



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



May 18, 2023

Subject: Imports of CITES Marine Species Taken on the High Seas

Background: At the 17th, 18th and 19th meetings of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), several marine species, including sharks and rays, were listed in Appendix II of CITES. For more information please refer to the [CITES Appendices](#) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) [Public Bulletin: \(CITES\) CoP19 Amendments to Appendices I and II](#).

CITES specimens taken by U.S. vessels on the high seas, i.e. waters beyond the territorial sea or exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of any nation, and landing in the United States require a CITES Introduction from the sea (IFS) certificate, as described in CITES Articles I(e), III(5), IV(6), and IV(7). For more information please refer to [CITES Introduction from the Sea \(IFS\)](#).

Fishing on the high seas raises difficulties for communicating with the Service. In addition, the commercial fishing industry and scientific expeditions, among others, generally use nontraditional ports of entry.

Action: Service officers will continue to enforce the import/export requirements for CITES marine species, as well as all marine species regulated by the Service, that were taken on the high seas. Service officers will ensure that shipments of these species meet all applicable regulatory requirements under Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 10, 13, 14 and 23.

As required under U.S. CITES-implementing regulations (50 CFR 23), any specimens of CITES listed species imported into the United States, including take and landing from the high seas, or exported from the United States must be accompanied by valid CITES documentation or meet the criteria for exceptions as described in 50 CFR 23.

Importers who lawfully take CITES marine species on the high seas and who are authorized to import such wildlife in accordance with CITES and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 23) may import such wildlife at any port or place.

Service Import/Export License requirements and applicable designated port user fees apply as outlined in 50 CFR 14.94.

Guidance for procedures on proper notice to the Service and unavailability of a Service Officer are as follows:

1. Procedure for the 48 Hour Notice Requirement

The importer may fulfill this notification requirement by providing the vessel's estimated landing date and port or place of arrival to the nearest staffed wildlife port office. This notice may be provided to the Service prior to the vessel embarking.

2. **Unavailability of a Service Officer**

If a Service officer is not available to physically inspect the shipment, the original CITES IFS certificate, the Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife (Form 3-177), and all required accompanying documents must be sent to the nearest staffed wildlife port office within two business days of landing. These items must be sent using a traceable shipping method, and the goods must remain intact, unaltered, and complete at the importer's facility until Service clearance is received.

EXPORTS: Exports of protected marine species remain unchanged and must comply with applicable U.S. laws and federal regulations.

Importers/exporters are encouraged to set up an electronic declaration (eDec) system account, so declarations can be filed prior to the specimens being landed and therefore minimize delays in receiving clearance.

This bulletin supersedes and replaces the February 26, 2020 CITES Marine Species Taken on the High Seas by Commercial Fishing Vessels Public Bulletin.

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