**POSSESSION OF NATIVE SPECIES**

Possession or removal from the wild of any native reptile or amphibian is illegal*. This prohibition applies both to live animals and animal remains. Why? Rhode Island’s reptiles and amphibians face pressure from numerous threats. For many species, removal of even a single adult individual from the wild can lead to local extinction. It is illegal to sell, purchase, or own/possess native species in any context, even if acquired through a pet store or online.

Animals that have been held in captivity can transmit deadly pathogens to wild populations. Under no circumstance should a captive animal, whether native or non-native, be released into the wild. If you have questions about animals currently in your possession, call the RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife at (401) 789-0281.

*Permits are available for hunting, scientific collection, and professional exhibition (details outlined below). For a list of all reptile and amphibian species native to Rhode Island, see RIDEM regulation 250-RICR-40-05-3.17 sections A3 & A4.

**COMMERCIAL TRADE IN NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

Rhode Island law offers the opportunity to own a variety of non-native reptiles and amphibians as pets. Some species require special permits issued by the Division of Agriculture. For detailed rules and regulations regarding possession of non-native (“exotic”) reptile and amphibian species, see RIDEM regulation 250-RICR-40-05-3.17 sections A3 & A4.

Federal law prohibits the sale of viable turtle eggs or any live turtle with a carapace length shorter than four inches. This regulation applies regardless of species or geographic origin, as small turtles are associated with an increased Salmonella risk for young children.

**SCIENTIFIC COLLECTION & PROFESSIONAL EXHIBITION**

Possession of native species for valid research and exhibition purposes is allowed with a permit. Individuals requesting permission to use native reptiles or amphibians for research or professional exhibition should submit a permit application to the RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife. Permit applicants are required to pay a processing fee of $25 per permit.
Help protect Rhode Island wildlife!

Witness illegal possession or sale of native reptiles or amphibians?
Report violations to the RIDEM Environmental Police hotline by calling (401) 222-3070.

See native reptiles or amphibians in the wild?
Join RIDEM’s Division of Fish and Wildlife as a community scientist by downloading our free Herp Observer app! By submitting your observations of wild reptiles and amphibians directly to our secure databases, you can help us understand where species are found throughout the state. This information is essential for effective conservation and management of our slimy and scaly neighbors. We welcome observations of all species, whether common or rare!