



Import Protocol for Zoological Avian Species *February 2026*

This protocol outlines requirements for the importation of zoological avians to the United States in accordance with provisions specified in [9 CFR 93.101](#).

Definitions

- The USDA defines **zoological avians** as bird species intended to be imported to a zoological facility for breeding, public display, recreational or educational purposes. USDA-defined poultry species that are imported for these same purposes to a zoological park are also included in this protocol.
- A **zoological park** is defined as a professionally operated zoo, park, garden, or other place maintained under the constant surveillance of a veterinarian, for the exhibition of live animals, pigeons, or other avians, for the purposes of public recreation or education.
- An **APHIS-approved zoological quarantine facility** is one in which APHIS has determined that minimum standards for maintenance and operation has been met as stated in [9 CFR 93.106\(c\)](#).

General Requirements

1. Shipments should arrive directly at the closest airport, unless otherwise agreed to by APHIS and as indicated on the import permit.
2. All zoo bird shipments, including those from Canada, must be accompanied by a USDA import permit.
3. After receiving an import permit, the importer must contact the APHIS VS port personnel listed on the permit no later than 3 business days in advance of arrival of the avians to coordinate the import process.
4. All shipments must be accompanied by a valid health certificate issued within 30 days of importation and endorsed by the Competent Authority of the exporting country.
5. Zoo birds 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 unless they have been vaccinated against HPAI (H5 or H7).
6. Canadian-origin zoo birds originating from, or transiting through, areas restricted due to HPAI or Newcastle disease and non-Canadian-origin zoo birds must undergo a minimum 30-day quarantine at a USDA Animal Import Center or a USDA-approved private quarantine facility. The importing zoological park may request that USDA approve a private quarantine facility on zoo grounds that meets USDA standards for such facilities.
7. VS Form [17-29](#) is required but may be completed at the port of entry on arrival.
8. The importer should contact the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \(USFWS\)](#) regarding any applicable permits or other importation requirements that agency may have in addition to APHIS requirements.

USDA Import Permit

9. The importer must obtain a [U.S. Permit to Import \(VS Form 17-135\)](#) for entry of the zoo bird(s) to the United States using [APHIS eFile](#) or by submitting VS Form [17-129 Application for Import or In Transit Permit](#) by email. See [APHIS Animal Health Permits](#) for additional information.
10. Issuance of import permits is contingent upon:
 - a. Submission of VS Form [17-129](#) at least 7 business days before shipment. If changes need to be made to the permit after it has been issued, additional fees will apply.
 - b. Availability of a USDA port veterinarian to inspect the zoo birds at the first U.S. port of entry (see 20 and 21 below). No shipments will be made on weekends or holidays.
11. The applicable processing fee must accompany the permit application, and may be submitted by credit card, ACH payments, or by providing a USDA [user fee](#) account.
12. The import permit is valid for **30 days** and must accompany all avian shipments.
13. The import permit may specify additional restrictions for zoo birds originating from or transiting regions affected with HPAI, Newcastle disease, or both.

Health Certificate

14. Zoo birds imported from any region of the world (except Canada; see 5) must be accompanied by a health certificate in English or with English translation that is:
 - a. issued by a salaried veterinarian of the national government of the exporting region, or
 - b. issued by a certifying official, and
 - c. endorsed by the competent animal health authority of that country.
15. Any allowable or required deviations of endorsement will be specified on the import permit.
16. The health certificate must contain all pertinent statements attesting to the health status of the zoological avians in the shipment. A [Model Health Certificate](#) can be used for any country (except Canada) that meets USDA-import requirements. Commodity-specific health certificates for [zoo birds](#) and [conservation bird hatching eggs](#) are needed for shipments from Canada.

Port Inspection Procedures

19. Zoo birds requiring quarantine must be shipped directly to the U.S. port of entry closest to the intended quarantine facility.
20. A USDA port veterinarian must inspect the zoo birds and review all import documentation at the first U.S. port of entry, unless otherwise indicated on the U.S. import permit. [View user fee rates for inspection services.](#)

21. The importer must arrange for this inspection at least 3 business days in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian whose contact information is listed on the import permit. Transport details must also be included on the import permit.
22. If the zoo birds are identified with a microchip, the importer must provide a reader capable of reading the microchip.
23. Refused zoo avians at the port of entry:
 - a. Avian imports may be refused entry at the port of entry for any, but not limited to, the following reasons:
 - Missing or non-compliant documentation
 - Missing proper identification of the animals
 - Excess number of avians in the shipment not authorized on the import permit
 - Any zoo avians in the shipment that appear to be clinically ill and unfit to travel
 - b. Refused entry options:
 - Any avian shipments that are refused entry need to be returned to the country of export or re-exported to another country if either will receive the shipment. The shipment will remain at the airport until a return of re-export is allowed to proceed.
 - If zoo avians have arrived in the United States and are clinically ill and unfit to travel and the exporting country (or another country for re-export) will not accept them, then the port veterinarian should meet with importers and discuss euthanasia. If the avians are listed on the endangered species list, the importer should inform the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) of the status of the shipment.

Import Quarantine Procedures

24. Importers seeking to quarantine at a USDA Animal Import Center (New York or Miami) should make reservations directly with the center of choice before the shipment arrives. 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](#).

New York Animal Import Center

USDA-APHIS-VS
474 International Boulevard Rock Tavern,
NY 12575 (845) 838-5500 (phone)
(845) 838-5516 (fax)

Miami Animal Import Center

USDA-APHIS-VS
6300 NW 36 Street
Miami, FL 33122
(305) 876-2200 (phone)
(305) 876-2201 (fax)

25. The importing zoological park may request that USDA approve a private quarantine facility on zoo grounds that meets [USDA standards for such facilities](#) (see 6). The initial approval process for a private quarantine may take several months and must be completed before USDA will issue the import permit.
26. During the quarantine period, the shipment will be tested for HPAI and Newcastle disease in accordance with [VSG 13410](#), “*Disease Testing and Sampling Requirements for Live Avians and Imported Hatching Eggs of Avians During Import Quarantine*.” Avians may be held for an additional length of time if any communicable disease becomes evident during the quarantine period and will not be released until negative test results have been received and the animals are determined by APHIS to be free of communicable diseases of poultry.
27. If avians become ill for any reason other than HPAI or Newcastle disease, the Veterinarian in Charge (VIC) of the port office overseeing the quarantine or their designee will contact the importer and discuss treatment options.
28. 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 length of quarantine, and laboratory testing during quarantine.

**General Questions:
USDA APHIS Veterinary Services**

Strategy & Policy
Live Animal Imports
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