

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventeenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 April 2008

Regional Reports

NORTH AMERICA

General information

- a) Names of the representatives:
Regional Representative: Mr Robert R. Gabel (United States of America)
Alternate Member: Dr Adrienne Sinclair (Canada)
- b) Number of Parties in the region: 3
- c) Period covered by this report: July 2006 (since PC16) through 15 February 2008

1. Directory of Experts on CITES Plant Issues

CANADA

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Scientific Authority

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MEXICO

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Scientific Authority

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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2. Activities carried out

Review of the Appendices

MEXICO

Candelilla (*Euphorbia antisyphilitica*): This species was included in the periodic review scheduled between the 13th and 15th meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Mexico currently has a protocol for completing existing information on the species conservation status and evaluating the harvesting regimes to which it is subject. A notice will be published to invite experts to develop this project.

CITES projects in the region

From 14 to 18 May 2007, CITES Authorities from Canada, Mexico and the United States participated in the Canada/United States/Mexico Trilateral Meeting for the Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management. The specific work of the CITES Table focused on preparations for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (The Hague, June 2007).

MEXICO

Saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*): The CITES Scientific Authority is financing a field study to assess the population status of this species in Mexico. The project is being carried out by Dr Búrquez of the Ecology Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM - Hermosillo Unit).

This project has involved studying 14 populations of this species distributed throughout its range in Mexico, and two populations in Arizona, United States. For each population, the population structure, spatial variation and morphological variation of vegetative characteristics were estimated. Also, the density per hectare of both live and dead specimens was estimated and the community structure was characterized. The data on the dead specimens were used to estimate the number of stems that could be harvested at each site. In areas where saguaro is being or has been harvested, interviews were conducted to obtain information on the type and level of use of the site in general and of the species. Moreover, field work helped to validate the map of the potential distribution of saguaro produced with Desktop GARP.

On the basis of the findings of this study, the Scientific Authority of Mexico will work with the Management and Enforcement Authorities in Mexico to evaluate saguaro harvesting activities in Mexico, so as to identify the measures needed to guarantee sustainable harvesting of the species in the long-term.

While there are plans to continue this study through a second phase, involving an analysis of the population dynamics and genetics of this species, funds are currently lacking.

Hollywood lignum vitae (*Guaiaacum sanctum*): The study on the "Abundance, distribution, and conservation status of *Guaiaacum sanctum* L. in Mexico" was completed under the leadership of Dr Martínez Ramos of the *Centro de Investigaciones en Ecosistemas* (CIECO), UNAM, to assess the availability of Hollywood lignum vitae, determine its conservation status and habitat, as well as the viability of exploiting wild populations of this species.

The study provides information and criteria for drawing up recommendations on the sustainable management of the species in Mexico. The study identifies priority conservation areas and potential harvesting areas, and evaluates aspects of the natural history and habitat of the species.

Using the findings of this study, CONABIO, with help from the CITES Authorities in Mexico, organized a *National workshop on the sustainable conservation, management and use of Hollywood lignum vitae (*Guaiaacum sanctum*) in Mexico*, which was held at CONABIO in October 2006. This workshop was attended by members of academic institutions, the government and the industry. Its aim was to lay the groundwork for a system to coordinate work among the various stakeholders and provide a comprehensive overview of the species status.

The non-detriment findings (NDFs) for this species are currently being drawn up on the basis of the results of this study. The two most recent authorizations granted for harvesting Hollywood lignum vitae in Mexico were based on the recommendations from the study and the national workshop.

Other

CANADA

American ginseng: Canada has completed documenting the basis for standing non-detriment findings for wild American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) and goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*) in collaboration with provincial scientific authorities and other experts within the species range.

- Canada has implemented a simplified procedure for small quantities (< 4.5 kg) of artificially propagated ginseng which is exported for personal purposes. The new procedure still includes issuance of a CITES multiple-use export permit, however, each shipment is accompanied by a sticker permit rather than a photocopy of the CITES permit. Canada reports having great success with this new permitting procedure.
- The Canadian Scientific Authority is an active member of the Ginseng Recovery Team made up of Canadian federal, provincial and municipal government members. This recovery team monitors

wild ginseng populations and their status, as well as researches threats to ginseng and its habitat. Landscape-level and site-specific protection and recovery measures are being determined and implemented.

UNITED STATES

Artificially propagated American ginseng personal effects: In December 2007, the United States Management Authority informed the United States American ginseng industry that the United States will no longer use a CITES Personal Effects Ginseng Stickers for the export of up to 10 pounds of artificially propagated American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) as a personal effect. The discontinuation of the Sticker programme will not affect the export of artificially propagated ginseng purchased within the United States by individuals and hand-carried out of the United States. Such exports of personal effects will continue to be considered exempt under CITES by the United States.

3. Capacity-building activities

CANADA

- Canada is developing a "Strategic Plan for CITES in Canada" that has involved consultations with Canadian Management, Scientific and Enforcement Authorities from all domestic jurisdictions, as well as members of non-governmental organizations (e.g. TRAFFIC). The intention of the Strategic Plan is to review capacity needs, strengthen partnerships, and enhance Canada's national strategy for implementing CITES.
- In January 2007, a Web-based CITES Electronic Permitting System (CEPS) was launched by the CITES office of Environment Canada. In 2008, access to the Web application will be expanded to the majority of federal, provincial and territorial CITES partners. This Web-based system increases the efficiency of permitting by compiling accurate and consistent information, and facilitates the production of annual reports on international trade in wildlife in Canada. The system is structured to allow future development of an online CITES permit application form accessible to the public through the CITES Canada website (www.cites.ec.gc.ca). Note that UNEP-WCMC kindly developed a tool to facilitate periodic downloading of the Checklist of CITES species in XML format on their website at:

(<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/species/dbases/citesdownloads.htm#STR>).

MEXICO

The CITES Authorities of Mexico (CONABIO, DGVS¹ and PROFEPA²), participated in *Capacity-building courses on selected topics relating to the implementation of wildlife law*. The workshops were aimed at inspectors, Customs personnel and other officials responsible for monitoring, inspection and surveillance activities linked to the implementation of CITES. Since May 2006, courses have been held in different regions of Mexico. In October 2006, a course was held for the central region (the Federal District), which included a module for the identification and management of the most frequently traded plant species.

Additionally, PROFEPA, together with TRAFFIC North America, held a *Capacity-building workshop on cross-border movements of wild flora and fauna between Mexico and Guatemala* from 7 to 9 August 2007 in the city of Tapachula, Chiapas (Mexico). The goal of this workshop was to provide wildlife officials in these two countries with theoretical and practical tools to strengthen their activities against illegal trade in wildlife and to identify potential synergies in order to improve cross-border communication, cooperation and support. The workshop included training on how to identify the palms, orchids, cacti and cycads which are most frequently traded between the two countries. CONABIO contributed by making presentations on *CITES general issues, structure and working* and on *Use and implementation of the CITES Appendices*.

¹ Dirección General de Vida Silvestre de la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales-SEMARNAT (Management Authority).

² Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente de la SEMARNAT (Enforcement Authority).

CONABIO helped revise a module on *Mexican cacti in trade: basis for their identification* in an identification guide being drawn up by TRAFFIC North America – Mexico.

CONABIO participated in a *Series of lectures on topical themes in biodiversity*, which took place at the Faculty of Science of UNAM, focusing on Mexico's participation and achievements in international conventions (CITES and CBD).

Mexico provided a Spanish translation of *A CITES manual for botanic gardens: Second edition*, published by Botanic Gardens Conservation International and compiled by Sara Oldfield and Noel McGough.

UNITED STATES

New CITES Regulations: On 23 August, 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which includes the United States Management Authority and Scientific Authority, published the first major update of the United States CITES implementing regulations since 1977. The extensive revisions and additions clarify procedures and provide an easy-to-use guide to the requirements for international trade in CITES-listed species. The regulations became effective 24 September 2007 and are available online at <http://www.fws.gov/international/>. The United States CITES authorities are currently drafting further amendments based on decisions taken by the Parties at CoP14.

Pernambuco listing: The United States Management Authority prepared and disseminated outreach materials and worked closely with the United States bow-making industry and musicians to ensure that they were fully apprised of the international trade requirements associated with the Appendix-II listing of pernambuco (*Caesalpinia echinata*). The letter to United States importers and re-exporters of pernambuco wood and wood products can be accessed at <http://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/pernambuco%20outreach%20letter.pdf>. Although the United States will not keep a registration of United States pernambuco stockpiles, it has encouraged individuals involved in bow-making to maintain documentation related to the wood in their possession in the event they wish to re-export wood or unfinished wood articles.

Electronic permit issuing system: Although the United States uses an electronic system for internal tracking of CITES permit applications and permits, until now it has not allowed for electronic submission of CITES permit applications. The United States Management Authority is currently developing a Web-based system that will allow permit applicants to submit and track their CITES permit applications on line. This system, which will be available on a limited basis within the next six months, provides a convenient application format and will assist the United States Management Authority in processing applications in a timely manner and ensuring greater consistency in monitoring and tracking permit issuance. We expect that the complete system will be on line within the next year and a half.

Contact with specialists and/or NGOs

CANADA

The Canadian Scientific Authority has worked closely with provincial and territorial Management and Scientific Authorities, Canadian Forest Service, Canada Border Services Agency, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, TRAFFIC North America, Ontario Ginseng Growers Association, Saskatchewan Herb & Spice Association, Canadian Orchid Congress, and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, & Rural Affairs.

MEXICO

- *Carnegiea gigantea* – Dr Alberto Burquez from the *Instituto de Ecología de la UNAM*, Unidad Hermosillo.
- Hollywood lignum vitae (*Guaiacum sanctum*) – Dr Miguel Martínez- Ramos from CIEco-UNAM.
- Capacity-building courses organized with PROFEPA – TRAFFIC-North America – Mexico.

UNITED STATES

The United States had numerous contacts with specialists and NGOs during the reporting period, including: American Botanical Council, American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, American Herbal Products Association, American Symphony Orchestra League, Bureau of Land Management, Chicago Botanic Garden, International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative, International Tropical Timber Organization, International Wood Products Association, National Network of Forest Practitioners, North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, Orchid Digest Corporation, Plant Conservation Alliance, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Rural Action, and State Natural Resource Agencies.

4. Implementation difficulties encountered in your country

CANADA

Conservation issues: Canada has concerns regarding the identification of woods-grown/wild-simulated ginseng in comparison to wild specimens of this species. An easy and effective method to differentiate between artificially propagated ginseng grown using cultivation techniques of varying intensity and wild ginseng is necessary.

Technical issues: The Management and Scientific Authorities at the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Convention in Canada. New generic emails addresses have been created to centralize the requests and ensure better communication with the public and its CITES partners. Please note the following addresses:

cites-canada@ec.gc.ca (Management Authority issues)

cites-science@ec.gc.ca (Scientific Authority issues)

UNITED STATES

Conservation issues: Like Canada, the United States continues to experience difficulty, particularly in relation to making non-detriment findings, in differentiating between woods-grown and wild-simulated American ginseng and wild ginseng.

5. Other topics related to CITES

CANADA

Timber

- Canada (K. Farr) attended the 'International Expert Workshop on Developing Non-Detriment Findings for Bigleaf Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*)', hosted by Mexico (10-13 April 2007). Canada chaired a session exploring identification of required population parameters and standardized methodologies for developing mahogany inventories and management plans. The workshop brought together forest management officials from range countries, researchers, academics, CITES representatives and other interested parties. The workshop results represent a significant synthesis of existing knowledge regarding the bigleaf mahogany and will directly inform the process of non-detriment finding development for this species.
- Canada (K. Farr) attended the 'CITES Timber Species Identification Workshop' organized by the German Scientific CITES Authority (22-23 November 2007). The workshop, held at the Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products Institute for Wood Biology and Wood Protection in Hamburg, Germany, provided instruction in the use of the "CITESwoodID" system, designed to facilitate identification of CITES-registered tree species traded as timber. Effective innovations of the CITESwoodID system are its capacity for comparing multiple wood anatomy images on-screen and the identification key, which, based on wood anatomical characters entered by the user, automatically eliminates non-matching species.

MEXICO

Bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*): Mexico is chairing the Bigleaf Mahogany Working Group (BMWG) of the Plants Committee, under the guidance of Dr Francisco García, Director General of the Forest and Land Management Unit under Mexico's Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources (DGGFS-SEMARNAT).

Mexico organized the 'International Workshop of Experts on Non-Detriment Findings on Bigleaf Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*)' (document CoP14 Inf. 24) from 10 to 13 April 2007 in Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico. The purpose of the workshop was to define a feasible methodological approach that could be used to formulate non-detriment findings (NDFs) for bigleaf mahogany, so as to improve the implementation of CITES provisions and ensure the sustainable harvesting of and international trade in the species.

Mexico participated in the 'Workshop of the subregion of Central America and the Dominican Republic on the implementation of CITES: improving international trade in the bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*)', held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 15 to 17 August 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to start work at the regional level to set up technical and administrative measures that will improve the implementation of CITES, ensuring the legal origin of specimens and adequate monitoring of harvest and trade, and reducing illegal trade therein.

Further to the 'Action plan for the control of international trade in bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*)' (Annex 3 to the CoP14 Decisions), Mexico developed a format for the submission of range States' reports on progress with the implementation of this Action plan, with a view to submitting this information at the present meeting.

Red cedar (*Cedrela odorata*): Using the Action plan (Annex 4 to the CoP14 Decisions) as a basis for completing knowledge on the status of conservation, trade in and sustainable use of *Cedrela odorata*, and the criteria under Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14), Mexico drew up terms of reference for a study on the conservation status of the species in the wild.

Dalbergia retusa, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*: Based on the Action plan included in Annex 4 to the CoP14 Decisions, which requires completing information on the conservation of, trade in and sustainable use of *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii*, and based on the criteria contained in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14), Mexico drew up terms of reference for a study on the conservation status of these species in the wild.

UNITED STATES

United States efforts related to Peruvian mahogany: During the reporting period, the United States Management Authority continued to work closely with Peru regarding its implementation of the mahogany Appendix-II listing. For 2006, Peru established a voluntary bigleaf mahogany export quota of 23,239.57 m³ (cubic metre). The United States closely monitored the volume of bigleaf mahogany imported into the United States from Peru during 2006, and provided Peru with periodic reports on those imports, which totalled 17,264 m³. In 2007, Peru's quota for bigleaf mahogany was 4,983 m³; United States imports, which we again reported to Peru, totalled 3,754 m³. The United States provides this information to Peru on a regular basis to assist Peru in monitoring exports and managing its quota.

Through the Tropical Forest Conservation Fund, the United States supported increased inspections in forest concessions that have mahogany (in the Madre de Dios and Ucayali regions of Peru), to verify compliance with Peruvian law for sustainable forest. Management Authorities undertook a number of inspections, and preliminary results indicate that some concessions will be cancelled for not complying with the law.

The United States supported and continues to support training in sustainable forest management for forest concessionaires in Peru. Working through Fundação Floresta Tropical (FFT) and others, a training programme has been developed to focus on reduced-impact logging activities, such as conducting a forest harvest inventory, planning, directional felling and safety. After successful demonstration of training courses, FFT and other partners are developing a more extensive

programme that will deliver additional training in sustainable forest management activities, including strategic planning for forest roads.

Ramin implementation activities: The United States Management Authority continued to work with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the United States Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to ensure that the United States is fully implementing the Appendix-II listing of ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.). The CITES Management Authority in Sarawak, Malaysia, has instituted a process whereby it informs the United States Management Authority when it issues a CITES export permit for a shipment of ramin from Sarawak destined for the United States. The United States Management Authority shares this information with the appropriate agencies in the United States to ensure that those ramin shipments are properly inspected and cleared upon arrival at United States ports.

Implementation of the Appendix-II listing of pernambuco: The United States Management Authority prepared and disseminated outreach materials and worked closely with the United States bow-making industry and musicians to ensure that they were fully apprised of the international trade requirements associated with the Appendix-II listing of pernambuco (*Caesalpinia echinata*). The letter to United States importers and re-exporters of pernambuco wood and wood products can be accessed at <http://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/pernambuco%20outreach%20letter.pdf>. Although the United States will not keep a registration of pernambuco stockpiles held in this country, we have encouraged individuals involved in bow-making to maintain documentation related to the wood in their possession in the event they wish to re-export any wood or unfinished wood articles.

Timber identification training: In 2007, as part of cooperative efforts under the Central America–Dominican Republic–United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), the United States Forest Service (USFS) trained 32 Nicaraguan and 28 Honduran Customs officials in wood identification, focused on CITES species. In Nicaragua training took place in Managua during 6-9 August 2007, and included officials from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MARENA), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR), the Institute of Forestry (INAFOR), Customs (Aduanas), and Fiscal and Legal Authorities Agency (Fiscalía and Procuraduría). Officials came from all over the country, including Bosawas, Puerto Cabezas, Bluefields, Peñas Blancas and Ocotal. The workshop was organized through a collaborative effort between the USFS and the CITES Management Authority in Nicaragua. In Honduras, USFS worked closely with the Honduran CITES Management and Scientific Authorities to carry out the training on 27-31 August 2007 at Zamorano University. Officials from around the country were trained, including from the Ministry of Agriculture (SAG), Ministry of Environment (SERNA), Forestry (AFE-COHDEFOR), Customs, Fiscal and Legal agencies (Aduanas, Fiscalía, Procuraduría), as well as the international Customs authorities (OIRSA) and universities (Zamorano and ESNACIFOR).

A wood identification training workshop was held in Singapore in late 2007 on the practical techniques for identifying wood of CITES-listed ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.) in manufactured products as well as sawn timber form. Supported by the United States State Department and the United States Agency for International Development, as well as the USFS, this workshop responded to technical assistance requests made during the ITTO-CITES meeting held in Kuala Lumpur during 2006 by Asian participants, including Singapore. Experts from the USFS Forest Products Laboratory and TRAFFIC International conducted the training over four days for port and customs inspectors from Indonesia, Malaysia and other Asian countries. TRAFFIC has also conducted follow-on training in the region.

Technical workshop on Southeast Asian Timber Species: In September 2007, a botanist from the United States Scientific Authority attended *Strategies for the Sustainable Use and Management of Timber Tree Species Subject to International Trade: Southeast Asia* workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The workshop focused on 115 Southeast Asian timber tree species, including CITES-listed species, which are in international trade and possibly of concern due to potential over-exploitation.

American ginseng: Representatives of the United States Management Authority and the United States Scientific Authority will attend a meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, 27-28 February 2008, to discuss with State natural resources agencies regulatory and management issues related to American ginseng harvest in the eastern United States.

6. Other issues

CANADA

Enforcement

- In 2007, EC's Wildlife Enforcement Directorate conducted significant numbers of inspections pertaining to commercial shipments and the importation of medicinal products. These two categories were both identified as inspection priorities for 2007.
- Wildlife Enforcement had several notable investigations of commercial importations which resulted in convictions, including the illegal importation of commercial quantities of orchids and medicinal herbs such as *Dendrobium*, *Cibotium barometz*, *Cistanche deserticola* and *Saussurea lappa*.
- Canada continues to experience extremely high numbers of illegal shipments of products said to contain *Hoodia*, many of which are non-commercial quantities originating from the United States.

MEXICO

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Mexico set up a steering committee to develop its Strategy for Plant Conservation based on the GSPC objectives and targets. This committee is drawing up targets and strategic guidelines for Mexico, identifying people in charge and setting timelines.

Following on Decision 14.15, the Scientific Authority has been part of the steering committee for Mexico's Strategy for Plant Conservation and has helped to define Mexico's targets in this regard, especially with a view to achieving Target xi of the GSPC, "No species of wild flora endangered by international trade", and addressing other issues related to plant species included in the CITES Appendices.

Study of high-priority species for Mexico: CONABIO, in collaboration with other government agencies, academic institutions and NGOs, is conducting a prioritization exercise covering species of commercial interest. The results will be used to identify species requiring greater attention and for which it would be advisable to carry out population studies and develop more effective management and conservation measures and, where appropriate, propose amendments to the CITES Appendices to reflect adequately their current status.

The Scientific Authority presented the preliminary results of this study at the XVII Mexican Botanical Congress, *Botanists in search of sustainable alternatives*, held in Zacatecas, Zacatecas, from 14 to 18 October 2007. Its presentation was on *Endangered Mexican plants in the CITES context*, as part of a symposium on *Endangered Mexican plants: importance of their conservation from an ecological perspective*.

Preparation for an international workshop on non-detriment findings (NDFs) for Scientific Authorities: Following Decisions 14.49 to 14.51, the Scientific Authority of Mexico, in collaboration with the Management Authority, is leading efforts to organize an international workshop on non-detriment findings (NDFs) for Scientific Authorities, to be held from 10 to 15 November 2008 in Mexico.

The workshop will focus on CITES species in Appendix II, commonly traded internationally, and is expected to draw the participation of about 100 experts in management, conservation and sustainable use of CITES species. The purpose of this workshop is to produce a general guide for Scientific Authorities on how to make non-detriment findings, and specific guides on nine groups of species. The plant species covered will include:

- Timber (e.g. Holywood lignum vitae, bigleaf mahogany, ramin, yew);
- Ornamental and medicinal perennials (e.g. *Ginseng*, *Hydrastis*, *Adonis*);
- Succulents and cycads (e.g. cacti, cycads, candelilla, tree ferns), and

- Geophytes and epiphytes (e.g. *Galanthus*, *Cistanche*, orchids).

On 5 October, the Secretariat issued a Notification to the Parties (No. 2007/032) asking them to provide expertise, and to share their experience on current methodologies used to formulate non-detriment findings (NDFs) (i.e. the IUCN checklist), and case studies on exported species, and invited the Authorities of exporting developing countries to join the Steering Committee for the international workshop.

Directory of CITES specialists in Mexico: CONABIO is compiling a directory of specialists who will be part of the team of advisors to Mexico's CITES Scientific Authority. Information on these specialists will be published on the CONABIO website.

CITES species data sheets: To follow-up on the request for proposals for the preparation of data sheets (containing information on biology, threats, management and risk status) for the Mexican species included in CITES Appendices I and II (2004), the Scientific Authority is continuing its review and validation of more than 100 data sheets, which include *inter alia* orchids and cacti. These data sheets are prepared using Biótica®, an information system designed by CONABIO for the management of curatorial, nomenclatural, geographical, bibliographical and ecological parameter data. These species sheets are the bioinformatic foundation for the National Biodiversity Information System (SNIB), and will be posted on the CONABIO website at www.conabio.gob.mx.

UNITED STATES

CITES Plant Rescue Center Program: In 1978, the United States Management Authority established the *CITES Plant Rescue Center Program* to care for live CITES-listed plants legally abandoned or forfeited to the United States Government due to non-compliance with CITES. The United States Management Authority administers this programme in cooperation with APHIS, the United States inspection agency for live CITES-listed plants entering the United States. Currently, 79 institutions cooperate as volunteer plant rescue centres. All of the cooperating rescue centres are public botanical gardens, arboreta, zoological parks or research institutions.

During 2006, APHIS confiscated 170 shipments containing a total of 6,343 plants and 3,720 seeds. Of these 170 shipments, 168 were assigned to plant rescue centres. The assigned shipments contained 3,624 orchids, 1,766 cacti, 540 euphorbias, 175 cycads, 151 aloes and 3,720 cycad seeds.

During 2007, APHIS confiscated 138 shipments of live plant material in violation of CITES, nearly all of which were assigned to rescue centres. These shipments contained 19,386 plants (747 orchids, 280 cacti, 110 cycads, 52 euphorbias, and 94 specimens of other taxa) and 164 individual seeds (100 palms and 64 auracaria), and an additional 4,250 grams of seeds (4,000 grams of palm seeds and 250 grams of cactus seeds).

19th World Orchid Conference: The United States hosted the 19th World Orchid Conference in Miami during 23-27 January 2008. Staff from the United States Management Authority and APHIS attended to provide information on CITES requirements for trade in orchids, to issue CITES re-export certificates and phytosanitary documents on site, and to give a presentation on the regulation of orchid trade under CITES.