



## NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



February 3, 2012

### **Subject: Ban on Importation and Interstate Transport of Four Snake Species**

**Background:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has published a [final rule](#) in the *Federal Register* listing four large non-native snakes as injurious species under the Lacey Act. This listing, which becomes effective on **March 23, 2012**, covers the following species:

- *Python molurus* (which includes Burmese python [*Python molurus bivittatus*] and Indian python [*Python molurus molurus*])
- Northern African python (*Python sebae*)
- Southern African python (*Python natalensis*)
- Yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*)

The listing generally makes it illegal to import live specimens of these snakes into the United States. (Prohibited imports include shipments transiting through the United States on their way to other foreign destinations.) Interstate transport of any type (both commercial and with respect to personal pets) is also generally prohibited.

The listing does not prohibit the importation or interstate transport of dead specimens of these snakes or of products made from them. Nor does it affect the sale and possession of these snakes within a State.

Direct export with the required CITES permit is still allowed from either a designated port or other location with a designated port exception permit (DPEP) **but any export must occur directly from the State where the snakes are present**. Designated port exception permits will only authorize use of a port in the same State where the snakes are located, and issuance will depend on the availability of inspections staff and other criteria. Snakes may not be transported between States by any means for the purpose of eventual export.

**Action:** Effective March 23, 2012, it will be illegal to import live Burmese pythons, live yellow anacondas, live southern African pythons, and live northern African pythons and gametes, viable eggs, or hybrids of these species into the United States or to transport these snakes, gametes, or eggs from one State to another (including transporting them for export) without a permit from the Service.

As of this date, these species may only be exported:

- Directly from a designated port in the State where the snakes are already located; or
- Directly from a non-designated port in the State where the snakes are located under a Service-issued designated port exception permit.

Flights carrying exports must be direct international flights to a foreign country that do not stop at an airport in another State. (Stopovers are allowed within the State from which the shipment is departing.)

Shipments moving by truck or rail to Canada or Mexico may not enter another State in transit to these countries.

Any export shipments that transit another State by air or land will be considered contraband subject to seizure and forfeiture whether or not the exporter knew that such interstate transport would occur.

Those caught unlawfully bringing these injurious snakes into the United States or transporting them across State lines on or after this date face penalties that include up to 6 months in prison and fines as high as \$5,000 for individuals or \$10,000 for organizations.

Shipments that are in the process of being imported at the time of the effective date must physically arrive in the United States before March 23; shipments that enter the country on or after this date will be subject to seizure.

Contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Office of Law Enforcement  
703-358-1949; 703-358-2271 (fax)  
[lawenforcement@fws.gov](mailto:lawenforcement@fws.gov) (e-mail)