

## AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

### Other Proposals

#### A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Conraua goliath in Appendix II.

#### B. PROPONENT

The United States of America.

#### C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

##### 1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Amphibia
12. Order: Anura
13. Family: Ranidae
14. Species: Conraua goliath
15. Common Names: English: goliath frog  
French: grenouille géante  
Spanish:  
German: Goliathfrosch
16. Code Numbers: None.

##### 2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and a small part of northwestern Gabon.

Conraua goliath is confined to the rain forest belt of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. The total area occupied is only about 150 miles (240 kilometers) long and 60 miles (96 kilometers) wide. It occurs at an elevation of 300-2200 feet (100-700 meters). Within the forests it is limited to the vicinity of the larger swift-flowing rivers, especially near waterfalls and rapids (Lamotte *et al.*, 1959, Perret; 1957; Sabater-Pi, 1985). This habitat is rapidly being destroyed by clearing of the rain forests and construction of dams on rivers, such as those already built on the Sanaga River (letter of July 15, 1990, from Dr. Stephen Gartlan to Dr. Christina M. Richards) and planned on the Ntem (personal communication from Dr. Victor H. Hutchinson to Dr. Christina M. Richards).

22. Population: This is a rare frog. There are no accurate figures available, but all early collections from the time of discovery in 1906 consisted of a very few animals. The original description was based on a single specimen. In the next 61 years, only 90 more specimens were reported in the literature (Perret, 1957, 1960, 1966), which is an average of only 1.5 frogs per year and a possible

1960, 1966), which is an average of only 1.5 frogs per year and a possible indication that the species is not common. Subsequent collections have been larger. Gewalt, collecting for the Duisberger Zoo on two separate trips, took a total of 15 animals. In 1981, Victor H. Hutchison (University of Oklahoma, pers. comm.), T. Pappenfuss (University of California, Berkeley), and J. Behler and P. Brazaitis (New York Zoological Society) captured 41 after intensive collection, with the assistance of many native hunters over a period of about three weeks. The frogs were widely dispersed but always within a few meters of streams. They appear to be sit-and-wait predators and occupy sites within one jump (sometimes two) of the water; they were seen only at night. Most reports note that the animals are sparsely distributed and found in very low concentrations throughout the range. However, Dr Letcher and Mr Wright of the Lincoln Park Zoological Gardens, after their May 1991 field trip, report (in litt.) that goliath frogs are seasonally and locally abundant in suitable habitat throughout its range.

23. Habitat: Conraua goliath lives only along large, swiftly flowing rivers, especially around waterfalls and in areas of rapids and cascades.. The tadpoles have special adaptations that enable them to feed and survive in such rapidly flowing water. Young frogs spend most of the day in water, with only the tops of their heads above the surface. They are active on land at night, but always along streams. Tadpoles feed on vegetation in the streams. Adults eat primarily insects, molluscs, crustaceans, and smaller amphibians. The main period for egg laying is the dry season of June-August, but some eggs also are deposited in "the little dry season" of December and January. Metamorphosis of the tadpoles takes place 85-95 days later. Despite the extraordinary size of the adult, the newly metamorphosed juveniles are comparable in size to those of most ranids.

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: The native people living in the coastal forests consider the meat of this frog to be a coveted delicacy.
32. Legal International Trade: As a public attraction, zoos are interested in displaying Conraua goliath as "the biggest frog in the world". Zoos in Spain, Germany, and the United States have sent expeditions specifically to catch this frog. Animal dealers in the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Japan have imported this species. Import records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Form 3-177) indicate that, from 1984 to 1989, eight importers brought 71 specimens into the country. In 1990 alone, two importers brought another 71 into the United States. There is a report that Cameroon has allowed 300 per year to be exported. Retail selling prices in the United States have varied from about \$600 for small specimens to \$3000 for very large individuals.

According to Dr Christina M. Richards (pers. comm.), these animals travel poorly, damage easily, and do not do well in captivity. Consequently, the mortality is extremely high. Zoos have been unable to keep these animals in captivity for long-term display.

33. Illegal Trade: No information available.

34. Potential Trade Threats: Conraua goliath is not naturally abundant and is easily damaged when captured. Since recently metamorphosed individuals are small, they undoubtedly take a longer time to become sexually mature than do the young of most frogs. A mature animal removed from the wild population may not be replaced quickly. The extensive media coverage of this species in the United States during the last few years may have increased the demand for it by private collectors, animal parks, and zoos (even though most major zoological parks in the United States and Canada are aware of the extreme difficulty of maintaining this species in captivity). Only two major U.S. zoos (Brookfield and Lincoln Park) now hold these animals.

341. Live Specimens:

342. Parts and Derivatives:

4. Protection Status

41. National: In the Federal Register of September 12, 1991, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to determine threatened status for Conraua goliath. Any final rule resulting from this proposal could change the classification to endangered. In either case, importation for commercial purposes would be generally prohibited.

42. International: No protective mechanisms known. However, Conraua goliath is classified as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

43. Additional Protection Needs: Surveys are needed to provide better data on populations (both adults and larvae) and habitats. Information derived from such studies should be applied to the conservation of the wild populations and their habitats. In addition, national and international measures are required to regulate and closely monitor trade. All trade may have to be halted until there is certain knowledge that such trade is not detrimental to wild populations.

5. Information on Similar Species

Conraua robusta, a somewhat smaller frog, occurs to the northwest of the range of Conraua goliath and perhaps overlaps with the latter's range; it also is hunted for food. A third member of the genus, Conraua crassipes, is more widespread, common, mostly aquatic, and appreciably smaller than are the other two species (Perret, 1966; Amiet, 1975).

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

7. Additional Remarks

8. References

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