Breadcrumb

1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

Importing Commercial Birds into the United States

Last Modified:



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines commercial birds as birds imported for resale, breeding, public display, or any other purpose, except pet birds, zoological birds, research birds, and performing or theatrical birds. Shipments containing **six** or more pet birds are also considered commercial.

Live poultry and Columbiformes (pigeons and doves) are not imported as commercial birds—importers should refer to the Live Poultry and Columbiformes requirements, respectively. Commercial birds may not import from or transit through regions affected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

USDA requires the following for all commercial bird **imports**:

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

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

How To Import Commercial Birds

Expand All

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.

Until further notice, the United States **will not issue permits for the import of commercial birds from the Democratic Republic of Congo.** Importers interested in importing from this country should periodically consult this page for updates on this restriction.

- Commercial bird shipments must be accompanied by a USDA import permit, except shipments imported from Canada through a land border port.

- 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 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 prior to shipping the birds.
- The original import permit is valid for **30** days and must accompany all commercial bird shipments.

Veterinary Export Health Certificate

Commercial 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 should be specified on the import permit.

Canada

- Avian Commercial Birds Health Certificate - Canada (363.48 KB) July 2025
- Protocol for the Importation of Raptors from Canada by Land (298.63 KB) (October 2026)
    - o Avian-Free Flight Raptors- Addendum HA1945- Canada (89.09 KB) (August 2025)

Switzerland

- Avian-Commercial Birds Health Certificate-Switzerland April 2026

United Kingdon

- Export captive birds to the USA: certificate 720—GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

All other countries

- Avian-Commercial Birds-Model Health Certificate (August 2024) (392.39 KB)

Port Inspection

- Commercial bird(s) 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 commercial bird shipments at the first U.S. port of entry, unless otherwise indicated on the U.S. import permit.
- The importer must arrange for an inspection at least **3 business days** in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian, whose contact information is listed on the import permit.
- 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

- Commercial birds (including their hatching eggs) must undergo a minimum **30-day quarantine** at a USDA Animal Import Center listed below or a USDA-approved private quarantine facility. View guidance for establishing a private quarantine. The initial approval process for a private quarantine may take several months and must be completed before USDA will issue the import permit.

- Commercial birds imported from areas of Canada that are not restricted due to HPAI or Newcastle disease, and have not transited such areas, **do not** require quarantine.
- 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

- Commercial 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.
- Commercial 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). 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 **3 business days** in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian whose contact information is listed on the transit permit.
- The importer must submit a contingency plan with the permit application and the request for service at the U.S. transit port.
- The transit permit lists special instructions for the importer and port staff. For more information, see Transit Shipments of Live Animal Commodities and Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits.
- For more information, please see the below VS Guidance link for additional documents.

View 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.

- Select a State - ▼

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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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