

Exporting Injurious Wildlife: A Guide for Businesses

As of March 23, 2012, the four large non-native snakes shown below will be added to the list of injurious species barred in the United States from import and interstate transport under the Lacey Act:

- *Python molurus* (which includes Burmese python [*Python molurus bivittatus*] and Indian python [*Python molurus molurus*])
- Northern African python (*Python sebae*)
- Southern African python (*Python natalensis*)
- Yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*)

While this listing generally makes it illegal to import live specimens of these snakes into the United States and move them across State lines for any purpose without a permit, it does not prohibit export provided that certain conditions are met.

These snakes (and [other species listed as injurious](#)) may only be exported:

- Directly from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) [designated port](#) in the State where the snakes are already located; or
- Directly from a non-designated port in the State where the snakes are located under a Service-issued [designated port exception permit](#).

Designated port exception permits will only authorize use of a port in the same State where the snakes are located, and issuance will depend on the availability of inspections staff and other criteria. Snakes may not be transported between States by any means for the purpose of eventual export.

Aircraft, trucks, or other conveyances carrying injurious wildlife may make stops **within the same State** in which the wildlife was located and loaded for export. But no conveyance may enter another State during the export process because such entry (i.e., interstate transport) is barred under the injurious species listing.

Any export shipments that transit another State by air or land will be considered contraband subject to seizure and forfeiture whether or not the exporter knew that such interstate transport would occur.

Scenarios

The following scenarios provide examples of legal and illegal export for commercial shipments of snakes. These same requirements also apply to the export of live specimens of any species listed as injurious and to personal travel with “pets” or personal shipment of injurious wildlife. Please note that since each of the snake species shown above is listed on Appendix II of the Conventional on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), any export must be accompanied by a valid CITES export permit issued by the United States that must be certified by a Service wildlife inspector before the shipment leaves the country.

Air Cargo

- *Mom and Pop Snakes, located in San Francisco, California, wants to export a shipment of African pythons to Japan. The animals are booked on Far East Airlines Flight #123 (San Francisco to Tokyo). Can this shipment be exported as booked?*

Yes. The shipment is booked on a nonstop international flight departing a Service designated port in the State where the animals are located and there are no intermediate stops for any reason in the any other U.S. State or Territory.

- *Best Snakes Inc., located in Tallahassee, Florida, wants to export a shipment of Burmese pythons to the United Kingdom. The shipment will move from Tallahassee to the designated port of Miami on SmallTown Airlines Flight #123 then transfer to Transatlantic Airlines Flight #456 to London. Can this shipment be exported as booked?*

Yes. Stopovers are allowed within the State where the snakes are located and from which the shipment will eventually depart for its international destination.

- *This same company wants to send a shipment of yellow anacondas to Jamaica from Tampa; once again the animals will be moved from Tallahassee to another site in Florida and then exported. Can the shipment be exported as booked?*

If the company has obtained a designated port exception permit authorizing export from Tampa, then the answer is yes. The snakes remain solely in Florida before export.

- *Pet Snakes Incorporated, located in Colorado, wants to export two albino Burmese pythons to Germany. The **domestic** air waybill issued for this shipment shows the airport of departure as Denver, Colorado, and airport of destination as Chicago, Illinois. The international air waybill will be issued from Chicago to Munich, Germany. Can this shipment be exported as booked?*

No. Interstate transport is prohibited. The animals must be booked on a direct international flight out of the United States from Denver with no stops in any other State for any reason. Pet Snakes Incorporated must also obtain a designated port exception permit to export the snakes from Denver.

- *This same Colorado company wants to export five African pythons to Paris, France. An **international** air waybill has been issued from Denver, Colorado to Paris, France. The freight will be placed on a flight that makes an interline connection (Colorado on Western Airlines to JFK Airport, New York where it will be transferred to a Fly France Airlines flight for onward movement to France). Can this shipment be exported as booked?*

No, for the same reasons as stated above. It does not matter if the shipment is consigned on a domestic or international air waybill, the animals must be booked on a flight out of the United States from the State where they are located with no stops in any other State for any reason.

- *My Python.com, located in Cincinnati, Ohio, wants to export one yellow anaconda to the Netherlands. The shipment is consigned for export on an international air waybill from Cincinnati and is on a flight that makes an intermediate stop in Atlanta before leaving the United States. Can this shipment be exported as booked?*

No. Cincinnati is not a Service designated port and this shipment cannot land in another State for any reason (even to obtain Service inspection and clearance). No interstate transport is allowed.

- *Big Snake Supplier Inc. in Miami wants to export 25 Burmese pythons from Miami, Florida to Hong Kong. These animals are booked on Far East Airlines Flight #987 that departs Miami, then lands in Anchorage for re-fueling. Can this shipment be exported as booked?*

No. Interstate transport is prohibited. The animals must be booked on a flight that leaves the United States without stopping in any other State for any reason (including re-fueling). Exporters must ensure that the flight chosen for export does not stop at a U.S. airport in another State.

Trucked Freight

- *Great Snakes Alive.com wants to send five African pythons to a customer in Vancouver, Canada. The company keeps its stock in Spokane, Washington, and plans to send the snakes by truck to Canada via the border port of Blaine, Washington. Can the snakes be exported via this routing?*

Yes, but the exporter first needs to obtain a designated port exception permit authorizing use of this non-designated port.

- *Big Sky Pythons, Inc., located in Glendive, Montana, wants to export one Burmese python to a buyer in Estevan, Saskatchewan, Canada. The buyer agrees to meet the company's owner in Portal, North Dakota, and accept delivery of the snake for export. Can this snake be exported as planned?*

No. Big Sky Pythons cannot move the snake through another State on its way to Canada. The company, however, could obtain a designated port exception permit to export the snake from Sweetgrass, Montana – an export that would not involve interstate transport.

- *Big Valley Snakes, Inc., located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, wants to export one yellow anaconda to a buyer in Mexico. The company wants to use the border port of El Paso, Texas to obtain clearance from the Service and enter Mexico. Can this snake be exported as planned?*

No. This snake cannot be taken from New Mexico to Texas. Interstate transport for the purpose of export is not allowed.

- *Ozark Snakes, Inc. located in Little Rock, Arkansas, wants to ship 20 African pythons to Canada using an international courier service. The shipment is picked up by the courier company at the business's premises in Little Rock. The courier company trucks the shipment to its hub in a different State to be loaded on another truck outbound for Canada. Can these snakes be exported as planned?*

No. These snakes cannot be trucked from Arkansas to Tennessee (or any other State). Export by land is no longer an option for this company.