

# **Arkansas Game and Fish Commission**

## **Code Book**

**The regulations in this Code Book are hereby adopted by the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission under authority of Amendment 35 to the Constitution of the State of Arkansas. All laws, rules, regulations, or orders in conflict with the regulations in this Code Book are hereby repealed by the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission.**

## **01.00 Alligator Farmer Restrictions**

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### **01.01 Alligator Farmer/Dealer General Provisions**

- A. Shipping tickets, invoices, or bills of lading shall be maintained for all alligators purchased or sold to verify they have been obtained from a legal source and not from the wild stock of the state, and complete written records of all changes in alligator stock shall be maintained for a minimum of 5 years from the date of each transaction to verify sources of supply and disposition of alligator stock.
- B. Facilities and records shall be subject to random inspection by enforcement officers of the Commission.
- C. Upon request or inspection by the Commission, an alligator farmer/dealer shall disclose ownership of all alligators and provide documentation of inventory of initial and subsequent numbers of all alligator eggs and alligators. Documentation shall demonstrate the inventory is commensurate with production and survival levels for captive populations in compliance with biological standards adopted by the Commission or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- D. Each alligator farmer/dealer shall report annually to the Wildlife Management Division by January 31 on a form supplied by the Commission all activities that have occurred during the previous calendar year (January 1 - December 31), including, but not limited to: the number of live alligators (separated by sizes); the number of eggs collected and hatched; information on the purchase and sale of alligators, hides and parts; and the numbers of alligator deaths. Failure to accurately complete this form may result in the non-renewal or revocation of the Alligator Farmer/Dealer Permit.
- E. The advertisement or representation of caimans or crocodiles as alligators is prohibited.
- F. No alligator farmer/dealer or his or her employees shall receive or transfer any alligator, eggs or hides except in compliance with Commission regulations.
- G. Permits to establish and operate alligator farms are not transferable.

## **01.02 Specifications And Facility Standards For Alligator Farms**

- A. An alligator farm must contain suitable land and habitat to support a population of adult alligators in outside breeding ponds and adequate area for the construction of holding houses for young alligators up to 3 years of age. There must be a reliable source of fresh water and equipment for pumping and changing water. Breeding ponds shall be fenced around the perimeters with woven wire or board fences of sufficient height (minimum 4 feet) and tightness, constructed to prevent the escape or entrance of any size of alligator. Fences shall be buried or otherwise secured at the bottom to prevent entrance or escape. Breeding ponds must have at least 1 area at least 6 feet deep and suitable nesting sites.
- B. Pens or holding facilities shall be constructed to prevent the egress and ingress of alligators. The alligator farmer shall provide rearing tanks of concrete, fiberglass, plastic or metal construction for alligators less than 4 feet. Alligators less than 2 feet shall be housed separately from those 2-4 feet. On-site propagation facilities shall provide ponds, nest sites and space for breeding adults and artificial incubators.
- C. Holding houses containing an adequate number of artificial tanks shall be provided for growing small alligators 6 feet or less. A sufficient number of tanks shall be provided to allow for segregation by age/size/classes, and each tank shall be permanently numbered to facilitate accurate record keeping. There shall be sufficient space in each tank for all alligators to completely submerge under water at one time and enough dry area to run around for basking purposes. A properly constructed tank will consist of 2/3 water for 1/3 dry area. The overall size of the tank shall depend upon the number of alligators held, but as a general standard each alligator should have enough space to submerge without having contact with another alligator. Holding tanks shall be designed to permit periodic cleaning of water and a complete change of water at least every other day.
- D. An alligator farmer shall provide security sufficient to ensure no alligators, eggs, or other parts can be moved in or out of the alligator farm without the farmer's knowledge.
- E. Permitted alligator farms shall be subject to inspection by Commission personnel at any time.
- F. An alligator farmer shall make all alligator eggs produced on the farm available for inspection by August 1 of each nesting year. All alligator eggs shall be in containers having not more than one layer of eggs in at least one incubation facility on each alligator farm. Only viable alligator eggs will be credited to the egg inventory. Eggs laid after August 1 may be collected and added to the egg inventory only if egg development characteristics indicate a laying date after August 1 and nests are verified by Commission personnel prior to being collected.
- G. A controlled environmental chamber complete with an incubator shall be provided for hatching of eggs. The chamber shall also contain a sufficient number of holding tanks to accommodate anticipated

As of June 8, 2022

hatchlings and to provide a suitable environment for newborn alligators.

## **01.03 Restrictions On Harvest And Sale Of Alligators**

- A. Alligators at least 23 inches raised on a permitted alligator farm, skins, or products of such captive-reared alligators may be sold only upon written approval from the Commission and in compliance with the restrictions below. An alligator farmer also may use any product from a captive-reared alligator less than 23 inches that dies from natural causes, but only in compliance with the following restrictions:
1. No alligator shall be skinned unless the alligator farmer/dealer first obtains written approval from the Commission. Records must be provided to verify that each alligator to be harvested was hatched and captive-reared on the farm or otherwise obtained from a legal source.
  2. Any alligator killed under authority of this section shall be tagged immediately with a tag furnished by the Commission. The tag shall remain attached to the alligator hide until finally processed by the fabricator. It is unlawful for any alligator farmer, dealer or processor to possess untagged alligator hides.
  3. Identifying tags issued to farms are property of the Commission. Alligator tags will be issued to a permitted alligator farmer upon request at least two weeks before scheduled harvest, subject to verification of available stock by Commission personnel. Unused tags must be returned to the Commission by January 15 the year after the tags expire. Possession of Commission alligator tags by persons other than permitted alligator farmers shall be unlawful. Tags are to be used only on skins and on live alligators (1 tag per alligator) shipped directly to a licensed abattoir.
  4. The meat of any alligator legally harvested may be consumed by the alligator farmer and his immediate family but shall not be sold or transferred except as provided in these regulations.
- B. An alligator farmer/dealer may sell, barter, exchange, give or loan any live alligators of at least 23 inches provided written approval is first obtained from the Commission for each transfer. If sold, bartered, or exchanged in interstate commerce or foreign trade, the legal requirements of the state or country involved in the transaction must also be satisfied.
- C. Any request for written approval to sell, barter, exchange give or loan any live alligators must be made in writing at least 2 weeks before the proposed transaction date, contain the name and address of the proposed buyer, reference the dealer's permit number or other authority for possession and describe each alligator by length, belly size, and sex, if known.
- D. A live alligator under 23 inches may be sold, loaned or donated to an accredited zoological park or to an Arkansas state or federal agency for educational use provided written approval is first obtained from the Commission. The request for approval must be made in writing by both the alligator farmer/dealer and the educator, describe each alligator by length, belly size, and sex, if known, detail where each

alligator will be housed and list the party responsible for the care and housing of each alligator.

- E. The Commission shall not approve the transfer of live alligators or alligator eggs outside of their native range unless the alligator farmer/dealer obtains prior written approval from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- F. Alligator meat lawfully acquired through production on a permitted alligator farm may be sold to wholesale food distributors, food and nonfood meat processors, restaurants and canneries, provided that:
  - 1. Any alligator meat sold shall be packaged in cardboard cartons, and each carton shall be sealed with a label clearly stating that it contains alligator meat, the number of pounds of meat enclosed, the name of the seller and buyer, the tag number corresponding to the alligator hide from which the meat was taken, and the date of sale. No more than 5 pounds of meat shall be included per carton and cartons shall be used only one time. Failure to properly mark cartons of alligator meat or possession of alligator meat in cartons improperly marked shall be considered a violation.
  - 2. Alligator farmers/dealers shall maintain detailed written records of all alligator meat sales. These records shall be open to inspection by Commission personnel and shall include for each carton of meat sold the data indicated on the carton label as specified in (F)(1) above.
  - 3. All alligator meat purchased by the type business listed above shall be retained in the original carton until the meat is prepared for consumption or processing. All cartons containing alligator meat labeled in compliance with these regulations shall be shipped only within Arkansas or to those states allowing the sale of alligator meat.
  - 4. Alligator farmers/dealers handling alligator meat for human consumption shall comply with the sanitation requirements of federal, state and local authorities.
- G. Alligator hides and other products, except meat, may be sold in compliance with the following:
  - 1. Alligator farmers/dealers may sell the hides, feet, viscera, or skeletal parts of alligators when all such sales are documented to show the kind and quantity of items sold and the name and address of each buyer who purchases for resale. Any packaged alligator parts must be sealed with a label that clearly states the hide tag number(s) of the alligator(s) from which the parts came, the names and addresses of the buyer and seller, the date of the sale, and the number and kind of parts included.
  - 2. No person shall sell any hide or other product manufactured from a crocodylian species (other than an American alligator) that has been declared to be endangered or threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service without prior written approval from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.