

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR EXPORT OF BOBCAT, LYNX, RIVER OTTER, AND WILD AMERICAN GINSENG

Commercial exports of U.S. bobcat, lynx, river otter, and the herb, wild American ginseng, controlled by an international treaty on endangered species, may continue under present permits until November 30, a month beyond the previously announced cutoff date, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Endangered Species Scientific Authority (ESSA) said today.

The 30-day extension for exports under permit gives individuals and businesses involved more time to prepare a careful inventory of stocks on hand that can be shipped out of the country. The ESSA, which had set the original deadlines, said the delay will have little or no impact on populations of these species still living in the wild. The trapping season for bobcat, lynx, and river otters lasts from November through February in most parts of the country and ginseng collection ends with the first killing frost.

The extension means that the deadline for exports of existing fur stocks has been extended one month and that American ginseng plants collected by November 30 can still be exported.

After that date, export permits will be approved for the furs and ginseng only if proof is submitted that the specimens were in the inventory by November 30. This restriction does not apply to river otters taken in 17 States and American ginseng collected in Michigan. The Fish and Wildlife Service also said that an inventory statement, verified by a certified public accountant (CPA), may be submitted as this proof.

The inventory statement must show the location and quantity of furs or roots by scientific name of species, and the location of records. Permits will be issued on the basis of the inventory statement and will be validated at U.S. ports.

The Service suggested that trappers, fur brokers, ginseng dealers, and collectors and others affected by this finding contact the Federal Wildlife Permit Office (telephone 202/634-1496) for further details and information on the permits required.

Federal permits have been required since May 23, 1977, to export bobcats, lynx, river otter, and ginseng and other species which are protected by a 38-nation treaty--the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The Convention is administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service in its capacity as the permit issuing management authority for the Convention. Permits must be approved by the ESSA, a seven-member interagency committee.