

Proposed Revision of CITES Regulations

“Thirty years have brought many changes to CITES...as issues of wildlife use grow ever more complex, CITES provides tools to effectively conserve the world’s diverse natural resources.”

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What Is CITES?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement that regulates global trade in many species of wildlife and plants. More than 160 countries, including the United States, cooperate through a system of permits and certificates to confirm that trade in listed wildlife and plants, including parts and products, is legal and does not threaten their survival in the wild. CITES is designed to prevent further decline of wild populations for which there is international demand and ensure that trade is based on sustainable use and management of wild and captive populations. CITES needs your support and cooperation to work effectively.

Why is the Service revising the current CITES regulations?

These regulations (50 CFR Part 23) have not been substantially updated since 1977. Since that time, CITES member nations have adopted more than 80 resolutions that clarify how the Treaty is implemented. We have modified our operating procedures accordingly and are updating our regulations to reflect those changes.

We have also revised these regulations as part of our permits reform effort to simplify procedures and reduce paperwork while still ensuring effective species conservation. The new regulations will bring our written rules into conformity with current CITES provisions.

Why are the proposed regulations so long?

We need to incorporate the many CITES resolutions that affect how we implement and enforce the Treaty in the United States. We also want to provide a comprehensive, easy-to-use guide to what is needed to conduct international trade in CITES species. We organized much of the information into tables to help you find information you need more quickly. These tables and other explanatory material added to the length of the regulations.

How do the proposed regulations support wildlife conservation?

The proposed regulations should improve our ability to implement the management, scientific, and enforcement provisions of CITES, with net benefits for the conservation of species subject to international trade.



Service Wildlife Inspector inspects a tropical fish shipment at Los Angeles International Airport.

Will the proposed regulations affect me?

If you import or export wildlife or plants, these regulations may affect you. They apply to trade in CITES species, whether commercial or non-commercial, including scientific, zoological, and botanical imports and exports. The proposed regulations also apply to international travelers who take wildlife and plants, or their products, with them or acquire them overseas.

How will the proposed regulations help me understand and meet CITES requirements?

Most parts of the new regulations explain procedures and requirements that are already in effect. We have included specific sections that provide information on:

- How you decide if the regulations apply to you;
- The offices to contact for CITES information;
- What CITES documents are required for international trade;
- What must be on CITES documents;
- When a U.S. or foreign CITES document is valid;
- What records you need to keep to trade in CITES species; and
- Special requirements associated with each type of CITES document, including documents for hybrids, traveling live-animal exhibitions, and personally owned live wildlife.

We also identify the issuance criteria for different CITES documents and describe the factors we use to make the findings on whether those criteria (such as legal acquisition and non-detriment) are met. Permit applicants can review this information to see if they meet the necessary requirements.

A few proposed provisions are new and may change some aspects of how individuals, businesses, and institutions import and export CITES species. These include:

- Definitions of new terms, such as sport-hunted trophies;
- How you may travel internationally with personal and household effects that contain CITES species.

How can I comment on the proposed regulations?

We encourage interested individuals and groups to review the proposed regulations and provide comments. Your participation in this process can help us provide clear, workable regulations that support global wildlife conservation and facilitate legitimate trade.

You can obtain a copy of the proposed rule by checking our web site at <http://www.fws.gov/international> or by contacting this office.

Send your comments by June 19, 2006, to the attention of Dr. Peter Thomas at the address below or e-mail them to us (part23@fws.gov). Please reference "Part 23 Comments" and include your name and return address in your letter or e-mail message.

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Pansy Orchid (Miltonia sp.)

USFWS/Monica Powell



Bigleaf mahogany (Swietenia macrophylla) lumber

USFWS/Anne St. John



Alligator (Alligator mississippiensis) skin and U.S. CITES alligator tags

USFWS/Frank Kohn



Blue-fronted Amazon parrot (Amazona aestiva)

USFWS/Anne St. John