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Sustaining wildlife

Protecting the Australian environment

Tackling wildlife crime

Permits to export or import wildlife or wildlife products

Introduction

The Australian Government is committed to protecting and conserving Australian native wildlife by regulating international trade. This helps to protect targeted species against overexploitation, and Australian ecosystems against the introduction of invasive species.

The Australian Government also supports the efforts of other nations to protect their wildlife, by implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).¹

In Australia, the export and import of wildlife and wildlife products is regulated under Part 13A of the EPBC Act, which is administered by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Regulation applies equally to individuals, commercial organisations and not-for-profit organisations.

Regulated exports and imports

Regulation is based on the species from which a specimen is derived. "Specimen" does not necessarily mean a whole or live animal or plant, and usually refers equally to non-live parts or derivatives such as manufactured leather goods and foodstuffs.

You may need a permit issued by the department to legally:

- export or import specimens of CITES listed species
- export specimens of Australian native species, and

import live specimens

Failure to obtain the relevant Australian export or import permit prior to consignment is an offence under the EPBC Act, and may lead to the item being seized. Severe penalties apply to breaches of the EPBC Act.

Types of permits and certificates

Single-use permits are available for most transactions for AU\$30 application fee. They are valid for a single specified consignment, for a period of up to three years (six months in the case of CITES specimens).

Single-use permits for the export or import of live specimens (including household pets) that under the EPBC Act require a welfare assessment are available for AU\$150 application fee.

Multiple consignment permits are available in most circumstances for an application fee of AU\$75 per six month period. They authorise an unlimited number of consignments of a particular range of specimens, for a period of up to three years (six months in the case of CITES specimens). For each individual consignment, the permit holder is authorised to complete a specimen export record (SER) or import notification form (INF) describing the consignment. SERs are accepted by importing countries as valid and original export documents.

Personal baggage permits are available, for a fee of AU\$1, for the export of CITES Appendix II specimens in accompanied baggage for personal use. They are often ordered by manufacturers and wholesalers of tourist souvenirs, for supply at point of sale. Some fields on the reverse side of these permits must be completed by the exporter at the time of export.

Exceptional circumstance permits usually operate as six-month single-use permits but are only available in exceptional circumstances where a permit may not otherwise be issued. The process is more complicated, and involves a mandatory public comment period. The application fee applicable to this type of permit is AU\$150.

Testing permits are available for some scientific purposes for a AU\$150 fee. They are valid for six months.

Pre-CITES (or pre-Convention) certificates certify that a CITES specimen was acquired prior to the application of CITES to the species in question, and is therefore exempt from normal permitting requirements. There is no fee for a pre-CITES certificate.

Certificates of origin certify that a CITES Appendix III specimen was acquired in Australia and is therefore exempt from normal permitting requirements. There is no fee for a certificate of origin.

1. See separate fact sheet entitled "CITES" for further information.

wildlife trade **fact sheet**



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Please note that all applicable fees are charged in relation to the application process, and will not be refunded if the application is unsuccessful

Permit applications

If you think you need a permit or certificate to export or import wildlife or wildlife products you should make an application to the department according to the following procedure:

Obtain an application form online or from the address below.

Complete all parts of the application and sign it. Incomplete or unsigned applications will not be accepted. Attach any supporting documentation you may have to identify the specimen(s). Receipts, valuations, certificates of authenticity, government permits, farming or trading licences may all be used as evidence of the age or identity of the specimen.

Make a copy of your application and supporting documentation for your own records.

Send the application, including supporting documentation and the requisite application fee, by mail or facsimile to the address below. Payment may be made by Bankcard, Mastercard, Visa, cheque or money order (cheques and money orders should be made out to the "Collector of Public Monies"). Your application will not be acknowledged on receipt.

If your application is approved, we will send your permit by surface mail (unless you have provided an Express Post envelope or courier bag). Read the permit carefully, paying particular attention to any special conditions, and to the distribution instructions at the bottom of each page.

Even if you have a valid permit, it is still important to declare wildlife and wildlife products to customs officials.

In some instances, a permit from an overseas CITES management authority will be needed before an Australian CITES permit may be issued.

Please note that when a permit expires whether it has been used or not a new application (including another application fee) must be made for a replacement permit.

What else do I need to know?

Exports and imports of wildlife and wildlife products may also be subject to regulation under the *Customs Act 1901* (administered by the Australian Customs Service) and the *Quarantine Act 1908* (administered by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service). These organisations may be contacted through offices in each state capital, or through their head offices:

Australian Customs Service

Customs House
5 Constitution Avenue
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6275 6666

Website: www.customs.gov.au

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)

GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6272 3933
Freecall: 1800 020 504

Website: www.aqis.gov.au

Where can I get more information?

For more information on permits please contact the department at the address below.

International Wildlife Trade Section Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

GPO BOX 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Phone: (02) 6274 1900
Facsimile: (02) 6274 1921

E-mail: wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au

Website: www.environment.gov.au/travel

Protecting
the world's
endangered
species



PLEASE NOTE: The material in this fact sheet is provided for general information only and should not be relied upon for the purpose of a particular matter. While efforts have been made to keep this material current, it may not exactly reflect Commonwealth legislation or Australia's international obligations. For further information call the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on 02 6274 1900.