



Wisconsin Taxidermy Regulations

Permit Information & Requirements

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

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Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Taxidermy Association and Photos by Matt, Inc

QUESTIONS?

Contact the WI DNR Call Center:
1-888-WDNRINFO (1-800-936-7463)
Available 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

***This pamphlet is an interpretive summary of Wisconsin's taxidermy laws and regulations. For complete taxidermy laws and regulations, consult the Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 29 or the Administrative Code of the Department of Natural Resources. Consult the legislative website – <http://docs.legis.wi.gov> – for more information.*

WHEN A PERMIT IS REQUIRED

Any person in Wisconsin who mounts any wild animal in a lifelike manner or preserves the carcass of any wild animal for consideration (compensation, barter or fee), must obtain a taxidermist permit from the Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR). A taxidermist permit is also required for anyone who only mounts deer heads for consideration or fee. The simple mounting of antlers or skulls on a plaque or the use of antlers or skulls in other decorative articles does not require a taxidermist permit.

Employees, while working under the direct supervision of a permitted taxidermist, do not need a taxidermy permit. This includes employees or agents working at the taxidermist's place of business or picking up specimens from drop off points and transporting them to the licensed taxidermist's place of business. Taxidermists should provide employees with a copy of their license to display if requested while transporting carcasses as part of their job duties.

APPLICATIONS AND RENEWALS

PERMIT FEE: Resident = \$50, Nonresident = \$100.

Permit applications are available online at www.dnr.wi.gov keyword search "taxidermy."

Applicants must also possess a Seller's Permit from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) and provide the Seller's Permit number on the application. For information on obtaining a Seller's Permit, contact the WDOR at (608) 266-1961 or visit their website at; <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/home.aspx>.

All initial taxidermy applications must be submitted to: WI DNR, Taxidermy Application – CS/1, PO Box 7924, Madison, WI 53707-7924.

Wisconsin resident and nonresident taxidermist permits are valid from the date of issuance until December 31st of the following year.

Renewals: Permits must be renewed prior to their expiration on December 31st. Renewals can be purchased online or at any WI DNR sales locations. All customer accounts which have a valid email address in their GoWild account will be sent a renewal notification via email prior to their permit expiration. Customers who do not have a valid email address listed in their account will not receive a notification reminder of their permit expiration.

The Federal Government requires a Federal Taxidermy Permit to prepare migratory bird mounts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also regulates the capture, transport and possession of all migratory birds. Any person wishing to perform taxidermy on migratory birds (ducks, geese, swans, mourning doves, woodcock, rails, snipe, etc.) should contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, MN 55111, or visit; <https://www.fws.gov/pacific/migratorybirds/permits/taxi.html> for information on federal requirements and how to obtain a federal permit.

PERMIT AUTHORIZATION

The taxidermy permit allows the holder to prepare and preserve the head, skin, part of the skin, or body of wild animals and fish in a lifelike manner for consideration or fee.

Permitted taxidermists are allowed to possess and transport lawfully acquired game birds, fish and animals (in connection with their business only) over the possession limit numbers imposed by state regulations. This can be done both during open and closed seasons for the various species. A taxidermy permit does not allow taxidermists to personally exceed bag or possession limits.

A taxidermy permit also entitles the permit holder to the same privileges as a Class A fur dealer's license. (Additional information in section titled, "FUR DEALER PRIVILEGES & RESPONSIBILITIES.")

TAXIDERMIST RECORDS REQUIREMENTS

Taxidermy regulations require that the taxidermist shall maintain sales records for all wild animal carcasses received at, delivered to, or shipped from the taxidermist's place of business. The sales records are required to be filled out upon receipt of the carcass, be in triplicate form and shall include information on each sale, delivery or shipment of wild animal carcasses. Taxidermists shall retain a copy of each record at the place of business for two years following the end of the effective period of the permit. The taxidermist should retain the original record and extra copies may be used as a receipt for the customer or provided to the WI DNR if requested. The WI DNR does not supply the forms for maintaining sales records. It is recommended that each taxidermist purchase standard pre-numbered, triplicate forms to be used as the sales records.

To maintain accurate inventories, permitted taxidermists must also attach an identification tag to each wild animal carcass received. The identification tag must have a legibly written or printed number on it that corresponds with the information (sales) record from the owner. The identification tag must remain with the carcass while it is in possession or under control of the taxidermist.

The information **required** to be collected on the sales record form includes:

1. A record identification number, which also corresponds to the number on the carcass identification tag.
2. The date received by the taxidermist.
3. The carcass owner's name and address.
4. A description of the carcass.
5. DNR carcass identification numbers (only those which have tags attached to the carcass)
6. The owner's signature.

Whenever a taxidermist or employee of a taxidermist transports a wild animal carcass as part of the business, at least one copy of the required completed record form must accompany the carcass.

SPECIAL NOTE – For animals which require government tags, the government tags should be removed at the taxidermy business after documentation and must be retained by the owner to be kept with any consumable meat. All government tags should be attached inconspicuously to the final mounted display for the owner's future reference.

Commingling - Legally harvested fish and game that is the personal property of the taxidermist can be stored with articles received in connection with a taxidermy business, only if the carcasses belonging to the taxidermist are also tagged and recorded in the same manner as if they belonged to a customer.

SPECIES SPECIFIC INFORMATION

ENDANGERED & THREATENED SPECIES

Some of the wild animals listed on Wisconsin's "Endangered and Threatened Species List" can be legally harvested or purchased in other states, countries and provinces. Prior to these animals being imported into Wisconsin, the person possessing the animal must ensure the carcass and its parts have a permanent tag attached from the state, country or province it lawfully originated from or the person must apply for an endangered species certificate and seal (includes a fee) to attach to the carcass by contacting WI DNR Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation. Additional information can be found by either visiting the website at; www.dnr.wi.gov keyword search "natural heritage" or contacting the DNR Call Center at 1-888-936-7463.

PROTECTED WILD ANIMALS

NR10.02 Protected wild animals. No person may take, attempt to take, transport or possess any protected wild animal at any time unless expressly authorized by the WI DNR. The following wild animals are designated protected in Wisconsin;

1. Cougar, Canada lynx, badger, moose, wolverine, and flying squirrel.
2. *Endangered or threatened species listed in NR 27, Wis. Admin Code
3. Albino or white deer, which are white except for the hooves, tarsal glands, head and parts of the head.
4. Prairie chicken, Canada spruce grouse (spruce hen), swans, cranes, bitterns, plovers, kingfishers, cormorants, herons, sandpipers and grebes.
5. Eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls; except as provided in NR 18, Wis. Admin Code (Falconry Permit).
6. Hen pheasants except as expressly allowed.
7. Any other wild bird not specified as unprotected.
8. Timber rattlesnakes, bullsnakes and black rat snakes.

SPECIAL NOTE: Cougar, Canada lynx, badger, moose, gray wolf, wolverine, Canada spruce grouse, and some cranes can be legally harvested in other states, countries or provinces. Wisconsin listed protected animals that are legally harvested in another jurisdiction can be imported into Wisconsin without any extra permits so long as those animals have a tag or permit attached by, or with the authority of, the state, country or province where the animal was legally harvested.

If the state, country or province does not require any tags or permits to be attached to the animal, you may contact your local conservation warden prior to having the animal brought into or shipped to your business. The warden can issue a Wisconsin "Possession Authorization & Receipt" for the animal if proof of origin can be documented. *This procedure does not apply to animals listed on the Wisconsin or Federal "Endangered and Threatened Species List" as those must follow the procedure as noted in the Endangered & Threatened Species section above.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING TAXIDERMISTRY

FUR DEALER PRIVILEGES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Permitted taxidermists are granted the same authority of a Class A Fur Dealer's license to buy, barter or trade raw fur. Permit holders must keep complete records of all transactions involving raw furs. The records must show the name and address of persons the furs were bought from and sold to along with the number and kind of furs involved and the date of the transactions.

"Fur-bearing animals" include otter, beaver, mink, muskrat, marten, fisher, skunk, raccoon, fox, weasel, opossum, badger, wolf, coyote, bobcat, cougar and lynx.

All raw pelts of otter, fisher, and bobcat must have a pelt tag and a registration tag attached until the pelt is tanned or made into a mount. The removed pelt and registration tags should be returned to the owner or made part of the mount.

Tanned hides of all lawfully harvested fur-bearing animals may be sold any time without the need for a license.

Badger, cougar, lynx, and wolverine are protected in Wisconsin, but are not endangered or threatened. Pelts of these species, when legally obtained from another state or province, may be possessed in Wisconsin if the pelt has a tag attached or is accompanied by documentation showing the state or country of origin.

For additional information on Fur Dealer's Licenses, please visit; <https://dnr.wi.gov/Permits/professionallicenses.html> and select the tab labeled, "Fur dealers."

FURBEARER REQUIREMENTS

WI DNR engages in annual furbearer research which may require submission of a carcass, or only specific parts of a carcass, when a harvested animal is registered. Refer to the current year's *Trapping Regulations* pamphlet for information regarding the annual collection requirements. Furbearer registration must occur by the 8th day of the first month after the animal is harvested. The pelt tag attached by the trapper/hunter must remain attached to the pelt until the animal is registered. Before registering a pelt with WI DNR, harvesters are required to skin the animal and separate the pelt from the carcass, **except** that skinning/pelt separation does not need to be completed before registration for animals going to a taxidermist. These carcasses must still be registered prior to taxidermy, but the skinned carcass/parts required for submission may be delivered to WI DNR after the taxidermist has skinned the animal, no later than 30 days after registration. A taxidermist may not be in sole possession of a furbearer that requires registration by the WI DNR, prior to the registration being completed.

BUYING/SELLING FISH AND GAME

Wisconsin Statutes prohibit any person from buying or selling most fish and game. There is an exception for most wildlife that have been mounted, or is in the process of being mounted (hide or cape removed) for a private collection (not intended for sale). Most wildlife cannot be mounted for the purpose of sale, and sale can only take place after the specimen has been part of a private collection. This provision was drafted into the law to provide the legal authority for people to sell their private collections after they no

longer wish to keep them. This exception does not permit taxidermists to mount wild animals for purposes of sale.

Federal law prohibits the purchase, sale and barter of wild waterfowl and other migratory birds under any conditions (which include mounted specimens). Migratory waterfowl must be properly marked as required by Federal Law (50 CFR 21.13).

The heads, hides (not in the spotted coat) and antlers (not in the velvet) of legally killed deer may be bought and sold after they are removed from the rest of the carcass. Squirrel tails, skins and skulls removed from the carcass and rabbits can be bought and sold during their open season. Fur-bearing animals which have an open season in Wisconsin and which have no bag limit (raccoons, fox, mink, beaver, etc.), if lawfully taken, may be sold at any time of the year.

Unclaimed, or abandoned wildlife items that have been preserved and mounted in a lifelike manner for a customer's private collection may be lawfully sold by a taxidermist, except that migratory birds, wild deer hides or mounts in the spotted coat and antlers in the velvet from wild deer and bear skulls, teeth and claws which are not part of a lifelike mount (i.e. full body, head or shoulder mount) cannot be sold.

Any private collection, including a taxidermist's private collection, can be sold, except for migratory birds; wild deer hides or mounts in the spotted coat and antlers in the velvet from wild deer which cannot be sold at any time.

Deer hides not in the spotted coat which are purchased for resale as raw hides do not require any records. Deer capes and deer hides received for mounting and hides bought by a taxidermist for taxidermy purposes must be recorded in the taxidermist's records.

Game birds and animals acquired from licensed captive wild animal or wild fur farms, with written proof of origin, are not subject to the selling or bartering prohibitions of Wis. Stat. § 29.539. These items can be mounted and sold. Fish purchased from registered fish farms can also be bought, sold, mounted or traded. A taxidermist permit is still required to mount or preserve these animals.

Wild animals tagged with a WI DNR "Possession Authorization & Receipt" may not be sold if the box designated "SALE or TRANSFER is PROHIBITED" has been slit or punched.

TRIBAL

Wild animal species taken from Indian reservations which the WI DNR requires to be tagged must be tagged with an authorized tribal reservation fur, fish and game tag or WI DNR tag before removal from reservation.

CARCASS DISPOSAL

Permitted taxidermists who receive cervid deer carcasses are required to dispose of all inedible parts and all parts of the spinal column, brain and lymphoid tissues in a properly permitted landfill or with a licensed renderer in accordance with s. NR10.105(7)(c), Wis. Admin Code. For a list of disposal sites, please visit; <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/landfillmap.html>

IT IS UNLAWFUL TO:

- Possess animals or furs which were unlawfully taken or possessed in Wisconsin or from any another state.
- Buy, sell or trade bear teeth, claws, gall bladders, or other parts, except that the entire bear hide with claws, head and teeth intact may be sold or purchased.
- Possess the skin of any mink, muskrat, fisher, beaver, or otter showing that the animal was shot or speared.
- Ship or transport any package of furs unless the package is marked showing the kind and number of furs contained, the license number and address of the consignor and consignee.
- Possess any raptor (hawks, owls, eagles or falcon) or any non-game migratory bird including any songbirds, flickers, woodpeckers, or any other protected species of wild animals without proper state or federal authorization. (This generally includes possession of any parts of those species as well)
- Buy or barter wild game fish or game fish skins unless a person holds a valid taxidermy school permit and who, on 08-15-1991, operated a taxidermy school approved by the educational approval board. "Game fish" includes all fish except rough fish and minnows.

INSPECTION INFORMATION

WI DNR Conservation Wardens have specific authority to conduct routine compliance inspections and may enter a taxidermist's place of business for inspection purposes anytime between 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. on weekdays (except holidays). Items subject to inspection include the numbered sales records and corresponding identification tags required to be attached to the carcass and records of all wild animal carcasses received at, or delivered to the place of business. A taxidermist, employee, or agent of the taxidermist shall cooperate with any warden or any other agent of the WI DNR, and exhibit items subject to inspection. According to state law, the title to all wild animals rests with the state until they are lawfully reduced to private possession. The WI DNR may seize wild animals taken or held in violation of the law.

To contact your local Conservation Warden, either call the WI DNR Call Center at 1-888-936-7463 or visit the WI DNR website at; <https://dnr.wi.gov/> and select "contact, staff directory."

Report Natural Resource Violations

CALL or TEXT:

1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367)

Toll Free*Statewide*24-Hour*Confidential

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. This publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, audio tape. etc.) upon request. Please call (888-936-7463) for more information.