



CITES Permits and Certificates

What is CITES and how does it apply to me?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) protects more than 41,000 species of animals and plants to ensure that international trade is legal and biologically sustainable. It regulates and monitors international trade in listed species and hybrids, including parts and products, through a system of permits and certificates.

For the United States, the Division of Management Authority in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service processes applications for CITES permits to export, re-export, import, or introduce from the sea CITES-listed species into or out of the United States.

Hawksbill Turtle, CITES Appendix I



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CITES-listed species are included under one of three Appendices, with varying levels of protection and different permitting and documentation requirements.

- Appendix I includes species presently threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. CITES prohibits commercial international trade in specimens of these species with limited exemptions.
- Appendix II includes species that are not presently threatened with extinction but may become so if not regulated for trade. It also includes species that look like CITES-listed species.

- Appendix III includes species listed by a range country to obtain international cooperation in controlling trade.

What CITES documents are required?

Importing

Import of Appendix-I specimens into the United States requires both an import permit (issued by U.S. CITES Authorities) and an export permit (issued by country of export). An import permit may be granted when the purpose of the import will not be detrimental to the species' survival, is not primarily commercial, and when the importer is deemed suitably equipped to house and care for live animals and plants. An export permit may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens are legally acquired.

The import of Appendix-II specimens into the United States does not require an import permit but does require an export permit (issued by country of export). An export permit may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens were legally acquired.

The import of Appendix-III specimens into the United States does not require an import permit but does require an export permit (from country of origin) if it is coming from the country that listed the species under Appendix III. The export permit can be issued with only the determination that the specimen was legally acquired. If the import is coming from a country that did not place the species under Appendix III, only a CITES certificate of origin (issued by country of export) or a CITES re-export certificate is required, as applicable.

Exporting

Exporting of Appendix I-specimens from the United States requires an export permit (issued by U.S. CITES Authorities) and an import permit (issued by country of import).

An export permit may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens were legally acquired. An import may be granted (by country of import) when the purpose of the import will not be detrimental to the species' survival, is not primarily commercial, and when the importer is deemed suitably equipped to house and care for live animals and plants. A copy of the import permit (or confirmation that one will be issued) is required when applying for an export permit for an Appendix-I specimen.

Export of Appendix-II specimens from the United States does not require an import permit but does require an export permit (issued by U.S. CITES Authorities). An export permit may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens were legally acquired.

Export of Appendix-III species from the United States requires an export permit (from U.S. CITES Authorities) if the United States was the country that listed the species under Appendix III. An export permit may be granted when the specimens were not obtained in contravention of that country's laws for the protection of animals and plants. If the United States was not the country that listed the species under Appendix III, a CITES certificate of origin is required.

Re-Exporting

A re-export certificate is required for the re-export of CITES-listed specimens that were previously imported, including items subsequently converted to manufactured goods. A certificate may be issued when evidence of legal import has been provided. The original importer needs to provide a copy of the canceled CITES documents that accompanied the shipment into the United States and, for wildlife specimens, the cleared U.S. Fish and Wildlife Declaration form (Form 3-177) for that shipment. The person re-exporting must provide copies of the

original importer's documents, as well as documents that show the wildlife was purchased from the original importer, or a record of sequential transactions.

Introduction from the Sea

An introduction from the sea certificate is required for Appendix-I or -II specimens taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any country (high seas) and landed in the United States from a U.S. flagged or chartered vessel.

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 that will allow for the specimen to be exported. For Appendix-I specimens, no CITES import permit is required with a valid pre-Convention certificate. Additional requirements can be found under 50 CFR 23.45.

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 the CITES Resolutions, the exporting country may issue a bred-in-captivity certificate or certificate for artificially propagated plants. For Appendix-I specimens, no CITES import permit is required with a valid bred-in-captivity certificate or certificate for artificially propagated plants.

Certificate of Scientific Exchange

A Certificate of Scientific Exchange (COSE) authorizes the non-commercial loan, donation, or exchange between scientists or scientific institutions registered by a Management Authority of their country, of preserved, dried or embedded specimens, herbarium specimens and live plant material which includes a label issued or approved by a Management Authority. All registered scientific institutions are listed on www.cites.org.

If the specimens of a species are protected by other U.S. laws and/or treaties, such as the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, additional authorizations are required prior to any export or re-import of those specimens. Additional requirements can be found under 50 CFR 23.48.

Certificate of Origin

For Appendix-III specimens that originated from a country other than the listing country, a certificate of origin is required for export. A certificate can be issued if the specimen was legally obtained within the exporting country.

Certificate of Ownership

CITES allows for the issuance of a certificate of ownership to the personal owner of a legally acquired live animal traveling to other countries with the animal as a personal or household effect. The certificate must be obtained from the Management Authority in the country of the owner's primary residence. Animals covered by a certificate of ownership cannot be sold or otherwise transferred while traveling internationally under this certificate.

Not all countries accept certificates of ownership; it is important to check with the country before traveling. Additional requirements can be found under 50 CFR 23.44.

Traveling-Exhibition Certificate

Specimens that qualify as bred in captivity, artificially propagated, or pre-Convention, and are part of a traveling exhibition, can qualify for a traveling-exhibition certificate. The certificate must be obtained by the Management Authority in the country of the exhibitor's primary place of business. The cross-border movement must be for exhibition, and not for breeding, propagating, or activities other than exhibition. Specimens covered by a traveling-exhibition certificate cannot be sold or otherwise transferred while traveling internationally under this certificate. Not all countries accept traveling-exhibition certificates; it is important to check with the country before traveling. For additional requirements, see 50 CFR 23.49.

What about shipping live wildlife?

Permits may be issued only when the applicant demonstrates that the specimen will be humanely shipped, housed, and cared for. For the issuance of an export permit, re-export certificate, or introduction from the sea certificate, the Management Authority of the country of export must be satisfied that any living specimen will be so prepared and shipped as to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health, or cruel treatment. For the issuance of an import permit, the Scientific Authority of the country of import must be satisfied that the proposed recipient of a living

specimen is suitably equipped to house and care for it. Live animal shipments must meet the *International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations* or the *CITES guidelines for the non-air transport of live wild animals and plants*. In addition, the import of live mammals and birds must meet the humane shipment regulations in 50 CFR Part 14.

What exemptions are there to permit requirements?

In-Transit Shipments

Under CITES, a shipment transiting a country must be accompanied by a valid CITES document from the exporting country to its final destination. The shipment must remain under Customs control. Check with other countries involved in the shipment to meet their requirements. For additional requirements, see 50 CFR 23.22.

Shipment of a specimen that is also listed under the Migratory Bird Act, injurious wildlife under the Lacey Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and is moving through the United States is considered an import and cannot be treated as an in-transit shipment.

Shipments within the 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 effects

A CITES document is not required to import, export, or re-export any legally acquired specimen of a CITES species to or from the United States if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) No live wildlife or plant (including eggs or non-exempt seeds) is included.
- (2) No specimen from an Appendix-I species is included, except for certain worked African elephant ivory as noted in 50 CFR 23.15 paragraph (f).
- (3) The specimen and quantity of specimens are reasonably necessary or appropriate for the nature of the trip or stay and, if the type of specimen is one listed in 50 CFR 23.15 paragraph (c)(3), the quantity does not exceed the quantity given in the table.

(4) The specimen is owned/possessed for personal use, including any specimen intended as a personal gift.

(5) The specimen is being worn as clothing or an accessory or is being taken as part of personal baggage, which is being carried by the traveler or checked as baggage on the same plane, boat, vehicle, or train as the traveler.

(6) The specimen was not mailed or shipped separately.

Household effects

CITES documents are not required to import, export, or re-export any legally acquired specimen of a CITES species that is part of a shipment of household effects when moving residences to or from the United States, if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The provisions of 50 CFR 23.15 paragraphs (d)(1) through (3) are met.

(2) The specimen is owned by the person moving and is being moved for personal use.

(3) Household effects are imported or exported within one year of changing residences from one country to another.

(4) Shipments contain only specimens that were purchased, inherited, or otherwise acquired before changing residences.

What foreign documentation might I need from a country that is not a member of CITES?

If you are importing CITES-listed wildlife, or their parts and products, from a country that is not a Party (member) to CITES, you must obtain documents that contain all the information normally required by CITES.



Gary Kauffman/U.S. Forest Service

How do I apply for a CITES permit or certificate?

(1) Complete a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service application form (3-200 series) and submit it with a processing fee to the Division of Management Authority. Allow at least 60 days for review.

(2) 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. (Visit the CITES Secretariat's website at www.cites.org.)

(3) 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.

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