

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

This document has been submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran.*

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Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel very unfortunate not being able to attend the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties in Doha. As the principal author of the proposal I am very impatient to hear that the Luristan mountain newt becomes amended to appendix I of CITES because beyond any doubt I believe that illegal collecting for national and international pet trade is the main threatening factor for the existence of this species.

Neurergus kaiseri is inhabitant of very remote parts of Zagros Mountains in southern Iran. In this area human population density is remarkably low and includes mostly of nomads who have a short presence during spring and summer. There is no sign of water quality deterioration or water abstraction as it is seen in many parts of the country. Yet, there exist one of the most beautiful salamanders of the world which by IUCN criteria is critically endangered. Meanwhile there are strong evidences of an international trade of this species and other threats. High market value of this species in Europe, USA and Japan, the low number of organism in existence, the difficulty of breeding this species in captivity, presence of exotic fish, its vulnerability, fluctuation in stream discharge under the influence of recent global warming and the risk of vandalism leave no time for scientific precautions. It is just absolutely essential to prohibit trade of this species, since if this is not done, in a short time *N.kaiseri* will be one more in the already long list of extinct species. We have experienced this for *Neurergus crocatus* in northern Zagross where there is no report of this species for over 50 years and another glooming situation for *N.micropiletus* in mid-Zagros. The fate of the species of the genus *Neurergus* is well correlated with human density. This may be another Centinelan Extinction. There shouldn't be another silent extinction.

I agree everyone knows the tiger, the panda, and the blue whale. We have witnessed the extinction of the Caspian tiger and the Persian lion in this country in 1940s but what about the Luristan newt? I believe unlike their body mass there are stunning similarities between the Luristan newt and the other two extinct megaspecies of Iran. Like tiger and lion Luristan newt is a top predator of its very diverse community, the benthic macroinvertebrates. Like other predator it may well control productivity of the periphyton community of the streams. When we lost tiger and lion there was no concept of "biodiversity" and no ethical values for conservation of biodiversity and we shouldn't let body mass make a difference. Yes, there shouldn't be another Centinelan Extinction

To see that Luristan mountain newt plays its role as an international heritage, you should help Iranian conservation biologists and for that there shouldn't be another Centinelan Extinction.



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