ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 220-2
GAME AND FISH DIVISION

220-2-.142 Turtle Dealer/Farmer Regulation.

(1) Definitions:

(a) "Division" - Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

(b) "Director" - The Director of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

(c) "Turtle Farmer" - Any person, firm, or corporation engaged in the business of propagating legally acquired captive indigenous turtles or turtle eggs for commercial purposes.

(d) "Turtle Dealer" - Any person, firm, or corporation who purchases, imports or exports turtles or turtle eggs for resale or stocking purposes or who sells, offers for sale, or trades for anything of value legally acquired live turtles.

(e) "Nonindigenous Animal" – A species of animal, other than birds, that does not exist historically and naturally in the wild within the state or does not exist within the state as a result of the natural expansion of its range. Ref. Section 9-11-500(2)

(2)(a) No person shall take, attempt to take, sell or possess any turtle egg or turtle or parts thereof from the wild in this state, to include public and private waters, for commercial purposes, except those turtle farmers who may take nuisance turtles from privately constructed farm ponds for use as breeder turtles only under specially issued permits from the Director or his designee. Turtles taken under the specially issued nuisance permits shall not be sold or bartered. This is not to prohibit the operations of properly permitted "Turtle Farmers" or "Turtle Dealers" as defined in paragraph (1) as long as those turtles are not taken from the wild.

(b) Nothing in this regulation prohibits the taking for personal use of up to two legal turtles per day by hand, dip net or hook and line from the wild in this state, to include public and private waters.

(3)(a) Any person, firm, or corporation engaged in the business of propagating captive turtles or incubating and hatching turtle eggs

for restocking, sale, or other commercial purposes must first obtain a turtle farmer's permit from the Director. Each turtle farmer permittee must agree to meet designated standards for enclosure construction and animal care prior to being permitted.

(b) Each permittee will file the following annual reports on forms provided by the Division prior to renewal of their farmer permit:

(i) Each permittee will file a WFF Turtle Farmer Inventory Report Form on form provided by the Division prior to renewal of their farmer permit.

(ii) All turtles imported into or exported out of the state of Alabama for commercial purposes shall be accompanied by a bill of lading which provides the following information: (1) name of person importing/exporting the turtles; (2) permit number of person importing/exporting the turtles; (3) date of shipment; (4) quantity and species of turtles; (5) origin (state and body of water) of shipment; (6) destination of shipment; (7) total value of shipment; and (8) signature of owner/transporter. A copy of the bill of lading shall remain with the shipment. A copy of the bill of lading or a copy of the WFF Bill of Lading Form must be sent to the Division.

(iii) Each WFF Turtle Farmer Report required in this regulation must be filed with the Division prior to renewing their annual permit and must include the following and any other information specified by the Director: (1) permit holder's name and permit number; (2) buyer/seller's name and address; (3) date of transaction; (4) origin (state) of turtles purchased/sold; (5) quantity and species of turtles purchased/sold/caught; (6) amount received/paid for turtles and; (7) signature of permit holder.

(c) No person, firm or corporation shall import or cause to be imported, any nonindigenous turtle species for the purpose of propagation. Nonindigenous turtle species may not be propagated within the state.

(d) Standards of care for turtle breeder facilities.

i. Outdoor facilities, including, but not limited to, breeding ponds, grow-out ponds, holding ponds, and nesting areas shall meet the following conditions:

   a. All facilities shall have perimeter fencing not less than 24 inches in height from ground level and be sufficient to prevent egress and ingress of any turtle.

   b. All ponds shall be permanent earthen structures unless otherwise stipulated by the Director.

c. Turtle nesting areas shall consist of non-compacted soil of sufficient depth and area to meet the reproductive needs of species being bred and accommodate the density of the facility's breeding stock.

ii. Indoor facilities shall meet the following conditions:

a. All indoor facilities shall have a structurally sound barrier to prevent egress or ingress of any turtle.

b. Suitable sanitary methods shall provide for rapid elimination of excess water and shall be properly constructed, and kept in good repair, to ensure the health of the turtles at all times. The method of drainage shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations relating to pollution control or the protection of the environment.

c. Turtle nesting areas shall consist of non-compacted soil of sufficient depth and area to meet the reproductive needs of species being bred and accommodate the density of the facility's breeding stock.

iii. When shipping and transporting turtles, the following conditions must be met:

a. Containers used for live transport should be designed, constructed, and fitted as appropriate to the species, size, and weight of the animals being transported. Containers should have adequate ventilation for the animals.

b. Animals may not be stacked upon one another in a container during transport.

c. Animals shall be protected from adverse weather conditions while transporting.

(4)(a) Any person, firm or corporation engaged in the import, export, sale or trade of live turtles or turtle eggs must first obtain a "Turtle Dealers" permit from the Director or his designee. Each turtle dealer permittee must agree to meet designated standards for enclosure construction and animal care prior to being permitted.

(b) Each permittee will file the following annual reports on forms provided by the Division prior to renewal of their dealer permit:

i. Each permittee will file a WFF Turtle Dealer Inventory Report Form on form provided by the Division prior to renewal of their dealer permit.

ii. All turtles imported into or exported out of the state shall be accompanied by a bill of lading which provides the following information: (1) name of person importing/exporting the turtles; (2) permit number of person importing/exporting the turtles; (3) date of shipment; (4) quantity and species of turtles; (5) origin (state and body of water) of shipment; (6) destination of shipment; (7) total value of shipment; and (8) signature of owner/transporter. A copy of the bill of lading shall remain with the shipment. A copy of the bill of lading or a copy of the WFF Bill of Lading Form must be sent to the Division.

iii. Each WFF Turtle Dealer Report required in this regulation must be filed with the Division prior to renewing their annual permit and must include the following and any other information specified by the Director: (1) Permit holder's name and permit number; (2) buyer/seller's name and address; (3) date of transaction; (4) origin (state and body of water) of shipment; (5) quantity and species of turtles purchased/sold; (6) amount received/paid for turtles and; (7) signature of owner/transporter.

(c) Turtle dealers may import, export, sell, or trade live nonindigenous turtle species. Nonindigenous turtle species may not be propagated within the state.

(d) Standards of Care for Turtle Dealer Facilities

i. Outdoor facilities, including, but not limited to, grow-out ponds and holding ponds, shall meet the following conditions:

   a. All facilities shall have perimeter fencing not less than 24 inches in height from ground level and be sufficient to prevent egress and ingress of any turtle.

   b. All ponds shall be permanent earthen structures unless otherwise stipulated by the Director.

   c. All turtles housed in outdoor facilities should be segregated by sex as to not allow reproduction.

ii. Indoor facilities shall meet the following conditions:

   a. All indoor facilities shall have a structurally sound barrier to prevent egress or ingress of any turtle.

   b. Suitable sanitary methods shall provide for rapid elimination of excess water and shall be properly constructed, and kept in good repair, to ensure the health of the turtles at all times. The method of drainage shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations relating to pollution control or the protection of the environment.

c. Indoor facilities shall provide appropriate lighting, temperatures, humidity, and clean water to meet the physical requirement of each species. Fresh food and clean water should be provided to turtles to fulfill their dietary requirements.

d. Effective measures must be provided to prevent and control infection, disease, parasites, or vermin.

e. All turtles housed in indoor facilities should be segregated by sex as to not allow reproduction.

iii. When shipping and transporting turtles, the following conditions must be met:

a. Containers used for live transport should be designed, constructed, and fitted as appropriate to the species, size, and weight of the animals being transported. Containers should have adequate ventilation for the animals.

b. Animals may not be stacked upon one another in a container during transport.

c. Animals shall be protected from adverse weather conditions while transporting.

(5) The Director or other persons as designated for such purposes shall have the power and authority to inspect and examine the books, records, turtles or facilities of each permit holder.

Author: Christopher M. Blankenship
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§9-2-7, 9-2-8, 9-2-12.
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Penalty: As provided by law.