



## Ohio Revised Code Section 1531.13 Wildlife officers.

Effective: March 18, 1999

Legislation: Senate Bill 187 - 122nd General Assembly

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The law enforcement officers of the division of wildlife shall be known as "wildlife officers." The chief of the division of wildlife, wildlife officers, and such other employees of the division as the chief of the division of wildlife designates, and other officers who are given like authority, shall enforce all laws pertaining to the taking, possession, protection, preservation, management, and propagation of wild animals and all division rules. They shall enforce all laws against hunting without permission of the owner or authorized agent of the land on which the hunting is done. They may arrest on view and without issuance of a warrant. They may inspect any container or package at any time except when within a building and the owner or person in charge of the building objects. The inspection shall be only for bag limits of wild animals taken in open season or for wild animals taken during the closed season, or for any kind or species of those wild animals.

The chief may visit all parts of the state and direct and assist wildlife officers and other employees in the discharge of their duties. The owners or tenants of private lands or waters are not liable to wildlife officers for injuries suffered while carrying out their duties while on the lands or waters of the owners or tenants unless the injuries are caused by the willful or wanton misconduct of the owners or tenants. Any regularly employed salaried wildlife officer may enter any private lands or waters if the wildlife officer has good cause to believe and does believe that a law is being violated.

A wildlife officer, sheriff, deputy sheriff, constable, or officer having a similar authority may search any place which the officer has good reason to believe contains a wild animal or any part of a wild animal taken or had in possession contrary to law or division rule, or a boat, gun, net, seine, trap, ferret, or device used in the violation, and seize any the officer finds so taken or possessed. If the owner or person in charge of the place to be searched refuses to permit the search, upon filing an affidavit in accordance with law with a court having jurisdiction of the offense and upon receiving a search warrant issued, the officer forcibly may search the place described, and if in the search the officer finds any wild animal or part of a wild animal, or any boat, gun, net, seine, trap, ferret, or device in the possession of the owner or person in charge, contrary to this chapter or Chapter 1533. of the Revised Code or division rule, the officer shall seize it and arrest the person in whose custody



or possession it was found. The wild animal or parts of a wild animal or boat, gun, net, seine, trap, ferret, or device so found shall escheat to the state.

Each wildlife officer shall post a bond in a sum not less than one thousand dollars executed by a surety company authorized to transact business in this state for the faithful performance of the duties of the wildlife officer's office.

The chief and wildlife officers have the authority specified under section 2935.03 of the Revised Code for peace officers of the department of natural resources for the purpose of enforcing the criminal laws of the state on any property owned, controlled, maintained, or administered by the department of natural resources and may enforce sections 2923.12, 2923.15, and 2923.16 of the Revised Code throughout the state and may arrest without warrant any person who, in the presence of the chief or any wildlife officer, is engaged in the violation of any of those laws.

A wildlife officer may render assistance to a state or local law enforcement officer at the request of that officer or may render assistance to a state or local law enforcement officer in the event of an emergency. Wildlife officers serving outside the division of wildlife under this section shall be considered as performing services within their regular employment for the purposes of compensation, pension or indemnity fund rights, workers' compensation, and other rights or benefits to which they may be entitled as incidents of their regular employment.

Wildlife officers serving outside the division of wildlife under this section retain personal immunity from civil liability as specified in section 9.86 of the Revised Code and shall not be considered an employee of a political subdivision for purposes of Chapter 2744. of the Revised Code. A political subdivision that uses wildlife officers under this section is not subject to civil liability under Chapter 2744. of the Revised Code as the result of any action or omission of any wildlife officer acting under this section.