
Updated 17 February 2022

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 material 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 *1957 Antiquities Law*, and the *2015 Protection and Preservation of Antique Objects Law* (summarized in [this document](#)), and are relevant to any material from Myanmar, regardless of whether the mines were located in conflict zones or not. The Myanmar situation is a fluid one, and each case is unique. As such, the guidelines below may be updated in response to additional information or comments. Comments and questions concerning this document can be submitted to svp@vertpaleo.org with "SVP Myanmar Working Group" in the subject line.

Reporting of the material

In accordance with *Myanmar Protection and Preservation of Antique Objects Law (2016)*, the fossil material(s) 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 realize that due to the coup and the unprecedented nature of such proceedings, this may currently be problematic. Updates will be made to this document when and if more information on this procedure is available.

Provenance of the material

The documentation summaries below, which are based on the *Myanmar Gemstone Law (1995 as amended 2016)*, are divided into two time periods: (a) prior to and (b) following the June 2017 military takeover of control of the mining regions. This reflects the timing of when the military took control over a portion of 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 the material(s) has(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 as from June 2017

1. Proof of purchase (e.g. invoice, receipt); ideally this will contain provenance (or approximate location), trader contact information, purchase date, list of material purchased, including dimensions and weight

- a. Additional documentation containing list of material in amber purchased, including dimensions and weight if not included in the above.
2. If purchased or collected:
 - 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 or collector
 - ii. *Only gems and jewelry purchased at the licensed dealers, or those 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 (from Myanmar)**
 - 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 material will be deposited (if the material has been mailed, there should be a customs form associated with the package).
4. If transported to multiple countries, the required export and (re-)import permits, as per the regulations of the specific countries.

(b) Material acquired before June 2017

As 1–5 above. In case the documentation detailed in 1–5 is 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 also 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 four pieces of information/documentation:

1. Proof of purchase (e.g. invoice, receipt); ideally this will contain provenance (or approximate location), trader contact information, purchase date, list of material purchased, including dimensions and weight
2. Customs declaration showing date item was shipped/transported from Myanmar
3. Metadata from photographs which support previous ownership and source of said photograph
4. Previous publication record(s) of the material with reference to current or original catalogue number(s), if applicable.