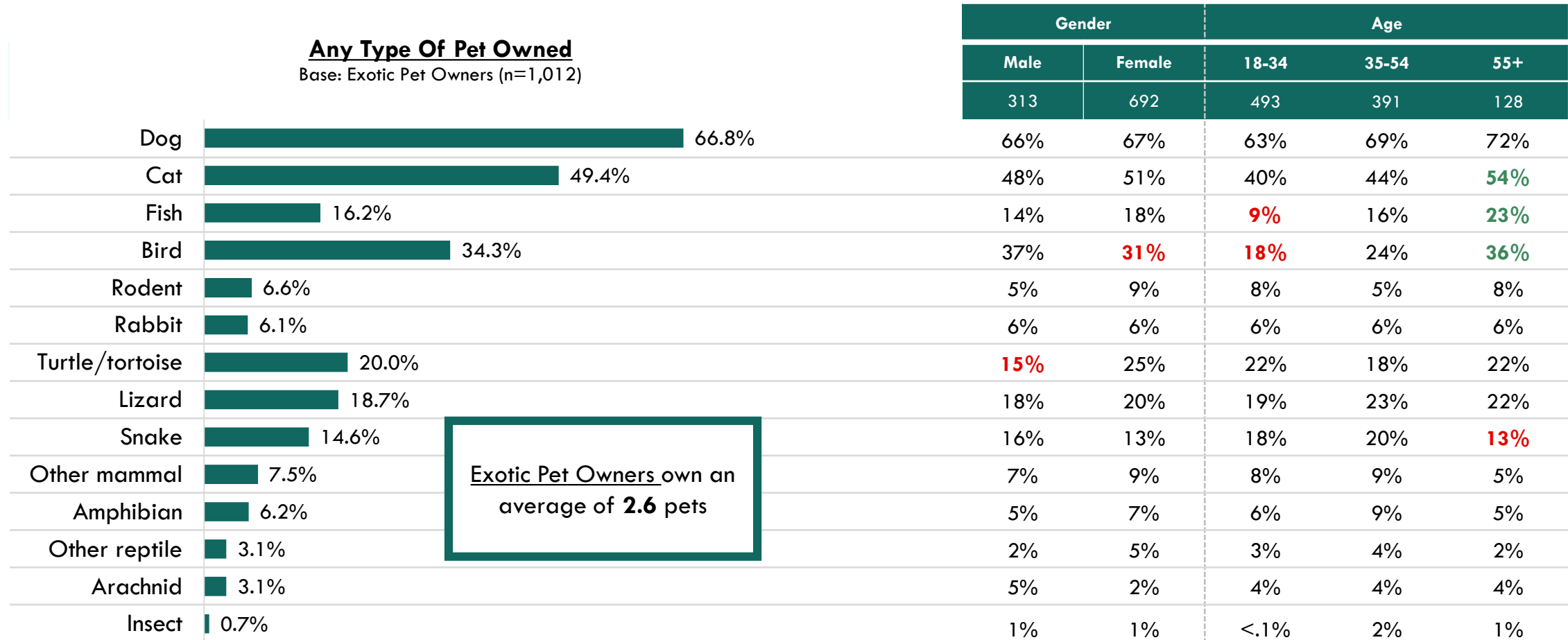
Types of pets owned by all pet owners

- Among all pet owners, those age 18 to 34 are less likely to own a cat compared with older pet owners, while older pet owners (55+) are less likely than younger pet owners to own either a dog or a fish.



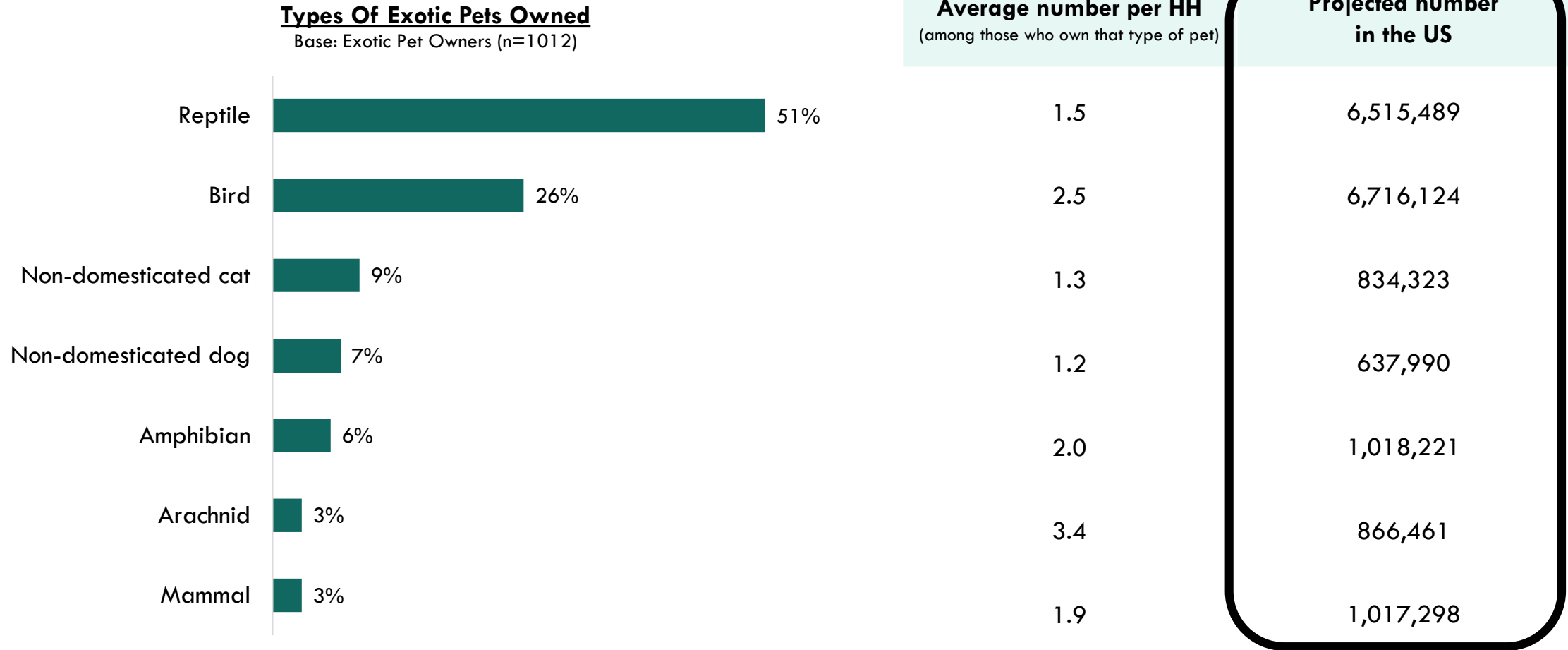
Types of pets owned by Exotic Pet Owners

- Among Exotic Pet Owners, those over 55 years old are far more likely than others to own cats, fish or birds, while younger Exotic Pet Owners (18-34 years of age) are the least likely to own a bird or fish.
- Focusing on gender, males are more likely to own birds while females are more likely to own turtles.



Types of exotic pets owned by Exotic Pet Owners

- When asking specifically by species, reptile species are the most popular type of exotic pet among Exotic Pet Owners, followed by birds.
- Owners of arachnids own an average of ~3, the most among exotic pet types, followed by birds and then amphibians.



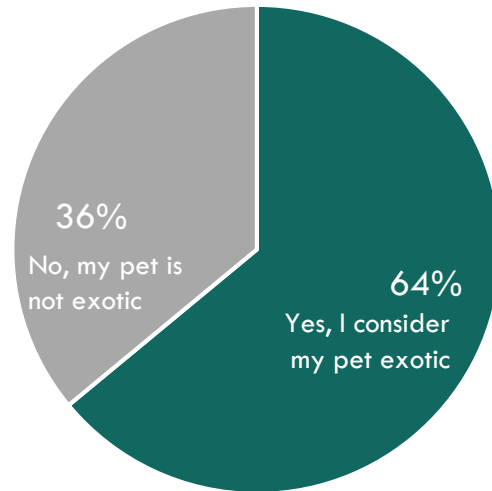
Q7. What species of [INSERT TYPE OF PET FROM Q5] do you own? [SHOW MULTI SELECT LIST.]
 Q8. [ASK Q8 IF MORE THAN 1 AT Q3] How many of each species below do you currently own?

Exotic pet consideration

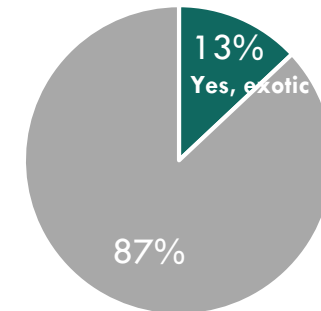
- Nearly 40% of Exotic Pet Owners do not consider any of their pets to be an exotic species.
- Exotic Pet Owners of mammals (including non-domesticated dogs) are the least likely to consider those pets an exotic species.

Exotic Pet Owners Who Consider Their Pets to be Exotic

Base: Exotic Pet Owners (n=1012)



Base: Among **All Pet Owners** (n=9,545)



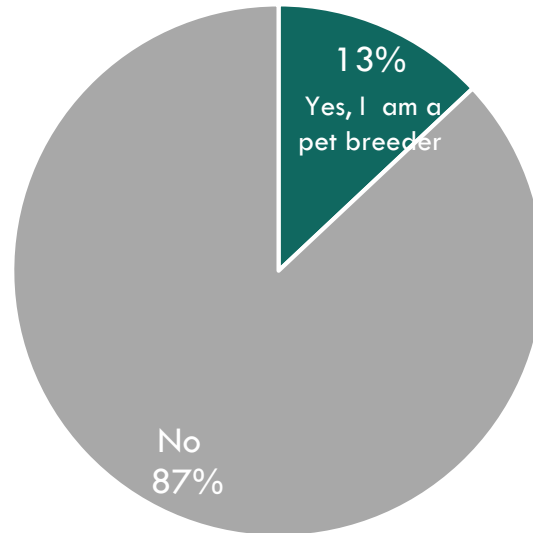
Base: Among those with specified type of exotic pet	Non-domesticated cat	Non-domesticated dog	Bird	Reptile	Amphibian	Mammal	Arachnids
n=	85	74	230	546	68	32*	27*
Yes, I consider my pet(s) exotic	54%	36%	63%	72%	71%	48%	80%

*NOTE: low base size, interpret with caution
 Q4. Would you consider any of your pets to be an exotic species?

Pet Breeder Incidence

- Nearly 15% of Exotic Pet Owners claim to also be a pet breeder.
- Those who own non-domesticated dogs and arachnids are the most likely to say they are pet breeders.

Exotic Pet Owners Who Consider Their Pets to be Exotic
 Base: Exotic Pet Owners (n=1012)



Base: Among those with specified type of exotic pet	Non-domesticated cat	Non-domesticated dog	Bird	Reptile	Amphibian	Mammal	Arachnids
n=	85	74	230	546	68	32*	27*
Yes, I am a pet breeder	10%	26%	10%	12%	4%	10%	24%

Where Purchased Exotic Pet

- For nearly all species, the 'pet store' is the top location where these individuals purchased their exotic pets. The exception is non-domesticated cats, with nearly one-third receiving this pet from a friend/neighbor, and only 15% purchasing it from a pet store.

<i>Base: Among those with specified type of exotic pet</i>	Total	Non-domesticated cat	Non-domesticated dog	Bird	Reptile	Amphibian	Mammal	Arachnids
n=	1012	85	74	230	546	68	32*	27*
Pet store	42%	15%	37%	43%	45%	56%	48%	32%
Friend/neighbor	22%	29%	18%	22%	24%	13%	16%	24%
Other	15%	21%	6%	22%	14%	14%	20%	2%
Pet expo	9%	13%	9%	6%	9%	10%	6%	21%
Online retailer	7%	9%	13%	6%	8%	4%	4%	6%
Craigslist ad	3%	6%	1%	4%	3%	4%	5%	0%
Flea Market	3%	1%	3%	3%	4%	0%	2%	4%
County or State Fair	2%	3%	7%	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%
Facebook Group	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Facebook ad	1%	4%	6%	2%	0%	1%	4%	9%
Newspaper ad	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%

Projected number of exotic pets in the United States

- Nearly 9 million households own an exotic pet, with there being approximately 17 million exotic pets across the United States.







	Projected Number Of Households Who Own An Exotic Pet	Projected Number Of Exotic Pets In the United States
United States	8,950,395	17,593,570
Northeast	175,5367	3,267,188
Midwest	150,9229	3,027,784
South	334,7669	6,808,090
West	228,1135	4,396,209

Projected number of exotic pets in the United States – By Species

NOTE: Average is among those who own this type of pet.




Exotic Pet Species	% of HHs Among GenPop (n=21,382)	% of HHs Among Exotic Pet Owners (n=1,009)	Projected # in the United States	Avg. number/HH (among those who own that type of pet)
Non-domesticated Cats	1.0%	8.5%	834,323	1.3
Non-domesticated Dogs	0.7%	7.1%	637,990	1.2
Birds	1.8%	25.8%	6,716,124	2.5
Reptiles	3.5%	50.6%	6,515,489	1.5
Alligators	0.2%	3.1%	310,758	1.2
Lizards	1.3%	18.7%	2,150,182	1.3
Snakes	1.0%	14.6%	1,631,341	1.3
Turtles	1.1%	15.6%	1,651,431	1.3
Tortoise	0.5%	6.4%	771,777	1.5
Amphibians	0.4%	6.2%	1,018,221	2.0
Mammals	0.2%	2.8%	1,017,298	1.9
Arachnids	0.2%	3.1%	866,461	3.4

Demographics

	Total/ Gen Pop	Total Exotic Pet Owners	Non- Domesticated Cat	Non- Domesticated Dog	Bird	Reptile	Amphibian	Mammal	Arachnid	
Age 	n=13,752	n=1012	n=85	n=74	n=230	n=546	n=68	n=32*	n=27*	
	18-34	30%	41% 	39%	61%	27%	47%	55%	50%	53%
	35-54	34%	39%	48%	32%	37%	39%	33%	31%	39%
	55+	36%	20% 	13%	7%	36%	14%	13%	19%	9%
	Average	46.5	40.9 	40.0	34.0	47.8	38.5	37.4	40.3	36.4
Region 	Northeast	18%	20%	32%	23%	20%	17%	25%	21%	31%
	Midwest	21%	16%	15%	11%	16%	18%	15%	20%	17%
	South	37%	37%	29%	47%	37%	35%	25%	35%	29%
	West	25%	28%	24%	19%	26%	30%	35%	23%	24%
Gender 	Male	49%	51%	57%	59%	54%	47%	44%	42%	76%
	Female	51%	49%	43%	42%	46%	53%	56%	58%	24%



Demographics (continued)

		Total Exotic Pet Owners	Non-Domesticated Cat	Non-Domesticated Dog	Bird	Reptile	Amphibian	Mammal	Arachnid
		<i>n=1012</i>	<i>n=85</i>	<i>n=74</i>	<i>n=230</i>	<i>n=546</i>	<i>n=68</i>	<i>n=32*</i>	<i>n=27*</i>
Residential Area 	Urban	31%	28%	39%	27%	30%	30%	25%	38%
	Suburban	47%	51%	44%	44%	48%	46%	56%	33%
	Rural	23%	21%	18%	29%	22%	24%	19%	29%
Marital Status 	Married / common law	47%	55%	50%	46%	46%	38%	54%	42%
	Single, never married	28%	26%	32%	28%	28%	31%	20%	29%
	Living with significant other	13%	16%	13%	11%	15%	17%	11%	20%
	Separated/divorced	8%	2%	4%	7%	9%	13%	15%	0%
	Widowed	4%	1%	1%	9%	3%	1%	0%	9%
Household Composition 	Kids Under 18	49%	40%	53%	33%	57%	54%	50%	58%

