spotlight

40 YEARS

Promoting the sustainable use and conservation of wild plants and animals

Venus' flytrap plants and bottlenose dolphins are protected by CITES.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES. This international treaty on wildlife trade helps ensure that trade does not threaten species' survival in the wild. The 177 member nations of CITES (called Parties) work together to protect almost 35,000 species of plants and animals. To help celebrate, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Claire Cassel spoke to two figures immersed in CITES history. The following are excerpts from the interviews with Marshall Jones and Lee Talbot.

MARSHALL JONES: A WORLD WITHOUT CITES IS INCONCEIVABLE

Marshall Jones is a Senior Conservation Adviser at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI), a 3,200-acre conservation and research facility in Front Royal, Virginia. Before going to SCBI, Jones worked for 32 years for the Fish and Wildlife Service, starting in 1975 as a wildlife biologist and technical writer with the Office of Endangered Species. During his career, Jones served on the U.S. delegation to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP1) to CITES. He served as a member of U.S. delegations to 10 CoPs, holding several leadership positions. Jones also erved as the first Assistant Director of the Service's International Affairs programs and Deputy Director and Acting Director for the Service.

CoP1: Setting the stage

I started working for the Service in April 1975 as the editor of the *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin* (now known as the *Endangered Species Bulletin*). After less than a year, I was asked to serve as a consultant for zoological issues to the U.S. delegation for CoP1. At that time, the Fish and Wildlife Service did not have a Scientific Authority office.

As the depositary government for the Convention, Switzerland paid for and hosted CoP1 in November 1976 in Bern, Switzerland. Bern was a good choice; it was a small city without the distractions of a tourist destination such as Geneva.

CoP1 set a pattern of English, French and Spanish as the working languages for the Convention. That meant that simultaneous

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LEE TALBOT: FOUNDING FATHER OF CITES

Lee Merriam Talbot Ph.D. is an ecologist and geographer; specialist in international environmental affairs, ecology, environmental policies and institutions, conservation biology and natural resource management, with more than 60 years of professional experience, approximately half spent working on environmental issues in 134 countries outside the United States Talbot is currently senior professor of environmental science, international affairs and public policy, Department of Environmental Science and Policy at George Mason University. Past positions include Assistant to the Chairman for the President's Council on Environmental Quality; Director General, World Conservation Union—IUCN; and Visiting Fellow, World Resources Institute.

What was your involvement in the drafting of CITES?

While attending a conference in Arusha in northern Tanzania in 1961, I pulled together wildlife officials from a number of African countries to discuss the issue of endangered species and poaching and what could be done about it. Poaching was a big problem—things like zebra hides, elephant ivory, rhino horn, crocodile and leopard skins. Of course, poaching is still a big issue today.

The consensus from that meeting was that the problem stemmed from the demand end of things, specifically Europe and the United States. The supply countries lacked the dollars and the manpower to protect the species from highly organized poaching operations. In response, I proposed a convention on trade to get at the issue of demand.

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DOLPHIN: ALLISON HENRY/NOAA/NEFSC FLY TRAP: NOAH ELHARDT/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

CITES 101

Understanding Appendices, CoPs and Permits

Until the early 1960s, trade in wild animals and plants focused on consumer demand with little regard for its impact on the long-term survival of species. But, as international discussions turned to this unregulated trade and the threat it posed to wildlife, CITES was born.

In 1963, a resolution adopted at a meeting of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Nairobi, Kenya, led to the drafting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Ten years later, the text of the Convention was approved in Washington, DC, at a meeting of representatives from 80 countries. On July 1, 1975, CITES took effect.

Today, the 177 member nations of CITES (called Parties) work together to protect almost 35,000 species of plants and animals by ensuring that international trade is legal and does not threaten their survival in the wild.

How CITES Protects Species

International trade in plants and animals, whether taken from the wild or bred in captivity, can pose serious risks to wildlife species. Without regulation, international trade can deplete wild populations, leading to extinction. The goal of CITES is to facilitate legal, biologically sustainable trade, whenever possible. But, in some cases, no level of commercial trade can be supported.

Species are listed in one of three appendices:

- Appendix I comprises species threatened with extinction and provides the greatest level of protection. International trade for primarily commercial purposes is essentially prohibited. Examples include gorillas, sea turtles and giant pandas.
- Appendix II is composed of species that, although currently not threatened with extinction, may become so without trade controls. Most CITES species are listed in this appendix, including American ginseng, paddlefish, lions and many corals.
- Appendix III comprises species for which a range country, based on their own legal protections for a species, has asked other Parties to help control international trade. Examples include map turtles, walrus and Cape stag beetles.

The CITES Structure

CITES is administered by a Secretariat, located in Geneva, Switzerland. Three permanent committees (Standing, Animals and Plants) provide technical and scientific support to the Parties. Each Party designates Management and Scientific Authorities to issue permits, make legal and scientific findings, and monitor trade. In the United States, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's International Affairs Program carries out these functions.

The CITES Parties, collectively referred to as the Conference of the Parties (CoP), meet approximately every three years to review CITES implementation and assess the status of species in trade. During this meeting, Parties review and vote on proposals to improve the effectiveness of the treaty and make amendments to Appendices I and II. Through the adoption of resolutions and species proposals, the CoP develops practical solutions to complex wildlife trade problems. Attendees include Party delegations, representatives of the CITES Secretariat and approved observers, including conservation and industry organizations.

Bobcat skins with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service CITES tags.

Permits: More Than Paperwork

The backbone of CITES is the permit system that facilitates international cooperation in conservation and trade monitoring of CITES-listed species. Permits are issued only if a country's Management and Scientific Authorities determine that trade is legal and does not threaten the species' survival. The use of standardized permit forms allows officials at points of export and import to verify that specimens are properly documented. They also allow for collection of species-specific trade data to determine trends in trade, identifying increases or decreases in trade levels that may indicate a need to reassess a species listing in the CITES Appendices.

Over the last several decades, CITES has helped ensure the global conservation of species. Increased commitment by Parties to effectively implement the treaty, including stronger legislation and enforcement at the national level, has helped control worldwide over-exploitation of wildlife.

CLAIRE HOOD, International Affairs, Headquarters

Jones interview, continued from page 13

interpreters were provided for these three languages, and those countries speaking other languages were required to provide and pay for their own translators.

What were the main goals of CoP1?
The first and biggest goal of CoP1 was to fix some oversight in the list of species that were adopted in 1973. For example, the African elephant was not included in the initial list of species, in either Appendix I or II, while the Asian elephant was in Appendix I. To rectify this, the United Kingdom submitted a proposal to put the African elephant in Appendix I. Switzerland proposed placement in Appendix II. The U.S. supported the Swiss proposal; the terrible poaching of elephants, which led to the U.S. support of the 1989 Appendix-I listing, had not yet commenced.

The second major goal was to establish ground rules for operating the Convention. The U.S went into the Convention with the notion of a precautionary principle. That is, if there's doubt then lean toward protection of a species.

What were the successes of CoP1?
Rules, regulations and procedures were the biggest successes of CoP1. The most critical of these was a rule—advocated by the U.S. and adopted by the Parties—that required the same documents and permits of non-Parties as from Parties. The message was clear: you need a permit, and you need a process to meet CITES requirements. This requirement put pressure on countries to join the treaty.

Another success was the adoption of requirements for Parties that take reservations to species listings in Appendix I or II. Although a Party can decide not to recognize a species listing, it still must issue a permit that meets CITES requirements before it can export the species. There are no free passes, and taking a reservation actually puts a country at a disadvantage. For example, South African Parties took reservations to the 1989 Appendix I listing of the African elephant. Later, they realized that it was not to their advantage to be treated as non-Parties and removed the reservations.

These two principles are so important and contributed greatly to the success of CITES.

What are the challenges in implementing CITES?
CITES is only as strong as the Party countries' own enforcement. There are lots of developing and developed countries who don't care—or who don't have the resources to implement their laws. There's corruption and huge money involved that's fueling the poaching.

What does the future of CITES look like?
We need to address supply as well as demand. We need to put more money toward supporting rangers on the ground so that we can prevent animals from dying and keep them out of trade. Illegal wildlife trade has become the training ground for organized crime. To be effective in fighting it, we need to enforce laws and use the best techniques available. We need to bring strong sanctions against countries that are issuing corrupt and bad permits.

We need to modernize CITES, make it known among people who care about wildlife and constantly improve its profile. We need to engage electronic media and develop apps so that government officials can identify wildlife parts or products on the fly. We need social media to get people to take action. We need to get non-government organizations more involved.

A world without CITES is inconceivable. □

DIRCK BYLER/USFWS

USFWS

(Right): A Service wildlife inspector checks out and identifies an iguana. (Above): The Service's Wildlife Without Borders program has a multi-year cooperative agreement with the Garoua Wildlife College in Cameroon aimed at enhancing wildlife conservation in Central and West Africa.

No CITES, no ESA?

"Those who were involved in negotiating CITES in 1973 were also involved in developing the Endangered Species Act. The law that was in effect at the time—the Endangered Species Conservation Act—was very weak with minimal regulatory effect. A new ESA was needed to both implement CITES and address domestic issues. John Dingle in the House of Representatives was key to that effort. He pushed for CITES, the ESA—and funding. There were people in Congress, government and academia all thinking about how to develop a treaty and a U.S. law to put teeth into the treaty and address domestic issues.

I'm convinced that without the U.S. we would not have CITES. And without CITES there would not be an ESA—or at the very least there would be a weakened ESA."

Talbot interview, continued from page 13

In 1963, I brought the proposal to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) General Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, where it was presented as a resolution and passed unanimously. Subsequently, it went through three or four iterations as the result of review by IUCN member governments and non-government organizations.

By 1969 the IUCN had a pretty good draft of an international wildlife trade convention. At that time I was with the Smithsonian but was also an adviser to the Joint Senate/House Environment Committee. One of the issues that came up was the redrafting of the Endangered Species Act, and we actually got a line in the 1969 version of the ESA authorizing the government to hold an international conference to develop an international convention to control trade.

In 1970, I went to work for the newly created President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as Assistant to Chairman Russell Train. One of the things I had on my agenda was to try to get the convention enacted, and Russ was strongly supportive. Shortly after that, we began preparations for the 1972 U.N. Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. We developed the draft a bit further and also got agreement from the State Department and the Department of the Interior for the U.S. to host a plenipotentiary conference to negotiate it. As co-chairs of a U.N. preparatory committee for the Stockholm conference, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nat Reed and I prepared the conservation components of the Stockholm agenda and, of course, we included the official U.S. proposal on the agenda. I also traveled on behalf of the White House to Africa, Europe and other regions to explain the convention and seek support for it. The U.S. proposal as well as a proposal for a plenipotentiary conference was presented at Stockholm and accepted with nearly unanimous support.

In 2007, Lee Talbot with his wife, Martha Walcott Hayne, journeyed to a previously unexplored part of the Annamite Mountains of Laos and are shown holding the Explorers Club flag. The Explorers Club flag is given to outstandingly significant expeditions.

Early in 1973, we held the plenipotentiary conference in the State Department in Washington D.C. with some 80 countries represented. IUCN served as staff for the conference, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora was negotiated, signed and since ratified, well and truly.

What countries were particularly active in promoting the convention?

Kenya wanted a stronger convention than the one that was agreed to. From my point of view, that was fine. England was supportive, but somewhat hesitant due to concerns about the difficulty in using untrained customs officials to identify the difference, for example, between an African spotted cat and a leopard. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was starting to develop identification manuals. These were helpful in terms of implementing the convention, but were also helpful at the time of negotiating it.

Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika (now part of Tanzania), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Malawi, South Africa, Egypt, Sudan and Iran were among the developing countries that helped promote the convention. Germany, France, England and the United States were among the developed countries.

As you look back over its implementation, what are CITES' major successes?

CITES' successes are a kind of roller coaster. Elephants were a major success, particularly in southern Africa, when CITES first closed the door on legal trade. Trade of rhino horn was another southern Africa success story until this year. Other major successes include trade in leopard hide and other skins intended for clothing or trophies and some plants, such as desert plants and even orchids.

Where the end result is display, CITES has been exceedingly effective. There is a direct relationship between the objective for the poaching and the success of CITES. Where demand is driven by the desire for display, the controls have been good. But, when demand is driven by less visible uses, such as traditional home remedies, then control is less successful.

CITES has also been successful in raising consciousness in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as other regions of the world about the consequences of illegal wildlife trade.

What are CITES' major challenges?

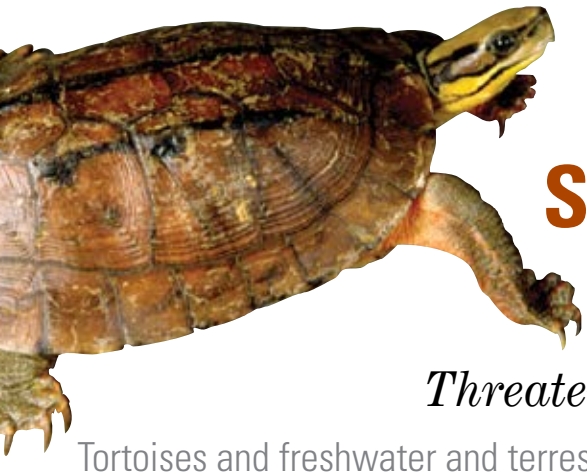
We need stronger enforcement of the laws that are in place in member countries. For example, some major consumer countries in Asia have reasonable laws but don't enforce their laws. We also need education as well as more surveillance within the supply countries.

What does the future CITES look like?

We need to find more and better ways to get at the demand side of illegal wildlife trade. We also need more funding to build capacity to do research for better ways to identify the products and interdict the trade. Some of the non-government organizations are doing this work now, namely DNA identification of ivory and whale meat. □

Talbot says CITES cut trade in rhino horn until recently.

USFWS



Shell-Shocked

Trade in Turtles Threatens Species

Tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles are the world's most endangered vertebrates. The Service has been involved in CITES efforts to better monitor and regulate their international trade.

Global commerce in turtles in the last 20-plus years has followed a well-known pattern of boom and bust in international wildlife trade: Once a species is depleted or regulated, trade shifts to species not as threatened or less regulated.

International trade in turtles is most common in Asia, with supply countries feeding well-established legal and illegal trade networks supplying markets in China and other consumer countries in East Asia. Buyers in Asia primarily use turtles as food or in traditional medicine. But a growing pet trade across the region impacts a number of threatened species. Many freshwater turtles also come from the United States—mostly from turtle farms.

Because of their life-history traits—including adult longevity, late maturity, limited annual reproductive output, and high juvenile and egg mortality—turtles are vulnerable to the effects of over-harvest. Their long lifespan creates a high probability that some hatchlings will survive to maturity, but this strategy may be overwhelmed by the impacts of human exploitation. Harvest of adults leads to too few eggs being laid and thus fewer hatchlings to survive to maturity. Human exploitation of eggs also leads to fewer hatching and fewer hatchlings surviving to maturity. In this way over-harvest often leads to population collapse.

Along with other countries—including China, Germany, Indonesia and Vietnam—the United States has spearheaded efforts not only to list species in the CITES Appendices but also to bring countries together to strengthen implementation and enforcement of CITES. This international cooperation is vital to conserving tortoise and turtle species. Consider the plight of Asian box turtles.

Asian *Cuora* box turtles—about 10 to 12 species—have a history of local and international exploitation for food, traditional medicine and the pet trade. Originally, several of the species were only known from specimens found in Asian food markets.

The locations of wild populations, if any existed, were unknown. As discoveries were made regarding their ranges in the wild, many of these box turtle populations were found to have fewer than 100 individuals, and in some cases only a handful. Even today, the status of Zhou's box turtle in the wild, with approximately 100 known living specimens in captivity, is a mystery.

The golden coin turtle, also known as the three-striped box turtle, has long been used in China, primarily for traditional medicines. Live turtles are kept for good luck or as a financial investment, and turtle populations tolerated low-level collection for these uses for centuries. However, in the last three decades, demand has been fueled by the false belief that jellies and abstracts from this species cure cancer. High demand coupled with habitat loss has pushed this species to the edge of extinction. Despite farming of golden coin turtles by the thousands, demand for wild-caught males still exists because captive breeding seems to produce only females, and high demand encourages the construction of additional farms that require wild animals as breeding stock.

To help conserve the golden coin turtle, Zhou's box turtle and seven other *Cuora* box turtle species, the United States and China have joined together to strengthen CITES protections by proposing to eliminate trade in wild-caught animals. A joint CoP16 proposal includes a zero quota on exports of wild-caught specimens for commercial purposes.

The United States has also partnered with Vietnam on a proposal to transfer the big-headed turtle from Appendix II to Appendix I, which would prohibit commercial trade in the species.

These two proposals, along with six other turtle proposals submitted by the United States, will ensure that turtles are a focus of discussion at CoP16, even though these species may not "make the headlines." □

THOMAS LEUTERITZ, PhD and BRUCE WEISSGOLD, International Affairs, Headquarters

Turtle proposals submitted by the United States

Transfer **Burmese star** tortoise to Appendix I from Appendix II.

Add 15 **Asian pond and river** turtles to Appendix II and establish zero quotas for 15 currently listed species (Co-sponsored by China).

Add eight **Asian softshell** turtles to Appendix II and two to Appendix I (Co-sponsored by China).

Transfer **Roti Island snake-necked** turtle to Appendix I from Appendix II.

Add **Blanding's** turtle to Appendix II.

Add **Diamondback** terrapin to Appendix II.

Add **Spotted** turtle to Appendix II.

Transfer **Big-headed** turtle from Appendix II to Appendix I (Co-sponsored by Vietnam)

CITES CoP16

What Will Make the Headlines?

In March, delegates from around the globe will converge on the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand, for the world's most influential meeting on international wildlife trade—a meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES. At this 16th meeting of the CoP, the most anticipated and potentially controversial proposals center on African elephants, white rhinos, polar bears and sharks.

African Elephant Proposal
Burkina Faso and Kenya have submitted a proposal contending that any legal trade in ivory poses a very serious threat to elephant populations. If passed, CITES would not accept proposals to allow trade in elephant ivory from populations in Appendix II for nine years from the last ivory sale in 2008. This proposal, according to proponents, reflects the intention of a 2007 agreement among the elephant range states and ensures that African elephants are not put under threat from legalized ivory sales.

White Rhinoceros Proposal
Kenya believes the export of white rhino trophies should not be allowed, citing evidence that suggests that hunting trophies offer a legal pathway for criminal networks to obtain horns, which are then illegally sold for medicinal and ornamental purposes. Range states have witnessed unprecedented poaching in recent years, with South Africa losing 668 rhinos in 2012 alone. Kenya's proposal also contends that the continued legal trophy hunting of rhino may be stimulating demand.

Shark and Manta Ray Proposals
Shark species, especially those with low reproductive rates, are vulnerable to over-exploitation from the international fin trade and bycatch, or unintentional catch in nets meant for something else. Shark fins are particularly in demand as a food item and are highly valued in international trade, with a wholesale value up to $39 per pound. Proposals have been put forth to include several species of sharks—oceanic whitetip, porbeagle and three species of hammerhead— and all manta rays in CITES Appendix II, to control trade at biologically sustainable levels. Adding commercially exploited marine species to the CITES Appendices has been controversial. Some countries argue that Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) are the only appropriate bodies for dealing with international fisheries issues. The United States firmly believes CITES action can be complementary to measures taken for sharks and other marine species by RFMOs.

Polar Bear Proposal
From 2001 through 2010, an average of 3,200 items made from polar bears were exported or re-exported annually from range states. This represents about 400 to 500 polar bears per year. The United States has submitted a proposal to transfer the polar bear from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I, which would prohibit international trade for primarily commercial purposes. Over time, trade in polar bear skins has increased. The current level of trade may hurt the species because trade, particularly commercial trade, compounds the threat to the species posed by habitat loss. Inclusion of the polar bear in Appendix I would not affect the subsistence harvest of this species by Alaskan natives or other indigenous peoples or the creation of handicrafts using polar bear parts.

When deciding its position on these proposals, the United States will consider a variety of information between now and CoP16, including the proposal itself, its own supplemental research, public comments received during a 60-day comment period, reviews by IUCN Specialist Groups and other consultations. The Service will update U.S. positions as they become available on its CoP16 webpage at <www.fws.gov/international/cites/CoP16>. □

CLAIRE HOOD, International Affairs, Headquarters

White rhinos in Nakuru National Park in Kenya.

The oceanic whitetip shark spans every ocean in tropical and subtropical waters, but populations have declined markedly.

The most anticipated and potentially controversial proposals center on African elephants, white rhinos, polar bears and sharks.

A U.S. proposal would put the polar bear in Appendix I of CITES, which provides the most protection for species.

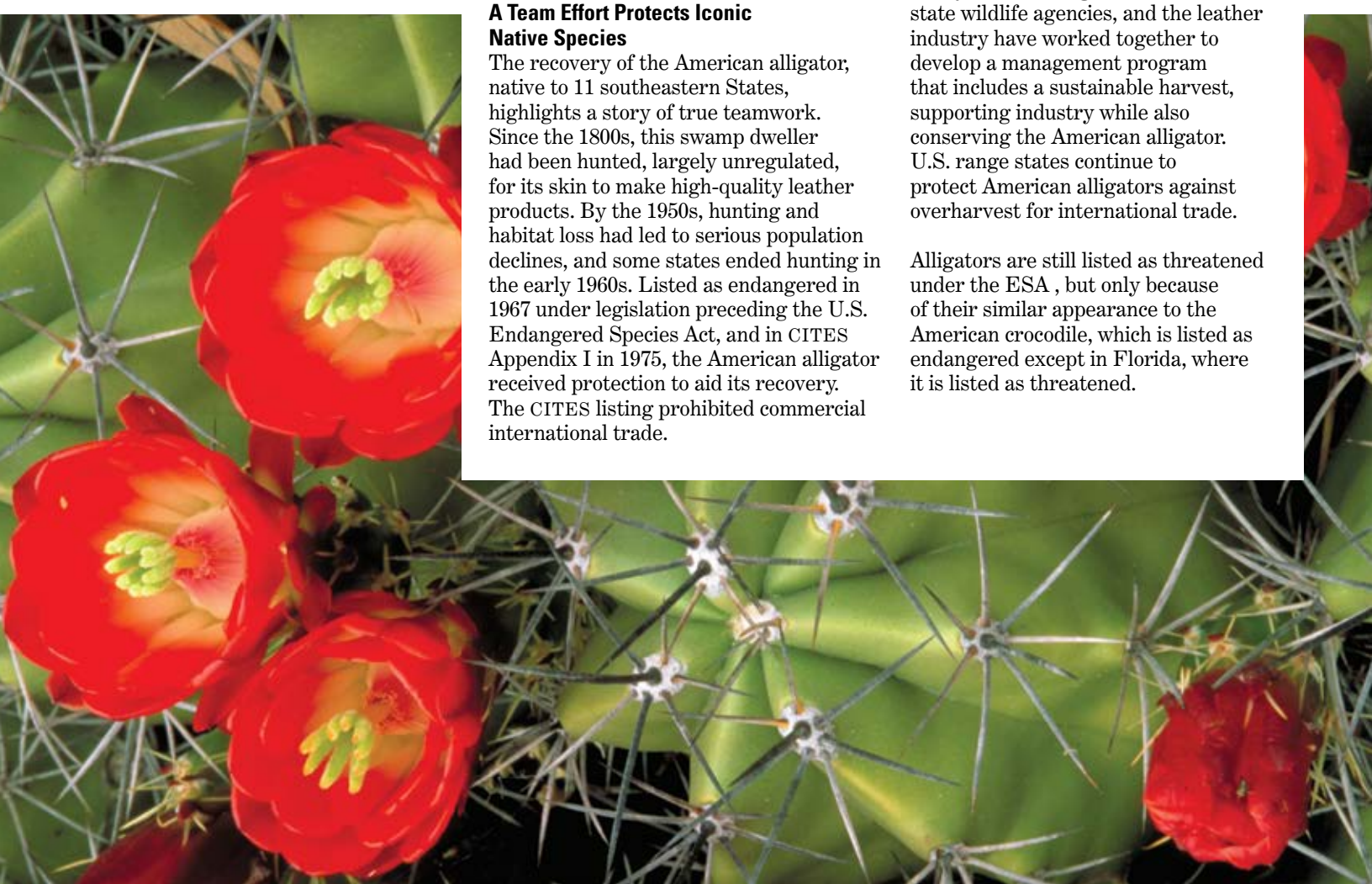
Elephants in Tanzania, Africa.

ELEPHANTS: GARY M. STOLZ/USFWS, SHARK: NOAA, RHINOS: KARL STROMAYER/USFWS, POLAR BEAR: MIKE DUNN, NC STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES VIA NOAA

Partnering to Conserve Native Species

From paddlefish and peregrine falcons to Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and orchids, CITES protects more than 700 animals and almost 500 plants native to the United States and its territories.

The Claret cup cactus is one of many cacti in CITES Appendix II.



These CITES-protected species may be highly localized—like the Venus' flytrap, native only to North and South Carolina—or cross borders into other countries, such as the 450 native CITES-listed species the United States shares with Mexico. Ensuring their conservation and sustainable use in international trade requires collaboration with a vast network of species experts and resource managers across the country and around the world.

A Team Effort Protects Iconic Native Species

The recovery of the American alligator, native to 11 southeastern States, highlights a story of true teamwork. Since the 1800s, this swamp dweller had been hunted, largely unregulated, for its skin to make high-quality leather products. By the 1950s, hunting and habitat loss had led to serious population declines, and some states ended hunting in the early 1960s. Listed as endangered in 1967 under legislation preceding the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and in CITES Appendix I in 1975, the American alligator received protection to aid its recovery. The CITES listing prohibited commercial international trade.

Recovery for the alligator meant monitoring, protection, reintroduction, ranching and captive breeding. In 1979, the American alligator was transferred to CITES Appendix II, allowing the resumption of commercial international trade under a special rule; by 1987, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared this reptile as fully recovered under the ESA.

Today, the federal government, state wildlife agencies, and the leather industry have worked together to develop a management program that includes a sustainable harvest, supporting industry while also conserving the American alligator. U.S. range states continue to protect American alligators against overharvest for international trade.

Alligators are still listed as threatened under the ESA , but only because of their similar appearance to the American crocodile, which is listed as endangered except in Florida, where it is listed as threatened.

The recovery of the American alligator is a CITES success story.

In 2011, the United States exported more than 400,000 U.S. alligator specimens, including skins, jewelry, leather products and scientific specimens. The recovery of the American alligator, together with the transformation of U.S. industry practices, demonstrates that conservation and sustainable use can go hand-in-hand.

"The recovery of the American alligator and the continued sustainability of the industry demonstrate the power of collaboration between the USFWS, the states and commercial interests through CITES," said Curtis Taylor of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, adding that it "is a model of how conservation should work."

Partnerships Benefit Native Plants

Nearly all of the world's approximately 1,500 species of cacti occur in the Americas, from extreme southern South America to some parts of Canada. Cacti vary in shape and size, and for hundreds of years, they have been sought by collectors around the world. With the exception of three genera, all species of cacti are included in the CITES Appendices, with the overwhelming majority in Appendix II, which regulates international trade.

The southwestern United States shares much of its desert ecosystem, and the plant diversity therein, with Mexico. But even if you can easily buy a cactus in Mexico, you will need permits from the Mexican authorities, including CITES permits, to bring the plant into the United States. These permits ensure that the cacti were legally acquired and that the trade is not detrimental to the survival of these species.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) has inspection personnel at ports of entry along the nearly 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border, including three CITES-designated ports of Nogales, Arizona; San Diego, California; and Brownsville, Texas.

When these inspection personnel discover a cactus in a car at a border crossing, and the person does not possess the required CITES permits, the authorities seize the plant because this trade may jeopardize the species' survival in Mexico. The question then becomes what to do with these seized specimens, which may weigh more than 100 pounds and be decades old. This is when the Service's partnership with U.S. zoos, botanic gardens and research institutions, through the U.S. Plant Rescue Center Program (PRC Program), comes into play.

The 83 institutions that participate on a voluntary basis in the PRC Program provide permanent homes for live CITES-listed plants that have been seized at U.S. ports of entry and exit and include them in their collections. Many of these institutions use these rare and unusual plants to educate the public on CITES and the conservation of threatened plants and their ecosystems. They may also propagate the plants and share their progeny with other institutions or private growers, thus making them available for further propagation and research and, potentially for rare species, reintroduction into the wild.

While many of these specimens will never be returned to their wild habitats, the partnership with PRC institutions provides an opportunity to make the public aware of the rules regarding wildlife trade and to show the impact this trade can have on wild populations.

PATRICIA DE ANGELIS and ANNE ST. JOHN,
International Affairs, Headquarters

CACTUS: DR. THOMAS G. BARNES, ALLIGATOR: ROBERT BURTON/USFWS

40 Years AT-A-G

1987

CoP6 is held in **Ottawa, Canada**. The Technical Committee, established in 1981, evolves to form the Animals, Plants and Nomenclature committees. The Animals and Plants committees are a major part of CITES today. Several species of fruit bats are listed in Appendix II.

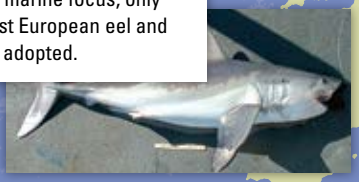
2007

CoP14 is held in **The Hague, Netherlands**. Marine species proposals are prominent at this CoP, with proposals to list spiny dogfish, **porbeagle shark**, European eel, red and pink corals, sawfishes, and several other marine species in the CITES Appendices. Despite this increased marine focus, only proposals to list European eel and sawfishes are adopted.

BARBARA BEGGS

1994

CoP9 is held in **Fort Lauderdale, Florida**. It marks the first time students participated in a CITES conference. At a student mock conference a week before the meeting, about 550 students from area schools develop and discuss resolutions similar to those considered at CoP9. They present those that passed by a two-thirds vote to the 1,600 delegates to the CITES Convention. At CoP9, the Parties add several species of aloe to Appendix I.

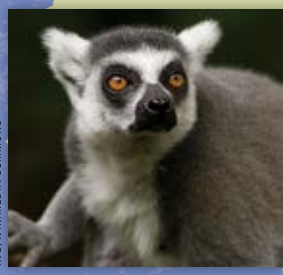


NOAA

1973

Eighty countries attend the plenipotentiary conference in **Washington, DC**. After three weeks of debate, the delegates agree to the final text of the Convention, containing the preamble and the first 25 articles. Twenty-one countries sign the Treaty.

CITES takes effect July 1, 1975, after the 10th Party to the Convention, Canada, ratifies the treaty.



RVB/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

1979

CoP2 is held in **San Jose, Costa Rica**. The Parties establish a permanent Standing Committee, which to this day steers the work of the treaty between CoPs. The American alligator is transferred to Appendix II from Appendix I because of successful conservation efforts in the United States.

1985

CoP5 is held i**n Buenos Aires, Argentina**. The Parties establish procedures for listing species in a new appendix, Appendix III, which consists of species for which a range country has asked other Parties to help control international trade. One of the first species included in Appendix III is the giant pangolin, listed by Ghana.

1983

CoP4 is held in **Gaborone, Botswana**. All species of **musk deer** are added to Appendix I and II, depending on their location.

NICHOLAS BARBEU/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

2002

CoP12 is held in **Santiago, Chile.** Populations of **vicuna** in three South American countries are transferred to Appendix II from Appendix I as a result of successfully implementing sustainable harvesting.

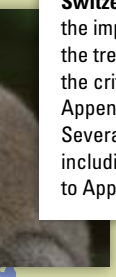
KILOBUG/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

# of CITES
LANCE

For 40 years, delegates from countries all over the world have met approximately every three years for the Conference of the Parties (CoP).

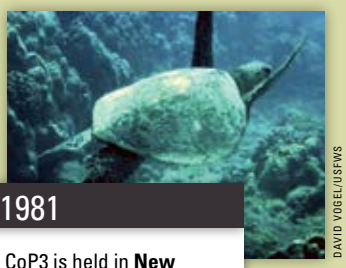
1976

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP1) is held in **Bern, Switzerland**. The Parties lay the important foundation of the treaty by establishing the criteria for amending Appendix-I and -II listings. Several species of primate, including **lemurs**, are added to Appendix I.



1981

CoP3 is held in **New Delhi, India**. The Technical Committee is established to assess species worldwide. **Sea turtles** are transferred to Appendix II as a result of declining populations.



DAVID VOGEL/USFWS

1989

CoP7 is held in **Lausanne, Switzerland**. Amid declining wild elephant numbers, the Parties transfer the African elephant to Appendix I, effectively banning commercial international trade in elephant ivory.

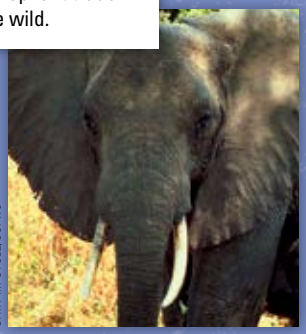
1992

CoP8 is held in **Kyoto, Japan**. The Parties recommend the development of criteria to amend Appendices I and II. These recommendations are adopted at CoP9. The **American black bear** is added to Appendix II.

WAVERLEY TRAYLOR/USFWS

2000

CoP11 is held in **Gigiri, Kenya**. This CoP focuses mainly on species-specific issues, with the African **elephant** taking center stage. The monitoring systems recommended during CoP10 are cemented during this conference. These systems, MIKE and ETIS, are still used today and provide invaluable data on elephant trade and poaching of elephants in the wild.



GARY M. STOLZ/USFWS

2004

CoP13 is held in **Bangkok, Thailand**. Parties increase protection for several large marine species by listing species of dolphin, shark and other fish in Appendices I and II.

2013

CoP16 will be held in **Bangkok, Thailand** on March 3–14. The United States has submitted a proposal to transfer the polar bear to Appendix I, thereby providing the highest level of protection available and prohibiting commercial trade in the species. Additionally, the United States has submitted or co-sponsored proposals to protect numerous species of turtles and sharks.

1997

CoP10 is held in **Harare, Zimbabwe**. The Parties vote to move several populations of African elephant to Appendix II as they successfully rebounded in the 1990s due to increased protections. In addition, the Parties pass a resolution to develop a monitoring system for African and Asian elephant populations.