

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

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Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Bangkok (Thailand), 2-14 October 2004

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Amendment of the Appendices

Standard nomenclature

RECOGNITION OF *CHAMAELEO EXCUBITOR* AS A SEPARATE SPECIES

1. This document has been submitted by Kenya.

Introduction

2. The *Checklist of CITES species* currently includes *Chamaeleo excubitor* (also known as *Bradypodion excubitor*) as a synonym of *Chamaeleo fischeri* (also known as *Bradypodion fischeri*). All *Chamaeleo* species are included in Appendix II.
3. In 2002, the well known herpetologists Stephen Spawls, Kim Howell, Robert Drewes and James Ashe published the first comprehensive field guide to East African reptiles.<sup>1</sup> The guide lists *Chamaeleo excubitor*, the Mount Kenya hornless chameleon, as a separate species. The taxonomic notes state that for a long time it was regarded as a subspecies of the eastern Usambara two-horned chameleon (*Chamaeleo fischeri*), but that now it is regarded as a full species.<sup>2</sup>
4. This newly recognized species is a Kenyan endemic with a very restricted range. It is found on the eastern side of Mount Kenya, from Meru to the vicinity of Embu. The known range is small and within a forest area which is rapidly being logged. The impact of this on the species is not known and no work has been done to establish the species population estimates in the wild or in captivity. However, it is likely that population levels are declining. As well as being potentially affected by deforestation and habitat loss, there are indications that the species is in international trade.
5. Currently it is impossible to assess the extent of trade in *Chamaeleo excubitor* since it would be included in trade figures for *Chamaeleo fischeri*. CITES trade data obtained from UNEP-WCMC show that there has been extensive trade in *Chamaeleo fischeri* from the United Republic of Tanzania between 1975 and 2002. Importing countries and territories include Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (China), Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan (Province of China), Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. If specimens of *Chamaeleo excubitor* were included in any of these shipments they would have been illegally smuggled from Kenya since Kenya does not allow exports.
6. Confiscations of illegally traded specimens of *Chamaeleo excubitor* have been made in Kenya and the culprits charged in a court. This indicates an illegal trade exists.

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<sup>1</sup> Spawls, S., Howell, K., Drewes, R. and Ashe, J. A Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa. Academic Press, London, UK and San Diego, California, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 220.

7. Taking into account the above considerations, Kenya would like to request from the Nomenclature Committee to consider recognizing *Chamaeleo excubitor* as a separate species. Kenya recommends to that end the adoption of the draft decision annexed to the present document.

#### COMMENT FROM THE SECRETARIAT

It is one of the tasks of the Nomenclature Committee to review the existing Appendices with regard to the correct use of zoological nomenclature and to ensure that changes in nomenclature recommended by a Party do not alter the scope of protection of the taxon. Upon acceptance of a new or updated reference for a given taxon, it should present this to the Conference of the Parties for adoption as the standard reference for that taxon. The case of the nomenclature for *Bradypodion fischeri* and the potential new species *B. excubitor* can be reviewed by the Nomenclature Committee under its current mandate as contained in Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12), and the Conference of the Parties does not need to adopt a separate decision on this matter. Rather, the Secretariat suggests that it be referred to the Nomenclature Committee.

DRAFT DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Directed to the Nomenclature Committee

- 13.xx The Nomenclature Committee shall consider the evidence and determine whether *Chamaeleo excubitor* (also known as *Bradypodion excubitor*) is a full species, separate from *Chamaeleo fischeri* (also known as *Bradypodion fischeri*).