

## Greenlandic handicraft – more than mere souvenirs

Your encounter with Greenland will give you plenty of opportunities to buy original Greenland handicraft items such as polar bear claws, skins and hides, jewellery, tupilaks and more. But are you aware that several of these items either must *not* be exported or *require* a CITES export permit?

In particular, you *must* be aware of objects that originate from some of the Greenlandic animals such as whales, walrus and polar bears, which in most cases will require a CITES permit to take home with you.

### CITES (Washington Convention)

CITES is the acronym for “Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna”.

The Washington Convention makes it possible to track the degree of trade in certain endangered or threatened animal species. With your CITES permit you are therefore contributing to securing a sustainable future for the respective animal populations.

The Washington Convention is, among other things, known from campaigns against trade in tigers, turtles, other exotic animal species and ivory.

The Convention has been signed by more than 170 countries and protects the world’s many threatened and endangered plant and animal species by regulating the international trade in wildlife species. There are more than 4,800 animal species and 25,000 plant species listed in CITES. About 30 of these animal species and a few of the plant species occur in Greenland.



The CITES certificate is more than simply a customs document. It is also a guarantee that the goods originate from species that can legally be hunted in Greenland.

The export of parts and products originating from walrus, beluga whales and minke whales from West Greenland requires a CITES permit, which is obtained along with your purchase. Included, for example, is jewellery made from walrus and craft items made from whalebone or baleen. This CITES permit is issued at the time of purchase in most shops and outlets in Greenland.

- *Without* a CITES permit you run the risk of having your precious memento of Greenland confiscated.
- *With* a CITES permit you have proof on paper that your purchase can legally be taken back to your home country.

Parts of and products made from sperm whale teeth, from the baleen of bowhead, fin whales, humpback whales, narwhal, polar bear and from all bird of prey species may *not* be exported from Greenland.

### Relevant addresses:

#### Greenland Home Rule

Department of Infrastructure and the Environment  
Postbox 1614  
3900 Nuuk, Greenland  
Tel. +299 34 67 26/34 67 01  
Fax +299 34 54 10  
E-Mail [citeskontor@gh.gl](mailto:citeskontor@gh.gl)  
[www.nanoq.gl](http://www.nanoq.gl)

### Internet information:

[www.skovognatur.dk/cites](http://www.skovognatur.dk/cites) gives general information about CITES and the regulations currently in force in Denmark.  
[www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org) gives information about international regulations. The current CITES lists will be found here, showing the level of protection enjoyed by the various species.  
[www.eu-wildlifetrade.org](http://www.eu-wildlifetrade.org) gives information about CITES and trading in wild plants and animals in most EU languages.

**NB:** If in doubt, contact the Greenland Department of Infrastructure and the Environment (DIM).

REMEMBER that illegal export or failure to obtain a permit can result in confiscation of goods and a fine.



**CITES** Rules  
for tourists  
remember your CITES permit



Greenland Home Rule  
Ministry of Environment and Nature  
Revised June 2008

**CITES** Convention on International Trade in  
Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

Species/Export regulations	CITES Export permit	May <u>not</u> be exported	No restrictions *
<b>List I species</b>			
Fin whale		X	
Greenland whale		X	
White-tailed eagle		X	
Sperm whale		X	
Humpback		X	
Minke whale from East Grl.		X	
<b>List II species</b>			
Beluga	X		
Polar bear (temporary freeze)*		X	
Narwhal (temporary freeze) *		X	
Killer whale	X		
Minke whale from West Grl.	X		
<b>List III species</b>			
Walrus*	X		
<b>Not covered by CITES</b>			
Seals (except walrus)			X
Reindeer			X
Musk oxen			X
Sheep/lambs			X

\* Note: Under veterinary regulations, packs of meat for export must not exceed 5 kg. Export of meat from livestock like lambs must not exceed 1 kg.

The regulations are based on the Washington Convention (CITES), which defines the international regulations for the protection of endangered species of plants and animals.

CITES applies to both live and dead plants and animals as well as parts of the same.

**What to do ....**

**... when you buy an item:**

If you buy handicraft items made from or containing parts of **walrus, beluga whale or West Greenland**

**minke whale**, you can obtain the necessary **CITES export permit** in many shops.

If the shop itself does not complete and issue you with the CITES permit, request one.

It is important that you receive both the front page, a red copy and a blue copy.

The CITES permit is only valid for exporting items for **personal use**.

The items must be transported in your personal luggage.

If craft items you buy on the street or in the shops do not come with CITES permits, you can contact DIM to find out where you can obtain the necessary permit.

**.... when you pass through Customs**

Upon entry to your home country, you must go through the red channel, hand in the white front page and let the customs officer inspect the item. You should keep the red copy for yourself.

**... in special circumstances**

Gifts and postal items etc., including those made of walrus, beluga, killer whale and West Greenland minke whale, require a different kind of CITES export permit. Contact DIM for more information.

**.... \* Narwhal (List II)**

As of 6 June 2006, Greenland Home Rule introduced a temporary ban on the export of *all* narwhal products. Similarly, *all* EU countries decided in December 2004 to introduce an import ban on all narwhal products. It is therefore forbidden for tourists to take narwhal products out of the country with them.

**.... \* Polar bears (List II)**

On 21 February 2008 the Greenland Home Rule introduced a temporary moratorium on the export of *all* polar bear products, valid from 1 April 2008. Similarly, *all* EU countries decided in February 2008 to introduce an import ban on all polar bear products. It is no longer legal, therefore for a tourist to export polar bear products after 1 April 2008.

**.... \* Walrus (List III)**

In accordance with EU legislation, all EU countries have temporarily decided on an import ban on walrus products from Greenland. However, tourists taking home walrus items as personal property and holding a CITES export permit from the Department of Infrastructure and the Environment are *not* affected by the freeze.



**WEST GREENLAND  
MINKE WHALE BALEEN**



**NARWHAL TOOTH**