

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control and marking

Use of taxonomic serial numbers

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STANDING COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS
ON USE OF TAXONOMIC SERIAL NUMBERS

1. This document has been submitted by Canada^{*}
2. At its 15th Meeting (Doha, 2010) the Conference of the Parties considered Taxonomic Serial Numbers (TSNs), and the potential for coded species data to increase consistency of species identification on permits, to alleviate tracking, monitoring and enforcement problems, and to facilitate collection by customs services of exchangeable species data
3. Canada believes that capture of accurate wildlife trade data is essential to tracking and monitoring international wildlife trade and enforcing international wildlife trade legislation.
4. For conservation and customs authorities to adequately collect, manage and share species data requires that the scientific name of a species appear as a distinct data element of customs documentation and data.
5. While Customs Authorities frequently use Harmonized System codes (HS codes) administered by the World Customs Organization, these codes do not always present data that would enable CITES enforcement authorities to identify content of shipments as CITES-listed species.
6. Effective tracking and sharing of international wildlife trade data requires simultaneous capture of two fundamental data types – data that names the wildlife species in trade, and data focussed on the products in trade derived from these species.
7. We consider that incorporation of Taxonomic Serial Numbers (permanent and unique numeric codes assigned to an individual taxonomic name) as an element of CITES data sets is a feasible means of accurately recording and tracking wildlife species in trade.
8. CITES incorporation of TSNs would facilitate comparison of CITES and non-CITES data sets that include TSNs, and assist Parties and other organizations wishing to employ the TSN in domestic customs or enforcement activities.

Recommendation

9. We recommend that the Standing Committee Working Group consider the above-mentioned factors in its investigations of the usefulness and feasibility of incorporating TSNs in CITES data sets.

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10. If the Working Group agrees that the idea of incorporating TSNs into CITES data sets has merit, we would also suggest that the group investigate if an existing system, such as the Integrated Taxonomic Information System, could best provide a source of TSNs, in consideration of dynamic and hierarchical needs associated with CITES-agreed nomenclature.