

Travel

Getting Your Trophies Home ©

By

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When planning your international hunt one of the considerations you want to think about is whether you want to have more than memories and photographs as a reminder of your trip. If you want to bring your trophies home, before leaving you will have to do several things.

1. Decide on the animal you wish to acquire.
If plains game, there are no requirements for import permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (Beware of **Bontebok** as it does require an endangered species import permit from the Division of Management Authority of FWS in Fairfax, Virginia. There is usually a 90-day turnaround. It must be hunted on an approved Bontebok ranch and often the South Africa PH's consider this "just another antelope").
2. Take any serially numbered weapon, optic, computer etc. to your nearest U.S. Customs (now known as CBP) office and obtain a CF 4457 form. You will be asked to present this form upon your return to the United States. Keep in mind that the air carriers' change their rules and regulations often, so check with them prior to your trip to see if your gun case will be required to be LOCKED when tendered to the airline, whereas your suitcases must be tendered UNLOCKED. Be aware you are permitted only 5 kilos of ammunition per hunter that matches the weapons being tendered.
3. Make contact with a Licensed Customs Broker to set the necessary paperwork in motion to allow them to handle your imported trophies. This is a very specific niche market which requires the Broker to have a working knowledge of Fish and Wildlife, CBP/A, CDC, U.S. Department of Public Health and of course Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP). So ask them what experience they have had in this field.
4. You will be required to provide the following information:
Full Given Name
Full Physical Address
Full Mailing Address
Home Phone and Fax number
Work Phone and Fax number
E-mail addresses at home and work
Social Security Number and Birth date (Needed to verify authenticity with the Social Security administration.)
The broker will then prepare a Customs Power of Attorney for your signature – this is a necessary requirement per CBP regulation, and only gives permission to the broker to perform paperwork functions with the various government agencies on your behalf.

On your hunt make sure you know exactly how you want your finished trophy to look – this will be invaluable information to pass onto your PH in order they pass along the correct information to the skinners. Monitor their process – hair slippage is the number one reason why hunters receive poor quality trophies.

Ask your professional hunter when your skins will be taken to the export taxidermist? At the end of your hunt, once a month, or end of season. That is when your shipping clock starts ticking.

After the hunt your PH will take you to visit one of his "buddies" who is a taxidermist. It is a very common practice in Africa that taxidermist pays the PH a commission for each client they bring him. If you only want your trophies dip and packed overseas and mounted in the U.S. ask to utilize the services of someone like Dip Pack (www.dippack.com) in South Africa, who does nothing but this kind of business. Oft times taxidermist will put dip and pack work off in favor of doing the more lucrative mounting work. Dip and pack swine, non-human primate and ruminants require re-processing in the United States by an Approved Establishment. Know whom you want to use in this capacity before you leave. Ask to see a sample set of export documents – are they hand written, typed or computer generated. No matter which service you choose, get their business card and their e-mail address. When you come back – call your Customs Broker and let them do the follow-up for you.

If your trophies are mounted overseas be prepared to pay a higher airfreight bill than you would expect. Airfreight is billed based on the greater weight of actual versus dimensional volume. The formula for determining dimensional volume = multiply the length (in inches) by the width (in inches) and height (in inches). Divide the total number by 166 to get the pounds of dimensional freight. International airfreight is billed in kilos so divide the pounds by 2.20463 to get the number of kilos you will be charged.

You will be paying the following charges that normally **WILL NOT BE INCLUDED** in your safari package:

- Foreign taxidermy work to prepare your animals for shipment.
Be prepared to leave a 50% deposit on the work before you leave. Advise the taxidermist THE NAME OF THE CUSTOMS BROKER WHO YOU WANT TO CLEAR YOUR SHIPMENT IN THE U.S. Make sure the taxidermist notifies you or your broker BEFORE they turn the trophies over to a transportation agent. Provide your Broker with the name of the transportation agent and their e-mail address.
- Delivery charges from foreign taxidermist to the transportation agent's warehouse.
- Crating of the animals to make ready for the shipment. Insist they meet IPPC standards.
- Export documentation is required to move the animals, they include Veterinary Certificates, permits for export, and an itemized invoice is required with the cost of taxidermy work performed for each separate animal indicated. Currency used should be indicated as well.
- Air or Ocean freight to the port closest to your home or U.S. taxidermist.
- Insurance – Determine if you want coverage it's cheap in Africa and is not always available in the U.S. at a reasonable cost. (Airlines are only required to pay you in the event of loss or damage an amount to equal \$20 per kilo of chargeable weight per the Warsaw Convention). To cut your exposures to loss tell your Customs Broker or the overseas transportation agent to ship your trophies on direct flights, even if the costs are more than indirect flights.

In the March 2003 issue of The Hunting Report, Vol. 23 No. 3 Pg 14, Editor Don Causey discussed with Dieter Ochsenbein, owner of Highveld Taxidermist and head of the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa, what transpires after your trophies are dipped and packed and before they are shipped. "What clients need to realize is, trophies require proper treatment before they leave South Africa, even if we don't mount them there." The treatment called "dipping" has to be done at a veterinary-approved facility in order for one to be able to obtain the necessary veterinary export permits. Next, the overseas taxidermist needs to obtain an

export permit from Nature Conservation authorities. In order to get that they have to submit a packing list with the trophy items genus and species listed, along with the name and place they were hunted and by whom. One's professional hunter is also required to submit a trophy register to Nature Conservation after every hunt, clearly showing the client's name and address, the name and place where the hunt took place and species hunted".

Nature Conservation authorities, upon receiving the export documentation requests, compare the professional hunter's trophy register with the taxidermist's export packing lists. If all the items are correct and legally documented, they will issue the permit. This process takes about three to four weeks, if everything goes according to plan. Unfortunately, things often don't go according to plan. For example, when the taxidermists try to submit a packing list to Nature Conservation, they often find the professional hunter has not yet submitted his trophy register and he is out in the bush hunting – and will be in his office, again, in four weeks time. Another problem (export) taxidermist have is, application papers getting lost at Nature Conservation. Sometimes the conservation personnel will just tell them they never received anything and indeed that is often the case if things are sent via the South Africa postal service, which has become unreliable. Most of these taxidermists now have resorted to using couriers to send export applications to Nature Conservation. Dieter further stated "I can tell you that we taxidermist are frustrated about the entire system, and we are addressing with the parties involved." **We suggest you obtain a photocopy of all of your hunting registers from your PH before you leave the country.**

Now you have another question to ask your PH – When and how do you file my trophy's register?

EACH HUNTER MUST HAVE THEIR TROPHIES PACKED IN THEIR OWN CRATE. COMINGLING OF MULTIPLE HUNTERS IN ONE CRATE IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER THE REGULATIONS OF CBP'S AUTOMATED MANIFEST SYSTEM. (ONLY EXCEPTION IS FOR A MINOR CHILD WITH PARENT) A GROUP OF HUNTERS CAN HAVE THEIR SEPARATE CRATES SHIPPED ON THE SAME MASTER BILL TO LOWER THEIR FREIGHT COSTS.

When your trophies are ready to be shipped, common business practice will have the overseas transportation agent making contact with you in an attempt to collect their charges on a freight pre-paid basis. AT THIS POINT CONTACT YOUR CUSTOMS BROKER, if you have not already done so. Your Customs Broker should take over at that point, if they have not already done so. The experienced Customs Broker will know if the rate that you are being asked to pay is within normal range or not. After your payment decision is made it will take another 2-3 weeks to accomplish the export paperwork necessary to get your trophies moving to the U.S.

Your Customs Broker will get a pre-alert advise from the overseas transportation agent. (Note: November through February is perishable season in Africa and it is nearly impossible to get space for trophies even at inflated prices, as the flights are full with flowers and vegetables to Europe and other areas). The cargo flights from Africa are ALWAYS FULL, so the pre-alert advice may be off by a couple of days.

When the trophies arrive at the first U.S. Port they will be taken off the carrier and placed in a warehouse where the accompanying documents will be reviewed by a CBP/Aphis inspector. Any dipped and packed only swine, non-human primates and ruminants will be required to be re-dipped and packed in the U.S. and should have been separated from the remainder of your trophies when they were packed. Tell your Broker whom you want used as an Approved Establishment to do this re-dip work. If you don't have one or your U.S. taxidermist is not approved ask the Customs Broker to suggest one. (Another test to see if the broker knows their stuff). After advising the CBP/A inspector the name of this facility the inspector will complete a Form 16-78, which will remain with the shipment to final destination. Those trophies being re-dipped cannot come into contact with anyone until they have been reworked at the Approved

facility. After the CBP/A inspector releases your documents your trophies will be placed on a customs bonded trucker where they will complete their journey to the port of entry you have chosen.

YOU ARE THE ONE PAYING THE BILLS. IT IS YOUR DECISION AS TO WHO SHIPS THE TROPHIES TO YOU – DON'T LET ANYONE ELSE FORCE YOU OR YOUR CUSTOMS BROKER INTO USING SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW OR WANT USED.

The freight you paid the overseas transportation agent will only cover the cost of your trophies to the port of entry you have chosen.

UPON ARRIVAL YOU WILL OWE ANOTHER SET OF CHARGES:

- Carrier Import Service Charge will usually range between \$40 and \$50 payable to the carrier that brought your trophies from the first port of unloading to the port of entry and covers the paperwork they have had to lodge with CBP to close out their bond. Free time is usually restricted to between 48 and 72 hours. Therefore there will most always be storage charges due at time of pickup. These can range from a minimum \$20 per day to 10 cents a pound of freight per day. Ocean freight will have similar items known as Terminal Service Charges, Harbor Maintenance fees along with VACUS examinations, and possible inspection by the Contraband Enforcement Team.
- Many brokers will transfer your trophies to their bonded warehouse to cut down on the possibility of excess storage charges. This will incur a warehouse charge, which is generally a flat charge of \$65.
- A messenger will pick up the original documents from the carrier to bring to the Customs Broker. The messenger will also be toting the entry documents between all the government agencies therefore a flat messenger fee of normally \$25 will be due. (Many ports have government agencies in far-flung parts of town so this could entail special messenger fees of up to \$50).
- At last, the documents reach your Customs Brokers office where expert personnel will turn those documents into a full-fledged Fish and Wildlife entry (Cost approximately \$100) with genus and species and other required data elements completed. Most ports are now using a separate PC based Fish and Wildlife computer program called e-Decs. The expert then puts together a document packet of the original documents (You did send your ORIGINAL U.S. Cites permit to them, didn't you?) gives it to the messenger who takes it to the Fish and Wildlife office. In many ports the Fish and Wildlife and sometimes CBP/A inspectors will require that the Customs Broker provide an employee with a crowbar and other tools to open your crates for a physical inspection. Of course when they are done the employee has to put everything back and secure the crate. The special services charge for this is approximately \$50.
- Once Fish and Wildlife has cleared the shipment an e-mail message is transmitted to the Customs Broker with the "Cleared 3-177 form". This form is then placed with the required Customs forms in an entry packet (Cost approximately \$100) submitted again by messenger to CBP.

- Port practices around the United States vary greatly as to the type of entry Customs wants – most want a formal entry with a Customs Surety Bond provided. It must be in an amount equal to three times the commercial invoice value. This bond carries a minimum charge of approximately \$65. After CBP clears the shipment and returns the physical release back by messenger – the Customs Broker will then arrange (if they have not already done so) to bring your trophies to their warehouse. This entails an airport transfer charge with a minimum of approximately \$40 or 5 cents per pound of chargeable weight.
- Once in the Customs Brokers warehouse you will be contacted again to verify delivery instructions. Remember truckers charge extra for residential deliveries so if you have a business where they can be delivered and handled with a fork lift truck - you can then transfer to a pickup to your home or taxidermist and save anywhere from \$75 to \$100 in service fees. The hunter will be asked to pay the Customs Brokers invoice before dispatch of the cargo either by credit card or cashier/personal check. This avoids confusion at time of delivery by the trucker and the unnecessary delays in transmittal of COD checks back to the Customs Broker.
- We tell clients that they should allocate approximately \$10 per kilo to cover all the cost incurred in transporting their trophies back home. As you can see the clearance process is not a simple matter. Add another expert to your Rolodex – a licensed Customs Broker.

Carol Rutkowski is a licensed Customs Broker and the National Director of the Hunting Trophy Division of Coppersmith Inc. Coppersmith is a family owned business in the international transportation and brokerage business since 1948. They have offices from Coast to Coast and the experience to make them the leader in this niche market. Visit their website coppersmith.com or huntingtrophy.com where you will find a FAQ section which will answer many other of your questions. Contact Carol at carolr_dfw@coppersmith.com, toll free at 888-827-4388 or 817-481-1260 for your specific needs.