

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Possession of Potentially Dangerous Wild Quadrupeds, Big Exotic Cats, and Non-Human Primates (LAC 76:V.115)

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby advertise their intent to amend the rules and regulations governing the possession of potentially dangerous quadrupeds, big exotic cats, and non-human primates.

The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent and final Rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the fiscal and economic impact statement, the filing of the Notice of Intent and final Rule and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part V. Wild Quadrupeds and Wild Birds

Chapter 1. Wild Quadrupeds

§115. Possession of Potentially Dangerous Wild Quadrupeds, Big Exotic Cats, and Non-Human Primates

A. This commission finds that possession of certain potentially dangerous quadrupeds, big exotic cats, and non-human primates poses significant hazards to public safety and health, is detrimental to the welfare of the animals, and may have negative impacts on conservation and recovery of some threatened and endangered species.

1. The size and strength of such animals in concert with their natural and unpredictable and/or predatory nature can result in severe injury or death when an attack upon a human occurs. Often such attacks are unprovoked and a person other than the owner, often a child, is the victim. Furthermore, there is no approved rabies vaccine for such animals, so even minor scratches and injuries inflicted upon humans or other animals could be deadly.

2. Responsible possession of these potentially dangerous wild quadrupeds, big exotic cats, and non-human primates necessitates that they be confined in secure facilities. Prolonged confinement is by its nature stressful to these animals and proper long-term care by experienced persons is essential to the health and welfare of these animals and to society.

3. Certain of these animals are listed as endangered species and others are so similar in appearance to endangered subspecies as to make practical distinction difficult. This similarity of appearance may provide a means to market illegally obtained endangered animals and can limit the effective enforcement of endangered species laws.

B. This commission regulation prohibits importation and private possession, and otherwise regulates certain wild quadrupeds, big exotic cats, and non-human primates as provided herein.

C.1. Except as provided herein, it shall be unlawful to import into, possess, purchase or sell within the state of Louisiana, by any means whatsoever including but not limited to transactions conducted via the internet, any of the following species or its subspecies of live wild quadrupeds,

big exotic cats, or non-human primates, domesticated or otherwise (hereinafter "listed animals"):

- a. black bear (*Ursus americanus*);
- b. grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*);
- c. polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*);
- d. red wolf (*Canis rufus*);
- e. gray wolf (*Canis lupus*);
- f. wolf dog hybrid (*Canis lupus* or *Canis rufus x Canis familiaris*);
- g. all non-human primates;
- h. the following big exotic cats:
 - i. tigers;
 - ii. lions;
 - iii. leopards (including, but not limited to snow leopard and clouded leopard);
 - iv. jaguars;
 - v. cheetahs;
 - vi. cougars or mountain lions (*Felis concolor*);
 - vii. all subspecies of the above listed exotic cats;
 - viii. hybrids resulting from cross breeding of the above listed exotic cats.

2. Holders of a potentially dangerous wild quadruped permit allowing possession of any listed animal, where the permit is valid on the effective date of this regulation, will be "grandfathered" and the permit will be renewed annually until existing permitted captive animals expire, or are legally transferred out of state, or are transferred to a suitable facility. No additional listed animals may be acquired by any means whatsoever, including breeding.

D.1. Wolf-Dog Hybrids. The prohibition against wolf-dog hybrids expired January 1, 1997. Persons are cautioned that local ordinances or other state regulations may prohibit possession of these animals. Any animal which appears indistinguishable from a wolf, or is in any way represented to be a wolf shall be considered to be a wolf in the absence of bona fide documentation to the contrary.

E. Exempted Entities. The following organizations and entities shall be exempt from this regulation, including permitting:

1. zoos accredited or certified by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) and the Zoo of Acadiana so long as it meets the American Zoo and Aquarium Association standards for enclosures;

2. research facilities as defined in the Animal Welfare Act as found in the *United States Code* title 7, chapter 54, §2132(e), including but not limited to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Primate Center, the Tulane National Primate Research Center, and Chimp Haven, Inc., located in Shreveport, LA; and

3. any person transporting any listed animal through the state if the transit time is not more than 24 hours and the animal is at all times maintained within a confinement sufficient to prevent escape and contact with the public. Exhibiting the listed animal, in any manner, is prohibited;

4. circuses, limited to those temporarily in this state, offering varied performances by live animals, clowns, and acrobats for public entertainment, and which are incorporated class C licensees under chapter I of title 9 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Notwithstanding the above, circuses do not include entertainment that includes any listed animal in any type of wrestling, photography opportunity with a patron, or an activity in which any listed animal and a patron are in close contact with each other;

5. Louisiana colleges or universities, for possession of a big exotic cat of the species traditionally kept by that college or university as a school mascot, after proper documentation to the department that the college or university has consistently over the years possessed a big exotic cat as its mascot.

F. Permitted Entities. The following organizations and entities may be exempted from this regulation after applying for and receiving a permit from the department to possess any listed animal under the following conditions:

1. other zoos and educational institutions not covered under Paragraphs E.1-2 above. The secretary shall determine whether to issue a permit and any conditions for the permit on a case by case basis. A zoo, for purposes of this subsection, is defined as a publicly or municipally owned permanent institution which owns and maintains multiple species of wildlife, under the direction of at least one full-time professional staff member who possesses an appropriate body of knowledge and experience in zoological park management, provides its animals with appropriate care, exhibits the animals to the public on a regular basis, and has as its primary mission the exhibition, conservation, and preservation of animals in an educational and scientific manner:

a. any entity that has submitted to the department on or before July 1, 2014 an application as an other zoo or educational institution under this subsection shall not be required to be publicly or municipally owned. Should a permit be granted under this exception, future permits shall be likewise exempted, provided that a permit had been issued for the immediately preceding year;

2. animal sanctuaries accredited or certified by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA). Permitted sanctuaries are prohibited from exhibiting, breeding, or selling any listed animal. Listed animals must be surgically sterilized or separately housed to prevent breeding. Listed animals must be housed in such a manner as to prevent public contact and in compliance with the enclosure rules provided herein in Subsection I. Permitted animal sanctuaries are prohibited from transporting these animals to any public building or place where they may come into contact with the public including, but not limited to schools, hospitals, malls, private residences, or other commercial or retail establishments.

G. Non-Human Primates

1. As provided below, the following individuals may be exempted from this regulation after applying for and receiving a permit from the department to possess a non-human primate. The permit will be for one year and must be renewed annually under the following conditions:

a. an individual who legally possesses one or more non-human primates immediately prior to the effective date of this regulation and who can prove legal ownership is authorized to keep those non-human primates but is prohibited from acquiring any additional non-human primates by any means whatsoever, including breeding;

b. the individuals listed in this Subsection must annually apply for and receive a permit from the department. The permit application shall include:

i. the name, address, telephone number, and date of birth of applicant;

ii. a description of each non-human primate applicant possesses, including the scientific name, sex, age, color, weight, and any distinguishing marks;

iii. a photograph of each non-human primate and its permanent enclosure;

iv. the physical location where the non-human primate is to be kept;

v. proof of legal ownership. (Proof of legal ownership includes original purchase documents, veterinary records, or other documentation, acceptable to the department demonstrating ownership);

vi. the microchip or tattoo number of each non-human primate;

vii. a health certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian within one year prior to the date of the application stating that the animal is free of all symptoms of contagious and/or infectious diseases at the time of the examination and that all appropriate tests and preventative measures have been performed as deemed necessary by the veterinarian;

viii. a signed release statement, on a form provided by the department, agreeing to abide by permit terms and to cooperate with LDWF personnel;

ix. a signed agreement, on a form provided by the department, indemnifying and holding harmless the state, department, and other applicable public agencies and employees, including agents, contractors, and the general public from any claims for damages resulting from the non-human primate(s);

x. a signed agreement that the permittee will be responsible for any and all costs associated with the escape, capture, and disposition of the non-human primate(s).

c. The department shall only accept applications for possession of non-human primates from individuals who have not previously possessed a permit until June 30, 2015. Thereafter, permits will only be issued for the possession of non-human primates to those individuals who were permitted in the immediately preceding year and who meet all applicable requirements of this section.

2. Permittee must allow inspections of premises by Department of Wildlife and Fisheries employees for purposes of enforcing these regulations. Inspections may be unannounced, and may include, but are not limited to, pens, stalls, holding facilities, records, and examination of animals necessary to determine species identification, sex, age, health, and/or implanted microchip number.

3. Permit holders must house their non-human primates in such a manner as to prevent public contact and are prohibited from transporting their non-human primate to any public building or place where the public may come into contact with the non-human primate, including, but not limited to schools, hospitals or malls.

4. Permit holders must have their non-human primates examined annually by a licensed veterinarian to insure that the animal is free of all symptoms of contagious and/or infectious diseases at the time of examination and all appropriate tests and preventative measures have been performed as deemed necessary by the veterinarian.

5. Permit holders are required to report any escapes to the department within 24 hours of discovery of the escape.

6. Permit holders are required to submit any changes to the permit information provided in the permit application within 30 days of the date those changes take effect or the permit will be considered invalid.

H. Big Exotic Cats. An individual who legally possesses one or more exotic cats listed in Subparagraph C.1.h. above on August 15, 2006 (the effective date of Act 715 of the

Regular Session of 2006) and who can prove legal ownership is authorized to keep those exotic cats under the following conditions.

1. Only those exotic cats legally possessed on August 15, 2006 will be permitted. Additional exotic cats cannot be acquired by any means whatsoever, including breeding.

2. The individuals listed in this Subsection must annually apply for and receive a permit from the department. The permit application shall be on a form provided by the department and require:

a. the name, address, telephone number, driver's license number, and date of birth of applicant;

b. a description of each exotic cat applicant possesses, including the scientific name, sex, age, color, weight, and any distinguishing marks;

c. one or more photographs of each exotic cat and its permanent enclosure;

d. the physical location where each exotic cat is to be kept;

e. proof of legal ownership of the exotic cat on August 15, 2006. Proof of legal ownership includes original purchase documents, veterinary records, or other documentation, acceptable to the department, demonstrating ownership;

f. the microchip number of each exotic cat;

g. a health certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian within one year prior to the date of the application. The certificate shall include the name, address, and license number of the examining veterinarian;

h. a written plan for the quick and safe recapture or destruction of an escaped exotic cat listed in the permit. This plan must also be filed with the local sheriff's department, and police department if applicable;

i. statement that permittee has legal authority to possess weapons and/or other equipment necessary to carry out the plan provided in Subparagraph H.2.h;

j. signed agreement, on a form provided by the department, indemnifying and holding harmless the state, department, and other applicable public agencies and employees, including agents, contractors, and the general public from any claims for damages resulting from the permitted exotic cat(s);

k. signed agreement that the permittee will be responsible for any and all costs associated with the escape, capture, and disposition of a permitted exotic cat;

l. proof of liability insurance from an A-rated or higher insurance company in the amount of \$100,000 for each exotic cat, up to a maximum of \$1,000,000, valid and effective continuously for the entire permit term. The policy shall specifically include a provision requiring notice from the carrier to the secretary of the department a minimum of 30 days prior to cancellation of the policy.

3. Permitted exotic cats must be prevented from breeding by separate housing or sterilization. Sterilization records must be kept on the premises and available for inspection by the department.

4. Permittee or designee must live on the premises. Designee must have the ability to carry out all requirements of the permittee.

5. Permittee must allow inspections of premises by Department of Wildlife and Fisheries employees for purposes of enforcing these regulations. Inspections may be unannounced, and may include, but are not limited to, pens, stalls, holding facilities, records, and examination of animals

necessary to determine species identification, sex, age, health, and/or implanted microchip number.

6. A weapon capable of destroying the animal(s), and a long range delivery method for chemical immobilization shall be kept on the premises at all times. Additionally, the applicant shall provide a signed statement from a licensed veterinarian identifying a designated veterinarian who will be on-call and available at all times to deliver chemical immobilization in the event of an escape.

7. Clearly legible signs, approved by the department, shall be posted and displayed at each possible entrance onto the premises where the permitted exotic cat is located. The signs shall clearly state "Danger, Wild Animal On Premises" with letters of a size and font easily readable from 30 feet away.

8. Each permitted exotic cat must be implanted with a microchip by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

9. Each permitted exotic cat must remain in its enclosure on the property listed in the permit at all times and cannot be removed from the enclosure for any reason. However, the exotic cat may be removed for proper medical care for medical emergencies or medical procedures, but only under the direction of a licensed veterinarian.

10. Permittee must notify the department, the local sheriff's department, and police department if applicable, immediately upon discovery that the permitted exotic cat is no longer in its enclosure.

11. Permittee must notify the department prior to any disposition of a permitted exotic cat, including transportation out-of-state. The department reserves the right to supervise and accompany any such disposition.

12. Permitted exotic cats must be kept in a sanitary and safe condition and may not be kept in a manner that results in the maltreatment or neglect of the exotic cat. This includes, but is not limited to:

a. drinking water must be provided in clean containers, pools must be cleaned as needed to ensure good water quality, enclosures must have adequate surface water drainage, and hard floor surfaces must be regularly scrubbed and disinfected;

b. food must be unspoiled and not contaminated, and be of a type and quantity sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of the permitted exotic cat;

c. fecal and food waste must be removed from enclosures daily and disposed of in a manner that prevents noxious odors and insect and other pests;

d. sufficient shaded areas must be available for each exotic cat that is maintained in an enclosure, regardless of group rank or status.

13. In addition to complying with this regulation, permittee must comply with any and all applicable federal, other state, or local law, rule, regulation, ordinance, permit, or other permission. Failure to comply with any such law, rule, regulation, ordinance, permit, or other permission constitutes a violation of this regulation.

I. Enclosure Requirements. Minimum pen/enclosure requirements are as follows:

1. bears:

a. single animal: 25 feet long x 12 feet wide x 10 feet high, covered roof;

b. pair: 30 feet long x 15 feet wide x 10 feet high, covered roof;

c. materials: chain link 9 gauge minimum;

- d. safety perimeter rail;
- e. pool: 6 feet x 4 feet x 18 inches deep with facilities for spraying or wetting bear(s);
- 2. wolf:
 - a. 15 feet long x 8 feet wide x 6 feet high per animal, covered roof;
 - b. secluded den area: 4 feet x 4 feet for each animal;
 - c. materials: chain link wire or equivalent;
 - d. safety perimeter rail;
- 3. big exotic cats:
 - a. enclosures shall be constructed and covered at the top with nine gauge steel chain link or equivalent, with tension bars and metal clamps;
 - b. enclosures must be well braced and securely fastened to the floor or ground and shall utilize metal clamps or braces of equivalent strength as that proscribed for cage construction;
 - c. enclosures shall be secured by at least two sets of doors, so that the first door must be closed before the second door is opened. The inside door to the animal enclosure must open in. These doors must remain locked at all times when unattended. The doors must be designed so that the frame, hasps and locks are of sufficient strength to restrain the exotic cat;
 - d. a perimeter fence of at least 8 feet in height (secondary barrier) and located a minimum of 5 feet from the enclosure sufficient to prevent unauthorized entry or direct physical contact with the exotic cat;
 - e. the mesh size and/or distance between bars for all enclosures and fences shall be sufficiently small to prevent escape and/or direct physical contact with the exotic cat;
 - f. enclosures shall include a den area or other connected housing unit in which the exotic cat may be secured for the safe servicing and cleaning of the remaining enclosure. This area shall be constructed with steel, reinforced cinder block, or concrete sufficient to withstand damage from high winds, hard rains, hail, and other natural phenomenon.

J. Penalty for Violation. Unless another penalty is provided by law, violation of these regulations will be a class two violation as defined in title 56 of the *Louisiana Revised Statutes*. In addition, upon conviction for violation of these regulations, any license/permit may be revoked and the quadrupeds or other animals seized in connection with the violation will be forfeited.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:6(31), R.S. 56:115, R.S. 56:171, and R.S. 56:1904(F).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 21:1356 (December 1995), amended LR 32:647 (April 2006), LR 33:1153 (June 2007), amended by House Concurrent Resolution 6 of the 2012 Regular Legislative Session, LR 38:1459 (June 2012), LR 40:

Family Impact Statement

In accordance with Act 1183 of 1999 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Poverty Impact Statement

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S.49:973.

Provider Impact Statement

This Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of 2014.

Public Comments

Interested persons may submit written comments relative to the proposed amendments until 4:30 p.m., 30 August, 2014 to Camille Warbington, Wildlife Permits Coordinator, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898, or via email to cwarbington@wlf.la.gov.

Bryan McClinton
Undersecretary

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

RULE TITLE: Possession of Potentially Dangerous Wild Quadrupeds, Big Exotic Cats, and Non-Human Primates

I. ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION COSTS (SAVINGS) TO STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (Summary)

The proposed rule change is expected to have no effect on implementation costs to state or local governmental units.

The proposed rule change clarifies the definition of a zoo.

The proposed rule change provides an exception to the ban on possessing listed animals to entities that are not zoos or animal sanctuaries but which have applied for a permit by the date on which these regulations become effective.

The proposed rule change removes an exemption from non-human primate permit requirements for physically-challenged individuals who employ non-human primates as helper animals.

The proposed rules change alters the requirements for applying for and maintaining a non-human primate permit. The proposed rules change states the LDWF shall accept non-human primate applications for previously unpermitted non-human primates through December 31, 2014.

The proposed rules change amends various requirements for possessing and housing exotic big cats.

II. ESTIMATED EFFECT ON REVENUE COLLECTIONS OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS (Summary)

The proposed rule change is expected to have no effect on revenue collections of state or local governmental units.

III. ESTIMATED COSTS AND/OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO DIRECTLY AFFECTED PERSONS OR NONGOVERNMENTAL GROUPS (Summary)

Entities that currently possess exotic big cats may benefit from the proposed rule change that grant certain exemptions from bans on possessing those animals.

The proposed rule change removing the exemption from non-human primate permit requirements for physically-challenged individuals who employ non-human primates as helper animals is unlikely to affect any individuals in Louisiana. To the knowledge of the LDWF, nobody in the state has applied for such an exemption.

IV. ESTIMATED EFFECT ON COMPETITION AND EMPLOYMENT (Summary)

The proposed rule change is expected to have no effect on competition or employment.

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