

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

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Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

Interpretation and implementation on the Convention

Trade control and marking issues

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf. 11.19, transferring the responsibility for the publication of the Identification Manual to the Secretariat.
3. As required in that Resolution, the Secretariat regularly reports at meetings of the Standing, Animals and Plants Committees. This document is a summary of the reports since CoP14 (The Hague, 2007) and provides an overview of the current status of the Identification Manual.
4. The CITES Identification Manual was initiated in 1977. Since CoP11, the Secretariat has been directed to publish, within its financial capacity, the Identification Manual. At the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, July 2008), the Secretariat explained the difficulty of maintaining the present sheet-based Identification Manual and the impossibility of updating all sheets under the present staffing and financial limitations. There is no provision for funding of the Manual from the Trust Fund in the current triennium.
5. In 2007, the Secretariat made available on the CITES website a database of published sheets from the Identification Manual, which provided access to the sheets in PDF format. However, the content of the sheets had not been updated, and searches based on the content of the sheets could not be performed. That database was intended to provide a transition between the previous paper-based version and a future fully searchable electronic format.
6. In 2008, the Secretariat contracted the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to determine the feasibility of converting the existing CITES Identification Manual into a Web-based database with a partial "wiki" format. UNEP-WCMC considered, *inter alia*, the software requirements to create and operate such a database, the steps required to convert the existing sheets into a "wiki" format (with certain data elements linked to or derived from other databases), copyright matters, and recommendations on a policy for adding, editing and reviewing material.
7. In January 2009, the Secretariat contracted UNEP-WCMC to develop a full working version of the Web-based Identification Manual database. The new database, available in English, Spanish and French, became available on the CITES website in October 2009. Information on taxonomy, common names, CITES status, and distribution is derived from the CITES species database managed by UNEP-WCMC. Information on characteristics, intraspecific variation, similar species, references, authorship and credits is drawn from electronic versions of the previous Identification Manual sheets. The database provides a link to the CITES trade database for trade information. Improved search functions will be added to future developments of the database.
8. The significant advance with the Web-based Identification Manual database is the capability of having users directly add information on identification characteristics, intraspecific variation, similar species and related Internet links, through a "wiki" function. Users wishing to add or modify these sections must first

register with the Secretariat. Any addition or modification must be reviewed by the Secretariat before they appear in the database. The Secretariat may consult with relevant experts before authorizing any additions or modifications. Registered users cannot effect any changes to the sections on taxonomy, common names, CITES status and distribution.

9. Each entry in the database provides the name of the original author and the person who last made an addition or modification. However, every requested and approved modification is logged and traceable, and any addition or modification can be reversed if deemed necessary.
10. New information for inclusion in the Web-based Identification Manual database may be submitted by Parties to the Secretariat for inclusion in the database. The Secretariat recommends, however, that Parties provide any new additions directly in the database. The Secretariat also encourages non-government organizations, academic, research or other institutions, and knowledgeable persons to provide additions to the database.
11. The Secretariat would like to remind Parties that have successfully submitted proposals to include new species in the Appendices that they are exhorted by the Conference of the Parties to provide appropriate data for inclusion in the Identification Manual (see Resolution Conf. 11.19).
12. The Secretariat circulated with Notification to the Parties No. 2008/043 of 7 July 2008 a copy of "The Aloes and Euphorbias of CITES Appendix I & the Genus *Pachypodium*", published by the Management Authority of Switzerland. This work is available in book and CD-ROM versions, in English.
13. The Secretariat received in November 2008 a submission from Switzerland on orchid hybrids exempted from CITES provisions. In January 2009 the Secretariat received a submission from Sweden on the identification of the European eel *Anguilla anguilla*. These submissions have been added to the Web-based Identification Manual database, and the Secretariat is grateful to the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland for these important contributions.
14. The Secretariat is grateful for the support received from Parties for the preparation of Identification Manual materials and looks forward to the contribution of Parties and others to the new Web-based Identification Manual database.