

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Transfer of *Ailurus fulgens* from Appendix II to Appendix I.

B. PROPONENT

The Kingdom of the Netherlands.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Mammalia

12. Order: Carnivora

13. Family: Procyonidae*

14. Genus: *Ailurus*

Species: *Ailurus fulgens*

Subspecies: *Ailurus fulgens fulgens*
Ailurus fulgens styani

Scientific synonyms: *Aelurus fulgens*

15. Common Names: English: Red panda, lesser panda
French: Petit panta
Spanish: Panda rojo
German: Katzenbar

16. Code Numbers:

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution and Habitat:

Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, China: The range of this species encompasses the slopes of the Himalayas stretching from central Nepal in the West, through the northeastern Indian Provinces of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, into Bhutan, and northern Myanmar (formerly Burma) and on into China (Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces and the southern and eastern edges of the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau and the Qinling Mountains of

* *Ailurus fulgens* is classified as a member of the Procyonidae according to classical authorities. However, current research throws this classification into question, see later.

Shaanxi) (Roberts & Gittleman, 1984; Johnson *et al.*, 1988; Tikader, 1983; U Tun Yin, 1967; Glatston, in press). In China its range overlaps that of the giant panda, *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*, in some areas. The western end of this range is inhabited by the nominate form while the eastern form or Styan's panda has been recorded to the East of the Brahmaputra river system (Roberts, 1982).

It is confined to mid-elevation, temperate mixed-deciduous forest with a dense understorey of bamboo. It is found at altitudes between 1500-4000 m. (1500-3000 m. in Sichuan near the northern end of its range and between 3000-4000 m. in central Nepal near the southern end of the range) (Glatston, in press).

22. Ecology: This species has been little studied in the wild. The studies which have been undertaken indicate that they are an essentially solitary species. It is presumed that the home range of the male overlaps with that of the female. They are exceedingly seasonal in their reproduction. The female gives birth to a maximum of one litter (with an average of two infants) each year. The cubs are born in the late spring/early summer and remain with their mother for several months after their birth. The species is essentially terrestrial but can climb very well. They are dependant on the forest for resting sites and for hollow trees for maternity dens. Their dietary staple is bamboo; bamboo leaves compose about 98% of their daily food intake (Yonzon, 1989; Johnson *et al.* 1988).
23. Population Status, Trend and Threats: The red panda is currently listed as Insufficiently Known in the 1990 IUCN Red List (IUCN, 1990). However, when Mace-Lande criteria (1991) are applied to red panda data the species is indicated to be endangered (Wirth *et al.*, in prep).

The data that is currently available on red pandas in Nepal indicates that individuals are few in number and widely spaced, approximately one animal per 4.4 km² (there are estimated less than 40 red pandas in the 1719 km² Langtang National Park, Yonzon, 1989) and that habitat destruction has left population groups separated from each other. Extrapolation from these data would put the population of the whole country as low as a few hundred individuals. (Yonzon, pers.com.). However, available habitat in eastern Nepal may be better and more suitable for bamboo and red pandas may therefore be commoner there (Glatston, in press). In China, Reid *et al.* (1991) estimate that the red panda occur at densities of one animal per 2-3 km² in Wolong Natural Reserve. Further data are unavailable although a survey is in progress in Nepal and Sikkim (Yonzon, 1992). Elsewhere, incidental information collected during giant panda research indicate that the red panda status is not secure in China (Wei Fuwen and Hu Jinchu, verbal presentation at 'The Giant Panda and Red Panda Conservation Workshop'). At this same workshop a computerized population simulation of the red panda population was undertaken. This simulation used known data from the field and life table parameters from zoos and its results indicated that the prognosis for the red panda in the wild was indeed bleak.

The major threat confronting this species is deforestation which is not only reducing the habitat available but is also separating the population into small subpopulations on islands of vegetation with no contact between the subpopulations. This problem has already been well documented for the giant panda in China. Disappearance of red panda habitat in China is illustrated by the recent experience of a Chinese biologist planning to study red pandas; when he arrived at his planned study site he found the areas completely deforested (Roberts, pers. com.). In addition Pan We-shi has reported extensive deforestation in the Qinling Mountains (Roberts, pers. com.). As with the giant panda, the problems caused by habitat loss and fragmentation are exacerbated by the die off of bamboo in areas from which the animals can not migrate. A second problem confronting the red pandas, in Nepal at least, is high level of mortality primarily due to human disturbance of the habitat (Yonzon & Hunter, 1991).

24. Comments on Classification: *Ailurus* is a monospecific genus which means that the red panda has an extra call for protection due to its taxonomic uniqueness; should it ever become extinct we lose not only a unique species but also the sole representative of a genus. However, scientists are still debating the correct classification of *Ailurus*. There are several reasons for not including this species in the family Procyonidae. Firstly the red panda is the only Old World species of procyonid, all other procyonids are endemic to the Americas and secondly it has been argued that the classification of the red panda as a procyonid is based on superficial similarities (eg. face mask, ringed tail, etc.) as the red panda lacks any derived procyonid features which would support its inclusion in this family (Wozencraft, 1989). Nevertheless, the view of the red panda as a procyonid is supported by the DNA hybridization studies of Wayne *et al.* (1989). However, other studies using anatomical features (Decker & Wozencraft, 1991) and cytogenetics (Wurster & Bernirschke, 1968) tend to indicate that the red panda may be an aberrant bear. Given these unresolved differences in opinion, it may be better to adopt the approach advocated by Eisenberg (1981) and classify the red panda in its own separate family, the Ailuridae. If this taxonomy were to be adopted it would mean that the extinction of the red panda would mean the loss of an entire taxonomic family from the world's fauna.

3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: In India, red pandas were formerly hunted for their pelts. This has resulted in their almost complete disappearance from the Darjeeling District of West Bengal (Tikader, 1983). In China, the pelts of this species can be regularly seen in regional markets and they play a role in the wedding ceremonies of some indigenous people (Glatston, in press). In addition, in China they are still hunted to supply local zoos with a reported sale price of 10,000 yen (the cost of a small car). Local sources report that numbers of red pandas are being brought into China from Myanmar to satisfy this market. For example, it is also reported that the red pandas held in the Wolong Breeding Centre were imported from Myanmar (Roberts pers. com.) and Li Yinghong reports that one centre in Yunnan now has over 100 red pandas from Myanmar although this figure may be an exaggeration.
32. Legal International Trade: Most trade movements declared to CITES involve live animals. The number of red pandas exported by various countries and reported to CITES between 1985 and 1992 can be seen in Table 1. China is the only country from within the species' range known to be exporting red panda, averaging 18 per year over this period. These specimens are largely destined for zoological collections. However, despite a well-run studbook of many years, the majority of these specimens disappear, i.e. are not registered in the studbook. Furthermore, despite a recommendation of the Animals Committee that the Management Authority of importing countries should verify the origin of all imported *Ailurus fulgens* with the studbook keeper, this has not yet occurred.
- Declared movements of live animals between non-range States involve the transfer of individuals as part of internationally co-ordinated breeding programmes.
33. Illegal Trade: In the last few years red pandas have begun to appear on the lists of various dealers one of whom indicated the pandas he was offering were captive born in a zoo in Bangladesh. There are no records supporting this claim or even of red pandas held in a zoo in that country. Very little is known about the origin of such animals or of their eventual destination. In addition, a number of red pandas are known to have been illegally exported to Taiwan from China (Low, 1991).

34. Captive Population: The registered studbook population in zoos as of 31 December 1992 (Glatston, 1993 & in prep.) follows:

Region	<i>A. f. fulgens</i>	<i>A. f. styani</i>
North America	77	45
Europe (excl. GB)	91	8
Great Britain	21	0
Australasia	22	1
Japan	9	120
China	0	111**
Other	7	0
Total	227***	285****

The data from Chinese zoos have been provided by the Chinese regional studbook keeper (Lu Baoquan) however, these data are not complete as some zoos are not replying to his enquiries.

The red pandas registered in the first five regions of the list are all part of formal regional breeding programmes (i.e. those in N. America, mainland Europe, Great Britain, Australasia & Japan). In addition, there has been a positive initiative towards establishing a truly global management programme for the whole zoo population with the establishment of the International Red Panda Management Group (IRPMG) in 1991.

Genetic and demographic analysis of the captive populations of both subspecies indicate that there is an adequate basis for viable captive populations for both species based on the animals that are now registered in captivity. The IRPMG have stated that there is no need whatsoever for further wild-caught specimens to be introduced into the population for the purpose of augmenting the captive gene pool (Kleiman & Roberts, 1991). This view was also supported by genetic analyses of the captive population of *A. f. styani* (Lu Baoquan *et al.*, 1993).

4. Protection Status

41. National: In Nepal, and three Indian States (Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh) it is a protected species. In Myanmar it is covered by the Forest Act, which means it is protected in the same way all forest products are protected, but it is not covered by the more stringent Wildlife Protection Act. In China it is classed as a Category 2 Species, subject to local key protection, under the 1988 Law of Wild Animal Protection (Gaski & Hemley, 1991). Nevertheless Low (1991) found three live animals and four specimens for sale openly in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces.

** Majority of red pandas in Chinese zoos are wild caught

*** All except four animals are captive born

**** 44% of whole zoo population is captive born

Yonzon & Hunter (1991) proposed that the IUCN should ask the Chinese Government to assess the status of *Ailurus fulgens* in China, and suggested that it should be accorded greater protection. One field study is planned, however it has not commenced due to lack of appropriate study site (see 23. above). Also the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens is planning a study looking at red pandas in Chinese zoos; included number imported from the wild, survival rate of wild-caught animals, numbers bred in captivity and infant mortality rate (Li Yinghong, pers. com.)

42. International: The species is listed in Appendix II of CITES. It is also listed in Annex C2 of the EC regulations.
43. Additional Protection Requirements: Although the primary threat to this species is undoubtedly deforestation and, to a lesser extent hunting for skins, the increasing number of wild-caught animals appearing in western zoos over recent years is undoubtedly a cause for concern. Given that the actual numbers of this species in the wild may only be a few thousands and given the relatively slow rate of reproduction of this species; a trade in wild animals which may only number tens of individuals per year, could prove a very significant drain on a fragile wild population, especially when it is remembered that the number of animals declared for export does not reflect the actual numbers of animals caught (mortality due to post capture stress and lack of adaptation to captivity can be expected to be high in this species given the problems encountered in the captive management of red pandas in zoos). Transfer of this species from Appendix II to Appendix I may not halt the illegal trade in this species but it would effectively halt the current trade in wild-caught animals to western zoos.

Obviously further field studies on this species are required and indeed, are in the planning stage. However, if the situation in the wild is as critical as the Nepal work would indicate, then protective action is urgently needed.

5. Information on Similar Species

When dealing with the Red Panda it is difficult to quote data from similar species as none exist. The red panda does bear some superficial similarities to the raccoon (genus *Procyon*) and the coati (genus *Nasua*) in that these animals also have similar facial masks and ringed tails. Although the actual colour of the pelts are different, there is a possibility that pelts could be confused.

6. Summary

Ailurus fulgens is a little-known Asian species, declining in most parts of its range due to hunting, habitat loss and fragmentation. Although the number traded each year is small, it may be significant in relation to the wild population.

7. References

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TABLE 1

Reported exporting countries and quantities of transactions
in *Ailurus fulgens* reported to CITES

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
GARMENTS								
Countries having or possibly having populations of <i>Ailurus fulgens</i>								
China				1				
LIVE								
Countries having or possibly having populations of <i>Ailurus fulgens</i>								
China	15	13	26	32	19	19	8	9
Countries without wild populations of <i>Ailurus fulgens</i>								
Australia		3	4	4	4	1	2	5
Belgium							2	
Canada		3		2			1	
Denmark		1						
Finland	1		1	2	1			2
Germany					1	2	2	2
Netherlands		1			1			4
Norway								1
Spain					1		2	
Switzerland	2						1	
USA							4	
SKULLS								
Countries without wild populations of <i>Ailurus fulgens</i>								
United Kingdom		1						
SPECIMENS								
Countries without wild populations of <i>Ailurus fulgens</i>								
United Kingdom					10			10
USA							2	
TROPHIES								
Countries without wild populations of <i>Ailurus fulgens</i>								
United Kingdom					1			

Species Survival
Programme

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No. of Pages: Ten (10) including this one

To: Josh Ginsberg/Anic Braungam
From: John Howes IUCN/SSC
Re: Continuation of Surgeon proposal and information on *Ailuurus fulgens*

Attached please find:

Additional 9 pages of surgeon proposal, i.e., pages 33 to 41 inclusive.

Pages 42 through 46 will follow in next fax.

Information on Red Panda from Carolin Inskip:

Dr U. Sharma

General Dept. of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation /

~~_____~~ would welcome upgrading proposal for the species. ✓

Dr Mingma Norbu Sherpa

Director

~~_____~~ Programme

~~_____~~ is not threatened in Bhutan and has been listed as a candidate for the

~~_____~~ of these animals between Bhutan and Tibet

Chees

John
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