

Wildlife inspectors work closely with Service special agents and counterparts from the U.S. Customs Service and other Federal agencies that police international trade. They staff special enforcement task forces that conduct inspection blitzes at international mail processing facilities or target specific enforcement problems, such as the import and sale of medicinal products made from endangered species.

Outreach is also an important part of the job. Inspectors meet with customs brokers, trade associations, international travelers, and hunters going abroad to explain wildlife import/export rules and regulations. They are popular guest speakers at schools, nature centers, community conservation programs, and environmental fairs.



How do I become a wildlife inspector?

New inspectors are recruited locally when vacancies occur. Openings are announced by regional Service personnel offices. Inspectors typically join the Service at the GS-5, 7, or 9 level, depending on their education and experience. Knowledge of wildlife taxonomy and zoology is especially helpful. A background in criminal justice, communication skills, and computer literacy are also useful.



Are there any special requirements?

Wildlife inspectors work in airport cargo facilities, passenger terminals, dock warehouses, and border check stations, often under adverse noise and weather conditions. They must be comfortable handling live animals and fit enough to lift heavy cartons and cases. Wildlife inspectors wear uniforms while on duty. Some inspections require protective clothing and special safety equipment. Because international trade is an around-the-clock business, inspectors sometimes work on weekends or at night. They must have a valid state driver's license and be able to operate a government-owned car, van, or pickup truck.