



STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

Wildlife Diversity Division

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MEMORANDUM

September 1, 2017

To: Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife, and Interested Publics

From: Jennifer Newmark, Administrator, Wildlife Diversity Division

Title: Commercial Collection of Reptiles

Description: The Commission will consider at least two potential regulations for commercial collection of reptiles. One regulation could prohibit all collection of reptiles for commercial purposes, either temporarily or permanently. The other regulation could limit collection of reptiles for commercial purposes based on season, species, collection area and/or take. Options will be discussed and the Commission may choose to direct the Department to advance a recommendation to a future Commission meeting.

Summary:

At the August 2017 meeting, the Commission directed the Department to draft two potential regulations for the Commission to discuss regarding the commercial collection of reptiles. The following is a summary of options the Department has drafted that could be included in future regulations, policies, or directions that the Commission may choose to take.

A Commission General Regulation (CGR) would need to be drafted if the Commission chose to prohibit commercial collection of reptiles, but if the Commission chose to limit commercial collection of reptiles based on season, species, collection area and/or take a Commission Regulation (CR) would need to be drafted. Information on both options is provided below.

A Possible Commission General Regulation (CGR) to Prohibit Commercial Collection of Reptiles

This regulation would prohibit collection of reptiles for commercial purposes in the State of Nevada, either temporarily or permanently. Hobby collections under Commission Regulation 17-02 would remain unchanged. This regulation provides the strongest conservation of native reptiles and allows the most recovery potential of declining populations. This regulation would be cost-effective and enforceable and is consistent with neighboring states.

To enact a regulation such as this, NAC 503.095 would need to be amended with language that states that commercial collection of unprotected reptiles is prohibited. Another option for the Commission to consider would be to direct the Department to not issue any permits until it is proved to the Department that reptile populations are not being adversely impacted by commercial collecting. This would not require an NAC change unless it was decided to prohibit permanently.

A Possible Commission Regulation (CR) to Limit Commercial Collection of Reptiles

This regulation would limit commercial collection of reptiles based on season, area, and species, and could provide limits on both daily and annual numbers of animals allowed to be collected. The regulation would allow take for commercial purposes and would provide less opportunity for native species to recover from population declines. Associated enforcement and staff resources would be supported by license fees and tag sales and would pose some enforceability challenges.

Within a potential Commission Regulation, there are several areas that the Commission could consider in discussions. These include the following topics:

Seasons:

Currently, collections are allowed during the breeding season which results in decreased reproductive output and impacts the ability of species to recover from collection pressure. It is the Department's recommendation to allow collecting only during non-reproductive months, Jan 1 – March 31 and Aug 1 – Dec 31. The Department recommends closing the season for commercial collecting statewide during the breeding season, from April 1 – July 31.

Legal Methods of Collection:

The Department recommends continuing to allow collecting only by hand, noose, snake hook, tongs and nets. Collecting reptiles from pit, can, or fall type traps or containers, or any part of such a trap including cover boards, would continue to be prohibited. Furthermore, crowbars, jackhammers or other methods or means of collection that involves the removal or breaking apart of rocks or other destruction of habitat would also continue to be prohibited.

Areas of Collection:

Data analysis by the Department has shown declines in species population in the areas that have been hotspots of collecting over the past several decades. The Department recommends the Commission consider closing Game Management Areas 04, 17,18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, and 29. In addition, some of these areas have known pitfall traps within them. While we understand that these pitfall traps are in the process of being removed, they have served as a significant source of mortality for many years and this will likely have continuing effects even after traps are removed. Closing these areas will allow reptiles populations to begin to recover from both collecting pressure and pitfall traps.

Annual Quotas and Daily Possession Limits:

Currently, unprotected reptiles are allowed to be collected for commercial purposes in unlimited numbers. To allow for populations to recover from continued collecting pressure, the Department recommends the Commission consider annual quotas and daily possession limits for those species that would be included in a draft regulation. The Department recommends that daily collection limits be set to not exceed 30 reptiles per day in aggregate. The Department recommends annual quotas for individual species open to commercial collection as listed in the table below.

Annual quotas and daily limits are based on possession of the animals in hand. Reptiles collected for commercial purposes are different than other regulated harvestable animals in that they are collected, maintained and shipped as live animals. Because animals can be quickly shipped and are not able to be permanently marked, enforcing either daily possession limits or annual quotas would be problematic and difficult.

Species open to collection:

Some species are more affected by commercial collection of reptiles than others. The Department recommends the Commission consider restricting species that are allowed for commercial collection. Species of Conservation Priority, as identified within the Nevada Wildlife Action Plan, are recommended to be closed to all commercial reptile collection as data analysis on these species has indicated declining populations. These include: desert iguana, western chuckwalla, long-nosed leopard lizard, Great Basin collared lizard and desert horned lizard.

Species considered under this potential Commission Regulation, along with Annual Quotas could include:

Lizards	Annual Quota Limit
Eastern fence lizard (<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>)	50
Great Basin skink (<i>Plestiodon skiltonianus</i>)	30
Great Basin whiptail (<i>Aspidoscelis tigris</i>)	50
Northern sagebrush lizard (<i>Sceloporus graciosus</i>)	50
Ornate tree lizard (<i>Urosaurus ornatus</i>)	50
Western fence lizard (<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>)	50
Yellow-backed spiny lizard (<i>Sceloporus uniformis [magister]</i>)	30
Zebra-tailed lizard (<i>Callisaurus draconoides</i>)	30
Side-blotched Lizard (<i>Uta stansburiana</i>)	50
Snakes	
California kingsnake (<i>Lampropeltis californiae [getula]</i>)	10
Desert nightsnake (<i>Hypsiglena chlorophaea</i>)	10
Glossy snake (<i>Arizona elegans</i>)	10
Gophersnake (<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>)	10
Long-nosed snake (<i>Rhinocheilus lecontei</i>)	10
Mojave patch-nosed snake (<i>Salvadora hexalepis</i>)	10
Red racer (<i>Coluber flagellum</i>)	10
Striped whipsnake (<i>Coluber taeniatus</i>)	10
Terrestrial gartersnake (<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>)	10

Western black-headed snake (<i>Tantilla planiceps</i>)	10
Western groundsnake (<i>Sonora semiannulata</i>)	10
Western yellow-bellied racer (<i>Coluber constrictor</i>)	10
Venomous Snakes	
Western lyre snake (<i>Trimorphodon biscutatus</i>)	5
Great Basin rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus oreganus</i>)	5
Mojave rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus scutulatus</i>)	5
Panamint rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus stephensi</i>)	5
Speckled rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus mitchellii</i>)	5
Non-Indigenous	
Bullfrog (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)	unlimited
Spiny softshell turtle (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>)	unlimited
Mediterranean house gecko (<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i>)	unlimited
Bow-footed gecko (<i>Cyrtopodion scabrum</i>)	unlimited