

Captive-bred Wildlife Registration under the U.S. Endangered Species Act

The captive-bred wildlife registration system was implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to decrease Federal permit requirements for captive-born, exotic, endangered and threatened wildlife. Under the system, otherwise prohibited activities can occur when the activities can be shown to enhance propagation or survival of the affected species, provided the principal purpose is to facilitate captive breeding.

What types of wildlife are covered?

Wildlife meeting the following criteria are eligible:

- Listed as endangered or threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.
- Living specimens.
- Exotic to the United States (has no natural geographic distribution, including historical range, in the United States).
- Bred in captivity in the United States.

The following species are not eligible for a captive-bred wildlife registration since

part of their natural distribution includes areas in the United States: jaguar, margay, ocelot, gray wolf, nene, and thick-billed parrot. An endangered or threatened species permit is required prior to each transaction with these species.

On a species-by-species basis, the Service may determine that particular species native to the United States are eligible for the registration. At the present time, the only native species that has been granted eligibility under the registration is the Laysan duck (*Anas laysanensis*).

What activities are prohibited?

Without a permit, it is unlawful for any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to commit, attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed any of the following activities:

- Take (meaning to harm, harass, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct) within the United States and its territorial seas or upon the high seas.

- Deliver, receive, carry, transport or ship in interstate or foreign commerce in the course of a commercial activity.
- Sell or offer for sale in interstate or foreign commerce.
- Import or export.
- Possess, ship, deliver, carry, transport, sell or receive unlawfully taken wildlife.

What activities are authorized?

The registration authorizes take and interstate commerce, PROVIDED the purpose of the take or commerce is to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species. Take includes culling and euthanasia, provided such activities are necessary to maintain a genetically viable, self-sustaining captive population of the affected species. Interstate commerce pertains to the purchase and sale of the affected species among captive-bred wildlife registrants who are not residents of the same state and who are registered for the species involved.

Take (harass) for captive wildlife does not include generally accepted (1) animal husbandry practices that meet the Animal Welfare Act standards for facilities and care; (2) breeding procedures; and (3) provisions of veterinary care for confining, tranquilizing, or anesthetizing, when such provisions are not likely to result in injury to the wildlife.

What are the limitations?

- Activities involving non-living wildlife and their parts and products are not authorized under the registration. Authorized activities may be conducted only with living, exotic wildlife born and held in captivity in the United States.



- The registration may be issued when the applicant documents that his activities will serve to enhance propagation or survival of endangered or threatened species, as defined in 50 CFR 17.3 (see below) and the principal purpose of the activities is captive breeding.
- Authorized activities may be conducted only with other captive-bred wildlife registrants who are registered for the same species. If either the buyer or seller lacks a registration, then the buyer must obtain an endangered or threatened species interstate commerce permit prior to the sale.
- The registration may not be issued or used to sell protected species as pets or for hybridization of any listed species.

As outlined in the regulations (50 CFR 17.3), enhance the propagation or survival, when used in reference to wildlife in captivity, includes but is not limited to the following activities when it can be shown that such activities would not be detrimental to the survival of wild or captive populations of the affected species:

1. Provision of health care, management of populations by culling, contraception, euthanasia, grouping or handling of wildlife to control survivorship and reproduction, and similar normal practices of animal husbandry needed to maintain self-sustaining captive populations that possess as much genetic vitality as possible;

2. Accumulation and holding of living wildlife not immediately needed or suitable for propagative or scientific purposes, and the transfer of such wildlife between persons to relieve crowding or other problems hindering the propagation or survival of the captive population at the location from which the wildlife would be removed; and

3. Exhibition of living wildlife in a manner designed to educate the public about the ecological role and conservation needs of the affected species. Please note that registrations are not issued for conservation education only.

Where do I apply

To apply for the captive-bred wildlife registration, applicants must complete an application form and submit it and the processing fee to the Service's Division of Management Authority. (Consult the fee schedule to see if you are exempt from the processing fee.) Applicants should allow for a 60- to 90-day processing and review period.

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Summer 2003

