

**STATE OF FLORIDA
FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Order No. EO 21-19

**Take and Transport Prohibitions for Sliders
and Softshell Turtles**

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) of the State of Florida, acting under the authority of Article IV, Section 9, of the Florida Constitution, and acting through its Executive Director under Paragraph 22 of the Delegations of Authority, and due to the threat of turtle bunyavirus (TBV), hereby prohibits the take or transport of any softshell turtle (Florida softshell, *Apalone ferox*; smooth softshell, *A. mutica*; and spiny softshell, *A. spinifera*) and yellow-bellied slider (*Trachemys scripta scripta*) as follows:

1. In order to prevent the spread of turtle bunyavirus, which has been found in softshell and slider turtle species, and notwithstanding anything to the contrary in 68A-25.002, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the take or transport of softshell turtles (Florida softshell, *Apalone ferox*; smooth softshell, *A. mutica*; and spiny softshell, *A. spinifera*) and yellow-bellied sliders (*Trachemys scripta scripta*) is prohibited.
2. Licensed wildlife rehabilitation centers may continue to receive, evaluate and provide care for softshell turtles and yellow-bellied sliders, and shall release healthy turtles at the point of capture or the closest water body to the point of capture. Unpermitted individuals transporting turtles to licensed wildlife rehabilitation centers must first call and confirm transport with the center and call the TBV hotline 352-339-8597 to inform FWC staff of the transportation.
3. The take of nuisance softshell turtles and yellow-bellied sliders pursuant to 68A-9.010, F.A.C., may still occur but with the additional requirement that the release of these species must be coordinated with FWC by calling the closest Regional Office. Contact information can be found here: <https://myfwc.com/contact/fwc-office/regional-offices/>. Only turtles who appear healthy may be released.
4. Only owners of legally-acquired softshell turtles or yellow-bellied sliders may transport the species, and, while transporting any turtle of the species, must possess a license of sale or exhibition or documentation of the source and supplier of the turtles, notwithstanding the single turtle allowance in Chapter 68A-25.002, F.A.C.
5. These species may be possessed and transported in accordance with conditions of a valid Scientific Collecting permit.
6. Aquaculture producers may transport legally-produced aquacultured turtles pursuant to the requirements in 597.004(4).
7. All other rules or orders of the Commission relating to the take and transport of softshell turtles and yellow-bellied sliders shall remain in effect.
8. This order shall remain in force until amended or rescinded by subsequent order. If not rescinded sooner, this EO shall be reviewed annually to determine continued necessity.

Specific Authority:

Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution

Law Implemented:

Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution and subsection 120.81(5),
Florida Statutes



Attest
Agency Clerk

Julie Canfield

/s/Quilla Miralia

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency

Given under my hand and seal of the Florida
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
on this 26th day of August, 2021.

Thomas H. Ervin

h Eric Sutton
Executive Director