Importing Columbiformes (Pigeons and Doves) into the United States

Last Modified:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may also regulate Columbiformes imports.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulates imports of birds protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992. These regulations are part of an international conservation effort to protect some species of wild birds subject to international trade.

Visit U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ePermits for information on applying for a permit, if applicable. If you have questions, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 800-358-2104. Outside the United States, call +1 703-358-2104.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines Columbiformes (pigeons and doves) as poultry. However, unlike other poultry, Columbiformes may be imported from or transit through countries or zones affected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Columbiformes are not considered pets and do not import under the same requirements as pets.

USDA requires the following for Columbiformes imports, except as specified below:

- **USDA Import Permit**
- **Veterinary Export Health Certificate**
- **Port Inspection**
- **Import Quarantine**

Download and print a copy of USDA import requirements: Information for Importers of Pigeons and Doves to the United States

USDA requirements for **transiting** Columbiformes through the United States are detailed in the **USDA Transit Process** below.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may also regulate Columbiformes imports. Learn more.

How To Import Columbiformes

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.

- Columbiformes shipments must be accompanied by a USDA import permit, with one exception: shipments from Canada crossing at a U.S. land border port **do not** require an import permit (an import permit **is** required for shipments from Canada arriving by air or sea).
- Importers should apply for an import permit online using the APHIS eFile system . 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 to obtain a permit. Use VS Form 17-129 Application for Import or In Transit Permit (73.07 KB).
- Importers must submit the import permit application at least 7 business days prior to shipping birds.
- The original import permit is valid for 30 days and must accompany all shipments.
- Import permits for U.S.-returning performing/theatrical Columbiformes are valid for 90 days.

Veterinary Export Health Certificate

- Columbiformes 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 authority of that country.
    - **Note:** Any allowable or required deviations of endorsement will be specified on the import permit.
- Certain exporting countries have a specific health certificate for Columbiformes. Other countries may use the U.S. model health certificate for Columbiformes or their own document that contains the same requirements as the model health certificate.
    - The Netherlands: Avian - Columbiformes - Netherlands - Negotiated Health Certificate (127.76 KB) (September 2025)
    - Canada: Avian - Columbiformes - Canada - Health Certificate (July 2025)
    - United Kingdom: Export pigeons and doves to the USA: certificate 8699 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
    - Other Countries: Avian - Columbiformes - All Countries (no Canada) - Model Health Certificate (348.28 KB)(Aug 2026)

Port Inspection

- A USDA port veterinarian **must** inspect 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 information is listed on the import permit.
- Inspection consists of a visual inspection of the shipment, export health certificate, and U.S. import permit. View user fee rates for inspection services.

Import Quarantine

- Columbiformes importing from areas of Canada that are not restricted due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) or Newcastle disease, and that have not transited such areas, do not require quarantine.

- Other Columbiformes (not including hatching eggs) must undergo quarantine at a USDA Animal Import Center or a USDA-approved private quarantine facility, with one exception—**U.S.-Origin Returning Performing or Theatrical Columbiformes:**
    - USDA defines performing or theatrical Columbiformes as birds that are used in shows, theatrical acts, or performances.
    - USDA defines U.S.-origin return shipments as those for which a U.S. health certificate was obtained **before** the shipment left the United States.
    - Performing or theatrical Columbiformes returning to the United States are only eligible for home quarantine if the shipment **did not** originate in or transit through a region that the USDA considers to be affected by HPAI within 90 days of U.S. arrival.
- There are fees associated with approving a private quarantine facility, quarantine at a Federal facility, and home quarantine (if eligible). If quarantining at a USDA Animal Import Center, port officials will provide an estimate of the overall cost of the quarantine.
- Birds are tested in quarantine to determine if they are free of certain communicable diseases. The cost of diagnostic testing is separate from the quarantine fee.
- To arrange Federal quarantine, contact a USDA Animal Import Center.
- To establish a privately owned USDA-approved quarantine facility, see VS Guidance Document 13401: Approval and Oversight of Private Avian Quarantine Facilities in the United States.
- **U.S.-Origin Returning Performing or Theatrical Columbiformes** may be eligible for quarantine in the importer's home if the birds do not export from or travel through regions affected by HPAI. If APHIS approves home quarantine, the import permit will include contact information for the APHIS office that is overseeing home quarantine. Importers must submit the previously issued U.S.-origin health certificate when applying for the import permit to be granted U.S.-returning status.
    - USDA defines performing or theatrical Columbiformes as birds that are used in shows, theatrical acts, or performances.
    - USDA defines U.S.-origin return shipments as those for which a U.S. health certificate was obtained **before** the shipment left the United States.
    - Performing or theatrical Columbiformes returning to the United States are only eligible for home quarantine if the shipment **did not** originate in or transit through a region that the USDA considers to be affected by HPAI

within 90 days of U.S. arrival.

USDA Transit Process

- Columbiformes 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.
- The process for applying for the transit permit is the same as for the import permit (see USDA Import Permit section above). Denoting the route of travel on the application distinguishes the type of permit being requested.
- USDA oversees transit shipments while 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 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 (479.88 KB) and Notice Regarding APHIS Live Animal Import and Third-Country Import Transit Permits.

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
Print