

# Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13)\*      Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles

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AWARE that the global international trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles involves millions of specimens each year;

RECOGNIZING that nearly all Asian tortoise and freshwater turtle species are found in trade, and that a number of species are already included in Appendix I or II;

OBSERVING that the collection of tortoises and freshwater turtles is carried out through an extensive informal network of trappers, hunters and middlemen, and that collection efforts and trade volumes are considerable, especially in Asia;

CONSIDERING that, in addition, wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles are generally vulnerable to overexploitation, because of biological characteristics such as late maturity, limited annual reproductive output, and high juvenile mortality, as well as habitat degradation and loss;

NOTING that there are two significant types of trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles: a high-volume trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles and parts thereof for consumption both as food and in traditional medicine; and a species-focused trade for pets;

AWARE that certain species of tortoises and freshwater turtles are bred in high numbers in and outside range States, *inter alia* to supply the demand for food and medicines, and that the conservation risks and benefits of large-scale commercial breeding of tortoises and freshwater turtles are not well known;

NOTING that the shipment of live tortoises and freshwater turtles is often not conducted in accordance with the provisions of Articles III, IV and V of the Convention, and in particular that transport of live tortoises and freshwater turtles by air is often not conducted in accordance with IATA regulations;

ACKNOWLEDGING that unregulated or unsustainable trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles poses a significant threat to wild populations, and that international cooperation is needed to address these threats urgently;

RECALLING that a technical workshop on Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, held in Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002, provided recommendations concerning conservation management, CITES implementation, enforcement and trade controls, and capacity-building needs, as well as suggestions for amending Resolution Conf. 11.9, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), which were reported by the Secretariat to the Animals Committee;

## THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES:

- a) all Parties, especially range States and exporting and importing States of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, to enhance and increase enforcement efforts with regard to existing legislation as a matter of urgency;
- b) all Parties, especially range States and exporting and importing States of Asian tortoise and freshwater turtles, to enhance cooperation amongst wildlife-law enforcement agencies at national and international levels concerning control of trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, and between enforcement agencies and national CITES authorities;
- c) all Parties, especially range States of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, to assess current efforts to manage native tortoise and freshwater turtle populations, and to improve those efforts as necessary, e.g. by establishing quotas that take into consideration the particular biology of tortoises and freshwater turtles;

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\* Amended at the 12th and 13th meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and corrected by the Secretariat following the 15th meeting.

- d) all Parties to develop and implement research programmes to identify the species involved in trade, to monitor and assess the impact of trade on wild populations, and to evaluate the conservation risks and benefits of large-scale commercial breeding of tortoises and freshwater turtles;
- e) all Parties whose national legislation is not sufficient to control effectively the unsustainable harvest of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles to enact legislation to protect and manage these species appropriately;
- f) all Parties, especially in the Asian region, to increase public awareness of the threats posed to tortoises and freshwater turtles from unsustainable harvest and unregulated trade, to encourage non-governmental organizations to develop, produce and distribute posters and other educational and informative materials on this subject, and to facilitate, where necessary, the compilation, dissemination and translation into local languages of information on tortoises and freshwater turtles for their use by enforcement officers, drawing on existing identification and enforcement guides, and focusing on identification, local names, distribution and illustrations;
- g) all Parties to explore ways to enhance the participation of collectors, traders, exporters, importers and consumers in the conservation of and sustainable trade in tortoises and freshwater turtle species;
- h) all Parties, especially in the Asian region, to collaborate on all aspects of conservation and management of, trade in, and implementation of the Convention for, tortoises and freshwater turtles, taking into consideration the recommendations formulated at the technical workshop on Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles held in Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002;
- i) all Parties, particularly those in the Asian region, to develop plans of action, in compliance with Resolution Conf. 10.7 (Rev. CoP15)<sup>1</sup>, that can be executed without delay in the event that live specimens of tortoises and freshwater turtles are confiscated;
- j) range States of tortoises and freshwater turtles to develop management strategies concerning CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles, including regional action plans for the conservation of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, in collaboration with the Secretariat, industry representatives, interested governmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders as appropriate;
- k) all Parties to ensure that all shipments of live tortoises and freshwater turtles are transported in compliance with relevant IATA guidelines;
- l) all Parties to facilitate the development of partnerships between interested non-governmental organizations or other bodies to develop and operate rescue centres for seized or confiscated tortoises and freshwater turtles, in cooperation with range States and relevant government agencies; and
- m) range States of tortoises and freshwater turtles that authorize trade in these species to include in their periodic reporting under Article VIII, paragraph 7 (b), information on progress in implementing this Resolution; and

DIRECTS the Secretariat to provide assistance with securing financial resources from Parties, United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, trade associations, industry and others as appropriate, for range States in need of and requesting financial support to develop and implement management strategies and action plans concerning CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles in accordance with this Resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> *Corrected by the Secretariat following the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties: originally referred to Resolution Conf. 10.7.*