



CITES Permits and Certificates

What Is CITES and How Does It Apply to Me?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) protects many species of animals and plants to ensure that commercial demand does not threaten their survival in the wild. It regulates trade in listed species and hybrids, including parts and products, through a system of permits. The Office of Management Authority administers CITES in the United States and processes applications for permits. Under CITES, a species is listed at one of three levels of protection, which have different permit requirements.

Appendix I

Appendix I includes species presently threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. CITES directs its most stringent controls at activities involving these species. A shipment requires two permits—one from the importing country (obtained first) and another from the exporting country. Import permits may be granted when the purpose of the import will not be detrimental to the species' survival, is not primarily commercial, and the importer is suitably equipped to house and care for live animals and plants. Export permits may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens were legally acquired. Import permits are valid for 1 year, export permits for 6 months.

Appendix II

Appendix II species are not presently threatened with extinction but may become so if not regulated. CITES does not require import permits, but each shipment must be accompanied by a permit issued by the exporting country's Management Authority. Export permits may be issued for any purpose as long as the export will not be detrimental to the

species' survival and the specimens were legally acquired. Export permits are valid for 6 months.

Appendix III

Appendix III includes species listed by a range country to obtain international cooperation in controlling trade. An export permit is needed to ship specimens originating in a country that listed the species. A certificate of origin would need to be issued by a country other than the listing country when the specimen originated in that country.

Re-export

Re-export certificates are required for the export of specimens that were previously imported, including items subsequently converted to manufactured goods. Certificates may be issued when evidence of legal import has been provided. If you were the original importer of the wildlife or plant, you need to provide a copy of the canceled CITES permit that accompanied the shipment into the United States and, for animal specimens, the cleared Declaration for Importation (Form 3-177) for that shipment. If you were not the importer, you must provide copies of the importer's documents, as well as documents (e.g., invoices) that show you purchased the wildlife or plant from the original importer, or a record of multiple transactions.

Introduction from the Sea

An introduction from the sea permit is required for the import of Appendix I or II specimens taken in the marine environment but not under the jurisdiction of any country or state.

Certificates of Exemption

Pre-Convention Certificate: If a specimen was obtained prior to the CITES listing date of that species—collected from the wild or held in

captivity—it may be granted a pre-Convention certificate. For Appendix I specimens, no CITES import permit is required.

Bred-in-Captivity Certificate or Certificate for Artificially Propagated Plants:

If a species meets the criteria for bred-in-captivity or artificially propagated as outlined in CITES resolutions, the exporting country may issue an exemption certificate (bred-in-captivity facts sheet is available).

Scientific Exchange Certificate:

Scientific institutions are eligible for this certificate, which authorizes import and export of museum and herbarium specimens. Such specimens must be shipped as non-commercial loans, donations, or exchanges among scientific institutions registered with CITES.

What About Shipping Live Animals and Plants?

Permits for the shipment of CITES-listed live animals or plants may be issued only when the applicant demonstrates that the specimen will be humanely shipped. Live animal shipments must meet the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations or the CITES guidelines for transport. In addition, the import of live mammals and birds must meet the humane shipment regulations in 50 CFR Part 14.

Exceptions to Permit Requirements

In-transit Shipments: Under CITES, a shipment transiting a country must be accompanied by a CITES permit from the exporting country to its final destination. The shipment must remain under Customs bond. Check with other countries involved in the shipment to meet their requirements.

United States: CITES imposes no controls on shipments between States or U.S. territories, including the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

Personal or Household Effects: The United States recognizes an exemption found in the CITES treaty that allows for certain personal or household effects to be exported and imported without CITES permits. Wildlife and plants, or their parts and products, that are part of a household move or are accompanying the owner and intended for personal use may be:

- exported from the United States without CITES permits (check with the Management Authority in the country of import since many countries require an export permit, especially for Appendix I or live specimens) and
- imported without CITES permits, provided the foreign country does not require a CITES permit. Appendix I species acquired abroad may not be imported into the United States without CITES permits.

Foreign Documentation

If you are importing protected wildlife or plants, or their parts and products, from a country that is not a Party to CITES, you must obtain documents that contain all the information normally required by CITES. Contact the Office of Management Authority for documentation requirements and the address of the authority to contact in a non-CITES country.

How Do I Apply for a CITES Permit or Certificate?

Complete a standard application form (3-200) and submit it with a \$25 processing fee to the Office of Management Authority. Allow at least 60 days for review. Also contact your State wildlife or plant conservation agency and the CITES Management Authority of the foreign importing or exporting country to determine any additional requirements. Some CITES-listed species are also protected by other U.S. laws with more stringent permit requirements, i.e., Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Wild Bird Conservation Act. Contact the Office of Management Authority for additional information.

Office of Management Authority
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 700
Arlington, VA 22203
703/358/2095
703/358-2281 fax
r9ia_oma@fws.gov
international.fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

October 1999