

Pet Store Inspection and Exotic Bird Program



What Is An Exotic Bird?

An exotic bird consists of any of the following species: Bunting, Canary, Cockatiel, Cockatoo, Conure, Dove, Pigeon, Finch, Lorikeet, Lory, Lovebird, Macaw, Mynah, Parakeet, Parrot or Weaver.



Pet Stores are inspected biannually to ensure compliance with operational standards, sanitation requirements and humane conditions for animals. Laws and regulations pertaining to control of rabies and psittacosis, sale and distribution of reptiles, sale and distribution of pet animals and control of communicable diseases in pet stores are vigorously enforced. Other enforceable aspects of State law and regulation include the posting of reptile CAUTION notices, and prohibition of the sale of viable reptile eggs and turtles with shell lengths less than four (4) inches. The overall goal of the inspection program is to minimize the occurrence of zoonotic diseases.



Salmonella and Reptiles

If I breed Exotic Birds in my own home and sell or give them away, am I required to have a permit?

Yes, if you plan to breed any of the above listed birds and sell them or give them away, you are required to obtain an exotic bird permit issued by the Harford County Health Department. There is no fee for the permit but prior to its issuance, the Health Department must inspect the area where you intend to raise the birds.



You will be required to maintain records on all bird transactions (name, address, and phone number of persons to whom birds are given or sold). With your permit you will be provided the latest copy of the [Psittacosis Compendium](#), which is published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. We request that all exotic bird breeders become familiar with the [Psittacosis Compendium](#) and its requirements regarding exotic bird care and Psittacosis prevention.

You will be provided other information concerning exotic bird care and may be required to invest in some Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The items are of low cost and can be purchased at any home improvement or hardware store.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Health Department at 410-877-2300.

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.06.01

Specific Sections of Importance

[Psittacosis](#)

[Rabies](#)

Sale and Distribution of Reptiles

Sale and Distribution of Pet Animals

Control of Communicable Diseases in Pet Stores

.13 Psittacosis.

- A. There is no control of a human case or contacts.
 - B. Infection Control. A health care provider shall practice appropriate disinfection and disposal of respiratory discharges.
 - C. The sale and distribution of exotic birds and handling of exotic birds which are cases or suspected cases of avian psittacosis are subject to Health-General Article, §§24-101—24-110, Annotated Code of Maryland.
 - D. The Department recommends that the Compendium of Measures To Control Chlamydomphila psittaci infections among Humans (Psittacosis) and Pet Birds (Avian Chlamydiosis), by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, be followed for ill birds and birds that carry diseases.
-

.14 Rabies.

- A. Control of a Case (Human). A health care provider shall apply contact isolation to the case for the period of communicability.
 - B. Control of Contacts. A health officer or health care provider shall evaluate individually a close contact or hospital contact to determine the need for post-exposure rabies prophylaxis. A health care provider shall warn an immediate attendant of the hazard of infection.
 - C. Infection Control. A health care provider shall practice contact isolation.
 - D. Confinement or Examination of Animals. The health officer or the Maryland Public Health Veterinarian shall direct the quarantine, examination, control, and disposition of any animal that bites or otherwise potentially exposes a human to rabies, according to COMAR 10.06.02.
-

.23 Sale and Distribution of Reptiles.

A. Scope.

- (1) Pursuant to the authority conferred upon the Secretary by Health-General Article, §18-219, Annotated Code of Maryland, the Secretary has determined that reptiles and reptile eggs are dangerous to human health and safety in that human contact with reptiles and reptile eggs may spread disease to humans. With this regulation, the Secretary prohibits the sale or public distribution of turtles with a carapace length of less than 4 inches and viable reptile eggs.
- (2) The Secretary may permit the sale and public distribution of reptiles in accordance with specific requirements and conditions as stated in §B of this regulation.
- (3) This regulation does not apply to a turtle:

- (a) Used for agricultural purposes;
- (b) Used for scientific purposes;
- (c) Used for educational purposes as certified by a health officer;
- (d) Used for public exhibitions; or
- (e) That the Secretary determines is not a threat to human health and safety.

(4) The requirements of this regulation are in addition to any requirement imposed by Natural Resources Article, Title 10, Subtitle 9, Annotated Code of Maryland, and regulations adopted under it.

(5) The giving away of reptiles is subject to the crimes and punishments set forth in Criminal Law Article, §10-610, Annotated Code of Maryland.

B. Reptile Sales.

(1) A person may not sell in Maryland viable reptile eggs or live turtles with a carapace length of less than 4 inches, except as otherwise provided in §A(3) of this regulation.

(2) A person may sell turtles with a carapace length of 4 inches or more and other live reptiles in Maryland if:

(a) A caution notice with the text as indicated in §C of this regulation is:

- (i) Posted by the person selling reptiles;
- (ii) Posted within 3 feet of each display of reptiles; and
- (iii) A minimum of 8 x 11 inches in size; and

(b) At the time of the sale of a reptile, the seller:

- (i) Furnishes the buyer with a copy of the caution notice, or
- (ii) Has the buyer sign a log or statement that the buyer has read the caution notice.

C. Caution Notice. A person who sells reptiles shall post a caution notice that:

(1) Is in 4 parts, each separated by a horizontal 4-point rule;

(2) In part 1 has the word "Caution" set in 100-point Times Roman Bold;

(3) In part 2 has the following paragraph set in 30-point Times Roman: "Reptiles and other pets may carry and transmit germs (including Salmonella) to humans. It is important to wash your hands thoroughly after handling reptiles and other pets or coming in contact with their water, food, housing material, or container. Do not allow pet water, food, or housing material to come in contact with your food or areas where food is prepared.";

(4) In part 3 has the following sentence set in 42-point Times Roman Bold: "Provide your reptiles and other pets with a clean home, a suitable diet, and other proper care."; and

(5) In part 4 has the following sentence set in 30-point Times Roman: "If you or any member of your family is prone to or has serious health problems or is pregnant or your family includes a child younger than 5 years old, it is suggested that you consult your physician before purchase."

D. Penalties and Seizure of Contraband Reptiles.

(1) Pursuant to Health-General Article, §§18-219 and 18-222, Annotated Code of Maryland, a person who imports,

transports, sells, transfers, breeds, raises, keeps, or possesses any live turtle with a carapace length of less than 4 inches, other reptiles, or reptile eggs in violation of §§A—C of this regulation is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$500, or imprisonment not exceeding 1 year, or both.

(2) An authorized law enforcement officer may seize a turtle with a carapace length of less than 4 inches, viable turtle and other reptile eggs, and other reptiles, which are considered a nuisance and a contraband pursuant to Health-General Article, §18-222, Annotated Code of Maryland, and §A of this regulation.

.24 Sale and Distribution of Pet Animals.

To help prevent the spread of a communicable disease, a seller or a group of sellers who prepares or causes to be prepared a pamphlet, flyer, or other printed information on the handling of one or more pet animals and who distributes this pamphlet, flyer, or other printed information, shall ensure that this pamphlet, flyer, or other printed information stresses the importance of handwashing after contact with a reptile or other pet animals or its surroundings, and the need to consult a physician if a child younger than 5 years old, a pregnant woman, or an immunocompromised individual lives in the household for which a pet animal is purchased.

.25 Control of Communicable Diseases in Pet Stores.

A. A pet store shall utilize procedures to ensure prevention and control of diseases common to and shared among humans and animals.

B. The Department recommends that pet stores utilize the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control and the Compendium of Measures To Control Chlamydomphila psittaci Infection Among Humans (Psittacosis) and Pet Birds (Avian Chlamydiosis), issued annually by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, to ensure prevention and control of diseases common to and shared among humans and animals.

C. A health officer shall annually inspect a pet store to determine compliance with §A of this regulation.

D. A health officer:

(1) May delegate the authority to conduct annual pet store inspections to another specified agency such as, but not limited to, the local animal control; and

(2) Shall execute and keep on file a written agreement with the delegated inspection agency.

E. Enforcement. An authorized law enforcement officer or local animal control authority shall promptly enforce a written order of the health officer or the Maryland Public Health Veterinarian issued pursuant to COMAR 10.06.02.

F. Penalty. The owner of a pet store refusing or failing to comply with the provisions of this regulation is subject to the penalties set forth in Health-General Article, §§18-222, 18-604, and 24-110, Annotated Code of Maryland.