November 18, 2013

Dear Venomous Reptile Licensees:

Beginning on December 1, 2013, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Captive Wildlife Office will require that all new applicants for the License to Possess or Exhibit Venomous Reptiles and/or Reptiles of Concern provide documentation of experience with venomous reptiles based on the level of biological family, as required by Rule 68A-6.007, Florida Administrative Code, (F.A.C.) which states in part:

Applicants shall demonstrate no less than one (1) year of substantial practical experience (to consist of no less than 1,000 hours) in the care, feeding, handling and husbandry of the species or other species within the same biological family which are similar in characteristics and care to the species for which the permit is sought.

Please note that there are five families of venomous reptiles: Viperidae, Elapidae, Colubridae, Helodermatidae and Hydrophiidae. Hydrophiidae are prohibited and may not be possessed without a Prohibited Species Permit from FWC’s Habitat and Species Conservation Section, pursuant to Rule 68-5.001(4)(a)6., F.A.C. Based on consensus within the scientific community, species previously classified under the family Crotalidae (pit vipers such as rattlesnakes) will be authorized under Viperidae.

All current licensees will be grandfathered and will not be required to provide additional documentation of experience based on the family level. New applicants will be required to provide the 1,000 hours and at least one year of substantial, practical experience for each of the above families requested. Facilities that train potential new licensees may want to advise their trainees on this requirement.

If you have any questions, please call Captain Kara Hooker at (850) 488-6253, or write to her at Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement, Captive Wildlife Office, 620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600.

Sincerely,

[Signature on File]

Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Gibson
Deputy Director, Division of Law Enforcement

ca/kh/kd