



WILDLIFE SMUGGLING

Customs works to protect Australia's borders by preventing the import and export of flora and fauna. Officers work to protect Australia's wildlife from illegal export and cruel smuggling practices while preventing the introduction of exotic diseases.

As well as detecting illegal movements across the border, Customs investigates and prosecutes those who smuggle wildlife.

Australia treasures its unique wildlife. Customs enforces Australian law and supports international efforts to detect and deter the trade of endangered wildlife and products made from them.

Customs investigators have uncovered and successfully prosecuted many organised wildlife smuggling activities.



LEGISLATION

Australia's wildlife is protected from export under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This legislation is administered by the Department of the Environment and Water Resources and enforced by Customs at the border.

The Act also includes species listed on the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)*. There are over 30,000 species of flora and fauna listed with CITES as endangered or threatened.

The maximum penalty for illegal importing or exporting wildlife under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is A\$100,000 and/or 10 years jail.

PARTNER AGENCIES

Customs works cooperatively with other federal and state agencies to detect and prevent native flora and fauna from being smuggled out of Australia.

These include:

- Australian National Parks and Wildlife
- Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
- Department of the Environment and Water Resources
- State and Territory Parks and Wildlife Authorities.

NATIVE WILDLIFE

The vibrant colours and unique character of Australian flora and fauna are highly attractive to overseas collectors.

Unfortunately due to the nature of how they are exported, many animals die before reaching their destination.

Customs uncovers wildlife smugglers using technology, risk assessment and intelligence, including information provided by members of the public.

Smuggling methods detected by Customs include:

- bird eggs strapped to the body
- birds stuffed into plastic tubes
- live fish in a purpose-built apron
- lizards stitched into suitcases
- pythons in garden pots
- reptile eggs hidden in clothing
- reptiles hidden in body packs
- snakes coiled into stockings
- spiders in film canisters.

Smugglers tend to visit the nesting sites of the more rare species in the breeding season and rob the nest of eggs.

They then act as incubators and transporters to deliver the wildlife to its destination. Smugglers have been found by Customs to be carrying up to 50 eggs in purpose-designed clothing.

Wildlife smuggling is a cruel practise that often results in the death of animals while in transit.

DETECTION TECHNOLOGIES

A wide range of technology and resources are available to Customs officers to detect wildlife offences at Australia's borders. Customs also uses intelligence and profiling techniques to identify potential smugglers.

All arriving air and sea passenger's baggage is x-rayed or inspected by Customs or its partner agencies.

Customs also uses DNA testing to assist in species identification.

IMPORTING/EXPORTING WILDLIFE

Wildlife and wildlife products cannot be imported or exported without a permit from the Department of the Environment and Water Resources.

For information on export restrictions and permit requirements contact:

Department of the Environment and Water Resources

Phone: (02) 6274 1900

Fax: (02) 6274 1921

website: www.environment.gov.au

HOW TO PROTECT OUR WILDLIFE

You can help protect Australia's wildlife by reporting any suspicious sightings of nets, cages and poacher's equipment to the Customs Hotline on 1800 06 1800 – 24 hours a day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on any Customs matters, contact the Customs Information and Support Centre on 1300 363 263 or email information@customs.gov.au or browse the website www.customs.gov.au.

