

Preventing Wildlife Damage— Do You Need a Permit?

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Thousands of acres of Indiana farmland are developed each year for housing and businesses. As more people move to the country, they encounter wild animals living in direct contact with them. Human-wildlife interactions can be very enjoyable at times, but sometimes lead to serious conflicts.

When the experience is negative, Hoosiers often do not have the knowledge or skills to deal with critters that decide to call their backyard home. The occurrence of wild animals around the home doesn't necessarily mean they are a problem. In fact, many people encourage wildlife on their property without experiencing problems. Conflicts occur when the home is not properly sealed (e.g., open attic vents or absence of chimney cap), or when food sources normally used by wildlife are scarce. Just remember that wildlife is "wild," and we can never predict their behavior all of the time.

An animal is damaging my property, what do I do?

Know the law first. One of the most confusing aspects of dealing with wildlife around the home is the federal and state laws that regulate nuisance wild animal control. The purpose of these laws is to conserve a valuable resource, while helping landowners deal with nuisance wildlife in a safe and effective way. The flow charts in this publication are categorized by animal group – mammals, birds, and reptiles and amphibians. Answer the questions within each chart to determine what steps you must do prior to or after dealing with problem wildlife. These rules are generally

applicable only for wildlife that are causing or threatening to cause damage to property, or posing a health or safety threat to people or domestic animals. Permits and licenses referenced within each flow chart are summarized in detail in Table 1.

Once the necessary permits are obtained, the next step is to solve the problem. You can tackle the problem yourself or hire a professional wildlife control operator. If you choose to do it yourself, you will need to identify the species causing the damage, determine all of the legal control options available to you, capture and dispose the animal if necessary, and prevent the problem from reoccurring. For more information on how to deal with these issues, see PPP-56 *Conflicts with Wildlife Around the Home*.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish & Wildlife, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services, and Purdue University offer a toll free phone number that provides personal service and information on handling nuisance wildlife problems. This valuable resource can be obtained by calling the Wildlife Conflicts Hotline at 1-800-893-4116 (765-496-3968 in Lafayette or outside Indiana) Monday through Friday, 8:00-5:00. The Hotline will provide you information on how to live with wildlife and advice on how to manage conflicts with wildlife. The Hotline also has information on professional Nuisance Wildlife Control Companies (people who capture or remove nuisance animals for a fee), and Indiana Wildlife Rehabilitators (people who take care of injured or orphaned wildlife).

Professional wildlife control operators charge a fee for resolving human-wildlife conflicts. In Indiana, they

must obtain a nuisance wild animal control permit from the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife (312 IAC 9-10-11). This permit serves as their license to capture, handle, and release or euthanize wild animals; restrictions are listed on the permit. You may contact the Indiana DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife at 317-232-4080 for a list of licensed operators by county or to verify their credentials. Pest control companies do not have the authority to handle migratory birds unless the landowner has a federal Migratory Bird Treaty Depredation Permit that authorizes that company and its employees to deal with the birds causing problems. However, birds can be removed (not killed) from inside buildings without a permit. You must seek the assistance of a licensed animal rehabilitator to remove an active nest with eggs.

Operators must answer at least 80% of the questions on a written examination of basic knowledge about wildlife, control methods, and pertinent laws. To maintain their permit, operators must within 4 years complete continuing education courses (32 contact hours) approved by the Division or pass another written examination. The Division also sets regulations on the types of permissible traps, post-capture release, and euthanasia.

Relocating and Euthanizing Live Animals

Before releasing an animal on public or private property, you must have written permission from the landowner. Animal releases must be done within the county of capture. Animals can also be euthanized by legal means including body-gripping traps and firearms. Check local ordinances prior to using a firearm. The Indiana Board of Animal Health regulates disposal of dead animals under Indiana Code 15-2.1-16. However, bodies of dead fish, reptiles, or small animals of any kind such as dogs, cats and small game are exempt from their requirements. A general guideline to follow for these types of animals is to double bag them in plastic bags or garbage bags and dispose with the garbage.

Standing Depredation Orders

Generally, landowners must apply for on a case-by-case basis a Migratory Bird Treaty Act Depredation Permit to trap or kill migratory birds. However, in special cases when number of birds has increased



Written permission from the landowner is required prior to releasing any animal on public or private property. Animal releases must be done within the county of capture. (Raccoon in a typical box-type cage trap pictured)

in such numbers as to cause serious damage to agricultural, horticultural, and fish cultural interests, or when concentrated in such numbers and manner as to constitute a health hazard or other nuisance, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may issue Standing Depredation Orders under Title 50, Section 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These Depredation Orders allow the taking of specific species under specific circumstances without the issuance of a permit. See www.fws.gov/permits for more information.

Using Pesticides to Control Wildlife

Few pesticides are available for controlling nuisance wildlife. However, make certain when you contract with a commercial company or individual to control wildlife (e.g., pigeons, starlings, voles, rats, mice, etc.) that they are properly certified and licensed by the Office of the State Chemist. You can type the name of the individual or company at www.isco.purdue.edu/pesticide/search_oisc_databases.html to see if they are properly credentialed. Calls to 800-893-6637 can also verify that their firm can legally apply pesticides to control wildlife.

Notable recent changes in Indiana regulations

Several notable changes have recently occurred since FNR-16-W, Working with Wildlife – Animal Damage Rules and Regulations in Indiana was published. The Indiana DNR no longer issues permits for resident Canada Goose nest destruction or egg destruction. Permits for these activities are issued from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Office in Washington D.C. Landowners must apply online at <https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/geSI.aspx>. Contact the Washington D.C. office at (703) 358-2016 with questions.

The Indiana DNR still issues permits to trap and relocate, or euthanize resident Canada Geese.

Landowners no longer require a nuisance wild animal control permit to trap and remove nuisance gray squirrels and fox squirrels from their property (See “Furbearer” box on mammals flow chart, page 5). While no permit is necessary, landowners are required to contact their local DNR Conservation Law Enforcement Officer (through the county sheriff’s office or district law enforcement headquarters) within 72 hours of “taking” the animal.

Internet Resources

Purdue University Everything Wildlife - www.purdue.edu/wildlife

Indiana Wildlife Conflicts Web Site - www.wildlifehotline.info/

Purdue Pesticides Program - www.btny.purdue.edu/PPP/

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Resident Canada Goose Registration Site - <https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/geSI.aspx>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Region 3 Migratory Bird Permit Office - www.fws.gov/permits

Indiana DNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife - www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/

Indiana DNR, Division of Law Enforcement - www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/

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Table 1. Permits and licenses applicable to the control of nuisance mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians in Indiana.

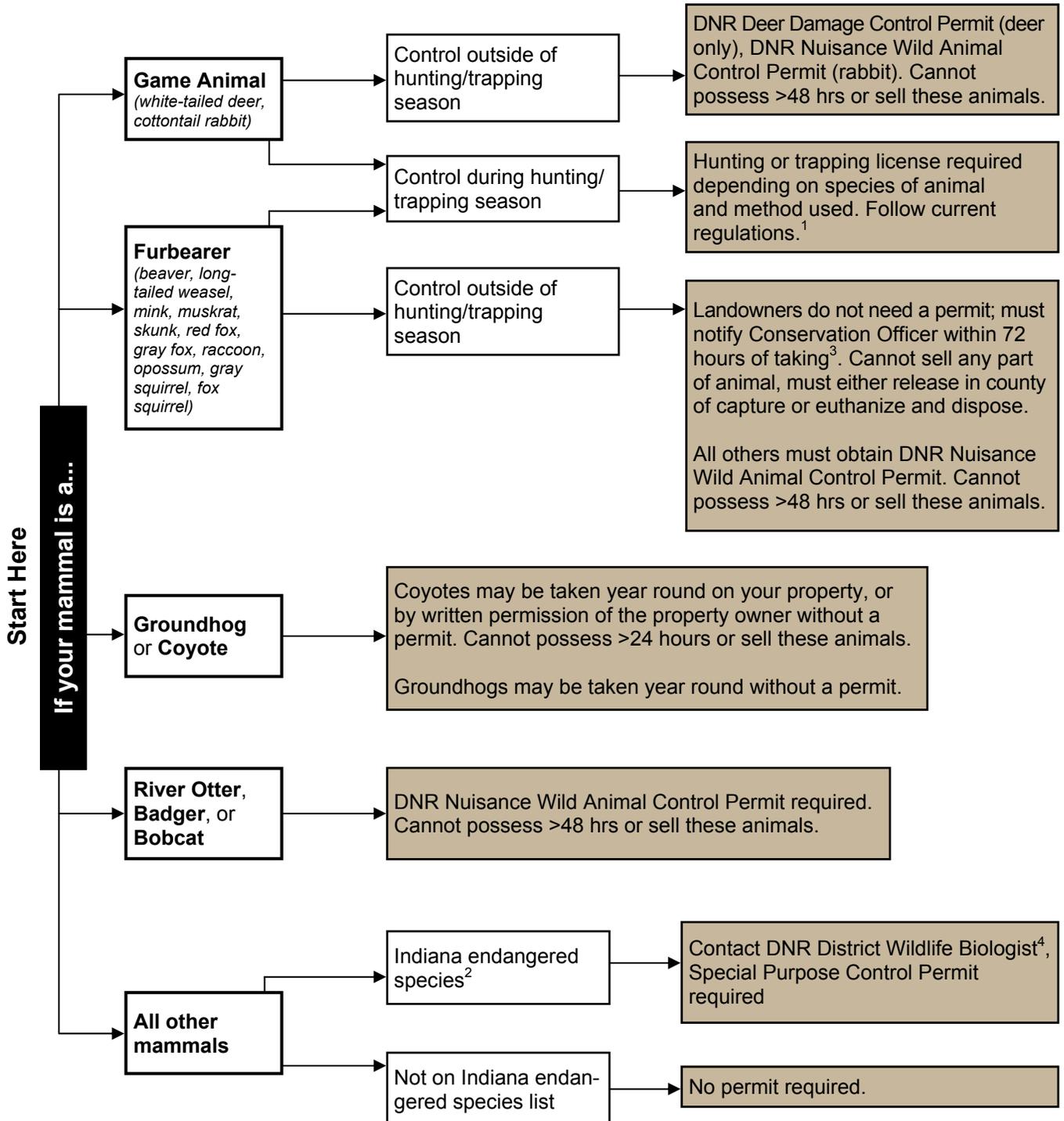
Permit	Agency	Purpose/Contact
Migratory Bird Treaty Act ¹ Depredation Permit	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (612) 713-5436	Authorizes holder to “take” a migratory bird on a case-by-case basis.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act Collectors/Salvage Permit	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (612) 713-5436	Not issued to landowners for personal use. Authorizes professionals affiliated with an institution to collect the eggs, nests, feathers or other parts of migratory birds.
DNR Goose Permit (goose roundup)	DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife [contact your DNR District Wildlife Biologist ³]	Authorizes holder to roundup flightless Canada geese. Details are described on the permit.
DNR Deer Damage Control Permit	DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife [contact your DNR District Wildlife Biologist ³]	Authorizes holder (up to 5 people) to take white-tailed deer out of season due to severe property damage or a safety hazard. The number (1-10) of deer and method of taking are described on the permit.
DNR Special Purpose Control Permit	DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife [contact your DNR District Wildlife Biologist ³]	Authorizes holder to take a state endangered species on a case-by-case basis. Approved by District Biologist with final authorization from Indianapolis office.
DNR Nuisance Wild Animal Control Permit	DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife [contact Indianapolis DNR office at (317) 233-6527]	Authorizes holder to take a wild animal that is causing property damage or poses a health or safety threat.
DNR Salvage Permit	DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife [contact Indianapolis DNR office at (317) 233-6527]	Authorizes holder to collect the eggs, nests, feathers or other parts of migratory birds, and reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.
Hunting, Fishing and Trapping License	DNR, Div. of Fish & Wildlife	Authorizes holder to harvest a limited number of animals during designated seasons. Landowners do not require a hunting license to hunt on their own property. You can obtain a hunting license from independent agents, county clerks, and most DNR properties.

¹ The Migratory Bird Treaty Act implements various treaties and conventions between the U.S. and Canada, Japan, Mexico and the former Soviet Union for the protection of migratory birds. Under the Act, taking, killing or possessing migratory birds is unlawful. See www.fws.gov/birds/Laws.htm for more information.

² USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services is the initial contact and will help you complete the permit application. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Office reviews and authorizes Migratory Bird Treaty Act permits and collects the processing fee.

³ See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/huntguide1/wbiolo.htm

Permits for Controlling Nuisance Mammals



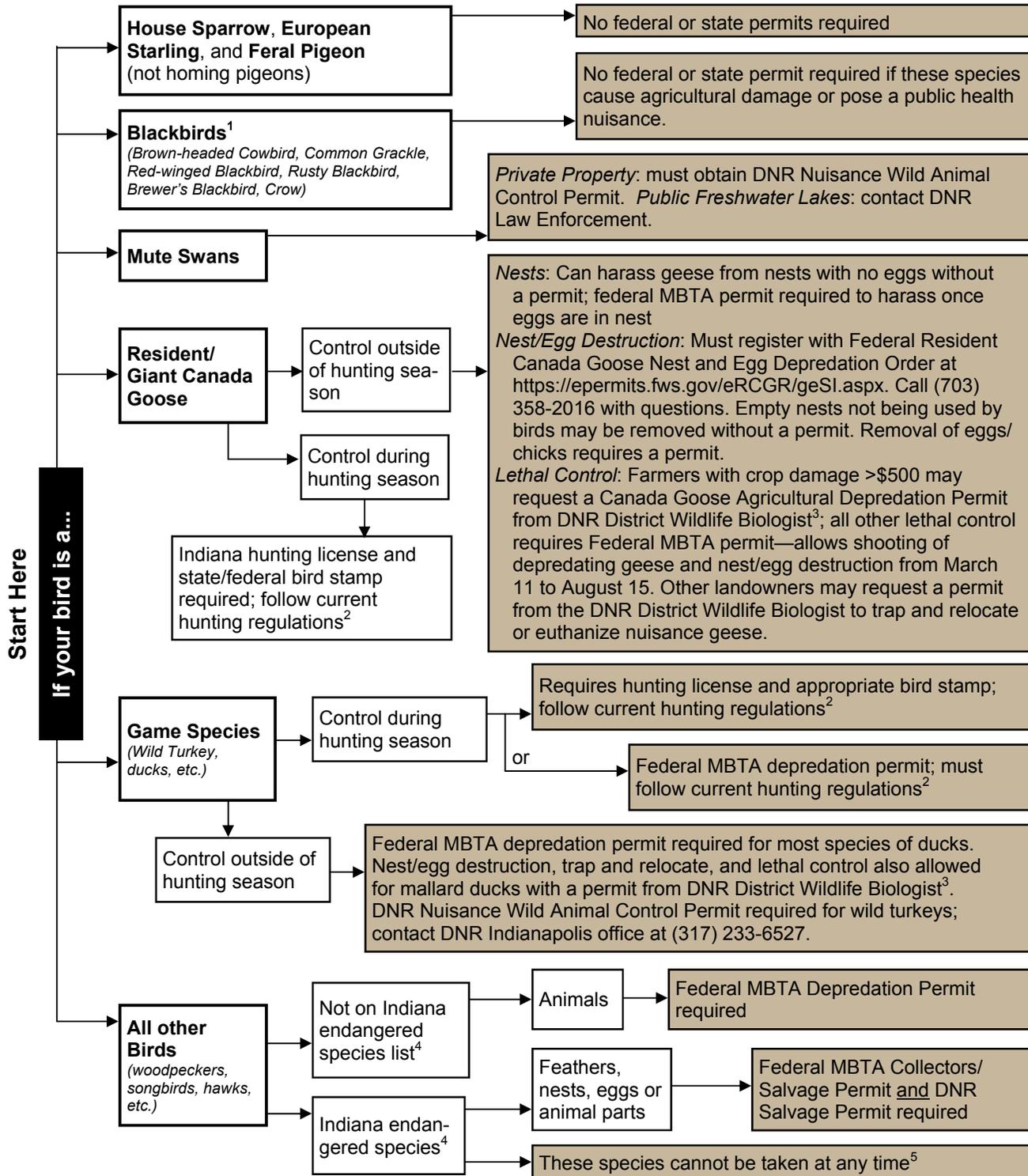
¹See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/hunt/ or call Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080

²See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/endangered/ or call Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080

³Contact your county sheriff's office, or see www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/contact/

⁴See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/huntguide1/wbiolo.htm

Permits for Controlling Nuisance Birds



¹Yellow-headed Blackbird is an Indiana endangered species

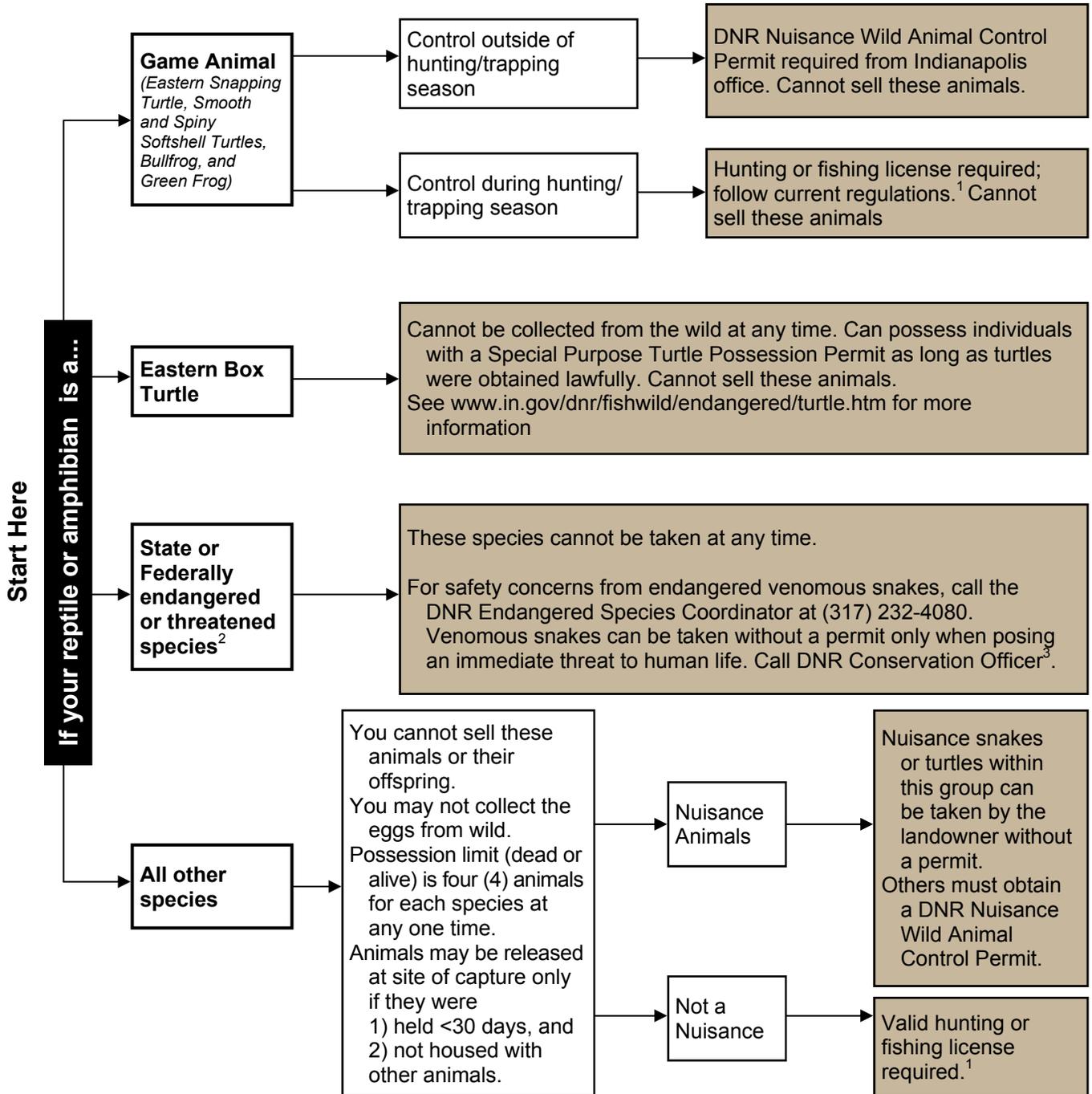
²See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/hunt/ or call Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080

³See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/huntguide1/wbiolo.htm

⁴See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/endangered/ or call Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080

⁵Contact DNR Endangered Species Coordinator at (317) 232-4080 for exceptions

Permits for Controlling Nuisance Reptiles and Amphibians



¹ See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/hunt/ or call Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080

² See www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/endangered/ or call Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080

³ Contact your county sheriff's office, or see www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/contact/

