

PRESS KIT

CITES 2002

TWELTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

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

3 – 15 November 2002, Santiago, Chile

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Note: For official documents and COP12 press accreditation, see www.cites.org

PRESS RELEASE

CITES to decide wildlife trade rules and promote conservation Agenda includes turtles, elephants, whales, seahorses, vicuñas, and mahogany

Santiago, October 2002 – Decisions affecting the survival of dozens of wild plant and animal species will be adopted at a major conference here of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The conference, which runs from 3 to 15 November, will consider 59 proposals to amend the lists of species subject to trade controls. The proposals range from the highly charismatic minke whale and African elephant, to endangered Asian freshwater turtles and Latin American parrots, to commercially valuable bigleaf mahogany and Patagonian toothfish (Chilean sea bass).

“CITES seeks to promote a healthier and more sustainable relationship between people and wildlife,” said CITES Secretary-General Willem Wijns tekens. “The Santiago conference is an opportunity to ensure that trade does no harm to plant and animal species. It will also address national efforts to conserve species that are not traded because they have become threatened or endangered,” he said.

“Protecting wildlife is vital to the broader goal of making environmental conservation and poverty reduction mutually supportive,” said Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, which administers the CITES Secretariat. “Its well-honed regulations and practical programmes put CITES on the front line of sustainable development.”

One group of proposals addresses Asia’s declining freshwater turtles, which are collected and traded as pets, food, and medicinal preparations in Asia. The number of turtles on sale at Chinese food markets alone is estimated between 12 and 20 million specimens annually, most of them originating from the wild. Experts fear that many Asian turtle species will soon face extinction. The conference will consider proposals for introducing trade controls on 26 species of freshwater turtles.

Another high-profile item is the African elephant. After an eight-year ban on ivory sales, in 1997 CITES agreed to allow three African countries – Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe – to make one-time sales from their existing legal stocks of raw ivory. The ivory – which weighed 49,574 kg and represented 5,446 tusks – was sold to Japan in 1999 and earned some USD5 million. The funds were used for elephant conservation activities in the three range States.

This year, the three countries plus South Africa and Zambia are proposing one-off sales of existing ivory stocks to be followed later by annual quotas. The proposals are for a first sale of 20,000 kg and an annual quota of 4,000 kg for Botswana, 10,000 kg and 2,000 kg respectively for

Namibia, 30,000 and 2,000 for South Africa and 10,000 and 5,000 for Zimbabwe. Zambia is proposing a one-off sale of 17,000 kg. A proposal from India and Kenya, on the other hand, argues that further ivory sales from African elephants should be clearly prohibited as a precautionary measure for reducing future threats to the elephant.

Meanwhile, Japan is seeking to open up trade in most northern hemisphere populations of minke whale and a Pacific population of Bryde's whale. Its proposals stress the use of national legislation and DNA identification of individual whales to monitor catches and trade. Similar proposals were presented without success at the most recent CITES conferences in 1997 and 2000. This year's debate is likely to involve issues related to science, sustainable use, possible enforcement problems, and the International Whaling Commission's moratorium on commercial whaling.

Other proposals emphasize the sustainable use of wildlife. Sustainable use can build support for conservation among local communities while directly raising funds for protecting endangered species. For this reason, Argentina, Bolivia and Chile want to expand their ability to sell the fine silky wool sheared from live vicuña to include a number of additional vicuña populations.

The meeting will also review measures for improving protection for highly endangered species already protected by CITES regulations, including rhinoceroses, bears, the tiger, musk deer, sturgeons, the Tibetan antelope and leopards.

CITES was adopted in 1973 in Washington D.C. and will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year on 3 March 2003.

Note to journalists: For media inquiries from 23 October, please contact Juan Carlos Vasquez or Michael Williams in Santiago at +56-2-2745810. For media inquiries before that date please contact in Geneva Juan Carlos Vasquez at +41-22-917-8156 or juan.vasquez@unep.ch, or Michael Williams at +41-22-9178242/244/196, +41-79-409-1528 (cell) or michael.williams@unep.ch. Official documents for the meeting, the Convention itself, and the Appendices with their complete listings are posted on the Internet at www.cites.org.

Press accreditation is now open. For more information and to submit the on-line form, see www.cites.org. Press working facilities will be available at the conference, and a large number of press conferences will be organized by both governments and organizations during the meeting.

Backgrounder: Understanding CITES and COP12

Thousands of species are endangered as a result of human activities such as habitat destruction, poaching, over-harvesting, and pollution. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was adopted in 1973 to address the threat posed by just one of these activities: international trade. To date, some 160 countries have become Parties to the treaty, making it one of the world's most important agreements on species conservation and sustainable use.

Even after commercial fishing is set aside, the international trade in wildlife is big business, estimated to be worth billions of dollars annually and to involve more than 350 million plant and animal specimens every year. Unregulated international trade can push threatened and endangered species over the brink, especially when combined with habitat loss and other pressures. CITES accords varying degrees of protection to more than 30,000 plant and animal species depending on their biological status and the impact that international trade may have upon them.

Three ways to regulate

CITES provides three regulatory options in the form of Appendices. Animals and plants listed under Appendix I are excluded from international commercial trade except in very special circumstances. They include all the great apes; various big cats such as cheetahs, the snow leopard and the tiger; numerous birds of prey, cranes, and pheasants; all sea turtles; many species of crocodiles, tortoises and snakes; and some cacti and orchids.

Commercial trade is permitted for species listed under Appendix II but it is strictly controlled on the basis of CITES permits or certificates. This Appendix includes all those primates, cats, cetaceans, birds of prey, parrots, crocodiles and orchids not listed in Appendix I.

Finally, Appendix III includes species that are protected within the borders of a member country. An Appendix-III listing allows a country to call on others to help it regulate trade in the listed species. This Appendix also requires CITES documentation and includes broad-leafed mahogany, walrus and great white egrets.

Most of the Convention's work addresses internationally traded species that are not endangered but that could become so if trade were not regulated. A closer look at the respective lists confirms this: Appendix I contains fewer than 600 animal species and a little more than 300 plant species, whereas Appendix II covers over 4,100 animal species and 22,000 plant species – seven times as many animal species and seventy times more plant species. Appendix III lists 278 species.

CITES, then, is about much more than large charismatic mammals and trade bans. It involves a green certification system for non-detrimental wildlife trade (based on CITES permits and certificates), combats illegal trade and related wildlife offences, promotes international cooperation, and helps establish management plans so that range states can monitor and sustainably manage CITES-listed species.

CITES requires each member government to adopt the necessary national legislation and officially designate a Management Authority that issues trade permits. They must also designate a Scientific Authority to provide scientific advice on imports and exports. These national

authorities are responsible for implementing CITES. This is done in close cooperation with Customs, police, or similar agencies.

As the impact of trade on a population or a species increases or decreases, the plant or animal species can be added to the CITES Appendices, removed from them, or transferred from one Appendix to another. These decisions are to be based on the best biological information available and an analysis of how different types of protection can affect specific populations.

It is worth noting that when a species is transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II, the protection for this species has not necessarily been 'downgraded'. Rather, it can be a sign of success when that species' population has grown to the point where trade may be possible. In addition, by allowing a species to be commercially traded at sustainable levels, an Appendix-II listing can actually improve protection by giving local people a greater stake in the species' survival.

The COP12 agenda

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the Convention's ultimate authority and includes all Governments that have ratified CITES. It meets every two-and-a-half years and is supported by a number of subsidiary bodies, including the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee (which conduct scientific reviews), the Standing Committee (which acts as an interim authority between COP meetings), and the Secretariat (which organizes meetings, drafts documents, undertakes missions, and otherwise services the Parties). While the official delegates are appointed by Governments, observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also play an important role in the CITES process.

COP12 will be conducted in the three working languages of the Convention – English, French and Spanish. It will be guided by an agenda (document COP12 Doc.3 (Rev.1)), which also contains a listing of the meeting documents. The President of the COP will be chosen during the opening ceremony and, in consultation with Parties, will guide the meeting on a day-to-day basis. The plenary session of the COP normally meets at the beginning of the two-week meeting and again at the end, when it formally adopts the meeting's resolutions and decisions. During the middle part of the meeting, various committees meet to consider reports from the subsidiary bodies, financial and budgetary issues, the strategic plan of the Convention, and a range of critical technical issues.

Of greatest interest to journalists will be the **proposals to amend Appendices I and II**. These proposals are submitted by interested Governments and are numbered as Proposals 1 through 59. Many of these proposals tell fascinating stories and are well worth reading in their entirety. The Secretariat has conducted a preliminary assessment of these proposals and presented its views in Notification 2002/043. The proposals are described in more detail starting on page 7 of this press kit.

In addition to the proposals, the meeting will examine a number of **conservation and implementation issues** concerning specific species. For example, Kenya is proposing (Doc. 63) that the Conference adopt a resolution on the rescue of dependent apes from war zones. Recognizing that Governments in war zones lack the capacity to implement CITES regulations to the letter, the draft text calls on the Secretariat to establish a system that would, on a case-by-case basis, permit the export of live apes without a CITES export permit if this is required to rescue them from probable death.

Another issue is the growing trade in **bushmeat**. Following a decision at the latest CITES Conference, six Central African countries formed the Bushmeat Working Group to identify how to discourage the over-hunting of local wildlife for the purpose of eating it. The Working Group is presenting a proposal for its future work on developing databases on the bushmeat trade, harmonizing national legislation, raising awareness and strengthening law enforcement (Doc. 62).

The meeting will also review a report (Doc. 32) on how to improve the trade control system for **leopard** skins and hunting trophies. The problem of how to better regulate trade in **bear** specimens and improve national control regimes is explored in Doc. 31; bear species appear in both Appendix I and Appendix II but demand for hunting trophies remains high, as does the demand in traditional medicine for bear bile and gall bladders.

Rhinoceroses also remain a conservation challenge (Doc. 35). All five rhino species were listed in Appendix I in 1977, but illegal hunting remains a problem, and several species are in critical condition. Another important report (Doc. 33) surveys recent efforts to protect the **tiger**. The tiger is also listed in Appendix I and is down to just 5,000 to 7,000 wild individuals; illegal trade and weak conservation systems in key range States have raised serious concerns over the species' survival.

Other agenda items include a renewed mandate for the **mahogany** working group (Doc. 47), a report on efforts to conserve **sturgeons** and manage the **caviar** trade (Agenda item 42), and ongoing efforts to protect the **Tibetan antelope** (Doc. 37) and the **musk deer** (Doc. 36).

The proposals for amending the CITES Appendices

Over the years, CITES has fine-tuned the criteria it uses for listing a species on Appendix I (which prohibits international commerce) and Appendix II (which regulates trade). It puts the onus on the proposing Government to make its case on the basis of scientific, biological criteria. To do this, the Government must provide as much detailed information and data as possible on population and trade trends. Recognizing that not all threatened species are affected by international trade, CITES avoids listing species for which its specialized provisions are not useful. Its decisions also consider practical matters such as whether any new controls can actually be enforced.

MAMMALS

The Black Sea **bottlenose dolphin** has declined greatly in recent years as a result of hunting, the impacts of pollution, declines in its prey due to over-fishing, and other fundamental changes in the Black Sea ecosystem. Georgia is proposing (Prop. 3) that this subspecies be transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Concerned that **whale** stocks had been decimated by years of over-hunting, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) set zero catch quotas for commercial harvesting in 1982. CITES responded the following year by listing great whales on Appendix I. Japan now proposes that most northern hemisphere populations of Minke whale (Prop. 4) as well as the western North Pacific population of Bryde's whale (Prop. 5) be transferred to Appendix II.

Japan points to scientific evidence that stocks of these two species are once again robust and healthy. Its proposal includes the use of precautionary measures such as a reliance on IWC methods to calculate safe catch levels and a requirement that trade be permitted only between countries with effective DNA register systems. The proposal would have the effect of enabling Japan to purchase existing blubber stocks from Norway. (See also Doc. 38.)

The **African elephant** also returns to the COP agenda. After an eight-year ban on ivory sales, three African countries – Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe – were allowed to make one-time sales from their existing legal raw ivory stocks in 1997. They made proposals for annual quotas in 2000 but then withdrew them. The debate over elephants has focused on the benefits that income from ivory sales may bring to local communities and to conservation programmes versus concerns that such sales may inspire increased poaching.

This year, the three countries plus South Africa (whose elephants were listed on Appendix II in 2000) are proposing (Props. 6, 7, 8 and 10) one-off sales of existing ivory stocks followed later by annual quotas. The proposals are for a first sale of 20,000 kg and an annual quota of 4,000 kg for Botswana, 10,000 kg and 2,000 kg respectively for Namibia, 30,000 and 2,000 for South Africa and 10,000 and 5,000 for Zimbabwe. Zambia too is now proposing (Prop. 9) to list its elephants on Appendix II and to make a one-off sale of 17,000 kg.

India and Kenya, meanwhile, are proposing (Prop. 11) that all African elephant populations be returned to Appendix I. A dialogue meeting of all African elephant range States will take place shortly before the beginning of the Santiago conference in an effort to reach a regional agreement on the elephant in advance of the COP. (See also Docs. 34.1, 34.2 and 34.3.)

Ivory in five southern African countries (metric tonnes)

Country	Proposed annual quota	Existing stocks	Recent annual stock growth	Future potential annual stock growth*	Elephant population
Botswana	4	33	7.7	10-50	120,000
Namibia	2	39	3.5	1-5	9,000
South Africa	2	32		1-4.5	13,000
Zambia	17 (one time)	17			29,000
Zimbabwe	5	20.9	20	8.5-42.5	88,000

* Based on 1-5% natural mortality and low crude average combined tusk weights of 10 kg per individual.

Like the llama, the **vicuña** lives in the high Andes where its fine silky wool is used to make high-quality woven products. Argentina, Bolivia and Chile are proposing (Props. 12, 13 and 14) that certain vicuña populations be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in marked cloth made with wool sheared from live animals. Their proposals argue that these populations are healthy and that shearing wild animals has a low impact. They also emphasize that gaining the support of local communities – which tend to be extremely poor – is vital to the species' survival and that sustainable use is therefore the best strategy for protecting this species. (See also Doc. 24.)

FISH

The **whale shark** is the largest fish in the world, measuring up to 20 metres in length and weighing up to 34 tonnes. It lives in tropical waters, feeds on plankton, bears live young and matures and breeds slowly. Citing declining populations and continued international trade in whale shark meat, fins and liver oil, India and the Philippines propose (Prop. 35) that the species be included in Appendix II. A similar proposal by the United States was rejected by the COP in 2000, but the current proposal includes more data on trade and population trends plus information on fisheries and conservation measures. (See also Docs. 41.1 and 41.2)

The highly migratory **basking shark** continues to be hunted for its meat and fins. Large numbers are also caught and killed accidentally as by-catch. Well-documented declines in catches of basking shark in certain fisheries have been recorded, suggesting reductions of at least 50 to 90% in some areas over very short period (usually 10 years or less). The ability of basking shark populations to recover quickly is limited by the species' slow reproductive rate. The United Kingdom (on behalf of European Community members) proposes that the species be included in Appendix II (Prop. 36). A similar proposal by the United Kingdom was rejected in 2000. Identification materials to help Customs officials differentiate parts and derivatives other than fins would be essential should this proposal be adopted.

Seahorses live in tropical and sub-tropical ocean waters, typically among sea grasses, kelp beds, algal reefs and rocky reefs, mangroves and coral reefs. Their numbers seem to have declined dramatically over the last few years owing to commercial trade, by-catch in fisheries, coastal development, destructive fishing practices and pollution. To meet the growing demand for traditional medicines, aquarium pets, souvenirs and curios, at least 20 million seahorses were captured annually from the wild in the early 1990s; the trade is estimated to be growing by 8-10% per year. Seahorse populations are estimated to have declined by 25-75% between 1990 and 1995 in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and possibly other Indo-Pacific countries. The

United States proposes (Prop. 37) to include all of the estimated 32 seahorse species in Appendix II.

The **humphead wrasse** lives in coral reefs throughout the Indo-Pacific region and can grow up to 2 metres and weigh 190 kg. It is threatened by over-fishing for the live reef food fish trade, which services the luxury restaurant markets in Hong Kong SAR, China, Singapore and other countries. Spearfisher in scuba gear hunt for humphead wrasse at night. Other specific threats are destructive fishing practices, such as the use of sodium cyanide to stun animals for capture while incidentally killing living coral; the lack of coordinated, consistent national and regional management systems; and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. In addition, much of the species' essential coral reef habitat is seriously threatened by climate change, pollution and other human activities. The United States proposes (Prop. 38) to include this species on Appendix II.

Australia proposes (Prop. 39) listing the **Patagonian toothfish** (or Chilean sea bass), as well as its look-alike **Antarctic toothfish**, on Appendix II. The Patagonian toothfish is a slow-growing, long-lived species that inhabits the Antarctic and Southern Oceans. Its commercial exploitation began in the late 1980s, and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing began in the 1990s. Current harvests are exceeding sustainable levels. This proposal raises the issue of CITES' role regarding valuable and heavily traded fish stocks and its relationship to regional fisheries agreements, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (which regulates toothfish catches) and other international agreements.

REPTILES

The turtle proposals below were inspired by the CITES-sponsored Technical Workshop on Conservation of and Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia held in Kunming, China, in March 2002. All proposals made by Germany at COP12 are made on behalf of the member states of the European Community (EC).

Germany and China have submitted one proposal (Prop. 22) for listing four species on Appendix II – the **Arakan forest turtle**, **giant Asian pond turtle**, **Philippine pond turtle** and **spiny turtle**. Each of these species appears to be traded in significant volumes as food items or as live specimens for hobbyists and the pet industry. In each case there is extensive evidence of illegal trade and of recent declines in availability in some markets, which suggests overexploitation.

The **big-headed turtle** is considered vulnerable or endangered throughout its range in China and other east Asian states. Little information is available on its numbers, however. The species appears to be traded in significant volumes for food, Chinese traditional medicines, and pet markets. There is extensive evidence of illegal trade and recent declines in availability in some markets, which may suggest overexploitation. Habitat destruction is also a major threat. China and the United States propose (Prop. 20) to include the big-headed turtle in Appendix II.

The **Annam pond turtle** appears to be traded in significant volumes. Because Vietnam, the turtle's sole range state, has not issued export permits for many years, all existing trade is almost certainly illegal. The turtles are traded as food items or as live specimens. In addition, their natural habitat of marshes and slow-flowing streams in central Vietnam is being steadily converted to agriculture. China and Germany propose (Prop. 21) to place the species on Appendix II.

The **yellow-headed temple turtle** lives in the swamps, flooded fields and slow-flowing rivers of Southeast Asia. It is considered vulnerable or endangered throughout its range. The species is harvested both for subsistence consumption and the export trade. China and the United States propose (Prop. 23) an Appendix II listing.

India and the United States propose (Prop. 24) listing six species of **roofed turtles** in Annex II. They are the **three-striped roofed turtle**, the **red-crowned roofed turtle**, the **brown-roofed turtle**, the **Assam roofed turtle**, the **Indian roofed turtle** and the **Burmese roofed turtle**. Roofed turtles are found in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Myanmar and Pakistan. They are collected for both subsistence and commercial use. International trade plays an increasing role and is putting additional pressure on already dwindling populations.

The **Sulawesi forest turtle** is limited to the western portion of the Minahasa peninsula of Sulawesi, Indonesia. It is considered critically endangered. The numbers observed in international trade rapidly increased from a few specimens in the early 1990s to 2,000 - 3,000 animals in southern China's food markets in 1998. The trade then collapsed to about 100 animals in 1999, and the species has not been observed since in Chinese food markets. These trends indicate that populations are under severe pressure. China and Germany are therefore proposing (Prop. 25) an Appendix-II listing.

Little is known about the **yellow pond turtle**, but it is clearly under pressure from harvesting for international trade and domestic consumption. This species is found in China, Japan and Viet Nam. Once one of the commonest turtles for sale in the Chinese food market, the yellow pond turtle has become uncommon in recent years. This trend indicates substantial declines in the wild populations. In addition to over-collecting for the food trade, the turtle is threatened by habitat destruction as well as water pollution and the increased use of fertilizers and pesticides. China and the United States propose (Prop. 26) an Appendix-II listing.

The **Malaysian giant turtle** inhabits the lowland wetlands of Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo), Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and Sumatra (Indonesia). Despite few data it is clear that the species is endangered because of unregulated harvesting and international trade. Populations have severely declined in some locations; because these declines have occurred during a period of intensive collection, they are unlikely to be caused by habitat loss, which is a much slower process. China and Germany propose (Prop. 27) an Appendix-II listing.

The **Keeled box turtle** is declining throughout its range in China, India, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. It is over-collected for subsistence consumption and for the international food markets and is the subject of extensive illegal trade. It is also threatened by habitat loss and deforestation throughout much of its range. China and the US are proposing (Prop. 28) that this turtle be listed on Appendix II.

Although there are not many data on its population trends, the **black marsh turtle** appears to be traded in significant volumes as food items or live specimens. Its range includes Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. In addition, the turtle is killed accidentally by fisher and from habitat loss and degradation. An Appendix-II listing is proposed (Prop. 29) by China and the United States.

Narrow-headed softshell turtles are rare or extinct throughout much of their range in east, Southeast and south Asia where they are collected and exported for the food and pet markets.

They also suffer from habitat destruction and other threats. China and the United States are calling for an Appendix-II listing (Prop. 31). For similar reasons they also propose (Prop. 32) an Appendix-II listing for the **New Guinea giant softshell turtle**. This last proposal also includes the **Asian giant softshell turtle** because it looks similar to its New Guinea relative and can be easily confused with it.

New Zealand endemic geckos are colourful and attractive lizards, apparently selling illegally for up to USD15,000 per individual on international markets. Expressing concern that illegal harvesting in the wild is on the rise, New Zealand proposes (Prop. 33) that all 15 species of its native geckos be listed on Appendix II. It notes that in addition to trade the gecko has traditionally been threatened by habitat loss and by introduced predators such as cats and rats.

The United States proposes (Prop. 34) deleting the **orange-throated whiptail lizard** from Appendix II. Its proposal states that the species is abundant, well protected in the wild and not threatened by trade. The main threat to the lizard, which lives in southwest California in the United States and Baja California in Mexico, is habitat loss.

BIRDS

The **yellow-naped amazon** is threatened by deforestation and habitat loss throughout its range from southeast Mexico to northwest Costa Rica. According to Costa Rica, which proposes (Prop. 16) that the species be transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I, the parrot's decline is also due to the ransacking of nests for domestic and international trade in live specimens.

The **yellow-headed amazon** is also under pressure from habitat loss in its native range of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. Concluding that the bird's numbers have declined by 68% over the last 10 years, Mexico proposes (Prop. 17) to transfer this parrot from Appendix II to Appendix I. The proposal recognizes that any trade measures would need to be complemented by efforts to secure the species' habitat.

Germany proposes transferring the **blue-headed macaw** from Appendix II to I. Its proposal (Prop. 18) points to 10-year-old estimates putting the macaw's total population at 10,000 individuals, an increase in legal and illegal trade, the bird's low reproductive rate and support for the proposal by the range states Bolivia, Brazil and Peru.

The **lesser rhea** was transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I in 1979 following a proposal from Peru. Chile now proposes (Prop. 15) that the sub-population in its territory be returned to Appendix II as it does not meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. Only trading in captive-bred birds would be permitted.

South Africa proposes (Prop. 19) to transfer the **Cape parrot** population on its territory from Appendix II to Appendix I. It states that the bird's habitat and numbers are declining and that trade is the primary threat.

INSECTS

The **Sri Lankan rose** is a critically endangered butterfly found only on the island nation. Its rarity is due primarily to deforestation in its natural habitat. Germany proposes (Prop. 40) to include this butterfly in Appendix II, stating that illegal collection continues.

Papilio aristophontes, a butterfly living only in the Comoros Islands, has become endangered owing to deforestation in what is Africa's most densely populated country. Germany proposes (Prop. 41) listing this butterfly – as well as its look-alikes *Papilio nireus* and *Papilio sosia* – on Appendix II. It notes that the Comoros has no national legislation prohibiting collection or export of this butterfly. The limited information available suggests that trade levels are low.

FLORA

The **bigleaf mahogany** is a valuable timber tree whose high-quality wood is used for furniture, boats and expensive paneling. It thrives in dry tropical forests ranging from southern Mexico to the Amazon basin. Although the species is not currently at risk of extinction, many populations are seriously threatened and their genetic variation has been depleted. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the average rate of deforestation in general in the tree's range States is more than 1% per cent per year. Guatemala and Nicaragua propose (Prop. 50) to include the neotropical populations of bigleaf mahogany in Appendix II, including logs, sawn wood, veneer sheets and plywood.

The **monkey puzzle tree** is popular as an ornamental plant and as a high-quality wood. Its bark is reputed to have medicinal qualities, and its seeds provide a high-protein food source for local indigenous peoples. The Chilean and Argentine populations of monkey puzzle trees are listed in Appendix I. Argentina now proposes (Prop. 42) that all of the world's cultivated specimens outside of Argentina and Chile, which are currently listed on Appendix II, be transferred to Appendix I.

The **tonopah fishhook cactus** is found at just two sites in Nevada, in the United States, while the **Blaine's pincushion** is found at three sites in the states of Nevada and Utah. Both species are currently listed on Appendix II, and since 1994 no exports of wild specimens have been permitted. Concerned about the increasing number of seeds being offered on the Internet, which implies that the illegal collection of wild specimens is increasing, the United States proposes (Prop. 46 - 47) to transfer the two species to Appendix I.

The **Santa Barbara Island dudleya** is a flowering and succulent perennial herb that is native to western North America. Although the species has small sub-populations, it is not threatened by international trade. The United States therefore proposes (Prop. 48) to transfer it from Appendix I to Appendix II.

There are eight known populations of *Aloe thorncroftii* in South Africa's Mpumalanga Province. Their grassland habitat has been transformed dramatically in recent years, particularly by commercial afforestation. Invasions by alien plant species are the main future threat to the plant's habitat. *Aloe thorncroftii* was originally listed on Appendix I on account of its small population size and the threat of collection. However, because there is no longer any indication that collection is a threat, South Africa proposes (Prop. 49) to remove the species from Appendix I and place it on Appendix II.

Many **orchids** are listed on Appendix II because their popularity with collectors led to the over-harvesting of wild specimens. The United States proposes (Prop. 51) exempting artificially propagated hybrids from this listing when they meet certain conditions. These hybrids are traded in very large quantities, but the trade itself has no impact on the natural populations. Delisting them would allow enforcement officers to pay more attention to trade aspects of greater relevance to nature conservation.

A number of **cactus** species have been listed in Appendix II. An exemption permits the free trade in artificially propagated specimens of certain cactus hybrids and cultivars. Switzerland proposes (Prop. 43) to expand this exemption to include a number of new colour mutant forms. The purpose is to exclude from the CITES Appendices easily identifiable, commonly traded, artificially propagated specimens whose trade has no impact on wild species.

Maguire's bitter-root is a succulent and perennial herb that exists at eight known sites in Nevada, in the United States. Although very attractive and interesting to plant enthusiasts, it is probably not traded. In 2000 Switzerland (as Depositary Government of the Convention and on behalf of the Plants Committee) proposed the species' deletion from Appendix II, but the United States asked for delay to study the species. The United States is now proposing (Prop. 53) that the deletion go ahead.

The **tree of life** (also known as the guaiac tree) grows up to 10 metres in height and is indigenous to the wider Caribbean region. From the time of Columbus, its dense, highly textured wood has been greatly valued. It is still used for ship propeller shafts, for castor wheels and bearings in machinery, and in die casting. Local people also use it sometimes in remedies for rheumatic pain and other complaints. This endangered species is threatened by overexploitation and habitat conversion and is listed on Appendix II. To prevent tree of life products from being traded under the name of related but non-CITES species, Germany now proposes (Prop. 54) to specify that the Appendix-II listing include all parts and derivatives of the tree, including bark, wood, and extract.

Switzerland proposes delisting the **prickly pear cactus** (Prop. 44) and **leaf-bearing cacti** (Prop. 45) from Appendix II. Trade in live wild-collected specimens is virtually non-existent and the removal of these easily recognizable species would not pose a threat to their conservation.

A unique parasitic herb that lives on the roots of the bunge plant (which is itself in decline), China's **desert-living cistanche** has been used for some 1,800 years as a natural tonic drug. It was listed on Appendix II at the latest COP meeting in 2000. China now proposes (Prop. 52) to correct a technical error in the earlier listing, which referred incorrectly to the herb's 'roots'.
