

Exporting CITES Bred-in-captivity Wildlife

Captive breeding of wildlife is an important source of animals for pet owners, hobbyists, breeders, zoos, researchers, and commercial dealers. If you plan to export captive-bred wildlife, take a few minutes to become acquainted with wildlife laws and regulations that may affect you.

What is CITES and how does it apply to me?

To ensure that commercial demand does not threaten their survival in the wild, many wildlife species are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This treaty regulates trade in listed species, including hybrids and captive-bred specimens, through a system of permits and certificates. Under CITES, a species is listed at one of three levels of protection, which have different permit requirements:

- Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. Import is prohibited for primarily commercial purposes unless the animals meet the criteria for bred-in-captivity (see below). A shipment requires both export and import permits, issued only when the purpose of the import or export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and the specimens were legally acquired. Export to an importer establishing a breeding program to sell offspring is considered a commercial purpose.
- Appendix II includes species that may become threatened with extinction if trade is not regulated. All specimens require an export permit, issued for any purpose as long as export is not detrimental to species' survival and specimens were legally acquired.



- Appendix III includes species listed by their range countries to obtain international cooperation in controlling trade. Export of non-native specimens born in the United States requires a certificate of origin. Export of native species, which the United States has included in Appendix III, requires an export permit.

Export permits for any CITES-listed live specimens may be issued only when the applicant demonstrates that the animals will be humanely shipped, e.g., if by air, the shipment meets the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations.

The Division of Management Authority administers CITES in the United States and processes applications for permits and certificates.

What is bred in captivity Under CITES?

The terms *captive-born*, *captive-hatched*, *captive-bred*, and *bred-in-captivity* are often used interchangeably, but there is a difference. *Captive-born* or *captive-hatched* describe animals born or hatched in captivity, but whose parents may have mated in the wild, i.e. when a wild-caught female is pregnant at the time she is placed in captivity, or when eggs are collected from the wild, then hatched in captivity. Generally, *captive-bred* describes animals that were born or hatched in captivity and whose parents mated in captivity.

CITES countries have agreed that wildlife may be considered *bred-in-captivity* only if the exporting country finds that the animals meet the following strict criteria:

- The parental breeding stock (founder stock) was: (1) legally acquired,

(2) established in a manner not detrimental to species survival in the wild, and (3) maintained without the addition of wild-caught animals, except for occasional addition of animals to prevent or alleviate deleterious inbreeding and for other exceptional circumstances.

- The captive-breeding program has produced offspring of second generation or subsequent generations in a controlled environment or the species is managed in a manner that has demonstrated reliable breeding to the second generation by other breeders. Some second-generation specimens do not qualify under CITES as bred-in-captivity because the breeding program does not produce sufficient offspring to maintain the diversity of the captive stock.

For Appendix-II and -III species that meet the above criteria, the Service may issue a bred-in-captivity certificate. However, for Appendix-I species, additional restrictions apply.

What about Appendix-I species bred-in-captivity?

Requirements differ, depending on whether or not the animal was bred for commercial purposes:

- **Bred for non-commercial purposes:** If the Service finds that the specimen was bred for non-commercial purposes and meets the bred-in-captivity criteria outlined above, it issues a bred-in-captivity certificate. This document authorizes the export of the specimen. In addition, the importer does not need a CITES import permit. However, some countries have domestic legislation that requires an import permit. You need to contact the CITES Management Authority in the country of import to meet their requirements prior to export (addresses available from the Division of Management

Authority or from the national contacts page at www.cites.org).

- **Bred for commercial purposes:** Such trade is prohibited under CITES except when the facility is registered with the CITES Secretariat. Breeding stock must meet bred-in-captivity criteria for a facility to be eligible for registration. Once a facility is registered, such animals are treated as if they were in Appendix II—that is, they can be exported for commercial use by the importer. No separate CITES import permit is required. However, contact the country of import to meet their requirements.

How can I show that my animals are bred in captivity?

Keep good records. For applications involving exporting bred-in-captivity specimens, the Division of Management Authority may require information on:

- How, when, and where parental stock was obtained, and documentation to show its legal origin—obtain a receipt for your purchase and documentation showing source of specimens and parental stock. Additional information may be required for species subject to significant levels of illegal international trade.
- Inventory of captive population that shows the number of animals by sex and age- or size-class.
- Annual production (eggs laid, young born or hatched, young reared to independence) and mortalities within captive population.
- Number of animals sold or transferred annually.
- Number of animals added to the breeder's captive population from another source.
- Transaction records (i.e., date, quantity of animals, name and address of seller, and a list of previous owners, with a complete history of transactions back to the breeder or importer. For imported animals, try to obtain and keep a copy of the CITES permit and wildlife import declaration).

You may need to permanently mark your animals to track them, as well as

make available photographs or videos of the captive propagation program and facilities, including activities during nesting and production and rearing of young. Additional information may be requested if you are breeding for commercial purposes and are applying to register your facility.

Does buying young animals provide any assurance that they are captive-bred or of legal origin?

Unfortunately, no. Young animals or eggs could have been removed from the wild. Their small size makes them easier to conceal and trade illegally. Captive-bred animals are not of legal origin if one of the parents was obtained illegally. You can help conservation efforts by finding out the source of the animals you purchase and refusing to buy questionable stock.

How do I apply for CITES permits?

Complete a standard application form (3-200) and submit it with a processing fee to the Division of Management Authority. Allow at least 60 days for review. Also contact your State wildlife conservation agency and the CITES Management Authority of the importing country to determine any additional requirements. Some species that are protected under CITES are also protected by other U.S. laws under which permit requirements may be more stringent, i.e., Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

How do I get more information about registering my facility?

The registration process for a commercial Appendix-I species requires extensive work. To get more information, please contact the Division of Management Authority.

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Boa constrictor
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