



## **DWR Recommendations for Educators Seeking to Purchase Tadpoles**

DWR does not recommend captive reptiles and amphibians, including tadpoles, in the classroom, native or nonnative. Reptiles and amphibians are a lifelong commitment and uniquely challenging due to their long lifespans. We have found that most individuals do not understand that the animal can **NEVER** be released into the outdoors or sold and that there are many laws that govern the purchasing, capturing, and possession of reptiles and amphibians in Virginia.

However, if you choose to pursue tadpoles:

A) The tadpoles you obtain **MUST** be a non-native species.

1. It is your responsibility to ensure that the tadpoles you order are **non-native**. If vendors are unable to guarantee the identification of the species they will be shipping, you will need to find another vendor that can guarantee species identification.
2. No permit from the state is required to purchase and import nonnative tadpoles
3. It is illegal to purchase any native species of tadpoles in Virginia, see this list, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/virginia-native-naturalized-species.pdf>, for a full listing of native amphibian species; aka the species you **cannot** order.
4. It is your responsibility to confirm that the species you are purchasing is non-native to Virginia and you are liable if you purchase and import a native Virginia tadpole species.
5. Lastly, you can never purchase any species on the [undesirable species list](#) which includes the Cane toad (*Rhinella marina*), the African dwarf frog (*Hymenochirus* spp., *Pseudohymenochirus merlini*) or the Tongueless or African clawed frog (*Xenopus* spp.).

B) Once your unit is over, you have **ONLY TWO** options for your non-native species:

1. The species must remain indoors for the entirety of their long lifespans; they may **NEVER** be released outside. You may keep them, or you may find other indoor housing. It is illegal to release the species anywhere into the outdoors as this may cause irreparable damage to native species and the environment.
2. If you are unable to find permanent indoor homes for the entirety of the animal's lifespan, they must be euthanized.

C) Regarding harvesting native tadpoles, Under *VAC 15-360-10* It shall be lawful to capture and possess live for personal use no more than one individual non-SGCN (Species of Greatest Conservation Need) amphibian or reptile per physical address. In other words, you may only possess 1 non-SGCN tadpole per physical address. DWR still does not recommend this route for educators for the following reasons

1. Tadpole identification in the wild can be extremely difficult, there is no guarantee of correct species collection
2. In addition to those species listed as SGCN, Virginia has several species of state and federally threatened and endangered amphibians which are illegal to possess in any number
3. There are time and location restrictions for re-release of any wild captured Virginia species. It is highly likely that your wild captured tadpole will not be able to be released and will now be yours to house indoors for the entirety of its lifespan