

## CURRENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS USED FOR CITES PERMITTING

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**The Combined Species File (CSF)** is the USFWS database containing listing status data on all plant and animal species in the CITES Appendices, as well as their listing status under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and other U.S. laws. Recognized synonyms are associated with the species' preferred scientific name. A unique species code is used to retrieve information on the species' listing status for use by DMA staff in evaluating requests and issuing permits.

**The Service Permit Issuance and Tracking System (SPITS)** is used by DMA's Branch of Permits to issue permits for specimens of listed animal and plant species. It is also used by the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and the Migratory Birds and Ecological Services programs. The species-related blocks on the CITES permits processed by SPITS are populated by the CSF data associated with that species.

**The Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS)** is the system used by OLE to compile data on all imports and exports of wildlife shipments (excluding plants). LEMIS also contains an investigative subsystem which, among other things, tracks seized property and documents active investigations. Due to privacy concerns, access to this database is restricted to OLE personnel only.

**The CITES Annual Reporting System (CARS)** contains trade data on all U.S. imports and exports of CITES-listed plant and animal species. These data are submitted to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre as the U.S. CITES Annual Report. Data enters the system in several ways:

- USFWS staff manually enter data from all CITES permits for plant shipments processed by inspectors with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
- A USFWS contractor enters CITES permit data for all wildlife shipments processed by the USFWS OLE at ports of entry/exit into LEMIS. This includes shipments that are cleared as well as those that are refused clearance. These data are then transferred into CARS on an annual basis.
- Data on seizures of plants and plant specimens are provided to USFWS in summary form by CBP. In addition, CBP and APHIS inform DMA of live-plant seizures so that they can be placed appropriately via our Plant Rescue Center program. These data are entered manually by DMA staff.

### Current and future state of information systems

USFWS CITES-related databases are legacy systems currently in the initial phases of modernization. Current systems are capable of meeting DMA's needs but are inefficient and have limited data-sharing capabilities. The modernization effort will affect the CSF, SPITS and CARS databases. The development of new data systems is consistent with a U.S. government-wide emphasis on upgrading legacy systems to include technological advances regarding cloud-based platforms, intelligent automation, shared services and other methods for improving efficiency and speed. USFWS hopes to coordinate these efforts, which will likely span several years, with similar activities at other federal agencies and with the CITES Parties.