

ILLINOIS TAXIDERMY LAWS

The business of taxidermy is governed and regulated by the Fish and Aquatic Life Code [515 ILCS 5 et. seq.], the Wildlife Code [520 ILCS 5 et. seq.], and the Endangered Species Protection Act [520 ILCS 10 et. seq.]. The regulations contained in these statutes apply to all species of aquatic life, endangered and threatened species, and other protected species of birds and mammals.

The following information was taken from the state regulations in effect on **June 1, 2009**. This is only intended as a guide to those state regulations, which are subject to change. Contact your local Department of Natural Resources office for the most current information <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/Law3/images/consmaplq.pdf> or go on line to www.ilga.gov and search under "Illinois Compiled Statutes" and/or "Illinois Administrative Rules".

Copies of the **Illinois Conservation Law** code book are available for purchase through:

LexisNexis
Matthew Bender & Company, Inc.
Attn: Customer Service
1275 Broadway
Albany, NY 12204-2694
Phone: 800-562-1197
Fax: 800-828-8341

For more information about the **Illinois Taxidermist Association** call:

Pete Sweitzer, President,
1174 County Road 1200 N.,
Lerna, IL , 62440
(217) 849-3500

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EXAMPLE - TAXIDERMY LOG PAGE

EXAMPLE - CAPTIVE BRED WILDLIFE TAGS

I. DEFINITIONS

- * **Aquatic life:** "Aquatic life" means all fish, reptiles, amphibians, crayfish, and mussels.
- * **Business (of taxidermy):** "Business" is defined as employment, occupation, profession or commercial activity engaged in for gain or livelihood. (Black's Law Dictionary, 6th Edition, 1990)
- * **Fur-bearing mammals (furbearers):** "Fur-bearing mammals" means the following specific species: mink, muskrat, raccoon, striped skunk, weasel, opossum, beaver, badger, red fox, gray fox, and coyote.

For clarification purposes, any fox with the same scientific name as the red fox or gray fox is a protected species, regardless of its common name. Arctic fox are not protected.

The following is a list of names given to ranch fox that are of the red fox (*Vulpes Vulpes*) species and would, therefore, be protected:

<i>Silver</i>	<i>Platinum Gold</i>	<i>North</i>
<i>Gold</i>	<i>Platinum Cross</i>	<i>Arctic Golden Island</i>
<i>Gold Cross</i>	<i>Arctic Marble</i>	<i>Fawn Light Shadow</i>
<i>Cross</i>	<i>Arctic Marble Cross</i>	<i>Blue Frost</i>
<i>Amber</i>	<i>Sun Glow</i>	<i>Blue Shadow Frost</i>
<i>Burgundy</i>	<i>Fire Gold</i>	<i>Sapphire Frost</i>
<i>Burgundy Marble</i>	<i>Fire Cross</i>	<i>Shadow Sapphire Frost</i>
<i>Amber Platinum</i>	<i>Arctic Fire Light</i>	<i>Golden Island</i>
<i>Pearl</i>	<i>Pearl Platinum</i>	<i>Golden Island Shadow</i>
<i>Pearl Gold</i>	<i>Platinum Blue</i>	<i>Fawn Light</i>
<i>Pearl Cross</i>	<i>Platinum Polar</i>	<i>Cinnamon</i>
<i>Glacier</i>	<i>Sapphire Gold</i>	<i>Golden Topaz</i>
<i>Platinum</i>	<i>North Light Shadow</i>	

The general rule of thumb to follow is that fox of the red fox genus will retain the black tipped ears and feet, no matter what color phase they are called.

* **Game mammals:** "Game mammals" means the following specific species: cottontail, swamp and jack rabbit, white-tail deer, fox squirrel, gray squirrel and ground hog.

Special Note: It is unlawful for any person to take any all white white-tail deer, white squirrel or red squirrel (Tamiasciurus hudsonicus) in this State at any time.

* **Green hide:** "Green hide" means any hide or pelt which has not been tanned. *Note: Salt drying is not considered a part of the tanning process.*

* **Migratory game birds:** "Migratory game birds" means the following specific species: waterfowl including brant, wild ducks, and geese; rails and coots; snipe; woodcock; pigeons including doves and wild pigeons (except domestic pigeons); and crows.

Special Note: While swans and gallinules are also considered migratory game birds, no open season exists for them, and they may not be taken in Illinois.

* **Person:** "Person" includes the plural "persons", females as well as males, and shall extend and be applied to clubs, associations, corporations, firms, and partnerships as well as individuals.

* **Protected species:** "Protected species" means the species of wild birds and mammals designated by Section 2.2 of the Wildlife Code. *Note: See link for listing of Illinois Protected Species.*

* **Sale:** "Sale" means to sell, barter or otherwise offer goods to another for consideration.

* **State endangered species:** "State endangered species" means any species which is in danger of extinction as a breeding species in Illinois, and has been placed on the list of endangered species in 17 Ill. Adm. Code 1010 by the Illinois Endangered Species Board. *Note: See link for listing of Illinois Endangered and Threatened Vertebrate Animals.*

* **State threatened species:** "State threatened species" means any breeding species which is likely to become a state endangered species within the foreseeable future in Illinois, and has been placed on the list of threatened species in Ill. Adm. Code 1010 by the Illinois Endangered Species Board. *Note: See link for listing of Illinois Endangered and Threatened Vertebrate Animals.*

* **Taxidermy:** "Taxidermy" means the art of preparing, preserving, and mounting the skins of fish, birds, or mammals to make them appear lifelike.

II. TAXIDERMY REGULATIONS

A. Permit Requirements

1. State Taxidermy License

Before any person shall engage in the business of taxidermy within the state of Illinois, they must first procure a license from the Department of Natural Resources. The annual fee for a state taxidermy license is \$25.00. Illinois

taxidermy licenses expire on January 31st of each year.

All licenses issued to the taxidermist are only valid at the location designated on the license application. Persons performing taxidermy while working for (whether paid or unpaid for their services) and at the business of the license holder shall not be required to possess a separate taxidermy license, **provided** the licensed taxidermist has submitted such person's name to the Department. Only those individuals whose names are on file with the Department shall be authorized to work under the scope of the taxidermist's license.

Taxidermy licenses are available from DNR Direct license and permit vendors, online through the IDNR web site at <https://www1.wildlifelicense.com/il/start.php>, or by phone (allow 10 business days for delivery) toll-free at 1-888-6PERMIT (1-888-673-7648):

We no longer process taxidermy licenses by mailed application or automatic renewal form. If you have further questions, you can contact the Commercial Permit office at 217-785-3423.

2. Federal Taxidermy Permit

A federal Migratory Bird Permit is required prior to performing taxidermy services on migratory birds for other persons.

To apply for a federal migratory bird permit contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
BHW Federal Building - One Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056
(612) 713-5436
Fax: (612) 713-5286

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not issue a federal Migratory Bird Permit to an Illinois taxidermist unless the applicant first procures a state taxidermy license.

Note: Nothing in state law relieves state licensed taxidermists from complying with all applicable federal laws and regulations. For information on federal wildlife laws contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the address listed below.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Law Enforcement
1499 Bradfordton Road
Springfield, Illinois 62707
(217) 793-9554

B. Record and Tagging Requirements

1. Taxidermy license holders shall keep written records of all birds, mammals, aquatic life or parts thereof, received or returned by them. Records shall include the following information:
 - a. The date the specimen was received.
 - b. The name and address from whom the specimen was received.

- c. The number and species received.
 - d. The number and state of issuance of the hunting, trapping or fishing license, special Department permit (e.g. Scientific Permit), federal migratory bird permit or Letter of Authorization, or documentation establishing lawful import (USFWS Form 3-177, Declaration of the Import or Export of Fish or Wildlife), of the person from whom the specimen was received.
- * *In the absence of a license or permit number, the taxidermist may rely on the written certification of the person from whom the specimen was received that the specimen was legally taken or obtained.*
 - * *In the event the person is exempt from the license requirements, indicate the exemption.*
 - * *Department of Natural Resources staff are exempt from having a Scientific Permit while performing their job, unless they are collecting endangered or threatened species. For specimens other than endangered or threatened species, Department employees shall provide to the taxidermist, on Department stationary, the name, address and phone number of the employee responsible for the specimen (s), the number and type of each species delivered to the taxidermist, and the date delivered to the taxidermist. For endangered and threatened species, Department employees must provide the taxidermist with permit information as outlined in Section IV-B.*

Taxidermists shall maintain records for a period of 2 years from the date of receipt of the specimen or for as long as the mount remains in the taxidermist's possession, whichever is longer.

2. All specimens that have been received, preserved, mounted or possessed by a taxidermist are required to bear a coded origin tag or label. The coded origin tag or label shall correspond with written records (log) containing more complete information required by the Department. (See example of a Taxidermy Log Page. This is not the required form, but if you, as a taxidermist, like the format, please make copies to use for your log.)
3. No taxidermist shall have in his or her possession any bird, mammal, aquatic life, or parts thereof, that is not listed in his or her written records and properly tagged or labeled.
 - * *For the purpose of these record-keeping and tagging requirements, it is the Department of Natural Resources' position that "parts thereof" shall mean any mountable parts that are useable as a whole. For example, under this interpretation parts such as turkey tail fans, deer racks and feet, raccoon tails, pheasant and quail skins, and hides must be recorded and tagged. Parts such as individual feathers, beaks, fish scales and fins, would not need to be tagged or recorded.*
 - * *Personal items stored within the taxidermy shop, and customer items stored in other areas, must also be tagged and recorded within the business records. This is true for "drop off points" as well. If a taxidermist has made arrangements for clients to drop off specimens at a*

location other than the taxidermy shop, the items must be tagged and recorded in the business records. A receipt should be issued to the client for the items. A “drop off point” does not need a separate taxidermy license as long as no taxidermy work is done at that location.

** The Department of Natural Resources-Office of Legal Counsel’s interpretation on record keeping and tagging requirements under the Wildlife Code (Chapter 520) is that they apply to Illinois’ protected species listed under Section 2.2 (see Appendix A), but do not apply to exotic or non-indigenous species. Keep in mind, however, that there are other, special requirements that must be met if a specimen is an endangered or threatened species, or a federally protected species.*

4. Special tagging requirements - Deer and Turkey:

Hunters are required to tag their deer* or turkey with a Department of Natural Resources’ tag immediately upon its taking. Once the deer or turkey is in the taxidermy shop, the tag may be removed and replaced with a coded origin tag or label. These deer and turkey tags should be retained, and the permit numbers must be cross-referenced in the taxidermist's records. Once the taxidermy process is completed, the tag must remain with the deer or turkey until it is returned to the residence of the person who legally took or possessed the specimen.

** The temporary harvest tag should be attached to the leg of the deer. If the head of an antlerless deer is taken to a taxidermist for processing, the temporary harvest tag should be removed from the leg of the deer after it is checked in by the hunter, with confirmation number recorded (if applicable), and should accompany the head to the taxidermist. The head tag should be attached to the antler of an antlered deer (antlers 3 or more inches in length.), with confirmation number recorded and should accompany the head to the taxidermist. [Note: Other parts of deer (hide, feet, etc.) have no special requirement besides the regular taxidermy tagging requirement.]*

In counties with Chronic Wasting Disease testing during the firearms deer seasons, a plastic leg tag will be affixed to the deer at check-in. It and the temporary harvest tag should accompany the deer to the taxidermist and/or deer processor as proof of harvest reporting.

In counties without CWD testing, all successful deer hunters must register their harvest by 10:00 p.m. on the same calendar day the deer was taken by calling the toll-free telephone check-in system at 1-866-ILCHECK or by accessing the on-line check-in system at <http://dnr.state.il.us/vcheck>. The hunter will be provided with a confirmation number to verify that he or she checked in the harvest. This number must be written by the hunter onto the temporary harvest tag (leg tag).

The temporary harvest tag (leg tag) and confirmation number must remain attached to the deer until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the deer, the deer has been checked in, and final processing is completed. If the head/antlers are delivered to a taxidermist for processing, the confirmation number must be recorded on the “head tag” portion of the permit and both must remain with the deer while at the taxidermist. Persons delivering deer/parts of deer to a tanner for processing must supply the tanner with either their deer permit number, their confirmation number, or a written certification by

the person from whom the deer was received that the specimen was legally taken or obtained.

The question has arisen as to whether it would be lawful for a taxidermist to accept an untagged deer or turkey, if the taxidermist received written certification that the specimen was legally taken or obtained. While it would be lawful for the taxidermist to accept such a deer or turkey after obtaining written certification, it would be **unlawful** for the hunter or other person to possess such untagged specimen, therefore, **the specimen may be seized and charges filed against said individual(s).**

Individuals who wish to take vehicle-killed deer, or deer killed by methods other than lawful hunting, to a taxidermist or tannery will be required to make a phone report to the Department to obtain a registration number or tag. The tag cannot be discarded until the deer is at the legal residence of the person who legally claimed the deer. (See link for additional information.)

5. Special Record and Tagging Requirements - Migratory Birds

The Code of Federal Regulations establishes additional record keeping and tagging requirements for federally permitted taxidermists. For example, under 50 CFR 13.46, the taxidermist shall:

- maintain complete and accurate records of any taking, possession, etc. of wildlife pursuant to the permit
- include current names and addresses of persons
- have records legibly written in English
- maintain records for 5 years after expiration of permit
- allow inspections by authorized agents

Under 50 CFR 20.36, the migratory birds must be tagged by the hunter with the following information.

- signature of hunter
- address of hunter
- total number of species of birds
- date birds were killed

Please refer to the regulations found in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 13, 20, & 21, for specific information or contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office identified in Section II A2.

C. Inspections

Taxidermy records shall be open for inspection by any peace officer at any reasonable hour. The Department may require the taxidermist to submit any information it deems necessary.

Authorized employees of the Department are further empowered to examine all buildings, conveyances, etc., and to open and examine any packages or other receptacle which they have reason to believe contains aquatic life, or any part; wild birds, or any part; or wild mammals, or any part, contrary to the provisions of the Fish and Aquatic

Life Code or the Wildlife Code.

All authorized employees of the Department shall be given free access to and shall not be hindered or interfered with in making such examination, and any license issued by the Department held by the person preventing such free access or interfering with or hindering such authorized employee shall be subject to confiscation by the Department; and no license or permit of any kind whatsoever shall be issued to such person for the period of one year thereafter.

D. Green Hides - Possession and Tanning

1. A licensed taxidermist may possess the green hides of furbearers and other game mammals the year round as long as such hides are tagged as and remain the property of the individual who legally took them and for whom the taxidermist is performing services.
2. A licensed taxidermist may without a fur tanner's permit tan the green hides of furbearers and other game mammals as long as such hides are tagged and remain the property of the individual who legally took them and for whom the taxidermist is performing services.

E. Shipping

All licensed taxidermists who ship specimens that have been received, preserved or mounted, shall tag or label the shipment. The tag or label shall state the name of the taxidermist and the number and date of his or her license.

Any person who ships birds, mammals, or aquatic life to a taxidermist must label or tag every package with the following information: species and number, or in the case of aquatic life, species and number of pounds; name, address and license number of the shipper; and name and address of the taxidermist.

It is recommended that any taxidermist receiving a shipment that is improperly labeled notify the Department of Natural Resources immediately. Improperly labeled packages could result in the taxidermist being unable to complete the required taxidermy records and could result in arrest and/or seizure of the specimens.

F. Importation of Hunter-Harvested Deer and Elk Carcasses

Importation of hunter-harvested deer and elk carcasses into Illinois is prohibited except for:

1. Deboned meat, antlers, antlers attached to skull caps, hides, upper canine teeth (also known as "buglers", "whistlers", or "ivories"). Skull caps shall be cleaned of all brain and muscle tissue;
2. Finished taxidermist mounts;
3. Carcasses or parts of carcasses with the spinal column or head attached may be transported into the State only if they are submitted to a licensed meat processor or a licensed taxidermist for processing within 72 hours after entry; licensed meat processors and taxidermists shall dispose of inedible tissue not exempted in subsection (1) in a properly permitted landfill or with a renderer; and

4. Tissues can be imported into the State for use by a diagnostic or research laboratory; and
5. Carcasses or parts of carcasses may be transported into the State to a properly permitted facility, to be disposed of, as long as the transportation and disposal complies with all applicable Illinois and federal laws and regulations. Carcasses or parts of carcasses to be disposed of must be frozen when transported and stored.

III. PURCHASING SPECIMENS FOR TAXIDERMISTRY PURPOSES

A. Buying and Selling Aquatic Life

Aquatic life may be purchased from licensed fish dealers, minnow dealers, or aquaculture permit holders (breeders). These specimens may be mounted and re-sold by the taxidermist without any additional permits. If a taxidermist wishes to buy any commercial species directly from the commercial fisherman, he must first obtain a fish dealers license. (See Appendix C for listing of Illinois Commercial Aquatic Life Species.) Game fish such as bass, crappie, bluegill, etc., may only be purchased from a licensed dealer or aquaculture permit holder.

B. Buying and Selling Wildlife

1. Captive-bred game birds and mammals may be purchased from properly licensed breeders. These birds and mammals must be tagged by the breeder at the time of sale. Other than the taxidermy license, no other license or permit is required for mounting and re-selling these specimens purchased from a breeder.

NOTE: Game birds taken on licensed hunting preserves or IDNR controlled pheasant hunting areas are also considered to be captive-bred specimens and may be bought and sold, if properly tagged to show proof of origin.

It is recommended that taxidermists attach the tag to the back of the completed mount, and enter the type of tag (ex: breeder, hunting preserve, IDNR area) and tag number (if applicable) in their taxidermy records. See Appendix D for an example of these tags.

2. A licensed taxidermist may, without a furbuyer's permit, buy, sell, transport and possess the green or tanned hides of any legally obtained furbearing mammals the year round, as long as the hides in the taxidermist's possession are used for taxidermy purposes. *Note: If purchasing the green hides of furbearing mammals for uses other than taxidermy purposes, a fur buyer's license must be obtained.*
3. The inedible portions of game mammals, such as antlers, hides, hooves, skulls and bones, may be bought and sold without any permit or license required. (The inedible parts of vehicle-killed deer or deer killed by other, non-hunting methods, however, may not be sold.) *Note: As outlined in section II.B.3, **Record and Tagging Requirements**, the **mountable** inedible portions of game mammals must be properly tagged.*
4. When purchasing species from out-of-state sources, and those species are indigenous to Illinois, proof of origin must be shown. Proof of origin may consist of purchase/sales receipts, tags, etc. **Failure to provide this proof of origin**

upon request is considered prima facie evidence that the species were obtained in Illinois.

5. Special regulations apply to the possession and resale of **Illinois endangered and threatened species** purchased from out-of-state sources. Taxidermists may acquire these items through their taxidermy business without a special permit, provided that the acquisition is in compliance with all taxidermy regulations and all required records are maintained. Should they decide to keep the item(s) in either their business or personal collections, they must acquire a possession permit from the Endangered Species Program Manager. If the endangered or threatened species are sold, the buyer must obtain the same permit. For example, a taxidermist purchases a listed species hide from an out of state source. He must maintain his proof of legal origin (license number, receipt, etc). If he mounts the listed species and decides to keep it in his collection, he must obtain a possession permit. If he sells it to anyone that is not a licensed taxidermist, the buyer must obtain a possession permit.

For Illinois endangered species permit applications or permit-related questions, contact:

Department of Natural Resources
Division of Natural Heritage
Attn: Endangered Species Program
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271
Phone: 217/785-8774
E-mail: DNR.ENDSPEC@illinois.gov

See link for listing of Illinois Endangered and Threatened Vertebrate Animals.

6. Federal laws and regulations govern the buying and selling of **migratory birds and federally listed endangered and threatened species**. For further information, please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office identified in Section II A2.
7. For other species purchased from out-of-state sources when those species **are not indigenous** to Illinois, the only requirement is that they be legally obtained.

C. Unclaimed Mounts

Taxidermists may sell unclaimed mounts if two criteria are met:

1. The mount must be of a species and origin that may legally be sold; and,
2. The mount must be the legal property of the taxidermist.

For example, unclaimed mounts of furbearing mammals and game mammals (other than deer killed by non-hunting methods such as found dead or roadkills) and commercial species of aquatic life (other than sportfish) may be sold once they become the legal property of the taxidermist.* Unclaimed mounts of game birds taken from the wild may not be sold, however birds taken on shooting preserves and birds from game farms may be sold provided the proper tag or permit accompanies the bird. Unclaimed mounts of migratory birds may not be sold

except in compliance with federal regulations. (For further information regarding migratory birds, please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office identified in Section II A2.)

* *Obtaining legal ownership of an unclaimed mount can be a complicated process. The Department of Natural Resources recommends, therefore, that the taxidermist consult an attorney and follow the attorney's guidance. Guidelines should include at minimum a written and posted policy that unclaimed items held beyond a certain number of days after the customer has been notified of their completion, will become the property of the taxidermist. Before attempting to sell any unclaimed mounts, you may wish to contact the Office of Law Enforcement, at your nearest Regional Office, regarding the legality of the sale.*

The laws regarding the sale of wildlife and aquatic life are numerous and complicated. The information contained in this handbook may not address all of your questions. If you need any additional information, contact your nearest Department of Natural Resources office for assistance.

IV. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

- A. **Restricted species** (songbirds, hawks, owls, etc.), and freshly killed protected species not in season, cannot be possessed unless the individual has a scientific permit or special authorization from the Department. Authorization is not granted to private individuals.
- B. **Endangered or threatened species** cannot be possessed unless the individual has been issued a permit from the Department's Endangered Species Program Manager. The permit holder may allow temporary possession of the specimens by a licensed taxidermist for the purpose of providing taxidermy services, such as mounting, cleaning, or tanning. A copy of the permit, or a signed statement from the permit holder attesting to the existence of the permit, must accompany the specimen while in the possession of the taxidermist.
- C. **Possession/time limits for game** follow and are provided as a guideline to taxidermists in accepting animals to mount:

Migratory game birds - may only be held and possessed in accordance with federal regulations. (Questions regarding migratory birds and federal regulations should be addressed to your nearest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Law Enforcement Office.)

Wild game birds and wild game mammals - cannot be possessed in excess of the legally established daily limit or possession limit, whichever applies.

Furbearing mammals - hunters and trappers must dispose of their fur within 20 days after the close of the season for the zone in which it was taken.

TAXIDERMY RECORD

Shop ID #

Date Received:

License Type And
Number:

Permit Type And
Number:

Date Promised:

Total Price:

Amount of Deposit:

Amount Due At Delivery:

Date Delivered:

Amount Paid at Delivery:

Cash: yes _____ no _____
Check# _____
Charge Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

Species – Sex – Number: _____

Date Killed: _____

Location Killed: _____

Description Of Mount Or Comments: _____

Trophy Plate Inscription:

- I affirm that the information which I have provided is true and correct. I further affirm that all State and Federal laws were adhered to in the taking and possession of the above listed specie(s).

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

EXAMPLE OF CAPTIVE BRED WILDLIFE TAGS

Wild Game and Bird Breeder tags:

ILL WILD GAME & BIRD BREEDER

J37951

IDNR Controlled Pheasant Hunting Area:

CPHA – IDNR

Hunting Preserves – Mallard Ducks:

ILL LIC GAME HPA

S 09457

Hunting Preserves – Upland Game:

GB & HPA

XX 272656

