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Importing Zoological Birds into the United States

Last Modified:



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines **zoological (zoo) birds** as birds intended for breeding or public display, for recreational or educational purposes, at a zoological park. This includes poultry species that are imported for the same purpose from a foreign zoological park and destined for a U.S. zoological park.

USDA defines zoological park as a professionally operated zoo, park, garden, or other place maintained under the constant surveillance of a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, for the exhibition of live animals, pigeons, or birds, for the purpose of public recreation or education.

All zoological birds, regardless of size, must be permanently identified per the Code of Federal Regulations Title 9 (9 CFR 93.104(b)(4)).

USDA requires the following for all live zoo bird imports:

- **USDA import permit**
- **Veterinary health certificate**
- **Port inspection**
- **Import quarantine**

USDA requirements for **transiting** live zoo birds through the United States are detailed below under **USDA Transit Process**.

Importers may retain the services of a customs broker to facilitate the importation of zoo birds. To obtain a list of customs brokers, contact one of the USDA Animal Import Centers listed below under "Import Quarantine."

How To Import Zoological Birds

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USDA Import Permit

Use the Veterinary Services Permitting Assistant (VSPA) to confirm your live animal import permit requirements. Select the "Live Animals" tab. The VSPA will provide you with a summary of required import documents, including permit applications, certificates, informational letters, and more.

- All zoo bird shipments, including those from Canada, must be accompanied by a USDA import permit.
- Importers should apply for an import permit online using APHIS eFile. This will help expedite the entire permitting process and enable users to track the status of their permits, confirm receipt, and easily renew or amend existing permits. For more information on import permit application, visit Animal Health Permits.
- Alternatively, importers may submit a paper application using the VS Form 17-129 Application for Import or In Transit Permit (211.74 KB).
- Importers must submit the import permit application at least **7 business days** before shipping zoo birds.
- The original import permit is valid for **30 days** and must accompany all zoo bird shipments.
- The import permit may specify additional restrictions for zoo birds originating from or transiting regions affected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), Newcastle disease, or both.

Veterinary Export Health Certificate

- Zoo birds imported from any region of the world must be accompanied by a health certificate in English or with English translation that is:
  - Issued by a salaried veterinarian of the national government of the exporting region, **or**
  - Issued by a certifying official **and**
  - Endorsed by the competent animal health authority of that country.
- Any allowable or required deviations of endorsement will be specified on the import permit.
- Some exporting countries have a specific health certificate for zoo birds. Other countries may use the U.S. model health certificate or their own document that contains the same information and requirements as the model health certificate.
  - Canada: Avian-Zoo Birds-Health Certificate-Canada (234.28 KB) (July 2025)
  - Canada: Avian-Conservation Bird Hatching Eggs-Health Certificate-Canada (239.13 KB) (July 2025)

- Other countries: Avian-Zoo Birds-Model Health Certificate (306.92 KB) (May 2024)

Port Inspection

- Zoo birds requiring quarantine must be shipped directly to the U.S. port of entry closest to the intended quarantine facility.
- A USDA port veterinarian must inspect the zoo birds at the first U.S. port of entry, unless otherwise indicated on the U.S. import permit.
- The importer must arrange for this inspection at least **72 hours** in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian, whose contact information is listed on the import permit.
- If the zoo birds are identified with a microchip, the importer must provide a reader capable of reading the microchip.
- The port veterinarian will visually inspect the shipment, export health certificate, and U.S. import permit. View user fee rates for inspection services.

Import Quarantine

- Zoo birds importing from areas of Canada that are not restricted due to HPAI or Newcastle disease, and that have not transited such areas, do not require quarantine unless they have been vaccinated against HPAI (H5 or H7).
- Other zoo birds must undergo a minimum **30-day quarantine** at a USDA Animal Import Center or a USDA-approved private quarantine facility. The importing zoological park may request that USDA approve a private quarantine facility on zoo grounds that meets USDA standards for such facilities. The initial approval process for a private quarantine may take several months and must be completed before USDA will issue the import permit.
- Importers seeking to quarantine at a USDA Animal Import Center should make reservations directly with the center of choice before the shipment arrives.
- Birds are tested during quarantine to determine if they are free from certain communicable diseases.
- The importer is responsible for all costs and fees associated with the import, including but not limited to costs and fees for port inspection, the quarantine

stay, and laboratory testing during quarantine.
- USDA will provide cost estimates for quarantine at a USDA Animal Import Center and for USDA fees associated with quarantine at an approved private facility. View user fee rates.

USDA Animal Import Centers

For quarantine-related questions, contact one of the following USDA Animal Import Center quarantine facilities:

Miami Animal Import Center

Email: vs.mpo@usda.gov

Phone: 305-876-2200

Fax: 305-876-2201

Website:

- Miami Animal Import Center

Mailing Address:

USDA-APHIS-VS

6300 NW 36th St.

Miami, FL 33122

Website:

- Miami Animal Import Center

More Details:

Port of Entry: Miami International Airport

Species Received: Pet birds and shipments of commercial birds

New York Animal Import Center

Email: vspsnic@usda.gov

Phone: 845-838-5500

Fax: 845-838-5575

Website:

- New York Animal Import Center

Mailing Address:

USDA-APHIS-VS

474 International Blvd.

Rock Tavern, NY 12575

Website:

- New York Animal Import Center

More Details:

Port of Entry: JFK International Airport

Species Received: Birds, poultry, equines, ruminants, swine, and certain zoo animals

All Contacts

USDA Transit Process

- Zoo bird shipments transiting the United States from the exporting country to a third country destination must be accompanied by a USDA transit permit and a contingency plan as described in Transit Shipments of Live Animal Commodities (479.88 KB).

- Zoo birds originating from an HPAI-affected region or that would transit an HPAI-affected region enroute may not transit the United States.
- The transit permit application process is the same as the import permit application process (see "USDA Import Permit" section above). Denoting the route of travel on the application distinguishes the type of permit requested.
- USDA oversees transit shipments while they are in the United States. The importer must arrange for USDA services at least **72 hours** in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian listed on the transit permit.
- The importer must submit the contingency plan with the permit application and the request for service at the U.S. transit port.
- The transit permit lists any special instructions for the importer and port staff. For more information, see Transit Shipments of Live Animal Commodities (479.88 KB) and Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits.

For more information about importing zoo birds or to view associated guidance documents, see VS Guidance and Other Documents for Avian Importation.

Questions?

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import Permit team if you have questions before you apply for a permit.

For questions about import permits or permit applications:

Live Animal Import Permit Team

Email: laipermits@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

APHIS Port Services

For questions about import inspections at a port of entry, quarantine of animals arriving from a foreign country, or requesting approval as a private animal import quarantine facility, contact APHIS Port Services.

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Live Animal Import and Export

Contact APHIS' Live Animal Import and Export team for questions about current trade restrictions, or other questions not related to permits.

For general questions related to the import of a live animal:

Live Animal Import and Export

Email: laie@usda.gov

Phone: 301-851-3300

All Contacts
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