Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 571—Chapter 111
"Natural Resources Collector Permits: Research, Education, and Wildlife Rehabilitation"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 461A.41, 481A.39, and 481A.65

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code sections 461A.41, 481A.39, and 481A.65 and 50 CFR Parts 10, 20, and 21

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

September 23, 2025	6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200
2 to 3 p.m.	Des Moines, Iowa

Free language assistance: If you need assistance in a language other than English, contact the Department of Natural Resources (Department) at karmin.klingenberg@dnr.iowa.gov or civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov or by telephone at 515.326.0430 at least seven days before the event.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si necesita ayuda en un idioma que no sea inglés, comuníquese con el Departamento de Recursos Naturales (Departamento) al karmin.klingenberg@dnr.iowa.gov or civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov o por teléfono a 515.326.0430 al menos siete días antes del evento.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

Karmin Klingenberg
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Phone: 515.326.0430
Email: karmin.klingenberg@dnr.iowa.gov

Free language access: If you speak a non-English language, the Department offers language assistance services free of charge, contact the Department at karmin.klingenberg@dnr.iowa.gov.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Comuníquese con el Departamento al karmin.klingenberg@dnr.iowa.gov.

Purpose and Summary

Proposed Chapter 111 explains the process for members of the public to obtain permits to take, acquire, or possess wildlife or plants for educational projects, scientific collecting, wildlife rehabilitation, and wildlife salvage. The rules clarify compliance with State and federal law and adopt standards as identified by the National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association, the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

This chapter has been reviewed and edited consistent with Executive Order 10. Definitions and rules have been revised to align with State and federal law. Specific publication titles have been added with dates certain to clarify the standards that apply to applicants and permittees.

Analysis of Impact

1. **Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

- **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

Applicants and permittees for the scientific collector, educational project, wildlife salvage, and wildlife rehabilitation permit types will bear the costs.

- **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

Applicants, permittees, and Iowans will benefit.

2. **Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

Permittees must pay a permit fee of $5 for one year, $10 for two years, and $15 for three years.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

Permittees must complete applications and expend time in ensuring compliance with the standards of these proposed rules. The standards are necessary to ensure appropriate treatment and care of animals that continue to be held in trust for the people of Iowa.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

Department staff will continue to administer this program without bearing costs beyond what is contemplated in statute.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

No effect on State revenues is anticipated.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

The benefits of ensuring that wildlife and plants are taken or removed only under specific circumstances in biologically appropriate numbers outweigh the minimal costs to permittees and the Department. Inaction through removal of this chapter would result in no process or clear standards for the public to apply for permits authorized by the Iowa Code.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

No less costly or less intrusive methods are possible. The proposed rules are the minimal regulation necessary to ensure appropriate oversight of permit issuance and wildlife care.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

There are no alternative methods that were seriously considered by the Department.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

This proposed rulemaking does not have an impact on small business.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Rescind 571—Chapter 111 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 111
NATURAL RESOURCES COLLECTOR PERMITS:
RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

571—111.1(481A) Definitions.

"Department" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 481A.1.

"Educational project permit" means a permit to take, acquire and possess live wildlife for natural resource-based educational programs and displays.

"Permit" means a license for the purpose of this chapter.

"Permittee" means an organization or person that possesses a valid permit issued by the department under Iowa Code section 481A.65.

"Scientific collector's permit" means a permit to take, for scientific purposes only, any birds, nests, eggs, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, invertebrates, plants or parts thereof that are protected by state regulations.

"Wildlife rehabilitation permit" means a permit to take and temporarily possess injured, sick or orphaned authorized wildlife species with the sole intent to return the animal to its natural habitat as soon as possible.

"Wildlife salvage permit" means a permit to possess, for natural resource education programs or scientific studies, authorized protected wildlife species that have died as the result of natural causes or accidents, were legally taken, or were donated specimens that have been legally obtained.

571—111.2(481A) General conditions for permits.

1. Applications will not be approved for private collections or for commercial use of protected species.
2. Any costs incurred by the permittee for the administration of any permit authorized by this chapter are the responsibility of the permittee.
3. Scientific collecting permits, wildlife salvage permits, and educational project permits unless for migratory birds are generally issued in the name of the institution or organization. The principal collector or permittee will be listed on the permit and be responsible for administering the permit. All persons collecting or working under the authority of the permit shall carry a copy of the permit and a letter of authorization from the principal permittee.
4. Educational project permits for migratory birds and wildlife rehabilitation permits may list an institution or organization but also must list the person or persons with the qualifications for that particular permit. These permits do not necessarily continue with the institution or organization if the person or persons listed on the permits leave. If replacement personnel with the proper qualifications for the permit or permits are found, then the permit or permits may stay in the institution's or organization's name.
5. Specimens collected or possessed under any permit authorized by this chapter remain the property of the state of Iowa. The department reserves the right to determine the disposition of all specimens collected under authority of these permits.

6. Records, facilities and inventories must be made available for inspection by the department's agents during reasonable hours.

7. Records of collections and the manner in which specimens have been acquired and their disposition must be kept current at all times.

8. Authorization to collect or possess endangered or threatened species requires special permission and must comply with provisions established in Iowa Code chapter 481B.

9. A representative of the department must be notified within 72 hours of a permittee taking or holding threatened or endangered species that are found dead and within 24 hours for those that are injured or sick.

10. A permitted rehabilitator or veterinarian must determine if a migratory bird is permanently crippled before it may be held under an educational project permit.

11. Permit fees will be $5 for one year, $10 for two years, and $15 for three years.

12. Applicants for scientific collectors, wildlife rehabilitation, and educational projects must be at least 18 years old or provide written permission from a parent or guardian.

13. No animals being rehabilitated may be used for educational programs.

14. Applicants for scientific collector, wildlife rehabilitation, wildlife salvage, and educational project permits that are requesting permission to collect, possess, or hold wildlife species as listed in 50 CFR Parts 10, 20, and 21 as amended through August 4, 2025, must follow provisions set forth and may be required to obtain a federal permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

15. Any native mammals, reptiles, amphibians, or fish that are not state-listed endangered or threatened species and are obtained from legal sources outside the state of Iowa are exempt from these permit requirements. Proof of origin of each animal is the responsibility of the owner.

571—111.3(481A) Scientific collector's permit. A scientific collector's permit may, after investigation, be issued to any business, organization, university, college or person engaged in a scientific project approved by the department.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to three years.

The application narrative shall include the reason for study, expected conservation benefit for Iowa, species, number of specimens to be collected, geographic location, time frame and collection methods subject to department approval.

571—111.4(481A) Wildlife salvage permit. A wildlife salvage permit may be issued to any business, university, college, school, public agency, other organization or person engaged in a natural resource education or research program approved by the department.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to three years.

Special approval is required for the salvage of migratory birds, including nests and eggs.

571—111.5(481A) Educational project permit. The following classes of educational project permits may be issued by the department:

111.5(1) A general educational project permit for protected animal species, other than migratory birds, may be issued to any university, college, school, public agency, other organization or person engaged in a natural resource education program approved by the department. The limitation on the number of animals in possession shall be established by the ability of the applicant to provide adequate facilities and care.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to three years.

111.5(2) A migratory bird apprentice educational project permit may be issued to a person interning to meet the requirements of the federal special purpose possession permit and being sponsored by a person possessing the following: a master wildlife rehabilitation permit and having two years' experience using migratory birds under a state or federal educational project permit, a master class falconry permit or a migratory bird general educational project permit for at least five years. An apprentice will be limited to the possession of one American kestrel and one screech owl

that are permanently crippled or human imprinted. In the case where an apprentice will be in charge of an existing facility with additional birds, the sponsor and the conservation officer must approve the possession of the additional species and individuals.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to two years.

111.5(3) A migratory bird general educational project permit for migratory birds may be issued to a person who has served the appropriate apprenticeship and is recommended by the person's sponsor, has previously held an educational project permit for migratory birds issued by the department or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or has held a master class state and federal falconry permit within the last five years.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to three years.

571—111.6(481A) Wildlife rehabilitation permit. The following classes of wildlife rehabilitation permits may be issued by the department:

111.6(1) An apprentice wildlife rehabilitation permit may be issued to a person serving a one-year internship with and being sponsored by a person possessing a master wildlife rehabilitation permit or to a person serving a two-year internship with and being sponsored by a person possessing a general wildlife rehabilitation permit.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to two years.

111.6(2) A general wildlife rehabilitation permit may be issued to a person who has served the appropriate apprenticeship; has graduated with a degree in veterinary medicine; or has previously held a rehabilitation permit issued by the department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or any other state natural resource agency.

A general wildlife rehabilitator may sponsor up to four apprentices at a given time.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to three years.

111.6(3) A master wildlife rehabilitation permit may be issued to a person who has completed five consecutive years of extensive rehabilitation work and has received a recommendation from the local state conservation officer assigned to the person's resident county or who is a licensed veterinarian with specific training and experience in wildlife rehabilitation. The department may issue a master wildlife rehabilitation permit to individuals who have demonstrated special ability, knowledge, training and experience in wildlife rehabilitation.

A master wildlife rehabilitator may sponsor up to six apprentices at a given time.

This permit may be issued for a period of up to three years.

571—111.7(481A) Application qualifications. All applicants for any permit defined herein must possess adequate qualifications and experience and facilities to house and properly confine species held under the permit if applicable. Applicants are subject to the following standards:

Standards/Publications	Association/Society Name
Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, Fourth Edition 2012	International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA)
Migratory Bird Permit Memorandum, MBPM-12, December 31, 2024	Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
Buhl G. Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals. Second. Buhl G, Schlieps J, Smith L, editors. Bloomington, MN: National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association, 2018	NWRA
Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations Blue Book, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, July 2023	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Arent, Lori, "Raptors in Captivity: Guidelines for Care and Management," Hancock House, 2007	FWS

For scientific collectors permits, the applicant must certify to following the guidelines set forth by the organization's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee or the organization overseeing the research.

For education and rehabilitation permits, the applicant and officer will be provided the appropriate Permit Inspection Sheet based on the guidelines set forth by the appropriate governing body and the appropriate governing body's permit resources.

If they are housing animals, wildlife rehabilitation and educational project applicants must provide a completed and signed Consulting Veterinarian Agreement on the form provided by the department from a licensed veterinarian that will provide professional counsel to the applicant. Applicants must list species or groups of species, such as but not limited to rabbits, squirrels, migratory birds, snakes or turtles, for which they will be providing rehabilitation services on the applicants' permit application narrative.

The application narrative for an educational project permit must list the species and number of each species that will be held. Facilities for migratory birds must meet the design and size criteria set forth by the standards listed above.

If an applicant has been found in court to have committed an act of animal cruelty or neglect, the applicant shall not be eligible for a license for at least five years from the date of the conviction or guilty plea.

571—111.8(481A) Evaluation committee. For the purpose of evaluating facilities, standards of care, study design, sample numbers, and impacts to wild populations from applications requested by applicants under this rule, the director may establish an ad hoc committee of persons with expertise in wildlife, rehabilitation, veterinary medicine, research or education. Upon request by the director, the committee shall inspect the facilities, procedures and educational programs and provide the department with appropriate recommendations. The recommendations may be used as a basis for placing certain conditions on a permit or modifying or terminating a permit.

571—111.9(481A) Disposition of animals, parts, eggs or nests. Injured or orphaned animals that cannot be returned to their natural environment shall be transferred to someone with an educational project permit or, after being euthanized by or under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian, handled as follows:

111.9(1) The animals will be transferred to someone with a scientific collector's permit or a wildlife salvage permit after obtaining permission from the department, or

111.9(2) Disposition of carcasses must be in accordance with local ordinances and according to Iowa Code chapter 167.

All threatened and endangered species that have died, that must be euthanized, or that cannot be released shall be referred to the department for further determination of proper disposition.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 461A.41, 481A.39, and 481A.65.