



Society of Vertebrate Paleontology

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Myanmar amber: Best Practice Guidelines for Researchers, Research Institutions and Publishers

The following recommendations from the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology’s Myanmar Working Group provide guidelines for individuals and organizations around documents to be retained for fossil specimens in amber from Myanmar (hereafter referred to as ‘the material’). These guidelines are based on the 2016 “Second Amending Law of the Myanmar Gemstone Law (1995)”, the 1857 “Antiquities Law”, and the 2015 “Protection and Preservation of Antique Objects Law”, and are relevant to ANY amber material from Myanmar, regardless of whether the mines were located in conflict zones or not. The situation is a fluid one, and each case is unique. As such, the guidelines below may be updated in response to additional comments and information. Comments and questions concerning this document can be addressed to “SVP Myanmar Working Group” at svp@vertpaleo.org.

Reporting of the material

In accordance with *Myanmar Protection and Preservation of Antique Objects Law (2016)*, the fossil material should be reported to the Ministry of Culture of the Government as soon as possible, and should ultimately be repositied in a national repository. We realise that due to the coup and also to the unprecedented nature of such proceedings, this may be hard at the moment.

Provenance of the material

The documentation summaries below, which are based on the Myanmar Gemstone Law are divided into two time periods: (a) post-2017 and (b) before 2017. This reflects the timing at which the military took control over the mining regions. For more information see [SVP’s 2021 letter on the matter](#).

The date of acquisition (or collection) should be clearly stated on each part of the documentation provided. We also recommend that you ensure that any amber fossil specimens have no ties to the military-owned conglomerates Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd (MEHL) (List available in the [UN Report](#)).

(a) Material acquired post-2017

1. Invoice or proof of purchase with date, and seller name and contact information. Ideally this should also mention the provenance or approximate location of the piece.
2. If purchased:
 - a. from within Myanmar:
 - i. **Gemstone production permit (for exploration, production, trading, processing and retail) or Gemstone trading license (for trading, processing and retail) of trader**

- ii. *Only gems and jewelries purchased at the licensed dealers, or who can issue an export permit are allowed to be taken out of Myanmar.*
- b. from outside of Myanmar:
 - i. **Export permit of the material**
 - ii. *Requires the formal declaration, payment of royalties and taxes, regardless of whether the sale was through the Gems Emporium or directly to the buyer*
3. **Import permit** or declaration certificate of the country where the piece will be deposited (if the piece has been mailed, there should be a customs form associated with the package).
4. Proper documentation of the item(s) bought, including dimensions and weight.
5. If transported to multiple countries, the required export and (re-)import permits as per the regulation of the specific countries

(b) Material acquired before 2017

As 1–4 above. In case the documentation detailed in 1–4 are not available due to the material's age, then a **signed declaration** from the owner about the provenance of the material should be provided, including photographs that may support previous ownership. This includes museums, which should provide assistance in determining the origins of the material as per the International Council of Museums (ICOM) code of ethics. This declaration should be accompanied with at least two of the following three pieces of information/documentation:

1. Proof of purchase such as an invoice or a receipt
2. Customs declaration
3. Metadata from photographs and source of said photograph that can be assessed
4. Published records of the fossil material, if applicable.