

Importing non-native animals – what you need to know

kept in indoor aquaria, and in some cases garden ponds, but most listed species require an individual licence for either keeping or release. The keeping of non-native crayfish is also regulated by an Order made under ILFA: with the exception of signal crayfish, which can be kept in certain areas of England, the keeping of all other non-native crayfish species requires a licence. A general licence has been issued which enables the keeping of Redclaw crayfish (*Cherax quadricarinatus*) for ornamental purposes in indoor heated aquaria.



For more information and a full list of the species covered by these regulations please go to the e-fishbusiness website at <http://www.efishbusiness.co.uk/default.asp> or **contact** the Fish Health Inspectorate at Cefas (01305 206673/4) or at Fish.Health.Inspectorate@cefas.co.uk

Disposal or Release

• Release of non-native species into the wild

It is illegal to allow any animal which is not ordinarily resident in Great Britain, or is listed on Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to escape into the wild, or to release it without a licence. You must therefore carefully consider the long-term arrangements for how the animal will be housed throughout its stay in the country.

If you are importing a non-native animal into Great Britain with the intention of releasing it into the wild you must apply for a release licence. Licences are considered on a case by case basis and are likely to be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Before any licence could be granted you would have to provide an impact assessment examining the possible consequences for the local environment, economic interests such as forestry, farming, and fishing, public health, and impacts on local biodiversity.

Contact: Natural England on 0845 6014523 (local rate).

• Abandonment of Animals Act 1960

The Abandonment of Animals Act 1960 makes it an offence for the owner or person in charge or control of any animal, without reasonable cause or excuse, to abandon it, whether permanently or not, in circumstances likely to cause the animal any unnecessary suffering. To do so renders that person guilty of an offence of cruelty within the meaning of the Protection of Animals Act 1911.

The 1960 Act will be revoked with commencement of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 in March 2007 (Wales) and April 2007 (England). This does not mention abandonment of an animal specifically as it is considered that such action is likely to contravene the welfare offence, even if there is no unnecessary suffering caused. A cruelty offence may also be committed if the animal subsequently does suffer as a result of its abandonment.

**Published by the Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs. © Crown Copyright 2005.**

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fibre for uncoated paper and 75% recycled fibre for coated paper.**

PB12381

Originally published January 2007.

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Are you importing a live animal into Great Britain?



Don't forget that there are a number of controls which you must comply with before you import any non-native animal into Great Britain. This applies to any mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish or invertebrate such as crustaceans, spiders or insects. While Defra has overall responsibility for many of these controls, some of the licensing responsibilities are delegated to other bodies, such as local authorities, Natural England, or the Welsh Assembly Government. Please note that controls may apply differently in Scotland.

Import controls

• Quarantine

Most non-native mammals are subject to 6 months quarantine which must be arranged before the animals are imported. Exceptions include certain pet animals entering the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) which comply with all the rules. There are also exemptions relating to commercially traded animals entering under the Balai Directive.

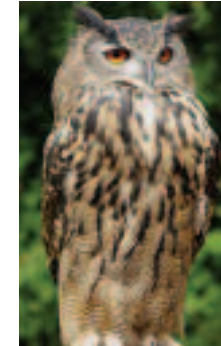
- For information on the requirements for importing pet animals visit www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/pets/index.htm or contact: the PETS helpline on 0870 241 1710 or email pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk (please enclose your postal address and a day time telephone number).
- For pets that do not meet the rules of the Pet Travel Scheme and for non-pet mammals contact the quarantine team on 01245 358383 or email quarantine@defra.gsi.gov.uk.
- For information on animal health import controls for other live animals please contact the Animal Health Import Team (AHIT) in Chelmsford. Tel: 01245 358383 or email: AHITChelmsford@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk

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• Endangered Species: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

If the animal you are importing is listed on Annex A or B of CITES you will need to obtain relevant export and import licences to bring it into the country (unless it is coming from within the EU). You should allow at least 3 weeks for your application to be processed.

Contact: the CITES licensing team on 0117 372 8168 /8691 (0117 372 8692 for birds of prey) or by emailing wildlife.licensing@defra.gsi.gov.uk.



Keeping

• Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

If you wish to keep an animal listed in the Schedule to this Act you will need to obtain a licence from your local authority. Licences will only be granted in cases where the local authority is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so having regard to the conditions set out in the Act.

Contact: Defra for advice on the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 on 0117 372 8209 or by emailing zoos.branch@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

• Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932



The importation and keeping of musk rats, grey squirrels and non-indigenous rabbits is prohibited, as is the keeping of mink and coypu. If you wish to import or keep any of these animals you will need to obtain a licence from Natural England.

Licences will only be granted for exhibition, scientific research or other exceptional purposes.

Contact: Natural England on 0845 6014523 (local rate).

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• European Protected Species (EPS)

In response to a European Court Judgment the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 are being amended in early 2007 which will affect the possession of EPS taken from the wild. The amended regulations will protect against trade all EPS listed on Annex IV(a) of the Habitats Directive and not just those whose natural range is Great Britain. The regulations will require anyone who already possesses an EPS acquired after 10th June 1994 to obtain a licence to continue to legally possess the specimen. A three month grace period after the regulations come into force will be available to allow people time to apply for a licence. Anyone who wishes to possess an EPS acquired after the new regulations come into force will require a licence immediately. Please check the origin of your wild EPS specimen against Annex IV(a) of the Habitats Directive as there are exceptions for certain species in certain countries in the EU.

Contact: Natural England on 0845 6014523 (local rate). Welsh Assembly Government on 01970 610216.

• Registration of certain birds

If you are importing a bird which is listed on Schedule 4 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and keeping it in captivity in England, Wales or Scotland, it must be registered with Defra and be fitted with a Defra ring, other permitted mark or have a licence to be kept unringed.

Contact: Defra's bird registration team in Bristol on 0117 372 8692 or by emailing wildlife.licensing@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

• Keeping of certain fish and crayfish

The keeping and release of specified non-native fish species is regulated by Orders made under the Import of Live Fish (England and Wales) Act (ILFA), 1980. Some common ornamental species are covered by a general licence (currently under review) and can be