



Captive Wild Animal Farm Regulations

PUB-CS-17 3/2016

This publication provides a summary of Wisconsin's laws which pertain to individuals that are required to possess a captive wild animal farm license. It is not a complete set of laws.

A CAPTIVE WILD ANIMAL FARM LICENSE AUTHORIZES THE HOLDER TO:

Possess in pens, propagate, kill, exhibit, purchase, and sell those species of live captive wild animals and birds which are regulated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and that are listed by the DNR on the license. The license allows the holder of the license to kill, or allow an employee to kill, captive wild animals lawfully held under the license. No one else may kill an animal on a captive wild animal farm. A licensed veterinarian may euthanize an animal for medical reasons. All animals must be obtained from a legal captive source.

Compliance with Local & Federal Regulations:

No initial captive wild animal farm application may be approved for the possession of harmful wild animals unless the application is accompanied by written assurance that the application is in compliance with local ordinances and zoning regulations. In addition, the Federal Captive Wildlife Safety Act restricts the import, export, purchase, sale, transport, receipt or acquisition of certain live big cats, including cougars, across State lines or the U.S. border. Contact the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) at (703) 358-1949 for more information on this Federal Act.

CLASSES OF CAPTIVE WILD ANIMAL FARM LICENSES (CWAFL)

There are 2 types of CWAFLs, a Class A and a Class B.

In addition to rules and regulations that apply to both types of licenses, there are rules and regulations that are specific to each license type. This section will explain the differences to help you determine which license to apply for.

Class A Captive Wild Animal Farm License

\$200 Initial Application/\$100 Renewal

A class A CWAFL is required to operate a captive wild animal farm that earns \$10,000 or more in annual sales **or** to sell the following native reptiles or amphibians:

1. Leopard Frogs
2. Tiger Salamanders
3. Mudpuppies
4. Any native reptile or amphibian collected outside of Wisconsin (which can only be sold to educational or research institutions in Wisconsin or to someone located outside of Wisconsin).

Class B Captive Wild Animal Farm License

\$50 Initial Application/\$25 Renewal

A class B CWAFL is required to operate a captive wild animal farm that earns less than \$10,000 in annual sales and you do not plan to sell native reptiles or amphibians.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Native vs. Non-native Captive Wild Animals. DNR regulation of captive wildlife is focused on animals native to Wisconsin.

"**Native**" means indigenous and occurring or having occurred naturally within the boundaries of this state regardless of whether a particular specimen originates inside or outside of this state.

"**Nonnative wild animal**" means a wild animal that is not native to Wisconsin.

A CWAFL **is** required for activity involving most native species, and some non-native species, of captive wild animals.

A CWAFL is not needed to possess most non-native wild animal species. Common examples are pheasants (except those that are used on a bird hunting preserve or for training or trialing bird dogs require an alternative captive wildlife type license). However, some non-native animals may still require a permit from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Contact these agencies for regulations and additional information before obtaining any wild animal.

*DATCP at <http://datcp.wi.gov/>

*USDA at <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>

Non-Native animals that DO require aCWAFL:

- Harmful wild animals (all bear, cougar, wolf-dog hybrids, mute swans). Additional species may be added.
- Endangered or threatened species (also require an endangered or threatened species permit).
- Most migratory game birds.

Native animals that DO NOT require aCWAFL:

You may possess the following species without a captive wildlife type license provided they are not endangered or threatened species and you obtain them from a legal source:

- Arthropods, mollusks (clams & mussels), chipmunks, pocket gophers, mice, moles, opossums, pigeons, porcupines, rats, shrews, English sparrows, starlings, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, red squirrels, voles, and weasels.

NOTE:

- Harvesting or collecting live clams from most Wisconsin waters is currently not allowed. The commercial harvesting seasons for all clams has been closed and the collection or harvest of clams for personal use from most inland waters is also no longer allowed. A person may collect less than 50 pounds of clams per day if not a threatened or endangered species, only from the boundary waters. It is not legal to sell any such clams or their shells. Be sure to check the current status of the clamming season on boundary waters before harvesting there.
- A fishing or small game license is needed to take crayfish from the wild. Any person under age 16 does not need a license to take crayfish. It is illegal to possess, introduce, transport, or transfer live non-native crayfish without a permit issued by the DNR. See ch. NR 40 Wis. Adm. Code and NR 19.27 Wis. Adm. Code for details and limited exceptions.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND HUSBANDRY STANDARDS

Feeding

Captive wild animals must be fed at least once each day, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian or as required to provide adequate care.

- The food must be clean, nutritious, and given in a large enough amount to maintain the normal condition and weight of the animal.
- The diet must be appropriate for the individual animal's age and condition.

Watering

If clean drinking water is not continually available to the captive wild animals, it must be offered to the animals as often as necessary to ensure their health and well-being but not less than twice daily for at least one hour each time unless restricted by a veterinarian.

Food and Water Containers

Containers must be easily accessible for all captive wild animals, must be located so as to reduce the chance of contamination by animal waste and pests, and be protected from rain and snow. Containers should be made of a durable material that may be easily cleaned and sanitized or be disposable.

Environmental Enrichment

You must supply all captive wild animals with environmental enrichment. Consider species differences when you decide upon the type or methods of enrichment. Examples of environmental enrichment include providing perches, objects to climb, food to search for and running water.

Additional Enrichment Requirements: Bears, Cougars, Bobcat, Lynx

License holders for these species must develop, document and follow a plan for environment enhancement that will promote the psychological well-being of these captive wild animals.

- The plan must meet currently accepted professional standards found in appropriate professional journals or reference guides, and as directed by the attending veterinarian.
- You need to make this plan available to any authorized DNR agent upon request.

PEN SPECIFICATIONS

All primary enclosures housing captive wild animals must comply with the following General Facility, Pen, and Shelter Requirements. In addition, bear, cougar, mute swans, wolf-dog hybrids, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox, fisher, all raptors, raccoon, badger, beaver, otter and migratory waterfowl have additional specific minimum pen requirements. These specific pen requirements and transportation requirements can be found in the publication "**Captive Wildlife Pen Specifications and Transportation Standards (PUB-CS-20)**" on the [WDNR Captive Wildlife website](#).

General Facility Requirements:

1. Pens must be structurally sound, kept in good repair, protect the captive animals from injury, hold the animals securely and protect them from other animals.
2. Bear, cougar, mute swans, wolf-dog hybrids, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox, fisher, all raptors, raccoon, badger, beaver and otter **may not** be kept in any part of a building or home where people live unless receiving **temporary** health care, treatment or special handling (except that wolf-dog hybrids kept as pets may share indoor housing which is intended for human occupancy).
3. Areas used for storing food or bedding must be free of trash, animal waste, weeds, insects, etc. to prevent rotting and spread of disease.
4. All surfaces in a pen, including houses, dens, shelters, fixtures and objects must be easily cleaned and or removed or replaced when worn or dirty. Surfaces must be free of rust, jagged edges, or sharp points.
5. If raised floors are used they must be constructed so the animals' feet cannot pass through the openings in the floor. If the floor is constructed of wire, a solid resting surface large enough to hold all the animals at the same time, comfortably, must be provided.
6. Enclosures and food and water containers must be cleaned and sanitized at least once every 2 weeks and more often if necessary to prevent a buildup of dirt, debris, animal and food waste, and other disease risks.
7. Standing puddles of water must be drained or mopped up after cleaning or rain so the animals remain dry.
8. Trash containers in food storage and preparation areas must be leak-proof with tightly fitting lids. The lids must remain on unless the caretaker is using them.
9. Supplies of food and bedding must be stored in a way that protects them from spoilage, contamination and pest infestation. You must be able to clean around and under the supplies. Foods requiring refrigeration must be stored in a refrigerator. All open food must be kept in a leak-proof container with a tightly fitting lid.
10. To promote the health of the captive animal, an effective program for the control of insects; external parasites; and birds and mammals that are pests must be developed and followed.

General Pen and Shelter Requirements:

1. Pens must be large enough to allow each captive wild animal to make normal position changes with plenty of freedom of movement.
2. All captive wild animals housed in the same enclosure should be compatible. Vicious or aggressive animals must be housed separately.
3. Outdoor facilities must provide shelter large enough to fit all animals inside comfortably.
4. Shelters need 4 sides, a roof and a floor, and must provide the animals with protection from the cold and heat, sun, snow, wind and rain.
5. A wind and rain break must be provided at the shelter entrance.
6. Shelters need clean dry bedding material if the temperature falls below 50°F and additional bedding is needed if temperatures fall below 35°F.
7. Metal barrels, cars, refrigerators, freezers and similar objects **may not** be used for shelter.
8. Shelters should be ventilated to provide for animal health and well-being, and to minimize odors, drafts, ammonia levels and moisture. Ventilation can be provided by windows, doors, vents, fans or air conditioning.
9. Shade large enough to contain all the captive wild animals at one time must be provided to protect them from the sun.
10. *Outdoor shelter for captive wild birds:* May consist of natural vegetation that provides protection from the sun, wind, rain and snow.

In Addition to General Requirements, specific species have their own Minimum Specific Housing Facility Requirements. For these species-specific requirements and pen specifications for transportation, refer to the publication "*Captive Wildlife Pen Specifications & Transportation Standards*" (PUB-CS20).

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

Sales and Purchases: When you sell the carcass or parts of any captive wild animal you need to supply the purchaser with a receipt or written proof of origin. The purchaser must hold onto that receipt during the time the carcass or parts are possessed. The receipt must include:

1. The captive wild animal farm license or owners name;
2. The address and license number of the farm;
3. The number and species of animals, and
4. The date of the transaction.

Escapes: If any bear, cougar, bobcat, lynx, wolf, coyote, fox, wolf-dog hybrid, or mute swan escapes from its enclosure or fenced area on a captive wild animal farm, you must notify the DNR within 24 hours after the escape.

- Call your local warden or the DNR Hotline at 1-800-847-9367 to report escapes.

Wolf-Dog Hybrids: A person who owns a wolf-dog hybrid must:

1. Have the animal sexually neutered by six months of age;
2. Have the animal tattooed, implanted with a microchip, or otherwise permanently marked with information identifying the owner.

Other Federal, State and Local License, Permit and Registration Requirements: In addition to the need for this license to possess, raise, breed, kill, exhibit, purchase or sell certain captive wild animals, you may also be required to apply for permits, registration or licenses from your local unit of government or the DATCP, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Animal Care Division, or the USFWS. Check with your local unit of government and these State and Federal Agencies for regulations and additional information before obtaining any wild animal.

* DATCP (608) 224-4872

* USDA (301) 851-3300

* USFWS (612) 713-5320

EXHIBITION OF CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS

You may exhibit captive wild animals you have licensed under your captive wild animal farm license provided you meet the following requirements:

1. Pens must meet the specifications outlined in the *Captive Wildlife Pen Specifications and Transportation Standards* publication (PUB-CS-20)
2. Environmental enrichment as described in this publication must be implemented.
3. Animal health and husbandry standards described in this publication must be followed.
4. Animal and food waste must be removed from enclosures and under enclosures as necessary to prevent buildup.
5. Enclosures and food and water containers must be cleaned and sanitized at least once every 2 weeks and more often if necessary to prevent a buildup of dirt, debris, animal and food waste and other disease risks.
6. Gravel, sand, grass, etc. in pens, runs and outdoor housing areas must be cleaned by removing the contaminated material as needed to prevent odors, diseases, insects and pest infestations.
7. You must display your Captive Wild Animal Farm License at the place of exhibit.
8. Each pen needs to be labeled with the proper common name, in English, of the animal confined in the pen.
9. Pens of most animals being exhibited must be surrounded on all sides where the public may approach by substantial guard rails. Guard rails must be at least 3 feet high, well supported, fully enclosed with not greater than 6 inch square mesh fencing, and must be at least 3 feet from the pens.
10. Pens, guard rails, and fencing must be kept in good repair at all times and all gates and doors must be kept securely locked.
11. Harmful wild animals can only be exhibited at the location authorized on the license. Special written approval is required to exhibit at any other location.
12. Captive wild animals subject to NR 16.30 (4) (a) that are greater than 3 months of age **may not** be used in interactive sessions or exhibited outside of the enclosure. Captive wild animals subject to NR 16.30 (4) (a) are bear, cougar, wolf-dog hybrid, mute swan, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox and fisher.
13. Venomous snakes **may not** be used in interactive sessions or exhibited outside of the enclosure
14. If using animals for interactive sessions you must be licensed to exhibit by USDA under 9 CFR 2.1 and follow the regulations found in 9 CFR 2.131

Note: CFR is the Code of Federal Regulations.

RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Records

All license holders must keep a record by date of all captive wild animals that are purchased, sold, acquired, or transferred; or have died, been killed, or escaped. The record must include:

1. Complete name and address and the number of any captive wildlife license of the person from whom the wild animals were purchased or acquired or to whom the wild animals were sold or transferred.
2. The date of the transaction and the number and species of the wild animals.
3. All captive wild animals that have died, have been killed, or have escaped.

You must record all required information within 7 days after a transaction or activity occurs.

All records and reports must be kept for 3 years.

These records must be kept at the facility and made available for inspection by DNR personnel upon request.

Additional Record-Keeping Requirement for Amphibians:

If you take mudpuppies, leopard frogs, or tiger salamanders from the wild, your records must include the date of harvest or collection; the species name; and number or pounds of each species harvested by the county of harvest.

You must complete harvest records on the day of harvest.

Note: These are the only amphibians that can be taken live from the wild in Wisconsin for commercial purposes.

RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS *continued*

Reports

Quarterly Reports

1. You must submit a quarterly report by April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31 each year for the previous 3 months. You only need to report transactions (purchase, acquisition, sale, transfer) or activities (birth, death, kill, escape) involving bear, cougar, wolf-dog hybrid, mute swan, bobcat, lynx, coyote, fox, wolf, badger, mink, otter, fisher, martin, wolverine and skunk in your quarterly report.
2. A quarterly report does not need to be submitted if you do not have any activity or transactions involving these species during a quarter.

Annual Reports

In addition to any required quarterly reports, all license holders must submit an annual report by January 30, each year.

Annual reports must include all of the following information for each species of captive wild animal licensed by the person holding the license:

1. The total number of each species of captive wild animals possessed on the date of the report.
2. The total number of each species of captive wild animals that were purchased, produced or otherwise acquired during the reporting year.
3. The total number of each species of captive wild animals that were sold, released into the wild, or otherwise transferred during the reporting year.
4. The total number of each species of captive wild animals that were killed, escaped, or died during the reporting year.

The DNR will send quarterly and annual report forms with your license renewal application. The forms are also available online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/captive.html>. If you have your own record-keeping system, forms, or computer program, you may use that system provided the records contain all the information required.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Captive Wild Animal Farm License application can be found on the DNR website, keyword search "captive", or contact Customer and Outreach Services at 1-888-936-7463.

Applications must be filled out completely. If you lease the property where you have your captive wild animal farm, a written lease is required. Requirements for a written lease appear on the application.

Fees

Class A captive wild animal farm initial fee is \$200.00; annual renewal \$100.00.

Class B captive wild animal farm initial fee is \$50.00; annual renewal \$25.00.

The initial license fee is waived for anyone who is under 14 years of age and is a member of a 4-H club or a sporting club.

A person applying for 2 or more captive wildlife licenses that are necessary to engage in a single business or other operation shall pay a total fee for the license with the highest fee that is required, plus 50% of the fee for each additional required license.

Effective Period

A captive wild animal farm license is valid from the date of issuance until the following December 31.

CAPTIVE WILDLIFE LAWS

Chapter 169, Wis. Stats.

<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/169>

Chapter NR 16, Wis. Adm. Code.

http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/nr/001/16

Links to complete Captive Wild Animal Farm regulations (169, Wis. Stats., and NR 16, Wis. Adm. Code) are also found at the DNR's [Captive Wildlife website](#). Go to dnr.wi.gov, keyword search "captive"