



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



August 02, 2004

Subject: Trade Restrictions on CITES-Listed Wildlife from Mauritania and Somalia

Background: The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service received notice from the CITES Secretariat that Mauritania and Somalia failed to adopt required CITES legislation or create a CITES legislative plan to satisfactorily implement and enforce the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species upon import, export, and re-export. This failure poses a serious threat to many endangered and threatened species. Mauritania has been a member of CITES since 1998 and Somalia has been a member since 1986. In the notice, the Secretariat also indicates that Mauritania and Somalia are currently under trade suspensions for all CITES-listed specimens due to their failure to provide the required annual reports.

The Endangered Species Act prohibits trade (import, export, re-export) in specimens traded contrary to the CITES Convention. Articles II and VIII of CITES require that countries take appropriate measures to enforce the provisions of the treaty and to prohibit trade in specimens that are in violation. CITES permits and certificates may only be issued and considered valid when it is determined that the specimens have been legally acquired.

As a member of CITES, the United States is committed to carrying out decisions and policies approved by CITES countries that reflect appropriate interpretations of the treaty. Based upon the lack of implementing legislation in Mauritania and Somalia, the United States cannot establish legal origin or the lack of detriment of wildlife that is exported or re-exported from Mauritania or Somalia. Any export permits or re-export certificates issued by these two countries are considered invalid, and shipments may not be imported directly from Mauritania or Somalia or through an intermediary country. In addition, the United States cannot allow export or re-export of CITES-listed specimens from the United States to Mauritania or Somalia since there are no enforcement provisions in place to ensure that the Convention is being implemented.

Action: Effective immediately, the United States will prohibit the import of CITES-listed specimens from Mauritania or Somalia, or CITES-listed specimens with an origin of Mauritania or Somalia. The United States will also prohibit the export-or re-export of CITES-listed specimens to Mauritania or Somalia, or the re-export of CITES-listed specimens with an origin of Mauritania or Somalia, until further notice. Any such shipments are subject to seizure and forfeiture.

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