



## 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

Any person in Wisconsin who mounts any wild animal in a lifelike manner or preserves the carcass of any wild animal for consideration (compensation, barter or fee), must obtain a taxidermist permit from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A taxidermist permit is also required for anyone who only mounts deer heads for consideration or fee. The simple mounting of 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. (See "Taxidermist Permit Holder Requirements" section for more details) Taxidermists should 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 DNR Service Centers, online at: [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) keyword search "taxidermy"

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, Taxidermy Application – CS/1, PO Box 7924, Madison, WI 53707-7924.

Wisconsin resident and nonresident taxidermist permits are valid from the date of issuance until December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

**Renewals:** Permits must be renewed prior to their expiration on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Renewals can be purchased online or at any DNR sales locations. All customer accounts that have a valid email address in their account will be sent a renewal notification.

### 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 consideration or fee.

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 identification tag to each wild animal's carcass or part received. The identification tag number must correspond to a numbered record that lists the carcass owner's name, address, signature, date received by the taxidermist, description of the carcass or part, and DNR carcass identification numbers (i.e. pelt tag and registration numbers) If a carcass is required by DNR to be tagged by the person who harvested it, the DNR tag must remain attached to the carcass and accompanied by a copy of the corresponding taxidermy transaction record during transportation.

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, employee, or agent of the taxidermist shall cooperate with any warden or agent of the department, and exhibit items subject to inspection.

DNR engages in furbearer research which may require submission of a carcass, or only specific parts of a carcass, when a harvested animal is registered. Refer to the current year's *Trapping Regulations* pamphlet for information regarding the annual collection requirements. Furbearer registration must occur by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the first month after the animal is harvested. The pelt tag attached by the trapper/hunter must remain attached to the pelt until the animal is registered. Before registering a pelt with DNR, harvesters must skin the animal and separate the pelt from the carcass, except that skinning/pelt separation does not need to be completed before registration for specimens going to a taxidermist. These carcasses must still be registered prior to taxidermy, but the skinned carcass/parts required for submission may be delivered to DNR after the taxidermist has skinned the animal, no later than 30 days of registration.

When bear are taken in for mounting, the DNR tags should be removed at the taxidermist after documentation, and must be retained by the owner and kept with the meat. For other animal species which require DNR tagging, it's recommended, but not required, that all government tags (except 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 for two years following the effective period of the permit. The other copies may be used as a receipt for the customer or provided to the Department if requested. 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.
6. **DNR carcass identification numbers (tag/harvest authorization numbers)**

For questions regarding the harvest authorization number please contact Customer Service at 1-888-936-7463.

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 permanent ink prior to storage in a freezer.

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 have 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 does not permit 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 (which

include mounted specimens). Migratory waterfowl must be properly marked as required by Federal Law (50 CFR 21.13).

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, skins and skulls removed from the carcass and rabbits can be bought and sold during their open season. Fur-bearing animals which have an open season in Wisconsin and which have no bag limit (raccoons, fox, mink, beaver, etc.), if lawfully taken, may be sold at any time of the year.

Unclaimed, or abandoned wildlife items that have been preserved and mounted in a lifelike manner for a customer's private collection may be lawfully sold by a taxidermist, except that migratory birds, wild deer hides or mounts in the spotted coat and antlers in the velvet from wild deer and bear skulls, teeth and claws which are not part of a lifelike mount (i.e. full body, head or shoulder mount) can't 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 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 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 Wis. Stat. § 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.

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 closed seasons for that species off the reservation) must be tagged with an Indian reservation fur, fish and game tag before removal from 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 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 apply for a permit and tag to attach to the carcass by contacting Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation.

### PROTECTED WILD ANIMALS

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

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 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, bullsnakes 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 Dealer's 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.

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.

Tanned hides of all lawfully harvested fur-bearing animals may be sold any time without the need for a license.

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

Badger, cougar, 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 or is accompanied by documentation 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 8-15-91, operated a taxidermy school approved by the educational approval board under s. 45.54, Wis. Stats. "Game fish" includes all fish except rough fish and minnows.
- Possess animals or furs which were unlawfully taken or possessed in Wisconsin or from any another state.
- Dispose of or return any inedible parts or any part of the spinal column, brain and lymphoid tissues of any deer carcass which originated from a the Wisconsin Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Zone (MZ), or from any other state or province in which CWD has been detected in the wild or a captive deer herd, except for disposal of such parts at a properly permitted landfill or with a licensed renderer.  
**NOTE:** Under Wisconsin law, any person presenting a deer carcass to a taxidermist must inform the taxidermist if the carcass originated from the CWD-MZ or any state or province know to have CWD.



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