



Marine Mammal Handicrafts

Significantly Altered

What is an Authentic Native Handicraft?

Authentic Native handicrafts are items composed wholly, or in some significant respect, of natural materials which are significantly altered from their natural form.

Marine mammal parts must be significantly altered and qualify as authentic Native handicrafts, to be sold to non-Natives.

If you have questions about handicrafts that you wish to produce, please contact the USFWS at 907/786 3311 or 1 800/362 5148.

The following are examples of marine mammal parts that are NOT significantly altered, do NOT qualify as authentic Native handicrafts, and may not be sold to non-Natives.



Polar bear skull on a plaque

This skull is not considered a legal handicraft because no artwork (i.e. scrimshaw or carving) has been done to physically alter the skull in a significant manner. Attaching a polar bear, walrus, or sea otter skull to a plaque does not qualify as a legal handicraft.



Sea otter hide with drawing on back

This sea otter hide is not considered a legal handicraft because merely drawing, painting, or sketching on the back of an otherwise unaltered hide does not qualify as significantly altered.



Polar bear claw on a string

This claw is not considered a legal handicraft because the only physical alteration is a hole drilled through the claw. This does not qualify as significantly altered.



Walrus head mount with carving on nose plate and raw tusks

This head mount is not considered a legal handicraft (even though the nose plate is carved) because the tusks have not been physically altered.

Walrus tusk with minimal light scrimshaw

A walrus tusk with drawing, painting, or extremely light scrimshaw is not considered a legal handicraft. In the case of drawing and painting, the tusk has not been physically altered. Scrimshaw should be deep enough to hold ink or pigment and not be easily sanded off to return the tusk to a natural state. Scrimshaw or carving should cover a significant portion of the tusk.



Marine mammal products that can be easily converted back to their natural state, or that have only been tagged and/or signed, are not considered authentic native handicrafts and cannot be sold to non-Natives.