



## NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



April 15, 2004

### **Subject: Changes Affecting Import and Export of Seahorses and Other Tropical Fish**

**Background:** Global concern regarding international trade in coral reef species prompted the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to list all species of seahorses (*Hippocampus sp.*) on Appendix-II. Seahorses are commonly traded live for the aquarium trade and dead for the curio and medicinal trade. The delayed CITES listing for seahorses takes effect on May 15, 2004. Beginning May 15, shipments containing seahorses will require CITES export permits or re-export certificates.

The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force is charged with determining the U.S. role in the international trade of coral reef species. As part of this effort, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service was tasked to analyze data on international trade in coral reef species, particularly the trade in marine fish. Currently, the Service allows importers and exporters to combine all tropical fish, both freshwater and marine, into one record on the Form 3-177 (Declaration for the Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife) provided the invoice contains the more detailed information that is required. This consolidation hinders the Service's ability to distinguish between freshwater and marine tropical fish.

### **Action:**

- Effective May 15, 2004, all seahorses (*Hippocampus sp.*) must be separately declared at the species level on the declaration form and must be accompanied by the required valid CITES permit or certificate. Traders should be alert and schedule shipments containing seahorses so that any imports or exports that occur on or after May 15, 2004, are accompanied by valid CITES documents.
- Effective May 15, 2004, all importers and exporters must separate marine tropical fish from freshwater tropical fish on different lines of the declaration form (Form 3-177). Declarations received beginning May 15, 2004, that combine freshwater and marine tropical fish as one line item will be rejected for correction.

We strongly urge the wildlife import/export trade community to transition to these new declaration requirements as soon as possible and inform suppliers of the upcoming CITES document requirements for seahorses.

For information on how to obtain U.S. CITES export permits or re-export certificates for seahorses, please contact the Service's Division of Management Authority at 703-358-2104.

### **Contact:**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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