



Information Document 1/2021
Guidelines for CITES listed bird breeders

I am directed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to refer to guidelines for CITES listed bird breeding operations.

Many birds of prey and pet birds bred in Ireland are listed as endangered species in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES).

All breeders of birds of prey and pet birds listed on the CITES Appendices (and corresponding EU Annexes) must submit a yearly list of their breeding stock to the Irish CITES Management Authority. A full inventory in the format of Appendix A to this letter should be submitted to the Irish CITES Management Authority at the beginning of each year prior to any applications being processed in that year. Applications will be placed on hold until a full inventory has been received.

This list should include the ring numbers and/or microchip numbers as well as their EC Trade Certificates (Article 10) numbers of the breeding males and females. The Irish CITES Management Authority will keep a specific bird breeding database which will be updated on an annual basis.

The list of breeding birds should be itemised as per **Appendix A** to this letter and should include as much detail as possible on the breeding stock – particularly in relation to the origin of the birds used for breeding.

The issue of EC Trade Certificates is contingent on the receipt of this inventory.

Although the regulations which govern the implementation of CITES in the European Union have been in existence for a number of years this Information document should act as a useful guide to those of you who are new to bird breeding and as a reminder to those of you who are already aware of current CITES legislation.

CITES - General Background

CITES is an international agreement between Governments. Its aim is to ensure that trade in specimens of selected wild animals and plants which are considered endangered does not threaten their survival in the wild.

CITES works by subjecting trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices (I, II & III) according to the degree of protection they need. CITES also governs trade in all parts and derivatives of species listed as well as live specimens.



CITES is implemented in the European Union through a set of regulations known as the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation¹. The three main Annexes (A, B, and C) to the Regulation largely (but not always) correspond to Appendices I, II and III of CITES, but also contain some non-CITES-listed species that are protected under EU internal legislation. Further information on European Union Wildlife Trade Regulation can be found in the TRAFFIC Reference Guide to EU Wildlife Trade Regulations (December 2020).

CITES – Pet birds and birds of prey commonly bred in Ireland

Many different types of pet birds and birds of prey are bred in Ireland. The table below gives details on the birds most commonly bred in Ireland. Most of the birds bred in Ireland are CITES listed on EC Annex A. This is the list reserved for the most endangered species.

Common Name	Scientific Name	CITES App.	EC Annex
African Grey Parrot	<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	I	A
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	II	A
Blue-headed Macaw	<i>Primolius couloni</i>	I	A
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	II	A
Double Yellow-headed Amazon	<i>Amazona oratrix</i>	I	A
Eurasian Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	II	A
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	I	A
Harris's Hawk	<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>	II	B
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	II	A
Lilac crowned Amazon	<i>Amazona finschi</i>	I	A
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	II	A
Military Macaw	<i>Ara militaris</i>	I	A
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	II	A
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	I	A
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	II	A
Scarlet Macaw	<i>Ara macao</i>	I	A
Snowy Owl	<i>Nyctea scandiaca</i>	II	A
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	II	A
Yellow-naped Amazon	<i>Amazona auropalliata</i>	I	A

CITES – Appendix I/II (Annex A Birds) - Commercial Prohibitions

Trade in Appendix I/II (Annex A) species is generally prohibited as the species included on Appendix I/II (Annex A) are the most endangered species in the world. In order to ensure that trade in these endangered species is sustainable there are provisions relating to the control of commercial activities to safeguard the species from exploitation and possible extinction.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein and Commission Regulation (EC) No 865/2006 laying down detailed rules concerning the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97.



Under the Regulations the purchase, offer to purchase, acquisition for commercial purposes, display to the public for commercial purposes, use for commercial gain and sale, keeping for sale, offering for sale or transporting for sale of specimens of the species listed in Annex A is prohibited².

In considering these prohibited activities it is important to realise that some of the expressions used have been specifically defined for the purposes of the Regulations and should therefore not be interpreted as in the common usage of such expressions. Accordingly one should realise that certain activities are defined as follows:

“**Sale**” shall mean any form of sale. For the purposes of this Regulation, hire, barter or exchange shall be regarded as sale; cognate expressions shall be similarly construed;

“**offering for sale**” shall mean offering for sale and any action that may reasonably be construed as such, including advertising or causing to be advertised for sale and invitation to treat;

“**Primarily commercial purposes**” shall mean all purposes the non-commercial aspects of which do not clearly predominate;

“**Trade**” shall mean the introduction into the Community, including introduction from the sea, and the export and re-export there from, as well as the use, movement and transfer of possession within the Community, including within a Member State, of specimens subject to the provisions of this Regulation.

CITES – Appendix I/II (Annex A) Birds - EC Trade Certificates for Commercial Purposes

It is possible to obtain an exemption from the prohibitions described above by obtaining a **CITES EC Trade Certificate also known as an Article 10**. A CITES Certificate is required for any commercial activity with an Annex A listed bird. The issuance of a CITES Certificate is considered, on a case by case basis, by the CITES Management Authority of the Member State in which the bird is located. There are a number of situations under which a CITES Certificate may be issued³.

In Ireland, Specimen Specific EC Trade Certificates are issued for captive-bred birds. In order to qualify as a captive born and bred specimen a number of criteria must be met. One of these criteria is that the parental breeding stock must be legally acquired, uniquely marked and holding valid CITES Certificates. These criteria are described in full in the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations⁴.

To obtain a CITES Certificate one needs to complete the necessary CITES Certificate Application Form and submit this application together with all supporting documentation, e.g. evidence that the bird was legally acquired, copies of the parents CITES Certificates and return it to the CITES Management Authority in Ireland. Application Forms can be obtained by visiting our website at: <http://www.npws.ie/en/WildlifePlanningtheLaw/CITES/> and are available in electronic MS Excel Spreadsheet and MS Word.

² Article 8(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97.

³ Article 8(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97.

⁴ Article 54 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 865/2006.



Appendix II (Annex B) Birds

With regard to birds listed on CITES Appendix II (EC Annex B) an EC Trade Certificate is not required to sell or engage in any commercial activity. There is however a requirement to have proof of the legal origin of the bird e.g. a receipt for sale. Trade in these specimens can proceed as long as it can be proved to the satisfaction of the relevant CITES Management Authority that the bird in question has been legally acquired.

Wild Taken Birds/Injured Wild Birds (Annex A)

A licence is required under the Wildlife Acts 1976 in order to possess an injured wild bird. This must be obtained from the Wildlife Licensing section of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Wildlife Licensing can be contacted at wildlifelicence@housing.gov.ie

While anyone can take an injured wild animal into care, they then assume a duty to relieve suffering or provide adequate care. If the care they gave yielded a suboptimal outcome compared with that which would be provided by a vet – they have committed an offence. Keepers and owners have a responsibility to ensure that nothing happens by act or failure to act, which does or is likely to prevent or delay the subsequent release back to the wild of an injured bird. Specific examples would be imprinting, flight feather damage, disease, illness, injury, e.g. bumblefoot

In consultation with a registered veterinary surgeon, who must assess the capability of the bird for release back to the wild, the licence should be returned to NPWS. If the specimen is unlikely to survive in wild for reasons of disability or for other reasons deemed reasonable by the Minister, you must apply to the aforementioned section for a licence to retain the bird.

In terms of CITES, an injured wild bird cannot be used for primary commercial purposes, and therefore applications will only be considered on a case by case basis.

I hope the above information assists you with some of the CITES queries you may have and helps you know what is required in order to be CITES compliant. As indicated above further information can be found on our website and any specific queries can be sent to CITES@housing.gov.ie.

The Irish CITES Management Authority shall decide on the issue of permits and certificates within in one month of the date of a submission of a complete application⁵. Applications for CITES certificates and permits are dealt with on the basis of date of receipt and we encourage applicants to allow up to 4 weeks for an application to be processed if at all possible. Please note that the production and sending out of permits and certificates, in limited cases, may take longer than one month. The CITES Management Authority, however, do endeavour to complete applications promptly.

If there is doubt as to whether a plant or animal specimen was born and bred in captivity or artificially propagated, the Management or Scientific Authority can request proof through, for example, DNA testing of blood or other tissue for animal species. In such cases, the analysis, or the necessary samples, must be made available to the Management or Scientific Authority.

⁵ Article 8(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 856/2006.

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