

## Rhode Island Adopts New Rules To Manage Exotic Animals

**The Department of Environmental Management amends rules governing exotic animal importation and possession.**

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The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has adopted amendments to rules governing the importation and possession of exotic animals. The new rules go into effect April 15, 2010.

The amendments aim to modify the existing rules so as to clarify which animals may be owned with a permit and which animals do not require a permit. Prior to adopting the amendments, the department made some changes/clarifications to sections that pertain to exotic amphibians and mammals.

Specifically, the new rules call for the establishment of three categories of animals: domestic animals, exempt exotic animals and exotic animals. Animals classified as domestic or exempt exotic animals do not require a permit for ownership. Animals classified as exotic do require a permit. Animals that do not appear on either the domestic animals or exempt exotic animals lists require a permit by default.

The department defines "exotic animals" as "any vertebrate or invertebrate other than those defined as domestic animals, native wildlife, or exempt exotic animals under this regulation." The rules state that any exotic animal imported into or possessed within the state without a permit will be considered contraband and may be confiscated.

All aquarium trade fish may be kept without an exotic animal permit, except endangered species and the following species: Grass Carp or White Amur; Piranha; Rudd; Walking Catfish; Snakeheads.

Exotic amphibians kept, housed or maintained outdoors require a permit. Permits will be granted on a case-by-base basis to applicants who ensure the animal will be kept so that it can't escape. In the original draft, all amphibians, both indoor and outdoor, would have required a permit. The rule has also been revised to include certain requirements for retail amphibian vendors. All retail amphibian vendors must provide written notification to purchasers of the permit requirement and keep a sales log that includes the name of the purchaser, address of the purchaser, date of purchase, purchaser's signature and species purchased.

All exotic turtles may be kept without a permit, except endangered species and the Argentina or Chaco tortoise; gopher tortoise and pancake tortoises.

(The department's Division of Fish and Wildlife regulations prohibit possession of red-eared slider turtles).

All venomous snakes require an exotic animal permit, but the following snakes may be kept without a permit: All species of boas and pythons, except the emerald tree boa, green tree python, African rock python, reticulated python and all species of anaconda; Shield-tailed snakes, sunbeam snakes, and others in the families Uropeltidae and Xenopeltidae; Worm snakes, thread snakes, and others in the families Typhlopidae, Leptotyphlopidae, and Anomalepididae; Certain snakes of the family Colubridae.

Possession of all chameleons, the Gila monster, beaded lizard and all monitors require a permit. Also in need of a permit are Florida sand skinks, Solomon Island ground skinks, certain teiids and the big bend gecko.

Endangered bird species and migratory birds listed in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act require a permit, as does the monk parakeet (quaker parrots), rose-colored starling and the red-billed, black-fronted or Sudan diochs.

The following mammals may be kept without a permit: Four-toed hedgehog; Captive-bred chinchillas; Deer mouse and white-footed mouse; Degu; Egyptian spiny mouse; House mouse; Jerboas; Norway rat; Paca; Striped hamster, also known as the Chinese or Siberian dwarf hamster; Sugar glider.

The department has added a note in the regulation that states possession of a ferret does not require an exotic animal permit. It does, however, require a permit issued through the Division of Fish & Wildlife.



To view the new rule in its entirety, click: [www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/agric/xotkanml.pdf](http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/agric/xotkanml.pdf). See All BirdChannel.com Bird News