

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Dracaena paraguayensis in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT

The Republic of Paraguay.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Reptilia
12. Order: Sauria
13. Family: Teiidae
14. Species: Dracaena paraguayensis
15. Common Names: English:  
French:  
Spanish: Amaral
16. Code Numbers: -

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: Originally described in Paraguay (Amaral, 1950). The only other document registering it is in South Brazil. The species may perhaps occur in neighbouring areas of Bolivia, but there is no record (see Fig. 1).

It is a subaquatic reptile which inhabits the marshy area of Upper Paraguay. Its distribution also reach the "pantanal" of Mato Grosso (Brazil).

22. Population: No information exists on the size of the wild population. The few records of its occurrence may indicate that it is not common, but it may also reflect its nature and tendency to occupy marshes and small rivers.

The clutches of this species are usually 15 to 20 eggs. From information provided by the indigenous people of the region of its habitat, the egg mortality or loss is very high because the nests are in easily flooded locations.

23. Habitat: There is virtually no information whatsoever on the ecology of D. paraguayensis and the following description is based on observations on D. guianensis. Both species are principally aquatic and live in marshes and small rivers. They are adapted to feed on snails and they break them with their characteristically rounded teeth. Little is known on its

reproductive behaviour, but the presence of a nest in a termitary has been recorded. The females have in their ovaries up to 17 follicles with vitelus.

D. paraguayensis has been recorded on the edges of Río Paraguay and in the coastal lagoons and meanders of this river, the banks of which are covered with bushy and graminaceous vegetation, as well as gallery forests.

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: No local utilization has been recorded, but as it is considered as a kind of caiman by the Tefe natives, it is assumed that it is hunted for food. Other indigenous people of the species range consider it, on the contrary, as a species related to the origin of the race and, therefore, as a sacred animal.

32. Legal International Trade: Up to 90,000 skins of D. guianensis are recorded per annum in CITES annual reports, mainly from importing countries; in any case, as no legal supply exists, all trade represents illegally acquired skins. No record of trade in live animals exists since 1980 (Luxmoore et al., 1988).

The volume of trade in D. paraguayensis skins is unknown. As it is not listed in Appendix II, nobody mentioned it in annual reports, but it is very likely that skins of it have been mixed with D. guianensis skins as they are very similar. Other countries of the region have exported D. guianensis skins and it would not be surprising that D. paraguayensis skins have gone out also, as identification is almost impossible.

33. Illegal Trade: The CITES annual reports have registered a total trade of 304,585 D. guianensis skins from 1980 to 1986. The declared countries of origin are indicated in the table. Except for 67 skins from Brazil in 1981, all others originate from countries where, it is believed, no wild populations of this species occur. The main importers were the USA and Japan, with smaller quantities having appeared in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain.

The volume of trade in D. paraguayensis is unknown, because it is not listed in Appendix II, and, therefore, it is not recorded in CITES annual reports. As it is extremely unlikely that the trade is making any difference between the skins of both species, it is possible that a significant portion of the trade registered as D. guianensis is actually in the other species. Most of the trade has been registered as coming from Paraguay, a country in which only D. paraguayensis has been recorded. All international trade is illegal because neither Brazil or Paraguay allow wildlife exports.

### 4. Protection Status

41. National:

Brazil: All trade in terrestrial wild animals has been prohibited since 1967 by Ley No. 5197;

APPARENT ORIGIN AND NUMBER OF D. GUIANENSIS SKINS REPORTED TO CITES

Year	80	81	82	83	84	85	86
Country known to have wild populations of <u>D. guianensis</u>							
Brazil		67					
Countries without wild populations of <u>D. guianensis</u>							
Argentina	1092	5000	3000	-	-	-	-
France	90	4966	5000	-	-	-	-
French Guiana	5180	8417	8919	1104	-	-	-
Guyana	-	10141	22680	6715	786	7935	21578
Indonesia	-	-	-	1000	1520	-	-
Japan	-	-	-	-	2000	-	-
Mexico	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Paraguay	-	28205	47096	34665	31386	18428	4961
Spain	962	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suriname	6490	26339	6653	1913	2538	-	-
Venezuela	-	100	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown	1253	2893	3922	877	16274	1181	99
Net trade	8925	72422	85335	37716	48447	25201	26539

Ecuador: Export of wildlife products has been prohibited since 1983 by Ley No. 74;

Paraguay: A ban on hunting and trade in indigenous wild animals has existed since 1975 (implemented since 1982 only) under Ley No. 18796. Dracaena is not listed under any of the exemptions to that ban.

Peru: A ban on hunting and trade in species from the Amazonian forest region has existed since 1973 under Decreto Supremo No. 934-73-AG. Dracaena is not listed as a species for which subsistence hunting is permitted.

42. International: D. guianensis is listed in CITES Appendix II, but D. paraguayensis is not.
43. Additional Protection Needs: Both Dracaena species are very similar and the skins are difficult to identify. It is very likely that no distinction between them is made in trade. As the genus has not been reviewed since the initial description of D. paraguayensis, it is possible that it is not a valid species. Until the taxonomic situation is clarified, it is necessary to include this species in Appendix II, which means that Dracaena spp. will be listed in this appendix.

5. Information on Similar Species

Peracca (1904) examined specimens from Amazonas and Mato Grosso and reached the conclusion that both types did not show significant difference. Vanzolini and Valencia (1965), on the other hand, have a different point of view. There is, therefore, a problem of similarity with D. guianensis, which justifies the listing of the whole genus in Appendix II. In addition, the risk exists that traders declare skins as D. paraguayensis to avoid CITES controls applicable to D. guianensis. It is supposed that this might have already occurred and that the trade is much higher than that recorded.

Finally, as most Dracaena skins originate from an area inhabited by D. paraguayensis instead of D. guianensis, it is possible that the trade in D. paraguayensis skins is sufficiently high to justify its listing in Appendix II by itself.

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

Both have a ban on wildlife hunting.

7. Additional Remarks

The inclusion of the genus (Dracaena spp.) in Appendix II would rectify the threat due to the potential trade and the taxonomic uncertainty.

8. References

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