

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



Thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-21 July 2018

Strategic matters

Capacity building and identification materials

UPDATE OF THE IDENTIFICATION GUIDE
FOR CITES-LISTED ALLIGATOR LIZARDS (*ABRONIA* SPP.)

1. This document has been submitted by the Scientific Authority of México.*

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted the inclusion of species of the genus *Abronia* spp. in the CITES Appendices, as follows:

Appendix	Listing of <i>Abronia</i> spp.
I	<i>Abronia anzueto</i> <i>Abronia campbelli</i> <i>Abronia fimbriata</i> <i>Abronia frosti</i> <i>Abronia meledona</i>
II	<i>Abronia</i> spp. [except the species included in Appendix I (zero export quota for wild specimens for <i>Abronia aurita</i> , <i>A. gaiophasma</i> , <i>A. montecristoi</i> , <i>A. salvadorensis</i> and <i>A. vasconcelosii</i>)]

3. To facilitate implementation of the listing, the Scientific Authority of México (CONABIO) coordinated the preparation of an identification guide for the genus *Abronia*. The guide was developed by two experts: Oscar Sánchez Herrera (biologist), and Israel Solano Zavaleta (MSc), with feedback from several experts and from the Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA).
4. The main diagnostic trait used in the Guide is the number of scales and their position, thereby enabling non-experts to correctly identify 29 species from the genus. Further, it provides updated information on historic distribution, conservation status as per the IUCN Red List, and level of protection afforded under Mexican legislation and CITES for each species.

* 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.

5. At the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, 2017), Mexico submitted document AC29 Doc. 19, which included the first draft of the “Identification Guide for species of the genus *Abronia*”. At Mexico’s request, the Committee agreed to send feedback for the purpose of improving the guide.

Progress achieved

6. Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America sent feedback within the time limit established at the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee, as a result of which, a note was included to indicate that the guide is useful for identifying adult specimens. Further, the authors are working on a peer-reviewed paper for publication that includes a dichotomous key.
7. Thanks to the support of nature specialists and photographers, the guide includes images for 27 of the 29 species of *Abronia* spp. We have yet to find images of *Abronia matudai* and *A. salvadorensis*; accordingly, we request the valuable support of the Parties in order to complete the digital version of the Guide that is currently available.
8. As a result of the update, the Guide has been re-designed and will now be available in two formats: a) a printed information leaflet; and b) an interactive PDF file for electronic tablets and smartphones. The interactive PDF format allows users to browse through the different species, and contains contextual information on CITES provisions, with links to further information, images and real-time maps on the following websites: CONABIO’s image database, EncicloVida, and Naturalista. See the information document.
9. Thanks to the support of the North American Region, the leaflet is available in English, French, and Spanish in the Annex hereto and on the website of the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico (CONABIO): <http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/planeta/cites/guias.html>

Recommendations to the Animals Committee

10. The members of the Animals Committee are invited to:
 - a) Note Mexico’s progress in the development of identification material for the genus *Abronia*;
 - b) Request the Secretariat to publish the Identification Guide for CITES-listed alligator lizards on the Convention’s website;
 - c) Encourage the CITES Enforcement Authorities of importing, exporting, and re-exporting Parties to use the Guide, and to inform other authorities involved in CITES enforcement at ports, airports, and borders of its availability; and
 - d) Invite the Parties and other players to review the different formats of the Guide (Information document) and send feedback, including photographs of *Abronia matudai* and *Abronia salvadorensis*, to the Scientific Authority of Mexico: ac-cites@conabio.gob.mx.