

Supporting Information

Table S1. Choice sets for each of the survey versions based on the D optimal design

Survey version	Choice set	Coloration	Size	Life span	Behavior	Price
1	1	Both colorful and patterned	Small	Short	Aggressive	Lowest
1	2	Neither colorful nor patterned	Large	Long	Aggressive	Price 2
1	3	Patterned, not colorful	Medium	Short	Docile	Highest
1	4	Colorful, not patterned	Small	Average	Docile	Price 2
1	5	Both colorful and patterned	Medium	Long	Intermediate	Price 3
1	6	Colorful, not patterned	Large	Average	Intermediate	Lowest
2	1	Both colorful and patterned	Large	Average	Aggressive	Highest
2	2	Patterned, not colorful	Medium	Average	Intermediate	Price 2
2	3	Colorful, not patterned	Large	Short	Docile	Price 3
2	4	Colorful, not patterned	Medium	Long	Aggressive	Lowest
2	5	Patterned, not colorful	Small	Long	Docile	Lowest
2	6	Neither colorful nor patterned	Small	Short	Intermediate	Price 2
3	1	Neither colorful nor patterned	Medium	Average	Docile	Lowest
3	2	Patterned, not colorful	Small	Average	Aggressive	Price 3
3	3	Both colorful and patterned	Large	Long	Docile	Price 2
3	4	Colorful, not patterned	Medium	Short	Aggressive	Price 2
3	5	Patterned, not colorful	Large	Short	Intermediate	Lowest
3	6	Colorful, not patterned	Small	Long	Intermediate	Highest

Table S2: Effects coding for the attribute levels

Attribute level	Effects Coding [†]		
Coloration:	Colorful, not patterned	Patterned, not colorful	Both colorful and patterned
Neither colorful nor patterned	-1	-1	-1
Colorful, not patterned	1	0	0
Patterned, not colorful	0	1	0
Both colorful and patterned	0	0	1
Adult size:	Medium	Large	
Small	-1	-1	
Medium	1	0	
Large	0	1	
Life expectancy:	Average	Long	
Short	-1	-1	
Average	1	0	
Long	0	1	
Behavior:	Intermediate	Aggressive	
Docile	-1	-1	
Intermediate	1	0	
Aggressive	0	1	
Purchase price:	Price 2	Price 3	Highest
Lowest	-1	-1	-1
Price 2	1	0	0
Price 3	0	1	0
Highest	0	0	1

[†] For each choice set, the attribute levels took a value of -1 if they were set as the base level (neither colorful nor patterned, small adult size, short life expectancy, docile behavior, lowest purchase price), 1 if they were included in the choice set, and 0 if they were excluded from the choice set. Following Flynn et al. (2007), we coded the attribute impacts as 1 if a respondent selected the attribute level as ‘most liked’, -1 if the respondent selected the attribute level as ‘least liked’, and 0 if the respondent did not choose the attribute level as most or least liked.

Table S3. Demographic characteristics of survey respondents (n=1,055)

	No.	%		No.	%
Gender:			Highest degree or level of school completed:		
Male	266	25.2	Less than 12th grade	15	1.4
Female	753	71.4	High school graduate/GED	218	20.7
I prefer not to say	36	3.4	Some college/associate or technical degree	430	40.8
Age:			Bachelor's degree	263	24.9
18-24 years	239	22.7	Graduate/professional degree	129	12.2
25-34 years	282	26.7	Job status:		
35-44 years	192	18.2	Full-time	515	48.8
45-54 years	154	14.6	Part-time	128	12.1
55-64 years	117	11.1	Self-employed	102	9.7
65-74 years	60	5.7	Unemployed	80	7.6
75 years or over	11	1.0	Retired	82	7.8
Household's annual income (before tax):			Student	71	6.7
Less than \$25,000	166	15.7	Other	77	7.3
\$25,000-\$49,999	307	29.1	Type of housing:		
\$50,000-\$99,999	390	37.0	Apartment/condominium	190	18.0
\$100,000-\$199,999	158	15.0	Townhouse/semi-detached house	52	4.9
\$200,000 or more	34	3.2	Trailer home/mobile home	77	7.3
Individuals under the age of 18 living in household	416	39.4	Single family home	720	68.2
Current Florida resident	617	58.5	Other	16	1.5
Survey implemented by Qualtrics	465	44.1			

Table S4. Respondent's pet ownership, and how they acquired their current exotic pets (n=1,055)

	Number	Percent
Pets respondent currently owns:		
Dog	698	66.2
Cat	550	52.1
Bird	194	18.4
Fish (saltwater or freshwater)	411	39.0
Lizard/chameleon	544	51.6
Snake	396	37.5
Turtle/tortoise	358	33.9
Frog/toad	122	11.6
Salamander/newt	44	4.2
Insect/arachnid	141	13.4
Hamster/guinea pig/gerbil	96	9.1
Rabbit	80	7.6
Mouse/rat	78	7.4
How many individual non-traditional pets do you currently own?		
1 pet	265	25.1
2-5 pets	401	38.0
6-10 pets	153	14.5
11-20 pets	73	6.9
21 pets or more	163	15.5
How many non-traditional pets did you or your family own when you were under 18 years old?		

None	322	30.5
1 pet	164	15.5
2-5 pets	369	35.0
6-10 pets	77	7.3
More than 10 pets	123	11.7
How did you come to own your current non-traditional pet(s)?		
I purchased it for myself	693	65.7
I purchased it for my children	198	18.8
I purchased it for someone in my household	85	8.1
I adopted it	367	34.8
It was a gift	186	17.6
I found it in the wild and kept it	112	10.6
It is my partner's pet	86	8.2
I inherited it	63	6.0
Other	69	6.5
Where did you purchase your current non-traditional pet(s)?		
Another pet owner	240	22.7
A commercial pet store (e.g., PetSmart, Petco)	373	35.4
An independent pet store	282	26.7
A breeder/hobbyist	363	34.4
A pet trade show (e.g., Repticon)	285	27.0
Other	56	5.3
Purchased one or more current non-traditional pets online	236	22.4

Table S5. Respondents' choice of which exotic pet they would purchase next, and the number of respondents who already owned this type of pet (n=1,055).

Pet	Number [†]	Percent	Respondents who already own this type of pet	
			Number	Percent
Lizard/chameleon	499	47.3	355	65.3
Fish (saltwater or freshwater)	415	39.3	260	63.3
Snake	412	39.1	283	71.5
Tortoise	222	21.0	124	34.6
Turtle	201	19.1	123	34.4
Frog/toad	161	15.3	67	54.9
Insect/arachnid	150	14.2	88	62.4
Salamander/newt	98	9.3	18	40.9

[†] Respondents could select more than one animal in response to the question, "If you were going to purchase another pet, which of these animals are you most likely to purchase?"

Table S6. Respondent's stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet snakes, and the price they paid for their previous pet snake (n=184).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new snake, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a green tree python	26	14.1
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a fire ball python	55	29.9
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a corn snake	93	50.5
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a black rat snake	10	5.4
If you were going to buy a new snake, which size of adult snake would you prefer?		
Small: Around 1 to 3 feet long, e.g., a western hognose	45	24.5
Medium: Around 4 to 6 feet long, e.g., a Brazilian rainbow boa	116	63.0
Large: Around 8 feet or longer, e.g., a reticulated python	23	12.5
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new snake, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	0	0.0
2 to 4 years	5	2.7
5 to 9 years	28	15.2
10 to 25 years	108	58.7
More than 25 years	43	23.4
If you were going to buy a new snake, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	142	77.2
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	41	22.3
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	1	0.5
What was the approximate cost of the last pet snake you acquired?		
Free	18	9.8
Less than \$90.00	38	20.7
\$90.00 to \$139.99	38	20.7
\$140.00 to \$249.99	27	14.7
\$250.00 or more	38	20.7
I have never owned a pet snake	25	13.6

Table S7. Respondent’s stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet lizards/chameleons, and the price they paid for their previous pet lizard/chameleon (n=202).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new lizard/chameleon, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., an electric blue gecko	26	12.9
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a leopard gecko	31	15.3
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a panther chameleon	90	44.6
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a bearded dragon	55	27.2
If you were going to buy a new lizard/chameleon, which size of adult lizard/chameleon would you prefer?		
Small: Around 3 to 6 inches (not including tail), e.g., a crested gecko	58	28.7
Medium: Around 8 to 12 inches (not including tail), e.g., a veiled chameleon	102	50.5
Large: Around 16 to 24 inches (not including tail), e.g., a green iguana	42	20.8
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new lizard/chameleon, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	1	0.5
2 to 4 years	11	5.4
5 to 15 years	127	62.9
More than 15 years	63	31.2
If you were going to buy a new lizard/chameleon, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	150	74.3
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	52	25.7
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	0	0.0
What was the approximate cost of the last pet lizard/chameleon you acquired?		
Free	34	16.8
Less than \$50.00	34	16.8
\$50.00 to \$89.99	53	26.2
\$90.00 to \$199.99	31	15.3
\$200.00 or more	30	14.9
I have never owned a pet lizard/chameleon	20	9.9

Table S8. Respondent's stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet turtles, and the price they paid for their previous pet turtle (n=130).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new turtle, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a cumberland slider	45	34.6
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a black-knobbed map turtle	17	13.1
Colorful and patterned, e.g., an ornate wood turtle	56	43.1
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a mud turtle	12	9.2
If you were going to buy a new turtle, which size of adult turtle would you prefer?		
Small: Around 4 to 5 inches long and around 0.5 pounds, e.g., a spotted turtle	77	59.2
Medium: Around 6 to 9 inches long and 2 to 3 pounds, e.g., a pond slider	45	34.6
Large: Around 12 to 24 inches long and 6 to 14 pounds, e.g., a Florida softshell turtle	8	6.2
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new turtle, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	2	1.5
2 to 4 years	8	6.2
5 to 15 years	49	37.7
16 to 40 years	38	29.2
More than 40 years	33	25.4
If you were going to buy a new turtle, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	87	66.9
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	43	33.1
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	0	0.0
What was the approximate cost of the last pet turtle you acquired?		
Free	53	40.8
Less than \$25.00	27	20.8
\$25.00 to \$49.99	19	14.6
\$50.00 to \$99.99	11	8.5
\$100.00 or more	9	6.9
I have never owned a pet turtle	11	8.5

Table S9. Respondent’s stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet tortoises, and the price they paid for their previous pet tortoise (n=114).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new tortoise, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a cherry head red foot tortoise	36	31.6
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a radiated tortoise	25	21.9
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a high yellow pancake tortoise	33	28.9
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a brown mountain tortoise	20	17.5
If you were going to buy a new tortoise, which size of adult tortoise would you prefer?		
Small: Around 8 to 10 inches long and 1 to 3 pounds, e.g., a Russian tortoise	44	38.6
Medium: Around 12 to 18 inches long and 15 to 25 pounds, e.g., a yellow-footed tortoise	37	32.5
Large: Around 22 to 36 inches long and 70 to 100 pounds, e.g., a sulcata tortoise	33	28.9
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new tortoise, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	0	0.0
2 to 4 years	2	1.8
5 to 24 years	35	30.7
25 to 60 years	44	38.6
More than 60 years	33	28.9
If you were going to buy a new tortoise, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	82	71.9
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	31	27.2
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	1	0.9
What was the approximate cost of the last pet tortoise you acquired?		
Free	24	21.1
Less than \$100.00	19	16.7
\$100.00 to \$149.99	17	14.9
\$150.00 to \$199.99	10	8.8
\$200.00 or more	7	6.1
I have never owned a pet tortoise	37	32.5

Table S10. Respondent’s stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet frogs/toads, and the price they paid for their previous pet frog/toad (n=98).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new frog/toad, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a golden mantella	10	10.2
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a great plains toad	20	20.4
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a poison dart frog	59	60.2
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a bullfrog	9	9.2
If you were going to buy a new frog/toad, which size of adult frog/toad would you prefer?		
Small: Around 1 to 2.5 inches long, e.g., a golden mantella frog	43	43.9
Medium: Around 3 to 5 inches long, e.g., a white-lipped tree frog	38	38.8
Large: Around 7 inches or longer, e.g., a giant African bullfrog	17	17.3
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new frog/toad, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	1	1.0
2 to 4 years	20	20.4
5 to 12 years	49	50.0
More than 12 years	28	28.6
If you were going to buy a new frog/toad, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	68	69.4
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	29	29.6
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	1	1.0
What was the approximate cost of the last pet frog/toad you acquired?		
Free	13	13.3
Less than \$20.00	16	16.3
\$20.00 to \$49.99	22	22.4
\$50.00 to \$69.99	9	9.2
\$70.00 or more	8	8.2
I have never owned a pet frog or toad	30	30.6

Table S11. Respondent's stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet salamanders, and the price they paid for their previous pet salamander (n=75).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new salamander, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a yellow-eye Ensantina	14	18.7
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a two-lined salamander	5	6.7
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a fire salamander	45	60.0
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a Jefferson's salamander	11	14.7
If you were going to buy a new salamander, which size of adult salamander would you prefer?		
Small: Around 3 to 5 inches long, e.g., an Ensantina	9	12.0
Medium: Around 6 to 14 inches long, e.g., a tiger salamander	60	80.0
Large: Around 16 to 45 inches long, e.g., an amphiuma	6	8.0
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new salamander, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	0	0.0
2 to 4 years	5	6.7
5 to 9 years	31	41.3
10 to 25 years	28	37.3
More than 25 years	11	14.7
If you were going to buy a new salamander, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	48	64.0
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	26	34.7
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	1	1.3
What was the approximate cost of the last pet salamander you acquired?		
Free	3	4.0
Less than \$20.00	11	14.7
\$20.00 to \$49.99	10	13.3
\$50.00 to \$69.99	11	14.7
\$70.00 or more	1	1.3
I have never owned a pet salamander.	39	52.0

Table S12. Respondent’s stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet insects/arachnids, and the price they paid for their previous pet insect/arachnid (n=89).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new insect/arachnid, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a jewel beetle	6	6.7
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a ten-lined june bug	6	6.7
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a Gooty tarantula	67	75.3
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a dead leaf mantis	10	11.2
If you were going to buy a new insect/arachnid, which size of adult insect/arachnid would you prefer?		
Small: Less than 0.5 inches long, e.g., a ladybug beetle	1	1.1
Medium: Around 0.5 to 2 inches long, e.g., a lesser stag beetle	13	14.6
Large: Around 4 inches or longer, e.g., a New River rust rump tarantula	75	84.3
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new insect/arachnid, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
Less than 6 months	1	1.1
6 to 12 months	4	4.5
More than 12 months	84	94.4
If you were going to buy a new insect/arachnid, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: An animal that is easy to handle, and not aggressive.	42	47.2
Intermediate: An animal that can be handled, and may be aggressive, but only occasionally.	44	49.4
Aggressive: An animal that, due to its aggressive nature, is typically difficult to handle.	3	3.4
What was the approximate cost of the last pet insect/arachnid you acquired?		
Free	6	6.7
Less than \$12.00	9	10.1
\$12.00 to \$24.99	11	12.4
\$25.00 to \$44.99	24	27.0
\$45.00 or more	22	24.7
I have never owned a pet insect or arachnid	17	19.1

Table S13. Respondent’s stated preferences for the appearance, size, longevity, and behavior of pet fish, and the price they paid for their previous pet fish (n=163).

	Number	Percent
Two qualities of appearance a pet owner might consider when selecting a new pet include color and pattern. If you were going to buy a new fish, which combination of color and pattern would you prefer?		
Colorful and patternless, e.g., a yellow tang	33	20.2
Patterned and colorless, e.g., a convict cichlid	21	12.9
Colorful and patterned, e.g., a Mandarinfish	92	56.4
Colorless and patternless, e.g., a black molly	17	10.4
If you were going to buy a new fish, which size of adult fish would you prefer?		
Small: Around 1 to 3 inches long, e.g., a leopard danio	94	57.7
Medium: Around 5 to 9 inches long, e.g., a yellowtail angelfish	63	38.7
Large: Around 12 inches or longer, e.g., an arowana	6	3.7
The life span of potential pets can differ greatly, impacting the length of time a pet owner is responsible for their pet. If you were going to purchase a new fish, what length of time would you prefer to own that pet?		
1 year or less	7	4.3
2 to 4 years	78	47.9
5 to 10 years	45	27.6
More than 10 years	33	20.2
If you were going to buy a new fish, what behavior type would you prefer?		
Docile: A fish that is peaceful and does not pose a threat toward other fish.	106	65.0
Intermediate: A fish that is active, and may be occasionally aggressive toward other fish.	55	33.7
Aggressive: A fish that is highly active, and typically poses a threat to other non-dominant fish.	2	1.2
What was the approximate cost of the last pet fish you acquired?		
Free	11	6.7
Less than \$8.00	65	39.9
\$8.00 to \$24.99	66	40.5
\$25.00 to \$49.99	11	6.7
\$50.00 or more	4	2.5
I have never owned a pet fish	6	3.7

Table S14: Responses to the question: ‘Please indicate how the following traits would influence your decision to acquire [an exotic] pet.’

Traits	Median	Percent of respondents				
		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neither positive nor negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive
The pet was captive-bred	Very positive	1.7	2.9	26.4	17.3	51.8
The pet was wild-caught	Somewhat negative	38.2	33.5	21.8	4.7	1.8
The pet is native to the area where I live	Neither positive nor negative	5.3	7.3	49.6	26.4	11.4
The pet is rare	Neither positive nor negative	7.3	8.6	39.0	30.9	14.2
The diet of the pet is expensive	Somewhat negative	29.8	44.3	22.4	2.7	0.9
The pet requires a diet of animal products	Neither positive nor negative	10.3	14.8	64.5	6.4	3.9
The pet has an unusual shape	Neither positive nor negative	2.8	3.6	57.3	26.5	9.8
The pet has a pre-historic appearance	Somewhat positive	1.9	3.4	33.2	37.4	24.1
The pet's appearance changes as it gets older	Neither positive nor negative	1.1	3.4	54.7	28.5	12.2
The pet breeds easily	Neither positive nor negative	5.6	11.8	56.1	16.7	9.8

Table S15: Information that respondents obtained prior to acquiring an exotic pet (n = 1,055)

	Before acquiring [an exotic] pet, do you look-up any of the following information?		When acquiring your current [exotic] pet(s), were you offered any of the following information?		Is there any information you wish you had received prior to acquiring your [exotic] pet(s)?	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Adult size of the animal	911	86.4	496	47.0	82	7.8
Life span	906	85.9	467	44.3	114	10.8
The diet of the animal	962	91.2	668	63.3	81	7.7
Potential additional costs (such as equipment or veterinarian costs)	791	75.0	254	24.1	207	19.6
Behavior traits (for example, aggression)	936	88.7	522	49.5	129	12.2
Whether the animal was wild-caught or captive-bred	681	64.5	458	43.4	143	13.6
Options to find a new home for the animal if you can no longer care for it	315	29.9	99	9.4	138	13.1
Other	148	14.0	36	3.4	63	6.0
None of the above	37	3.5	-	-	-	-
No, I was not offered any information	-	-	233	22.1	-	-
No, I am fine with the information I received	-	-	-	-	545	51.7

Table S16. Responses to the question: ‘Since acquiring your [exotic] pet(s), have you looked up any additional information on the species or how to care for the animal?’ (n = 1,055)

	Number	Percent
No	131	12.4
Yes	924	87.6
From an online search engine (for example Google)	753	71.4
From an online forum	421	39.9
From an enthusiast group (for example a Herpetological Society or Aquarist Society)	383	36.3
From social media	302	28.6
From another pet owner	289	27.4
Local hobbyist/breeder	271	25.7
From a book	245	23.2
From a veterinarian	228	21.6
From the pet store	109	10.3
From another source	42	4.0