

## **Wildlife in the Classroom**

### **What is required to display wildlife in the classroom.**

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)

Effective July 1, 2013, VDGIF regulation 4 VAC15-290-60 will exempt elementary and secondary school teachers from 1) submitting a completed Exhibitor's Permit Application and 2) paying the associated application fee, ONLY IF they are exhibiting live [native or naturalized wildlife species](#) in the classroom for educational purposes.

Regulation 4 VAC15-290-60 DOES require teachers to annually submit reports to VDGIF documenting any [native or naturalized wildlife species](#) (except for terrestrial insects, annelid worms, planarians/flatworms, centipedes, millipedes, arachnids, pillbugs, isopods, amphipods) exhibited in the classroom for educational purposes. Numbers of animals, species, location, and dates must be reported.

The regulation does NOT exempt elementary and secondary teachers from submitting applications, obtaining permits, and paying associated application fees for VDGIF [Scientific Collection Permits or Salvage Permits](#), IF there are any plans to actively survey for and/or collect any specimens (live, dead, or parts) of [native or naturalized wildlife species](#) (except for terrestrial insects, annelid worms, planarians/flatworms, centipedes, millipedes, arachnids) from the wild.

Any elementary and secondary school teacher that has (or plans to have) any nonnative (exotic, not naturalized) wildlife species on exhibit for education in the classroom, MUST submit a completed [Exhibitor Permit Application](#), pay associated application fee, and submit an annual report for the species on exhibit. Domestic animals are excluded from the nonnative wildlife definition ([4 VAC15-20-50](#)).

ADDITIONALLY, this regulation does NOT exempt elementary and secondary school teachers from LOCAL ordinances regarding keeping certain wildlife or other animal species in captivity or in classroom environments. ALWAYS check with your county/city regarding any ordinances that may affect keeping certain wildlife or other animal species in captivity.

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### **What teachers CAN do/have without a permit:**

- Teachers CAN have species on the [VDGIF List of Native and Naturalized Fauna of Virginia](#) without an exhibitors permit or application fee, BUT must REPORT the species, numbers, location, and dates to the VDGIF, annually and per updates. (Reports will not be required for terrestrial "bugs" [see next bullets] or UNLESS provided written authorization from the VDGIF)
- Teachers CAN have the following on exhibit with NO permit and NO reporting to the VDGIF:
  - Non-threatened/non-endangered terrestrial insects, annelid worms, planarians/flatworms, centipedes, millipedes, arachnids, pillbugs, isopods, amphipods
  - [Domestic animals](#), as defined by [4 VAC15-20-50](#)
- Teachers can allow one time "show and tell" of wildlife species without any permit or reporting.

## What teachers CANNOT do/have without a permit:

- Teachers CANNOT have the following on exhibit in the classroom, UNLESS they obtain the appropriate permit(s) (including submission of: completed permit application, associated application fee, and required reports):
  - Nonnative wildlife species ([4 VAC15-30-40](#), [4 VAC15-20-50](#), [29.1-571](#), [4VAC15-20-210](#), and [4 VAC15-30-20](#))
  - Fur-bearing wildlife species ([29.1-100](#))
  - Nuisance wildlife species ([4 VAC15-20-160](#), [29.1-571](#), and [4VAC15-20-210](#))
  - [Federal](#) or [state](#) threatened or endangered wildlife species (UNLESS provided written authorization from the VDGIF)
- Teachers CANNOT actively survey for and/or collect any specimens (live, dead, or parts) of [native or naturalized wildlife species](#) (except for terrestrial insects, annelid worms, planarians/flatworms, centipedes, millipedes, arachnids, pillbugs, isopods, amphipods) from the wild WITHOUT a [Scientific Collection Permit and/or a Salvage Permit](#).
- In Virginia, NO native or naturalized wildlife species can be purchased or sold, which includes ordering via catalogues or over the internet. If you are in Virginia, it is illegal for you to purchase or sell any wildlife species that is native or naturalized to the Commonwealth. ([4VAC15-30-10](#))
- NO wildlife (native, naturalized, or nonnative) shall ever be released into the wild, UNLESS provided written authorization from the VDGIF ([4VAC15-30-10](#)). ([study tracking invasive releases by science teachers](#)) The only other exception is wild-caught, native, non-threatened, and non-endangered reptiles and amphibians that are not banned from collection, which may be released under specific conditions: within 30 days of capture, at the exact location of capture, no signs of illness or injury, and not housed with other animals during captivity. ([4VAC15-360-10](#), section A. 6.).

## What else is REQUIRED:

- Anytime a person is bitten by a mammalian wildlife species, the injury must be reported to the [local health department, under the Virginia Department of Health](#). The offending animal must be segregated from other animals and humans until the health department is notified.
- Any captive wildlife is to be confined under sanitary and humane conditions that are appropriate for the given species. All cages and enclosures shall be locked at all times, when wildlife is not under immediate control or direct supervision of the handler to prevent escape or unauthorized contact with other individuals.