

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Transfer of Felis tigrina from Appendix II to Appendix I. (Note: The subspecies Felis tigrina oncilla is listed in Appendix I.)

B. PROPONENT

The Federal Republic of Germany.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Mammalia
12. Order: Carnivora
13. Family: Felidae
14. Species: Felis tigrina
- Synonyms: Leopardus tigrinus
Oncifelis pardinoides
Oncilla pardinoides
Oncilla guttulata
15. Common Names: English: tiger cat
French: chat tigre
Spanish: Gato tigre, Caucel, Margay, Tigrillo, Tirica
16. Code Numbers: A-122.007.011.028

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: The tiger cat can be found from Costa Rica to the Andean zone of western Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, possibly northern Peru and through eastern Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil to Paraguay and northern Argentina (Guggisberg, 1975). It occurs in the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

In Costa Rica and Nicaragua only the subspecies Felis tigrina oncilla occurs. This subspecies is listed in Appendix I. Felis tigrina oncilla also occurs in Panama.

Remark: The above given distribution of the species and subspecies is no longer scientifically supported. There is now a consensus among scientists that the coloration and external characteristics of the skins are not valid scientific criteria on which the subdivision of the species into subspecies can be based (see App. A). At the present there is no agreement among scientists on the distribution of the subspecies or on the way their distribution should be determined (see App. B).

Consequently the distribution of the subspecies is no longer defined and an everywhere equal enforcement of the regulations of CITES is not possible.

22. Population: There is very little specific information on this species available. Koford (1973b) described the species as rare in most areas and common in none.

Argentina: Reported to be rare to endangered in Salta Province in the extreme North-West of the country (Mares et al., 1981).

Brazil: Melquist (1984) reports that it is probably declining in large parts of its range.

Colombia: No information.

Costa Rica: Listed as endangered (Mena Moya, 1978).

Ecuador: All spotted cats are considered to be rare (Melquist, 1984).

French Guiana: Probably the same situation as in Suriname.

Guyana: Probably the same situation as in Suriname.

Nicaragua: Endangered (Salas, 1978).

Panama: Very rare (Koford, 1975).

Paraguay: No information.

Peru: There are no records of this species from Peru. However it is expected to occur in the Amazonian region (Grimwood, 1969).

Suriname: Reichart (cited in Melquist, 1984) suggested that this was probably the least common of the small spotted cats throughout the Guianas, although in Suriname large areas of undisturbed habitat remain.

Venezuela: Endangered (Zawisza, 1969).

The present available population studies do not give clear scientific criteria on which the actual status of the species can be based. The only conclusion, which can be drawn from these studies, is that there are populations, which are certainly threatened, and that the status of the other populations is not known.

Experts think that due to the enormous trade in skins (see Tables 1 and 2), which has taken place till far into the 1980s, more than the already listed populations, if not all, have become threatened.

23. Habitat: The tiger cat is poorly known and often confused with the margay (Felis wiedii) (Cabrera, 1957). the tiger cat apparently favours subtropical forests (Koford, 1973b).

Reported to occur in a variety of habitat types in Venezuela, including dense humid forests within a wide altitude range from low plains to montane areas up to at least 2500 m (Zawisza, 1984).

There is no information on litter size in the wild. In captivity litters of one or two young were produced.

3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: For the local market skins are used for making garments and coats. Worked skins are also sold to tourists as souvenirs.
32. Legal International Trade: Between the years 1980 and 1984 large numbers of skins were reportedly traded. The average over these years is + 50,000 skins each year. By 1984 there were reportedly still over 35,000 skins in trade, which is more than of any of the other spotted cats. After 1987 there is a notable decline in the numbers in legal trade.

Argentina authorized the export of 1,010 stockpiled skins in early 1987 (Broad, 1987). The whereabouts of these skins is not well known!

In Tables 1 and 2 respectively the numbers of skins exported by the reported countries of origin (or exporting country if no origin was reported); and the minimum net imports of Felis tigrina skins reported to CITES, for the years 1980-1986, are given.

Table 1. Reported countries or origin (or exporting country if no origine reported) of skins of Felis tigrina reported to CITES, 1980-1986. (Source 1980-1985: Broad et al., 1988; 1986: WTMU database)

Country/year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Argentina	1450	1377	-	-	-	-	-
Bolivia	-	-	-	-	15482	2039	-
Panama	145	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paraguay	32675	35068	68163	84492	19167 +606 kg	7	-
Venezuela	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown	-	71	1197	2084	358	-	1
TOTAUX	34275	36517	69360	86576	35007 + 606 kg	2046	1

Obviously Paraguay was the major exporting country. In 1984 a large number was exported from Bolivia, but this country probably does not have a wild population at all!

Table 2. Apparent minimum net imports of Felis tigrina skins reported to CITES (Source 1980-1985: - Broad et al., 1988; 1986: WTMU database)

Country/year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Austria	80	1998	288	1423	269	417	-
Belgium	22624	242	1050	-	-	-	-
France	-	-	-	-	22647	1635	-
Germany, Fed. Rep.	811	31128	65645	80068	11274	-	222
Greece	9588	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	376	58	1000	2850	-	-	-
Japan	-	-	-	-	606 kg	-	6
Luxembourg	7	10	-	13	-	-	-
Mexico	-	92	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	36	-	-
Spain	-	186	180	-	815	-	-
Sweden	3	-	-	-	2	-	-
Switzerland	-	1295	-	102	-	1	-
United Kingdom	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
United States	-	49	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	33489	35058	68163	84493	35007	2053	229
					+ 606 kg		

Germany has been the major importing country of tiger cat skins. Belgium imported in 1980 a large number of skins and France did the same in 1984.

33. Illegal Trade: Paraguay has been the major exporter till 1984. Especially in 1982 and 1983 huge numbers were exported by Paraguay. The majority of these skins were probably illegal re-exports from other countries. An important point to note is the emergence of Bolivia as a major source of skins in 1984 and 1985, although there is no scientific evidence that Felis tigrina occurs in this country. In 1988 a shipment from Paraguay containing 450 skins of Felis tigrina + Felis geoffroyi was confiscated in Belgium.

In several range states there are still large legal and illegal stocks present. Apparently these stocks never dry up! At present it is tried to bring these stocks into trade through free-ports or non-Party countries. The volume of this illegal trade is difficult to define, but it could be extensive.

34. Potential Trade Threats:

341. Live Specimens: No direct trade threat. Only a small trade in live specimens exists, mainly for and between zoos.

342. Parts and Derivatives: The main threat is the trade in skins. Although all range states prohibit, at the moment, the commercial export of skins, poaching and smuggling continues on a large scale. All around the world shipments, without legal CITES documentation, containing large numbers of skins are being held in stock. In 1987 and 1988 several illegal shipments containing tiger cat skins have been confiscated (e.g. in Denmark and Belgium). As long as the

species as a whole is not covered by Appendix I, a potential market for these illegal skins will continue to exist.

4. Protection Status

41. National: All range states are Parties to CITES.

In Table 3 the legal prohibitions on hunting, internal trade and commercial export of all range states are given. Dates are those on which the legislation came into force (Fuller et al., 1987).

Table 3

Country	CITES	Hunting	Trade	Export
Argentina	1980	1981	1981	1981
Brazil	1975	-	1967	1967
Chile	1975	1972	1972	1972
Colombia	1981	1973	1973	1973
Costa Rica	1975	1984	1984	1984
Ecuador	1975	-	-	1981
French Guyana	1978	1975	1975	1975
Guyana	1977	-	-	1987
Nicaragua	1977	-	-	-
Panama	1978	?	?	?
Paraguay	1977	1975	1975	1975
Peru	1975			
Suriname	1981	1970	1970	1970
Venezuela	1975	1970	1970	1970

? = no information.

42. International: The species is listed in Appendix II of CITES since 1977. The subspecies Felis tigrina oncilla is listed since 1977 in Appendix I of CITES.

In October 1986 the EEC installed a ban on the import of skins of Felis tigrina (Anon., 1987).

The species is known to occur in a number of protected areas, throughout its range (Anon., 1982).

43. Additional Protection Needs: If the Berne Criteria are interpreted in a narrow way, then it will be observed that, for this species, these Criteria are not fulfilled. However the special circumstances (e.g. the impossibility to determine the distribution of the subspecies and the impossibility to determine the origin of the skins) and the situation in the range states require the strongest possible protection, which in this case can only be given through an Appendix I listing. The present subdivision in subspecies within the appendices of CITES is not an effective measure to protect the threatened populations.

Listing of the species as a whole in Appendix I of CITES will prevent a further decline of the populations, throughout the range. Poaching for the skin trade will be useless, as there will be no legal market available. The subspecies already listed in Appendix I of CITES will benefit from this measure, as their skins cannot be mixed with shipments of skins of the subspecies listed in Appendix II.

At the moment there is insufficient information on the status, distribution and ecology of the species to ensure a sustainable harvest. When this information is on hand, trade, under a strict quota system, could be considered again.

5. Information on Similar Species

The closest similar species are Felis geoffroyi, which is larger and has a relatively shorter tail, and Felis wiedii, which is also larger and which has a longer tail. Both species have an overlap in range with the tiger cat (e.g. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay).

Skins of Felis tigrina can be distinguished from skins of Felis wiedii as the hairs on the neck are directed towards the tail and not to the crown as in Felis tigrina; and from skins of Felis paradalis as there is only one whirl on the shoulder and not two whirls as in Felis paradalis (Dollinger, 1982).

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

This proposal was discussed during the 2nd meeting of the Animals Committee in Montevideo (April 1989). The representatives of several range states (i.e. Bolivia, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Uruguay), showed a positive attitude towards the proposal.

All range states will be consulted as soon as possible.

7. Additional Remarks

71. Skin Quality/Coloration: The skins of the tiger cat is not as highly priced as the skin of the ocelot.

The coloration is highly variable. The ground colour above ranges from pale to dark ochre, marked with black stripes on the neck, and with rosettes or elongated blotches on the body. Underparts greyish or whitish marked with black spots. The tail has black rings and tip (Dollinger, 1982).

72. Captive Breeding: A total of 6 animals were bred between 1972 and 1986 in collections contributing to the International Zoo Yearbook (Duplaix-Hall, 1974-1975; Olney, 1976-1983).

In 1986 a total of 15 animals were present in 5 collections (Olney, 1988)

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