

Rules and Regulations Affecting Tilapia Aquaculture and Aquaponics in Arizona

January 4, 2016

Introduction: On December 5, 2015, five species of Tilapia and their hybrids were added to Arizona Game and Fish Commission Rules R12-4-406 (R12 [Natural Resources], Chapter 4 [Game and Fish Commission], Article 4 [Live Wildlife], 406 [Restricted Live Wildlife]). As restricted live wildlife, those species of Tilapia and their hybrids (*Oreochromis aureus* [Blue Tilapia or Israeli Tilapia], *O. mossambica* [Mozambique Tilapia]; *O. niloticus* [Nile Tilapia], *O. urolepis hornorum* [Wami Tilapia] and *T. zillii* [Redbelly Tilapia]) may only be imported, purchased, possessed, transported and stocked in Arizona through R12-4-410: Aquatic Wildlife Stocking License. The guidance below is applicable to the following: individuals who want to import, purchase, possess, transport, and/or stock these species in Arizona; individuals who possessed the relevant Tilapia species prior to December 5, 2015; and individuals or businesses that want to sell the Tilapia species for the purposes of use in aquaculture or aquaponics.

- I. Individuals who want to import, purchase, possess, transport, and/or stock these species in Arizona as of December 5, 2015:
 - a. An Aquatic Wildlife Stocking License must be obtained from the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The license is free and is valid for no more than 20 consecutive days. Fish must be from a facility certified to be free of diseases and causative agents, and the certification must be submitted with the license application. <https://azgfdportal.az.gov/license/speciallicense/aquaticstocking/>
 - i. Disease free certification – Certification is based on a physical examination of the fish farm or pond of origin by a qualified fish health inspector or fish pathologist performed no more than 12 months before the fish are shipped to the Aquatic Wildlife Stocking License holder. Individuals or businesses pursuing certification can contact the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Fish Pathologist, Joe Marcino, for more information jmarcino@azgfd.gov.
- II. Individuals with the relevant Tilapia species used in backyard ponds, aquaponics, or for aquaculture that were in possession prior to December 5, 2015:
 - a. An Aquatic Wildlife Stocking License must be obtained from the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Disease free certification will be waived for the Tilapia currently in possession, but any future Tilapia that the individual wants to import, purchase, possess, transport, and/or stock must obtain a new Aquatic Wildlife Stocking License. The license is free and is valid for no more than 20 consecutive days. Fish must be from a facility certified to be free of diseases and causative agents, and the certification must be submitted with the license application (see I[a][i] above).
- III. Aquaculture License – An individual who wishes to sell, trade, display, purchase, export, possess, propagate, culture or rear live Tilapia for profit is required to obtain an aquaculture permit from the Arizona Department of Agriculture; this is not a new requirement. The permit application will require that information regarding the

- location, water source and water disposal, the responsible (contact) person be provided. The application also must include the species being cultured (\$100 per year). <https://agriculture.az.gov/aquaculture-facility-license-application>
- IV. Transporter License – An individual who wishes to transport live fish to persons who are licensed to resell, possess, or stock live Tilapia in Arizona must have a transporter license from the Arizona Department of Agriculture; this is not a new requirement (\$100 per year). <https://agriculture.az.gov/aquaculture-transporter-license> <https://agriculture.az.gov/category-terms/aquaculture> (for general information for licenses required for individuals or businesses that sell fish for profit in Arizona)