

www.CITES.org

Introduction to CITES

UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force
National Training Workshop
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Convention on International Trade in Endangered
Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

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Overview

- What is CITES?
- How CITES works
- The benefits of CITES
- Trade measures

What is CITES?

CITES

- CITES is the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**
- It is also known as the Washington Convention, as it was signed in Washington D.C.
- CITES was signed on 3 March 1973, and entered into force on 1 July 1975

...in operation for 29 years

CITES

- CITES was 'born' from a resolution adopted by the eighth General Assembly of IUCN, in Nairobi in 1963, expressing concern about the wildlife trade and calling for a mechanism to regulate this trade
- The drafting of the text started in 1964, and after several worldwide consultation the final text was adopted in Washington in 1973
- It has now become one of the largest conservation oriented Conventions

CITES

...is relevant to an ever-increasing number of Parties

| Year | Number of Parties |
|------|-------------------|
| 1973 | 11 |
| 1975 | 12 |
| 1978 | 15 |
| 1981 | 18 |
| 1984 | 22 |
| 1987 | 26 |
| 1990 | 30 |
| 1993 | 34 |
| 1996 | 38 |
| 1999 | 42 |
| 2002 | 46 |
| 2004 | 166 |

CITES

- CITES is an agreement between governments
- Its purpose is to ensure that wild fauna and flora in international trade are not exploited unsustainably



CITES

- CITES is an international convention that combines wildlife and trade themes with a legally binding instrument for achieving conservation and sustainable use objectives



Misconceptions about CITES

- *CITES deals with all aspects of wildlife conservation*
 - This is wrong, as CITES deals only with international trade in certain species included in its Appendices
- *CITES aims to ban all wildlife trade*
 - This is wrong, as CITES aims to regulate international trade (for some species trade is highly restricted)

Misconceptions about CITES

- *CITES regulates domestic trade*
 - This is wrong, as CITES can only address international trade
- *The CITES Appendices are a listing of the world's endangered species*
 - This is wrong, as the Appendices only list those species that are or may be affected by international trade

How CITES works

- The Convention establishes an international **legal framework** with common **procedural mechanisms** for the prevention of international commercial trade in endangered species, and for an effective regulation of international trade in others



How CITES works

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- The Convention and its Appendices are legally binding, but **national legislation** is required to apply its provisions



How CITES works

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- National legislation to implement CITES must, at the very least:
 - **designate** a Management Authority and a Scientific Authority
 - **prohibit** trade in specimens in violation of the Convention
 - **penalize** such trade
 - allow for **confiscation** of specimens illegally traded or possessed



How CITES works

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- The Management Authority is responsible for the administrative aspects of implementation (legislation, permits, annual and biennial reports on trade, communication with other CITES agencies)



How CITES works

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- The Scientific Authority is responsible for advising the Management Authority on non-detriment findings and other scientific aspects of implementation, and monitoring of national trade



How CITES works

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- Species subject to CITES regulation are divided amongst three Appendices

Appendix I

- includes species threatened with extinction
- International (commercial) trade is generally **prohibited**
- Almost 530 animal species and some 300 plant species



Macropygia melanotos
Photo © van Vliet



Alouatta palliata



How CITES works

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Appendix II

- includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but for which trade must be controlled to avoid their becoming threatened
- includes species that resemble species already included in Appendix I or II
- International trade is **permitted but regulated**
- More than 4,400 animal species and more than 28,000 plant species



Diamante muscipula



Tupinambis



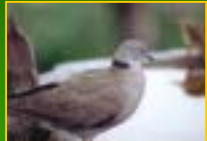
How CITES works

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Appendix III

- includes species for which a country is asking Parties to help with its protection
- International trade is **permitted but regulated** (less restrictive than Appendix II)
- Some 240 animal species and about 40 plant species

Gonystylus spp. (Photo: RBG Kew)



Streptopelia semitorquata (Photo: P. Dollinger)

How CITES works

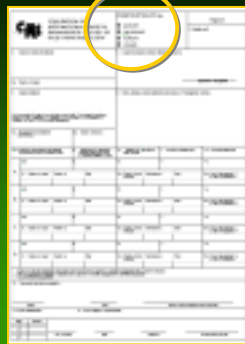
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- CITES regulates the export, re-export and import of live and dead animals and plants and their parts and derivatives (for listed species only) through a **system of permits and certificates**
- These permits or certificates may only be issued if certain conditions are met and which must be presented when leaving or entering a country
- For Appendix I and II-listed species, the most important condition is that international trade in these species must not be detrimental to their survival in the wild

How CITES works

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- There are four types of CITES documents:
 - Export permits
 - Import permits
 - Re-export certificates
 - Other certificates



The benefits of CITES

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- Effective and consistent **international regulation** of trade in wildlife for conservation and sustainable use
- **International cooperation** on trade and conservation, legislation and enforcement, resource management, conservation science
- **Participation** as a global player in managing and conserving wildlife at the international level

Trade Measures

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Trade-related measures in CITES

- **Trade-related measures** in CITES can be grouped into five main categories:
 - Measures for an early exchange of relevant information to support decision-making and cooperation
 - Measures to support legal trade
 - Measures to regulate trade between Parties
 - Measures concerning trade between Parties and non-Parties
 - Measures to reduce illegal trade

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Measures for exchanging information

- The procedures for trade in Appendix I specimens are a form of 'prior informed consent' between the Parties concerned
- The requirement that, for species at risk of extinction, an import permit must be issued before an export permit is issued ensures that both the importer and exporter have considered the risks and other implications of the proposed trade before it takes place



Measures for exchanging information

- Concerning specific provisions for the notification and exchange of information among countries, the Appendices are the most important form of 'notification', identifying which species are covered by CITES
- Other important methods of information exchange include the distribution of Notifications to the Parties, the use of the website for document distribution and information (including publishing contact details for all Parties and many non-Parties), and as a repository for past and present documentation



Measures to support and regulate legal trade

- The main measure to support legal trade is the CITES permit system
- Permits are only issued by competent authorities, and when certain provisions are met
- The most important consideration for trade in species listed in Appendices I and II is whether the trade may be detrimental to the survival of the species



Measures to regulate trade between Parties

- For trade in Appendix I specimens, the fundamental principle is that trade must only be authorized only in exceptional circumstances, which is a limiting measure
- The quotas and quota systems within CITES cover leopard, markhor, ivory (trophies), and sturgeons and caviar
- CITES also publishes voluntary national quotas for any CITES-listed species to assist Parties with regulating trade



Measures concerning trade with non-Parties

- Under CITES, trade with non-Parties is allowed only when comparable documentation is issued by the competent authorities in that State which substantially conforms with the requirements of the Convention for permits and certificates (Article X)



Measures to reduce illegal trade

- Article VIII requires Parties to take appropriate measures to enforce the provisions of the Convention and to prohibit trade in specimens in violation thereof



Measures to reduce illegal trade

- The effective enforcement of CITES requires, among other things, the national control of the legal international trade in CITES-listed species, and the application of all measures to stop any illegal international trade in these species
- Violations of the Convention and related national legislation have serious implications for the conservation of biological diversity



Measures to reduce illegal trade

- Why enforce CITES?
 - To aid conservation
 - To detect illegal international trade
 - To deter illegal international trade
 - To assist detection and deterrence of wildlife crime at national levels
 - To gather revenue



Measures to reduce illegal trade

- Trying to control, limit or eliminate illegal trade is difficult, but progress can be made through:
 - Better control of CITES documents
 - Better border controls
 - Better control of internal trade
 - Investigations
 - Registration of specimens
 - Better control of breeding operations and nurseries



Thank you for your attention

- For additional information:
 - Visit the CITES website at www.cites.org
 - Contact us at
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