



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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REGULATE TURTLE TRAPPING

House Bill 4171 as introduced
First Analysis (9-27-88)

RECEIVED

NOV 10 1988

Sponsor: Rep. Jerry C. Bartnik
Committee: Tourism and Recreation

Michigan State Law Library

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Many people consider snapping turtle meat to be a great delicacy. In fact, it is in such great demand that restaurants are reported to have paid \$5 a pound for turtles. As a result, the commercial taking of turtles has increased to the point where snapping turtles are in danger of being over-harvested. Many believe that to protect turtles and other reptiles and amphibians, the legislature should authorize the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to regulate how and when these animals may be taken.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Sportsmen Fishing Law to allow the director of the Department of Natural Resources to decide how and when reptiles (turtles, snakes, and lizards) and amphibians (frogs, toads, and salamanders) could be taken. People taking turtles and frogs for their personal consumption would be required to have valid fishing licenses (currently required with respect to turtles, but not frogs), while people taking reptiles and amphibians would be required to have commercial reptile and amphibian licenses, which would cost \$150 annually.

The bill would also change the name of the act from the "Michigan Sportsmen Fishing Law" to the "Michigan Sports Fishing Law."

MCL 301.1 et al.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency says that the bill would have no fiscal implications. (9-26-88)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The high prices being paid by restaurants for snapping turtle meat have resulted in increased commercial taking of turtles, which are being killed before they can reproduce. This threatens not only existing turtle populations but future populations as well. At present, the director of the DNR can specify how and when frogs may be taken, but lacks such authority with regard to other amphibians and reptiles. The only restrictions on the taking of turtles is that the turtle traps must not interfere with or take fish and the person using the traps must have a fishing license. The bill would retain the fishing license requirement for those who would take turtles for personal use, extend it to the taking of frogs, and authorize the DNR to restrict the manner of taking reptiles and amphibians. Further, someone who would take reptiles or amphibians for commercial use would have to purchase a commercial license costing \$150.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (9-22-88)

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs does not oppose the bill. (9-22-88)

H.B. 4171 (9-27-88)