



State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
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Division of Fish and Wildlife
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POLICY ON THE IMPORTATION OF CAPTIVE RABIES VECTOR SPECIES

BACKGROUND

Under the authority of N.J.S.A. 23:4-63.3, N.J.S.A. 23:4-63.4, N.J.A.C 7:25 subchapters 4 and 10, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has the responsibility of regulating the possession of wild mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and ensure that associated human activities do not negatively affect the health and/or safety of the citizens of New Jersey.

Rabies is a deadly viral disease capable of infecting all mammals including domestic pets, livestock and wildlife species. While all mammals are potentially vulnerable to rabies, raccoons, skunks, fox, woodchucks and bats are vector wildlife species, and as such, rabies virus variants are adapted to efficient transfer within the adapted species. The mid-Atlantic region of the United States is endemic to the raccoon variant and NJ became exposed when an animal was imported to the area from the southeast region.

The need to create this policy is the direct result of animal health, public health and safety concerns, the need to protect native wildlife, and the dangers associated with the possession and interstate transportation of these *captive* rabies vector species (RVS). Concerns regarding the relocation and release of NJ's *wild* rabies vector species are addressed in the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Policy on the Relocation of Wildlife.

CERTIFICATE OF VETERINARY INSPECTION (CVI)

Regulations N.J.A.C. 7:25-4.7 and 7:25-10.8 outline the criteria for permits to possess wildlife. Criteria for possession include demonstration that the animal is free of infectious diseases and parasites, which may be dangerous to the animals or people of the State.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions include facilities with wildlife held for zoological purposes as these facilities incorporate advanced animal health provisions and are subject to additional regulatory oversight by the American Zoological Association.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Because the NJ DFW cannot regulate the practices of another state, the NJ DFW is immediately placing a ban on the importation of raccoons, skunks, fox, woodchucks and bats, into the State of New Jersey from any state that is endemic to a variant of rabies other than raccoon variant. The only exception will be RVS held under supervision of a licensed veterinarian for zoological purposes.

The Division will refer to the Center for Disease Control's surveillance of rabies and/or other information noting the current location of rabies in the United States.

This ban has been placed in effect in response to the growing concern over human and animal exposure to the deadly viral disease rabies. Placing this ban on the importation of Rabies Vector Species (RVS) will reduce the risk of rabies entering our state and help prevent exposure to this deadly disease.

This ban will remain in effect until this ban is rescinded.

Approved 6/17/2009

Revised 11/30/2011