

and drawers within a limited access area.

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL:

Automated records will be retained in the DTS (V02 System) and updated. Printouts will be disposed of in accordance with HUD Handbook 2225.6.

SYSTEM MANAGER(S) AND ADDRESS:

Director, Departmental Enforcement Center, Portals Building, Suite 200, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20024.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE:

For information, assistance, or inquiry about the existence of records, contact the Privacy Act Officer at the appropriate location, in accordance with procedures in 24 CFR part 16. A list of all locations is given in Appendix A.

RECORD ACCESS PROCEDURES:

The Department's rules for providing access to records to the individuals concerned appear in 24 CFR part 16. If additional information or assistance is required, contact the Privacy Act Officer at the appropriate location. A list of all locations is given in Appendix A.

CONTESTING RECORD PROCEDURES:

The Department's rules for contesting the contents of records and appealing initial denials, by the individual concerned, appear in 24 CFR part 16. If additional information or assistance is needed, it may be obtained by contacting: (i) In relation to contesting contents of records, the Privacy Act Officer at the appropriate location (a list of all locations is given in Appendix A) and (ii) in relation to appeals of initial denials, the Department of Housing and Urban Development Departmental Privacy Appeals Officer, Office of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20410.

RECORD SOURCE CATEGORIES:

The Departmental Tracking System will interface with other HUD information systems to extract pertinent data for tracking and reporting.

EXEMPTIONS FROM CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE ACT:

None.

Appendix B—Departmental Enforcement Center Headquarters and Satellite Office Locations

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Departmental Enforcement Center, Portals Building 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20024

HUD Illinois Enforcement Center, Ralph H. Metcalfe Federal building 77 West Jackson Boulevard, Room 2207, Chicago, IL 60604-3507

HUD Georgia Enforcement Center, Richard B. Russell Federal Building 75 Spring Street, SW, Room 1070, Atlanta, GA 30303-3388

HUD Ft. Worth Enforcement Center, Federal Building 819 Taylor Street, Room 13A47, Ft. Worth, TX 76113

HUD Los Angeles Enforcement Center, 611 West 6th Street, Suite 3800, Los Angeles, CA 90017-3127

HUD New York Enforcement Center, 26 Federal Plaza, Room 3237, New York, NY 10278-0068

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

RIN 1018-AF66

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Carrying Out the Inclusion of all Species of the Order Acipenseriformes (Sturgeon and Paddlefish) in the Appendices to CITES

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of proposed policy.

SUMMARY: We propose to no longer issue or accept for import any "pre-Convention" certificates for caviar. A pre-Convention certificate for caviar documents that the caviar pre-dates April 1, 1998, the effective date of the listing of all previously unlisted species of the Order Acipenseriformes (sturgeon and paddlefish) in the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

DATES: We will consider comments and information received by November 10, 1999 in developing a final policy.

ADDRESSES: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, Mail Stop 700 ARLSQ, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240. If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments by any one of several methods. You may mail comments to the above address. You may also comment via the Internet to r9oma_cites@fws.gov. Please submit Internet comments as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include Attn: [RIN number, 1018-AF66] and your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system

that we have received your Internet message, contact us directly at the telephone number listed below. Finally, you may hand-deliver comments to the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Teiko Saito, Chief, Office of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, telephone (703) 358-2093, fax (703) 358-2280.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To make sure that commercial demand does not threaten the survival of wild sturgeon, the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES (COP10) adopted a proposal on June 20, 1997, to include all previously unlisted species of the Order Acipenseriformes (sturgeon and paddlefish) in Appendix II of CITES, effective April 1, 1998. Therefore, all international shipments of sturgeon and paddlefish specimens or their parts and products, including caviar, made on or after April 1, 1998, must include a valid CITES export permit, re-export certificate, or pre-Convention certificate, which shows that the CITES treaty is being followed.

We have issued pre-Convention certificates for the re-export of caviar only when we were satisfied that it was imported before April 1, 1998. We have learned from the sturgeon products industry and others that the normal shelf life for caviar is 12 months. By the time this proposed policy is finalized, the normal shelf life of any caviar imported before April 1, 1998, will have been exceeded by several months. In addition, it has become evident since April 1, 1998, that the false declaration of caviar as having been acquired before April 1, 1998, is a means of circumventing the CITES treaty. So, we propose to no longer issue pre-Convention certificates for caviar.

On March 12, 1999, the CITES Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 1999/23, which recommends that no permits or certificates declaring pre-Convention caviar should be accepted after April 1, 1999. Consistent with that recommendation, we propose to no longer accept "pre-Convention" certificates for the importation of Appendix II sturgeon caviar into the United States.

For imports, this proposed policy does not affect aquaculture-produced caviar or caviar harvested from the wild after April 1, 1998, which will continue to be allowed with a valid CITES export permit from the country of origin or a valid CITES re-export certificate from the country of re-export. For exports or re-exports from the United States, this proposed policy does not affect aquaculture-produced caviar or caviar

acquired from the wild after April 1, 1998, provided a valid CITES permit or re-export certificate is issued and accompanies the shipment.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the rulemaking record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be limited circumstances in which we would withhold from the rulemaking record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this clearly at the beginning of your comment. But, we will not consider anonymous comments. We generally make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

Required Determinations

This document has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget under Executive Order 12866.

The Department of the Interior certifies that this document will not have a significant effect on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). This proposed policy would restrict the sturgeon industry within the United States from engaging in foreign commerce with "pre-Convention" caviar that is, according to industry representatives, perhaps no longer available, and if available, only in very limited quantities at greatly reduced value. We estimate that there would likely be less than 100 businesses with remaining stocks of "pre-Convention" caviar. Any such caviar has exceeded its normal shelf life and has decreased in value dramatically. Therefore, this proposed policy is restricting the sturgeon industry within the United States from engaging in commerce, under an exemption to CITES, with a commodity that may no longer even be available, and if available, only in very limited quantities at greatly reduced value. Therefore, it does not appear likely that this proposed policy will have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities as defined under the Regulatory Flexibility Act. It should be noted that this proposed policy will not restrict members of the sturgeon products industry from conducting business with caviar that has been obtained after April 1, 1998. Only the availability of the

"pre-Convention" exemption would be terminated if this proposed policy were made final.

Similarly, this proposed policy is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804(2), the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

This proposed policy does not impose an unfunded mandate of more than \$100 million per year or have a significant or unique effect on State, local, or tribal governments or the private sector because we, as the lead agency for CITES implementation in the United States, are responsible for the authorization of shipments of live wildlife, or their parts and products, that are subject to the requirements of CITES.

Under Executive Order 12630, this proposed policy does not have significant takings implications for the same reason as described above under the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Under Executive Order 12612, this proposed policy does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment because it is not anticipated that a state tagging program, similar to the one currently employed in the management of CITES listed furbearer species for export, will be administered in the management of exports of sturgeon products from U.S. wild-caught stock.

Under Executive Order 12988, the Office of the Solicitor has determined that this proposed policy does not unduly burden the judicial system and meets the requirements of Sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of the Order.

This proposed policy does not contain new or revised information collection for which Office of Management and Budget approval is required under the Paperwork Reduction Act. Information collections associated with CITES permits is covered by an existing OMB approval, and is assigned clearance No. 1018-0093, Form 3-200-27, with an expiration date of January 31, 2001. Detailed information for the CITES documentation appears at 50 CFR 23.15(g). The Service may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

This proposed policy does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. The proposed policy is categorically excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act requirements, under Part 516 of the Departmental Manual, Chapter 2, Appendix 1.10.

Executive Order 12866 requires each agency to write regulations that are easy to understand. We invite your comments on how to make this proposed policy easier to understand including answers to questions such as the following: (1) Are the requirements in the proposed policy clearly stated?; (2) Does the proposed policy contain technical language that interferes with its clarity? What else could we do to make this proposed policy easier to understand?

Our normal practice is to publish proposed policies with a 60-day comment period. But in this case, we are using a 15-day comment period since we feel that a 60-day comment period is unnecessary because: 1) we have learned in discussions we have had with the sturgeon products industry and others, that the normal shelf life for caviar is 12 months so, there no longer is any pre-Convention caviar available; 2) as a member of CITES, it is our responsibility to carry out promptly our obligations under the treaty.

Dated: September 21, 1999.

Donald J. Barry,

Assistant Secretary—Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Digital Earth Interagency Working Group

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of rescheduled meeting—digital earth alpha version.

SUMMARY: THE DIGITAL EARTH MEETING ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED IN THE OCTOBER 14, 1999, Federal Register has been rescheduled from October 25, 1999, to November 10, 1999, to provide additional preparation time for interested participants. The Digital Earth Interagency Working Group, chaired by NASA with representatives from other Federal departments and agencies, will hold an open meeting at the USGS facility in Reston, Virginia, to discuss options for a near-term demonstration of the Digital Earth vision by public and private sector technology providers (for details, visit www.digitalearth.gov).

Throughout Federal, State, and local government, the private sector, and other public sector interests, there exist data, infrastructure, partnerships, and capability to support the exploitation of