

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS Democrat Gazette

Commission urged to protect turtles

By Emily Walkenhorst
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More than two dozen scientists sent a letter to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission last week urging the commission to ban commercial turtle trapping in Arkansas.

In the letter, 28 scientists from across the South and other parts of the United States say the freshwater turtle population cannot rebound from a commercial harvest.

“The science shows that Arkansas’ turtle trapping regulations need to be amended to prevent turtle declines,” the letter said.

The Center for Biological Diversity, the Sierra Club’s Arkansas chapter, Arkansas Water Trails Partnership, Audubon Society of Central Arkansas, Environmental Resources Center, Kory Roberts and biologist John Kelly have petitioned the commission for the ban.

Arkansas allows people to trap 14 types of turtles for commercial use.

The number of wild turtles caught and purchased varies widely each year.