



State of Wisconsin  
2015 - 2016 LEGISLATURE

LRB-2812/1  
EHS:klm

## 2015 BILL

1     **AN ACT** *to amend* 169.07 (1) (a), 169.08 (1), 169.11 (1) (a) (intro.), 169.15 (4) (b),  
2             173.22 (1) and 173.22 (3) (a) (intro.); and *to create* 173.13 (1) (a) 10., 173.21 (1)  
3             (e), 173.22 (3) (a) 5. and 173.50 of the statutes; **relating to:** the possession of  
4             certain wild animals and providing a penalty.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill makes changes to the laws relating to the possession of certain wild animals.

Under current law, known as the captive wildlife law, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates the possession of, and other activities related to, certain wild animals. Generally under current law, a person may not possess a wild animal that is native to Wisconsin without a license from DNR. There are exceptions to this prohibition for some animals, including chipmunks, mice, pigeons, and voles. Certain entities may possess wild animals without a license from DNR, including veterinarians, zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, municipal zoos, and circuses.

Generally, the captive wildlife law does not require a person to have a license from DNR to possess a wild animal that is not native to Wisconsin, such as a lion, unless the animal is endangered or threatened and native to the United States or Canada or is a harmful wild animal. Under the statutes, cougars, wild and feral swine, and bears, including nonnative bears, are harmful wild animals. The law authorizes DNR to designate other wild animals that satisfy specified criteria as harmful wild animals. DNR has designated mute swans and wolf-dog hybrids as

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harmful wild animals. Generally, a person may not possess, exhibit, propagate, sell, or purchase a harmful wild animal without specific authorization in a license issued by DNR.

The captive wildlife law also authorizes a city, village, town, or county to enact an ordinance that prohibits the possession of wild animals.

This bill generally prohibits the possession, propagation, and sale of dangerous exotic animals. Under the bill, dangerous exotic animals are nonnative big cats, including lions and tigers; nonnative bears, including brown bears and polar bears; apes, including gorillas, chimpanzees, and gibbons; and crocodilians, including alligators, crocodiles, and caimans. Certain entities are exempt from the prohibitions, including veterinarians, accredited zoos, municipal zoos, circuses, federally licensed research facilities, and wildlife sanctuaries. The bill authorizes a person who does not qualify for an exemption but who owns a dangerous exotic animal when the bill takes effect to continue to possess the animal if the person registers the animal with the municipality in which the person keeps the animal.

The bill prohibits a person from allowing a member of the public to come into direct contact with a dangerous exotic animal and requires the owner of a dangerous exotic animal to inform local law enforcement if the animal escapes. The bill also authorizes a city, village, town, or county to enact an ordinance relating to dangerous exotic animals if the ordinance is at least as strict as the provisions in the bill relating to dangerous exotic animals.

In addition, the bill eliminates DNR's authority, under the captive wildlife law, to regulate dangerous exotic animals, including nonnative bears, as harmful wild animals.

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

***The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:***

1           **SECTION 1.** 169.07 (1) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

2           169.07 (1) (a) No person may exhibit any captive live native wild animal ~~or any~~  
3           ~~captive live nonnative wild animal of the family ursidae~~ except as authorized under  
4           a captive wild animal farm license, a rehabilitation license, a nonprofit educational  
5           exhibiting license, or a nonresident temporary exhibiting license or under s. 29.319.

6           **SECTION 2.** 169.08 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

7           169.08 (1) **REQUIREMENT.** No person may propagate any native wild animal ~~or~~  
8           ~~any nonnative wild animal of the family ursidae~~ except as authorized under a captive

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1 wild animal farm license, a bird hunting preserve license, a wild fur farm license, a  
2 nonprofit educational exhibiting license, or a scientific research license.

3 **SECTION 3.** 169.11 (1) (a) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

4 169.11 (1) (a) (intro.) The department shall designate by rule cougars, members  
5 of the family ~~ursidae~~ species Ursus americanus, wild swine, and feral swine as  
6 harmful wild animals. After consulting with the department of agriculture, trade  
7 and consumer protection and the department of health services, the department of  
8 natural resources may designate by rule other species of wild animals, except  
9 dangerous exotic animals, as defined in s. 173.50 (1) (b), as harmful wild animals if  
10 any of the following applies:

11 **SECTION 4.** 169.15 (4) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

12 169.15 (4) (b) If any member of the family ~~ursidae~~, ~~felidae~~, or ~~canidae~~ or of the  
13 species Ursus americanus escapes from its enclosure or fenced area on a captive wild  
14 animal farm, the person holding the captive wild animal farm license shall notify the  
15 department within 24 hours after the escape.

16 **SECTION 5.** 173.13 (1) (a) 10. of the statutes is created to read:

17 173.13 (1) (a) 10. A dangerous exotic animal possessed, imported into this state,  
18 sold, transferred, or bred in violation of s. 173.50.

19 **SECTION 6.** 173.21 (1) (e) of the statutes is created to read:

20 173.21 (1) (e) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the animal is a  
21 dangerous exotic animal possessed, imported into this state, sold, transferred, or  
22 bred in violation of s. 173.50.

23 **SECTION 7.** 173.22 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

24 173.22 (1) PETITION. A person claiming that an animal that he or she owns was  
25 improperly taken into custody under s. 173.13 (1) (a) 3., 4., 5., 6. ~~or~~ 8., or 10. or is

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1 wrongfully withheld under s. 173.21 (1) may seek return of the animal by petitioning  
2 for an order from the circuit court for the county in which the animal was taken into  
3 custody or in which it is held.

4 **SECTION 8.** 173.22 (3) (a) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

5 173.22 (3) (a) (intro.) If the animal was taken into custody under s. 173.13 (1)  
6 (a) 8. or 10. or is withheld under s. 173.21 (1), the court shall order the animal  
7 returned to the owner unless it determines that one of the following conditions is  
8 satisfied:

9 **SECTION 9.** 173.22 (3) (a) 5. of the statutes is created to read:

10 173.22 (3) (a) 5. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the animal is a  
11 dangerous exotic animal possessed, imported into this state, sold, transferred, or  
12 bred in violation of s. 173.50.

13 **SECTION 10.** 173.50 of the statutes is created to read:

14 **173.50 Dangerous exotic animals. (1) DEFINITIONS.** In this section:

15 (a) “Circus” means an entity holding a class C license as an exhibitor under the  
16 federal Animal Welfare Act, 7 USC 2131 to 2159, who conducts scheduled events  
17 performed by a traveling company that uses mobile facilities in which entertainment  
18 consisting of a variety of performances by acrobats, clowns, and trained animals is  
19 the primary attraction or principal business.

20 (b) “Dangerous exotic animal” means a live animal that is any of the following:

21 1. One of the following animals of the family felidae: a lion, tiger, jaguar,  
22 leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, Sunda clouded leopard, or cheetah or a  
23 hybrid of any of these species.

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1           2. One of the following animals of the family ursidae: an Asiatic black bear,  
2 brown bear, polar bear, sloth bear, sun bear, giant panda bear, or spectacled bear or  
3 a hybrid of any of these species.

4           3. One of the following animals of the family hominidae: a gorilla, orangutan,  
5 chimpanzee, or bonobo.

6           4. One of the following animals of the family hylobatidae: a siamang or gibbon.

7           5. One of the following animals of the order crocodylia: an alligator of any  
8 species, crocodile of any species, caiman of any species, or gharial.

9           (c) “Municipality” means a city, village, or town.

10          (d) “Wildlife sanctuary” means a nonprofit entity to which all of the following  
11 apply:

12           1. The entity operates a place of refuge where abused, neglected, unwanted,  
13 abandoned, orphaned, displaced, or impounded dangerous exotic animals are  
14 provided with lifelong care.

15           2. The entity does not conduct any commercial activity involving a dangerous  
16 exotic animal, including the sale, trading, or leasing of dangerous exotic animals or  
17 the dead bodies or parts of bodies of dangerous exotic animals or the use of dangerous  
18 exotic animals in a for-profit operation.

19           3. The entity does not use dangerous exotic animals for performances or in a  
20 traveling exhibit.

21           4. The entity does not breed dangerous exotic animals.

22          **(2) PROHIBITIONS.** (a) Except as provided in sub. (3), no person may possess,  
23 import into this state, sell, transfer, or breed a dangerous exotic animal.

24           (b) No person may allow a member of the public to come into direct contact with  
25 a dangerous exotic animal.

**BILL****SECTION 10**

1           **(3) EXEMPTIONS.** (a) Subsection (2) (a) does not apply to any of the following:

2           1. An entity that is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and  
3           Aquariums or that has a contract under a species survival plan of the Association of  
4           Zoos and Aquariums for the breeding of species listed as threatened or endangered  
5           under 16 USC 1533 (c).

6           2. A zoo that is operated by a municipality or county.

7           3. A circus.

8           4. Circus World Museum.

9           5. A wildlife sanctuary.

10          6. A person operating a research facility that is registered under the federal  
11          Animal Welfare Act, 7 USC 2131 to 2159.

12          7. A veterinarian licensed under ch. 453 who is providing treatment to a  
13          dangerous exotic animal.

14          8. An individual performing his or her duties as a humane officer or law  
15          enforcement officer, a political subdivision on whose behalf a humane officer or law  
16          enforcement officer takes a dangerous exotic animal into custody, or a person  
17          providing services under a contract under s. 173.15 (1).

18          9. A person transporting a dangerous exotic animal through this state if the  
19          dangerous exotic animal is in this state for no longer than 72 hours.

20          (b) A person who owns a dangerous exotic animal on the effective date of this  
21          paragraph .... [LRB inserts date], and who does not qualify for an exemption in par.

22          (a) may possess the dangerous exotic animal if all of the following apply:

23          1. The person maintains documentation showing that on the effective date of  
24          this subdivision .... [LRB inserts date], the person owns the dangerous exotic animal.

