

Bringing Pets and Wildlife into the United States

Licensing and Health Requirements

Visitors frequently inquire about traveling with their pets to the United States. All such importations are subject to health, quarantine, agriculture, wildlife, and customs requirements and prohibitions. Pets, except for pet birds, taken out of the United States and returned are subject to the same requirements as those entering for the first time. Returning U.S. origin pet birds are subject to different import restrictions than pet birds of non-U.S. origin entering the United States. For more information on importing pet birds into the United States, see the section on Birds, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/NCIE.

Pets excluded from entry into the United States must either be exported or destroyed. While awaiting disposition, pets will be detained at the owner's expense at the port of arrival. USDA does not inspect or detain pets at U.S. ports of entry.

The U.S. Public Health Service requires that pet dogs and cats brought into this country be examined at the first port of entry for evidence of diseases that can be transmitted to humans. Travelers with dogs originating from areas not free of rabies must bring a valid rabies vaccination certificate. Turtles are subject to certain restrictions, and monkeys may not be imported as pets under any circumstances.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is concerned with the importation, trade, sale, and taking of wildlife and with protecting endangered plant and animal species. Some wild species of dogs, cats, turtles, reptiles, and birds, although imported as pets, may be listed as endangered. Endangered and threatened animals and plants, migratory birds, marine mammals, and certain dangerous wildlife may not be imported without special federal permits. Sportsmen will find the section on wildlife of particular interest, since game birds and animals are subject to special entry requirements.

Also, check with state, county, and municipal authorities for local restrictions on importing pets. It is a general requirement that airlines require health certificates for traveling pets. You should check with your airline prior to your travel date to find out what the requirements are.

If you are taking a pet to another country, contact that country's embassy in Washington, DC, or consular office servicing your area for information on any requirements that you must meet. A list of embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions can be found on the Department of State's web site at <http://usembassy.state.gov/>.

Contents

General Information.....	
Duty.....	
Scams.....	
Pets and Wildlife.....	
Purebred animals.....	
Birds	
U.S. Origin Birds.....	
Canadian Birds.....	
Cats and Dogs	
Vaccinations.....	
Special Circumstances.....	
Monkeys.....	
Turtles, Tortoises and Terrapins.....	
Rabbits, Guinea pigs, Hamsters, Ferrets, and other pet Rodents...	
Wildlife.....	
Designated Ports.....	
Game: Birds and Other Animals	
Endangered Species	
Addresses and Web Sites.....	

GENERAL INFORMATION

All birds and animals must be imported under healthy, humane conditions. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations require that careful arrangements be made with the carrier for suitable cages, space, ventilation, and protection from the elements. Cleaning, feeding, watering, and other necessary services must be provided. Under the Animal Welfare Act, the Department of Agriculture is responsible for setting the standards concerning the transportation, handling, care, and treatment of animals. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is responsible for ensuring humane transport of all imported animals and birds (except domesticated species) and all imported or exported wildlife protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Every imported container of pets, or package of animal parts or products, must be plainly marked, labeled or tagged on the outside with the names and addresses of the shipper and consignee, along with an accurate invoice specifying the number of each species contained in the shipment.

Since hours of service and availability of inspectors from the other agencies involved may vary from port to port, you are strongly urged to check with your anticipated port of arrival before importing a pet or other animal. This will assure expeditious processing and reduce the possibility of unnecessary delays.

For the most up-to-date information, visit <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/contacts/ports/>.

Duty

Dogs, cats, and turtles are free of duty. Other pets imported into the United States, if subject to a customs duty, may be included in your personal exemption if they accompany you and are imported for your personal use and not for sale.

Scams

Many scams exist trying to get money from potential adopters of dogs in other countries.

Legitimate entities will not extort money for fees other than those associated with the actual cost of shipping, for which there should be pricing information on the carriers web site. Paying the carrier directly for shipping will ensure you are not being scammed.

If you have questions about “required” fees, contact the embassy of the country from which the dogs are being exported.

PETS AND WILDLIFE

Purebred Animals

Purebred animals other than domesticated livestock that are imported for breeding purposes are free of duty under certain conditions. A declaration is required to show that the importer is a citizen of the United States; that the animal is imported specifically for breeding purposes; that it is identical with the description in the certificate of pedigree presented; and that it is registered in the country of origin in a book of registry recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

An application to the Department of Agriculture on Veterinary Services Form 17-338 for a certificate of pure breeding must be furnished before the animal is examined at the designated port of entry. For complete information, write to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service at:

Technical Trade Services, Animal Products Staff
U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Import/Export Center
4700 River Road, Unit 40
Riverdale, MD 20737-1231

Birds

All processed or unprocessed avian products and avian by-products from countries that are considered affected with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) are refused entry into the United States. A USDA import permit is required for most imported birds. Permit application forms can be obtained by contacting the USDA Animal Import Center directly or can be found on the USDA web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/forms/vs17-129.pdf.

Non-U.S. origin birds

All non-U.S.-origin pet birds imported into the United States (except from Canada) are required to be quarantined for 30 days in one of three special USDA animal import facilities at the owner's expense. You must make a reservation at the chosen facility in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian there. A cost estimate for the quarantine will be provided when you make your reservation.

Pet birds arriving at these facilities without advance reservations will generally be refused and may also be confiscated. Note that regardless of where you enter the United States, your pet bird must be presented for entry at New York City, Miami, or Los Angeles.

USDA Quarantine Centers and Ports-of-Entry

All non-U.S.-origin pet birds must enter the country and undergo quarantine at one of the following import quarantine facilities. These are the only ports-of-entry available for importing non-U.S.-origin pet birds.

New York, NY
USDA–APHIS–Veterinary Services
John F. Kennedy International Airport
230–59 Rockaway Blvd., Suite 101
Jamaica, NY 11413
Telephone 718.553.1727
Fax 718.553.7543

Miami, Fla.
USDA–APHIS–Veterinary Services
6300 NW. 36th Street (Perimeter Road)
Miami, Fla. 33122
Telephone 305.526.2926
Fax 305.526.2929

Los Angeles, Calif.
USDA–APHIS–Veterinary Services
Los Angeles International Airport
11850 S. La Cienega Blvd.
Hawthorne, Calif. 90250
Telephone 310.725.1970
Fax 310.725.9119

U.S. Origin Birds

ADVISORY: Until further notice, there is a temporary ban on the importation of pet birds from Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Cambodia, Cameroon, Czech Republic (regions (kraj) of Kralovehradecky and Pardubicky ONLY), Denmark (Funen County ONLY), Djibouti, France (VS defined restricted zone ONLY), Germany (the following kreis ONLY: Muldenthal, Torgue-Oschatz, Döbeln, Saalfeld-Rudolstadt, Schwandorf, Neustadt A.D. Aisch, Bamberg, Kitzingen, Erlangen-Hochstadt, Oberhavel, Havelland, Ostprignitz-Ruppin, Potsdam-Mittelmark, Uckermark, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Prignitz and Jerichower Land), Ghana, Hungary (Bacs-Kiskun and Csongrad counties ONLY), India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Japan, Jordan, Laos, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Peoples' Republic of China, Poland (voivodships [provinces] of Warminsko-Mazurskie, Mazowiekie, and Kujawsko-Pomorskie ONLY), Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sudan, Sweden (Kalmar county ONLY), Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom (counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, England), and Vietnam.

Returning U.S. origin pet birds from these countries must go into 30-day quarantine in an USDA animal import quarantine facility. Otherwise, the bird is quarantined for 30 days at the owner's residence (home quarantine). Pet birds returning from Canada are exempt from quarantine.

U.S. origin pet birds and performing birds returning from countries that are considered affected with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) also must be quarantined upon arrival for a minimum of 30 days in a USDA Animal Quarantine Center.

U.S. origin pet birds and performing birds returning from countries that are not considered affected with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) are required to have 30-day home quarantine and testing for END and HPAI. All birds imported into the United States must be inspected by a USDA port veterinarian at the first U.S. port of entry. This inspection must be arranged in advance by contacting the port veterinarian at least 72 hours prior to travel. The phone number for the USDA port veterinarian will be located on the import permit or it can be found on the USDA web site at

www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_portlist.shtml. A current veterinary health certificate must accompany the bird. The health certificate must be

endorsed by a national veterinarian of the country of export and be issued within 30 days of importation.

Canadian Birds

Birds imported from Canada are not required to be quarantined or tested. However, all birds must be examined by a USDA port veterinarian at the first U.S. port of entry. If the birds enter the United States via a U.S.-Canadian land border port, no import permit is required. If the birds enter via an airport, an import permit is required. The permit application can be obtained by calling 301.734.8364 or can be found on the USDA web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/forms/vs17-129.pdf.

More information on importing birds into the United States can be found on the USDA web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/return_pet_bird.shtml, or by contacting:

USDA, APHIS, VS
National Center for Import and Export
4700 River Road, Unit 39
Riverdale, MD 20737
Telephone 301.734.8364
Fax 301.734.6402

Importers and exporters of all wild birds, including captive-bred, are required to obtain clearance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Birds that are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) require permits to travel from one country to another, and import of these birds may be subject to permit requirements or restrictions under the Wild Bird Conservation Act (WBCA). Birds imported or exported at other than a FWS designated port may require payment of inspection fees.

To request a CITES and/or WBCA permit application or to obtain more information, contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Management Authority
4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 420
Arlington, VA 22203.

The toll-free telephone number is 800.358.2104. Overseas calls should be placed to 703.358.2281. The FWS web site has additional information at www.fws.gov/international.

Cats and Dogs

Importation of cats and dogs is regulated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

It is illegal in the United States to import, export, distribute, transport, manufacture, or sell products containing dog or cat fur in the United States. As of November 9, 2000 the Dog and Cat Protection Act of 2000 calls for the seizure and forfeiture of each item containing dog or cat fur.

The Act provides that any person who violates any provision may be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each separate knowing and intentional violation, \$5,000 for each separate gross negligent violation, or \$3,000 for each separate negligent violation.

Cats - All domestic cats must be free of evidence of disease communicable to humans when examined at the port of entry. If the animal is not in apparent good health, further examination by a licensed veterinarian may be required at the owner's expense.

There is no requirement for a rabies certificate but most airlines require a veterinarian's health certificate. Cats arriving in Hawaii or Guam, both of which are free of rabies, are subject to locally imposed quarantine requirements.

Dogs - Domestic dogs must be free of evidence of diseases communicable to humans when examined at the port of entry. If the animal is not in apparent good health, further examination by a licensed veterinarian may be required at the owner's expense.

Collies, shepherds, and other dogs that are imported from any part of the world except Canada, Mexico, and regions of Central America and the West Indies and that are to be used in the handling of livestock must be inspected and quarantined at the port of entry for a sufficient time to determine their freedom from tapeworm.

Vaccinations

Dogs that have never been vaccinated against rabies must be vaccinated at least 30 days before entering the United States. This requirement does not apply, however, to puppies less than three months of age or to dogs originating or located for at least six months in areas designated by the U.S. Public Health Service as being rabies-free.

The following procedures pertain to dogs arriving from areas that are not free of rabies:

- A valid rabies vaccination certificate should accompany the animal. This certificate should be in English or be accompanied by a translation. It should identify the animal, the dates of vaccination and expiration, and be signed by a licensed veterinarian. If no expiration date is specified, the certificate is acceptable if the date of vaccination is no

more than 12 months before the date of arrival. **NOTE:** Some certificates say the vaccine is good for three years. Dogs should not get re-vaccinated if they are within the dates of the certificate.

- Dogs not accompanied by proof of rabies vaccination, including those that are too young to be vaccinated (less than 3 months of age), may be admitted if the importer completes a confinement agreement and confines the animal until it is considered adequately vaccinated against rabies (the vaccine is not considered effective until 30 days after the date of vaccination). The confinement agreement (form CDC 75.37) can be found at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/animal.htm.
- If the vaccination was performed less than 30 days before arrival, the animal may be admitted but must be confined at a place of the owner's choosing until at least 30 days have passed since the vaccination.
- Young puppies must be confined at a place of the owner's choosing until they are three months old, then they must be vaccinated. They must remain in confinement for 30 days after the vaccination.

Dogs that arrive in Hawaii or Guam, both of which are free of rabies, are subject to locally imposed quarantine requirements, in addition to other Public Health Service requirements listed above that may apply.

Special Circumstances

Dogs imported from countries or regions where “screwworm” is known to exist may be imported if the dog is accompanied by a certificate signed by a full-time salaried veterinary official of the region of origin stating that the dog has been inspected for screwworm within 5 days prior to shipment to the United States. The certificate must state that the dog is either free from screwworm, or was found to be infested with screwworm and held in quarantine and treated until

free from screwworm prior to leaving the region.

Owners of dogs imported from countries or regions affected with Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) are advised to take the following precautions to prevent the introduction of FMD from pets entering the United States:

- The feet, fur, and bedding of the pets should be free of any excessive dirt or mud.
- The pet's bedding should be free of any straw or hay, or other natural bedding.
- The pet should be bathed as soon as it reaches its final destination.
- The pet should be kept separate and apart from all livestock for at least 5 days after entry into the United States.

For further information or questions concerning import applications, please contact the APHIS Animal Products Program at 301.734.3277.

Monkeys

Monkeys and other primates may be brought into the United States for scientific, educational or exhibition purposes by importers who are registered with the CDC. However, under no circumstances may they be imported as pets. Registered importers who wish to import or export primates for a permitted purpose in accordance with CDC requirements are also required to obtain clearance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) requires that all primates have permits.

Turtles, Tortoises and Terrapins

Live turtles with a shell length of less than four inches (linear measure) and viable turtle eggs may not be imported for commercial purposes. An individual may import live turtles with shells less than four inches long if the importation is not for commercial purposes, and the importation includes less than seven live turtles, less than seven viable turtle eggs, or any combination of turtles and eggs totaling less than seven. The CDC may issue a permit for importation of more

than the permitted number if the importation is for a bona-fide noncommercial scientific or exhibition purpose.

There are no Public Health Service restrictions on the importation of live turtles with a shell longer than four inches. Importers and exporters of all tortoises and terrapins must obtain clearance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Importers should check with USDA regarding import restrictions for some tortoises.

Rabbits, Guinea pigs, hamsters, ferrets and other pet rodents

There are no CDC or FWS restrictions or requirements on these animals if brought in as pets.

WILDLIFE

The following categories of wildlife and fish are subject to certain prohibitions, restrictions, permit and quarantine requirements:

- Mammals, birds, amphibians, fish, insects, crustaceans, mollusks, reptiles, coral, and other invertebrates.
- Any part or products, such as feathers, skins, eggs; and articles manufactured from wildlife.

Federal laws prohibit the importation or transportation of any wildlife or wildlife parts that violate state or foreign laws.

Designated Ports

Generally, all wildlife (including parts and products) must be imported or exported through one of the following designated ports.

<u>Anchorage, AK</u> P.O. Box 190045 Anchorage, Alaska 99519 907.271.6198; 907.271.6199 fax	<u>Louisville</u> 601 Broadway, Suite 115-A Louisville, Kentucky 40202 502.582.5989; 502.582.5981 fax
<u>Atlanta, GA</u> 4341 International Parkway, Suite #104 Atlanta, Georgia 30354 404.763.7959; 404.366.7031 fax	<u>Memphis</u> 3150 Tchulahoma Ave. Suite #6 Memphis, Tennessee 38118 901.544.3694; 901.544.3696
<u>Baltimore, MD</u> P.O. Box 8776 BWI Air Cargo Complex Building F, Suite 1500 Baltimore, MD 21240 410.694.9590; 410.694.9594 fax	<u>Miami, FL</u> 6601 N.W. 25th Street, Rm. 134 Miami, Florida 33172 305.526.2994 or 2620; 305.526.7480 fax
<u>Boston, MA</u> U.S. Fish and Wildlife 70 Everett Avenue, Suite 315 Chelsea, MA 02150	<u>New Orleans, LA</u> 2424 Edenborn, Room 100 Metairie, Louisiana 70001 504/219-8870; 504/219-8868 fax

617/889-6616; 617/889-1980 fax	
<u>Chicago, IL</u> Wildlife Inspection Program 10600 Higgins Road, Suite 200 Rosemont, IL 60018 847.298.3250; 847.298.7669 fax	<u>New York, NY</u> 70 E. Sunrise Hwy. #419 Valley Stream, New York 11580 516.825.3950; 516.825.3597 fax
<u>Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX</u> 1717 West 23rd, Suite 105 DFW Airport, Texas 75261 972.574.3254; 972.574.4669 fax	<u>Newark, NJ</u> 1210 Corbin St SeaLand Bldg, 1st Fl. Elizabeth, New Jersey 07201 908.787.1321; 908.787.1334 fax
<u>Houston</u> 16639 W. Hardy Rd Houston, Texas 77060-6230 Cargo Office 281.230.7225; 281.230.7227 fax	<u>Portland, OR (Wilsonville)</u> 7000 NE Airport Way, Rm C2732 P.O. Box 55206 Portland, Oregon 97238 503.628.6131
<u>Honolulu, HI</u> 3375 Koapaka St. #B296 Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-1867 808.861.8525; 808.861.8515 fax	<u>San Francisco, CA</u> 1633 Old Bayshore Hwy., Ste. 248 Burlingame, California 94010 650.876.9078; 650.876.9701 fax
<u>Los Angeles, CA</u> 370 Amapola Ave. #114 Torrance, California 90501 310.328.6307; 310.328.6399 fax	<u>Seattle, WA</u> 2580 South 156th Street Seattle, Washington 98158 206.764.3463; 206.764.3485 fax

Most fish and wildlife imported or exported at a FWS non-designated port require payment of inspection fees. All such packages and containers must be marked, labeled, or tagged to clearly indicate the name and address of the shipper and consignee, and the number and nature of contents. Wildlife in any form, including pets, imported into or exported from the United States must be declared on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Form 3-177 (Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife) and cleared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to release by CBP. Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for further clearance requirements and for a copy of the pamphlets *Facts about Federal Wildlife Laws* and *Buyer Beware*.

Domesticated pets such as dogs, cats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, and rabbits do not require clearance from FWS. For information about importing animal and bird products such as hides, eggs, feathers, etc. contact the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service at:

National Center for Import and Export
4700 River Road, Unit 39
Riverdale, MD 20737
Telephone 301.734.8364
Fax 301.734.6402

Game: Birds and Other Animals

Specimens of game birds and animals, other than protected species, that are legally killed by United States residents in Canada or Mexico may be imported for non-commercial purposes at any CBP port of entry and declared on a FWS Form 3-177. Game must be accompanied by a valid hunting license, tags, stamps, and by an export document from the country where taken, if such is required. Only United States residents may import game free of duty. Some game animals, such as black bear or elephant, require permits to be imported. Many countries also require export permits for all wildlife. Hunters should check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for permit and country requirements. The telephone number is 703.358.1949.

If the hunter wishes to import the meat, he/she must have a letter from a butcher indicating that the animal/bird was of Canadian origin and dressed at his/her butcher shop. All migratory birds must be imported with one wing attached for identification purposes.

United States residents may only import migratory game birds that they themselves have legally killed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has regulations regarding the number and species of migratory game birds that may be imported from Canada, Mexico, and other countries. Hunters should familiarize themselves with the restrictions on migratory game birds taken legally during open season in other countries; hunter should also be aware that some countries require wildlife export permits. Certain USDA restrictions may also apply. Contact the Veterinary Services (VS) Veterinarian in Charge in your state. For a list of offices and telephone numbers you should contact the Veterinary Services, Technical Trade Services, Animal Products Staff in Riverdale,

Md, at 301.734.3277.

Game birds and waterfowl that are being imported as trophies must be sent to a taxidermy facility that has been approved by the USDA's Veterinary Services. A list of approved taxidermists in a particular state can be obtained from the Technical Trade Services, Animal Products Staff, National Center for Import-Export at 301.734.3277.

Many animals, products, and byproducts from such animals are prohibited, or allowed only restricted entry into the United States. Specific requirements vary according to the country of export; for more information about importation by country, please call the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), National Import-Export Center, at 301.734.3277.

Endangered Species

Some wildlife, including pets, are listed as threatened or endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) and are prohibited from import or export unless authorized under a permit. The United States is a party in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, commonly known as CITES. This treaty regulates trade in endangered species of wildlife, plants and their products. International trade in species listed by CITES is illegal unless authorized by permit. Items restricted by CITES include, but are not limited to, articles made from whale teeth, ivory, tortoise shell, reptile, fur skins, coral, and birds. Permits to import into or export from the United States and re-export certificates are issued by the Division of Management Authority of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Information on wildlife and plants, including lists of endangered species, may be obtained from that agency.

ADDRESSES AND WEB SITES

Although essential requirements are described in this brochure, all regulations cannot be covered in detail. If you have any questions, write or call your local CBP office or the specific agency mentioned. Their addresses and web sites are:

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Customer Service Center

1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Washington, D.C. 20229

Tel. 703.526.4200 or Toll Free 1.877.CBP.5511 (1.877.227.5511)

www.cbp.gov

U.S. Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (E-03)

Atlanta, GA 30333

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/animal/index.htm

Confinement agreement for non-vaccinated dogs:

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/animal/dogs.htm

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Technical Trade Services, Animal Products Staff

U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Import/Export Center

4700 River Road, Unit 40

Riverdale, MD 20737-1231

Tel. 301.734.3277

Importing pet birds into the United States:

www.aphis.usda.gov/NCIE

Permit application for birds entering via an airport:

www.aphis.usda.gov/forms/vs17-129.pdf.

USDA port veterinarians:

www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_portlist.shtml

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Division of Management Authority

4401 N, Fairfax Drive, Room 700

Arlington, Va. 22203

Tel. 703.358.2104

To obtain wildlife permits:

www.international.fws.gov

For clearance ports and inspection fees:

Office of Law Enforcement

4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 500

Arlington, Va. 22203

Tel. 703.358.1949

www.le.fws.gov

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Report Suspicious Activity at

1-800-BE-ALERT

www.cbp.gov

Revised August 2008

CBP Pub. No.0000-0509