Testudo horsfieldii from Uzbekistan

1)Provide information and details on source codes for different specimens and how individuals from different sources are differentiated;

According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 290 of October 20, 2014, "Regulations on the Procedure of Permit Procedures in the Sphere of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)", paragraph-18, source codes are defined as follows:

W - specimens taken from nature;

R - specimens originate from specialized wildlife breeding nurseries;

D - animals and plants included in Annex I, bred in captivity (artificially bred) for commercial purposes, as well as their parts and derivatives, which are exported in accordance with Article VII, paragraph 4 of the Convention;

A - artificially bred plants and parts and derivatives thereof (specimens of Annex I species artificially bred for other than commercial purposes and specimens of Annex II and III species);

C - captive-bred animals and their parts and derivatives (specimens of Annex I species bred in captivity not for commercial purposes and specimens of Annex II and III species);

F - the first generation of captive-born animals that do not fully meet the definition of "captive-bred" and their parts and derivatives;

U - source of origin unknown;

I - confiscated or impounded specimens;

If the generation was derived from two mature individuals with source code W that have recently been in the wild, or if only one of these individuals has been in the wild, the source code for this kind of individual is F1 (first generation bred in captivity).

(https://lex.uz/docs/2485767#:~:text=%D0%B1)%20%D0%B2%20%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B5%20%C2%ABSource%20/%20%D0%98%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA%C2%BB%3A) The document is available in Uzbek and Russian languages.

Animals bred in facilities (nursery) differ significantly from their wild species. Under kennel conditions, animals grow much faster and have evident growth zones that are not pigmented and remain light yellow. This is a natural marker characteristic only for animals raised in a nursery, unlike wild species. *Photo.1*.

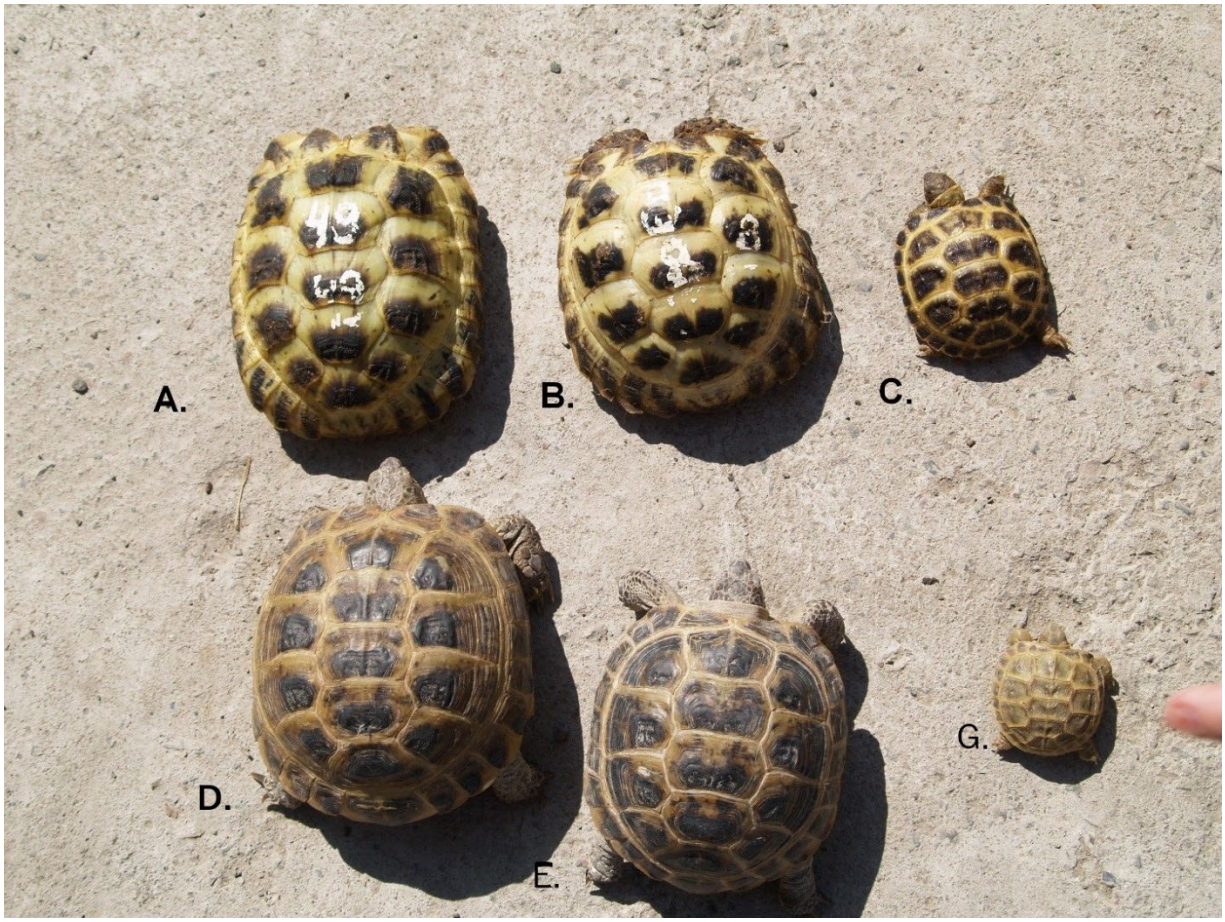

Photo 1.

A and **B** – are ranched (R) - 2 years old
C – 2 months;
D -11 years, **E** - 8 years, **G** - 2 years old. (Wild).

EVIDENCE ON THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE SUCH HIGH NUMBERS OF SPECIMENS

Currently, there are 16 nurseries in Uzbekistan that are engaged in keeping and breeding Testudo horsfieldii.

The total number of (sexually) mature species in these nurseries is 43,957 species. 74% of these are females ♀ the remaining 23% are males and ♂ 3% of which sex has not been determined.

Reproductive capacity of mature species is 1.8 - 2.3 heads per 1 female.

INFORMATION ON INITIAL STOCK, SUBSEQUENT INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNUAL PRODUCTION

When forming and removing animals from the wild to create breeding stock, nursery owners are committed to adhering to the principle of non-detriment to the population and are guided by the following criteria:

- In areas designated for construction.
- Regions where land is being repurposed for agricultural needs.
- Confiscated turtles, whose return to the wild is challenging.

- Rearing of juvenile individuals.
- Removal of mature individuals, on a small scale, strictly based on scientific grounds and with justification from the Scientific Authority.

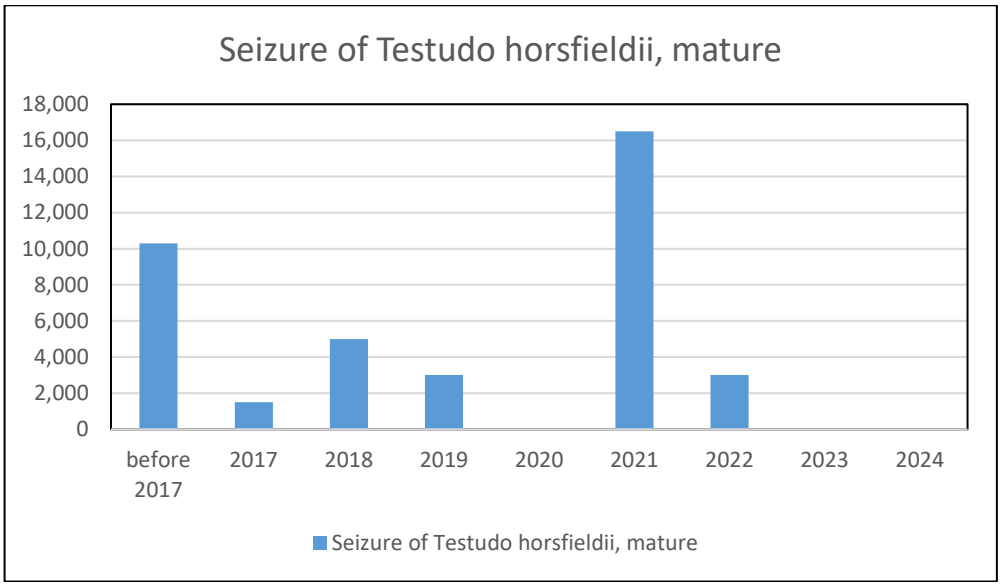

Photo 6. *Seizure of breeding stock (M) by year since 2017. (see Appendix No.1 to this report).*

Since only 1-3% of juveniles survive in the wild, and we return 10% of the removed species that reach 6 cm, making them less vulnerable to predators, the location of tortoise removal is of little significance. The release takes place in areas with few or no juvenile individuals, partly in regions where eggs or juveniles were originally collected. Release sites are agreed upon with the Academy of Sciences and monitored by the CITES Management Authority (Ministry of Ecology). The survival rate of released juveniles is monitored for the first two years, ranging from 70% to 96%. In predator-heavy areas with accessible water, the survival rate drops to 50%. Marking of released tortoises is unnecessary due to their noticeable differences from wild individuals, which persist for over two years. The latest introduction involved 1 332 (C) captive bred species, in 2019.

Breeding out Testudo horsfieldii in Uzbekistan:

	R	**F1**	**C**	
2020	17 100	26 446	6 000	
2021	7 125	47 198	2 500	
2022		106 081		
2023		70 959		

Or see the official CITES website:
https://cites.org/eng/resources/quotas/export_quotas?field_country_target_id=179&field_species_target_id=Testudo+horsfieldii&field_specimens_target_id=&field_date_value%5Bmin%5D=2019-01-01&field_date_value%5Bmax%5D=2024-12-31

Ре-интродукция черепахи в природу.

Самаркандский вилоят, апрель 2011 г.

23 апреля 2011 года в присутствии старшего специалиста Комитета охраны природы Самаркандского вилоята Д. Рузибоева, представителей Госбиоконтроля Госкомприроды РУз и ООО «Зоокмплекс» Е. Перегонцева и К. Халимон было выпущено 650 черепашат, выращенных из яиц в ООО «Зоокомплекс».
150 черепашат было выпущено в окрестностях кишлака Охун Нурабадского района Самаркандского вилоята.
500 черепашат было выпущено в окрестностях водохранилища «Собирсай» Нурабадского района Самаркандского вилоята.

2011 йил 23 апрелда Самарқанд вилояти Табиатни муҳофаза қилиш қўмитаси бош мутахассиси Д.Рўзибоев, Давбионазорат ходими Е. Перегонцев ва «Зоокомплекс» МЧЖ ходими К.Халимон иштирокида «Зоокомплекс» МЧЖнинг тухумдан ўстирилган 650 дона 1 ёшлик тошбақалари табиатга қўйиб юборилди
Самарқанд вилояти Нуробод тумани Охун қишлоғи ҳудудида 150 дона, Нуробод тумани Собирсой сув омбори сув киришига нисбатан ўнг қирқоғи худудига 500 дона тошбақалар қўйиб юборилди.

РЕ-ИНТРОДУКЦИЯ ЧЕРЕПАХИ В ПРИРОДУ
ТОШБАҚАЛАРНИ ТАБИАТГА РЕИНТРОДУКЦИЯ ҚИЛИШ

Джизакский вилоят, май 2012 Жиззах вилояти май 2012 йил

11-го мая 2012 года в Зааминском районе Джизакской области Республики Узбекистан была проведена природоохранная акция по ре-интродукции (выпуску) среднеазиатских черепах, выращенных из яиц (по методу ранчинга) в ООО "ЗООКОМПЛЕКС".
В акции принимали участие специалист 1-категории отдела кадастра и мониторинга Госбиоконтроля Госкомприроды РУз В.О.Сударев, ведущий специалист инспекции Биоконтроля Джизакского областного комитета по охране природы К.С.Мингбоев, специалист 2-категории И.У.Кулматов, начальник районного комитета охраны природы Зааминского района И.Н.Тошбоев, представитель ООО "ЗООКОМПЛЕКС" В.Н.Пак, редактор отдела Джизакского телерадиоканала А.Жулматов.
В их присутствии был осуществлен выпуск на природу 2000 черепах в возрасте от одного до трёх лет в окрестностях кишлаков Бешкуби, Корамозор и Каримсой, расположенных на территории КФИ Бешкуба Зааминского района. Данный процесс был заснят на видеокамеру Джизакского телерадиоканала и информационной службы хокимията Зааминского района.

2012 йил 11 май куни Ўзбекистон Республикаси Жиззах вилояти Зомин туманида ООО "ЗООКОМПЛЕКС" да тухумлардан ўстирилган (ранчинг усули бўйича) Ўрта Осиё тошбакаларни реинтродукция (чиқариш) бўйича табиатни муҳофаза қилиш акцияси амалга оширилди.
Ушбу акцияда Ўзбекистон Республикаси табиатни муҳофаза қилиш қўмитаси Бионазорат бош бошқармаси кадастр мониторинг бўлими 1-тоифали мутахасиси Сударев Владимир Олегович, Жиззах вилояти табиатни муҳофаза қилиш қўмитаси Бионазорат инспекцияси етакчи мутахассиси Мингбоев Қобил Султанкулович, 2-тоифали мутахассиси Қулматов Исмат Улатович, Зомин туман табиатни муҳофаза қилиш бўлими бошлиғи Тошбоев Исматило Нишонбоевич, ООО "ЗООКОМПЛЕКС" ов махсулотларни тайёрловчи В.Н.Пак, Жиззах телерадиоканали бўлим мухарири А.Жўлматовлар иштирок этдилар.
Уларнинг олдида Бешкуби ҚФЙга қарашли худудида жойлашган Бешкуби, Қорамозор ва Қаримсой қишлоғи дала майдогларига 2000 (икки минг) дона бир ёшдан уч ёшгача бўлган тошбақаларни табиат қўйнига қўйиб юборилди. Ушбу жараённи Жиззах телерадиоканали ҳамда Зомин туман хокимлиги ахборот хизмати томонидан видеотасвирга олинди.

Ре-интродукция черепах в Навойской области Нуратинский район

4 июня 2019 года в Навоийской области, Нуратинского района в окрестности посёлка Кызылча сотрудниками ООО "ZOOCOMPLEX" Сорочинским Г.Я., Сорочинским В.Г., Пак В.Н., Икрамовым У.Н., и в присутствии начальника отдела по биоразнообразию Навоийской области Эргашева Ш.Ш. было выпущено 1332 головы Среднеазиатской степной черепахи выращенной в питомнике ООО "ZOOCOMPLEX".

















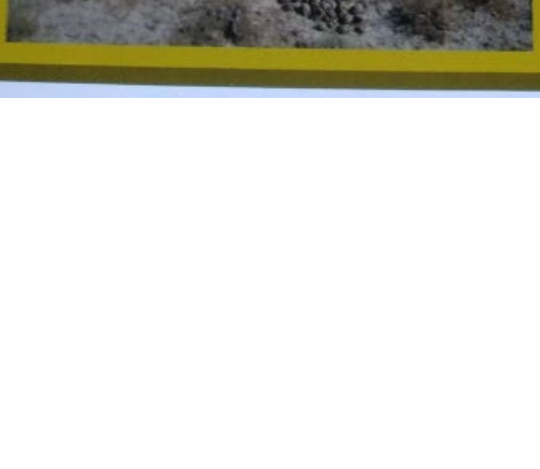


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INFORMATION ON WHAT MEASURES UZBEKISTAN IS TAKING TO ENSURE THAT WILD SPECIMENS CANNOT BE LAUNDERED THROUGH CAPTIVE-BREEDING FACILITIES AND EXPORTED AS SPECIMENS REPORTED AS PRODUCED IN CAPTIVITY

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, there are 16 registered nurseries dedicated to the breeding of *Testudo horsfieldii*. All these nurseries undergo regular inspections conducted by the Ministry of ecology, environmental protection, and climate change of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Each nursery submits annual reports to the Ministry, detailing the number of breeding stock, the number of offspring produced, the condition of the animals, and any other changes. All acquisitions of tortoises are recorded both in the nurseries and with the Ministry. If necessary, records related to the acquisition and breeding of animals are also checked during inspections.

At the end of each year, nursery owners or their representatives submit applications to obtain an export quota. The CITES Management Authority, which participates in inspections, ensures that the animals in the nurseries meet the criteria established by the CITES Conference Resolutions. In particular, the quantity requested for the export quota is checked, as well as the verification that the animals were bred in captivity, the breeding stock was legally acquired, mating and egg-laying occurred within the nursery, and incubation and rearing were conducted under controlled conditions.

When submitting an application for nursery registration, a team of 2-3 inspectors visits the proposed nursery site to evaluate the facilities and equipment. By the time of the application, the nursery, enclosures, shelving, and other conditions must be prepared to accommodate land tortoises.

During inspections of nurseries, documents confirming the legitimacy of the nursery and the legality of acquiring the breeding stock of Testudo horsfieldii are thoroughly reviewed. Inspectors also examine (monitor) the enclosures and other facilities used for housing the tortoises to ensure that the animals cannot escape and that wild animals cannot enter the enclosures. Particular attention is paid to the feeding regimen, living conditions, sanitary state, and the absence of injuries or behavioral abnormalities in the animals.

Based on the results of the initial inspection (monitoring), an informative report is prepared. This report is subsequently sent to the Academy of Sciences for assessment and confirmation of the facility's ability to breed and maintain Testudo horsfieldii. If any deficiencies are identified, the scientific body provides recommendations for their rectification in writing, based on scientifically substantiated facts. Once the deficiencies have been addressed, the nursery owner or their authorized representative submits a repeat application. A decision on the registration of the nursery is then made during the standard procedure.

Obtaining a quota for the seizure of breeding stock (mature) from the wild. If the Ministry of Ecology sets a quota for the seizure and issues permission to

seize breeding stock (mature), the Testudo horsfieldii species are registered both in the nursery owners' data and with the regulatory authority – the Ministry of Ecology.

Annually, the owners of nurseries submit reports on the number of breeding stock (mature), the number of eggs, and the young tortoises hatched from those eggs. During the inspection of the nursery, documents are checked to verify the legitimacy of the nursery and the legality of acquiring the breeding stock. The enclosures and all facilities for housing the Testudo horsfieldii are inspected to ensure that the exit of tortoises from the enclosures is impossible, and that the penetration of wild animals into the enclosures is also prevented. The feeding regimen, living conditions, sanitary state, as well as the absence of injuries and abnormal behavior are reviewed.

Agrionemys horsfieldii (also known as *Testudo horsfieldii*), unlike closely related species such as *Testudo graeca* and *Testudo hermanii*, has a unique characteristic. When bred in nurseries, the growth zones remain light yellow for an extended period, regardless of external conditions. These growth zones are used to track the growth rate of tortoises in nurseries and serve as a natural marker (identifier), allowing easy differentiation between captive-bred tortoises and wild individuals.

All nurseries undergo annual inspections during key periods of the tortoises' biological cycle, such as mating, egg laying, incubation, hatching, and growth.

Photo 2. Mating in the nursery

Characteristic differences between nursery-bred and wild specimens of the Central Asian tortoise:

Photo 3. Bred in the nursery

Photo 4. Wild species

HOW TO DIFFER WILD HORSFIELD TORTOISES
Agrionemys (Testudo) horsfieldii
FROM THOSE BRED AND REARED IN CAPTIVITY?

Prepared by PEREGONTSEV Evgeniy A. and SOROCHINSKIY Georgiy Y.
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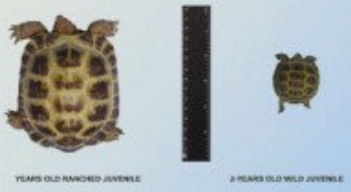
YEAR-OLD RANCHED JUVENILE 1-YEAR OLD WILD JUVENILE

Lately in Great Britain and some other countries of EC is observed significant import of land tortoises, the large quantity of which are Horsfield tortoise Agrionemys (Testudo) horsfieldii. The main amount of tortoises is imported legally but illegal import of tortoises also takes place. More often, the contraband tortoises are imported from Central Asian countries via Ukraine and countries of Eastern Europe.
In connection with the ban of the CITES European Commission for import of wild tortoises in the EC countries, the number of nurseries and farms on breading and rearing tortoises in captivity began to develop actively with the aim of further export and trade. However, not all nurseries and ranching farms fulfil their obligations on breeding tortoises conscientiously. There are cases when instead of tortoises bred in captivity are exported wild specimens. Besides, some exporters in EC countries use the documents obtained for import of ranched tortoises to legalize the contraband shipments of wild tortoises.

Such situation is negative in many aspects:
- illegal import of animals is a negative phenomenon in itself;
- possible undermining of wild populations;
- the cheaper price on wild tortoises is a negative stimulus for real breeders and have a negative effect on the programs on breeding tortoises in captivity.

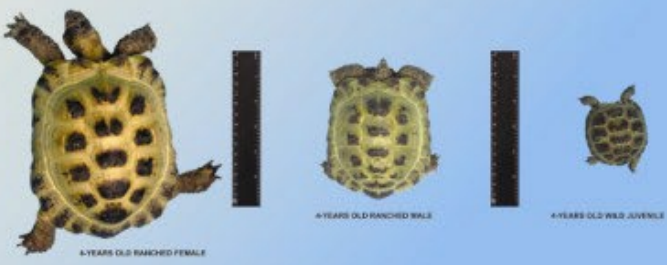


YEARS OLD RANCHED JUVENILE 2-YEARS OLD WILD JUVENILE

The company "Zoocomplex", having one of the main activity the breeding of tortoises by ranching (incubation of eggs taken from wild females and rearing the young tortoises up to certain dimensions) is also troubled by this situation. Taking into account our own many years experience on breeding and rearing Horfield tortoises, we'd like to propose how one can differ bred tortoises from the wild ones at the young age (since adult tortoises bred in captivity for a long time are available at present in a small number, and it is also scarcely probable, that the nurseries should trade their mature total number and adult tortoises).
According to EC CITES requirements the tortoises imported in EC countries must be no less than 60 mm in length.

YEARS OLD RANCHED JUVENILE 3-YEARS OLD WILD JUVENILE

CONCLUSION
- THE TORTOISE BRED IN CAPTIVITY IS MUCH LARGER THAN THE WILD ONE.
- THE WILD TORTOISE HAS MORE NARROW ANNUAL RINGS, I.E.
- THE LIGHT ZONE OF GROWTH IN WILD TORTOISES IS MUCH MORE NARROW THAT IN TORTOISES BRED IN CAPTIVITY OF THE SAME SIZE.
- THE BRED TORTOISE HAS NO SHABBY SHELL AND



4-YEARS OLD RANCHED FEMALE 4-YEARS OLD RANCHED MALE 4-YEARS OLD WILD JUVENILE

WILD TORTOISE (LEFT) AND RANCHED TORTOISE (RIGHT) IN A PET SHOP IN PARIS, JUNE 2003

5-YEARS OLD RANCHED FEMALE 5-YEARS OLD RANCHED MALE 5½-YEARS OLD WILD JUVENILE

THE VERY OLD GIANT FEMALE FROM EAST KYZYL KUM DESERT THE GIANT MALE 18-20 YEARS OLD FROM EAST KYZYL KUM DESERT THE STANDARD MORE THAN 20 YEARS OLD MALE THE STANDARD MORE THAN 20 YEARS OLD FEMALE

In 2003, Uzbekistan raised concerns about the increasing cases of wild tortoises being substituted with those bred in captivity. This issue was addressed in a report presented at the World Congress on Steppe Tortoises. The core problem highlighted was the necessity for nurseries to adhere strictly to regulations in order to prevent such fraudulent practices, which could undermine conservation efforts and contribute to the illegal trade of wild species. The report emphasized the importance of maintaining reliable monitoring systems and conducting regular inspections to ensure the authenticity of captive-bred animals.

For each nursery, information is gathered and stored both in digital and traditional formats:

1. Availability of cattery registration
2. Legality of purchased breeding stock
3. Availability of documents for additional breeding stock
4. Composition of breeding stock and sex ratio
5. Number of eggs obtained from registered breeding stock over specific periods
6. Mortality of hatchlings or infertile eggs
7. Export application specifying the number of tortoises
8. Annual report including information on all animals, their number, age, and condition
9. Acts of inspections carried out by ministry officials
10. Video and photo reports sent by the nursery

The Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan regularly conducts and participates in seminars and training sessions with representatives from customs and law enforcement agencies, special services, the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as interested environmental NGOs. These sessions focus on preventing illegal wildlife trade, particularly concerning species included in CITES lists and the Red Book of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Additionally, representatives from Central Asian countries, such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, as well as neighboring countries, actively participate in these events to foster cooperation on nature conservation issues and combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

1) **“Import and export of animals and plants and their parts and their protection”** with the participation of the Customs Committee, the Customs Academy, the Ministry of Ecology and the Academy of Sciences and the NGO “ECOMAKTAB” (trans. ECOSCHOOL)
(https://t.me/customschannel/29302)


The international meeting **«Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade»** for law enforcement officials from Central Asian countries aims to strengthen efforts against wildlife trafficking. It supports the region's law enforcement by sharing expertise and addressing gaps in legislation. The project targets reducing illegal trafficking of wildlife and their parts, improving capacity building, and enhancing cross-border collaboration. This initiative is part of a five-year program launched in 2021 involving Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to tackle wildlife crime and bolster regional security.

(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18VGd44m8wpYn6_hHY6SNmdTxkSeKFyBK?usp=sharing)

3) An international practical seminar on "**Advanced training of service dogs for prevention of wildlife crime**" was organized at the National Cynological Center for cynologists of customs services in cooperation with Fauna & Flora International and TRAFFIC. The seminar was attended by staff of the Customs Committee, international environmental organizations, representatives of the canine services of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and other interested officials.

- Source (https://t.me/customschannel/40209).Available in uzbek language.
- Gallery (https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1E3y2I1GPkiGGUjYD2qHsBSqKyc2VQ22i?usp=drive_link)

Information on whether they intend to move all trade to captive breeding in the future.

The CITES Management Authority of Uzbekistan hopes to eliminate the seizure of wild tortoises. There is an intention to increase the number of ranching, captive bred and farmed species, with subsequent introduction of 10% into habitats annually.

15. Testudo horsfieldii / Uzbekistan

Short-term Actions:

i. Establish an annual zero export quota for sources codes W and R within 90 days for Testudo horsfieldii and communicate the quota to the Secretariat.

Zero export quota for sources codes W and R will be established.

ii. No exports should occur until the quota has been published on the Secretariat's website.

No exports will occur until quota is published.

iii. Before making any increases to this quota, the planned changes should be communicated by the range State to the Secretariat and Chair of the Animals Committee along with a justification of how the change is conservative, based on estimates of sustainable off-take that make use of available scientific information, for their agreement.

Any change to the quota will be communicated with Secretariat and Chair.

iv. Clarify why there were high levels of exports of wild sourced specimens reported in 2020 and 2021 (years in which harvest from the wild was reported to have stopped)

Exports in 2020 of 14,458 are the balance of previous quotas. As for the 109 wild tortoises exported in 2021, this is the remainder of the export quota for 2020.