

Reptiles: Commission Order 43

GENERAL REPTILES				
Open Areas do not include areas within municipal parks, municipal preserves, county parks, county preserves, airports, golf courses, or posted water treatment facilities (except as specifically opened in this Commission Order) or areas closed under A.R.S. Sections 17-101, 17-303 and 17-304, or Commission Rules R12-4-321, R12-4-801, R12-4-802 and R12-4-803. Other Notes may apply (see Open Areas information below).				
Open Season Dates	Notes	Open Areas	Legal Reptiles	Bag and Possession Limit
A. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 24, 26, 27)	Statewide, except areas closed in Notes 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 (also noted above*).	All reptiles, except those named in Subsections B, C, D, and E	Four (4) per year or in possession of each species live or dead.
B. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 24, 26, 27)	Statewide, except areas closed in Notes 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 (also noted above*).	<i>Kinosternon arizonense</i> (aka, <i>K. stejnegeri</i> ; Arizona mud turtle), <i>K. flavescens</i> (yellow mud turtle), <i>K. sonoriense</i> (Sonora mud turtle), <i>Lichanura roseofusca</i> (rosy boa), <i>L. trivirgata</i> (three-lined boa), <i>Senticolis triaspis</i> (green ratsnake), <i>Lampropeltis knoblochi</i> (Madrean mountain kingsnake), <i>L. pyromelana</i> (Arizona mountain kingsnake), and <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i> (milksnake; except no open season in Cochise County)	Two (2) per year or four (4) in possession of each species live or dead.
C. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 3, 7 10 11, 12, 20, 24, 26, 27)	Statewide, except areas closed in Notes 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 (also noted above*).	<i>Sceloporus cowlesi</i> (southwestern fence lizard), <i>Sceloporus tristichus</i> (plateau lizard), <i>Sonora semiannulata</i> (groundsnake), <i>Tantilla hobartsmithi</i> (Smith’s black-headed snake), and all species in the genera: <i>Callisaurus</i> (zebra-tailed lizard), <i>Aspidoscelis</i> (whiptails), <i>Coleonyx</i> (banded gecko), <i>Cophosaurus</i> (greater earless lizard), <i>Holbrookia</i> (lesser earless lizards), <i>Urosaurus</i> (tree lizards), <i>Uta</i> (side-blotched lizard), <i>Hypsiglena</i> (nightsnakes), and <i>Rena</i> (threadsnakes)	Twenty (20) per day or in possession in the aggregate live or dead.
D. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 24, 26, 27)	Statewide, except areas closed in Notes 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 (also noted above*).	<i>Chalcides ocellatus</i> (ocellated skink), <i>Cyrtopodion scabrum</i> (rough-tailed gecko), <i>Tarentola annularis</i> (ringed wall gecko), <i>Nerodia fasciata</i> (banded watersnake), <i>Apalone spinifera</i> (spiny softshell), <i>Trachemys scripta</i> (slider), and all species of the family Chelydridae (snapping turtles)	Unlimited dead.
E. There is no open season on <i>Phrynosoma mcallii</i> (flat-tailed horned lizard), <i>Heloderma suspectum</i> (Gila monster), <i>Crotalus lepidus</i> (rock rattlesnake), <i>Crotalus pricei</i> (twin-spotted rattlesnake), <i>Crotalus willardi</i> (ridge-nosed rattlesnake), <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i> (milksnake; Cochise County only), <i>Sistrurus catenatus</i> (massasauga), <i>Thamnophis eques</i> (Mexican gartersnake), <i>Thamnophis rufipunctatus</i> (narrow-headed gartersnake), <i>Gopherus agassizii</i> (Mojave desert tortoise), <i>Gopherus morafkai</i> (Sonoran desert tortoise), <i>Kinosternon sonoriense longifemorale</i> (Sonoyta mud turtle), and <i>Terrapene ornata</i> (ornate box turtle); see Notes 4 and 5.				

LIMITED WEAPON HAND OR HAND-HELD IMPLEMENT REPTILES				
Open Areas do not include any area closed under A.R.S. Sections 17-101, 17-303 and 17-304, or Commission Rules R12-4-801, R12-4-802 and R12-4-803.				
Open Season Dates	Notes	Open Areas	Legal Reptiles	Bag and Possession Limit
A. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13)	Statewide, including private lands within city limits and areas within municipal parks, municipal preserves, county parks, county preserves, airports, golf courses, or posted water treatment facilities, except areas closed in Notes 6, 7, 8 and 10.	All reptiles, except those named in Subsections B, C, D, and E	Four (4) per year or in possession of each species live or dead.
B. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(2, 3, 7, 9, 13)	Statewide, including private lands within city limits and areas within municipal parks, municipal preserves, county parks, county preserves, airports, golf courses, or posted water treatment facilities.	<i>Kinosternon arizonense</i> (aka, <i>K. stejnegeri</i> ; Arizona mud turtle), <i>K. flavescens</i> (yellow mud turtle), <i>K. sonoriense</i> (Sonora mud turtle), <i>Lichanura roseofusca</i> (rosy boa), <i>L. trivirgata</i> (three-lined boa), <i>Senticolis triaspis</i> (green ratsnake), <i>Lampropeltis knoblochi</i> (Madrean mountain kingsnake), <i>L. pyromelana</i> (Arizona mountain kingsnake), and <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i> (milksnake; except no open season in Cochise County)	Two (2) per year or four (4) in possession of each species live or dead.
C. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(2, 3, 7, 13)	Statewide, including private lands within city limits and areas within municipal parks, municipal preserves, county parks, county preserves, airports, golf courses, or posted water treatment facilities.	<i>Sceloporus cowlesi</i> (southwestern fence lizard), <i>Sceloporus tristichus</i> (plateau lizard), <i>Sonora semiannulata</i> (groundsnake), <i>Tantilla hobartsmithi</i> (Smith’s black-headed snake), and all species in the genera: <i>Callisaurus</i> (zebra-tailed lizard), <i>Aspidoscelis</i> (whiptails), <i>Coleonyx</i> (banded gecko), <i>Cophosaurus</i> (greater earless lizard), <i>Holbrookia</i> (lesser earless lizard), <i>Urosaurus</i> (tree lizard), <i>Uta</i> (side-blotched lizard), <i>Hypsiglena</i> (nightsnake), and <i>Rena</i> (threadsnakes)	Twenty (20) per day or in possession in the aggregate live or dead.
D. Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1, – Dec 31, 2030	(2, 7, 8, 9, 13)	Statewide, including private lands within city limits and areas within municipal parks, municipal preserves, county parks, county preserves, airports, golf courses, or posted water treatment facilities. except areas closed in Note 10.	<i>Chalcides ocellatus</i> (ocellated skink), <i>Cyrtopodion scabrum</i> (rough-tailed gecko), <i>Tarentola annularis</i> (ringed wall gecko), <i>Nerodia fasciata</i> (banded watersnake), <i>Apalone spinifera</i> (spiny softshell), <i>Trachemys scripta</i> (slider), and all species of the family Chelydridae (snapping turtles)	Unlimited dead.
E. There is no open season on <i>Phrynosoma mcallii</i> (flat-tailed horned lizard), <i>Heloderma suspectum</i> (Gila monster), <i>Crotalus lepidus</i> (rock rattlesnake), <i>Crotalus pricei</i> (twin-spotted rattlesnake), <i>Crotalus willardi</i> (ridge-nosed rattlesnake), <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i> (milksnake; Cochise County only), <i>Sistrurus catenatus</i> (massasauga), <i>Thamnophis eques</i> (Mexican gartersnake), <i>Thamnophis rufipunctatus</i> (narrow-headed gartersnake), <i>Gopherus agassizii</i> (Mojave desert tortoise), <i>Gopherus morafkai</i> (Sonoran desert tortoise), <i>Kinosternon sonoriense longifemorale</i> (Sonoyta mud turtle), and <i>Terrapene ornata</i> (ornate box turtle); see Notes 4 and 5.				

ARIZONA
Reptile and
Amphibian
Regulations
2026, 2027, 2028,
2029 & 2030
Reptiles Note 4 was amended April 10, 2026.



Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, Arizona 85086
602-942-3000
azgfd.gov



Reptile Notes:

1. A hunting or combination license is required for take of reptiles. A fishing or combination license is required for take of softshell turtles. Reptiles may be taken day or night. See R12-4-304 (G) for restrictions on trapping and the use of artificial light and firearms. By law, softshell turtles are considered aquatic wildlife and a fishing or combination license is required for take; methods of take are prescribed in R12-4-313.
2. A hunting or combination license is required for take of reptiles. A fishing or combination license is required for take of softshell turtles. Reptiles may be taken day or night. See R12-4-304 (G) for restrictions for trapping and the use of artificial light. By law, softshell turtles are considered aquatic wildlife and a fishing or combination license is required for take. Methods of take are prescribed in R12-4-318 (C.9).
3. Per R12-4-404, progeny of lawfully held reptiles other than desert tortoises may, for twelve months from date of hatching or birth, be held in captivity in excess of the stated limits. Before or upon reaching twelve months of age, such progeny must be disposed of by gift to another person or as directed by the Department.
4. For possession and captivity rules for Sonoran desert tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*), please see R12-4-407.
5. The possession limit for massasaugas legally held prior to January 1, 1989, when season closure went into effect, is four (4) per person. The possession limit for Mexican gartersnakes, narrow-headed gartersnakes, and ornate box turtles legally held prior to January 1, 2005, when season closure went into effect, is four (4) per person. See Note 3.
6. Chuckwallas (genus *Sauromalus*) may not be taken within the boundaries of Phoenix South Mountain Park.
7. The Fort Huachuca Military Reservation, the Yuma Proving Ground, and Camp Navajo control access to hunting on their installations.
8. The Fort Huachuca Military Reservation controls access to the taking of aquatic wildlife on its installation.
9. Turtles may not be taken at any time (or during periods specified) within the following areas:
 - (1) Posted boundaries of State or Federal hatcheries, except for Arizona Game and Fish Department sponsored fishing clinics.
 - (2) Posted boundary of the Region I regional headquarters in Pinetop.
 - (3) The Colorado River one-half mile upstream and one-half mile downstream from its confluence with the Little Colorado River.

Reptile Notes:

- (4) That portion of the Little Colorado River lying within the Grand Canyon National Park.
 - (5) Lee Valley Creek above Lee Valley Lake.
 - (6) Gap Creek between Honeymoon Cabin and its confluence with the Verde River.
 - (7) Mineral Creek in Apache County upstream of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Boundary.
 - (8) Posted areas immediately above the dams at Upper Lake Mary, Alamo Lake and Lake Mead.
 - (9) Posted areas immediately below Davis, Hoover, Glen Canyon, Waddell (Lake Pleasant), Roosevelt, Horse Mesa and Mormon Flat dams.
 - (10) Posted, Spawning Pond Number 1 and Spawning Pond Number 2 located along the Salinity Canal north of Yuma.
 - (11) The Luna Lake Wildlife Area from April 1 through July 31.
 - (12) Posted portions of Alamo Lake.
 - (13) Posted portions of the Tonto Arm of Roosevelt Lake from November 15 through February 15 annually.
 - (14) Posted portions of Mittry Lake from November 15 through February 15 annually.
 - (15) Posted portions of Becker Lake are closed to all public entry from December 15 through June 15.
 - (16) Posted portions of Lake Mead.
 - (17) Posted portions of Powers Butte Wildlife Area are closed to entry for the purpose of taking wildlife.
 - (18) Posted portions of Bog Hole Wildlife Area.
 - (19) Posted portions of Lake Havasu.
 - (20) Posted portions of Cienega Creek in Pima County.
 - (21) Aravaipa Creek in Pinal and Graham counties.
 - (22) Sycamore Creek in Santa Cruz County.
 - (23) Cibola Lake from the first Monday in September (Labor Day) through March 15.
 - (24) Posted portions of Martinez Lake from October 1 through March 1.
 - (25) Posted in accordance with and pursuant to ARS 17-303 and 304.
10. The Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon, Grand Canyon-Parashant, Vermillion Cliffs, Sonoran Desert, Ironwood Forest, and Agua Fria National Monuments are open to hunting when the unit they occur in is open to hunting by Commission Order.
11. Open Areas do not include private lands within city limits and areas within municipal parks, municipal preserves, county parks, county preserves, airports, golf courses, or posted water treatment facilities (except as specifically opened in this Commission Order) or any area closed to hunting, fishing, or trapping under A.R.S. Sections 17-303

Reptile Notes:

- and 17-304, or Commission Rules R12-4-321, R12-4-801, R12-4-802 and R12-4-803.
12. General Reptile seasons must comply with R12-4-304 - Lawful Methods for Taking Wild Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles:
- F. An individual may take reptiles by any method not prohibited in R12-4-303 or R12-4-318 under the following conditions. An individual:
1. Shall check pitfall traps of any size daily, release non-target species, remove pitfalls when no longer in use, and fill any holes;
 2. Shall not use firearms at night; and
 3. May use artificial light while taking reptiles, if the light is not attached to or operated from a motor vehicle, motorized watercraft, watercraft under sail, or floating object towed by a motorized watercraft or a watercraft under sail.
13. Limited Weapon Hand or Hand-held Implement Reptile seasons must comply with R12-4-318 - Seasons for Lawfully Taking Wild Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles:
- C. When designated by Commission order, the following seasons have specific requirements and lawful methods of take more restrictive than those for general and special seasons, as prescribed in this Section. While taking the species authorized by the season, a person participating in:
9. A "limited weapon hand or hand-held implement" season may use one or more of the following methods or devices for taking wildlife, if authorized under R12-4-304 as lawful for the species hunted:
 - a. Catch-pole,
 - b. Hand,
 - c. Snake hook, or
 - d. Snake tongs.
14. Hunting is not permitted in Unit 26M in the following described area: Those private lands lying just north of the Town of Cave Creek in Sections 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of Township 6 North, Range 4 East.
15. A portion of Unit 25M is closed to hunting. Hunting is not permitted in the following area of Unit 25M: an unincorporated portion of land west of Loop 202 (San Tan Freeway) known as the Elliot and Hawes County Island in Section 16, Township 1 South, Range 7 East.
16. Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR) access is subject to military operations/closure and requires an Access Permit. For specifics about accessing the BMGR refer to the Arizona Hunting Regulations, "Hunting on Military Reservations."

Reptile Notes:

17. The Florence Military Reservation (training areas B and D: the areas north and south of Cottonwood Canyon Road) in Unit 37B is subject to short term closures due to military operations, including live fire operations, and requires coordination with the Florence Military Reservation for hunting access. For specific closure dates or any other access concerns, contact the Florence Military Reservation at 602-267-2060.
18. Hunting is not permitted in Unit 26M in the following described area: the unincorporated portion of land within the Town of Queen Creek in Pinal County in Sections 5, 7, 8, and 18 of Township 3 South, Range 8 East.
19. Within Unit 25M as described in R12-4-108, all incorporated lands, including private property within municipal boundaries, are closed to hunting unless opened under Commission Order. Incorporated includes all municipal and corporate limits. Hunting is also not permitted in an unincorporated portion of land west of Loop 202 (San Tan Freeway) known as the Elliot and Hawes County Island in Section 16, Township 1 South, Range 7 East.
20. The following Pima County parks and preserves are open to hunting concurrent with a game hunting season in the unit in which they occur: A-7 Ranch in Units 32 and 33, Oracle Ridge Property in Unit 33, Six Bar Ranch in Unit 33, Emperita Ranch in Unit 34B, Bar V Ranch in Unit 34B, Sands Ranch in Unit 34B, Clyne Ranch in Unit 34B, Diamond Bell Ranch in Unit 36A, Marley Ranch in Unit 36A and 36B, Rancho Seco in Units 36A and 36B, Kings 98 Ranch in Unit 36C, Old Hayhook Ranch in Unit 36C, Verdugo in Unit 36C, Bee Ranch in Unit 37A, Mordka Ranch in Unit 37A, Buckelew Ranch in Unit 37A, Carpenter Ranch in Unit 37A, Cochise Canyon Ranch in Unit 37A, Lords Ranch in Unit 37A, and Tortolita Mountain Park in Unit 37A. Hunting in County Parks, opened by this Commission Order, is not permitted within ¼ mile of any developed picnic area, developed camp ground, shooting range, occupied building, boat ramp, or golf course. Developed areas do not include trails.
21. Hunting is not permitted in Unit 36B in the following described area: in the posted portion of Sopori Ranch south of Arivaca Road in Sections 14 and 15, Township 20 South, Range 11 East. The remainder of Sopori Ranch is open to hunting.
22. Hunting is not permitted in Unit 37A in the following described area in the Town of Marana: beginning at the intersection of Sanders Road and Avra Valley Road; north on Sanders Road to the Santa Cruz River; southeast along the Santa Cruz River to the Central Arizona Project Canal; southwest along the Central Arizona Project Canal

Reptile Notes:

- to Avra Valley Road; west on Avra Valley Road to the intersection of Sanders Road.
23. Hunting is not permitted in Units 43A and 44B in the following described area in the Town of Quartzsite: Sections 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35, Township 4 North, Range 19 West and Sections 2, 3, and 4, Township 3 North, Range 19 West.
24. The following parks and preserves in Maricopa County are open to hunting as defined in R12-4-321: Lake Pleasant, White Tank Mountains, McDowell Mountain, and Estrella Mountain Regional parks; Buckeye Hills and McDowell Sonoran Preserve; and portions of Skyline Regional Park (Back Country designated area only-- contact the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Mesa Regional office or City of Buckeye for open area maps). Hunting in parks and preserves opened by this Commission Order is not permitted within ¼ mile of any developed picnic area, developed campground, shooting range, occupied building, boat ramp, or golf course. Developed areas do not include trails.
25. The area in Unit 37A in the Town of Marana is subject to temporary closures in February for special events. All state lands located south of Cochise Canyon Trail in Township 11 South, Range 12 East.
26. The following City of Tucson Water Properties located in Avra Valley are open to hunting: the Duval property in Unit 36C and the Bowden-west, Buckalew, Cactus Avra, Ed Anway, Flying E Bar, Kai, Nichols, Tucker, and Trust 205 properties in Unit 37A; all other Tucson Water Properties are closed to hunting. All open City of Tucson properties are foot access only at designated entry points. Signing in and out is required at sign-in boxes located at designated entry points.
27. In Unit 4A, Unit 5A, and Unit 5B, the Arizona Game and Fish Department has entered into an agreement with the Hopi Tribe to allow access to Hopi Trust lands on the Hopi Three Canyon Ranch. This includes the Aja Ranch (Unit 4A), the Clear Creek Ranch (Unit 5A) and the Hart Ranch (Unit 5B). Access is permitted by written permission through the Department Landowner Relations Program web page, www.azgfd.gov/landownercompact or by scanning the QR code on signs at all approved access points. All hunters and everyone in their party must have written permission.

ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES: TITLE 17 LAWS

A.R.S. 17-101

Definitions

- A. In this title, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - 19. "Statewide" means all lands except those areas lying within the boundaries of state and federal refuges, parks and monuments, unless specifically provided differently by commission order.
 - 24. "Wildlife" means all wild mammals, wild birds and the nests or eggs thereof, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans and fish, including their eggs or spawn.
- B. The following definitions of wildlife shall apply:
 - 1. "Aquatic wildlife" means fish, amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans and soft-shelled turtles.

A.R.S. 17-301

Times when wildlife may be taken; exceptions; methods of taking

- A. A person may take wildlife, except aquatic wildlife, only during daylight hours unless otherwise prescribed by the commission. A person shall not take any species of wildlife by the aid or with the use of a jacklight, other artificial light, or illegal device, except as provided by the commission.
- B. A person shall not take wildlife, except aquatic wildlife, or discharge a firearm or shoot any other device from a motor vehicle, including an automobile, aircraft, train or powerboat, or from a sailboat, boat under sail, or a floating object towed by powerboat or sailboat except as expressly permitted by the commission. No person may knowingly discharge any firearm or shoot any other device upon, from, across or into a road or railway.

A.R.S. 17-306

Importation, transportation, release or possession of live wildlife; violations; classification

- A. No person shall import or transport into this state or sell, trade or release within this state or have in the person's possession any live wildlife except as authorized by the commission or as defined in title 3, chapter 16.
- B. It is unlawful for a person to knowingly and without lawful authority under state or federal law import and transport into this state and release within this state a species of wildlife that is listed as a threatened, endangered or candidate species under the endangered species act of 1973 (P.L. 93-205; 87 Stat. 884; 16 United States Code sections 1531 through 1544).
- C. A person who violates subsection B of this section is guilty of a class 6 felony.

- D. A person who violates subsection B of this section with the intent to disrupt or interfere with the development or use of public natural resources to establish the presence of the species in an area not currently known to be occupied by that species is guilty of a class 4 felony.

A.R.S. 17-331

License or proof of purchase required; violation of child support order

- A. Except as provided by this title, rules prescribed by the commission or commission order, a person shall not take any wildlife in this state without a valid license or a commission approved proof of purchase. The person shall carry the license or proof of purchase and produce it on request to any game ranger, wildlife manager or peace officer.

A.R.S. 17-371

Transportation, possession and sale of wildlife and wildlife parts

- A. A person may transport in his possession his legally taken wildlife, or may authorize the transportation of his legally taken big game, provided such big game or any part thereof has attached thereto a valid transportation permit issued by the department. Such wildlife shall be transported in such manner that it may be inspected by authorized persons upon demand until the wildlife is packaged or stored. Species of wildlife, other than game species, may be transported in any manner unless otherwise specified by the commission. A person possessing a valid license may transport lawfully taken wildlife other than big game given to him but in no event shall any person possess more than one bag or possession limit.
- D. A holder of a sport falconry license may transport one or more raptors that the person lawfully possesses under terms and conditions prescribed by the commission. Regardless of whether a person holds a sport falconry license and as provided by section 17-236, subsection C, the person may transport for sport falconry purposes one or more raptors that are not listed pursuant to the migratory bird treaty act.

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION RULES

This summary of reptile and amphibian regulations effective Jan. 1, 2026, is prepared for convenience only. It is not a legal document as it does not contain all the laws and regulations related to reptiles and amphibians. For additional information, contact an Arizona Game and Fish Department office.

R12-4-101

Definitions

- A. In addition to the definitions provided under A.R.S. § 17-101, R12-4-301, R12-4-401, and R12-4-501, the following definitions apply to this Chapter, unless otherwise specified: “Waterdog” means the larval or metamorphosing stage of a salamander.

R12-4-301

Definitions

In addition to the definitions provided under A.R.S. § 17-101, the following definitions apply to this Article unless otherwise specified:

“Dip net” means any net, excluding the handle, that is no greater than 3 feet in the greatest dimension, that is hand-held, non-motorized, and the motion of the net is caused by the physical effort of the individual.

R12-4-303

Unlawful Devices, Methods, and Ammunition

- A. In addition to the prohibitions prescribed under A.R.S. §§ 17-301 and 17-309, the following devices, methods, and ammunition are unlawful for taking wildlife in this state:
1. A person shall not use any of the following to take wildlife:
 - a. Fully automatic firearms, including firearms capable of selective automatic fire.
 - b. Tracer or armor-piercing ammunition designed for military use.
 - c. Any smart device as defined under R12-4-301.
 - d. Any self-guided projectiles.
 3. A person shall not use or possess any of the following while taking wildlife:
 - a. Poisoned projectiles or projectiles that contain explosives or a secondary propellant.
 - b. Pitfalls of greater than 5-gallon size, explosives, poisons, or stupefying substances, except as permitted under A.R.S. § 17-239 or as allowed by a scientific collecting permit issued under A.R.S. § 17-238.
 - d. Electronic night vision equipment, electronically enhanced light-gathering devices, thermal imaging devices or laser sights projecting a visible light; except for devices such as laser range finders projecting a non-visible light, scopes with self-illuminating reticles, and fiber optic sights with self-illuminating sights or pins that do not project a visible light onto an animal.
 4. A person shall not by any means:
 - e. Use a manual or powered jacking or prying device to take reptiles or amphibians.

- h. Discharge any of the following devices while taking wildlife within one-fourth mile (440 yards) of an occupied farmhouse or other residence, cabin, lodge or building without permission of the owner or resident:
 - i. Arrow or bolt,
 - ii. Hybrid device, or
 - iii. Pneumatic weapon .35 caliber or larger.
5. A person shall not use a live-action trail camera, or images from a live-action trail camera, for the purpose of:
 - a. Taking or aiding in the take of wildlife, or
 - b. Locating wildlife for the purpose of taking or aiding in the take of wildlife.
6. A person shall not use images of wildlife produced or transmitted from a satellite or other device that orbits the earth for the purpose of:
 - a. Taking or aiding in the take of wildlife, or
 - b. Locating wildlife for the purpose of taking or aiding in the take of wildlife.
 - c. This subsection does not prohibit the use of mapping systems or programs.
- B. It is unlawful for a person who is a prohibited possessor to take wildlife with a deadly weapon or prohibited weapon.
- C. Wildlife taken in violation of this Section is unlawfully taken.
- D. This Section does not apply to any activity allowed under A.R.S. § 17-302, to a person acting within the scope of their official duties as an employee of the state or United States, or as authorized by the Department.

R12-4-304

Lawful Methods for Taking Wild Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles

- G. A person may take reptiles by any method not prohibited under R12-4-303 or R12-4-318 subject to the following restrictions. A person:
1. Shall check pitfall traps of any size daily, release non-target species, remove pitfalls when no longer in use, and fill any holes;
 2. Shall not use firearms at night; and
 3. May use artificial light while taking reptiles provided the light is not attached to or operated from a motor vehicle, motorized watercraft, watercraft under sail, or floating object towed by a motorized watercraft or a watercraft under sail.

R12-4-305

Possessing, Transporting, Importing, Exporting, and Selling Carcasses or Parts of Wildlife

- A. A person shall ensure that evidence of legality remains with the carcass or parts of a carcass of any wildlife that the person possesses, transports, or imports until arrival at the person’s permanent abode, a commercial processing plant, or the place where the wildlife is to be consumed.
- M. Except for cervids, which are subject to requirements established under subsections (I), (J), and (K), a person may import into this state the carcasses or parts of wildlife, including aquatic wildlife, lawfully taken in another state or country if transported and exported in accordance with the laws of the state or country of origin.

R12-4-311

Exemptions from Requirement to Possess an Arizona Fishing License while Taking Aquatic Wildlife

In addition to the exemptions prescribed under A.R.S. § 17-335, R12-4-206(E), R12-4-207(E), and R12-4-209(E) and provided the person's fishing, hunting, or trapping license privileges are not currently revoked by the Commission:

1. A fishing license is not required when a person is:
 - a. Fishing from artificial ponds, tanks, and lakes contained entirely on private lands that are not:
 - i. Open to the public, and
 - ii. Managed by the Department.
 - b. Taking from private property nonnative terrestrial mollusks, such as but not limited to brown garden snails (*Helix aspersa*) and decollata snails (*Rumina decollata*), or crustaceans, such as crayfish.

R12-4-313

Lawful Methods of Take and Season for Aquatic Wildlife

- A. Subject to the restrictions of this Section, a person may take aquatic wildlife during the day or night using artificial light as prescribed under A.R.S. § 17-301.
- B. A person who possesses a valid Arizona fishing license may take aquatic wildlife by angling or simultaneous fishing as defined under R12-4-301 with any bait, artificial fly, or lure subject to the following restrictions:
 3. Waterdogs may not be used as live bait in that portion of Santa Cruz County lying east and south of State Highway 82 or that portion of Cochise County lying west of the San Pedro River and south of State Highway 82.
- C. In addition to angling, a person who possesses a valid Arizona fishing license may also take the following aquatic wildlife using the following methods:
 7. Amphibians, soft-shelled turtles, mollusks, and crustaceans may be taken by minnow trap, crayfish net, hand, or with any hand-held, non-motorized implement that does not discharge a projectile, unless otherwise permitted under this Section.
 8. In addition to the methods described under subsection (C)(7), bullfrogs may be taken by:
 - a. Bow and arrow,
 - b. Crossbow,
 - c. Pneumatic weapon, or
 - d. Slingshot.

R12-4-318

Seasons for Lawfully Taking Wild Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles

- A. Methods of lawfully taking wild mammals, birds, and reptiles during seasons designated by Commission Order as "general" seasons are designated under R12-4-304.
 1. Lawful devices are defined under R12-4-101 and R12-4-301.
 2. Lawful devices are listed under this Section by the range of effectiveness, from greatest range to least range.
 3. A hybrid device may be used in a general season, provided:
 - a. All components of the hybrid device are designated as lawful for a given species under R12-4-304, and

- b. No components are prohibited under R12-4-303.
- C. When designated by Commission Order, the following seasons have specific requirements and lawful methods of take more restrictive than those for general and special seasons, as established under this Section. While taking the species authorized by the season, a person participating in:
 8. A "limited weapon" season may use one or more of the following methods or devices for taking wildlife, if authorized under R12-4-304 as lawful for the species hunted:
 - a. Bows and arrows,
 - b. Crossbows or bows to be drawn and held with an assisting device,
 - c. Pneumatic weapons capable of holding and discharging a single projectile .25 caliber or smaller,
 - d. Hand-propelled projectiles,
 - e. Any trap except foothold traps,
 - f. Slingshots,
 - g. Dogs,
 - h. Falconry,
 - i. Nets, or
 - j. Capture by hand.
 9. A "limited weapon hand or hand-held implement" season may use one or more of the following methods or devices for taking wildlife, if authorized under R12-4-304 as lawful for the species hunted:
 - a. Catch-pole,
 - b. Hand,
 - c. Snake hook, or
 - d. Snake tongs.

R12-4-321

Restrictions for Taking Wildlife in City, County, or Town Parks and Preserves

- A. All city, county, and town parks and preserves are closed to hunting and trapping, unless open by Commission Order.
- B. Unless otherwise provided under Commission Order or rule, a city, county, or town may:
 1. Limit or prohibit any person from hunting within one-fourth mile (440 yards) or trapping within one half mile (880 yards) of any:
 - a. Developed picnic area,
 - b. Developed campground,
 - c. Developed trailhead,
 - d. Developed wildlife viewing platform,
 - e. Boat ramp,
 - f. Shooting range,
 - g. Occupied structure, or
 - h. Golf course.
 2. Require a person entering a city, county, or town park or preserve, for the purpose of hunting, to declare the person's intent to hunt within the park or preserve, if the park or preserve has a check in process established.
 3. Allow a person to take wildlife in a city, county, or town park or preserve only during the posted park or preserve hours.
- C. The requirements of subsection (B)(1) do not apply to a reptile and amphibian limited weapon hand or hand-held implement season established by Commission Order.

R12-4-401

Live Wildlife Definitions

In addition to definitions given in A.R.S. § 17-101, and for the purposes of this Article, the following definitions apply:

24. "Restricted live wildlife" means wildlife that cannot be imported, exported, or possessed without a special license or lawful exemption.
26. "Special license" means any permit or license issued under this Article, including any additional stipulations placed on the license that authorizes specific activities normally prohibited by A.R.S. § 17-306 and R12-4-402.

R12-4-402

Live Wildlife: Unlawful Acts

- A. A person shall not perform any of the following activities with live wildlife unless authorized by a federal license or permit, this Chapter, or A.R.S. Title 3, Chapter 16:
 1. Import any live wildlife into the state;
 2. Export any live wildlife from the state;
 3. Conduct any of the following activities with live wildlife within the state:
 - a. Display,
 - b. Exhibit,
 - c. Give away,
 - d. Lease,
 - e. Offer for sale,
 - f. Possess,
 - g. Propagate,
 - h. Purchase,
 - i. Release,
 - j. Rent,
 - k. Sell,
 - l. Sell as live bait,
 - m. Stock,
 - n. Trade,
 - o. Transport; or
 4. Kill any captive live wildlife.
- B. The Department may seize, quarantine, hold, or euthanize any lawfully possessed wildlife held in a manner that poses an actual or potential threat to the wildlife, other wildlife, or the safety, health, or welfare of the public. The Department shall make reasonable efforts to find suitable placement for any animal prior to euthanizing it.
- C. A person who does not lawfully possess wildlife in accordance with this Article shall be responsible for all costs associated with the care and keeping of the wildlife.
- D. Performing activities authorized under a federal license or permit does not exempt a federal agency or its employees from complying with state permit requirements.

Arizona Game and Fish Department

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Amphibians: Commission Order 41				
Open Areas - Statewide - As defined in ARS§17-101, but does not include any area closed under ARS §17-303 and 17-304, or R12-4-801, R12-4-802 and R12-4-803				
Open Season Dates	Notes	Open Areas	Legal Amphibians	Bag and Possession Limit
A. Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 2, 5, 7, and 8)	Statewide, except areas closed in Note 7	All amphibians, except those named in Subsections B, C, D, E, and F	Ten (10) per year or in possession of each species live or dead.
B. Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 2, 7, and 8)	Statewide, except areas closed in Note 7	<i>Anaxyrus cognatus</i> (Great Plains toad), <i>A. punctatus</i> (red-spotted toad), <i>Scaphiopus couchi</i> (Couch’s spadefoot), and <i>Spea multiplicata</i> (Mexican spadefoot)	Ten (10) per day or in possession per species live or dead.
C. Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 2, 3, 7, and 8)	Statewide, except areas closed in Note 7	<i>Craugastor augusti</i> (barking frog)	Two (2) per year or in possession live or dead.
D. Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 2, 4, 7, and 8)	Statewide, except areas closed in Notes 4 and 7	<i>Ambystoma mavortium mavortium</i> (barred tiger salamander), and <i>A. m. nebulosum</i> (Arizona tiger salamander)	Unlimited live or dead.
E. Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2026 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2028 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2029 Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2030	(1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10)	Statewide, except areas closed in Notes 7 and 9	<i>Ensatina eschscholtzii</i> (ensatina), <i>Rana catesbeiana</i> (bullfrog), <i>Rana berlandieri</i> (Rio Grande leopard frog), and all species in the genus <i>Xenopus</i> (clawed frog)	Unlimited dead.
F. There is no open season on <i>Ambystoma mavortium stebbinsi</i> (Sonoran tiger salamander), <i>Rana tarahumarae</i> (Tarahumara frog), <i>Rana blairi</i> (plains leopard frog), <i>Rana chiricahuensis</i> (Chiricahua leopard frog, aka <i>Rana fisheri</i>), <i>Rana pipiens</i> (northern leopard frog), <i>Rana yavapaiensis</i> (lowland leopard frog), <i>Rana onca</i> (relict leopard frog).				

Amphibian Notes

1. A fishing or combination license is required for take of amphibians. Amphibians may be taken day or night. Methods of take are prescribed in R12-4-313.

2. The Fort Huachuca Military Reservation controls access to the taking of aquatic wildlife on its installation.

3. The possession limit for *Craugastor augusti* (barking frog) legally held prior to January 1, 2005 is 10 per person.

4. No waterdogs or salamanders may be taken in that portion of Santa Cruz County lying east and south of State Highway 82 or that portion of Cochise County lying west of the San Pedro River and south of State Highway 82.

5. No *Hyla wrightorum* (Arizona treefrogs) may be taken in Cochise or Santa Cruz counties.

6. *Rana berlandieri* (Rio Grande leopard frogs) may not be taken from the Hassayampa River above Morristown.

7. Amphibians may not be taken at any time (or during periods specified) within the following areas:
- (1) Posted boundaries of State or Federal hatcheries, except for Arizona Game and Fish Department sponsored fishing clinics.

(2) Posted boundary of the Region I regional headquarters in Pinetop.

(3) The Colorado River one-half mile upstream and one-half mile downstream from its confluence with the Little Colorado River.

(4) That portion of the Little Colorado River lying within the Grand Canyon National Park.

(5) Lee Valley Creek above Lee Valley Lake.

(6) Gap Creek between Honeymoon Cabin and its confluence with the Verde River.

(7) Mineral Creek in Apache County upstream of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Boundary.

(8) Posted areas immediately above the dams at Upper Lake Mary, Alamo Lake and Lake Mead.

Amphibian Notes

- (9) Posted areas immediately below Davis, Hoover, Glen Canyon, Waddell (Lake Pleasant), Roosevelt, Horse Mesa and Mormon Flat dams.

(10) Posted, Spawning Pond Number 1 and Spawning Pond Number 2 located along the Salinity Canal north of Yuma.

(11) The Luna Lake Wildlife Area from April 1 through July 31.

(12) Posted portions of Alamo Lake.

(13) Posted portions of the Tonto Arm of Roosevelt Lake from November 15 through February 15 annually.

(14) Posted portions of Mittry Lake from November 15 through February 15 annually.

(15) Posted portions of Becker Lake are closed to all public entry from December 15 through June 15.

(16) Posted portions of Lake Mead.

(17) Posted portions of Powers Butte Wildlife Area are closed to entry for the purpose of taking wildlife.

(18) Posted portions of Bog Hole Wildlife Area.

(19) Posted portions of Lake Havasu.

(20) Posted portions of Cienega Creek in Pima County.

(21) Aravaipa Creek in Pinal and Graham counties.

(22) Sycamore Creek in Santa Cruz County.

(23) Cibola Lake from the first Monday in September (Labor Day) through March 15.

(24) Posted portions of Martinez Lake from October 1 through March 1.

(25) Posted in accordance with and pursuant to ARS§17-303 and 17-304.
8. The Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon, Grand Canyon-Parashant, Vermillion Cliffs, Sonoran Desert, Ironwood Forest, and Agua Fria National Monuments are open to hunting when the unit they occur in is open to hunting by Commission Order.
9. Havasu, Bill Williams River, Cibola, and Imperial national wildlife refuges are open to the take of bullfrogs, as permitted by refuge regulations (posted areas are closed).
10. Within Unit 25M, bullfrogs may only be taken by minnow trap, crayfish net, hand, or with any hand-held, non-motorized implement that does not discharge a projectile, as prescribed in R12-4-313(C.7).