



Understanding CITES

CITES Appendix II Supports Sustainable Use

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) entered into force in 1975. It is the only global treaty to ensure that international trade in plants and animals does not threaten the survival of the species. It provides a framework for cooperation and collaboration among nations to prevent decline in wild populations of animals and plants. Currently 176 countries (called Parties), including the United States, implement CITES.

The CITES Appendices

Cacti, iguanas, and parrots represent some of the approximately 35,000 species protected by CITES. Species protected under CITES are listed in one of three appendices.

- Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction and provides the greatest level of protection, including restrictions on commercial trade. Examples include gorillas, sea turtles, most lady slipper orchids, and giant pandas.
- Appendix II includes species that, although currently not threatened with

extinction, may become so without trade controls. It also includes species that resemble other listed species and need to be regulated in order to effectively control the trade in those other listed species. Most CITES species are listed in this appendix, including American ginseng, paddlefish, lions, American alligators or mahogany.

- Appendix III includes species for which a range country has asked other Parties to help in controlling international trade. Examples include the walrus and alligator snapping turtle.

CITES Appendix II is:

- **NOT** a list of species in which international trade is prohibited. CITES Appendix-II species may be traded internationally if accompanied by appropriate permits.
- **NOT** a list of endangered species. CITES helps support natural resource management programs in range countries to prevent endangerment.
- **NOT** a ban or boycott of trade. CITES helps regulate and monitor trade for species vulnerable to overuse, and implements measures to attain sustainable harvest and legal trade.

Exporting a CITES Appendix-II Species

CITES is implemented through an international permitting system. Each Party designates Management and Scientific Authorities to process permits, make legal and scientific findings, and monitor trade.

In the United States, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is home to these two offices. Exporters must obtain a CITES permit from their national CITES Management Authority for each shipment that contains CITES-listed specimens. Export permits for Appendix-II specimens can be issued only when the following findings are made:



Frank Kohn/USFWS

Barrel Cactus, CITES Appendix II

- A scientific finding of non-detriment: The Scientific Authority must be able to find that the export of an Appendix-II specimen is not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild. The non-detriment finding is key to the long-term sustainability of the species. Depending on the species and activity, the Scientific Authority will either make a programmatic finding for a year or longer or a finding on a case-by-case basis. If the Scientific Authority is unable to make a positive finding, permits will not be issued for the export.
- A finding that specimens were acquired legally: Evidence must be provided to show that specimens were not obtained in violation of any state, federal, or other jurisdictional law.

Live animal and plant shipments. All shipments of live animals and plants must be prepared to minimize risk of injury, damage to health, or cruel treatment. In



North American River Otter, CITES Appendix II

the case of air transport, animals must be shipped in accordance with International



Venus Flytrap, CITES Appendix II

Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations.

Look-alike species. Sometimes species are listed in Appendix II to enable effective regulation of other listed species. Usually, this type of listing is necessary when species, or their parts or products, resemble other listed species and could cause identification difficulties. Look-alike species are monitored to ensure that they are not adversely affected by trade. Examples include the American black bear and river otter.

Captive Breeding and Artificial Propagation. CITES is concerned with the

survival of species in the wild. Captive breeding of animals and artificial propagation of plants can affect the survival of the species in the wild. But, specimens produced in captivity or under controlled conditions are typically lower risk to the survival of the species than specimens collected from the wild. As such, it is usually easier for CITES authorities to make the necessary findings for animals produced in captivity and plants propagated under controlled conditions.

Potential Benefits of Appendix-II Export Controls to Commercial Interests:

Longstanding international cooperation is the basis of CITES' effectiveness. The support of businesses, consumers, and the general public is vital to balancing conservation and trade needs within countries. Listing a species in Appendix II can produce the following benefits:

- Validation (through CITES permits) that the specimen has come from legal and sustainable sources, and has met international standards;
- Assurance that trade practices follow principles of sustainability;
- Uniform responsibility to address illegal trade, since all countries must meet the same CITES permitting con-

ditions and enforce CITES provisions;

- Increased public awareness of the important role CITES plays to conserve animals and plants, and a broader body of information on which to base consumer decisions;



Green Iguana, CITES Appendix II

- Assurance of long-term species sustainability through control of trade, and consumer confidence that species are being used in ways that are not harmful to their role within the ecosystem.

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