

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Gigiri (Kenya), 10-20 April 2000

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

USE OF MICROCHIPS FOR MARKING LIVE ANIMALS IN TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat on behalf of the Animals Committee.

Introduction

2. With the adoption of Resolution Conf. 8.13 (Kyoto, 1992), the Parties were encouraged to use microchips for individual marking of live animals whenever they felt this was appropriate. The potential of this method for the regulation of trade in specimens of species listed in the appendices to the Convention was also recognized.
3. Some efforts were made to agree upon mutual compatibility of the various products of particular manufacturers and the technologies used. Meanwhile the International Organization for Standardization standards ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 were developed, which specify the radio frequencies and the structure of the identification code.
4. Soon thereafter, however, some serious difficulties regarding the ISO standards were detected. Apart from some technical problems (such as the incorporation of two mutually incompatible technologies, HDX (half duplex) and FDX (full duplex), into the standard) and practical obstacles [e.g. not sufficient compatibility of the standards with previous RFID (radio frequency identification) technologies], the most serious difficulty detected was that the ISO standards do not ensure uniqueness and that the identification code can be altered.
5. Because of this, the ISO standards as originally proposed were not suitable for the purpose envisaged by the Animals Committee, which was to establish a unique, fraud-proof mechanism for identification of specimens of endangered species in trade.
6. A number of ISO members have now proposed to re-evaluate these ISO standards. According to the most recent information (4 May 1999), the ISO Central Secretariat has now been assigned to revise the ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 standards.
7. At its 14th meeting (Caracas, Venezuela, 1998), the Animals Committee created a working group, asking it to report back to the next meeting and to propose amendments, as necessary, to Resolution Conf. 8.13.
8. A working document, including proposals to amend Resolution Conf. 8.13, was presented at the 15th meeting of the Animals Committee (Antananarivo, Madagascar, July 1999).
9. Because of the difficulties explained above, the working group could not recommend the use of specific ISO-standard transponders for CITES purposes.
10. At its 15th meeting, the Animals Committee did, however, discuss possible amendments to Resolution Conf. 8.13. Following these discussions, the Animals Committee agreed to propose a number of amendments to this resolution. The proposed amendments are contained in Annex 1, including proposed additions (**in bold**), deletions (~~in-strikethrough~~) and explanations, where appropriate, *in italics*.

11. The outcome of the discussions in that meeting is presented in the form of an amended Resolution Conf. 8.13, a draft of which is included in Annex 2 to this document.
12. After the 15th meeting of the Animals Committee, the chairman of the working group, the Czech Republic, felt that some further amendments warranted discussion at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. These proposed amendments are included in Annex 3 to this document, together with comments of the Secretariat on these proposed amendments.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 8.13

Use of coded-microchip implants for marking live animals in trade

RECOGNIZING the increasingly wide use of coded-microchip implants for the secure identification of animals, ~~within zoological gardens and for high value personal pets;~~

RECOGNIZING *also* the potential for the application of this method of marking for the regulation of trade in certain other live animals of species listed in the appendices to the Convention;

CONCERNED that any such method employed to identify live animals in trade be uniform in its application;

~~RECALLING that Resolution Conf. 7.12 (Rev.), adopted at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Lausanne, 1989), recommended that the Animals Committee address further the issue of marking requirements for the identification of specimens of look-alike species for the purpose of developing practical marking strategies and systems, and that the use of coded microchip implants be adopted on a trial basis on a sample range of high value Appendix I taxa to be determined by the Animals Committee and Parties involved;~~

This paragraph can be deleted, because after the revision of Resolution Conf. 7.12 at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, it no longer contains the reference to the Animals Committee.

BELIEVING that there is no reason to limit the use of coded-microchip implants to live animals of species included in Appendix I or to high-value species;

NOTING that Management Authorities may permit the movement of travelling exhibitions or circuses without permits or certificates pursuant to Article VII, paragraph 7, of the Convention;

MINDFUL that the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 7, allow a Management Authority to determine appropriate methods of marking specimens for the purposes of assisting in identification;

AWARE that the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group has undertaken an extensive review of the application of coded-microchip implants, **and that effective implementation of Article VI, paragraph 7, will result in increasingly wider use of coded-microchip implants for the identification of animals;**

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOMMENDS that:

- a) Parties, where possible and appropriate, and without excluding the use of other methods, adopt the use of implantable transponders **bearing permanent, non-programmable, unalterable and permanently unique codes** for the secure identification of live animals of ~~Appendix I species to be determined in accordance with the advice of the IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group;~~

This change simply makes this resolution applicable to all animals in the CITES appendices, leaving it to the Parties to decide to which species they wish to apply the provisions of this Resolution.

- b) **where possible, these transponders contain a manufacturer's code and the ISO code of the country in which the animal was marked;**
- c) ~~b)~~ Parties take into account the findings of the IUCN/SSC ~~Captive~~ **Conservation** Breeding Specialist Group regarding frequency, size and sterility of transponder ~~as well as procedures for registration within a central data bank;~~
- d) ~~e)~~ microchip transponders be implanted where consistent with the well-being of the specimens concerned;

- ~~e) methods of secure identification such as the use of implantable transponders be applied also to animals of species listed in Appendix I or Appendix II that form part of travelling exhibitions or circuses.~~

Following the introduction of BELIEVING in the preamble and the amendments to paragraph a) above, this paragraph is superfluous.

- e) the location of implanted transponders in each animal be standardized according to advice from the IUCN/SSC ~~Captive~~ Conservation Breeding Specialist Group;
- ~~f) all microchip codes and related technical information needed to enable the reading of the transponder data be recorded on all relevant CITES documents;~~
- ~~g) all Parties have access to a central data bank to record microchip codes used to identify live specimens of Appendix I species and include such information in their annual reports to the Secretariat;~~
- ~~h) as the International Species Inventory System (ISIS) has agreed to record in its database transponder numbers used by Parties, in order to establish a central repository for registration of microchip codes, the Secretariat liaise with the appropriate authority regarding access thereto and the necessary financial arrangements;~~
- ~~i) provision be made in the budget of the Secretariat to assist Parties requesting support in acquiring the technology necessary to enable access to the database; and~~
- ~~j) where this technology is made available for use by persons and/or organizations through the Secretariat, they be charged an appropriate fee; and~~

f) all microchip codes be included on all relevant CITES permits and certificates; and

DIRECTS:

- ~~a) the Secretariat to urge all manufacturers of transponders to strive towards the production of compatible equipment that is able to be applied universally; and~~
- a) b) the Animals Committee to monitor developments in microchip-implant technology and application techniques and to advise the Secretariat about such developments, for the information of the Parties.**

REVISED DRAFT OF RESOLUTION CONF. 8.13

Use of coded-microchip implants for marking live animals in trade

RECOGNIZING the increasingly wide use of coded-microchip implants for the individual identification of animals;

RECOGNIZING also the potential of this method of marking for the regulation of trade in live animals of species included in the appendices to the Convention;

CONCERNED that any such method employed to identify live animals be standardized in its application;

BELIEVING that there is no reason to only limit the use of coded-microchip implants to live animals of species included in Appendix I or high-value species;

NOTING that Management Authorities may permit the movement of travelling exhibitions or circuses without permits or certificates pursuant to Article VII, paragraph 7, of the Convention;

MINDFUL that the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 7, allow a Management Authority to determine appropriate methods of marking specimens for the purposes of assisting in identification;

AWARE that the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group has already undertaken an extensive review of the application of coded-microchip implants, and that effective implementation of Article VI, paragraph 7, will result in increasingly wider use of coded-microchip implants for the identification of animals;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOMMENDS that:

- a) Parties, where possible and appropriate, without excluding the use of other methods, adopt the use of implantable transponders bearing permanent, non-programmable, unalterable and permanently unique codes for the identification of live animals;
- b) where possible, these transponders contain a manufacturer's code and the ISO code of the country in which the animal was marked;
- c) Parties take into account the findings of the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group regarding frequency, size and sterility of transponder;
- d) microchip transponders be implanted where consistent with the well-being of the specimens concerned;
- e) the location of implanted transponders in each animal be standardized according to the advice from the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group.
- f) all microchip codes be included on all relevant CITES permits and certificates; and

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to monitor developments in microchip-implant technology and application techniques and to advise the Secretariat about such developments, for the information of the Parties.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic would like to suggest the following additional changes:

In paragraph f) under "RECOMMENDS" insert after "codes" the following: "together with trade mark of transponder manufacturer".

Because there are several manufacturers of microchip transponders, the information about the trade mark of each transponder is needed for selection of the proper decoder to read the code. Even if ISO sets standards in this matter, there are still several systems with mutually incompatible decoders.

Under DIRECTS it is proposed to re-number the current paragraph as c) and insert two new paragraphs:

- "a) the Secretariat to inform all known manufacturers of microchip-implants and application techniques about the present Resolution, urge them to strive towards the production of compatible equipment that was able to be applied universally and ask them for information about their products compatible with CITES needs, for distribution to the Parties;
- b) the Secretariat to inform competent ISO bodies about the present Resolution and urge them to resolve current problems with application of standards ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 for marking of live animals with implantable transponders bearing permanent, unalterable, non-programmable and permanently unique codes;"

More or less similar text was proposed in document Doc. AC.15.17.1 but was deleted from the final draft after the Secretariat's comment that the proposal should contain budgetary provisions in accordance with Resolution Conf.4.6 (Rev.) was recognized by the Animals Committee. Therefore, we re-worded the proposal in a manner that we believe would not have severe implications on the Secretariat's budget. If there is still a need to add budgetary provisions, we would like to ask the Secretariat to suggest the proper changes in the text of our proposal.

Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the Secretariat should be directed to be in contact with transponder manufacturers and ISO bodies at least for mutual exchange of information. It is certainly possible to leave such contacts up to Parties (or IUCN) only, but the Secretariat's involvement should stress the common interest of all CITES Parties to obtain the highest degree of compatibility of various systems used in different countries for identification of specimens of endangered species in international trade.

Annex 1 of the Resolution Conf. 10.2 (Permits and certificates) should also be amended by adding to paragraph g) the following text (included in italics): "**and if the specimen is marked by a microchip transponder, the trade mark of the transponder used and its unique code**".

Comments from the Secretariat

The suggested amendment to paragraph g) is a logical one. Nevertheless, the whole of paragraph g) should be included in Resolution Conf. 10.2.

The Secretariat is not convinced that the directions in the proposed new paragraph a) are appropriate. The Secretariat has to obtain the information on these manufacturers from the Management Authorities of the Parties. It seems therefore logical that the Management Authorities concerned inform their manufacturers directly.

The new paragraph b) is rather strongly formulated. It would probably be better to reformulate it, instructing the Secretariat to consult regularly with the ISO Central Secretariat on the subject.