



# Captive Wildlife Pen Specifications & Transportation Standards

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This publication provides a summary of Wisconsin's laws which pertain to individuals who possess captive wild animals under a Captive Wild Animal Farm License, Wild Fur Farm License, Bird Hunting Preserve License, Dog Training or Trial License, or Nonprofit Educational Exhibitor License. This is not a complete listing of the laws. See [chapter 169, Wisconsin Statutes](#) and [chapter NR 16, Wisconsin Administrative Code](#) for a complete listing of applicable laws.

## **GENERAL FACILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Pens must be structurally sound, kept in good repair, protect the captive wild animals from injury, hold the animals securely and prevent other animals from entering.
2. Most captive wild animals (those specified in [s. NR 16.30 \(4\) Wis. Adm. Code](#)) may not be kept in any part of a building or home devoted to human occupancy unless receiving temporary health care, treatment or special handling.
  - 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, and discarded materials.
4. Surfaces of facilities—including houses, dens, shelters, fixtures and objects—must be constructed in a manner and made of materials that allow them to be readily cleaned and sanitized, or removed or replaced when worn or dirty.
  - Surfaces must be free of rust, jagged edges, and sharp points.
5. Surfaces must be maintained and cleaned or replaced when worn or soiled.
6. If raised floors are used, such floors must be constructed so the captive wild animals' legs and feet are protected and feet cannot pass through floor openings. If the floor is constructed of wire, a solid resting surface large enough to hold all captive wild animals comfortably at the same time must be provided.
7. Animal and food wastes, bedding, debris, garbage, water, other fluids and wastes and dead animals must be regularly and frequently collected, removed and disposed of.
8. Standing puddles of water must be drained or mopped up after cleaning or rain so the captive wild animals can stay dry.
9. Trash containers in facilities and food storage and preparation areas must be leak-proof and have tight-fitting lids. Lids must remain on them unless the caretaker is using them.
10. Supplies of food and bedding must be stored in a way that protects them from spoilage, contamination and pest infestation and that allows for cleaning under and around them. Foods requiring refrigeration must be stored in a refrigerator. All open food supplies must be kept in leak-proof containers with tight-fitting lids.
11. To promote the health of captive animals, 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 must be compatible. Vicious or aggressive animals must be housed separately.
3. Outdoor facilities must include shelter structures that are accessible to each animal in each outdoor facility and are large enough to fit all captive wild animals sharing the outdoor facility comfortably inside.
  - Metal barrels, cars, refrigerators, freezers and similar objects may not be used for shelter structures.
  - Shelters must have 4 sides, a roof and a floor, and must:
    - a. Provide the animals with protection from the cold, heat, sun, snow, wind and rain;
    - b. Be provided with a wind and rain break at the shelter entrance;
    - c. Contain clean dry bedding material if the temperature falls below 50°F, with additional bedding provided when temperatures fall below 35°F;
    - d. Be ventilated to provide for animal health and well-being and to minimize odors, drafts, ammonia levels and moisture. Ventilation must be provided by windows, doors, vents, fans or air conditioning.
4. In addition to shelters, shade areas large enough to contain all captive wild animals sharing the outdoor facility at one time must be provided to protect them from the sun.
5. Outdoor shelter for captive wild birds may consist of natural vegetation which provides protection from the sun, wind, rain and snow.

**SPECIFIC PEN REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIED CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS:** In addition to all general requirements, the following captive wild animals have specific minimum pen requirements that must be met:

### **BEAR PENS**

- Bear pens with covered tops must be a minimum of 400 square feet. No more than 2 bear may be held in a 400 square foot pen.
- At least 200 additional square feet are required for each additional bear.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 8 feet.
- A tank or pool with a minimum of 150 gallons of water must be provided when bears are not in hibernation.
- The space for the tank or pool of water must be in addition to the required minimum square feet of pen space.
- A perimeter fence (described later) is required.
- Additional requirements for open-top pens are on page 3.

## **SPECIFIC PEN REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIED CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS - CONTINUED**

### **COUGAR PENS**

- Cougar pens with covered tops must be a minimum of 200 square feet.
- No more than one cougar may be held in a 200 square foot pen.
- At least 100 additional square feet are required for each additional cougar.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 8 feet.
- Elevated resting surfaces large enough to comfortably hold all occupants of primary enclosure at the same time shall be provided.
- Resting surfaces must be resistant to moisture and be able to be easily cleaned and sanitized or easily replaced when dirty or worn.
- A perimeter fence (described later) is required.
- Additional requirements for open-top pens are on page 3.

### **BOBCAT AND LYNX PENS**

- Bobcat and lynx pens with covered tops must be a minimum of 144 square feet.
- No more than 2 animals may be held in a 144 square foot pen.
- At least 50 additional square feet are required for each additional animal.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 8 feet.
- Elevated resting surfaces large enough to comfortably hold all occupants of the primary enclosure at the same time shall be provided.
- Resting surfaces must be resistant to moisture and be able to be easily cleaned and sanitized or easily replaced when dirty or worn.
- Additional requirements for open-top pens are on page 3.

### **TIMBER WOLF AND WOLF-DOG HYBRID PENS**

- Wolf and wolf-dog hybrid pens with covered tops must be a minimum of 300 square feet.
- No more than 2 wolves or wolf-dog hybrids may be held in a 300 square foot pen.
- At least 100 additional square feet are required for each additional wolf or wolf-dog hybrid.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 6 feet.
- Additional requirements for open-top pens are on page 3.

### **COYOTE, FOX AND FISHER PENS**

- Coyote pens with covered tops must be a minimum of 144 square feet.
- Fox and fisher pens must be a minimum of 120 square feet.
- No more than 2 animals may be held in a minimum square foot pen.
- At least 50 additional square feet is required for each additional animal.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 6 feet.
- Additional requirements for open-top coyote pens are on page 3.

### **RAPTORS (EAGLES, HAWKS, FALCONS & OWLS)**

- Pens shall have a hutch or a shelter box, 2 or more perches of appropriate size for the raptor's feet and a water pan for drinking and bathing.
- When more than 2 birds are held in the same enclosure, the pen must be increased by at least 50% of the minimum size and height specifications for each additional bird. Minimum size and height specifications are as follows:
  - **Kestrel, burrowing owl, saw-whet owl and screech owl** pens must be a minimum of 36 square feet with a height of 7 feet for flighted birds and 9 square feet with a height of 3 feet for non-flighted birds.
  - **Buteos, horned owl, barn owl, barred owl and goshawks** pens must be a minimum of 72 square feet with a height of 7 feet for flighted birds and 36 square feet with a height of 7 feet for non-flighted birds.
  - **Eagles, vulture and osprey** pens must be a minimum of 400 square feet with a height of 9 feet for flighted birds and 120 square feet with a height of 9 feet for non-flighted birds.

### **RACCOON PENS**

- A raccoon pen must be a minimum of 80 square feet. No more than 2 raccoons may be held in an 80 square foot pen.
- At least 16 additional square feet are required for each additional raccoon.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 8 feet.
- Raccoons must have continuous access to fresh water when outdoor temperature is above freezing and must be provided with a climbing apparatus.

### **BADGER PENS**

- A badger pen must be a minimum of 100 square feet. No more than 2 badgers may be held in a 100 square foot pen.
- At least 50 additional square feet are required for each additional badger.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 6 feet.

### **BEAVER PENS**

- A beaver pen must be a minimum of 100 square feet. No more than 2 beaver may be held in a 100 square foot pen.
- At least 20 additional square feet are required for each additional beaver.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 6 feet.
- A tank or pool with a minimum of 250 gallons of clean open water must be provided for up to 2 beaver. Each additional individual or pair of beaver must be provided a minimum of an additional 250 gallons of clean open water. The space for the tank or pool of water must be in addition to the required minimum square feet.

## ***SPECIFIC PEN REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIED CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS - CONTINUED***

### **OTTER PENS**

- An otter pen must be a minimum of 100 square feet.
- No more than 2 otter may be held in a 100 square foot pen.
- At least 20 additional square feet are required for each additional otter.
- The pen height must be a minimum of 6 feet.
- A tank or pool with a minimum of 50 gallons of open water must be provided. The space for the tank or pool of water must be in addition to the required minimum square feet of pen area.

### **WATERFOWL PENS**

- **All waterfowl bred, raised or held on a Captive Wild Animal Farm:** must be enclosed within a covered pen throughout the state's open season for hunting waterfowl when written or oral notice is given to the licensee by the department or its agents.
- **Mallard ducks held under the authority of a Bird Hunting Preserve License:** shall be housed in pens that are covered and maintained to prevent free-roaming wild waterfowl from being attracted to the pens with the mallard ducks that are being bred.
- **Mute swans: All mute swans** shall be confined in a covered pen except as follows:
  - Mute swans that are pinioned by 4 weeks of age must be confined in a pen but do not require a covered pen.
  - Mute swans that are both sexually neutered and pinioned by 4 weeks of age do not need to be confined in a pen but shall be confined to the owner's property.

### **EXCEPTIONS**

- You may confine or control captive wild animals outside of the required pen on a temporary basis for the purpose of health care or treatment, training, movement from one enclosure to another or special handling needs.
- Mothers with infants less than 6 months of age may be maintained together in primary enclosures that meet the floor area space required for an individual animal.
- Pen specifications and requirements for humane handling, care and treatment of coyote, fox and rabbit held under the authority of a **hound dog training or trialing license** are found in ch. NR 17, Wis. Adm. Code.

### **ADDITIONAL PEN REQUIREMENTS:**

#### **PERIMETER FENCE (BEAR, COUGAR)**

- Outdoor housing facilities for bear and cougar must be surrounded by a perimeter fence that is at least 8 feet high. Fences less than 8 feet high require written approval from the department.
- The fence must be built to prevent unauthorized people from having contact with the enclosed species.
- The fence must be far enough away from the enclosure to prevent physical contact with captive wild animals inside the enclosure. Note: Fences less than 3 feet in distance from the enclosure require written approval from the department.
- A perimeter fence is not required if any of the following apply:
  - The outside walls of the primary enclosure are made of a sturdy, durable, solid material such as concrete, wood, metal, plastic or glass and are high enough and constructed in a manner that restricts contact with or entry by humans.
  - The housing facility is surrounded by a natural barrier that restricts the enclosed species to the housing facility and protects them from contact with unauthorized humans that are outside the housing facility. Note: Department approval of a natural barrier for this purpose is required.

#### **OPEN TOP PENS (BEAR, TIMBER WOLF, WOLF-DOG HYBRID, COYOTE, COUGAR, BOBCAT, LYNX)**

- **Bear, wolf, wolf-dog hybrid, and coyote pens** with open tops must be a minimum of 1000 square feet. The walls must be a minimum of 8 feet in height with an additional 3 feet at the top slanted inward at a 30 to 45 degree angle.
- **Cougar, bobcat, and lynx pens** with open tops must be a minimum of 1000 square feet. The walls must be a minimum of 10 feet in height with an additional 4 feet at the top slanted in at a 30 to 45 degree angle.

### **PEN REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION**

When transporting captive wild animals, the animals must be inside a compartment, transportation cage, carton or crate that meets the following requirements:

1. The enclosure must be strong enough to hold the captive wild animal securely and comfortably and to withstand the difficulties of transportation.
2. The enclosure must be large enough to allow every captive wild animal inside to turn about normally while standing, to stand and sit up comfortably and to lie normally.
3. The interior of the enclosure must have no sharp points or edges that could injure the captive wild animal inside.
4. The enclosure must not allow any part of the captive wild animal's body to be put outside the cage in a way that could result in injury to itself, handlers or people or animals nearby.
5. The enclosure must allow the captive wild animal to be easily and quickly removed in case of an emergency.
6. Unless the cage is permanently attached to a vehicle, handles or hand holds must be provided on the outside to prevent those handling the cage from coming in contact with the captive wild animal inside.
7. The enclosure must have adequate ventilation on at least 2 opposite walls.
8. The enclosure must have a solid bottom or if made of slats or wire mesh it must be constructed so the captive wild animals' legs and feet cannot pass through the slats or holes.
9. Enclosures must be positioned in the vehicle in a way that protects the captive wild animals from the elements.

10. Transportation enclosures must be cleaned and sanitized before every use. If the captive wild animal is in transit for more than 24 hours, the enclosure must be cleaned to prevent soiling of the animal by body waste.
11. When removing captive wild animals from an enclosure, the procedure shall be completed in a way that protects the animal from injury and prevents escape.
12. Captive wild animals transported in the same enclosure must be of the same species and be compatible.
13. Overly aggressive or vicious captive wild animals must be transported individually.
14. You must be able to provide proof that you are authorized to transport the captive wild animals in your possession.

### **EXHIBITION OF CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS**

**NOTE:** Captive wild animals that require a license for possession may be exhibited ONLY under a **Captive Wild Animal Farm License, Nonprofit Educational Exhibitors License** or **Nonresident Temporary Exhibitors License**, and provided the following pen requirements are met:

1. Captive wild animals must be confined at all times to pens that meet the specifications outlined in this publication unless otherwise allowed in this section.
2. Animal and food waste must be removed from enclosures and from under enclosures as necessary to prevent buildup.
3. 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.
4. Pens, runs, and outdoor housing areas using materials that may not be sanitized, such as gravel, sand, grass, absorbent bedding, must be sanitized by removing the contaminated material as needed to prevent odors, diseases, insects and pest infestations.
5. A copy of the license authorizing the exhibition of captive wild animals must be displayed at the place of the exhibit.
6. Each pen must be labeled with the proper common name, in English, of the captive wild animal confined in the pen.
7. Pens of most captive wild animals (those listed in [s. NR 16.30 \(4\), Wis. Adm. Code](#)) must be surrounded on all sides where the public may approach by substantial guard rails that must be:
  - At least 3 feet high and at least 3 feet from the pens and;
  - Well-supported and fully enclosed with not greater than 6 inch square fencing.
8. Pens, guard rails and fencing must be kept in good repair at all times and all gates and doors must be kept securely locked.
9. Harmful wild animals as designated in NR 16.11 Wis. Adm. Code—including bear, cougar, wolf-dog hybrid and mute swan—shall only be exhibited at the location authorized on the license. Special written approval from the department is required to exhibit at any other location.
10. If using captive wild animals in 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. CFR is the Code of Federal Regulations.

**NOTE:** The following captive wild animals must **NOT** be used in interactive sessions or exhibited outside of the enclosure:

- The following captive wild animals that are greater than 3 months of age: bear, cougar, wolf-dog hybrid, mute swan, bobcat, lynx, timber wolf, coyote, fox and fisher.
- Venomous snakes.

### **RELATED PUBLICATIONS**

Obtain the following publications from the DNR website, keyword search “captive”, or contact Customer and Outreach Services at 1-888-936-7463.

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| • Captive Wild Animal Farm Regulations         | PUB-CS-17  |
| • Wild Fur Farm Regulations                    | PUB-CS-18  |
| • Bird Hunting Preserve Regulations            | PUB-CS-19  |
| • Pen Specification & Transportation Standards | PUB-CS-20  |
| • Bird Dog & Dog Club Training Regulations     | PUB-WM-562 |
| • Dog Trialing Regulations                     | PUB-WM-563 |
| • Hound Dog & Dog Club Training Regulations    | PUB-WM-564 |
| • Hound Dog Training Enclosure Regulations     | PUB-WM-477 |

### **CAPTIVE WILDLIFE LAWS**

Chapter 169, Wis. Stats., is available here: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/169>

Chapter NR 16, Wis. Adm. Code., is available here: [http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin\\_code/nr/001/16](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/nr/001/16)

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