

[Home Page](#) > [Executive Branch](#) > [Code of Federal Regulations](#) > [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#)

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Title 50: Wildlife and Fisheries

[Browse Previous](#) | [Browse Next](#)

PART 12—SEIZURE AND FORFEITURE PROCEDURES

Section Contents

Subpart A—General Provisions

- [§ 12.1 Purpose of regulations.](#)
- [§ 12.2 Scope of regulations.](#)
- [§ 12.3 Definitions.](#)
- [§ 12.4 Filing of documents.](#)
- [§ 12.5 Seizure by other agencies.](#)
- [§ 12.6 Bonded release.](#)

Subpart B—Preliminary Requirements

- [§ 12.11 Notification of seizure.](#)
- [§ 12.12 Appraisalment.](#)

Subpart C—Forfeiture Proceedings

- [§ 12.21 Criminal prosecutions.](#)
- [§ 12.22 Civil actions to obtain forfeiture.](#)
- [§ 12.23 Administrative forfeiture proceedings.](#)
- [§ 12.24 Petition for remission of forfeiture.](#)
- [§ 12.25 Transfers in settlement of civil penalty claims.](#)

Subpart D—Disposal of Forfeited or Abandoned Property

- [§ 12.30 Purpose.](#)
- [§ 12.31 Accountability.](#)
- [§ 12.32 Effect of prior illegality.](#)
- [§ 12.33 Disposal.](#)
- [§ 12.34 Return to the wild.](#)
- [§ 12.35 Use by the Service or transfer to another government agency for official use.](#)
- [§ 12.36 Donation or loan.](#)
- [§ 12.37 Sale.](#)
- [§ 12.38 Destruction.](#)
- [§ 12.39 Information on property available for disposal.](#)

Subpart E—Restoration of Proceeds and Recovery of Storage Costs

- [§ 12.41 Petition for restoration of proceeds.](#)
- [§ 12.42 Recovery of certain storage costs.](#)

Subpart F—Return of Property

[§ 12.51 Return procedure.](#)

Authority: Act of September 6, 1966, 5 U.S.C. 301; Bald and Golden Eagles Protection Act, 16, U.S.C. 668–668b; National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, 16 U.S.C. 668dd (e)–(f); Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. 704, 706–707, 712; Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, 16 U.S.C. 718f–718g; Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 [Airborne Hunting Amendments], 16 U.S.C. 742j–(d)–(f); Black Bass Act, 16 U.S.C. 852d–853; Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 1375–1377, 1382; Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1540; Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 43, 44; Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 95 Stat. 1073–1080, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.* ; Tariff Act of 1930, 19 U.S.C. 1602–1624; Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978, 16 U.S.C. 742l; Exotic Organisms, E.O. 11987, 42 FR 26949; American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. 1996.

Source: 45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions



§ 12.1 Purpose of regulations.



The regulations of this part establish procedures relating to property seized or subject to forfeiture under various laws enforced by the Service.

§ 12.2 Scope of regulations.



Except as hereinafter provided, the regulations of this part apply to all property seized or subject to forfeiture under any of the following laws:

- (a) The Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.* ;
- (b) The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, 16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.* ;
- (c) The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.* ;
- (d) The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, 16 U.S.C. 718 *et seq.* ;
- (e) The Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j–1;
- (f) The Black Bass Act, 16 U.S.C. 851 *et seq.* ;
- (g) The Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.* ;
- (h) The Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.* ; and
- (i) The Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 43–44.
- (j) The Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*

[45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980; 45 FR 31725, May 14, 1980, as amended at 47 FR 56860, Dec. 21, 1982]

§ 12.3 Definitions.



(a) As used in this part:

(1) *Attorney General* means the Attorney General of the United States or an authorized representative;

(2) *Disposal* includes, but is not limited to, remission, return to the wild, use by the Service or transfer to another government agency for official use, donation or loan, sale, or destruction.

(3) *Domestic value* means the price at which the seized property or similar property is freely offered for sale at the time and place of appraisal, in the same quantity or quantities as seized, and in the ordinary course of trade. If there is no market for the seized property at the place of appraisal, such value in the principal market nearest to the place of appraisal shall be reported.

(4) *Solicitor* means the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior or an authorized representative.

(b) The definitions of paragraph (a) of this section are in addition to, and not in lieu of, those contained in §§1.1 through 1.8 and 10.12 of this title.

[45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980, as amended at 47 FR 17525, Apr. 23, 1982]

§ 12.4 Filing of documents.



(a) Whenever any document is required by this part to be filed or served within a certain period of time, such document will be considered filed or served as of the date of receipt by the party with or upon whom filing or service is required. The time periods established by this part shall begin to run on the day following the date of filing or service.

(b) If an oral or written application is made before the expiration of a time period established by this part, an extension of such period for a fixed number of days may be granted where there are reasonable grounds for the failure to file or serve the document within the period required. Any such extension shall be in writing. Except as provided in this paragraph, no other requests for an extension shall be granted.

§ 12.5 Seizure by other agencies.



Any authorized employee or officer of any other Federal agency who has seized any wildlife or other property under any of the laws listed in §12.2 will, if so requested, deliver such seizure to the appropriate Special Agent in Charge designated in §10.22 of this title, or to an authorized designee, who shall either hold such seized wildlife or other property or arrange for its proper handling and care.

§ 12.6 Bonded release.



(a) Subject to the conditions set forth in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, and to such additional conditions as may be appropriate, the Service, in its discretion, may accept an appearance bond or other security (including, but not limited to, payment of the value as determined under §12.12) in place of

any property seized under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*; Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 43; Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*; Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j-1; or Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*

(b) Property may be released under this section only to the owner or consignee.

(c) Property may be released under this section only if possession thereof will not violate or frustrate the purpose or policy of any applicable law or regulation.

[45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980; 45 FR 31725, May 14, 1980, as amended at 47 FR 56860, Dec. 21, 1982]

Subpart B—Preliminary Requirements



§ 12.11 Notification of seizure.



Except where the owner or consignee is personally notified or seizure is made pursuant to a search warrant, the Service shall, as soon as practicable following the seizure or other receipt of seized wildlife or other property, mail a notification of seizure by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the owner or consignee, if known or easily ascertainable. Such notification shall describe the seized wildlife or other property, and shall state the time, place, and reason for the seizure.

§ 12.12 Appraisalment.



The Service shall determine the value of any cargo, of a vessel or other conveyance employed in unlawful taking, seized under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, and the value of any property seized under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*; Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j-1, *et seq.*; or the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.* If the seized property may lawfully be sold in the United States, its domestic value shall be determined in accordance with §12.3. If the seized property may not lawfully be sold in the United States, its value shall be determined by other reasonable means.

[47 FR 56860, Dec. 21, 1982]

Subpart C—Forfeiture Proceedings



§ 12.21 Criminal prosecutions.



If property is subject to criminal forfeiture, such forfeiture will be obtained in accordance with the *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure*.

§ 12.22 Civil actions to obtain forfeiture.



The Solicitor may request the Attorney General to file a civil action to obtain forfeiture of any property subject to forfeiture under the Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j-1; Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 43-44; Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*; Black Bass Act, 16 U.S.C. 851 *et seq.*; Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*; Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*; Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, 16 U.S.C. 718 *et seq.*; Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*; or Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.* Before any such action is filed against property subject to forfeiture under the Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 43, or against property, other than the cargo of a vessel or other conveyance employed in unlawful taking, subject to forfeiture under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, a civil penalty must first be assessed in accordance with the statute and applicable regulations, and no such action may be filed more than 30 days after the conclusion of civil penalty assessment proceedings.

[47 FR 56860, Dec. 21, 1982]

§ 12.23 Administrative forfeiture proceedings.



[top](#)

(a) *When authorized.* Whenever any property subject to forfeiture under the Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*, or Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j-1, or any wildlife or plant subject to forfeiture under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, or any fish, wildlife or plant subject to forfeiture under the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*, is determined under §12.12 to have a value not greater than \$100,000, the Solicitor may obtain forfeiture of such property in accordance with this section.

(b) *Procedure—* (1) *Notice of proposed forfeiture.* As soon as practicable following seizure, the Solicitor shall issue a notice of proposed forfeiture.

(A) *Publication.* The notice shall be published once a week for at least three successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality where the property was seized. If the value of the seized property as determined under §12.12 does not exceed \$1000, the notice may be published by posting, instead of newspaper publication, for at least three successive weeks in a conspicuous place accessible to the public at the Service's enforcement office, the U.S. District Court or the U.S. Customhouse nearest the place of seizure. In cases of posting, the date of initial posting shall be indicated on the notice. In addition to newspaper publication or posting, a reasonable effort shall be made to serve the notice personally or by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, on each person whose whereabouts and interest in the seized property are known or easily ascertainable.

(B) *Contents.* The notice shall be in substantially the same form as a complaint for forfeiture filed in United States District Court. The notice shall describe the property, including, in the case of motor vehicles, the license, registration, motor, and serial numbers. The notice shall state the time and place of seizure, as well as the reason therefor, and shall specify the value of the property as determined under §12.12. The notice shall contain a specific reference to the provisions of the laws or regulations allegedly violated and under which the property is subject to forfeiture. The notice shall state that any person desiring to claim the property must file a claim and a bond in accordance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section, and shall state that if a proper claim and bond are not received by the proper office within the time prescribed by such paragraph, the property will be declared forfeited to the United States and disposed of according to law. The notice shall also advise interested persons of their right to file a petition for remission of forfeiture in accordance with §12.24.

(2) *Filing a claim and bond.* Upon issuance of the notice of proposed forfeiture, any person claiming the seized property may file with the Solicitor's office indicated in the notice a claim to the property and a bond in the penal sum of \$5,000, or ten per centum of the value of the claimed property, whichever is lower, but not less than \$250. Any claim and bond must be received in such office within 30 days after the date of first publication or posting of the notice of proposed forfeiture. The claim shall state the claimant's interest in the property. The bond filed with the claim shall be on a United States Customs Form 4615 or on a similar form provided by the Department. There shall be endorsed on the bond a list or schedule in substantially the following form which shall be signed by the claimant in the presence of the witnesses to the bond, and attested by the witnesses:

List or schedule containing a particular description of seized article, claim for which is covered by the within bond, to wit:

The foregoing list is correct.

Claimant _____

Attest: _____

The claim and bond referred to in this paragraph shall not entitle the claimant or any other person to possession of the property.

(3) *Transmittal to Attorney General.* As soon as practicable after timely receipt by the proper office of a proper claim and bond in accordance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the Solicitor shall transmit such claim and bond to the Attorney General for institution of forfeiture proceedings in U.S. District Court.

(4) *Motion for stay.* Upon issuance of the notice of proposed forfeiture, any person claiming the seized property may file with the Solicitor's regional or field office indicated in the notice a motion to stay administrative forfeiture proceedings. Any motion for stay must be filed within 30 days after the date of first publication or posting of the notice of the proposed forfeiture. Each motion must contain:

(i) The claimant's verified statement showing that he or she holds absolute, fee simple title to the seized property, free and clear of all liens, encumbrances, security interests, or other third-party interests, contingent or vested; and (ii) the claimant's offer to pay in advance all reasonable costs anticipated to be incurred in the storage, care, and maintenance of the seized property for which administrative forfeiture is sought. Where a stay of administrative forfeiture proceedings would not injure or impair the rights of any third parties and where the claimant has agreed to pay in advance anticipated, reasonable storage costs associated with the granting of a stay, the Regional or Field Solicitor as appropriate may, in his discretion, grant the motion for stay and specify reasonable and prudent conditions therefor, including but not limited to the duration of the stay, a description of the factors which would automatically terminate the stay, and any requirement for a bond (including amount) to secure the payment of storage and other maintenance costs. If a motion for stay is denied, or if a stay is terminated for any reason, the claimant must file, if he or she has not already done so, a claim and bond in accordance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section not later than 30 days after receipt of the Solicitor's Office denial or termination order. Failure to file the claim and bond within 30 days will result in summary foreclosure under paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) *Summary forfeiture.* If a proper claim and bond are not received by the proper office within 30 days as specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the Solicitor shall declare the property forfeited. The declaration of forfeiture shall be in writing, and shall be sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Service and to each person whose whereabouts and prior interest in the seized property are known or easily ascertainable. The declaration shall be in substantially the same form as a default judgment of forfeiture entered in United States District Court. The declaration shall describe the property and state the time, place, and reason for its seizure. The declaration shall identify the notice of proposed forfeiture, describing the dates and manner of publication of the notice and any efforts made to serve the notice personally or by mail. The declaration shall state that in response to the notice a proper claim and bond were not timely received by the proper office from any claimant, and that therefore all potential claimants are deemed to admit the truth of the allegations of the notice. The declaration shall conclude with an order of condemnation and forfeiture of the property to the United States for disposition according to law.

[45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980, as amended at 46 FR 44759, Sept. 8, 1981; 47 FR 56860, Dec. 21, 1982; 50 FR 6350, Feb. 15, 1985]

§ 12.24 Petition for remission of forfeiture.



[top](#)

(a) Any person who has an interest in cargo, of a vessel or other conveyance employed in unlawful

taking, subject to forfeiture under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, or any person who has an interest in any property subject to forfeiture under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*; Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j-1; or the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*, or any person who has incurred or is alleged to have incurred a forfeiture of any such property, may file with the Solicitor or, when forfeiture proceedings have been brought in U.S. District Court, the Attorney General, a petition for remission of forfeiture.

(b) A petition filed with the Solicitor need not be in any particular form, but it must be received before disposition of the property and must contain the following:

(1) A description of the property;

(2) The time and place of seizure;

(3) Evidence of the petitioner's interest in the property, including contracts, bills of sale, invoices, security interests, certificates of title, and other satisfactory evidence; and

(4) A statement of all facts and circumstances relied upon by the petitioner to justify remission of the forfeiture.

(c) The petition shall be signed by the petitioner or the petitioner's attorney at law. If the petitioner is a corporation, the petition must be signed by an authorized officer, supervisory employee, or attorney at law, and the corporate seal shall be properly affixed to the signature.

(d) A false statement in the petition may subject the petitioner to prosecution under title 18, U.S. Code, section 1001.

(e) Upon receiving the petition, the Solicitor shall decide whether or not to grant relief. In making a decision, the Solicitor shall consider the information submitted by the petitioner, as well as any other available information relating to the matter.

(f) If the Solicitor finds the existence of such mitigating circumstances as to justify remission or mitigation of the forfeiture or alleged forfeiture, the Solicitor may remit or mitigate the same upon such terms and conditions as may be reasonable and just or may order discontinuance of any proceeding under §12.23

(g) If the Solicitor decides that relief should not be granted, the Solicitor shall so notify the petitioner in writing, stating in the notification the reasons for denying relief. The petitioner may then file a supplemental petition, but no supplemental petition shall be considered unless it is received within 60 days from the date of the Solicitor's notification denying the original petition.

[45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980, as amended at 47 FR 56861, Dec. 21, 1982]

§ 12.25 Transfers in settlement of civil penalty claims.



In the discretion of the Solicitor, an owner of wildlife or plants who may be liable for civil penalty under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; Lacey Act, 18 U.S.C. 43; Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*; Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*; or Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, may be given an opportunity to completely or partially settle the civil penalty claim by transferring to the United States all right, title, and interest in any wildlife or plants that are subject to forfeiture. Such transfer may be accomplished by the owner's execution and return of a U.S. Customs Form 4607 or a similar compromise transfer of property instrument provided by the Department.

[47 FR 56861, Dec. 21, 1982]

Subpart D—Disposal of Forfeited or Abandoned Property



Source: 47 FR 17525, Apr. 23, 1982, unless otherwise noted.

§ 12.30 Purpose.



Upon forfeiture or abandonment of any property to the United States under this part the Director shall dispose of such property under the provisions of this subpart D.

§ 12.31 Accountability.



All property forfeited or abandoned under this part must be accounted for in official records. These records must include the following information:

- (a) A description of the item.
- (b) The date and place of the item's seizure (if any) and forfeiture or abandonment.
- (c) The investigative case file number with which the item was associated.
- (d) The name of any person known to have or to have had an interest in the item.
- (e) The date, place, and manner of the item's initial disposal.
- (f) Name of the official responsible for the initial disposal.
- (g) Domestic value of the property.

§ 12.32 Effect of prior illegality.



The effect of any prior illegality on a subsequent holder of any wildlife or plant disposed of or subject to disposal is terminated upon forfeiture or abandonment, but the prohibitions, restrictions, conditions, or requirements which apply to a particular species of wildlife or plant under the laws or regulations of the United States or any State, including any applicable conservation, health, quarantine, agricultural, or Customs laws or regulations remain in effect as to the conduct of such holder.

§ 12.33 Disposal.



(a) The Director shall dispose of any wildlife or plant forfeited or abandoned under the authority of this part, subject to the restrictions provided in this subpart, by one of the following means, unless the item is the subject of a petition for remission of forfeiture under §12.24 of this part, or disposed of by court order:

- (1) Return to the wild;

- (2) Use by the Service or transfer to another government agency for official use;
- (3) Donation or loan;
- (4) Sale; or
- (5) Destruction.

In the exercise of the disposal authority, the Director ordinarily must dispose of any wildlife or plant in the order in which the disposal methods appear in this paragraph (a) of this section.

(b) The Director shall dispose of any other property forfeited or abandoned under the authority of this part (including vehicles, vessels, aircraft, cargo, guns, nets, traps, and other equipment), except wildlife or plants, in accordance with current Federal Property Management Regulations (41 CFR chapter 101) and Interior Property Management Regulations (41 CFR chapter 114), unless the item is the subject of a petition for remission of forfeiture under §12.24 of this part, or disposed of by court order.

(c) The Director shall dispose of property according to the following schedule, unless the property is the subject of a petition for remission of forfeiture under §12.24 of this part:

(1) Any live wildlife or plant and any wildlife or plant that the Director determines is liable to perish, deteriorate, decay, waste, or greatly decrease in value by keeping, or that the expense of keeping is disproportionate to its value may be disposed of immediately after forfeiture or abandonment; and

(2) All other property may be disposed of no sooner than 60 days after forfeiture or abandonment.

(d) If the property is the subject of a petition for remission of forfeiture under §12.24 of this part, the Director may not dispose of the property until the Solicitor or Attorney General makes a final decision not to grant relief.

§ 12.34 Return to the wild.



(a) Any live member of a native species of wildlife which is capable of surviving may be released to the wild in suitable habitat within the historical range of the species in the United States with the permission of the landowner, unless release poses an imminent danger to public health or safety.

(b) Any live member of a native species of plant which is capable of surviving may be transplanted in suitable habitat on Federal or other protected lands within the historical range of the species in the United States with the permission of the landowner.

(c) Any live member of an exotic species of wildlife (including injurious wildlife) or plant may not be returned to the wild in the U.S., but may be returned to one of the following countries for return to suitable habitat in accordance with the provisions of §12.35 of this part if it is capable of surviving:

(1) The country of export (if known) after consultation with and at the expense of the country of export, or

(2) A country within the historic range of the species which is party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (TIAS 8249) after consultation with and at the expense of such country.

§ 12.35 Use by the Service or transfer to another government agency for official use.



(a) Wildlife and plants may be used by the Service or transferred to another government agency

(including foreign agencies) for official use including, but not limited to, one or more of the following purposes:

- (1) Training government officials to perform their official duties;
 - (2) Identifying protected wildlife or plants, including forensic identification or research;
 - (3) Educating the public concerning the conservation of wildlife or plants;
 - (4) Conducting law enforcement operations in performance of official duties;
 - (5) Enhancing the propagation or survival of a species or other scientific purposes;
 - (6) Presenting as evidence in a legal proceeding involving the wildlife or plant; or
 - (7) Returning to the wild in accordance with §12.34 of this part.
- (b) Each transfer and the terms of the transfer must be documented.
- (c) The agency receiving the wildlife or plants may be required to bear all costs of care, storage, and transportation in connection with the transfer from the date of seizure to the date of delivery.

§ 12.36 Donation or loan.



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- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, wildlife and plants may be donated or loaned for scientific, educational, or public display purposes to any person who demonstrates the ability to provide adequate care and security for the item.
- (b) Any donation or loan may be made only after execution of a transfer document between the Director and the donee/borrower, which is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The purpose for which the wildlife or plants are to be used must be stated on the transfer document;
 - (2) Any attempt by the donee/borrower to use the donation or loan for any other purpose except that stated on the transfer document entitles the Director to immediate repossession of the wildlife or plants;
 - (3) The donee/borrower must pay all costs associated with the transfer, including the costs of care, storage, transportation, and return to the Service (if applicable);
 - (4) The donee/borrower may be required to account periodically for the donation or loan;
 - (5) The donee/borrower is not relieved from the prohibitions, restrictions, conditions, or requirements which may apply to a particular species of wildlife or plant imposed by the laws or regulations of the United States or any State, including any applicable health, quarantine, agricultural, or Customs laws or regulations.
 - (6) Any attempt by a donee to retransfer the donation during the time period specified in the transfer document within which the donee may not retransfer the donation without the prior authorization of the Director entitles the Director to immediate repossession of the wildlife or plants;
 - (7) Any attempt by a borrower to retransfer the loan without the prior authorization of the Director entitles the Director to immediate repossession of the wildlife or plants;
 - (8) Subject to applicable limitations of law, duly authorized Service officers at all reasonable times shall, upon notice, be afforded access to the place where the donation or loan is kept and an opportunity to

inspect it;

(9) Any donation is subject to conditions specified in the transfer document, the violation of which causes the property to revert to the United States;

(10) Any loan is for an indefinite period of time unless a date on which the loan must be returned to the Service is stated on the transfer document; and

(11) Any loan remains the property of the United States, and the Director may demand its return at any time.

(c) Wildlife and plants may be donated to individual American Indians for the practice of traditional American Indian religions. Any donation of the parts of bald or golden eagles to American Indians may only be made to individuals authorized by permit issued in accordance with §22.22 of this title to possess such items.

(d) Edible wildlife, fit for human consumption, may be donated to a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization for use as food, but not for barter or sale.

(e) Wildlife and plants may be loaned to government agencies (including foreign agencies) for official use. Each transfer and the terms of the transfer must be documented.

§ 12.37 Sale.



[top](#)

(a) Wildlife and plants may be sold or offered for sale, except any species which at the time it is to be sold or offered for sale falls into one of the following categories:

(1) Listed in §10.13 of this title as a migratory bird protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703–712);

(2) Protected under the Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668–668d);

(3) Listed in §23.33 of this title as “Appendix I” under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

(4) Listed in §17.11 of this title as “endangered” or “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533), unless the item or species may be lawfully traded in interstate commerce; and

(5) Protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361–1407), unless the item or species may be lawfully traded in interstate commerce.

(b) Wildlife and plants must be sold in accordance with current Federal Property Management Regulations (41 CFR chapter 101) and Interior Property Management Regulations (41 CFR chapter 114) or U.S. Customs laws and regulations, except the Director may sell any wildlife or plant immediately for its fair market value if the Director determines that it is liable to perish, deteriorate, decay, waste, or greatly decrease in value by keeping, or that the expense of keeping it is disproportionate to its value.

(c) Wildlife or plants which may not be possessed lawfully by purchasers under the laws of the State where held may be moved to a State where possession is lawful and may be sold.

(d) Wildlife or plants purchased at sale are subject to the prohibitions, restrictions, conditions, or requirements which apply to a particular species of wildlife or plant imposed by the laws or regulations of the United States or any State, including any applicable conservation, health, quarantine, agricultural, or Customs laws or regulations, except as provided by §12.32 of this part.

(e) The Director may use the proceeds of sale to reimburse the Service for any costs which by law the

Service is authorized to recover or to pay any rewards which by law may be paid from sums the Service receives.

§ 12.38 Destruction.



(a) Wildlife and plants not otherwise disposed of must be destroyed.

(b) When destroyed, the fact, manner, and date of destruction and the type and quantity destroyed must be certified by the official actually destroying the items.

§ 12.39 Information on property available for disposal.



Persons interested in obtaining information on property which is available for disposal should contact the appropriate Special Agent in Charge listed in §10.22 of this title.

Subpart E—Restoration of Proceeds and Recovery of Storage Costs



§ 12.41 Petition for restoration of proceeds.



(a) Any person claiming any property or interest therein which has been forfeited under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*; Airborne Hunting Act, 16 U.S.C. 742j-1; or the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371 *et seq.*, and sold according to law, or any person claiming cargo or an interest therein, of a vessel or other conveyance employed in unlawful taking which has been forfeited under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, and sold according to law, may file with the Solicitor or, where forfeiture proceedings have been brought in U.S. District Court, the Attorney General, a petition for restoration of proceeds.

(b) A petition filed with the Solicitor need not be in any particular form, but it must be received within three months after the date of sale of the property and must contain the following:

- (1) A description of the property;
- (2) The time and place of seizure;
- (3) Evidence of the petitioner's interest in the property, including contracts, bills of sale, invoices, security interests, certificates of title, and other satisfactory evidence;
- (4) A request for restoration of the proceeds or such part thereof as is claimed by the petitioner; and
- (5) A statement of all facts and circumstances relied upon by the petitioner to justify restoration of the proceeds, including proof that the petitioner did not know of the seizure before the declaration or order of forfeiture and was in such circumstances as prevented the petitioner from knowing of the same.

(c) The petition shall be signed by the petitioner or the petitioner's attorney at law. If the petitioner is a corporation, the petition must be signed by an authorized officer, supervisory employee, or attorney at law, and the corporate seal shall be properly affixed to the signature.

(d) A false statement in the petition may subject the petitioner to prosecution under title 18, U.S. Code, section 1001.

(e) Upon receiving the petition, the Solicitor shall decide whether or not to grant relief. In making a decision, the Solicitor shall consider the information submitted by the petitioner, as well as any other available information relating to the matter.

(f) If the Solicitor finds the existence of such mitigating circumstances as to justify restoration of the proceeds or any part thereof and that the petitioner did not know of the seizure before the declaration or order of forfeiture and was in such circumstances as prevented the petitioner from knowing of the same, the Solicitor may order the proceeds or any part thereof restored to the petitioner, after deducting from such proceeds the costs of seizure, storage, forfeiture and disposition, the duties, if any, accruing on the seized property, and any sum due on a lien for freight, charges, or contribution in general average, notice of which has been filed with the Solicitor according to law.

(g) If the Solicitor decides that relief should not be granted, the Solicitor shall so notify the petitioner in writing, stating in the notification the reasons for denying relief. The petitioner may then file a supplemental petition, but no supplemental petition shall be considered unless it is received within 60 days from the date of the Solicitor's notification denying the original petition.

[45 FR 17864, Mar. 19, 1980, as amended at 47 FR 56861, Dec. 21, 1982]

§ 12.42 Recovery of certain storage costs.



If any wildlife, plant, or evidentiary item is seized and forfeited under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, any person whose act or omission was the basis for the seizure may be charged a reasonable fee for expenses to the United States connected with the transfer, board, handling, or storage of such property. If any fish, wildlife or plant is seized in connection with a violation of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981, 16 U.S.C. 3371, *et seq.*, any person convicted thereof, or assessed a civil penalty therefor, may be assessed a reasonable fee for expenses of the United States connected with the storage, care and maintenance of such property. Within a reasonable time after forfeiture, the Service shall send to such person by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, a bill for such fee. The bill shall contain an itemized statement of the applicable costs, together with instructions on the time and manner of payment. Payment shall be made in accordance with the bill. The recipient of any assessment of costs under this section who has an objection to the reasonableness of the costs described in the bill may, within 30 days of the date on which he received the bill, file written objections with the Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service for the Region in which the seizure occurred. Upon receipt of the written objections, the appropriate Regional Director will promptly review them and within 30 days mail his final decision to the party who filed objections. In all cases, the Regional Director's decision shall constitute final administrative action on the matter.

[47 FR 56861, Dec. 21, 1982]

Subpart F—Return of Property



§ 12.51 Return procedure.



If, at the conclusion of the appropriate proceedings, seized property is to be returned to the owner or consignee, the Solicitor or Service shall issue a letter or other document authorizing its return. This letter or other document shall be delivered personally or sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall identify the owner or consignee, the seized property, and, if appropriate, the bailee of the seized property. It shall also provide that upon presentation of the letter or other document and proper identification, and the signing of a receipt provided by the Service, the seized property is

authorized to be released, provided it is properly marked in accordance with applicable State or Federal requirements.

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