



## TAKING TURTLES IN CONNECTICUT

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### ISSUE

Under state laws and regulations, may a person take (e.g., capture, collect, or kill) wild turtles in Connecticut?

### SUMMARY

Connecticut regulations allow the taking of a limited number of snapping turtles. People are generally banned from taking other turtle species in Connecticut, including those listed as endangered or threatened.

### TAKING TURTLES IN CONNECTICUT

By law, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) may adopt regulations on the taking of wildlife ([CGS § 26-66](#)). Additionally, taking reptiles is prohibited except as authorized in regulations ([CGS § 26-70](#)). DEEP has adopted regulations on the seasons, bag limits, and taking of reptiles, including certain turtles (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 26-66-14).

Under the regulations, there is no open season for taking bog turtles, wood turtles, diamondback terrapins, eastern box turtles, or spotted turtles (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 26-66-14(a)). However, the regulations allow, but limit, the taking of snapping turtles, as described below (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 26-66-14(d)).

Further, DEEP has designated bog turtles, loggerhead turtles, Atlantic green turtles, leatherback turtles, and Atlantic ridley turtles as endangered or threatened. This designation generally bans people from taking these species from public property or state waters or for commercial purposes ([CGS § 26-311](#)).



## **SNAPPING TURTLES**

The open season for taking snapping turtles in Connecticut is July 15 through September 30 annually. Effective July 7, 2016, the daily and seasonal bag limits are five and 10, respectively. (They were previously five and 30.) People are prohibited from taking snapping turtle eggs (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 26-66-14(d)).

During the open season, only snapping turtles with a straight line upper shell (carapace) length of at least 13 inches may be taken. They may only be taken by hand, dip net, turtle hook, turtle trap, or a personally attended hook and line.

The regulations also set trap restrictions for taking snapping turtles. For example, no one may use more than three traps at any given time. Traps must be (1) set in a way that allows the turtles to surface and breathe and (2) constructed with at least a one-inch wide mesh size. Traps must have a functional escape hole with a minimum diameter of 7.5 inches to allow fish and smaller turtles to pass through. They must be tagged with a plate or tag visible above the water line bearing the trapper's conservation identification number. In addition, all traps must be checked by the trapper and emptied of catch at least once every 24 hours.

If a person takes snapping turtles by hook and line, they must hold a fishing license. To take them by trap, a person must obtain a free snapping turtle trapping endorsement from DEEP.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Turtles in Connecticut:

[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=473472&deepNav\\_GID=1655%20](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=473472&deepNav_GID=1655%20)

Snapping Turtles:

[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2700&q=531694&deepNav\\_GID=1633#Trap](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2700&q=531694&deepNav_GID=1633#Trap)

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species in Connecticut:

[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2702&q=323486&deepNav\\_GID=1628](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2702&q=323486&deepNav_GID=1628)

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