



DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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Standard Conditions for Amphibian and Reptile Scientific Collection Permits (revised January 2025)

In all cases where applicable, the permit holder must follow the protocols in their approved SCP application and accompanying proposal. Only activities specifically noted on the attached permit are authorized. Unless otherwise waived in the attached permit, the following standard conditions apply for each authorized activity.

Standard conditions for all Scientific Collection Permits

Reporting MESA-listed Species¹ and Tracking List Species²

- All observations of amphibian and reptile species listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (“MESA-listed Species”¹) or otherwise “tracked” by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) (“Tracking List Species”²) must be reported separately to the NHESP either online or by mail (see <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-rare-species-vernal-pool-observations>) by December 31st of the permit year. Each report of an observed animal must include photos of sufficient quality to confirm the species identification.

Deviations from intended study design

- Accidental mortalities occurring during the research must be included in the required year-end report for permit activity, noting the species, number of mortalities, and presumed cause(s) of mortality. Mortality of MESA-listed Species¹ must be reported to MassWildlife within 24 hours, or the next business day.
- Deviations in approved protocol(s) must be described in a narrative to accompany the required year-end report on permit activity, describing in detail the nature of the deviation(s). Examples of deviations to report include but are not limited to leaving research tags or devices on or in animals, removing extra tissue or tissue from unauthorized parts of the body, marking of animals in a manner inconsistent with standard protocol, performing late-season surgery, or abandoning/losing equipment in the field.

Collection/Salvage

- Specimens of MESA-listed Species¹ collected, or salvaged as the result of an accidental mortality, under the authority of a Scientific Collection Permit must be deposited in a museum specified on the attached permit. If no museum is specified, salvaged animals must be deposited at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, University of Massachusetts Amherst, or provided to a facility approved by MassWildlife.

Equipment Disinfection

- Equipment (waders, boots, nets, holding containers, etc.) for use in aquatic habitats must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between uses at different sites by following the latest Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NEPARC) disinfection protocol (available online at <http://northeastparc.org>; search under “Products”). For purposes of this condition, “site” is defined as a contiguous tract of vegetated habitat occurring within a single subwatershed (HUC Level 12) and uninterrupted by high-density development, major highway, or other barrier to movement by amphibians and reptiles.

Standard conditions for specific authorized activities*Authorized turtle trapping*

- Traps/nets must be checked at least once every 24 hours while set/open; turtles may not be restrained in traps for more than 24 hours without a specific waiver.
- Traps/nets must be firmly set or tied with at least one-third (1/3) of the trap height above water with available air space (for large hoop traps) or set with appropriate flotation.
- All traps must be clearly labeled with the name and contact information of the permit holder or, for projects using state-agency equipment, an appropriate agency contact.
- All traps must be removed from the water when not in use and must be removed from the site immediately upon completion of the sampling season.
- Any non-native reptile, including Red-eared Slider, captured must be retained for transfer to MassWildlife.

Authorized aquatic funnel- trapping for amphibians

- Traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours while set; amphibians may not be restrained in traps for more than 24 hours without a specific waiver.
- All traps must be clearly labeled with the name and contact information of the permit holder or, for projects using state-agency equipment, an appropriate agency contact.
- All traps must be removed from the water when not in use and must be removed from the site immediately upon completion of the sampling season.

Authorized installation of drift-fence and pitfall-trap arrays

- Animals to be released must be released on the opposite side of the fence from which they are captured and at least 25 feet away from the fence.
- Amphibians to be released should be placed in a moist area beneath cover (e.g., leaf litter, brush, log).
- Unless specified otherwise on the permit, pitfalls must be equipped with drainage holes and a moist sponge at the bottom of the trap. Use of a stick or other object in the pitfall to allow escape of any captured mammals is encouraged.
- Pitfalls must be closed securely when not in use.
- Arrays must be removed completely upon completion of the research, or upon completion of a sampling season if there will be a hiatus in sampling for more than 2 years. If there will be a hiatus of less than 2 years after completion of a sampling season, the array may be left in place, but it must be modified to allow free passage of wildlife (18-inch wide breaks in fence at 20-ft intervals, or 3-ft wide segments of the fence-bottom raised at least 10 inches above the ground surface at 20-ft intervals).

Authorized lethal voucher specimen collection

- If permanent removal of amphibians or reptiles from the wild for purposes of vouchering is authorized on the attached permit, such collection is not permitted for MESA-listed Species¹ or for Tracking List Species², unless stated otherwise on the permit.
- If permanent collection for vouchers is authorized on the attached permit, there is a limit of 2 voucher specimens per species for all other amphibian and reptile species, unless specifically stated otherwise on the permit.

Authorized collection for captive use or “head-starting”

- If specifically authorized on the attached permit to bring amphibians or reptiles (or their eggs) into captivity, collected or reared individuals may not be released into the wild without a project-specific husbandry protocol and release plan approved in writing by the NHESP prior to collection.
- If the permit authorizes collection of a specific number of individuals of a given species for permanent, captive use, then only that number of individuals may be possessed at any one time; the permit does not authorize interannual accrual of captive animals such that the total in possession exceeds the number specified by the permit. For example, a permit authorizing collection of 2 Spotted Salamanders for permanent, captive use in one year cannot be renewed to collect an additional 2 individuals in a subsequent year unless the originally collected individuals have been disposed of and reported accordingly, or a special permit to possess more than 2 individuals is issued.

¹ A current list of MESA-listed Species is available at the NHESP website (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masswildlifes-natural-heritage-endangered-species-program>) and at 321 CMR 10.90.

² Amphibian and reptile Tracking List Species consist of the following: Spring Salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*), Fowler’s Toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*), Atlantic Coast Leopard Frog (*Lithobates kauffeldi*), Northern Leopard Frog (*Lithobates pipiens*), Eastern Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*), Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), Eastern Ribbonsnake (*Thamnophis saurita*), North American Racer (*Coluber constrictor*), and Smooth Greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*).