



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION POLICY

4102 – Possession and Disposition of Live Game and Protected Animals (Revised: 09/12/2013)

Supersedes:

No. 2106 - Birds and Mammals - Possession and Disposition of Live Wild Birds and Mammals, dated January 1, 1977.

No. 4102 - Birds and Mammals - Possession and Protected Birds and Animals, dated January 1, 1977.

Issue/Purpose:

All wild animals found in this state, whether resident or migratory and whether native or introduced, are the property of the people of the state. The purpose of this policy is to determine the proper possession and disposition of live game or protected animals to ensure animal welfare and human health and safety.

Definitions:

“Animals of special concern” shall have the meaning defined in the Wildlife Conservation Order section 5.74a.

“Game,” “parts,” “protected animal,” and “take” shall have the meanings defined in Part 401 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of 1994 (1994 PA 451) or in the Wildlife Conservation Order (WCO).

Policy:

Michigan’s wildlife – including game, protected, and unprotected animals – are the property of the people of the state and should not be possessed by individuals, unless under the proper state or federal authority.

The Natural Resources Commission recognizes that the citizens of this state may come into contact with injured or juvenile wild animals that may be perceived to require human assistance. If an animal is taken from the wild by an organization or citizen, the organization or citizen shall transfer the animal to a licensed rehabilitator within 24 hours of possession. An organization or citizen shall not possess an animal taken from the wild without a Department or federal permit for more than 24 hours.

If live game or a protected animal is legally possessed by a licensed rehabilitator and cannot be rehabilitated and released, the live game or protected animal may be transferred to a wildlife sanctuary approved by the Association of Sanctuaries, the American Sanctuary Association, a credible animal protection shelter, or a zoo accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association.

In addition, the Natural Resources Commission supports the methods for disposition of wildlife in the possession of public citizens as required in the Wildlife Conservation Order. The

disposition of game or protected animals shall be accomplished with the welfare of the species and public interest uppermost in mind.

The Natural Resources Commission understands that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources occasionally comes into possession of wildlife due to the nature of its work.

If the Department possesses live game or a protected animal, whenever possible, the live game or protected animal shall be rehabilitated and released. Live game or a protected animal may be transferred to an organization or citizen for rehabilitation if the organization or citizen meets the provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Order sections 5.70 through 5.75. The disposition and possession of animals of special concern must follow the provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Order 5.74a.

If the Department possesses live game or a protected animal that cannot be rehabilitated and released and it is not a threatened or endangered species, then the Department may euthanize the game or protected animal by a method approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association. If the Department possesses an unprotected animal or an animal determined by the Department to pose another public health or safety risk, the animal may be humanely euthanized instead of released as well.

If the Department possesses live game or a protected animal that cannot be rehabilitated and released, and the live game or protected animal is threatened or endangered, a juvenile, or can serve an educational purpose, then the Department may transfer the live game or protected animal to a wildlife sanctuary approved by the Association of Sanctuaries, the American Sanctuary Association, a credible animal protection shelter, or a zoo accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association.

If the Department possesses a live game or protected animal that cannot be rehabilitated and released, the live game or protected animal shall not be transferred to a private citizen unless the citizen meets the requirements of the proper state or federal authority.

All diseased game or protected animals, whether living or dead, shall be referred to the DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing.

Related Reference:

The Wildlife Conservation Order (WCO) – http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10366_37141-120756--,00.html

The Captive Wild Animal Order – http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/CAPTIVE_190659_7.html

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of 1994 – <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-451-of-1994>

The Large Carnivore Act, Act 274 of 2000 – <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-Act-274-of-2000>

4102 – Possession and Disposition of Live Game and Protected Animals is hereby approved.

J.R. Richardson, Chair

Effective Date