



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

MassWildlife

Wayne F. MacCallum, *Director*

To: Licensed Pet Shops

From: Dr. Tom French, Assistant Director of Natural Heritage and Endangered Species

Subject: Notice of Changes In the Law Relative to Wildlife that May be Sold By Licensed Pet Shops or Kept as Pets in Massachusetts

Date: January 17, 2014

Recent changes to state wildlife regulations affect the types of wild animals that may legally be sold in pet stores and kept as pets in Massachusetts.

Many of the changes allow new types of wildlife to be sold in pet stores and kept as pets that were previously illegal. The only new small mammal allowed as a pet is the Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*). Most of the new species are reptiles, including: green tree python (*Chondropython spp.*), the Emerald Tree Boa (*Corallus caninus*), all of the jungle runners (*Ameiva spp.*), true chameleons, frilled lizards (*Chlamydosaurus spp.*), spiny-tailed lizards (*Uromastix spp.*), and one small species of monitor, the Spiny-tailed or Ridge-tailed Monitor (*Varanus acanthurus*). The one species of monitor is a small species that can easily be distinguished from juveniles of all the larger species, none of which may be kept as pets.

One turtle, the Red-eared Slider, will no longer be legal to keep in Massachusetts. This turtle has been prohibited because unwanted pets were released so often that they have now become established as a breeding non-native turtle in several areas of the state. **Any existing pet slider will be grandfathered and may continue to be kept for the rest of its life, but the owner should keep a date-stamped clear, in-focus photo of its belly (plastron) as documentation.** No permit is necessary.

For a complete list of species that may legally be sold in pet stores, see the actual regulation (321 CMR 9.01) at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/laws-regulations/cmr/321-cmr-900-exemption-list.html#9.01>. A plain language summary of this list is also attached.

Please look over the allowed list (Exemption List) carefully and inform your distributors of what species may and may not be imported and possessed in Massachusetts. These regulations will be strictly enforced. These changes became official on January 3, 2014, so the newly allowed species may be possessed and sold immediately.

www.mass.gov/masswildlife

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

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An Agency of the Department of Fish and Game

The enforcement of the Red-eared Slider possession prohibition will be implemented in two steps. No new Red-eared Sliders may be imported into Massachusetts, but the sale of sliders already in pet stores will be allowed until April 1, 2014.

Pet shop customers can be directed to the above link or to the Division's "Wildlife As Pets" webpage at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/fish-wildlife-plants/wildlife-as-pets.html>

Questions may be directed to the Division at mass.wildlife@state.ma.us.

General Wildlife Possession Guidelines for Massachusetts

The following is only a summary of animals that require a permit. For more detailed regulations, refer to the appropriate [Code of Massachusetts Regulations \(321 CMR 9.01\)](#) for details, especially with regard to snakes and lizards.

	Lawful	Unlawful
Fish	All <i>aquarium trade</i> * fish, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldfish • Koi (Japanese Carp) • Guppies • Fathead Minnow (requires a permit when sold as bait for fishing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All native & established species in Massachusetts • Tilapia • Grass Carp (White Amur) • Piranhas & related species • Rudd • Walking Catfish & related species • Snakeheads • Bluntnose Minnow
Amphibians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All amphibians may be lawfully kept without a permit except rare species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Federally listed Species
Turtles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All turtles, except rare species and those specifically listed as unlawful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Federally listed Species • the Argentine (Chaco) Tortoise • Gopher Tortoises & related species • Pancake Tortoise • Red-eared Slider • Spotted Turtle
Snakes**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All species of boas & pythons, regardless of size, except rare species, and those listed as Unlawful • Shield-tailed Snakes & Sunbeam Snakes • Worm Snakes (except rare species), Thread Snakes, & related species • Several so-called "harmless" snakes, including Brown & Redbellied Snakes, Garter & Ribbon Snakes, Glossy Snakes, Green Snakes, House Snakes, Kingsnakes & Milksnakes, Rat Snakes (except rare species), Water Snakes, the Western Hognosed Snake & certain others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL venomous ("poisonous") snakes • African Rock Python • Reticulated Python • All Anaconda • Black Rat Snake; other rare species, any other snake not specified as lawful
Crocodilians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All crocodilians, including alligators, crocodiles, caimans, and gavials

* See [321 CMR 9.01](#) for definition.

	Lawful	Unlawful
Lizards***	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most skinks (including the Solomon Islands Prehensile-Tailed Tree Skink). • False Club-tailed Lizards, Girdle-tailed Lizards, Plated Lizards, and Rock Lizards • Most Teiid Lizards including Jungle Runners and Tegus • Some Lacertid Lizards • Most Lateral-fold Lizards, Alligator and Legless Lizards • All Geckos except rare species and the Big Bend Gecko • Several iguanids, including Basilisks, Collared and Leopard Lizards, Common (Green) Iguana, False Iguana, New World Chameleons, Spiny Lizards, and Tree and Bush Lizards • Some Agamid Lizards, including the Water Dragon, Bearded Dragon, Frilled Lizard, and Uromestyx • Most Night Lizards • Spiny-tailed or Ridge-tailed Monitor • Most true Chameleons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federally Listed Rare species • Gila Monster and Beaded Lizard • All Monitor Lizards except the Ridge-tailed Monitor • Solomon Islands Ground Skink (<i>Tribolonotus</i> spp.) • Any other lizards not specifically listed
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coturnix and Button Quail • Pigeons and Doves, except native species • Waxbills and related species • Finches and related species, except native species • Weaver Finches, except the Red-billed Dioch & related species • Parrots & related species • Toucans, Aracaris, & Toucanets • Starlings & Mynahs, except the Rose-Colored (Pink) Starling. • Emu, Rhea, and Ostrich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Federally Listed Rare species • migratory birds found in the United States and Canada, and any other bird native to the United States or Canada. Permits may be issued for the aviculture of certain waterfowl and game birds.
Mammals	<p>Only the following 11 mammals (or groups) may be kept as pets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar Glider • Four-toed (African Pygmy) Hedgehog • Chinchilla, derived from captive stock • Deer Mouse and White-footed Mouse • Degu • Egyptian Spiny Mouse • House Mouse • Jerboas • Norway Rat • Paca • Southern Flying Squirrel • Hamster 	<p>All other mammals not listed as legal or domestic.</p>

** Regulations regarding the possession of snakes are quite detailed and should be consulted ([321 CMR 9.01](#)) for specifics.

*** Regulations regarding the possession of lizards are quite detailed and should be consulted ([321 CMR 9.01](#)) for specifics.