

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



Fifty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6-10 July 2009

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Amendment of the Appendices

CRITERIA FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

The attached document has been submitted by the Secretariat at the request of FAO*.

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

Examples of relevant text to highlight the consideration given to flexibility and data-poor cases in the assessment for listing species under CITES Annex 2a

Information Paper submitted by FAO

The following compilation of some relevant text from Annex 5 of the “Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II” (Conf. 9.24) is meant to highlight some of the flexibility in the CITES definitions and guidelines for the review of proposals to list species under Annex 2a, including those for which only little quantitative data exist. This compilation is not complete and cannot replace the full text contained in Annex 5 of Conf. 9.24. For a better understanding of the context, Annex 2a of Conf. 9.24 is also included.

Annex 2 a

Criteria for the inclusion of species in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention

The following criteria must be read in conjunction with the definitions, explanations and guidelines listed in Annex 5, including the footnote with respect to application of the definition of ‘decline’ for commercially exploited aquatic species.

A species should be included in Appendix II when, on the basis of available trade data and information on the status and trends of the wild population(s), **at least one** of the following criteria is met:

- A. It is known, or can be inferred or projected, that the regulation of trade in the species is necessary to avoid it becoming eligible for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future; or
- B. It is known, or can be inferred or projected, that regulation of trade in the species is required to ensure that the harvest of specimens from the wild is not reducing the wild population to a level at which its survival might be threatened by continued harvesting or other influences.

Extracts from Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14): Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II, Annex 5

Definitions, explanations and guidelines

NOTE: Where numerical guidelines are cited in this Annex, they are presented only as examples, since it is impossible to give numerical values that are applicable to all taxa because of differences in their biology.

...

Decline (see also footnote 2 below)

A ‘decline’ is a reduction in the abundance, or area of distribution, or area of habitat of a species. The assessment of decline by reference to area of habitat may be more appropriate where there are intrinsic difficulties in measuring the number of individuals.

...

The extremes of 5% and 30% will be applicable to only a relatively small number of species, but some species may even fall outside of these extremes. However, both these figures are presented only as examples, since it is impossible to give numerical values that are applicable to all taxa because of differences in their biology (2see footnote with respect to application of decline to commercially exploited aquatic species) (emphasis added).

A general guideline for a marked recent rate of decline is a percentage decline of 50% or more in the last 10 years or three generations, whichever is the longer. If the population is small, a percentage decline of 20% or more in the last 5 years or 2 generations (whichever is the longer) may be more appropriate. However, these figures are presented only as examples, since it is impossible to give numerical values that are applicable to all taxa because of differences in their biology (emphasis added).

The historical extent of decline and the recent rate of decline should be considered in conjunction with one another. In general, the higher the historical extent of decline, and the lower the productivity of the species, the more important a given recent rate of decline is.

In estimating or inferring the historical extent of decline or the recent rate of decline, all relevant data should be taken into account. A decline need not necessarily be ongoing. If data are available only for a short period and the extent or rate of decline based on these data are cause for concern, the guidelines above (extrapolated as necessary or relevant) should still apply (emphasis added). However, natural fluctuations should not normally count as part of a decline, but an observed decline should not necessarily be considered part of a natural fluctuation unless there is evidence for this. A decline that is the result of legal activities carried out pursuant to a scientifically based harvesting programme that reduces the population to a planned level, not detrimental to the survival of the species, would not normally be covered by the term 'decline'.

...

Inferred or projected

This refers to estimations using indirect or direct methods. Inferences may be made on the basis either of direct measurements or from indirect evidence. Projection involves extrapolation to infer likely future values.

...

Population issues

...

Small wild population

The judgement that a wild population is small is taxon-specific and can be justified by a number of considerations. For example, the population of a related taxonomic group. For some low-productivity species where data exist to make an estimate, a figure of less than 5,000 individuals has been found to be an appropriate guideline (not a threshold) of what constitutes a small wild population but the number could be higher for higher productivity species. However, this figure is presented only as an example, since it is impossible to give numerical values that are applicable to all taxa. There will be many cases where this numerical guideline does not apply (emphasis added).

Very small wild subpopulation

The judgement that a wild subpopulation is very small is taxon-specific. For some species where data exist to make an estimate, a figure of less than 500 individuals has been found to be an appropriate guideline (not a threshold) of what constitutes a very small wild subpopulation. However, this figure is presented only as an example, since it is impossible to give numerical values that are applicable to all taxa. There will be many cases where this numerical guideline does not apply (emphasis added).

...

Threatened with extinction

'Threatened with extinction' is defined by Annex 1. The vulnerability of a species to threats of extinction depends on its population demographics, biological characteristics (such as body size, trophic level, life cycle, breeding structure or social structure requirements for successful reproduction), and vulnerability due to aggregating habits, natural fluctuations in population size, and/or residency/migratory patterns. This makes it impossible to give numerical threshold values for population size or area of distribution that are applicable to all taxa (emphasis added).

...

Vulnerability

'Vulnerability' can be defined as the susceptibility to intrinsic or external effects which increase the risk of extinction (even when mitigating factors are taken into account). There are a number of taxon- or case-specific biological and other factors that may affect the extinction risk associated with a given percentage decline, small population size or restricted area of distribution (emphasis added). These can be, but are not limited to, aspects of any of the following:

Intrinsic factors

- Life history (e.g. low fecundity, slow growth rate of the individual, high age at first maturity, long generation time)
- Low absolute numbers or biomass or restricted area of distribution
- Population structure (age/size structure, sex ratio)
- Behavioural factors (e.g. social structure, migration, aggregating behaviour)
- Density (for sessile or semi-sessile species)
- Specialized niche requirements (e.g. diet, habitat)
- Species associations such as symbiosis and other forms of co-dependency
- Reduced genetic diversity
- Depensation (prone to continuing decline even in the absence of exploitation)
- Endemism
- Seed dispersal mechanism
- Specialized pollinators

Extrinsic factors

- Selectivity of removals (that may compromise recruitment)
- Threats from alien invasive species (hybridization, disease transmission, depredation, etc.)
- Habitat degradation (contamination, soil erosion, alteration by alien invasive species, etc.)
- Habitat loss/destruction
- Habitat fragmentation
- Harsh environmental conditions
- Threats from disease
- Rapid environmental change (e.g. climate regime shifts)
- Stochastic events

Footnote 2:

Application of decline for commercially exploited aquatic species

In marine and large freshwater bodies, a narrower range of 5-20% is deemed to be more appropriate in most cases, with a range of 5-10% being applicable for species with high productivity, 10-15% for species with medium productivity and 15-20% for species with low productivity. Nevertheless some species may fall outside this range (emphasis added). Low productivity is correlated with low mortality rate and high productivity with high mortality. One possible guideline for indexing productivity is the natural mortality rate, with the range 0.2-0.5 per year indicating medium productivity.

...

For listing in Appendix II, the historical extent of decline and the recent rate of decline should be considered in conjunction with one another. The higher the historical extent of decline, and the lower the productivity of the species, the more important a given recent rate of decline is.

...

Even if a population is not declining appreciably, it could be considered for listing in Appendix II if it is near the extent-of-decline guidelines recommended above for consideration for Appendix-I-listing. A range of between 5% and 10% above the relevant extent-of-decline might be considered as a definition of 'near', taking due account of the productivity of the species.

... When sufficient data are available, the recent rate-of-decline should be calculated over approximately a 10-year period. If fewer data are available, annual rates over a shorter period could be used (emphasis added). If there is evidence

of a change in the trend, greater weight should be given to the more recent consistent trend. In most cases, listing would only be considered if the decline were projected to continue.

In considering the percentages indicated above, account needs to be taken of taxon- and case-specific biological and other factors that are likely to affect extinction risk (emphasis added). Depending on the biology, patterns of exploitation and area of distribution of the taxon, vulnerability factors (as listed in this Annex) may increase this risk, whereas mitigating factors (e.g. large absolute numbers or refugia) may reduce it.