

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES  
**APPLICATION TO EXHIBIT WILD ANIMALS IN VIRGINIA**

(Under Authority of § 29.1-412, § 29.1-417 of the Code of Virginia, 4 VAC 15-290-60, 4 VAC 15-30-40)  
Permit Period is November 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> (or part thereof)

**\*Non-refundable Application Fee**

PERMIT: (Check One)  **NEW**  **RENEWAL** PREVIOUS VDGIF PERMIT # \_\_\_\_\_

Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Miss.

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

**TYPE OF OPERATION OR SPONSORSHIP AND NON-REFUNDABLE APPLICATION FEE (Check One):**

Accredited Educational Institution (\$20)  Political Subdivision (\$20)  Agency of the State (\$20)

Public Authority (\$20)  Rehabilitator (\$20)  Business/Corporation (\$50)  Falconer (\$20)

Name and location of facility (if different from above) where animal(s) will be held or exhibited:  
(Using a separate page(s); Temporary Exhibitors MUST list all dates and locations of exhibits to be held in Virginia.)

If Contracted/Cooperating, by/with whom: \_\_\_\_\_

- Applicants must attach a list of species (**include scientific and common names and number of each**) that the applicant wishes to be permitted to exhibit to this application. Only animals defined as domestic in Title 29.1 of the Code of Virginia do not need to be listed, all others must be listed. If an exhibitor wishes to add any additional species to their permit during the year, they must notify VDGIF's Permitting Section at (804) 367-9588, and we will consider each animal individually for approval. The Department must also be notified of changes in number of exhibited individuals of a given species. (No additional fee will be charged for any updates.)
- The Applicant must be licensed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture under the Federal Animal Welfare Act, if exhibiting warm-blooded mammals. A copy of the license must be included with the application.
- To exhibit migratory birds, attach copy of U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service permit and for threatened or endangered species, attach copies of Federal permit(s).

- Applicants must submit information proving their exhibit to be educational and purposeful in nature, and they must indicate what interpretive information and educational brochures are available. **Programs must involve the public.** If an exhibit is temporary in nature (i.e. circus, carnival, fair, etc.), the applicant must describe how the animals are to be displayed or caged and are required to provide the information displayed in Appendix A of the Permit Conditions to VDGIF with the application and to the public during exhibition either through written materials (brochures, handouts, etc.), appropriate signage or through verbal presentation.

<b>SIGNED STATEMENT FROM VETERINARIAN (DVM)</b>	
I have a working relationship with the above named exhibitor and will be available to provide professional veterinary care of their exhibited wildlife.	
Name of Veterinarian (please <u>print</u> full name and then <u>sign</u> )	Signature of Veterinarian
Address (Street, City, State, ZIP Code, <u>and</u> Phone Number)	Phone Number

Have you been convicted of violating any federal or state wildlife laws or wildlife-related regulations within the past 5 years?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If "yes", year and nature of offense \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 By my signature above, I hereby certify that all entries made on this application are true and complete, and I agree and understand that any falsification of information herein, regardless of time of discovery, may result in denial or revocation of my permit.

TYPED SIGNATURE IS AUTHORIZED AND BINDING PER CODE OF VIRGINIA §1-13.32 AND §2.1-7.4

Make check for non-refundable application fee payable to: **Treasurer of Virginia** and return to:  
 Permits Section, VDGIF, P O Box 3337, Henrico, VA 23228-3337

**THIS PERMIT EXPIRES OCTOBER 31<sup>st</sup>**

## PERMIT TO EXHIBIT WILDLIFE IN VIRGINIA PERMIT CONDITIONS

### A. General Conditions

1. This permit will be required of any wild animal exhibit (permanent or temporary) serving an educational purpose rather than serving merely as an attraction or amusement, and must be operated or sponsored by one of the following (pursuant to authority granted by § 29.1-412, §29.1-417 of the Code of Virginia, 4 VAC 15-290-60 and 4 VAC 15-30-40 of the Virginia Administrative Code):
  - a. An accredited educational institution.
  - b. A business or corporation providing educational exhibits as part of its operation, and charges a fee for their services.
  - c. An agency of the State.
  - d. A political subdivision of the State.
  - e. A public authority duly created by law, or by a political subdivision of the State.
  - f. A permitted Rehabilitator.
  - g. A permitted Falconer

Exhibits conducted under the auspices of this permit must be educational and purposeful in nature.

2. All native wildlife held under this permit remains in the stewardship of the Department and may be relocated by Department staff at any time for just cause.
3. Permanent exhibits must be open to the public. A private menagerie is not considered an educational exhibit.
4. All exhibits and facilities must be open to inspection at all times by authorized Department representatives as well as authorized local or Federal authorities. Any and all records, permits, or books required to be kept by the permit and governing regulations may be audited by appropriate authorities at any time.
5. Individuals wanting to display rehabilitated non-releasable wildlife for educational purposes must include a statement from a licensed veterinarian describing the nature of the injury/illness that makes each animal non-releasable. Animals with visible deformities will not be exhibited.
6. This permit only allows for the exhibition of live wildlife and not the taking or collection of live wildlife for exhibition purposes. In order to take or collect live wild animals (includes the capture and handling of wildlife and all sampling activities that remove, even temporarily, any individual wildlife from the natural environment as well as habitat disturbance such as turning over rocks/logs, putting down cover boards, etc.), including for exhibition purposes (includes temporary or permanent displays in nature centers or use in educational programs at events such as county/state fairs, schools, etc.), the permittee must also possess a Virginia Scientific Collection Permit (including collection conducted on Federal lands). In order to take or collect pieces or parts (including feathers of migratory birds) of wild animals a permittee must also possess a Virginia Salvage Permit as well as any relevant Federal permits.
7. The conditions listed here also apply to amphibians and reptiles that are collected for temporary use in educational displays and exhibits (i.e. fairs, nature centers, schools, etc.).

## **B. Wildlife Health & Care Conditions**

1. Wildlife held under this permit shall be maintained in safe, clean, uncrowded, appropriately sized enclosures that are able to be disinfected and are suitable for the species held in captivity. The exhibit area shall be species-appropriate and shall include items considered essential according to the natural history of the species, such as a pool for waterfowl, shelter for cottontail rabbits, objects to climb upon and chew for squirrels, etc. The exhibit area shall be appropriately sized to allow adequate space to live humanely within.
2. Wildlife held under this permit shall be fed a species appropriate diet and shall have free access to clean water.
3. All exhibitors operating temporary exhibits must submit information, with their permit application, on how their animals are displayed or caged at an event. All animals must be exhibited in a manner determined by the Department to prevent the opportunity for animal or public injuries or disease transmission.
4. Animals must be confined under sanitary and humane conditions with no animal continuously restrained by a chain, rope, or other similar device.
5. Wildlife held under this permit is to be kept separate from domestic animals and rehabilitation animals.
6. Should the permitted species escape, the permittee(s) must immediately notify the Department and is responsible for all expenses incurred for their recovery.
7. In the event of the escape of any permitted species this permit may be revoked without further action by the Department. Such revocation on this basis shall not relieve the permittee(s) of any other responsibility and/or liability required herein.
8. The deaths of bald or golden eagles shall be reported to the DGIF Permits Section within 48 hours. Deaths of other wildlife shall be reported to the Department within five (5) business days. Carcasses or individual parts (to include feathers) of bald or golden eagles shall be forwarded to the National Eagle Repository. Carcasses or individual parts of other species shall be properly incinerated or buried unless the permittee possesses an appropriate Salvage Permit. Deceased wildlife previously held pursuant to this permit shall not be utilized as a food source for other live animals or humans.

## **C. Administrative Conditions**

1. This permit does not absolve the permittee of any responsibilities or conditions of any other Federal, state, or local laws and regulations, including those that apply to threatened/ endangered species, as well as any related Federal permit conditions. The permittee or any sub-permittee may not conduct the activities authorized by this permit if doing so would violate the laws or ordinances of the applicable county, municipal or tribal government, the Federal or State government, or any other applicable law.
2. The permittee and all sub-permittees must possess a legible copy of the permit and display it upon request when exercising its authority. A copy of the permit conditions shall be in possession of the permittee while exercising the authority granted by the permit.

3. Permits to hold, in captivity, species subject to the Endangered Species Act (Code of Virginia, §29.1-564) will be considered only if the applicant is able to demonstrate, affirmatively in the application, that the transportation and possession of such animals is not and has not been in violation of Federal laws, or of laws of this, or any other state. A separate Virginia Endangered and Threatened Species Permit is not required if the permittee has a valid permit to exhibit the species in Virginia.
4. Under authority of Section 29.1-545 of the Code of Virginia, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, association or corporation to possess, sell, offer for sale, or liberate in the Commonwealth any live fur-bearing animal commonly referred to as nutria.
5. This permit does not authorize the collection of any wildlife, only the possession and exhibition; therefore, in order to collect any species from the wild a separate Scientific Collection Permit would be required.
6. If an exhibitor wishes to add any additional animals to the list of those already indicated on their permit, they must notify the Department's Permits Section at [collectionpermits@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:collectionpermits@dgif.virginia.gov) within thirty (30) days of the procurement of that animal, and each animal will be individually considered for approval. Permittees wishing to add bald or golden eagles to their permits must receive prior approval from the Department's Permit Section. (No additional fees will accrue.)
7. An annual report containing the disposition of the animals, the number of exhibits or programs held during the year, and the approximate number of people attending those exhibits or programs will be submitted to the Department by November 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Failure to submit the Annual Report may preclude the Department from renewing the permit.
8. The permittee(s) shall maintain adequate liability insurance to cover all damages, losses, or claims arising from the possession, exhibition, or escapement in the Commonwealth of Virginia of the species authorized by this permit. The permittee(s) hereby agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for all damages, losses, or claims arising out of the possession, exhibition, or escapement in the Commonwealth of Virginia of the species authorized by this permit. The permittee(s) shall cooperate with the Commonwealth and the Department in defense of any claim hereunder, and permittee(s) shall pay all consequential and incidental expenses of the Commonwealth and the Department, including but not limited to reasonable attorney fees.
9. A Permit to Exhibit Wild Animals in Virginia is not required for an authorized falconer or raptor propagator to exhibit a bird held under his/her valid falconry or raptor propagation permit(s) for noncommercial, conservation education purposes, except eagles.
10. Regulation 4 VAC 15-30-7 states that provided that the issuance of a permit renewal has been delayed past the expiration date of the permittee's previous permit at no fault of the applicant, the permittee may continue the specific activities authorized by the expired permit until the Department has acted on such person's application for renewal. To qualify for this allowance, applicants must submit a completed renewal application to the Department at least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration date of the permit. The Department may deny renewal of a permit to any applicant who fails to meet the issuance criteria set forth by the Department. Renewal applications will be mailed approximately two (2) months in advance of the permit's expiration date.

11. Individuals not specifically listed as sub-permittees on the permit are not allowed to possess or handle the wildlife being held under this permit unless they possess their own Permit to Exhibit Wild Animals in Virginia.
12. Native wildlife is not to be displayed in any manner that implies personal ownership. Native wildlife may not be used to promote or endorse any product, merchandise, goods, services, business, or organization except the permittee's educational activities. Public exhibition must include either a written or verbal statement that the permittee's possession and exhibition of the wildlife is by permission of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
13. Transfer of wildlife (including temporary transfer) held under this permit to another permitted exhibitor must be first approved by the Department's Permit Section.
14. This permit is not valid for possession of migratory birds unless accompanied by a Federal Special Purpose Live Migratory Bird Educational Use of Live and Dead Migratory Bird Educational Use Permit.
15. Only individuals (permittees or sub-permittees) that have had up-to-date rabies vaccine inoculations or titers will be permitted to possess, exhibit, or handle high-risk rabies vector species (e.g. raccoons, foxes, bats, skunks, and groundhogs). A safety barrier (perimeter fence, secondary fence) shall be present to adequately prevent high-risk rabies vector species from making physical contact with visitors. These barriers shall be present to prevent the public from approaching the cages, pens, enclosures, or areas near enough to contact the enclosure containing the wildlife. Under no circumstances should the public or non-vaccinated individuals ever be allowed to come inside this safety barrier.
16. Permittees shall provide any and all changes of name, address, e-mail address, and/or phone number to the Department's Permit Section within no more than seven (7) days of those changes.

#### **D. Educational Conditions**

1. Permanent exhibit areas must contain interpretive information designed to inform visitors about the animals on display.
2. Applications for permits from temporary exhibitors must include a fully completed Temporary Exhibition Wildlife Educational Information Template which can be located in Appendix A. All of the information required by the template must be conveyed to those people attending each exhibition, either through printed materials, appropriate signage and/or through a verbal presentation from the exhibitor.
3. Temporary exhibitors that have not notified the Department of all permit year exhibition dates and locations on the application must notify the Permits Section of the Department of any additional events at least seven (7) days prior to the event.

#### **E. Special Species Conditions – Cervids**

1. Under authority of Sections §29.1 - 103 and §29.1 - 521 of the Code of Virginia, it shall be unlawful to take, possess, import, cause to be imported, buy, sell, offer for sale or liberate within the Commonwealth any wild animal unless otherwise specifically permitted by law or regulation. Permittees shall not receive, transfer, move or relocate any member of the Cervidae family into or within Virginia, except

when specifically allowed by the Executive Director of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries under supplemental conditions available from the Department. Any facility possessing cervids under this permit is prohibited from accepting cervids for rehabilitation or for any other purpose unless otherwise provided for by an exception from the Executive Director.

2. All Cervids will be individually identified with ear tags provided by the Department. Exhibitors will be required to comply with Cervid marking requirements within ninety (90) days of receipt of ear tags. Cervid young must be identified as prescribed above within seven (7) days following birth. Permittees requiring ear tags for deer born on site must request additional tags from the Department.
3. Records on the inventory of all Cervid stock must be maintained on forms provided by the Department and such records shall be retained for at least two years. Records will be open to inspection by authorized department personnel at any reasonable time.
4. The permittee must immediately notify the Department of wild deer entering any enclosures holding cervids. If the wild deer cannot be freed within 24 hours, the Department will assist in its removal.
5. The permittee shall immediately notify the Department if any member of the Cervidae family demonstrates some combination of clinical neurological signs consistent with Chronic Wasting Disease (e.g., abnormal behavior, increased salivation, tremors, stumbling, lack of coordination, difficulty swallowing, excessive thirst, and/or excessive urination). The permittee is encouraged to contact their veterinarian to discuss humane dispatch and submission of samples for Chronic Wasting Disease testing. The Department's wildlife veterinarian will consult with the permittee's veterinarian regarding appropriate actions to be taken.
6. Members of the Cervidae family which escape from confinement may be destroyed by the Department without indemnity, after the Department contacts the owner. In any case, escaped free-ranging Cervids will be destroyed after a period of thirty (30) days following escape.
7. The permittee shall notify the Department of all deaths to members of the Cervidae family (except deer less than 6 months of age). Cervid carcasses (except those deer less than 6 months of age) must be transported by the permittee to a Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services veterinary diagnostic laboratory, or the head and neck of the carcass must be provided to designated Department personnel, within 48 hours for disease testing.

#### **F. Special Species Conditions – Dangerous Reptiles and Amphibians**

1. It shall be unlawful for any person, or persons, to display, exhibit, handle or use any poisonous or dangerous snake or reptile in such a manner as to endanger the life or health of any person under authority of Section 18.2-313 of the Code of Virginia.
2. It shall be unlawful for the owner or keeper of any exotic reptile or type of reptile not native to the Commonwealth of Virginia, including but not limited to the American alligator, to keep the reptile in any manner that will permit its escape or to knowingly permit the reptile to run at large under authority of Section 29.1-569 of the Code of Virginia.
3. Supplemental caging requirements and safety measures for dangerous reptiles and amphibians:

- a. A safety barrier (perimeter fence, secondary fence) shall be present to adequately prevent wildlife from coming into physical contact with visitors. These barriers shall be present to prevent the public from approaching the cages, pens, enclosures or areas near enough to contact the cage that the wildlife is in. Under no circumstances should the public ever be allowed to come inside this safety barrier. A minimum of 4' feet from the cage holding the animal to the safety barrier shall be maintained at all times.
- b. All cages and enclosures shall be secured at all times in such a manner as to prevent animals from escaping or the public from entering. The public may at no time come into contact with the animals.
- c. Animals on display shall be contained within an escape-proof area or enclosure at all times when not under the immediate control or direct supervision of the handler.
- d. All cage entrances must remain locked at all times (when unattended) with chains and locks of sufficient strength to prevent entrance to the facility by unauthorized individuals and to prevent the animal from breaking open the door if highly excited.

### **Compliance/Violation/Revocation**

Regulation 4 VAC 15-290-130 states that a permit holder shall comply with all terms and conditions of any permit issued by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries pursuant to Title 29.1 of the Code of Virginia and the regulations of the board pertaining to hunting, fishing, trapping, attempting to take, possession, sale, offering for sale, transporting or causing to be transported, importing or exporting, propagating, exhibiting, and rehabilitating of any wild bird, wild animal or fish. The penalty for violation of this section is a Class 3 misdemeanor unless another penalty is specified. Further, any violation of state or federal wildlife laws related to the permitted activities by the permittee, his/her agents or employees, or guests will constitute a violation of the conditions of the permit.

As provided by 4 VAC 15-30-5, failure to comply with the provisions of a permit may result in the revocation or suspension of the permit for a period up to but not to exceed five (5) years. Any person whose permit is revoked, or suspended may appeal that decision in writing, to the Director, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P O Box 90778, Henrico, VA 23228-0778



## Appendix A

### Temporary Exhibition Wildlife Educational Information Template

This information will be provided for each species exhibited to the viewing public at each event via brochure, signage, and/or verbal presentation.

1. Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Scientific Name (Binomial): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Country/Countries of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Range: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Normal Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Life Span: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Size (Height & Mass): \_\_\_\_\_
8. Diet: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Distinguishing Features: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Social Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Conservation Status: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Population: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Ecological Role: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Means of Communication: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Other information that the exhibitor elects to share with the public about the animal or its species is welcome and encouraged. However, all information provided about the animal should be scientifically accurate and correct.

### Instructions for and Sample of Exhibition Wildlife Educational Information Template

1. Common Name: Enter the animal's common name, i.e. *African Elephant*.
2. Scientific Name (Binomial): Enter the species' binomial scientific name, i.e. *The African Elephant is of the species Loxodonta Africana*.
3. Country/Countries of Origin: Enter the species' country/countries/geographic are of origin, i.e. *The African Elephant lives throughout sub-Saharan Africa*.
4. Range: Enter the species' daily range of movement i.e. *Males and family groups move 6 to 12 miles per day but distances up to 112 miles in a day have been recorded in Namibia*.
5. Normal Habitat: Enter the species' normal habitat/living environment, i.e. *Elephants can be found in savannahs, forests, deserts, and marshes*.
6. Life Span: Enter the species' average life span, i.e. *Elephants can live up to 70 years in the wild*.
7. Size (Height & Mass): Enter the species' size in height and mass, i.e. *African Elephants are the largest living terrestrial animals. They stand 10 to 13 feet tall and weigh 6,600 to 15,000 pounds. In general, African Elephants are larger than their Asian cousins*.
8. Diet: Enter the species' typical diet, i.e. *Elephants are herbivores therefore, they eat as much as 660 pounds per day of grass, brush, and trees. They can drink as much as 50 gallons of water per day*.
9. Distinguishing Features: Enter any distinguishing features that the species may possess, i.e. *Elephants are distinguished by their large ears, long trunks, and long tusks*.
10. Social Organization: Enter the species' social/family organization, i.e. *Female elephants spend their entire lives in tight-knit matrilineal family groups, whereas males spend more time at the edge of his group associating with outside males or even other family groups*.
11. Conservation Status: Enter the species' Conservation Status as determined by the International Union for Conservation of nature, i.e. *African Elephants are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as vulnerable. One of the biggest threats to elephant populations is the ivory trade, as the animals are poached for their ivory tusks*.
12. Population: Enter the current worldwide population of the species, i.e. *The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates that, as of 2012, there were around 440,000 elephants on the planet*.
13. Ecological Role: Enter the species' role in its local ecological environment, i.e. *Elephants, because of their large size, are considered to be a keystone species meaning that they have a disproportionately large effect on its environment relative to its abundance. Elephants are important seed dispersers; African forest elephants ingest and defecate seeds over great distances, with either no effect or a positive effect on germination*.
14. Means of Communication: Enter the means in which the species communicates with animals within its own species as well as other species, i.e. *Elephants communicate by touch, sight, and sound; they use infrasound which is a low frequency sound similar to what whales use and they use seismic communication, by way of their feet, over long distances*.