

A. Proposal: Ursus arctos. Inclusion of the population of Afganistan, India Nepal and Pakistan in Appendix I instead of Ursus arctos isabellinus

B. Proponents

Denmark

C. Supporting Statement

1. Taxonomy

1.1 Class: Mammalia

1.2 Order: Carnivora

1.3 Family: Ursidae

1.4 Species: Ursus arctos isabellinus Horsfield 1826

1.5 Common names: English: Himalayan Bear
French: Ours Brun de l'Himalaya
Spanish: Oso Pardo de Himalaya

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

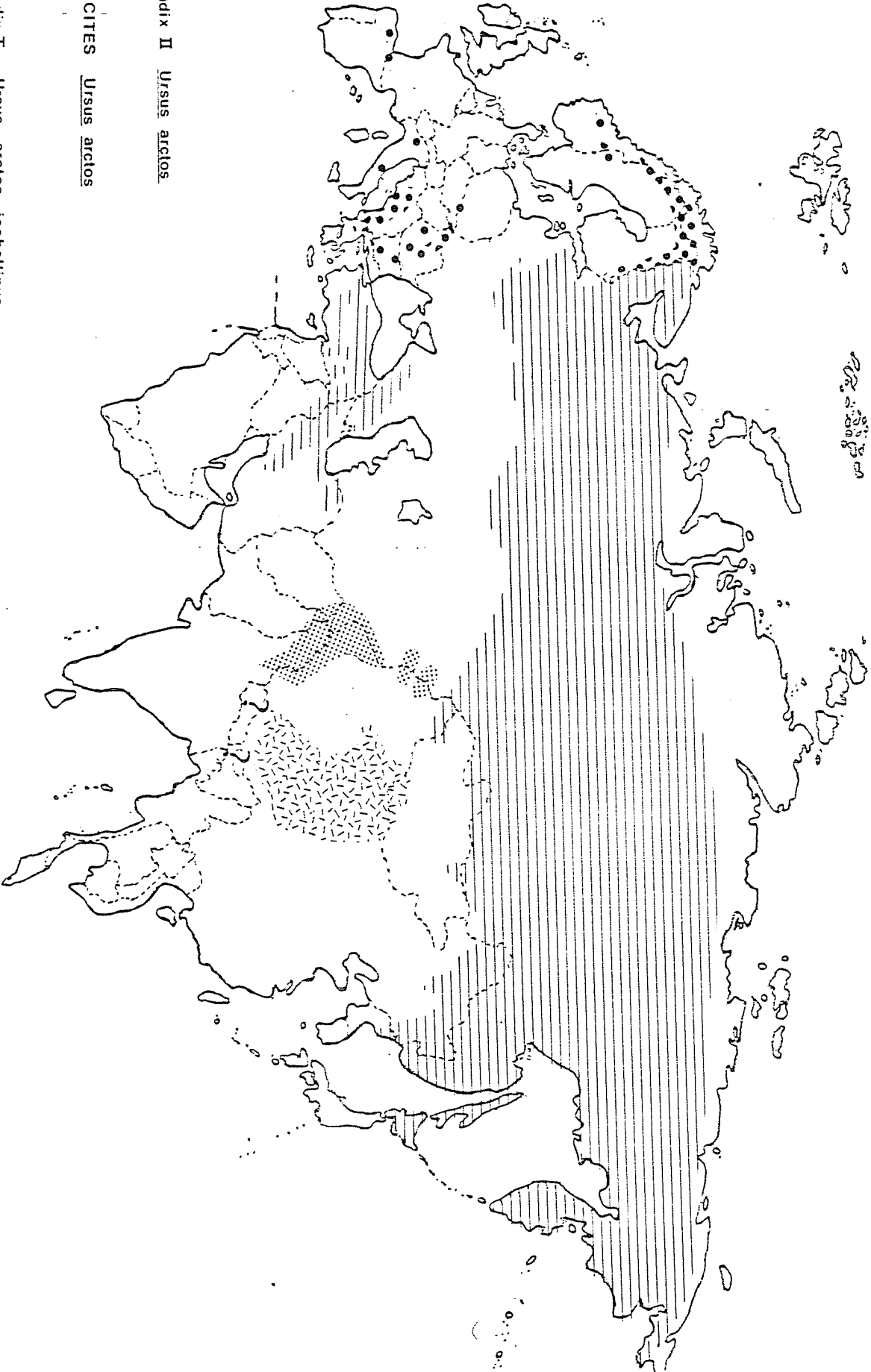
Himalayas, (see Fig 1). Range states involved are Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and possibly Nepal.

In Afghanistan, if the species still survives it is to be found in the Pamir valleys in the extreme north-east of the country (Naumann and Niethammer 1973) and possibly in other extreme north eastern mountains such as Safed Khirs and the mountains of Nuristan.

In India the species is found in the Himalayan area, notably in the Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh areas. Saharia (1981) also mentions the species as coming from the Sikkim area but this needs clarification as its occurrence in Nepal which stands between the aforementioned areas and Sikkim is in doubt. Specimens from Sikkim are perhaps probably more likely to be of the 'subspecies' pruinusus.

There are no confirmed records from Nepal (Mitchell 1975) but the type locality for the 'Ursus isabellinus' is actually "Mountains of Nepal" (Horsfield 1828). In view of the occurrence of the animals close-by in neighbouring China it seems that the species may occur in Nepal.

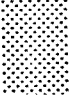
Fig The Eurasian distribution of Ursus arctos



Appendix II Ursus arctos



Non - CITES Ursus arctos



Appendix I Ursus arctos isabellinus



Appendix I Ursus arctos pruinosis

The Pakistani population is also confined to the Himalayas, particularly the Chitral, Gilgit and Balistan areas north of the river Indus and the Deosai plains to the south of the river.

2.2 Population

Several visits over a number of years to the Pamir Valleys area of ne Afghanistan showed the species to be very rare outside the valley areas and even within these few sightings were made (Naumann and Niethammer 1973). Habibi (1977) mentions only 3 or 4 records since 1948, Petocz (1988) considered the brown bear in Afganistan to be either very rare or extinct.

In India the species is regarded as 'endangered' (Saharia 1981). In the Ladakh area of Kashmir however Osborne et al (1983) between 1980 and 1983 found the species more widespread than expected being regularly seen in some areas. These authors also noted that much larger populations also occurred in the forested areas of the Himalayas. Further south in the Himachal Pradesh area of India, Gaston et al (1983) found Ursus arctos to have declined, formerly common, it was in 1978-80 rare throughout their study area.

In Pakistan the species occurs very sparsely throughout and has been noted to have declined in several areas (Roberts 1977).

2.3 Habitat

The habitat of the isabellinus population appears to vary. In Ladakh, India they are fairly widespread in areas over 2750m and the Himachal Pradesh area they are found almost exclusively above the tree line. In Pakistan too the species lives at high altitude, generally above 10,000 (Cowans 1972). In Afghanistan the species was found in alpine and sub-alpine valleys and mountain forest between 2500 and 5000 m (Habibi 1977). In the same country Hassinger (1973) states Ursus arctos to be found in similar habitats usually above 1500m.

3. Trade data

3.1 National utilisation.

In India bears are hunted for their fur, gall bladders, flesh fat and other derivations (Saharia 1981).

3.2 Legal international trade

Ursus arctos isabellinus, recorded trade by CITES parties 1976-1986 inclusive.

	Country of Import	Country of Export	Origin	Imports reported (purpose)	Exports/Re-exports reported (purpose)
1979	CH	IR		1 skin (P)	
1986	US	TR		1 trophy (I)	

Codes

CH	Switzerland	(P)	Personal
IR	Iran	(I)	Illegal
TR	Turkey		
US	United States of America		

It should be noted that the sub species does not occur in either Turkey or Iran mentioned above.

3.3 Illegal trade

Japanese Customs statistics reveal a very considerable trade in bear gall bladders (used for medicinal purposes) from the area in which these animals are found, none of which was reported in CITES records. Between 1979 and 1984 it is thought that 1,048kg of bear gall bladder was imported into Japan from India and 978kg from Nepal, representing some 10,480 bears from India and 9,780 from Nepal. As a number of bear species occur in these countries it is impossible to say conclusively if any of this trade was in specimens of Ursus arctos isabellinus (Milliken 1985).

3.4 Potential trade threats

3.4.1 Live specimens

Little demand anticipated.

3.4.2 Parts and derivatives

A considerable potential trade in gall bladders, skins and claws exists.

4 Protected status

4.1 National

Afghanistan: not known

India: Listed on Schedule II of The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 ie. a game species but one for which hunting licences are only given under special circumstances.

Pakistan: Protected

Nepal: Not known

5. Information on similar species

Although readily distinguishable in live form from other bear species it is impossible to distinguish specimens of the subspecies Ursus arctos isabellinus from other animals within the Ursus arctos species. (Erdbrink 1953). This is the view of current bear biologists (Herrero 1988).

6. Comments from countries of origin

Sought but no replies received except for India which supports the retention of its population of Ursus arctos in Appendix I (Agrawal 1989).

7. Additional remarks

The wish of the Parties to strictly control trade in Ursus arctos isabellinus was confirmed by the success of the listing proposal by Pakistan at the 2nd Conference of the Parties (1979). At the same conference, however, the impracticality of listing indistinct subspecies in the appendices was recognised (Conference Resolution 2.20). Ursus arctos isabellinus is not a valid subspecies and cannot be identified as such (Herrero 1988). In view of the impossibility of distinguishing Ursus arctos isabellinus from other subspecies of this species it is proposed to list these animals by geographical range.

8. References

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