

Maryland Enacts Snapping Turtle Rules

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Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council recommended that retailers post a notice of the new rule in their reptile sections to alert customers. The rule's provisions require any person catching snapping turtles for commercial purposes to hold a valid snapping turtle permit from the fisheries service. Also for commercial purposes, it prohibits all harvesting and possession of snapping turtles from the state's nontidal waters and, for tidal waters, limits harvesting and possession to snapping turtles with carapace lengths of at least nine-and-a-half inches.

For pet owners, the emergency rule limits possession to one snapping turtle from the wild and prohibits taking or possessing wild snapping turtles with carapace lengths less than four inches. The rule also allows people to release snapping turtles taken from the wild back into the wild with prior written authorization from the agency. The rule defines wild as "any land or water in the state, either natural or altered, upon which a snapping turtle can exist in a condition which is not constrained or controlled by humans."