

# Importing Your Southern African Leopard or African Elephant Sport-hunted Trophy

## Do I Need a Permit?

Yes, you need import and export permits to bring a personal sport-hunted trophy of either a leopard or African elephant (with the exception given below) into the United States. Both animals are protected in Appendix I (except for elephants taken in Botswana, Namibia, or Zimbabwe), the highest degree of protection under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Also, leopards from countries in southern Africa and all African elephants are listed as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (Act). Leopards from northern or central Africa are listed as endangered under the Act, and the Service has never issued a permit for the import of a leopard trophy taken in these areas.

## What Permits Do I Need for African Elephant Trophies Taken in Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe?

Effective September 18, 1997, the populations of elephants from these three countries were listed in Appendix II to allow for trade in certain products only, one of which is the non-commercial export of personal sport-hunted trophies. Thus, an import permit is no longer required even though the African elephant is still listed as threatened under the Act. Under a special rule, the Service will continue to ensure that each country has an ivory quota for the year of export and to determine that the import of a sport-hunted trophy will enhance the survival of the species. We have made these findings for Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. They will remain in effect until we find, based on new information, that the conditions of the special rule are no longer met and we have published a notice of any change

in the Federal Register. Except for information specific to import permits, all other information in this fact sheet applies to the import of trophies from these three countries.

## Why Are Permits Necessary?

The main purpose of CITES and the Act is to conserve protected wildlife for future generations. One of the reasons the leopard and African elephant were afforded their current protection is to reduce the pressure placed on them by poaching and trade in ivory, and the fashion industry's use of spotted cat fur.

Permits monitor the international movement of wildlife in trade. For species protected under the Act and included in Appendix I, permits ensure specimens are:

- legally acquired,
- imported and exported in a manner that will enhance the survival of the species, with no detrimental effects on wild populations, and
- not traded commercially.

## What Information Does the Service Need from the Species' Range Country?

Before an import permit can be issued, the Service must determine that the import will not be for purposes detrimental to the survival of the species and, for elephants, will enhance its survival. The Service looks at the overall management program for a species in each country. Factors considered may include the biological needs of the species, possible threats to the populations, current population estimates, quotas, management plans, legal protection, implementation, local

community involvement, and use of hunting fees for conservation.

Obtaining the information on management programs may entail a lengthy collaborative process between the country of export and the Service. At times delays occur due to communication difficulties or political instability.

## How Long Will it Take to Get an Import Permit?

Apply for a permit at least 60 days before your departure date. Generally, less time is needed to process import permit applications for leopards and elephants from countries for which the Service has recent information and that meet our obligations under CITES. These countries currently are:

- Leopard: Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- African elephant: Tanzania and South Africa

These countries may change, however, if the Service receives significant new information. You may apply for a permit to import a trophy from other countries, but you should allow more time for your application to be processed and a decision to be made, since applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and this office may need to contact the foreign country for information.

## What Should I Know Before I Go Hunting?

- A CITES permit for a leopard or elephant trophy is for the specific animal taken by the hunter for his or her own use only.

■ Only two leopard trophies may be imported by a hunter in one calendar year.

■ Although all parts of a sport-hunted African elephant may be imported, the ivory may not be re-exported from the United States, including the ivory of Appendix II populations of elephants taken in Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

■ You may not import skins or products of leopard purchased as souvenirs. You may import leather goods of elephants that originated in Zimbabwe for your own non-commercial use, but may not import such products originating in other countries. All ivory, including carvings and jewelry, may not be imported into the United States.

■ While traveling, you may find other wildlife items available for sale. Check with the Service if you are unsure about those you should not purchase and bring back into the United States.

#### **What Steps Should I Take?**

**1.** Obtain an import permit from this office (except for elephants hunted in Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe). You may want to take a **copy** of your permit when you leave on safari as some outfitters require a client to show that an import permit has been issued before scheduling the hunt. Leave the **original** permit at home as you will need to present it at the time the trophy is imported into the United States.

**2.** Comply with all foreign laws during your hunt.

**3.** Obtain a CITES export permit from the CITES Management Authority in the country where the animal was hunted. A copy of the import permit will need to be provided by the person who applies for the export permit.

**4.** Check expiration dates on your import and export permits before having the trophy shipped to you. You could lose your trophy if it enters the United States after your permits have expired. Import permits are valid for one year, and export permits for six months as required by CITES. If the import permit expires before the trophy is imported, you need to apply for a new permit. Return the original unused permit, a newly completed application form, and the processing fee. Allow at least 30 days for processing.

**5.** Import through a United States port designated for wildlife. If you plan to use a non-designated port, request that exception at the time you apply for the import permit. You will be charged additional fees to cover the costs incurred by the Service for using a non-designated port.

**6.** Contact the Service wildlife inspector at the port of entry to arrange for inspection before the arrival of your trophy. At the time of import, you will need to present the original import and export permits, as well as a completed Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife (Form 3-177, obtained at the port).

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