



To Persons Wishing to Apply for a Commercial Aquatic Turtle Harvester License

Enclosed is an application for an annual Commercial Aquatic Turtle Harvester's License. License expires December 31st of the year issued. For additional information, contact Curtis Tackett at 405-365-5060.

PLEASE NOTE: All traps and nets to be used **must be inspected by a Game Warden from your county of residence** or the county where you plan to harvest turtles. For a list of Game Wardens, please visit our website: http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/laws_regs/lawstatemap.htm

Also enclosed are copies of

- State statutes and ODWC Commission rules pertaining to the harvest of aquatic turtles in Oklahoma
- A clarification of waters open/closed to commercial turtle harvesting
- A list of turtle species which are prohibited from harvest in Oklahoma

Complete and mail the following to ODWC:

1. Completed and signed application (**MUST be signed by Game Warden from county of residence or county where you plan to harvest.**)
2. Certified check or money order for \$40.00 (resident) or \$200.00 (non-resident)
3. NOTARIZED "*Affidavit Verifying Lawful Presence in the United States*"

Mail to: Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation
PO Box 53465
Oklahoma City OK 73152



Important Information for Persons Applying for Commercial Aquatic Turtle Harvester License:

Permanent as of June 1, 2013:

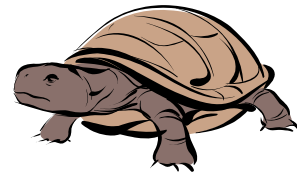
No turtles may be commercially harvested from “Waters of this State”

Title 29, Section 2-147. Waters of this State.

"Waters of this State" shall mean any river, stream, creek, bayou, oxbow and any impoundment constructed with public funds, provided, that impoundments constructed on private lands under the watershed protection and flood prevention programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, shall not be included as waters of this state.

Turtle Species Prohibited From Harvest/Collection, Sale or Purchase in Oklahoma:

- Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*)
- Chicken Turtle (*Deirochelys reticularia*)
- Map Turtle (*Graptemys* spp.)
- Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys* spp.)
- Razor-backed Musk Turtle (*Stemotherus carinatus*)
- All State and/or Federal threatened or endangered species
- All soft shell turtles and common snapping turtles greater than sixteen (16) inches in length when measuring the carapace only from the anterior (front) end to the posterior (rear).
-



**No Terrestrial Turtles May Be Harvested,
Purchased, or Sold
Under This License**

Commercial Turtle Harvest Rules and Statutes

800:15-9-2. License requirements

The following license provisions pertain to the commercial harvest and buying of aquatic turtles:

- (1) It shall be unlawful for any person to harvest or attempt to harvest aquatic turtles from any waters in this state for commercial purposes without having first procured from the Department of Wildlife Conservation, or its authorized agent, a commercial aquatic turtle harvester license in accordance with 29 O.S., Section 4-103A which shall be issued only upon the receipt of a completed application for such license.
- (2) A person licensed to harvest aquatic turtles for commercial purposes may purchase one or more helpers license. Such helpers license shall be a "John Doe" license that shall be valid for the helper or assistant only so long as the helper works under the supervision of the licensed commercial turtle harvester who shall be legally responsible for the activities of such helper, and anyone assisting a commercial aquatic turtle harvester in any commercial turtle harvesting operation must possess such a helpers license in accordance with 29 O.S., Section 4-104A.
- (3) No person may buy, transport out of state or export aquatic turtles from Oklahoma without having applied for and received an aquatic turtle buyer's license from the Director in accordance with 29 O.S., Section 4-103B.

800: 15-9-3. General; operating provisions

Harvest, sale and purchase of aquatic turtles for commercial purpose shall be in accordance with 29 O.S, Sections 4-103A, 4-103B and 6-204 and the following:

- (1) The **application for an aquatic turtle harvest license must be signed by a Game Warden**, and must list the county or counties from which turtles will be harvested.
- (2) The harvest, collection, sale or purchase of the following turtle species is prohibited:
 - (A) Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrolemys ternminckii*);
 - (B) Chicken Turtle (*Deirochelys reticularia*);
 - (C) Map Turtle (*Graptemys* spp.);
 - (D) Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys* spp.)
 - (E) Razor-backed Musk Turtle (*Stemotherus carinatus*)
 - (F) All State and/or Federal threatened or endangered species;
 - (G) All soft shell turtles and common snapping turtles, except as provided in Title 29 O.S., Section 4-102, greater than sixteen (16) inches in length when measuring the carapace only from the anterior (front) end to the posterior (rear) end shall not be kept in possession or sold or purchased and must be returned to the water immediately.
- (3) The possession, buying and/or selling of any terrestrial turtles commonly known as "box turtles", is prohibited.
- (4) All traps and nets used in the harvest of turtles for commercial purposes must have an identification tag with the owner's name and address attached and the name and address of all persons authorized to operate the traps and nets. **All such traps and nets must be shown to the county Game Warden at the time the Game Warden signs the license application.**

800:15-9-3.1. Closed Areas

The following waters are closed to all commercial aquatic turtle harvest:

- (1) Waters located within a city, town or municipality.
- (2) All waters of this state.

Title 29 O.S., Section 4-103A. Commercial turtle harvester license

- A. Except as otherwise provided by subsection B of this section, no person may take for commercial purposes, by the use of nets, traps, seines and other similar devices, turtles from this state without having first procured a commercial turtle harvester license from the Director.
- B. Any person having procured a commercial turtle harvester license, pursuant to subsection A of this section, may take for commercial purposes by any means, or assist in any such operations, turtles or aquatic turtles from any waters of this state, except from waters located within a city, town or municipality, and such areas designated pursuant to Section 1452 of Title 82 of the Oklahoma Statutes.
- C. Prior to the issuance of each license, the applicant must file with the Director a true inventory of the equipment to be utilized in the operations of that turtle harvester. Such inventory shall be kept current. The

inventory may be amended by filing a new inventory at any time.

- D. The fee for a license under this section shall be Forty Dollars (\$40.00) for residents and Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) for nonresidents of the State of Oklahoma.
- E. The Director shall not issue a commercial turtle harvester license to residents of any other state which does not allow residents of Oklahoma the opportunity to purchase such license in their state.
- F. Any person convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00), or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.
- G. Commercial turtle harvesters whose licenses have been revoked under subsection F of Section 4-101 of this title shall not engage in commercial turtle harvesting operations in any manner during such revocation.

Title 29 O.S., Section 4-104A. Commercial turtle harvester helper's license

- A. No person may assist in any commercial turtle harvesting operation without having first procured from the Director a license for each such person.
- B. Such license shall be in the form of a John Doe license and will be valid for the helper or assistant only so long as the helper or assistant works under the supervision of a commercial turtle harvester who shall be legally responsible for the actions of such helper or assistant.
- C. The fee for a license under this section shall be Forty Dollars (\$40.00).
- D. Any persons convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00), or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Title 29 O.S., Section 6-204. Operating provisions for commercial turtle harvesters.

- A. Except as otherwise provided by subsection B of this section, no person may net or trap aquatic turtles for commercial purposes or assist in such operations or buy, barter, trade or export any aquatic turtles from this state without having first obtained a valid commercial turtle harvester's license and without observing the following requirements:

1. **No nets and traps used in the harvest of turtles for commercial purposes may have a mesh size less than three (3) inches square. Provided that a trap or net with a mesh size of two (2) by four (4) inches shall be deemed to comply with the provisions of this paragraph if the trap or net contains at least eight escape holes of not less than four (4) by four (4) inches square located on the trap which will provide unrestricted egress for immature or small-sized turtles;**
2. **All types of traps shall have an identification tag with the owner's name and license number attached and the name and license number of all persons authorized to operate the traps or nets;**
3. Aquatic turtles may be harvested for commercial purposes only from private ponds, with permission of the pond owner and from municipal lakes, with written permission of the municipal authority;
4. Traps and nets must be cleaned and emptied at least once every forty-eight (48) hours;
5. Any game or nongame fish trapped or netted during a turtle harvesting operation shall be immediately released to the water; and
6. Legally taken nongame fish and their parts may be utilized for bait in turtle harvesting operations.

- B. No person may take for commercial purposes by any means, or assist in any such operations, turtles or aquatic turtles from any scenic river area of this state as such areas are designated pursuant to Section 1452 of Title 82 of the Oklahoma Statutes or from any major river channel specifically designated by rule by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission to be restricted from commercial turtle or aquatic turtle harvesting.
- C. The Commission may promulgate other rules it deems necessary to implement the provisions of this section.
- D. Any equipment used in violation of this section shall be confiscated and become the property of the Department or disposed of according to law.
- E. Any person convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

