



PYTHONS OWNERS NOW TARGETED IN GEORGIA

The Issue.

Georgia has now followed suit with Florida and Rhode Island to regulate certain snakes within the state. Senate Bill 303 proposes to amend current law by requiring a license for owners of certain pythons and anacondas.

The Impact.

SB 303 states that the following snakes may **NOT** be imported, transported, transferred, sold, purchased, or possessed unless owners obtain a wild animal license:

- *Python molurus* (Indian or Burmese python);
- *Python reticulatus* (reticulated python);
- *Python sebae* (African rock python);
- *Morelia amethystina* (Amethystine or scrub python); and
- *Eunectes murinus* (green anaconda).

The bill further implies that any such animal two inches or greater in diameter must permanently be identified by a microchip that the owner may readily be able to locate. Also, any person in possession of any of the listed animals on July 1, 2010 will have until December 31, 2010 to apply for a wild animal license.

NOTE: No fee structure for the license is presented in the bill. The bill also does not specify what will happen to animals of owners who are not approved for a license.

In order to obtain a wild animal license an applicant must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Submit documentation verifying that the proposed construction of facilities and the holding of wild animals is not prohibited by county or municipal ordinances;
- Obtain any required business licenses; and
- Prove that facilities for holding or exhibiting wild animals are completely separated from a residence and meet state specifications for humane handling, care, and confinement.

Current state law also states that anyone who is permitted a wild animal license who imports, purchases, transports, sells, or transfers any wild animal must record, in a record book, within 24 hours after the completion of such a transaction, the date, place, manner, and names and addresses of all persons involved in such a transaction. It is unlawful to fail to maintain such records for a period of 12 months or to fail to provide the Department of Natural Resources access to such records during all regular business hours. Georgia law states that anyone found in violation of such licensing laws is guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature and subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for one year or both.



Recommended Action.

Generally, PIJAC supports licensing legislation for species that could become invasive; however, with existing state licensing requirements outright ownership of the listed species in SB 303 as pets is in jeopardy. Many pet owners and businesses could be affected by this legislation. As stated above, Florida has also proposed similar legislative ownership restrictions of certain snakes, and Rhode Island recently introduced a ban on certain pythons and boa constrictors. In 2009, Congress proposed bills in both chambers banning certain snakes and just this week the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced it will propose to list the Burmese python and eight other large constrictor snakes that threaten the Everglades and other sensitive ecosystems as “injurious wildlife” under the Lacey Act. Therefore, it is obvious this type of legislation is becoming a trend all over the country.

SB 303 has been placed in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Environment. We urge you to contact members of the Committee with your questions and concerns. Contact information for committee members is listed below.

Also, to easily contact both members of the Committee, as well as your own Representative, visit PIJAC’s [Legislative Action Center](http://www.pijac.org/governmentaffairs) on the PIJAC website (<http://www.pijac.org/governmentaffairs>) to learn how.

The text to this legislation is attached to the online version of this *PetAlert*, found on the ‘Breaking News’ page of the PIJAC website (<http://www.pijac.org/petinformation/breakingnews.asp>).

If you have further questions please feel free to contact PIJAC’s Bambi Nicole Osborne by phone at 202-452-1525 or via email at bambi@pijac.org.

State of Georgia
Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Environment
State Capitol, #121-C
Atlanta, GA 30334
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<u>SENATOR</u>	<u>DISTRICT(S)</u>	<u>TEL. #</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>
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Freddie Sims (D-12)	Baker, Calhoun, Clay, Dougherty, Mitchell, Quitman, Randolph, Terrell	404/656-5259	freddie.sims@senate.ga.gov
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The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has been protecting and promoting responsible pet ownership for nearly forty years. Follow our successes, events, and action alerts through Facebook and/or Twitter at PIJAC4pets. If you are not already a Member, please join us today by visiting www.pijac.org/membership. For additional information on PIJAC and its many exciting campaigns, please visit: www.pijac.org and www.dontmesswithmypet.org. Or, contact us at 1-800-553-PETS (1-800-553-7387); members@pijac.org.

On behalf of pets, responsible pet owners, and the pet industry, we thank you!

2009 GA S 303 **AUTHOR:** Douglas
 VERSION: Introduced
 VERSION DATE: 01/11/2010

STATE OF GEORGIA

Senate Bill 303

By: Senator Douglas of the 17th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Code Section 27-5-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to wild animals for which license or permit is required, so as to include certain reptiles; to provide for a period to obtain a license; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Code Section 27-5-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to wild animals for which license or permit is required, is amended by striking the word "and" at the end of paragraph (5) of subsection (b); by striking the period at the end of paragraph (6) of subsection (b) and inserting "; and"; and by inserting at the end of subsection (b) a new paragraph to read as follows:

"(7) Class Reptilia: Order Squamata:

(A) Family Pythonidae (pythons): Python molurus (Indian or Burmese python), Python reticulatus (reticulated python), Python sebae (African rock python), and Morelia amethystina (Amethystine or scrub python); and

(B) Family Boidae (anacondas): Eunectes murinus (green anaconda).

Any animal identified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of this paragraph may be maintained in the owner's residence as a pet under a wild animal license. Any such animal two inches or greater in diameter shall be permanently identified by a microchip such that the owner may readily be located. Any person in possession of any such animal on July 1, 2010, shall have until December 31, 2010, to apply for a wild animal license."

SECTION 2.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.