



## Wisconsin Taxidermy Permit Requirements & Regulations

This publication gives you a summary of Wisconsin's laws which pertain to individuals who mount any wild animal in a lifelike manner or preserves the carcass of any wild animal for a consideration (compensation, barter or fee). It is not a complete set of laws.

### PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

A taxidermist permit is required from the Department of Natural Resources to mount any wild animal in a lifelike manner or preserves the carcass of any wild animal for a consideration (compensation, barter or fee).

Any person in Wisconsin who mounts any wild animal in a lifelike manner or preserves the carcass of any wild animal for a consideration (compensation, barter or fee), must obtain a taxidermist permit from the Department of Natural Resources. Effective April 28, 2004, a taxidermist permit is also required for anyone who only mounts deer heads for a consideration or fee. The simple mounting of just antlers or skulls on a plaque or the use of antlers or skulls in other decorative articles does not require a taxidermist permit.

Employees while working under the direct supervision of a permitted taxidermist do not need a taxidermy permit. This includes employees or agents working at the taxidermist's place of business or picking up specimens from drop off points and transporting them to the licensed taxidermist's place of business. All carcasses must be tagged and accompanied by a copy of the corresponding transaction record during transportation. (See "Taxidermist Permit Holder Requirements" section for more details.) Taxidermists may provide employees with a copy of their license to display if requested while transporting carcasses as part of their job duties.

### APPLICATIONS AND RENEWALS

**PERMIT FEE:** Resident = \$50, Nonresident = \$100.

Permit applications are available at local DNR service centers, on line at: [www.dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cs/apps/9400400.pdf](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cs/apps/9400400.pdf), or by calling (608) 266-0862.

Applicants must possess a Seller's Permit from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and provide the Seller's Permit number on the application. All initial applications must be submitted to: Dept. of Natural Resources, Bureau of Customer Service & Licensing, PO Box 7924, Madison, WI 53707-7924.

Beginning in 2005, Wisconsin resident and nonresident taxidermist permits will be valid from the date of issuance until December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following issuance.

**Renewals:** Permits must be renewed prior to expiration on December 31<sup>st</sup> at any local license vendor. Beginning in 2004, renewals will be done through the department's Automated License Issuance System (ALIS) at any license vendor where hunting or fishing licenses are sold.

### AUTHORIZATION

The taxidermy permit allows the holder to prepare and preserve the head, skin, part of the skin or body of wild animals and fish in a lifelike manner for a consideration. A taxidermist permit also entitles the permit holder to the same privileges as a class A fur dealer's license.

Permitted taxidermists are allowed to possess and transport lawfully acquired game birds, fish and animals (in connection with their business only) over the possession limit numbers imposed by state regulations. This can be done both during open and closed seasons for the various species. Taxidermists aren't allowed to personally exceed bag or possession limits.

### TAXIDERMIST PERMIT HOLDER REQUIREMENTS

To maintain accurate inventories, permitted taxidermists must attach a numbered tag to each wild animal's carcass or part received. The tag number must correspond to a numbered record that lists the carcass owner's name, address, signature, date received by the taxidermist and description of the carcass or part.

These records must be made in triplicate. One copy of each transaction record must be kept at the place of business for two years following the effective period of the permit. The other copies may be used as a receipt for the customer provided to department if requested.

A warden may enter a taxidermist's place of business for inspection purposes anytime between 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. on weekdays (except holidays). Inspections may also occur at anytime with the consent of the taxidermist. This includes inspection of the numbered carcass identification tags required to be attached to carcass; the corresponding information records and records of all wild animal carcasses received at, or delivered to the place of business. A taxidermist or an employee or agent of the taxidermist shall cooperate with and exhibit items subject to inspection to a warden or any other agent of the department.

Wild animals taken or possessed in any manner in violation of the laws of this or another state are unlawful to possess in Wisconsin.

For research purposes, either the entire carcass or the skull only of bobcat, fisher and otter may be requested by the department when the animal is registered. Refer to the current Trapping Regulations for more information on what must be turned in. Whether the entire carcass is requested, or just the skull, is dependent upon what the research needs are that year. Persons who wish to have the fisher, otter or bobcat mounted may register the pelt and deliver the skinned carcass and/or skull to the department after the animal is skinned by the taxidermist. Registration of the animal must occur by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the first month after animal is harvested. The pelt tag attached by the trapper/hunter must remain attached to the pelt until the animal is registered.

When deer and bear are taken in for mounting, the tags must be retained by the owner and kept with the meat. For other animal species which require tagging, it's recommended, but not required, that all government tags (except deer and bear) be attached inconspicuously to the mounted display for the owner's future reference.

Legally harvested fish and game that is the personal property of the taxidermist can be stored (commingled) with articles received in connection with a taxidermy business, only if the carcasses belonging to the taxidermist are also tagged and recorded in the same manner as if they belonged to a customer.

The title to all wild animals rests with the state until they are lawfully reduced to private possession. The Department may seize wild animals taken or held in violation of the law.

### MANAGEMENT OF TAXIDERMIST RECORDS

Taxidermy regulations require that the taxidermist prepare triplicate records and retain at least a copy of each record at the place of business. These records are required for all wild animal carcasses received at, delivered to or shipped from the taxidermist's place of business. The Department does not supply the forms for maintaining records. It's recommended that each taxidermist purchase standard pre-numbered, triplicate business forms.

The information required to be maintained on this business record form includes:

1. A record Identification number corresponding to the number on the carcass identification tag.
2. The carcass owner's name and address.
3. The owner's signature.
4. The date received by the taxidermist.
5. A description of the carcass.

This form should be filled out upon receipt of the wild animal. **One copy can be given to the customer with the original and second copies kept by the taxidermist.** Filing of these sales or informational records can be in whatever manner is suitable for the individual business. Two useful systems are alphabetically by name of the customer or sequentially by the record identification number. Each wild animal a taxidermist receives is required to have a tag attached with a number corresponding to the number on the information record form. It's recommended that taxidermists purchase two-by-four inch manila stringed tags, similar to the federal migratory bird treaty tag. The identification record number can be written on the tag in indelible ink prior to storage in a freezer.

Taxidermist regulations require that the tag attached to the wild animal carcass must have an identification number corresponding to the information record. It's recommended for the thorough management of your business that information including name, address, carcass description and date received should also be put on this tag.

Whenever a taxidermist or employee of a taxidermist transports a wild animal carcass as part of the business, at least one copy of the required completed record form must accompany the carcass.

### BUYING/SELLING FISH AND GAME

Wisconsin Statutes prohibit any person from buying or selling most fish and game. There is an exception for most wildlife that has been mounted, or is in the process of being mounted (hide or cape removed) **for a private collection** (not intended for sale). Most wildlife cannot be mounted for the purpose of sale and sale can only take place after the specimen has been part of a private

collection. This provision was drafted into the law to provide the legal authority for people to sell their private collections after they no longer wish to keep them. This exception is not a provision for taxidermists to mount wild animals for purposes of sale.

Federal law prohibits the purchase, sale and barter of wild waterfowl and other migratory birds under any conditions. The heads, hides (not in the spotted coat) and antlers (not in the velvet) of legally killed deer may be bought and sold after they are removed from the rest of the carcass. Squirrel tails and skins removed from the carcass and rabbits and raccoons can be bought and sold during their open season.

Unclaimed, or abandoned wildlife items that have been preserved or mounted for a customer's private collection may be lawfully sold by a taxidermist, except migratory birds, wild deer hides or mounts in the spotted coat and antlers in the velvet from wild deer which cannot be sold.

Any private collection, including a taxidermist's private collection, can be sold, except for migratory birds, wild deer hides or mounts in the spotted coat and antlers in the velvet from wild deer which cannot be sold at any time.

Deer hides which are not in the spotted coat which are purchased for resale as raw hides do not require any records. Deer capes and deer hides received for mounting and hides bought by a taxidermist for taxidermy purposes must be tagged and recorded in the taxidermist's records.

Game birds and animals acquired from licensed captive wild animal or wild fur farms, with written proof of origin, are not subject to the selling or bartering prohibitions of State Statute 29.539. These items can be mounted and sold. Fish purchased from registered fish farms can also be bought, sold, mounted or traded. A Taxidermist permit is still required to mount or preserve these animals.

Migratory waterfowl must be properly marked as required by Federal Law (50 CFR 21.13). The purchase, sale and barter of migratory waterfowl are illegal.

Wild animals tagged with WDNR Seizure Record Tag and "Possession Authorization Receipt" may only be sold if the box that is designated "Resale or transfer is prohibited" has not been slit or punched to indicate that any resale or transfer is prohibited.

## **OTHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING TAXIDERMIST ACTIVITIES**

Wild animals taken from Indian reservations (during the closed season for that species off the reservation) must be tagged with an Indian reservation fur, fish and game tag before removal from the reservation.

The Federal Government requires taxidermists to have a Federal taxidermy permit to prepare migratory bird mounts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also regulates the capture, transport and possession of all migratory birds. Any person wishing to perform taxidermy on migratory birds (ducks, geese, swans, mourning doves, woodcock, rails, snipe, etc.) should contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, MN 55111 for

information on how to obtain the Federal permit and Federal requirements.

## **ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES**

No person, including taxidermists, may possess any of the wildlife species listed on the Wisconsin or Federal "Endangered and Threatened Species List" unless a special endangered or threatened species permit is possessed with the carcass. SPECIAL NOTE: Some of the wild animals listed on Wisconsin's "Endangered and Threatened Species List" can be legally harvested or purchased in other states or countries. Prior to these animals being imported into Wisconsin, the person owning the carcass must first apply for a permit and tag to attach to the carcass by contacting the WDNR Bureau of Endangered Resources.

## **PROTECTED WILD ANIMALS**

NR10.02 Protected wild animals. The following wild animals are designated protected. No person may take, attempt to take, transport or possess any protected wild animal at any time unless expressly authorized by the department.

1. Cougar, Canada lynx, badger, moose, gray wolf, wolverine, and flying squirrel.
2. Endangered or threatened species listed in ch. NR27.
3. Albino or white deer, which are white except for the hooves, tarsal glands, head and parts of the head.
4. Woodchuck except as provided in s.29.337, Stats. (landowner hunting authorization)
5. Prairie chicken, Canada spruce grouse (spruce hen), swans, cranes, bitterns, plovers, kingfishers, cormorants, herons, sandpipers and grebes.
6. Eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls except as provided in ch NR 18, Wis. Adm. Code (Falconry Permit).
7. Hen pheasants except as expressly allowed.
8. Any other wild bird not specified as unprotected.
9. Timber rattlesnakes, Bullsnares and Black Rat snakes.

SPECIAL NOTE: Cougar, Canada lynx, badger, moose, gray wolf, wolverine, woodchuck, Canada spruce grouse, and some cranes can be legally harvested in other states and countries. Wisconsin listed protected animals that are legally harvested in another jurisdiction can be imported into Wisconsin without any extra permits so long as those animals have a tag or permit attached by or with the authority of the state or country where the animal was legally harvested.

If the state or country does not require any tags or permits to be attached to the animal, contact your local conservation warden prior to having the animal brought into or shipped to your business. The warden can issue a Wisconsin Seizure Record "Possession Authorization Receipt" for the animal if proof of origin can be documented to avoid future questions about possession. This procedure does not apply to animals listed on the Wisconsin or Federal "Endangered and Threatened Species List."

## **FUR DEALER PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Permitted taxidermists are granted the same authority of a Class A Fur Dealers License to buy, barter or trade raw fur. Permit

holders must keep complete records of all transactions involving raw furs. The records must show the name and address of persons the furs were bought from and sold to along with the number and kind of furs involved and the date of the transactions. "Fur-bearing animals" include otter, beaver, mink, muskrat, marten, fisher, skunk, raccoon, fox, weasel, opossum, badger, wolf, coyote, bobcat, cougar and lynx.

Wild animals whose raw fur may be lawfully traded in Wisconsin during the open season include mink, beaver, otter, muskrat, fox, raccoon, fisher, rabbit, coyote, and bobcat. All raw pelts of otter, fisher, and bobcat must have a pelt tag and a registration tag attached until the pelt is tanned or made into a mount. The removed pelt and registration tags should be returned to the owner or made part of the mount.

Unprotected fur-bearing animals pelts of skunk, weasel and opossum may be bought and sold at any time.

Tanned hides of lawfully harvested fur-bearing animals may be sold any time.

Pine marten are listed Wisconsin endangered or threatened animals and their pelts may not be possessed unless Wisconsin issues a permit prior to the pelt being imported into the state.

Badger, cougar, gray wolf, lynx, and wolverine are protected in Wisconsin, but are not Endangered or Threatened. Pelts of these species when legally obtained from another state or province may be possessed in Wisconsin if the pelt has a tag attached showing the state or country of origin.

## **ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS**

### **It Is Unlawful To:**

- Buy, sell or trade bear teeth, claws, gall bladders, or other parts, except that the entire bear hide with claws, head and teeth intact may be sold or purchased.
- Possess the skin of any mink, muskrat, fisher, beaver, or otter showing that the animal was shot or speared.
- Ship or transport any package of furs unless the package is marked showing the kind and number of furs contained, the license number and address of the consignor and consignee.
- Possess any raptor (hawks, owls, eagles or falcon) or any non-game migratory bird including any songbirds, flickers, woodpeckers, or any other protected species of wild animals without proper state or federal authorization.
- Buy or barter wild game fish or game fish skins unless a person holds a valid taxidermy school permit and who, on August 15, 1991, operated a taxidermy school approved by the educational approval board under s. 45.54, Wis. Stats. "Game fish" includes all varieties of fish except rough fish and minnows.
- Animals or furs which were unlawfully taken or possessed in this or another state are unlawful to possess in Wisconsin.

