



## NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



February 21, 2003

**Subject: Electronic Declaration of Wildlife Imports and Exports**

**Background:** In general, all wildlife imports and exports must be declared to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the past, importers and exporters could only declare shipments to the Service by completing a paper form (FWS Form 3-177, Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife) and presenting it to a Service wildlife inspection office or to the U.S. Customs Service.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has developed and tested a new voluntary electronic declarations system (eDecs). eDecs allows users to declare shipments to the Service via a secured Internet web site. The system facilitates clearance of wildlife imports and exports, allowing users to store data for future use and communicate by e-mail with Service wildlife inspectors.

**Action:** Effective March 1, 2003, the new eDecs system will be available for use by any individual, broker, or company that imports or exports wildlife and is required to file FWS Form 3-177. All U.S. ports of entry staffed by Service wildlife inspectors will accept and process declarations filed using eDecs. Although the Service will continue to accept and process traditional "paper" declarations for those who prefer that method of filing, we encourage importers and exporters to take advantage of the new electronic filing system.

Importers and exporters may access eDecs via the Office of Law Enforcement eDecs home page (<<https://edecs.fws.gov>>). Importers and exporters who wish to use eDecs should check with the relevant port of entry to make sure that their commodities can be cleared electronically. Later this year, we anticipate adding an on-line billing and payment feature for commercial importers and exporters and others who are subject to user fees.

To file declarations with eDecs, users need Internet connectivity, an e-mail address, the Microsoft Internet Explorer browser (version 5.0 or higher), and an ink jet or laser printer. No special software is required, and no fees are charged for using eDecs. Help files on the eDecs web site provide an on-line user manual, information on reconfiguring your Internet browser, filing instructions, and useful FAQs.

**Contact:**

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