



Rules Pertaining to Wild Animals, Subject 391-4-8

Matthew Rowe & Brett Albanese
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Conservation

Outline

- What is the “Wild Animal Rule?”
- History of the rule
- Justification and Approach
- Changes and examples of species
- Update Process
- Impact and public response



Background

- **27-1-2 (77):** “Wildlife” means any vertebrate or invertebrate animal life indigenous to this state...”
- **27-1-2 (75):** “Wild Animal” means any animal which is not wildlife and is not normally a domestic species in the state.
- **27-5-1.** “ The importation, transportation, sale, transfer, and possession of wild animals are privileges not to be granted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such actions can be accomplished in a manner that does not pose unnecessary risk to Georgia’s wildlife and other natural resources or the citizens of and visitors to this state”
 - Harmful competition for wildlife
 - The introduction of disease or pests harmful to wildlife
 - Problems of enforcing laws and regulations relative to wildlife
 - Threatening wildlife or other natural resources
 - Endangering the physical safety of human beings

Department and Board Responsibilities

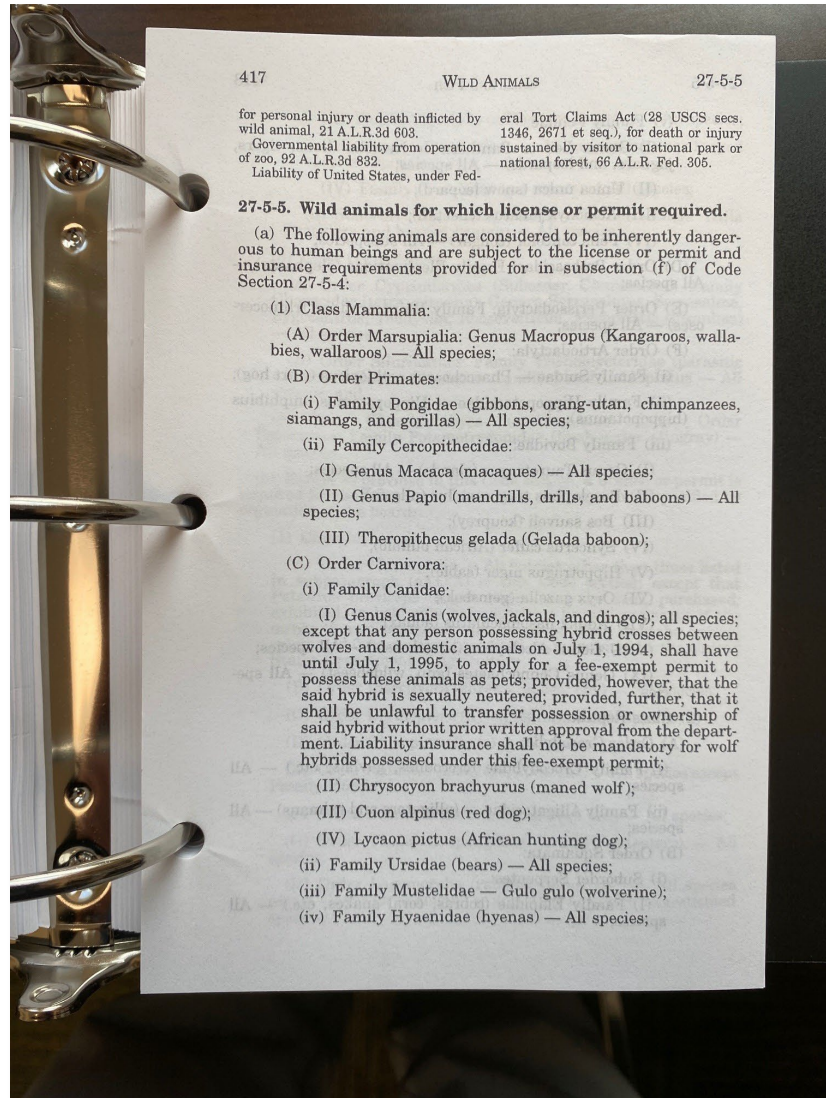
Department Of Natural Resources

- LED Issues Wild Animal Licenses and Permits as described in 27-5-4
- License: Wholesale or Retail Wild Animal Business (Not for Pet Owners)
- Permits: Scientific or Educational Purposes
- Facilities are inspected every 2-3 years
- Currently ~ 100 organizations/individuals with licenses/permits

Board of Natural Resources

- **27-5-2. (b)** The board is specifically authorized to supplement the list of wild animals set forth in this chapter...
- The board also has the authority to prohibit wild animals

Current Wild Animal List (27-5-5)



- Can view entire Wild Animal Chapter (O.C.G.A. 27-5) on General Assembly website
- 104 groups of species were listed
 - Inherently Dangerous Wild Animals (Requires license and liability insurance)
 - All other Wild Animals (Requires license only)

Justification and Approach

- Has not been updated since 1994
- Scientific name changes creating confusion
- Many invasive species groups not covered on Wild Animal List are being introduced and established in Georgia
- Proposed rules supplement the current list of wild animals and lists them all in single subject under authority of the DNR Board
- Developed by species and law enforcement experts from Georgia DNR
 - Observations in Georgia
 - Scientific publications and risk assessments
 - Invasive species issues and regulations in nearby states
 - Recognition as an injurious species under federal law (Lacey Act)

Changes to Wild Animal List

Mammals

- Prohibited: mongoose
- Inherently Dangerous: all non-domestic cat species

Birds

- Prohibited: monk parakeet and purple swamphen

Reptiles

- Inherently Dangerous: mole vipers
- License: 2 python, 2 lizard, and 2 turtle species

Fishes

- Prohibited: 5 groups of large invasive predatory fishes
- Inherently Dangerous: 3 groups of invasive or electric fishes
- License: 4 groups of predatory and/or invasive fishes

Invertebrates

- Prohibited: zebra mussels and marbled crayfish
- Inherently Dangerous: 5 groups of scorpions
- License: crayfishes, snails, penaeid shrimps, freshwater mussels and other invertebrates not held in aquaria or tanks.

Adopted Rules (Reptiles)



(c) **Reptiles:**

1. Order Squamata:

- (i) Family Pythonidae - Python molurus (Indian rock python);
 - (ii) Family Pythonidae - Python bivittatus (Burmese python);
 - (iii) Family Teiidae - Salvator merianae (Argentine black-and-white tegu);
 - (iv) Family Varanidae - Varanus niloticus (Nile monitor);
- ### 2. Order Testudines:

- (i) Family Pelomedusidae - Pelomedusa subrufa (African helmeted turtle);

- (ii) Family Trionychidae (softshell turtles) - Pelodiscus sinensis (Chinese softshell turtle);

3. The species listed in subparagraph (c) shall only be licensed for scientific, educational, or public exhibition purposes consistent with O.C.G.A. Sec. 27-5-4; provided, however, that such species possessed on or before the effective date of this rule may be held as a pet without a license or permit provided that the owner tags and registers all individuals with the Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division within 12 months following the effective date of this rule;



Adopted Rules (continued)

- Amphibians—No Changes

- Fishes

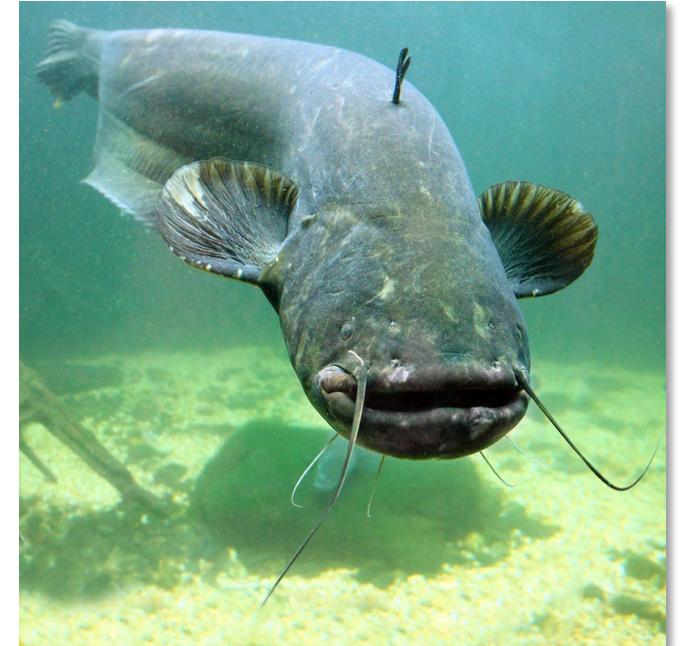
- Prohibited:

- 3 carp species
- African Tiger Fish
- Wels Catfish
- All species of Snakeheads
- Nile Perch and Barramundi

- Inherently Dangerous: Added Stonefishes, Weever Fishes and Electric Eels

- License:

- Arapaima
- Trahiras
- Goonch Catfishes
- Swamp Eels



Adopted Rules (continued)

- Invertebrates

- Prohibited:

- Dreissenidae (Zebra mussels and relatives)
 - Marbled Crayfish

- Inherently Dangerous:

- 5 groups of scorpions (fattail, bark, thicktailed, deathstalker, and yellow-legged creeping scorpion)

- License:

- All families of crayfishes (except 3 species in food/aquarium trade)
 - Apple, Assassin, and Asian Mystery Snails
 - Penaeid Shrimps (exception for human consumption)
 - Four families and 2 genera of freshwater mussels
 - All other freshwater and marine invertebrates not held in aquaria or tanks



Adapted Rules (continued)

The following measures remain in place to prevent the need to listing all potential species and make the implementation of the rule less onerous.

- The following wild animals are subject to licensing requirements pursuant to O.C.G.A. Sec. 27-5-4...
 - ...All freshwater and marine fish and invertebrate wild animals which are not held in aquaria or tanks.
 - Species listed... and held in aquaria or tanks in Georgia before the effective date of this rule may be possessed, sold, transported or transferred for a 12- month period following the effective date of this rule; and
 - The species listed... shall only be licensed for scientific purposes consistent with O.C.G.A. Sec. [27-5-4](#).



Marbled Crayfish (Prohibited)



SELF-CLONING MARMORKREB CRAYFISH (PROCAMBARUS FALLAX CF. VIRGINALIS) - TANK- BRED!

Sold Out

Choose a Variant:

1 B-GRADE MARMORKREB CRAYFISH JUVENILE

1 MARMORKREB CRAYFISH JUVENILE

3 MARMORKREB CRAYFISH

[Notify me when available](#)

[Add to Wishlist](#)

The Self-Cloning Marmorkreb Crayfish (*Procambarus fallax* cf. *virginalis*, although this is a temporary species name at best) is an incredible anomaly of biology. It is an all-female mutation that continually produces its own fertilized eggs, which develop into exact clones of the mother. In fact, many of our specimens continually reproduce in our tanks at our facility! This crayfish was reportedly discovered in a German pet shop, but little is known about its natural origins. Many people believe it to be some sort of mutation of the true Marbled Crayfish (*Procambarus fallax*) or possibly a mutated hybrid of a *Procambarus* species and another unrelated crayfish.

Though most crayfish are often reclusive by nature, this particular crayfish is very active by comparison and spends plenty of time exploring the floor of the aquarium in search of food. The Self-Cloning Marmorkreb Crayfish is an omnivorous scavenger and will eat most any meaty or plant-based foods. This crayfish should not be kept with ornamental live plants as it will eat them at a surprising rate. It is a skilled climber, so extra care must be taken to ensure that it does not escape its enclosure.

Argentine Black-and-White Tegu (License)



[HUNTING](#) [FISHING](#) [BOATING](#) [BUY A LICENSE](#) [REGISTER A BOAT](#) [PROPERTIES](#) [EDUCATION](#) [BLOG](#)



Argentine Black and White Tegus



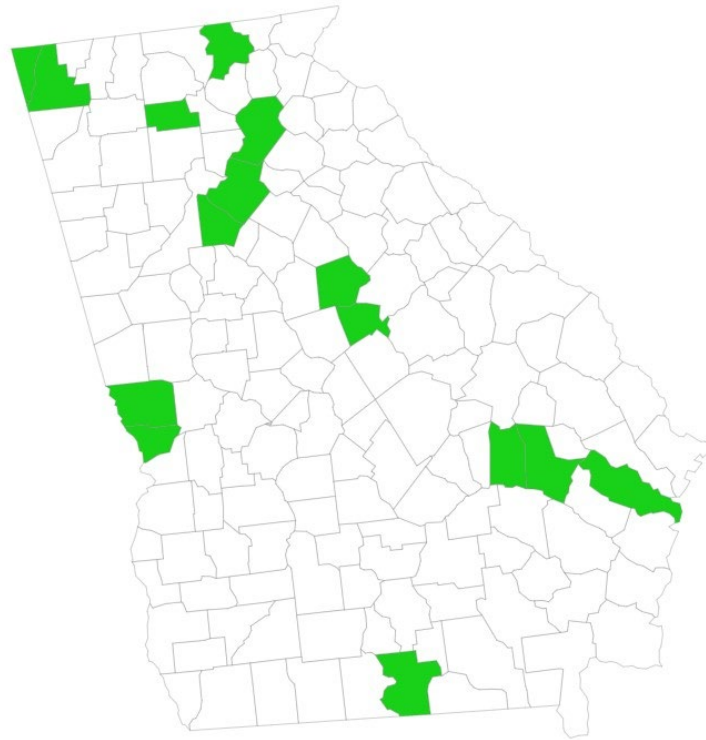
Invasive Lizards Threaten Native Georgia Wildlife

DNR and partners are working to eradicate a wild population of Argentine black and white tegus in Toombs and Tattnall counties in southeast Georgia.

- Tegu already regulated in Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama
- Existing owners can keep their pets by tagging them and registering them with LED within 12 months of the effective date of the rule.
- Animals can be sold, transferred and transported within the 12-month period as long as they are tagged and registered before the end of the 12-month period. Importation or breeding of animals would not be allowed after the effective date of the rule.

Tegu Concerns

Argentine black and white tegu (*Salvator merianae*)



Legend

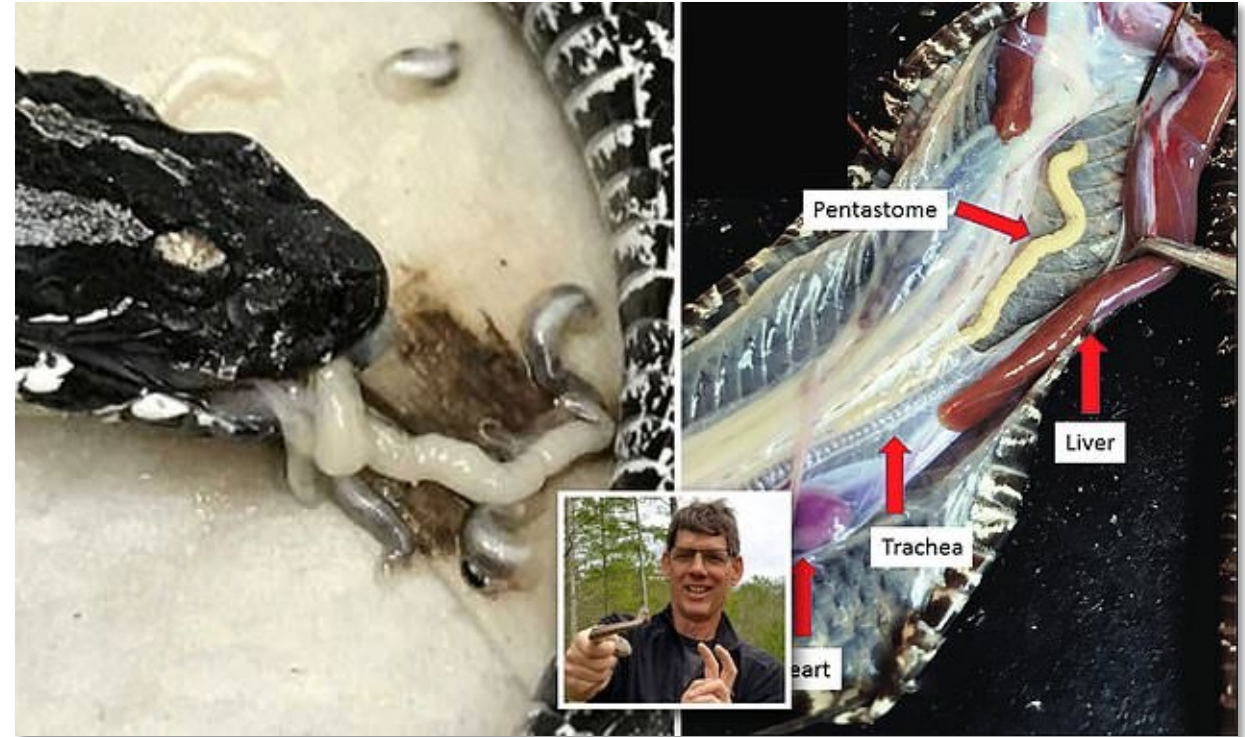
- No Data
- Species Reported

Map created : 9/9/2022

- Population in Toombs and Tattnall Counties, spreading
- Omnivores that include eggs of tortoises and ground nesting birds in their diets



Invasive Lung Parasites



- Burmese Pythons are a host for this non-native parasite
- Native snakes are susceptible to the parasite



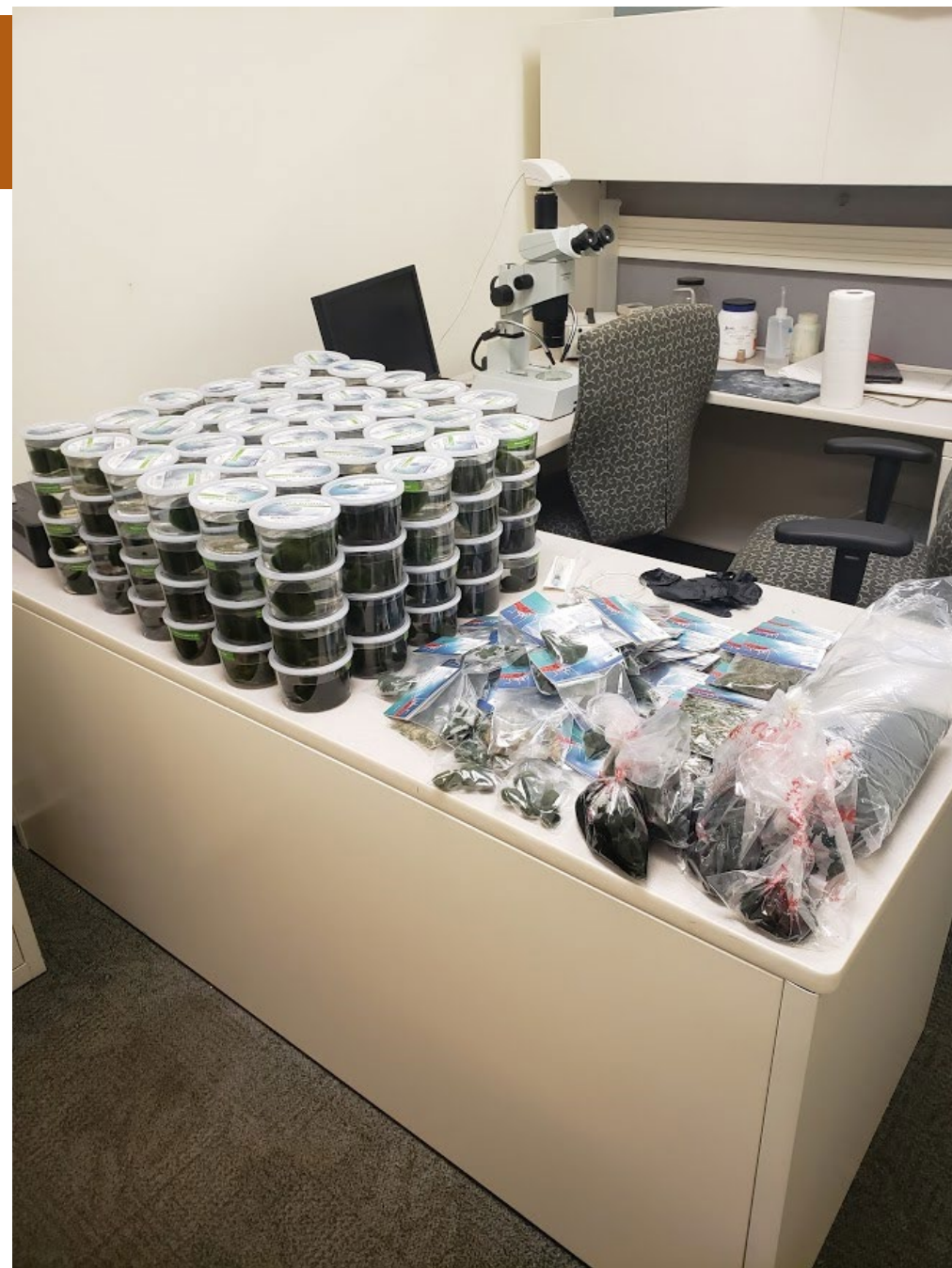
Dreissenid Mussels (Prohibited)

- Competition
 - High filtration rate
 - Prodigious reproductive rate
- Smothering
 - Grow on native mussels and other hard surfaces
- Alter benthic communities
 - Decreases in abundance and biodiversity of benthic invertebrates
- Trophic shift
 - Reduce plankton in the water column
 - Negatively Impacts pelagic fish
 - Positively impacts Benthic fish
 - Clarify water
 - Fertilize benthos
 - Increase rooted macrophyte growth
 - Hypoxia and Anoxia
- Calcium sequestration
 - Shells absorb calcium
- Billions of dollars spent on mussel control to date
- Large power plants can spend up to \$1M per year removing zebra mussels from plumbing
- Alteration of fisheries and aquatic recreation



Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Recent Close calls in GA





Process

1. Suggested regulation changes and species were developed between biologists from the GA DNR Conservation Section and DNR Law Enforcement.
2. Recommendations assembled and reported to the DNR Board
3. Public Comment Period
4. Presentations to the Board
5. Passed by the Board
6. Approved by the Secretary of State
7. Rule in full effect Dec 2023 after 12-month grace period

Public Input Process

Description of Action	Action Date
Georgia DNR Board Briefing on Proposed Rules	August 23, 2022
Proposed Rules Publicly Noticed on Website	August 26, 2022
Virtual Public Meeting, 7:00 PM-8:00 PM Presentation and documents posted on https://georgiawildlife.com	September 13, 2022
Deadline for submitting comments on proposed rules to wcscomments@dnr.ga.gov	September 30, 2022
Public comments and rules Presented to the Board for action Fort McAllister State Park	October 25, 2022
Rule Passed and went into effect	December 2022

Comment in **Support** of Rule 391-4-8-.05 (Wild Animals, License Required)

Species Group	No. of Comments	Commenting Groups
Burmese/Indian Rock Pythons	15	CTR for Invasive Species/Ecosystem Health Concerned Citizens Conservation Professionals Georgia Wildlife Federation Humane Society of the United States Reptile Keepers and Breeders
Argentine Black-and-White Tegu	15	CTR for Invasive Species/Ecosystem Health Concerned Citizens Conservation Professionals Georgia Wildlife Federation Reptile Keepers and Breeders
Nile Monitor	7	CTR for Invasive Species/Ecosystem Health Concerned Citizens Conservation Professionals
African Helmeted/ Chinese Softshell Turtles	7	Conservation Professionals

Comment in **Support** of Rule 391-4-8-.05 (Wild Animals, License Required), Continued

Species Group	No. of Comments	Commenting Groups
Fishes	10	CTR for Invasive Species/Ecosystem Health Conservation Professionals
Mussels	9	CTR for Invasive Species/Ecosystem Health Conservation Professionals
Crayfishes	10	Conservation Professionals
Snails	7	CTR for Invasive Species/Ecosystem Health Conservation Professionals
General Support (No species mentioned in comments)	35	Concerned Citizens Conservation Professionals Coosa River Basin Initiative Georgia Bird Observatory Georgia Conservancy Georgia River Network North American Native Fishes Association United State Fish and Wildlife Service Wild Animal License Holder Wildlife Exhibition License Holder

Comments **Opposed** to Rule 391-4-8-.05 (Wild Animals, License Required)

Species	No. of Comments	Commenting Groups
Burmese/Indian Rock Pythons	48	Reptile Keepers and Breeders Georgia Reptile Society U.S. Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK)
Argentine Black-and-White Tegu	34	Reptile Keepers and Breeders Georgia Reptile Society U.S. Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK)
Nile Monitor	5	Reptile Keepers and Breeders Georgia Reptile Society
African Helmeted/ Chinese Softshell Turtles	2	Reptile Keeper and Breeders Georgia Reptile Society
Snails	2	Pet Advocacy Network, Segrest, Inc.
Crayfishes	2	Pet Advocacy Network, Segrest, Inc.
General Opposition (No species mentioned in comments)	3	Reptile Keeper and Breeders Concerned Citizens

Resources

- Georgia DNR Wild Animal Rule FAQ
 - <https://georgiawildlife.com/wild-animal-rules>
- Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia: Subject 391-4-8 WILD ANIMALS
 - <https://rules.sos.ga.gov/gac/391-4-8>