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Importing Ratites and Hatching Eggs of Ratites into the United States

Last Modified:

Ratites are defined as cassowaries, emus, kiwis, ostriches, and rheas.

With few exceptions, ratites and ratite hatching eggs may not import from or transit through regions affected with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

Ratites must be permanently identified per the Code of Federal Regulations Title 9 (9 CFR 93.101 Definitions).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regulations

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

Visit FWS for information on applying for a permit, if applicable. If you have questions, contact FWS at 800-358-2104. Outside the United States, call +1-703-358-2104.

USDA requires the following for all ratite and ratite hatching egg imports:

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

USDA requirements for **transiting** ratites and ratite hatching eggs through the United States are detailed below under "USDA Transit Process."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may also regulate ratites and ratite hatching eggs at import. Learn more.

Importers may retain the services of a customs broker to facilitate the importation of ratites or ratite hatching eggs. To obtain a list of brokers, contact one of the USDA Animal Import Centers listed under "Import Quarantine" below.

How To Import Ratites and Hatching Eggs of Ratites

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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.

- Ratite 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 the 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** before shipping birds.
- The original import permit is valid for **30 days** and must accompany all shipments.

Veterinary Export Health Certificate

- Ratites imported from any region of the world must be accompanied by a health certificate in English or with English translation that is:
  - Issued within 30 days by a salaried veterinarian of the national government of the exporting region and endorsed by that national authority, **or**

    - Issued by a certifying official **and**
    - Endorsed by the competent animal health authority of that country, unless stated otherwise on the import permit.
- Any allowable or required deviations of endorsement will be specified on the import permit.
- Canada has a specific health certificate for ratites and ratite hatching eggs. Other countries may use the U.S. model health certificate for ratites or their own document that contains the same requirements as the model health certificate.
    - Canada:
        - Live, Hatching Eggs and Immediate Slaughter Ratites Health Certificate-Canada (316.22 KB) (July 2025)
    - Other countries:
        - Live Ratites: Avian-Ratites - Model Health Certificate (284.67 KB) (June 2024)
        - Hatching Eggs of Ratites: Avian-Hatching Eggs of Ratites-Model Health Certificate (255.78 KB) (June 2024)

Port Inspection

- Ratites and ratite hatching eggs 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 ratite and ratite hatching egg shipments 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 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.

Instructions for Ratites from Canada for Immediate Slaughter Arriving in a Truck Convoy

- The lead vehicle **must** present original import documents at the port of entry. All other vehicles in the convoy must present separate signed copies of the original documents.

Ratite imports from Canada **may not cross** the border at Opheim or Oroville.

Import Quarantine

- Ratites and ratite hatching eggs 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.
- Other ratites (except for immediate slaughter) and ratite hatching eggs must undergo a minimum **30-day quarantine**, plus days to hatch if applicable.
    - Live ratites may quarantine at a USDA Animal Import Center or a USDA-approved private quarantine facility.
    - Ratite hatching eggs must quarantine at a USDA-approved private quarantine facility or hatchery. The importer is responsible for establishing a private quarantine facility or hatchery that meets USDA requirements. View guidance on establishing a private quarantine (218.64 KB). The initial approval process for a private quarantine may take several months and must be completed before USDA will issue the import permit.
- Ratites 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.
- To arrange Federal quarantine, contact one of the USDA Animal Import Centers listed below.

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

- Ratite and ratite hatching egg shipments transiting the United States from an 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 (479.88 KB).
- Ratites and ratite hatching eggs 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 above). 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 **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.

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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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