

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
Minimum Qualifications for Giant Garter Snake Permits & Work Authorizations**

Applicants will be considered qualified for a section 10(a)(1)(A) permit if they meet the Service's most current qualification requirements. At a minimum, prospective applicants must:

- ! be familiar with the distinguishing physical characteristics of the GGS and other co-occurring and similar species prior to conducting activities according to this Guidance.
- ! provide application information (resume and curriculum vitae, including pertinent formal education, and professional experience, etc.) which needs to reflect direct education and experience with snakes or other herptiles, and should demonstrate:
 - Experience handling giant garter snakes, related species, or other snakes. We prefer that biologists have experience that includes handling of at least 25 garter snakes, including common garter snake (CGS), *Thamnophis sirtalis*, western terrestrial garter snake (WTGS), *Thamnophis elegans*, and western aquatic garter snake (WAGS), *Thamnophis couchi*. At least 10 of these must be giant garter snakes (GGS), *Thamnophis gigas*, identified and processed under supervision of a qualified permittee while doing the activities to be authorized by the requested permit over a period of at least one full field season and at least 40 hours of actual work. This experience should be documented in the information submitted with the permit application (that is: letters of reference from the qualified permittees who did the training, published papers, annual permit reports the applicant participated in preparing, and supervisory appraisals and letters of support, etc.).
 - Knowledge of the principles of general biology and ecology, and familiarity with the biology and ecology of giant garter snakes, including demonstrated field identification of individuals and likely habitat.
- ! The following items are considered to be an adequate showing of this knowledge, skill, and ability:
 - 1) Possess a Baccalaureate degree in biology, ecology, a resource management-related field, or have equivalent relevant experience;
 - 2) Have completed course work in herpetology and study-design and survey-methodology or have equivalent relevant experience;
 - 3) Have verifiable experience in the design and implementation of herpetological surveys or research or have equivalent relevant experience;
 - 4) Have verifiable experience handling and identifying a minimum of 25 GGS and similar snake species, comprised of a minimum of 10 GGS.
 - 5) Obtain a minimum of 40 hours of field experience through assisting in demographic evaluation, research, or monitoring surveys for the GGS during which positive identification is made.

- 6) Have verifiable familiarity with suitable habitats for the species and ability to identify the major vegetative components of communities in which GGS monitoring or research may be conducted.
- 7) Have familiarity with and be able to identify and safely handle native and non-native small vertebrates that may co-occur with the listed species and be encountered during GGS work.

Individuals not qualified to conduct scientific research or other activities covered under a recovery permit or sub-permit will be required to work under the supervision of a qualified, permitted individual until the minimum qualifications are met.