



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



January 4, 2012

Subject: Protection of Hellbender Salamanders under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Background: On September 8, 2010, the Service published in the Federal Register a document proposing the listing of the hellbender (*Cryptobranchus allenganiensis*), including its two subspecies, the eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus allenganiensis allenganiensis*) and the Ozark hellbender (*Cryptobranchus allenganiensis bishopi*), in Appendix III of CITES [75 FR 54579]. Listing hellbenders in Appendix III of CITES is necessary to allow the Service to adequately monitor international trade, to determine whether exports are occurring legally with respect to State law and to determine whether further measures under CITES or other laws are required to conserve this species and its subspecies.

Simultaneously with the CITES proposal, the Service also published in the Federal Register a document proposing the listing of the Ozark hellbender (*Cryptobranchus allenganiensis bishopi*) as endangered under the provisions of the ESA [75 FR 54561]. Surveys conducted over recent years have documented a severe decline in all populations of the Ozark hellbenders due to habitat destruction, disease and other factors.

Both final rules were published October 6, 2011. The final rule that implements the endangered status and the Federal protections for the Ozark hellbender (*Cryptobranchus allenganiensis bishopi*) provided by the ESA became effective November 7, 2011 [76 FR 61956].

The final rule that implements the CITES Appendix III listing will become effective April 3, 2012 [76 FR 61978]. After this date, a valid CITES document will be required to accompany any shipments of hellbenders entering international trade, including shipments for scientific or educational purposes.

Action: Importers and exporters of wildlife should be aware of these new requirements and prohibitions concerning hellbenders.

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http://www.fws.gov/le/ImpExp/Info_Importers_Exporters.htm