



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



August 29, 2007

Subject: Updated Guidance Concerning Personal Effects Exemption for Caviar

Background: At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Cop14) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which was held in June 2007 in The Netherlands, the Parties agreed to lower the personal effects exemption for sturgeon and paddlefish caviar from 250 to 125 grams. This change is reflected in amendments to resolutions dealing with personal effects (Res. Conf. 13.7) and sturgeon (Res. Conf. 12.7) that will soon be available on the CITES website.

The CITES personal effects exemption allows individuals to import, export, or re-export personally owned items made from CITES species that they wear or carry with them in their accompanying baggage without CITES permits. Since 1998, when all previously unlisted sturgeon and paddlefish species were added to CITES Appendix II, individuals have been able to import, export, or re-export up to 250 grams of sturgeon and paddlefish caviar without obtaining a CITES permit. The lower limit adopted at CoP14 reflects continuing global concern about the sustainability of trade in sturgeon and paddlefish species.

Action: The United States will adopt this change in the personal effects exemption for sturgeon and paddlefish caviar as soon as a rulemaking process to amend 50 CFR Part 23 (the Federal regulations that implement the CITES treaty in this country) is completed.

Individuals traveling in other CITES member nations, however, should be aware that the amended resolutions adopted at CoP14 are effective as of September 13, 2007, and that other nations may begin enforcing the new 125 gram limit for sturgeon and paddlefish caviar imported or exported as personal effects at that time. If a country has implemented the new limit, individuals will need to obtain a CITES permit if the amount of caviar exceeds 125 grams; permits must cover the entire amount, not just the amount in excess of the new limit.

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