

THE IUCN/SSC WILDLIFE TRADE PROGRAMME

Goal:

To promote the conservation of wild species subject to trade by assessing the effect of trade on the status of species and generating appropriate recommendations and conservation strategies

The work of IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC) on the status of wild species in trade started over 10 years ago. The programme ran initially under the auspices of the Trade Specialist Group, established to enhance the SSC's scientific input to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora), and later as the Wildlife Trade Programme, co-ordinated by the SSC Secretariat. Gradually, the focus has broadened to encompass a wide range of trade issues.

A major focus of the programme has been to identify species threatened by trade and to recommend actions to address these threats. This has involved working with Specialist Groups to monitor the status of species in trade and prioritise species for conservation action. Information is then relayed to decision-makers within the international conservation community. The programme has, therefore, acted as a two-way process, encouraging the exchange of information between scientists and policy-makers.

The Wildlife Trade Programme works in collaboration with its partner organisations, the TRAFFIC Network and WCMC (World Conservation Monitoring Centre.). SSC formally recognises TRAFFIC as its primary source of expertise to trade data, and TRAFFIC recognises SSC as its primary source of expertise on the biological status of species in trade. By combining the data produced by the two organisations, the impact of trade on wild species can be assessed.

Programme Objectives:

- * To identify situations where trade in wild species appears unsustainable or detrimentally affects the status of non-target species
- * To focus on gaps in knowledge of the biology and status of species in trade
- * To develop and promote those actions and/or mechanisms necessary to ensure the conservation of species detrimentally affected by trade
- * To ensure that the SSC's expertise is used to influence the decisions of CITES and other relevant agreements
- * To provide scientific support and capacity building to the Parties to CITES (and other relevant international agreements) in implementing conventions at national and regional levels
- * To increase understanding about CITES and other relevant agreements within the SSC network

Activities:

Priority Action: - Identify a focal point for trade issues in each taxonomic Specialist Group to ensure that SSC can provide high-quality information to policy makers - Support to Specialist Group Action Planning to identify species affected by trade which may be of conservation concern:

- determine where further information is needed on these species and stimulate the information collection

- work with interested parties to promote appropriate conservation action for species identified

Provide general assistance to the CITES Secretariat and Parties between the meetings of the Conference of Parties (COP)

Provide specific assistance to the Parties for the meetings of the COP by publishing:

- CITES: A Conservation Tool, A Guide to Amending the Appendices to CITES. This publication provides guidance through the Convention's articles and resolutions governing the submission, presentation and adoption of proposals to amend the appendices

- The Analyses of Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices, produced in collaboration with the TRAFFIC Network, provides an independent assessment of the information provided in the proposals

Support the CITES Significant Trade process by identifying species subject to significant levels of trade and development of conservation and management programmes for species in trade in their country of origin.

Assist CITES Parties to review, and where necessary strengthen the capacities of their Scientific Authorities to undertake the monitoring and assessment procedures for wild species in trade.

Contribute to policy documents, e.g. CITES Guidelines for the Disposition of Confiscated Specimens, IUCN Re-introduction Guidelines and IUCN Guidelines for the Prevention of Biodiversity Loss due to Biological Invasion.

The Wildlife Trade Programme aims to expand its work in three theme areas of particular conservation concern: trees, marine organisms, and medicinal plants and animals. The SSC three networks are being further developed in conjunction with WCMC. Further emphasis is being placed on marine organisms. The Medicinal Plant Specialist Group is very active and a number of medicinal issues are of concern to animal Specialist Groups as well.

