



Australian Government

**Department of Sustainability, Environment,
Water, Population and Communities**

INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRADE: COMPLYING WITH PERMITS

Australia's unique plants and animals are known throughout the world and are an important part of our natural heritage.

For this reason, the Australian Government is committed to protecting and conserving our native wildlife. One of the ways it does this is by regulating international wildlife trade.

By monitoring and controlling the import and export of wildlife, the Australian Government can better protect targeted species against overexploitation, and Australia's wildlife against introduced invasive species.

The Australian Government also works with other nations to protect wildlife globally, by implementing CITES (see separate fact sheet entitled *The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*).

What are the laws?

In Australia, the export and import of wildlife and wildlife products is regulated using a permit system under Part 13A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), which is administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

Regulation applies equally to individuals, commercial organisations and not-for-profit organisations.

Conditions placed on international wildlife trade permits are designed to meet the needs of the wildlife trade industry while ensuring Australia's environment and wildlife are protected and managed appropriately for the future.

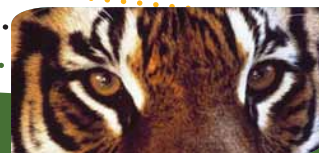
Under the EPBC Act, permit holders are required to meet the conditions attached to their permit.

Permit checks

The department is introducing a program to check selected international wildlife trade permits and ensure these conditions are being met.

Through these checks, the department will:

- gather information to determine if and how well conditions are being met
- communicate findings to the permit holder, and
- recommend any appropriate remedial action, where necessary.



Who will be chosen?

Checks will be carried out on a selected sample of permit holders in industry sectors where international wildlife trade occurs. This includes traditional medicines, cut flowers, clothing, timber and animal hides.

How are permit checks done?

The department is keen to work cooperatively with its clients during this program.

Permit checks may be performed using either of the following methods:

- desktop—from within the offices of the department using files available, or
- on-site visit—an agreed visit by departmental staff at the permit holder's place of business.

What is the process?

The department will select a sample of international wildlife trade permits to review and will advise the permit holders that their permits have been chosen for checking.

Once checks are completed, permit holders will be invited to respond to the department's preliminary findings. Following this, they will receive a final written report which may identify strengths or areas where improvements are needed.

Where the department finds that permit holders are not complying with their conditions, it will recommend appropriate remedial action in line with the department's compliance and enforcement policy. This may include:

- further education and awareness activity
- a follow-up visit to assess improved compliance behaviour, or
- a recommendation to vary existing conditions, suspend, or even cancel a permit.

What are the benefits of this program?

The benefits of completing these checks are expected to flow to:

- wildlife business operators—through improved education and awareness of the regulatory process
- the department—through feedback from international wildlife trade industry participants (that is, on areas where it may improve the level of service provided to permit holders, or more effectively regulate their industry), and
- the environment—through improved regulation of international wildlife trade.

Program principles

The department will carry out the permit checks in accordance with the following principles.

Independence

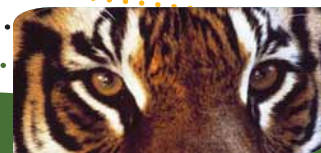
Departmental staff are to be independent of the activity being reviewed and free from bias or conflict of interest. They are to maintain objectivity throughout the process to ensure that the findings and conclusions will be based only on the evidence available.

Ethical conduct

Departmental staff are to act in a professional manner and demonstrate trust, integrity, confidentiality and discretion.

Fairness

Departmental staff are to present their findings in a truthful and accurate manner. Any problems encountered between the permit holder and departmental staff should be reported (see contact details below).



Due diligence

Departmental staff are to exercise care when doing their work, and respect the confidence placed in them by permit holders and other interested parties. They are required to demonstrate competence, discretion, and judgement when performing their duties.

For further information on this program, please contact:

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