

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Fourteenth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Windhoek (Namibia), 16-20 February 2004

PROPOSED PROCESS FOR SELECTING SPECIES TO BE INCLUDED  
IN THE SIGNIFICANT TRADE REVIEW

1. This document has been prepared by TRAFFIC in consultation with IUCN and UNEP-WCMC.
2. Resolution Conf. 12.8 directs the Animals and Plants Committees, in co-operation with the Secretariat and experts, and in consultation with range States, to review the biological, trade and other relevant information on Appendix-II species subject to significant levels of trade. An initial and critical step in this process is the selection of species to be subject to review. Resolution Conf. 12.8 calls for the selection process to be based on a review of CITES annual report data and additional information available to the Animals and Plants Committees. Other than specifying the timing of the production of summary trade data by UNEP-WCMC, the Resolution does not establish procedures for the selection process.
2. The following proposes a process for species selection allowing for a combined review of CITES annual report data and other information collected from the Parties and experts knowledgeable in species biology and trade. It is intended to provide sufficient time for Animals and Plants Committee members to consider fully the information presented prior to selecting species for review.
3. Resolution Conf. 12.8 requires the Secretariat to request UNEP-WCMC to produce a summary from the CITES database of annual report statistics showing the recorded net level of exports for Appendix-II species over the five most recent years. This summary is required to be produced within 90 days after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties. During its 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Animals Committee recommended that the Secretariat communicate with UNEP-WCMC with regard to producing data summaries in a manner facilitating their review by the Committee. UNEP-WCMC has developed a series of analytical tools aimed at facilitating data analysis, including for, example, analysis of trends in total net export volumes. The results of such analyses help identify species for which trade volumes and trends indicate a potential problem, and can be usefully combined with information on status and trade in the species selection process, as demonstrated in PC 14 Doc. 9.3.
4. Per the Resolution, and taking advantage of the statistical tests developed by UNEP-WCMC, within 90 days after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, an electronic spreadsheet of CITES net export data for the most recent 10 years should be made available on the CITES website. These data should exclude specimens declared as captive-bred or artificially propagated, but include specimens declared as originating from ranching operations or for which no source was provided. Data should be provided for all species recorded in trade, but configured to allow filtering to identify species for which average trade volumes exceed 100 animals or 250 plants per year during the most recent five years.
5. The results of various statistical tests developed by UNEP-WCMC, e.g. trend, variation, minimum trade volumes and/or other criteria established, should also be prepared and provided by UNEP-WCMC via the CITES website. One option for data presentation would be to include these results in separate columns within the data files, allowing Committee members and others to sort and/or filter the data according to test results. This would allow, for example, a subset of species to be selected for which trade was increasing over time. The availability of the data and a reminder of the

associated steps in the significant trade review process should be announced via Notification, and Parties and experts asked to provide the Secretariat with information regarding potential species of concern.

6. In order to further assist the Animals and Plants Committees with the species selection process, the Secretariat, with the assistance of UNEP-WCMC and other experts, should conduct a more thorough analysis of the trade data and additional information. As an initial step, a list of species declared in international trade should be compared with the IUCN Red List, and trade in those classified as threatened according to IUCN examined in more detail. Should the necessary data be forthcoming in electronic format in future, a facility to automatically compare export, quota, distribution and status data at the country level should also be developed.
7. Analytical tests such as those developed by UNEP-WCMC should be used to help identify species for which further examination is merited in the selection process. Working Groups of the two Committees might wish to consider the application of these and other tests in further detail, including as they might be applied to assessing trade from individual range States.
8. This further data review should be combined with collection and review of information from experts likely to have knowledge of the harvest, trade and status of the species concerned, and from relevant data sources. This should include information on domestic and illegal trade levels where available. Special attention should be drawn to those species for which Red List information and statistical tests indicate cause for concern. Experts to be consulted should include, for example, members of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the TRAFFIC network, FAO, other Convention Secretariats (e.g. CMS, CBD) and other relevant institutions. Subsets of the data, including on the country of origin of specimens in trade, should be provided to experts based on their taxonomic and/or geographic expertise, and also made available to Committee members as requested. Experience with conducting such rapid reviews indicates that clear guidance regarding the question at hand is required, but that a formal questionnaire is not necessary. Information received in response to the Secretariat's Notification should also be considered.
9. Although a search of recent literature would be ideal, resources for such a search are likely to be limited, and reliance on expert advice more cost effective. In some cases, however, a rapid review of information available from, for example, websites, may assist in a final determination of whether to propose a species for review.
10. Information received should be compiled and reviewed by an expert consultation group convened by the Secretariat. Species for which available evidence indicates that trade is within sustainable levels should be eliminated from the list of candidate species. Information on species for which available evidence indicates that trade from one or more range States potentially exceeds sustainable levels should be summarised in concise text for communication to the Animals and Plants Committees. Additional information should be sought where the situation is less clear, and, as appropriate, the species either removed from further consideration or proposed for inclusion in the review process. A list of such species should also be provided to the Committees for their information, and further information provided if requested. In keeping with Resolution Conf. 12.8, species previously reviewed should not necessarily be eliminated from the selection process. It is not unlikely, for example, for a decline in exports from a country responding to recommendations prompted by an earlier review to be followed by an increase in exports from other countries. Nor is it impossible that exports from a country previously subject to recommendations might reach unsustainable levels in future. Species listed in Appendix II during the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties should not normally be considered in this review.
11. Given the importance of adequate time to consider such information prior to determining the list of species for review, this information should be made available to the Committees no later than 30 days prior to the first Committee meeting following a meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

#### Issues requiring further consideration

12. The decision to exclude data on artificially propagated and captive-bred specimens appropriately focuses attention on specimens of wild origin. However, a process to regularly review such data might be considered in parallel, to assist with identification of possible mis-reporting.

13. Trade in plant species, especially trade in other than live specimens, is often poorly reported by CITES Parties, including with regard to the identification of species in trade. As a result, problems of Article IV implementation may not be discernible. Although expert information may highlight some species known to be of concern that are not recorded to the species level in CITES trade data, other species are likely to escape detection. Given the very large size of some plant genera, the genus *Dendrobium*, for example, it would seem unlikely that sufficient resources would be available to undertake a thorough review during the initial selection or even subsequent phases of the significant trade review process. It might be more practical, therefore, to focus such studies on higher taxa in individual countries of export for which large volumes of trade are known and for which information is not readily available regarding the process of making non-detriment findings. This approach has previously been taken with regard to the trade in orchids from China and Thailand, for example, and has been recommended by UNEP-WCMC with regard to the trade in orchids from Viet Nam.
14. The initial phase of the significant trade review process is likely to identify species for which problems of CITES implementation are not strictly limited to Article IV implementation, e.g. CITES reported exports from non-range States and indications that actual trade far exceeds that recorded in CITES data. The Animals and Plants Committees, in consultation with the Standing Committee, should develop a corresponding process to facilitate a rapid response to such information.

**PROPOSED PROCESS FOR SELECTING SPECIES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE IN APPENDIX II SPECIES**

