

# Endangered species, threatened convention: the past, present and future of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild

## BOOK REVIEW

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**Title: Endangered Species Threatened Convention: The Past, Present and Future of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**

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**Editors:** Jon Hutton & Barnabas Dickson

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By the time this review appears, the CITES meeting of 2000 will have passed. Regardless of the decisions taken there on the Cuban turtle proposal, this book is highly recommended to readers of the MTN/NTM. CITES is an important but complicated convention and the consequences and value of listing species on its appendices are not always as straightforward as they appear. After reading this book, probably some will think that CITES needs a radical overhaul. One possibility discussed in Rowan's chapter is that CITES should be subsumed under the Convention for Biological Diversity.

One of the problems is that CITES concerns only one threat to wildlife, that produced or potentially produced by trade. Loss of habitat is often a greater threat. What if CITES listing ameliorates one threat but exacerbates another? A lucid chapter by Sas-Rofles with case histories for rhinos, elephants, tigers and bears, brings out some of the dilemmas that can arise when there are multiple concerns.

Webb's chapter compares the conservation of crocodilians and turtles and the operation of the IUCN crocodile specialist group (CSG) to that of the Marine Turtle Specialist group (MTSG). Although the CSG started out with a largely preservationist approach, it is now much concerned with conservation through trade. Webb suggests that the different approaches of these groups stem not so much from biological considerations, as from the aggressive nature of crocodilians compared to the more charismatic sea turtles. If crocodiles could be hugged and dressed up in clothes, then — it is implied — things might be different.

Crocodiles are also the subject of Kievit's chapter. Here and elsewhere, it is suggested that progress in crocodile conservation was achieved despite rather than because of CITES. An error in this chapter is the statement that, at the Botswana meeting of the conference of the parties to CITES in 1983, Suriname withdrew its proposal to downlist green turtles. It was French Guiana that withdrew its proposal. The treatment of the Suriname's proposal was more interesting (see MTN 1983, 25: 6-9). The Suriname proposal was very favourably received at this meeting. In the Plenary session it was approved by a vote of 43 in favour, 3 against, — contingent on the approval of the marking scheme by the standing committee. Given the positive sentiment at the Botswana meeting, the adjusted proposal was then expected to go through easily by a postal vote. The problem was that, presumably for economic or political reasons, no delegates from Suriname were present at Botswana. Had the Surinamese been present to give assurances about their marking procedures, their proposal would probably have gone through alongside the Zimbabwe ranching proposal for Nile crocodiles, and the course of turtle conservation with respect to trade would have changed in 1983. One may speculate whether this would have been for the better or worse. As it turned out, resurgent preservationist sentiment reversed the favourable CITES voting in 1983, and Suriname's proposal and its ranch subsequently foundered.

The chapters in this book are short and self contained; this leads to some redundancy in the explanation of the appendices to CITES. The number of references given in support of statements will be too few for some tastes. On the other hand this book is highly readable, and it is instructive, insightful and provocative; the contributing authors have extensive experience with CITES and wildlife. Although the value of conservation through sustainable use, and how that can be achieved, are prominent in this book, those with other views will also wish to examine a work that turns a strong and sometimes harsh light on the operation of one of our most important international wildlife conventions. Regardless of one's approach, most will come away instructed and agree with Dickson that "if the 25 years of CITES has taught us anything, it should be that conservation policy is much more complex and involves many more different types of consideration than was originally assumed by CITES".

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Extra resources for Endangered Species, Threatened Convention: The Past, Present and Future of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Example text. Moreover, the last fragments of its native forest habitat are at risk from encroachment by introduced plants. Pollution and pesticides Pesticides are often cited as a major cause of the decline of natural insect populations and their use in restricted natural habitats must be viewed with concern. However, the effects of

pesticide use, in particular the side-effects of widespread agricultural and f CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention) is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals. It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The convention was opened for signature in 1973 and CITES entered into force on 1 July 1975. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild Alternative Titles: CITES, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, in full Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, international agreement adopted in March 1973 to regulate worldwide commercial trade in wild animal and plant species. The goal of CITES is to ensure that international trade does not threaten the survival of any species. Since 1973 the number of state parties to the convention has grown to more than 170. [Read More on This Topic.](#) endangered spe...

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is the best known and most controversial of international conservation treaties. CITES treats the international trade in wildlife as the most important threat to the continued existence of wild species, but it is now generally acknowledged that for most species habitat loss is a much more significant threat. This collection of essays, the first of its kind, charts the controversies and changes within CITES. It provides case studies of the way CITES has dealt with particular species and notes the growing Endangered Species, Threatened Convention: The Past, Present and Future of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Endangered Species, Threatened Convention: The Past, Present and Future of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Jon Hutton, Barnabas Dickson. Link deleted by legal owner.