

Crocodile Products - NT Export and Import Requirements

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BACKGROUND

The saltwater crocodile was declared a protected species in the Northern Territory in 1971 and legal hunting of all crocodiles ceased. Saltwater crocodiles were protected Australia-wide in 1974. In 1985 international trade in saltwater crocodiles from a ranching program was approved by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). In 1994, crocodiles were transferred to Appendix II unqualified, which allows for harvesting of problem wild animals from private properties, parks and reserves. The commercial farming of crocodiles developed in the 1980s and prospered, and is closely supervised by government bodies. Requirements concerning movement of crocodile products vary from country to country, and within countries. Northern Territory export and import requirements of crocodile products are presented here.

Requirements and Regulations

All individuals and companies trading in crocodile products must comply with the conditions of the NT Crocodile Management Program which was developed in accordance with requirements of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1993* and *Wildlife Protection (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1982*. Trade in crocodile products is regulated by the licensing and permit provisions of these Acts. The industry also follows the guidelines of the Crocodile Industry Strategy, developed by the Northern Territory Government.



Figure 1. Processing size crocodiles

Permits

All individuals or companies wishing to keep and trade in crocodiles and/or their parts are issued with a permit in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1993*. This is issued annually by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (DIPE). A trader's permit allows trade in crocodile parts or products used by manufacturers and retailers. In the Northern Territory, permits for export or import of crocodile products are issued by the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM). Then based on those permits, CITES which is located at Environment Australia in Canberra issues its certificates for \$30 and which may take up to four weeks to process.

Crocodile Products

A range of crocodile products is available. The belly skin of the saltwater crocodile is most important because of its high quality, and is sought by international markets. By-products such as flesh, teeth, tail tips, skulls, back-straps and feet, are also used.

Raw Products

Belly skins are usually sold raw, for tanning overseas. The raw skin must have a CITES skin tag attached to allow verification of the skin's origin. The high quality first grade skins are sold overseas, while the lower grade skins and by-products are largely used domestically. CITES skin tags are issued by Environment Australia through DPIFM and then distributed to the farms on a cost recovery basis.

Finished Products

Manufactured items include shoes, bags and belts. A crocodile product label is issued by DIPE for manufactured items. When a product is sold, the details of buyer and destination are recorded. This allows products to be traced back to farm or manufacturer. Each State/Territory has its own product label.

CROCODILE PRODUCTS LEAVING THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Domestic

Raw Products

Raw crocodile products leaving the Northern Territory must have a Northern Territory export permit. This permit is issued by DPIFM free of charge. Three days' notice is requested for the issue of a permit. Permits are valid for only one consignment and for only one month after issue. Some States within Australia will require an import permit for products before they are allowed to enter.

Finished Product

Finished products require a product label from DIPE to be issued with the item. Domestic shipment details are reported to DPIFM on a monthly basis.

Overseas

Raw Products

Besides requiring a CITES permit, all commercial shipments of raw crocodile products for export overseas must be inspected by a DPIFM officer, who will check, seal with authorised tape (orange), and sign the shipment. Some countries (for example, France) will require a health declaration before the shipment can enter. Import regulations for different countries should be known before the shipment is exported as they may differ. The health declaration is issued by DPIFM for the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

Finished Products

If the product is a finished item leaving Australia as a commercial shipment, a CITES export permit (Manufactured Crocodile Products), is supplied to the purchaser by the retailer. This permit provides verification that the product originated from an approved management program. When a finished item is carried in personal luggage as a gift, a CITES product label is not legally required but may be issued on request.



Figure 2. Raw belly skin

CROCODILE PRODUCTS ENTERING THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Domestic

Crocodile products entering the Northern Territory from within Australia require an import permit. This permit is issued by DPIFM. It is valid for one consignment and for one month after issue. If the consignment is live crocodiles, then DIPE supplies the permit.

Overseas

Crocodile products entering the Northern Territory from overseas require a CITES import permit, from Environment Australia for a \$30.00 fee and is valid for a year. To obtain that permit an NT import permit is required. If the product enters the Northern Territory from overseas via another Australian State, then only a Northern Territory import permit is required.

INFORMATION

Information and assistance are available from relevant departments. Queries concerning licences and trade in live crocodile shipments, should be directed to DIPE on 08 8999 4795. Queries regarding permits to move crocodile products in and out of the Northern Territory should be directed to DPIFM on 08 8999 2036. Overseas shipment queries should be directed to Environment Australia on 02 62741900.

Please visit us at our website:

www.nt.gov.au/dpifm

Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines

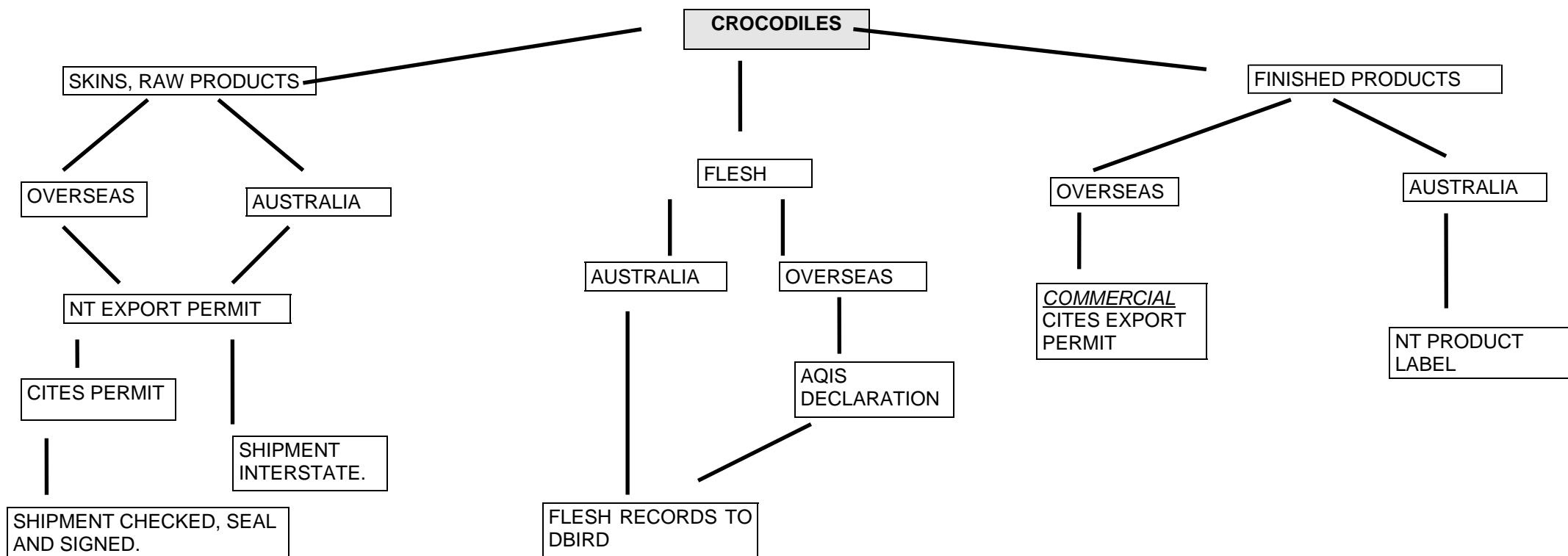
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