

WEST VIRGINIA

Reptile and Amphibian Regulations



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AMPHIBIAN REGULATIONS

Salamanders

Licensed bait dealers may possess 250 salamanders in total aggregate, but cannot possess species with closed seasons.

Possession Limit: 10 in aggregate Season: Open	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Jefferson salamander	<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>
Spotted salamander	<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>
Marbled salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>
Red-spotted newt (includes red eft)	<i>Notophthalmus v. viridescens</i>
Northern dusky salamander	<i>Desmognathus fuscus</i>
Seal salamander	<i>Desmognathus monticola</i>
Allegheny dusky salamander	<i>Desmognathus ochrophaeus</i>
Black-bellied salamander	<i>Desmognathus quadramaculatus</i>
Black Mountain salamander	<i>Desmognathus welteri</i>
Northern spring salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus p. porphyriticus</i>
Kentucky spring salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus p. duryi</i>
Four-toed salamander	<i>Hemidactylum scutatum</i>
Northern two-lined salamander	<i>Eurycea bislineata</i>
Southern two-lined salamander	<i>Eurycea cirrigera</i>
Long-tailed salamander	<i>Eurycea l. longicauda</i>
Eastern red-backed salamander	<i>Plethodon cinereus</i>
White-spotted slimy salamander	<i>Plethodon cylindraceus</i>
Northern ravine salamander	<i>Plethodon electromorphus</i>
Northern slimy salamander	<i>Plethodon glutinosus</i>
Valley and ridge salamander	<i>Plethodon hoffmani</i>
Cumberland Plateau salamander	<i>Plethodon kentucki</i>
Southern ravine salamander	<i>Plethodon richmondi</i>
Wehrle's salamander	<i>Plethodon wehrlei</i>
Northern red salamander	<i>Pseudotriton ruber ruber</i>
Midland mud salamander	<i>Pseudotriton diastictus</i>

Possession Limit: 0 Season: Closed	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern hellbender	<i>Cryptobranchus a. alleghaniensis</i>
Mudpuppy	<i>Necturus m. maculosus</i>
Cheat Mountain salamander	<i>Plethodon nettingi</i>
Cow Knob salamander	<i>Plethodon punctatus</i>
Shenandoah Mtn. salamander	<i>Plethodon virginia</i>
Smallmouth salamander	<i>Ambystoma texanum</i>
Streamside salamander	<i>Ambystoma barbouri</i>
Green salamander	<i>Aneides aeneus</i>
Cave salamander	<i>Eurycea lucifuga</i>
West Virginia spring salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus subterraneus</i>

The animal, its eggs, offspring, or parts thereof may not be possessed.

Toads and Frogs

Possession Limit: 4 in aggregate, with exceptions

Season: Open, with exceptions

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern American toad	<i>Anaxyrus a. americanus</i>
Fowler's toad	<i>Anaxyrus fowleri</i>
Cope's gray treefrog	<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>
Gray treefrog	<i>Hyla versicolor</i>
Mountain chorus frog	<i>Pseudacris brachyphona</i>
Spring peeper	<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>
Upland chorus frog	<i>Pseudacris feriarum</i>
*American bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>
*Northern green frog	<i>Lithobates clamitans melanota</i>
Pickerel frog	<i>Lithobates palustris</i>
Wood frog	<i>Lithobates sylvaticus</i>

* The daily creel limit for American bullfrog and green frog is 10, with a possession limit of 20. See *Fishing Regulations* for seasons.

No more than 25 amphibian eggs, tadpoles or larvae (in aggregate) may be possessed.

Possession Limit: 0

Season: Closed

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern spadefoot toad	<i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i>
Northern cricket frog	<i>Acris crepitans</i>
Northern leopard frog	<i>Lithobates pipiens</i>

The animal, its eggs, offspring, or parts thereof may not be possessed.



To learn more about amphibians and reptiles of West Virginia, including how to identify the species, please see eBooks under Publications at www.wvdnr.gov/wf.



REPTILE REGULATIONS

Reptiles and amphibians are a valuable and abundant wildlife resource. They provide us with opportunities to study, appreciate and use our natural heritage. The WVDNR established these regulations to enable these activities without harming reptile and amphibian populations.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

- Only West Virginia residents are permitted to take and/or possess reptile and amphibian species that do not have closed seasons. Non-residents may possess salamanders with open seasons for use as bait.
- A valid West Virginia fishing license is required to take aquatic life; species with closed seasons may not be taken as aquatic life.
- Nonresidents with a valid Class F nonresident fishing license may take only American bullfrogs and Northern green frogs.

Possession and Release of Amphibians and Reptiles

It is illegal to:

- release any reptile or amphibian back into the wild that was held in captivity for more than 30 days. Reptiles or amphibians that have been held in the same enclosure with other species of reptiles or amphibians may not be released at any time. Reptiles or amphibians that are released must be released at the location of the capture.
- collect reptiles and amphibians from the wild for commercial purposes.
- take or possess any reptile or amphibian from a Wildlife Management Area or State Fish Hatchery, except:
 - » Persons who have received written permission from the Chief of the Wildlife Resources Section, provided they carry and exhibit said permission upon request.
 - » Persons lawfully taking bullfrogs, green frogs, snapping turtles and eastern spiny softshell turtles (Wildlife Management Areas only).

Lizards

Possession Limit: 4 in aggregate

Season: January 1 – May 15 and July 15 – December 31

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern fence lizard	<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>
Eastern six-lined racerunner	<i>Aspidoscelis s. sexlineata</i>
Northern coal skink	<i>Plestiodon a. anthracinus</i>
Common five-lined skink	<i>Plestiodon fasciatus</i>
Broad-headed skink	<i>Plestiodon laticeps</i>
Little brown skink	<i>Scincella lateralis</i>

The possession of lizard eggs is not permitted.

West Virginia State Reptile

In April 2008, the West Virginia Legislature passed a bill designating the timber rattlesnake as the official state reptile.



HOW TO TELL A LIZARD FROM A SALAMANDER

Salamanders have an elongated body, a long tail, and a body shape that resembles lizards, and for this reason they are occasionally referred to as “spring lizards.” Salamanders, frogs and toads are amphibians while lizards, turtles and snakes are reptiles. As amphibians, salamanders lack the reptilian characteristics of lizards such as body scales and claws on their toes. Because of their delicate, moist, scaleless bodies, salamanders are restricted to aquatic or semi-aquatic habitats such as rivers, creeks and springs, and to moist forested areas.

Snakes

Possession Limit: 4 in aggregate, with exceptions

Season: Open

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern wormsnake	<i>Carphophis a. amoenus</i>
Northern black racer	<i>Coluber c. constrictor</i>
Northern ring-necked snake	<i>Diadophis punctatus edwardsii</i>
Red cornsnake	<i>Pantherophis guttatus</i>
Eastern ratsnake	<i>Scotophis alleghaniensis</i>
Eastern hog-nosed snake	<i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>
Eastern kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis g. getula</i>
Eastern black kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis g. nigra</i>
Eastern milksnake	<i>Lampropeltis t. triangulum</i>
Common watersnake	<i>Nerodia s. sipedon</i>
Northern rough greensnake	<i>Opheodrys a. aestivus</i>
Smooth greensnake	<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>
Northern pinesnake	<i>Pituophis m. melanoleucus</i>
Queen snake	<i>Regina septemvittata</i>
Northern brownsnake	<i>Storeria o. dekayi</i>
Northern red-bellied snake	<i>Storeria o. occipitomaculata</i>
Common ribbonsnake	<i>Thamnophis s. sauritus</i>
Eastern gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis s. sirtalis</i>
Eastern smooth earthsnake	<i>Virginia v. valeriae</i>
Mountain earthsnake	<i>Virginia v. pulchra</i>
*Northern copperhead	<i>Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen</i>
*Timber rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>

* Possession limit of 1; timber rattlesnakes must be 42 inches or greater in length.

- Shed snake skins will not be counted as part of the total possession limit.
- Homeowners may kill or collect for relocation any snake found near their home or outbuildings.

The possession of snake eggs is not permitted.

Turtles

Possession Limit: 4 in aggregate, with exceptions

Season: January 1 – May 15 and July 15 – December 31

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern musk turtle	<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>
Eastern painted turtle	<i>Chrysemys p. picta</i>
Midland painted turtle	<i>Chrysemys p. marginata</i>
Eastern river cooter	<i>Pseudemys c. concinna</i>
Northern red-bellied cooter	<i>Pseudemys rubriventris</i>
Eastern box turtle	<i>Terrapene c. carolina</i>
Red-eared slider	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>
*Eastern snapping turtle	<i>Chelydra s. serpentine</i>
*Spiny softshell	<i>Apalone s. spinifera</i>

* The daily creel limit for eastern snapping turtles and spiny softshells is 10, with a possession limit of 20. See Fishing Regulations for seasons.

The possession of turtle eggs is not permitted.

Possession Limit: 0

(includes parts thereof, eggs and offspring)

Season: Closed

Common Name	Scientific Name
Wood turtle	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>
Spotted turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>
Northern map turtle	<i>Graptemys geographica</i>
Ouachita map turtle	<i>Graptemys o. ouachitensis</i>
Midland smooth softshell	<i>Apalone m. mutica</i>

The animal, its eggs or parts thereof may not be possessed.

DEFINITIONS

Resident: a person who has been a domiciled resident continuously in West Virginia for 30 consecutive days or more immediately prior to the date of application for a license or permit. This includes members of the U.S. armed forces stationed outside the state who were West Virginia residents at the time of entry into the service and full-time students of a college or university of this state. Nonresident students of West Virginia colleges are not eligible to apply for lifetime licenses. Absentee ownership of land in West Virginia does not constitute legal residence.

Reptile: turtles, lizards and snakes, or any part thereof, and eggs or offspring.

Amphibian: salamanders (including hellbenders and mudpuppies), frogs and toads, or any part thereof, and eggs or offspring.

Possession Limit: reptiles and amphibians taken which are in any way under a person's control (including in a vehicle, home, or other storage place).



West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

324 Fourth Avenue
South Charleston, West Virginia 25303

*For questions regarding species, call **304.637.0245.***

For questions regarding license requirements, call

304.558.2758.

dnr.wildlife@wv.gov

It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, services, programs, and employment opportunities to all persons without regard to sex, race, age, religion, national origin or ancestry, disability, or other protected group status.

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