

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



Twentieth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Dublin (Ireland), 22-30 March 2012

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

Note: This report has been submitted by the regional representative for North America\*\*.

1. General information

- a) Names of the representatives:
  - Regional Representative: Mr. Hesiquio Benítez Díaz (México)
  - Alternate Member: Ms. Adrienne Sinclair (Canada)
- b) Number of Parties in the region: 3
- c) Period covered by this report: January 2011 to December 2011

2. Directory of experts on CITES plant issues

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### 3. Activities carried out

#### 3.1 Review of the Appendices

##### **MEXICO**

**Periodic review of *Tillandsia mauryana*:** During the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Plants Committee (PC19, Gineva, 2011), Mexico volunteered to undertake the periodic review of *Tillandsia mauryana*. Mexico contacted Ph.D. María Teresa Valverde Valdés, from the Department of Ecology of Natural Resources of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), to develop the project "Assessment of the conservation status of *Tillandsia mauryana* through an analysis of population dynamic".

##### **UNITED STATES**

**Periodic review of *Dudleya stolonifera* and *Lewisia serrata*:** At PC19, the United States agreed to complete periodic reviews of these two native species and will report on the status of these reviews at PC20. The Scientific Authority is also evaluating results of a comprehensive taxonomic and conservation status review of the genus *Sclerocactus* (Cactaceae), including U.S. and Mexican taxa, and will provide an update of this review at PC20.

#### 3.2 CITES-projects in the Region

##### **MEXICO**

**Study on the status of *Yucca queretaroensis*:** Following document PC18 Doc. 21.1 (Buenos Aires, 2009), CONABIO contracted the Agronomist Engineer Emiliano Sánchez Martínez, from Regional Botanic Garden of Cadereyta, to develop the study "Assessment of conservation status, uses and treatments of *Yucca queretaroensis* Piña (Agavaceae) and the relevance to include it in the CITES Appendices," in order to evaluate whether it should be included in the Appendices and to assess the need to modify its current conservation status in Mexican national legislation (NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010). Preliminary results will be available on July 2012.

**National Inventory on Candelilla:** Due to the commercial and economic relevance of *Euphorbia antisiphilitica* in Mexico, CONABIO, in partnership with CONAFOR (the Mexican National Forestry Commission) are developing the National Inventory of Candelilla to determine its current distribution, abundance and conservation status in order to establish sustainable harvest rates. Phase I of the Inventory is nearly complete. Results will be available in March 2012 and will be useful to determine sample sites and specific methods for the Phase II field work.

**Study on *Echinocactus platycanthus*:** DGVS-SEMARNAT financed the study "Population estimates for the conservation and sustainable use of *Echinocactus platycanthus* (biznaga)" developed by the Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM, Iztapalapa) with the purpose of ascertaining the current conservation status of the species, and to develop management and sustainable use strategies. The study was carried out between August-December 2011 and consisted of a habitat characterization; an estimate of the production capacity of *biznaga*; the development of a predictive model of the population dynamics of the species; and, the development of conservation and sustainable use proposals.

### 3.3 Nursery registration

#### **MEXICO**

DGVS reports the registration of CITES-listed plant species in twelve nurseries distributed throughout the country.

### 3.4 Other activities

#### **CANADA**

An updated National Standing Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) report for American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) was published on the CITES-Canada website ([www.ec.gc.ca/cites](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cites)) in April 2011. Standing NDF Reports are used to document the current management practices in Canada for commonly-traded Canadian species to support permit decisions on sustainable exports of legally obtained CITES specimens.

The Canadian Scientific Authority continues as a member of the Ginseng Recovery Team comprised 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.

The following is a list of CITES working groups of interest to the Plants Committee that are chaired or co-chaired by Canada:

- Canada, as AC representative for North America, and the USA, as Plants Committee Observer, are co-chairing the AC/PC Climate Change WG.
- Canada, as AC representative for North America, is co-chairing with the United Kingdom the AC/PC WG on Capacity-building programme for science-based establishment and implementation of voluntary national export quotas for Appendix-II species
- Canada is a chair of the sub-working group on Tree Species of the PC WG on Development and application of annotations to the listings of plant taxa in the Appendices, coordinated by the Vice Chair of the Animals Committee (Mexico).
- Canada is chair of the Standing Committee Working Groups on Purpose codes and Taxonomic Serial Numbers, whose work has relevance for the AC and PC.

Canada has also been responding to requests and providing information as a member of the PC WGs on timber species, medicinal plants and agarwood-producing species, and development and application of annotations to the listings of plant taxa in the Appendices, as well as the AC/PC WGs on climate change, capacity-building programme for science-based establishment and implementation of voluntary national export quotas, and non-detriment findings.

#### **MEXICO**

**Elaboration or working documents for PC20:** Hesiquio Benítez (Vice Chair of the PC) and Patricia Dávila (Chair of the working group on the periodic review) in collaboration with CONABIO elaborated the following working documents for PC20's meeting<sup>1</sup>:

- Doc. 13 Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Decision 15.19) –Report of the working group
- Doc. 16.1.1.1 Overview of species under review
- Doc. 16.1.1.2 Report of the working group
- Doc. 16.1.2 Assessment of trade in epiphytic cacti and review of listing of Cactaceae spp. in Appendix II (Decision 15.89) –Report of the working group
- Doc. 16.1.3 Euphorbia spp. [Decision 14.131 (Rev. CoP15)]
- Doc. 16.1.5.1 Overview [Decisions 15.31, 15.34, 14.133, 14.134 (Rev. CoP15), 14.149, 15.35 and 14.148 (Rev. CoP15) –Report of the working group]
- Doc. 15.1.5.2 Preparation of clarification of and guidance on the meaning of “packaged and ready for retail trade” and other terms used in the Annotations –Report of the working group

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the numbers provisionally assigned to these documents will be modified once the PC20's Agenda is adopted.

It is also worth noting that Canada as president of Working Group PC19WG6, prepared the document *Tree species: annotations for species included in Appendices II and III [Decisions 14.149, 15.35 and 14.148 (Rev. CoP15)] –Report of the working group* (Doc. 16.1.5.4) under the coordination of Hesiquio Benítez.

**Law Enforcement efforts:** During the current reporting period, there have been 6,852 verifications of wild specimens, parts and derivatives of CITES-listed species. Of these, 1,255 were exports, and 5,627 were imports. Additionally, the monitoring of transboundary movements of species in the genera *Euphorbia*, *Agave*, *Cedrela*, *Swietenia* and *Yucca* received special attention, since they are species of great interest to Mexico.

## UNITED STATES

**Expanded cooperation between CITES and ITTO:** In 2011, the United States continued to support the effective implementation of CITES requirements for listed tropical tree species through the ongoing International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)-CITES Work Program that supports work in all three tropical regions. Current work includes support to enhance CITES implementation for listed taxa, including *Gonystylus* spp., *Aquilaria* spp., *Pericopsis elata*, *Swietenia macrophylla*, and *Cedrela odorata*.

**Ongoing participation in AC/PC and PC Intersessional Working Groups:** In addition to co-chairing the Climate Change WG, the United States is participating in and responding to information requests on the various annotations WGs, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, capacity-building programme for science-based establishment and implementation of voluntary national export quotas, and non-detriment findings.

### 4. Capacity building activities

## CANADA

Work continues on a web-based permitting system including the development of an online CITES permit application, which will allow Canadians to apply online to obtain a CITES permit. The system is being deployed for use by Canadian federal, provincial and territorial CITES partners.

The North American Region members met by videoconference in April 2011 and maintain ongoing regular contact as part of our ongoing commitment to meet and discuss regional issues and positions. These meetings are very useful to better understand other Parties' views and concerns, especially for shared species.

The Canadian network of scientific authorities (the Scientific Authority Working Group, SAWG) kept in regular contact via email.

## MEXICO

CONABIO and DGVS participated in the “3<sup>d</sup> Regional Meeting of Units for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wildlife [UMAs, by its Spanish acronym] of the South-South east” (Oaxaca, México; June 2011), in order to promote strategies and policies for the sustainable use of wild plants and animals that generate environmental goods and services, employment, and economic benefits for communities.

PROFEPA and CONABIO participated as speakers at the *Regional Workshop for the Implementation and Operation of CITES* (San José, Costa Rica; August, 2011), organized by TRAFFIC North America. The Workshop was attended by more than 25 customs officers and other public officials. Through this Workshop, knowledge was improved, actions developed on the implementation of CITES in the Central American region were evaluated, and the efforts developed during the last five years within the scope of the *Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement* were consolidated.

PROFEPA has strengthened the inspectorates through training, equipment, and evaluation. This has improved the performance and service of the authorized inspection zones in addition to automating the verification process, including the continuous improvement of the Institutional System of Registry Verification (*Sistema Institucional del Registro de Verificación*, SIREV) –a tool that provides efficient services to citizens that wish to carry out transboundary movements of wild species regulated by CITES, and that automates information on shipments, providing statistical support to make public-policy decisions.

**10th Master's Degree in Management, Access and Conservation of Species in Trade: The International Framework (Baeza, Spain, June 2011):** Hesiquio Benítez (Director of the Scientific Authority) acted as coordinator and presenter of the unit on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). See also '10th CITES Master's Course,' below.

**Structure of CITES Scientific Authority in Mexico:** In late 2011, CONABIO hired two analysts to strengthen implementation of the Convention at the national level.

## **UNITED STATES**

**10th CITES Masters Course:** A Scientific Authority botanist participated as an instructor in Section 10: "Scientific Aspects – Flora" of the 10th Masters Course, presenting information on the structure and function of the Scientific Authority in the United States and the preparation of non-detriment findings, with emphasis on the North American medicinal plant American ginseng.

### **Capacity building through the International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP)**

With an office that is based in and supported by the U.S. Department of Interior (USDOJ) and using external funding, including from the Department of State, ITAP consults with USFWS to provide CITES capacity building and training around the world, including:

#### *CENTRAL AMERICA*

**Honduras:** Held CITES national capacity building workshops, training 60 customs, police, and CITES Authority officials, and regional Interpol representatives.

**Nicaragua:** Provided for design and nation-wide distribution of CITES enforcement brochures to regional prosecutor's offices throughout Nicaragua.

**CAFTA-DR Region:** Provided regional Wildlife Enforcement training to police, customs, prosecutors, and CITES Management Authorities to improve enforcement of CITES and other regional wildlife laws. Workshop organized in partnership with TRAFFIC and CCAD.

**Central America Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN):** Facilitated a roadmap meeting of WEN to improve coordination and communication in the region, in partnership with TRAFFIC and CCAD.

#### *NORTHERN AFRICA*

**Morocco:** In the coming year, ITAP will work with USFWS Law Enforcement and the CITES Secretariat to expand the capacity-building program for customs officers to cover species identification, review of CITES permits, train-the-trainer sessions, and implementation of Morocco's recently passed CITES implementing legislation.

For additional information, including a full list of publications, on the CAFTA-DR Environmental Agreement and its achievements, please see [www.caftadr-environment.org/index.htm](http://www.caftadr-environment.org/index.htm) for the English language site or [www.caftadr-environment.org/spanish/index.htm](http://www.caftadr-environment.org/spanish/index.htm) for the Spanish language site. Additional information on the USDOJ-ITAP program can be found at [www.doi.gov/intl/itap/index.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/intl/itap/index.cfm).

### **In-country enforcement & inspection capacity:**

Increased Staffing: The USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) added inspector staff at high-risk ports of entry, bringing total number of wildlife inspectors from 124 the previous year to 143.

Training of Federal Plant Inspectors and Botanists: In June 2011, several representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) and a representative of USFWS conducted a CITES regulatory workshop in Long Beach, California, for USDA-APHIS and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors and botanists that work at the CITES designated plant ports in the western United States.

U.S. federal interagency discussions regarding molecular ID tools for CITES-listed plants: In 2011, a meeting was held to discuss the current state of knowledge regarding the use of molecular tools for plant and timber identification. Topics included an overview of guidelines being developed by the USDA for the molecular identification of plants and a discussion about the interagency distribution of expertise and diagnostic tools that might be useful for identification of CITES-listed plants. Participants included representatives from APHIS-Plant Protection and Quarantine, APHIS-Center for Plant Health Science and Technology, U.S. Forest Service International Programs, the USFWS Forensics Lab, and the USFWS Scientific and Management Authorities.

**USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) international capacity building activities:** During this reporting period, OLE conducted two 2-week criminal investigation training programs for enforcement officers from sub-Saharan African nations at International Law Enforcement Training Academy in Botswana; presented the first ever CITES enforcement training for customs officers in Morocco; and teamed with the Department of Justice and U.S. Forest Service to conduct capacity building workshop in Peru focused on both wildlife and timber trafficking issues.

#### 4.1 Contact with specialists and/or NGOs

##### **CANADA**

The Canadian Scientific Authority continues to work 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, Canadian Botanical Association, and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, & Rural Affairs.

##### **MEXICO**

Law Enforcement efforts - Cooperation and Synergies with NGOs: During 2011, the Mexican Law Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA) worked with NGOs to perform actions within the scope of the Consensus Agreement signed with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and TRAFFIC North America in Mexico. This Agreement has allowed prevention and combat of illegal international trade of wildlife species, by professionalizing the technical and operational practices of the operational staff of PROFEPA, specifically through: capacity building, international cooperation, and public awareness-raising in accordance to CITES' provisions. It has resulted in the development of 55,000 brochures (in Spanish and English) targeted to marine cruise tourists on the responsible purchase of wild life, which were distributed throughout the major seaports with shipments of this type.

International Cooperation: Within the scope of the Trilateral Cooperation (U.S./Canada/Mexico), PROFEPA has followed up the North American Wildlife Enforcement Group (NAWEG) efforts to strengthen institutional capacities that will improve the mechanisms for monitoring, control and vigilance of legal and illegal wildlife trade in the region.

##### **UNITED STATES**

In addition to the groups mentioned elsewhere in this report, the United States worked with a variety of plant specialists and NGOs in 2011, including the American Herbal Products Association, Rio Grande Botanic Garden, the U.S. Botanic Garden, the Integrated Taxonomic Information System, NatureServe and State Natural Heritage Programs, the Montgomery Botanical Center, the Institute for Culture and Ecology, and the National Network of Forest Practitioners.

#### 5. Difficulties of implementation encountered in the country

##### 5.1 Technical issues

##### **CANADA**

The importance of clear terms and ease of interpretation continues to be emphasized with respect to plant annotations, particularly for Enforcement.



## 6. Other topics related to CITES

### UNITED STATES

**Amendments to the Lacey Act:** The Lacey Act makes it illegal to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any wildlife specimen taken or traded in violation of the conservation laws of a U.S. State or of another country. Amendments to the Lacey Act in 2008 protected a broader range of plants, including foreign plant and timber species and the United States has been taking steps to fully implementing the amendments, as described in the North American Regional Reports for PC18 (<[www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/18/E-PC18-05-05.pdf](http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/18/E-PC18-05-05.pdf)>) and PC19 (<[www.cites.org/eng/com/pc/19/e19-06-05.pdf](http://www.cites.org/eng/com/pc/19/e19-06-05.pdf)>). During the current reporting period, the U.S. continued its phased-in approach to the declaration requirement for plant imports into the United States, drafting definitions of the terms “common cultivar” and “common food crop,” as they apply in the Lacey Act, and providing additional national and international outreach.

**Efforts related to Peruvian mahogany:** The Management Authority continued working closely with Peru regarding its implementation of the Appendix-II listing of bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*). Peru established a voluntary bigleaf mahogany export quota of 3,565.547 cubic meters for 2010 (covering the time period from 23 July 2010 through 22 July 2011) and 775.659 cubic meters for 2011. We have been closely monitoring the volumes of bigleaf mahogany imported into the United States from Peru since 2009 (see also the North American Regional Report for PC19, <[www.cites.org/eng/com/pc/19/e19-06-05.pdf](http://www.cites.org/eng/com/pc/19/e19-06-05.pdf)>) and provide Peru with periodic reports on those imports on a regular basis to assist them in monitoring exports and managing their quota. Current tallies indicate a total of 1,253 cubic meters were imported to the United States in 2010 and 748 cubic meters in 2011.

**Outreach to U.S. industry on Appendix-III timber listings:** On 22 December 2011, the following CITES Appendix III listings became effective: 104 species of *Diospyros* (ebonies) and 5 species of *Dalbergia* (rosewoods) native to Madagascar, and the Panamanian national populations of *Dalbergia darienensis* and *D. retusa*. In early December 2011, the Management Authority informed U.S. timber importers and re-exporters of the United States interpretation of the annotations to these species listings and how the listings will be implemented in the United States.

**CoP16-related activities:** On 14 June 2011, USFWS published a Federal Register notice soliciting recommendations from the public regarding amendments to Appendices I and II of CITES at the 16th regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP16) (<[www.fws.gov/international/DMA\\_DSA/CITES/pdf/CoP16\\_FR\\_June14\\_2011.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/international/DMA_DSA/CITES/pdf/CoP16_FR_June14_2011.pdf)>). The Scientific Authority is currently reviewing these suggestions, including recommendations for two plant taxa – removal of goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*) from Appendix II and inclusion of 6 species of Hawaiian sandalwood (*Santalum* spp.) – and will announce which submissions the United States is likely, undecided, or likely to propose at CoP16 in a *Federal Register* notice to be published in February 2012.

## 7. Work to be done until next Plants Committee

### MEXICO

PROFEPA will develop a plan to improve, complement, and finalize identification guides on several CITES topics; and plans to organize, in conjunction with TRAFFIC North America, a training event for customs inspectors.

## 8. Other issues

### UNITED STATES

**CITES Plant Rescue Center (PRC) Program:** The U.S. PRC Program was established in 1978 by the Management Authority in cooperation with USDA-APHIS as a nationwide system of repositories able to care for live CITES-listed plants that have been legally abandoned or forfeited to or seized by the U.S. Government due to non-compliance with CITES. Currently, 83 institutions cooperate as volunteer PRCs in the United States, all of which are public botanical gardens, arboreta, zoological parks, or research institutions. During 2011, APHIS confiscated 58 shipments of live plant material that were in violation of CITES. Of these 58 shipments, 54 were assigned to cooperating PRCs. The assigned shipments contained a total of 10,133 plants (3,000 Venus flytraps, 2,403 pitcher plants, 2,314 orchids, 1,388 cacti, 1,000 *Anacampseros* spp., 11 euphorbias, 10 aloes, and 7 specimens of other taxa), 265 cycad seeds, and an additional 10 grams of hoodia seeds. In recent years,

there has continued to be a general reduction in the number of shipments of live CITES-listed plant material confiscated by USDA-APHIS. However, the numbers of plants assigned to PRCs has increased. During the 3-year period 2003-2005, USDA-APHIS confiscated 701 such shipments and 15,247 plants were assigned to PRCs; during 2006-2008, USDA-APHIS confiscated 440 such shipments and 9,363 plants were assigned to PRCs; and during 2009-2011, USDA-APHIS confiscated 278 such shipments and 20,939 plants were assigned to PRCs.

**Native Plant Conservation Initiative (NPCI) and CITES-listed species:** The Scientific Authority serves on the selection committee for project proposals that are funded through the Plant Conservation Alliance (PCA; <[www.nps.gov/plants](http://www.nps.gov/plants)>) & National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's grant program. Since 1995, the NPCI grant program, with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service, has funded more than US\$15 million in projects that promote conservation of U.S. native plants and pollinators, including CITES-listed species. U.S. cacti of the Southeastern States are among the projects funded through this grant program last year. In 2011, IUCN-US began a status review and Red List assessment, including climate change vulnerability, for southeastern cacti. Results will be forthcoming in early 2012.

**Participation in development of National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy:** The Scientific Authority is serving on a forest ecosystem team that is collaborating to develop a U.S. federal/state/tribal National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (See: [www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/](http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/)). The Scientific Authority also participated in a project coordinated by the Chicago Botanic Garden and Botanic Garden Conservation International-North America to identify trends in the national capacity to conserve and manage native plants species and habitats in the United States (See: [www.bgci.org/usa/bcap](http://www.bgci.org/usa/bcap)).