

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

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Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Kyoto (Japan), 2 to 13 March 1992

Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention

Marking of Specimens

USE OF CODED MICROCHIP IMPLANTS FOR MARKING LIVE ANIMALS IN TRADE

This document is submitted by the Commonwealth of Australia

Preamble

There is increasing use being made of coded microchip implants by collection managers employed with zoological gardens for the secure identification of certain highly-valued wild animals that are exhibited in establishments. Microchip implants are being used widely by veterinarians for permanently identifying household pets and valuable livestock.

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Lausanne, 1989) considered the matter of employing coded microchip implants for the secure identification of certain taxa included in the appendices to the Convention. Resolution Conf. 7.12 recommended adopting, on a trial basis, coded microchip implants for a sample range of high-value captive-bred Appendix-I taxa which are subject to international trade.

The fourth meeting of the Animals Committee (Darwin, 12-16 November, 1990) considered various aspects related to the practical use of transponders and recommended that:

- taxa which are subject to high volume trade and/or command a low unit value should be exempt from the use of microchip implants for the purposes of regulating international trade;
- a standardized site in an animal's anatomy should be agreed upon for the location of implants and recommended to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES;
- consideration also be given to the use of microchip implants for CITES-listed animals which form part of a travelling exhibition or circus.

In 1989 the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group, in recognizing that the use of microchips for the identification of live animals and the variety of systems being marketed were increasing, undertook an evaluation of the available technology. Criteria used by IUCN to evaluate systems included: product performance, commercial availability (as of 1 January 1991), international distribution and cost of hardware.

The Specialist Group agreed that:

- signal frequency should be in an internationally acceptable range (e.g. circa 128KHz);
- small transponders (circa 2 x 11 mm) are preferable to the medium and large varieties;
- pre-packaged, sterile transponders enclosed in needles results in easier and less traumatic use of these systems;
- the current limited "read-range" of most devices is short (<10 cm) and impractical for identifying animals at a distance;

- a central data base such as I.S.I.S., is the appropriate place to store transponder information;
- all taxa included in regional breeding programmes and CITES Appendix I should be identified with transponders;

The IUCN Specialist Group concluded that the product (EURO ID [TROVAN/AEB] - 129KHz) possessed the following advantages over its competition; greatest reading distance for the small size of chips currently in use, sterile, individually packaged chips, lowest unit cost per chip and general availability. Because of its superior properties, the product EURO ID should form the basis for developing a global standard to be adopted for the identification of live animals in trade.

The fifth meeting of the Animals Committee (Vancouver 19-23 August 1991) considered the results of the review undertaken by IUCN and resolved to recommend to the Conference of the Parties adoption of the preferred transponder system recommended by the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group (Annex).

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Use of Coded Microchip Implants for Marking Live Animals in Trade

RECOGNIZING the increasing wide use of coded microchip implants for the secure identification of animals, both within zoological gardens and for high value personal pets;

RECOGNIZING also the potential for the application of this method for the regulation of trade in certain other live animals listed in the appendices to the Convention;

CONCERNED that any such method employed to identify live animals in trade be uniform in its application;

RECALLING that Resolution Conf. 7.12 adopted at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Lausanne, 1989) recommended that the Animals Committee address further the issue of marking requirements for the identification of specimens of look-alike species for the purpose of developing practical marking strategies and systems, and that the use of coded microchip implants be adopted on a trial basis on a sample range of high value captive-bred Appendix-I taxa as determined by the Animals Committee and Parties involved;

NOTING that Management Authorities may permit the movement of travelling exhibitions or circuses without permits or certificates pursuant to Article VII, paragraph 7, of the Convention;

AWARE that the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group has undertaken an extensive review of the application of coded microchip implants;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOMMENDS

- a) that Parties adopt the general use of implantable transponder microchips for the secure identification of live captive-bred Appendix-I animals;
- b) that Parties accept the findings of the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group with respect to frequency, size of transponder and sterility of microchip;
- c) that microchip implants be applied, where consistent with the well-being of the specimens concerned, to live, captive-bred Appendix-I taxa that are subject to international trade;
- d) that the use of microchip implants be also applied to animals listed in Appendix I or Appendix II that are used in travelling exhibitions or circuses;
- e) that the location of implanted microchips be standardized according to advice from the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group;
- f) that all microchip codes be recorded on all relevant CITES documents;
- g) that all Parties maintain a register of microchip codes used to identify live captive-bred Appendix-I taxa and include such information in their annual reports to the Secretariat; and
- h) that the Secretariat liaise with the appropriate authority regarding access to the International Species Information System (ISIS), which has included a field in its database to record transponder numbers in order to establish a central repository for registration of microchip codes.