



CONSERVE. PROTECT. CONNECT.

## **Wildlife in the Classroom Requirements to display wildlife in the classroom.**

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR)

Effective July 1, 2013, VDWR regulation 4 VAC 15-290-60 exempted 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 \(only certain reptiles, amphibians and fish\)](#) in the classroom for educational purposes.

Regulation 4 VAC 15-290-60 DOES require teachers to report (in lieu of obtaining a permit), within 48 hours of the beginning of display of wildlife, that they are exhibiting wildlife and that report is made to the VDWR, by mail, to Permits Section, VDWR, PO BOX 3337 Richmond, VA 23228-2337. Teachers are required to update VDWR any time that additional wildlife is added to the display. Notification to VDWR WILL include: Number and species of wildlife held for display; the physical address of the location of the display; and the duration for which the display is intended to be maintained.

The regulation does NOT exempt elementary and secondary teachers from submitting applications, obtaining permits, and paying associated application fees for VDWR [Scientific/Educational Collection Permits or Salvage Permits](#), IF there are any plans to actively survey for and/or collect any specimens (live, dead, or parts/terrestrial or aquatic) of [native or naturalized wildlife species](#) (except for terrestrial insects, annelid worms, planarians/flatworms, centipedes, millipedes, arachnids) from the wild, then either a Scientific Collection Permit (for live non-Threatened & Endangered [T&E] wildlife), a Salvage Permit (for dead or parts of non-T&E wildlife), or a Threatened & Endangered Collection Permit (for T&E wildlife species) must be obtained.

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 the associated application fee, and submit an annual report for the species on exhibit. Domestic animals (and non-native/exotic wildlife not mentioned in 4 VAC 15-30-40, Subsection A) are excluded from the nonnative wildlife definition ([4VAC15-20-50](#)).

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.

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

- Teachers CAN have certain species (non-T&E reptiles, amphibians and fish) listed on the [VDWR List of Native and Naturalized Fauna of Virginia](#) without an exhibitor's permit or application fee, BUT must REPORT the species, numbers, location, and dates to the VDWR 48-hours prior to the exhibit commencing and per updates. Find the K-12 Schools Reporting Form here: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/education/resources-for-teachers/> under "Permit Information to Display Wildlife"
- Teachers CAN have the following on exhibit with NO permit and NO reporting to the VDWR:
  - Non-threatened/non-endangered terrestrial insects, annelid worms, planarians/flatworms, centipedes, millipedes, arachnids, pillbugs, isopods, amphipods.
  - [Domestic animals](#), as defined by [4VAC15-20-50](#)
  - Non-native/exotic animals not listed in [4VAC 15-30-40, Subsection A.](#)
- Teachers can allow one time "show and tell" of wildlife species (only non-T&E reptiles, amphibians, and fish) 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 ([4VAC15-20-50](#), [4 VAC 15-30-40, Subsection A](#), [4VAC15-290-60](#), [29.1-571](#), [4VAC15-20-210](#), and [4VAC15-30-20](#));
    - **\*\*Note**, unless the organism is specifically listed in [4 VAC 15-30-40 subsection A](#) or any other regulation above as needing a permit, your pet store organism falls under Subsection J of 4 VAC 15-30-40 and does NOT need to be reported and does NOT need a permit.
  - Fur-bearing wildlife species ([§ 29.1-521](#)) (\*A U.S. Department of Agriculture Class C Exhibitor's License is also required.);
  - Migratory birds protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act ([16USC §§ 703-711](#) and [4VAC15-290-60](#)) (\*A U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Educational Permit is also required.);
  - Nuisance wildlife species ([4VAC15-20-160](#), and [4 VAC 15-20-210](#));
  - **Federal** or **state** threatened or endangered wildlife species ([4VAC15-20-130](#));
  - Predatory or undesirable animals or birds for which a permit is required ([4VAC15-30-20](#)).

- 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/Educational 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 VDWR ([4VAC15-30-10](#)). 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.
- VDWR SHALL be notified within 24 hours of an instance of wildlife sickness or disease.
- Teachers possessing and displaying wildlife for educational purposes in accordance with [4VAC15-290-60](#) SHALL comply with all other local, state, and federal laws and regulations pertaining to species possessed and displayed.