



cover (African Elephant): Dave Currey

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Each animal has an inherent value and each species plays a vital role in the ecosystem in which he/she lives. We must conserve these species and protect their habitats.
- Avoid purchasing exotic animals, particularly those who were wild-caught.
- For information on species at risk, see the CITES database at www.cites.org, or the more inclusive and cautionary IUCN Red List at www.iucnredlist.org.
- As a consumer, be wary of products made from wildlife. Remember that it is illegal to import a CITES-listed species without a permit.
- Be part of the solution: support genuine efforts that keep wildlife in the wild, such as photo safaris or community-based humane education programs.



Théo de Bagéenne

Demand for ivory—once valued for multiple uses, from handles to piano keys—decimated elephant populations. Elephant ivory is still prized for signature seals and other ornamental items in Asia.

ABOUT US

Since 1951, AWI has been a leading voice for animals around the globe. Please join us in our ongoing campaigns dedicated to alleviating suffering inflicted on animals by humans. Sign up for AWI eAlerts to receive the latest on what you can do to help us protect all animals: www.awionline.org/ealerts.



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Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Consumers may unknowingly contribute to the decline of species, particularly when the origins of the products are not readily apparent—as with these turtle shell bracelets.

ensure the survival of many of the threatened and endangered plants and animals in dire need of protection. From bluefin tuna who have been unsustainably fished for decades and whose populations have declined precipitously in the last 50 years, to vastly depleted pink and red corals collected to make jewelry, the continued international trade in many species severely compromises their chances of survival.

Decisions at CITES should be based on science and motivated by the desire to conserve species. Politics, palates, economics, and vanity, however, are often primary factors in decisions over which species get listed and what proposals are put forth. In 2010, a new secretariat took the helm of CITES. It is hoped that the new leadership will favor science and conservation over profits and consumption. Time will tell whether CITES will evolve into a treaty that truly regulates sustainable trade and offers species threatened by international trade the protections they need and deserve.



Dave Currey

Green sea turtles, found in tropical and subtropical oceans, mature late and grow slowly. All seven sea turtle species are endangered, imperiled by indiscriminate fisheries, pollution, habitat encroachment, and overharvesting—in part to obtain shells for jewelry and art objects.

seizures of illegal ivory, including a massive seven-ton haul of African elephant ivory destined for Japan.

A second one-time sale of stockpiled ivory—approved in 2007—from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe to Japan, and later China, once again proved disastrous for elephants. The Elephant Trade Information System established by CITES reported increased poaching of elephants after the decision.

Implementation of CITES requirements by member countries is also problematic. For instance, member countries exporting Appendix II species are required to make a non-detriment finding (NDF) to ensure that trade will not harm the species in the wild. While CITES has adopted broad standards for NDFs and engages in capacity-building to help countries meet their NDF responsibilities, complete compliance is compromised by the fact that member countries assert the right to determine their own NDF protocol and procedures. CITES currently does not require NDFs to be in writing, made publicly available, or even provided to importing countries as proof the trade is legal.

THE FUTURE OF CITES

Valuable and highly exploited wildlife is suffering for the sake of commercial trade. CITES is currently failing to



MSPA

Valued for their bile as well as their body parts for use in traditional medicines, Asiatic black bears are hunted and farmed by the tens of thousands. Once captured, bears are confined for life and subjected to regular “bile milking” via catheters surgically implanted into their gall bladders.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE

ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

International trade in wildlife generates billions of dollars annually and is a continuing threat to the survival of countless animal and plant species. The diverse trade includes live plants and animals, as well as goods derived from their parts, for such purposes as food, pets, clothing, jewelry, exhibition in zoos, research, medicines, and trophies. Illicit wildlife trade can be highly profitable, and was linked to organized crime and drug trafficking in a 2008 U.S. Congressional Research Service Report. It is notorious, in fact, for being the third most lucrative illegal commerce behind drugs and arms trafficking.

When humans covet threatened and endangered species or their parts, it puts tremendous pressure on wildlife. Together with mounting devastation from poaching and habitat loss (including losses resulting from human-induced climate change), local populations are being severely depleted; in many cases, entire species are nearing extinction. Some, like the Japanese sea lion, hunted for the use of its organs in traditional Asian medicines, have been completely wiped out.



Brian McKay

Wild tigers have been driven to the brink of extinction by habitat loss, poaching and trade for their body parts. To those who ingest them, ground bones, dried organs, and other tiger parts are believed to impart strength, virility and other curative powers, and the illicit tiger trade flourishes despite a global commercial ban.

India's already endangered tigers are further threatened by demand from abroad for their skins, claws, teeth, bones and other body parts for perceived medicinal benefits. The African grey parrot, an incredible mimic, found in East, Central and West Africa, continues to be illegally trapped for the international wild bird trade. Bears, especially the endangered Asiatic black bear, are targeted for their gallbladders and bile, which are used in traditional Asian medicines and cosmetics. An estimated 73-100 million sharks are killed yearly to meet the demand for shark fin soup, a Chinese delicacy, leading to the depletion of many shark species. Regulation of wildlife trade is essential to stem potentially irreversible reductions to wildlife populations.

CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was established as a global treaty to regulate the worldwide trade in endangered and threatened wildlife to ensure its survival. Drafted after a 1963 meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the final language of the CITES treaty was agreed upon in Washington, D.C. by 80 countries in 1973 and went into effect on July 1, 1975. AWI was in attendance at the auspicious signing event and has remained an accredited observer ever since.



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The hyacinth macaw, the largest of the 17 macaw species, is found mainly in Brazil with a range spanning into Bolivia and Paraguay. Listed on CITES Appendix I and therefore not open to legal trade, this intelligent and social bird is endangered due to habitat loss and continued trapping for its feathers and the illicit pet trade.

Countries join CITES voluntarily. By joining, however, member countries agree to be bound by the Convention and adopt domestic legislation intended to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level.

CITES has three appendices that list species based on the degree to which they are threatened: Appendix I lists species that are the most endangered. They are threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance, for scientific research. Appendix II lists species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction at the moment but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. Appendix III is a list of species included at the request of a member country that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation. The Convention is managed by a secretariat administered by the United Nations Environment Programme, whose primary role is to coordinate, advise and administer the working of the Convention as well as monitor implementation.

INEFFECTIVE CONTROLS

Over 170 countries have joined CITES since its inception, and over 30,000 species are listed as "protected" under



Stuart Bassil

Poaching and uncontrolled hunting are devastating rhino populations. Already facing degraded and diminished ranges from human settlement and agricultural encroachment, the trade in rhino parts, as trophies and for traditional medicine, is hastening their decline.

the treaty. Despite such broad participation and coverage, safeguarding of species under CITES has fallen short of intent. Some countries—responding to the intense demand for threatened and endangered species—seek to undermine CITES or weaken the protections it affords.

The ivory trade serves as a prime example. CITES member countries gave African elephants Appendix I protections in 1989—thereby banning international trade in African elephant ivory. Elephant numbers—in decline prior to the listing—began to rebound, and many populations stabilized. Nevertheless, member countries succumbed to commercial pressure and voted on two occasions to lift the ban temporarily. The first occurred in 1997, when an "experimental" ivory trade was approved from Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to Japan. The resulting sell-off of over 109,000 pounds of ivory two years later reportedly raised an estimated \$5 million. This money was supposed to be channeled to elephant conservation efforts in the participating range states. There was no published accounting, however, to show the money was actually used for the intended purpose. AWI and other organizations had warned that reopening the ivory trade, even on a limited basis, would escalate poaching and fuel the demand for ivory. This, unfortunately, proved to be the case. The lifting of the ban resulted in an increase in poaching and



Bill Love/Blue Chameleon Ventures

Iran's critically endangered Kaiser's spotted newt gained an Appendix I listing at the 2010 CITES meeting in Doha. The salamander, numbering fewer than 1,000 in the wild, is the first animal to receive protections primarily due to its exploitation through internet sales, a mounting threat to many species.