

Draft Minimum Qualifications of for the San Francisco Garter Snake

Applicants will be considered qualified for a recovery permit or sub-permit if they meet the Service's most current qualification requirements. At a minimum, prospective applicants must:

- (1) Possess a Bachelor of Science degree in biology or a resource management-related field, or equivalent field/work experience;
- (2) Have completed course work in herpetology and study-design/survey-methodology, or equivalent field experience;
- (3) Have extensive, verifiable, experience in the design and implementation of colubrid research .

The permittee must verifiably demonstrate competence in the handling and identification of a minimum of 10 San Francisco garter snakes. The permittee must also receive experience in identification of the distinguishing characteristics of similar appearing species which co-inhabit the region (*e.g.*, California red-sided garter snake (*T. sirtalis infernalis*) and coast garter snake (*T. elegans terrestris*). Additionally, for authorization to handle the San Francisco garter snake the permittee shall receive a minimum of 40¹ hours of field experience through assisting in surveys for the San Francisco garter snake during which positive identification is made. Furthermore, if the permittee seeks to independently conduct trapping studies the permittee shall receive a total of 100 hours of field experience in trapping reptiles. A letter from an authorized individual, as previously defined, stating the completion of the required training and level of competence shall be submitted to the SFWO.

- (4) Have familiarity with suitable habitats for the species;
- (5) Have familiarity with amphibians, native and non-native, that may co-occur with the listed species; and
- (6) Be able to identify the major vegetative components of vernal pool ecosystems in which San Francisco garter snake surveys or research may be conducted.

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.

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¹Hours required for handling and trapping are subject to review and consideration on a case-by-case basis. Specifically, other experience may be considered to reduce the number of hours required for each activity.