

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 531

BY REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS

WILDLIFE & FISHERIES DEP: Provides relative to the regulation of reptiles and amphibians

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 56:6(30), 632.3(B), 632.4(Section heading) and (B), 632.5(A)
3 and (F), 632.5.1(Section heading), (A), (B), and (C), 632.6(C) and (D), 635, and
4 637.1(B)(2) and to enact R.S. 56:632.4(C) and (D), relative to reptiles and
5 amphibians; to provide for licenses; to provide for species of snakes allowed to be
6 imported, sold, or purchased; to provide for methods of collection; to provide for
7 definitions, and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 56:6(30), 632.3(B), 632.4(Section heading) and (B), 632.5(A) and
10 (F), 632.5.1(Section heading), (A), (B), and (C), 632.6(C) and (D), 635, and 637.1(B)(2) are
11 hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 56:632.4(C) and (D) are hereby enacted to read as
12 follows:

13 §6. Special powers and duties; statistics; rules and regulations; reports

14 The commission, through its secretary:

15 * * *

16 (30) Shall promulgate rules and regulations to control the importation and
17 private possession of nonindigenous constrictors in excess of ~~twelve~~ eight feet in
18 length, venomous snakes, and nonhuman primates. The rules shall provide

1 exceptions for certified animal sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums, wildlife research
2 centers, scientific organizations, and medical research facilities, including but not
3 limited to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Primate Center and the Tulane
4 National Primate Research Center. Such rules shall address internet purchase of
5 such animals. Such rules shall also provide for permits for certain institutions and
6 for owners who can prove ownership prior to July 1, 2003.

7 * * *

8 §623.3. Licenses

9 * * *

10 B. A violation of this Section is a class ~~one~~ two violation.

11 * * *

12 §632.4. Reptile and amphibian collector's license; scientific research and collecting
13 collector's permit

14 A. All persons engaged in the commercial collection and sale of native
15 reptiles and amphibians collected in Louisiana must possess one of the following
16 licenses:

17 * * *

18 B. Collector license shall comply with reporting requirements set forth by
19 the department.

20 ~~B. C.~~ C. Persons engaged in ~~legitimate~~ herpetological research ~~may request~~
21 ~~from the secretary~~ shall possess a scientific research and collecting collector's permit
22 prior to the removal of native reptiles or amphibians from the wild. Such permits
23 may be issued at the sole discretion of the secretary. No fee shall be charged for
24 such a permit. No specimens obtained under this permit may be sold.

25 ~~E. D.~~ D. A violation of this Section is a class ~~three~~ two violation.

26 §632.5 Reptile and amphibian wholesale/retail dealer's license; nonresident three-
27 day license

28 A. Any person ~~buying, purchasing or~~ acquiring, or handling, from any
29 person, by any means whatsoever, any species of native and nonnative reptiles and

1 amphibians from within or outside the state, for sale or resale, or possessing native
 2 or nonnative reptiles and amphibians for propagation for sale shall possess a reptile
 3 and amphibian wholesale/retail dealer's license at a cost of two hundred twenty
 4 dollars for a resident and eight hundred eighty dollars for a nonresident. This license
 5 shall not apply to farm raised aquatic chelonians regulated under Title 3. ~~or for~~
 6 ~~propagation for sale, any species of native reptile or amphibian, except farm raised~~
 7 ~~aquatic chelonians, or any live species of poisonous snake or constrictor, as~~
 8 ~~delineated in R.S. 56:632.5.1, in Louisiana, from within or outside the state, for sale,~~
 9 ~~or resale, whether on a commission basis or otherwise, is a wholesale/retail reptile~~
 10 ~~amphibian dealer and shall possess a reptile and amphibian wholesale/retail dealer's~~
 11 ~~license at a cost of two hundred twenty dollars for a resident and eight hundred~~
 12 ~~eighty dollars for a nonresident.~~

13 * * *

14 F. A violation of this Section is a class ~~three~~ two violation.

15 * * *

16 §632.5.1 Constrictors and ~~poisonous~~ venomous snakes

17 A. The importation, ~~or private possession, selling, or purchasing~~ of
 18 constrictor snakes in excess of eight feet long, including but not limited to the
 19 following species: Apodora papuana (Papuan python), Liasis olivacea, (Olive
 20 python), Morelia spilota (Carpet or Diamond python), Morelia kinghorni (Scrub
 21 python), ~~Morelia amethystine~~ Morelia amethystine (Amethystine python), ~~Python~~
 22 ~~natalensis (Southern African python), Python sebae (African Rock python), Python~~
 23 ~~molurus (Indian or Burmese python), Python reticulatus (Reticulate python), any~~
 24 ~~species of the genus Boa (Boa constrictors), and any species of the genus Eunectes~~
 25 ~~(Anacondas);~~ obtained in any manner, shall ~~be only~~ be allowed by permit issued by
 26 the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries except for animals kept by certified animal
 27 sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums, wildlife research centers, scientific organizations, and
 28 medical research facilities as defined in the Animal Welfare Act, ~~as found in the~~
 29 ~~United States Code Title 7, Chapter 54, 2132(e)~~ 7 U.S.C. 2132(e). The importation,

1 private possession, selling or purchasing of the following constrictor snake species
2 at any size in length shall be only by permit issued by the Department of Wildlife
3 and Fisheries: *Boa constrictor* (Boa Constrictor), *Python reticulatus* (Reticulated
4 Python), *Python sebae* (North African Python), *Python natalensis* (South African
5 Python), and all species in the genus *Eunectes* (Anacondas). Burmese pythons
6 (*Python molurus*) are prohibited from importation and possession, except for animals
7 kept by certified animal sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums, wildlife research centers,
8 scientific organizations, and medical research facilities as defined in the Animal
9 Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. 2132(e).

10 B. The importation or private possession of venomous snakes, including any
11 species under current taxonomic standing recognized to belong to the Families
12 Viperidae (~~Pitvipers and Vipers~~), Crotalidae (Pit Vipers), Elapidae (~~Cobras and~~
13 ~~Mambas~~ Elapids), and Hydrophiidae (Sea Snakes), ~~Atractaspididae (Mole Vipers)~~,
14 ~~as well as the genera *Dispholidus*, *Thelotornis*, and *Rhabdophis* of the Family~~
15 ~~*Colubridae* obtained in any manner, shall be only by permit issued by the~~
16 ~~Department of Wildlife and Fisheries except for animals kept by certified animal~~
17 ~~sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums, wildlife research centers, scientific organizations, and~~
18 ~~medical research facilities as defined in the Animal Welfare Act, ~~as found in the~~~~
19 ~~United States Code Title 7, Chapter 54, 2132(e)~~ 7 U.S.C. 2132(e). The importation
20 and possession of the following venomous snake species is prohibited: all species
21 in the family *Atractaspididae* (stiletto snakes); all species in the genera *Dispholidus*
22 (boomslangs), *Thelotornis* (twig snakes), and *Rhabdophis* (keelback snakes) of the
23 family *Colubridae*; and all species in the genera *Naja*, *Ophiophagus*, *Aspidelaps*, and
24 *Walterinnesia* (cobras), *Dendroaspis* (mambas), *Oxyuranus* (taipans), and *Bungarus*
25 (kraits) of the family Elapidae, except for animals kept by certified animal
26 sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums, wildlife research centers, scientific organizations, and
27 medical research facilities as defined in the Animal Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. 2132(e).

1 C. The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission is authorized to adopt
2 rules and regulations for the harvest, possession, sale, handling, housing, or
3 importation for species of constrictors and ~~poisonous~~ venomous snakes.

4 * * *

5 §632.6 Methods of collection

6 * * *

7 C. Any trap or other device designed to capture reptiles or amphibians,
8 which remains in the field unattended between routine inspections, must bear a tag
9 with the ~~name, address, and~~ license number of the collector. All such devices must
10 be checked every twenty-four hours or they must be rendered unworkable and
11 removed from the field during periods of nonuse.

12 D. A violation of this Section is a class ~~one~~ two violation.

13 * * *

14 §635. Diamondback terrapins; trapping; turtle eggs

15 A. No person shall take diamondback terrapins ~~by means of traps of any~~
16 ~~kind~~; and no person shall take the eggs of any species of turtle, ~~except the red ear~~
17 ~~(Trachemys Scripta)~~; wherever found.

18 B. ~~No person shall ship diamondback terrapins out of the state between the~~
19 ~~fifteenth of April and the fifteenth of June.~~ All diamondback terrapins caught by any
20 means whatsoever during that period shall be immediately returned to the water
21 alive.

22 * * *

23 §637.1. Definitions; applicability

24 * * *

25 B. Administration; enforcement; penalties

26 * * *

27 (2) Recreational use of wild box turtles. No ~~more than two wild box turtles~~
28 ~~per day may be taken for recreational purposes, and no person shall have in his or her~~
29 possession more than ~~four~~ two box turtles, regardless of species, at any time. A

1 violation of this Paragraph shall constitute a class ~~one~~ two violation, R.S. ~~56:31~~
2 56:32.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 531 Original

2024 Regular Session

Thomas

Abstract: Provides relative to the regulation of reptiles and amphibians, changes regulations for importation and possession of reptiles and amphibians, changes regulations for taking of reptiles and amphibians, changes regulations for taking of diamond terrapins, changes regulations for taking of wild box turtles, changes the violation level of listed provisions.

Present law requires the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, through its secretary shall promulgate rules and regulations to control the importation and private possession of nonindigenous constrictors in excess of 12 feet in length. Proposed law modifies present law by changing the size from 12 to 8 feet and allowing for exceptions for certified animal sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums, wildlife research centers, scientific organizations and medical research facilities.

Present law provides that a violation of present law (R.S. 56:632.3) is a class one violation. Proposed law modifies present law by changing a violation from a class one to a class two violation.

Present law provides for requirements for persons engaged in the sale of native reptiles and amphibians in Louisiana. Proposed law adds additional license requirements to present law, as set forth by the department.

Proposed law clarifies language related to the reptile and amphibian wholesale/retail dealer's license.

Present law provides that a violation of present law (R.S. 56:632.5) is a class three violation. Proposed law modifies present law by changing a violation from a class three to a class two violation.

Present law provides for certain species of constrictor snakes in excess of eight feet long that may be imported or possessed in accordance with a permit issued by the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries. Proposed law modifies present law by removing certain species from those requirements. Proposed law adds certain species of constrictor snakes at any size that may be imported, possessed, or sold in accordance with a permit issued by the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Present law provides that the importation of venomous snakes shall only be by permit issued by the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries. Proposed law modifies present law by providing for certain species of venomous snakes that are prohibited from importation and possession, except under certain enumerated exceptions.

Present law provides for methods of collection of reptiles and amphibians. Proposed law provides for requirements for taking a reptile or amphibian with the use of traps or other devices.

Present law provides for taking of diamond terrapins. Proposed law modifies present law by clarifying language and removing a time period for shipping diamondback terrapins out of the state.

Present law provides for the administration, enforcement, and penalties for taking of box turtles, and provides for limitations on taking of wild box turtles. Proposed law modifies present law by changing the limit of box turtles a person may have in their possession from four to two. Present law provides that a violation of this paragraph shall be a class one violation. Proposed law modifies present law by changing the violation from a class one violation to a class two violation.

(Amends R.S. 56:6(30), 632.3(B), 632.4(Section heading) and (B), 632.5(A) and (F), 632.5.1(Section heading), (A), (B), and (C), 632.6(C) and (D), 635, and 637.1(B)(2); Adds R.S. 56:632.4(C) and (D))