

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release May 20, 1977

Levitt 202/343-5634

INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON ENDANGERED SPECIES GOES INTO EFFECT

Beginning Monday, May 23, 1977, permits or other documents will be required by the United States for the International shipments of wild plants and animals protected by the Endangered Species Treaty, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced.

The regulations are designed to control commercial trade in order to prevent the decline of species threatened with extinction. At present 35 countries are bound by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora which was negotiated by 80 nations in 1973.

Major businesses which may be affected by the permit requirement include furriers, jewelers, wildlife importers, zoos, medical research companies, leather goods manufacturers, and horticulturists.

Fish and Wildlife Service special agents at JFK airport in New York--the largest port for wildlife entry in the Nation--anticipate a 25 to 30 percent increase in the number of wildlife shipments refused entry because of improper documentation. The shipments are expected to be of ivory, furs, monkeys, crocodilian products, snakes, lizards, and sea turtles. Other countries party to the convention such as Great Britain and Switzerland are already implementing the treaty and have refused entry to a number of shipments.

Final regulations to implement the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora were published in the Federal Register February 22, 1977, and went into effect 90 days after publication. They were designed to aid law enforcement and allow increased monitoring of commerce in wild plants and animals.

The treaty established three appendices along with a system of regulations which are more or less restrictive, depending upon the degree to which a species is threatened with extinction and the contribution trade makes to such a threat.

To stop "laundering" of wildlife and plant products through third countries, shipments must be accompanied by certificates or statements of origin from responsible wildlife officials in the specimen's native country.

Permits and other information are available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Wildlife Permit Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240 (202/634-1496).