Updating CPW's Herpetofauna Regulations

Herp Regulation Team:
Alexandria Argue, Jonathan Boydston, John Flier, Lexi Hamous-Miller, Eric Harper, Hilary Hernandez, John Koehler, Liz Krone, Jenn Logan, Jerrie McKee, Dan Neubaum, Erik Slater, Colby Wells, Mary Wood

Parks and Wildlife Commission
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Photo: H. Johnson

Herpetofauna Issues

Illegal Trafficking of Herps:

- Ornate box turtles, hognose snakes

Over collection of popular or trendy species:

- Social media changed the playing field (e.g. unusual leucistic color morph of hognose snake led to a collection frenzy).
- Unknown how many native herps are collected each year, currently no way of tracking

Herpetofauna Issues

Invasive Species

- Such as bullfrogs and red-eared sliders

Disease

- Multiple diseases tied to amphibians and reptiles spreading in N.A. (e.g., Chytrid fungus, Ranaviruses)

State Wildlife Action Plan

- Identified that many herps in the SWAP lack information about range, population trend, etc.

Problems with Existing Regulations

Confusing regulations - occur in 7 different Chapters

- Terminology is confusing
  - Venomous, does this include rear fanged species?
  - Unregulated vs. regulated?

Regulations currently hard to enforce by officers

- E.g. Corn, milk, and king snakes sold in pet stores despite being regulated native species to CO

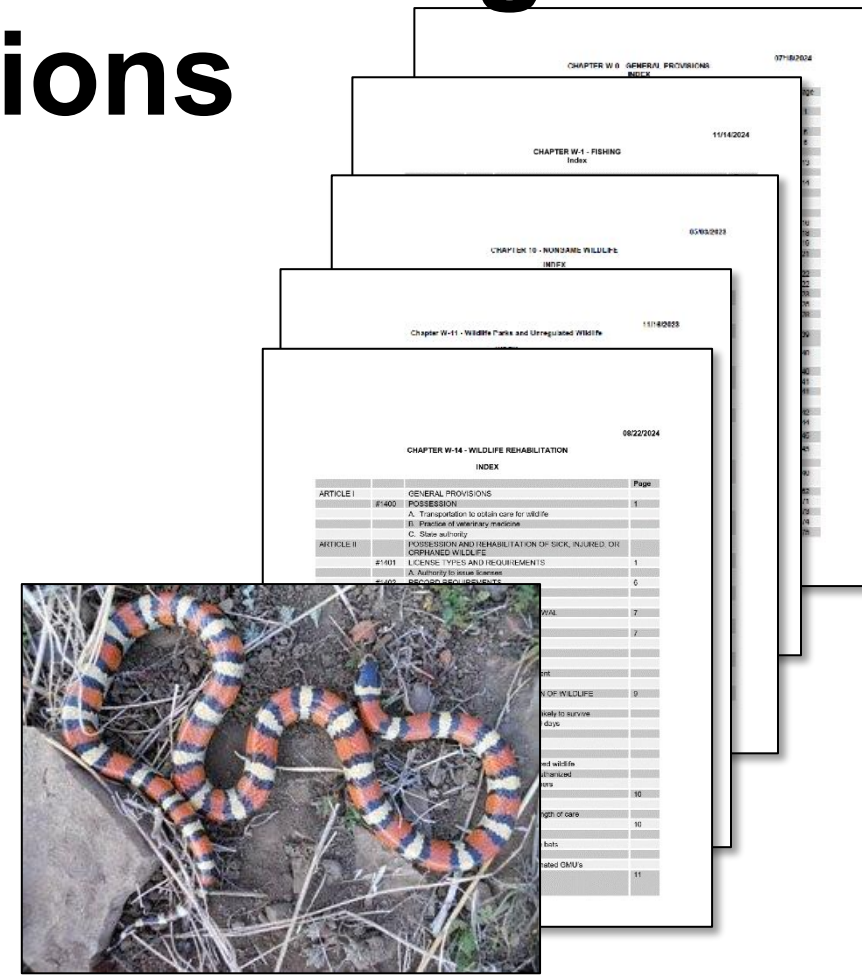


Photo: K. Young

Public Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement process

- Informed staff recommendations and several revisions to draft regulations proposed by CPW staff

Public Engagement process included

- Public webinar with polling question on wild collection alternatives
- EngageCPW page with 30 day feedback form opportunity asking about wild collection alternatives and general input
- Stakeholder meeting with diverse perspectives including technical experts, conservationists, reptile and amphibian rescue groups, reptile keepers, and animal welfare advocates.

Collection & Reporting Alternatives

Alternative 1

- Limited Native Herp Collection by CO residents: No permit required - ”As Is”, but includes some modifications (e.g., new chapter, “No release”, website materials)

Alternative 2

- Limited Native Herp Collection by CO residents with a Permit, and Fee: $40 Online permit required, mandatory education, reporting requirement, and includes modifications (e.g., new chapter, “No release”, website materials)

Alternative 3

- No Native Herp Collection: Includes some modifications suggested above

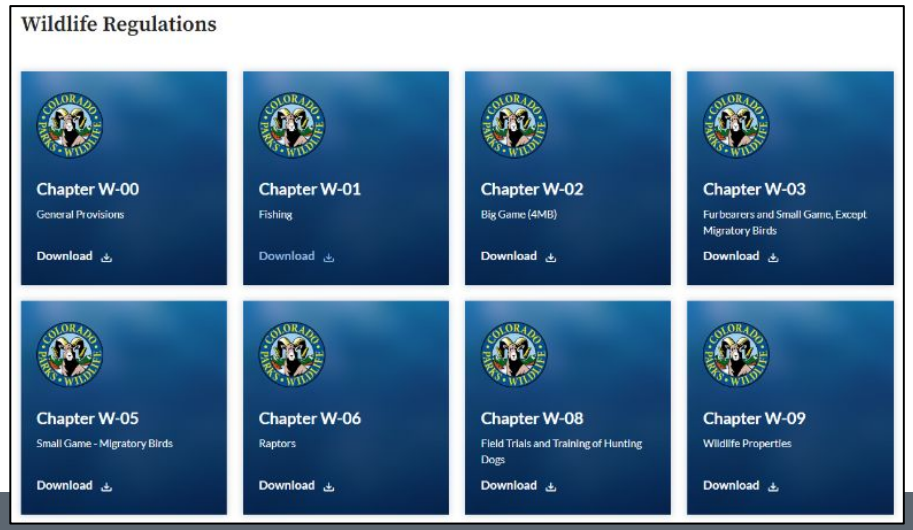
Recommendations

Create a new stand alone Herpetofauna Chapter

- Putting as many of the regulations in one place as possible will make it easier to get the correct information to staff and public and to update

Encourage “Herping” instead of collection

- Temporary possession of herps for identification or photography



Recommendations

Appendix A - Species that may be possessed, sold, offered for sale, purchased, or transported without a license or documentation under #702.A. (Specific species from the tropical/subtropical region) pg 11-13

Appendix B - Species that may be possessed, sold, offered for sale, purchased, or transported with documentation under #702.B. (Specific species of captive bred snakes) pg 13

Photo: Petco

Photo: K. Urbanek

Photo: M. Pingleton

Appendix C - Species that may be captured from the wild within Colorado, possessed, and transported within Colorado as provided by a valid Resident Herpetofauna Collection and Possession License under #703 (Specific native species) pg 13-14

Recommendations

Pet Trade Species

CPW approved a species list (Appendices A & B) based on the following considerations:

- Tropical or subtropical species that occur between 26.0 degrees north latitude and 26.0 degrees south latitude (Appendix A)
  - Low invasive risk
- Non venomous unless deemed medically insignificant by CPW (Appendix A)
- Subset of species found outside tropics allowed (e.g., corn, milk snakes; Appendix B)
- Legacy permit for species acquired prior to May 1, 2026

Recommendations

Alternative 2 - Capture from the wild

- Creating a Colorado Resident Herpetofauna Collection and Possession Licence $40.00
- License applicants must complete and pass an education course prior to applying for a license
- License period is no more than 5 years and will expire on March 31st
- Online reporting requirements
- Legacy possession requirements
- Disposition

Recommendations

Alternative 2: Online orientation course prior to collection of native species

- Reinforces **No Release** policy - think about the long-term commitment to care for these species, while reducing spread of disease and invasive species
- Encourages “Herping” as alternative
- Carifies terminology and introduces the species lists/Appendices
- Applicant must pass test with 75% or higher within twelve months prior to applying for a license

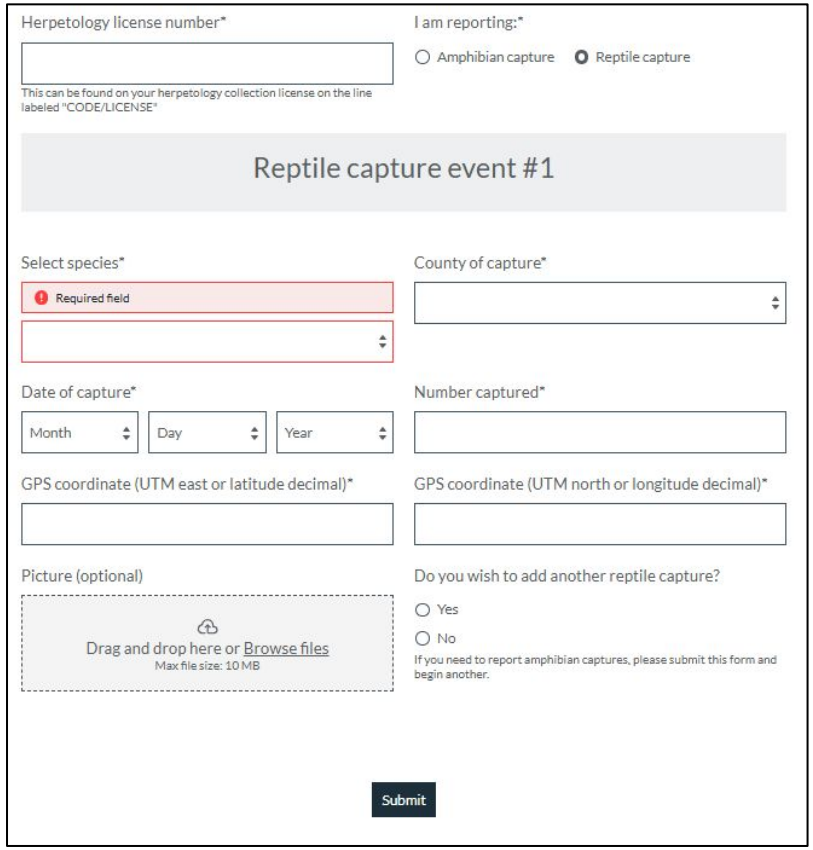
Snake fungal virus, Photo: Tri County Wildlife Care, CA

Invasive bullfrog, Photo: H. Johnson

Recommendations

Alternative 2: Reporting a capture/collection

- License holder's CID, date, and location of the collection
- Drop down with species list (if they don't see their species, it's not allowed)
- Picture provides species verification and acts as a voucher
- Seven day reporting requirement



Recommendations

Rehoming:

- Pet stores and shelters may temporarily house confiscated animals or those turned in for rehoming when the owner can no longer care for the animal
- Grants can be secured to help cover costs of care by participating facilities
- E.g. RescueMe.org
- Permit required for new owner if the species rehomed is from Appendix C

Photo: H. Glass

Recommendations

Invasive Herps

- Red-eared slider
- Bullfrogs
- Unlimited removal

Photo: D. Neubaum

Photo: G. Hume

Legacy reporting

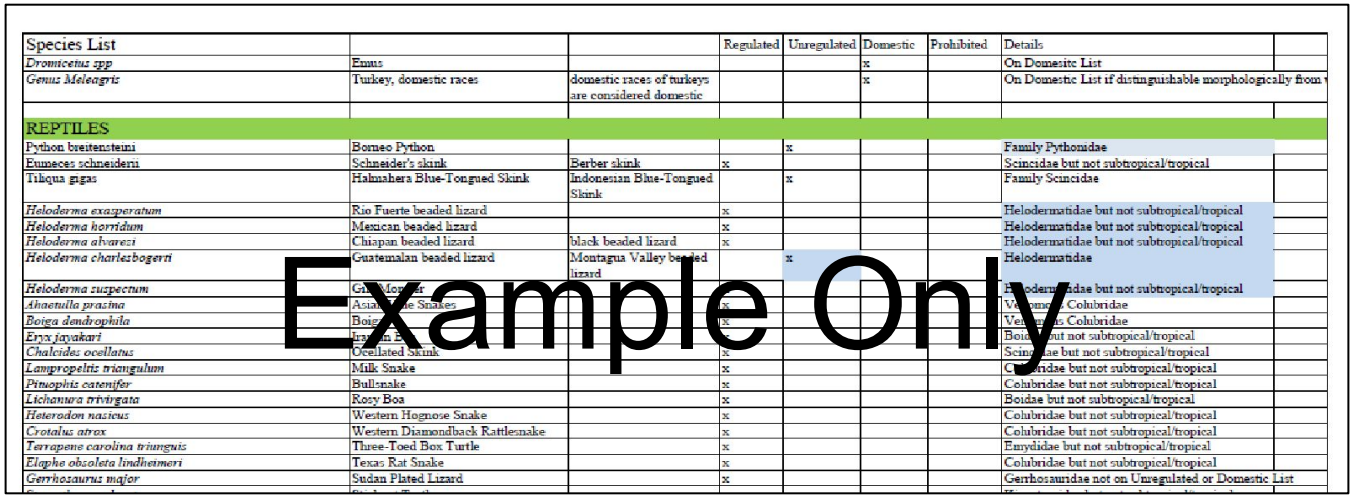
- Mexican beaded Lizard
- Gila monster
- Export the animal
- Rehome to an authorized facility

Gila monster, Photo: NPS

Recommendations

Improve access to regulations by adding resources to the CPW webpage:

- Provide basic summary of herp regulations and terminology on webpage for public, link to detailed regulations
- List regulated & unregulated species clearly, periodically update list



Species List			Regulated	Unregulated	Domestic	Prohibited	Details	
Dromiceus spp	Emus				x		On Domesitc List	
Genus Meleagris	Turkey, domestic races	domestic races of turkeys are considered domestic			x		On Domestic List if distinguishable morphologically from	
REPTILES								
Python breitensteini	Borneo Python			x			Family Pythonidae	
Eumeces schneideri	Schneider's skink	Berber skink	x				Scincidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Tiliqua gigas	Halmahera Blue-Tongued Skink	Indonesian Blue-Tongued Skink		x			Family Scincidae	
Heloderma exasperatum	Rio Fuerte beaded lizard		x				Helodermatidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Heloderma horridum	Mexican beaded lizard		x				Helodermatidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Heloderma alvarezi	Chiapan beaded lizard	black beaded lizard	x				Helodermatidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Heloderma charlesbogerti	Guatemalan beaded lizard	Montagua Valley beaded lizard		x			Helodermatidae	
Heloderma suspectum	Gila Monster						Helodermatidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Ahaetulla prasina	Asian Vine Snakes		x				Ve[illegible] Colubridae	
Boiga dendrophila	Boigas		x				Ve[illegible] Colubridae	
Eryx jayakari	Jayakar's [illegible]		x				Boi[illegible]but not subtropical/tropical	
Chalcides ocellatus	Ocellated Skink		x				Scin[illegible]ae but not subtropical/tropical	
Lampropeltis triangulum	Milk Snake		x				C[illegible]ridae but not subtropical/tropical	
Pituophis catenifer	Bullsnake		x				Colubridae but not subtropical/tropical	
Lichanura trivirgata	Rosy Boa		x				Boidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Heterodon nasicus	Western Hognose Snake		x				Colubridae but not subtropical/tropical	
Crotalus atrox	Western Diamondback Rattlesnake		x				Colubridae but not subtropical/tropical	
Terrapene carolina triunguis	Three-Toed Box Turtle		x				Emydidae but not subtropical/tropical	
Elaphe obsoleta lindheimeri	Texas Rat Snake		x				Colubridae but not subtropical/tropical	
Gerrhosaurus major	Sudan Plated Lizard		x				Gerrhosauridae not on Unregulated or Domestic List	

Example Only

Questions?

Photo by Hunter Johnson