

## CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

A. Proposal

Inclusion of *Bitis worthingtoni* in Appendix II, in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention and Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP12), Annex 2 a.

B. Proponent

Kenya.

C. Supporting statement1. Taxonomy

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1.1 Class:               | Reptilia   |
| 1.2 Order:               | Serpentes  |
| 1.3 Family:              | Viperidae  |
| 1.4 Genus:               | <i>Bitis</i>                                       |
| 1.5 Species:             | <i>Bitis worthingtoni</i> (Parker, 1932)           |
| 1.6 Scientific synonyms: | None   |
| 1.7 Common name:         | English: Kenya Horned Viper<br>French:<br>Spanish: |

2. Biological parameters

## 2.1 Distribution

*Bitis worthingtoni* is endemic to Kenya. It occurs in the Rift valley and the surrounding escarpments; recorded from north-west Kedong valley, Kijabe, Kinangop plateau, Naivasha, Elmenteita, through Njoro, Kipkabus up to Eldoret the northern most record. The species is probably present in the southern and eastern end of Mau hills, around Narok and south west of Mt. Suswa (Spawls *et al.* 2002).

## 2.2 Habitat availability

The species is restricted to high altitude grassland and scrub (usually over 1500 m a.s.l.) along the high central rift valley. It appears to favour broken country, not easily ploughed and might be tolerant to stock farming. Its main habitat is within prime farming areas (Spawls *et al.* 2002).

## 2.3 Population status

Currently there are no known estimates of the wild total population or number of individuals as well as those in captivity.

## 2.4 Population trends

A decline of the population is to be expected due to the increased removal for trade, habitat loss and fragmentation as a result of human population pressure.

## 2.5 Geographic trends

Given that the species occurs in high agricultural areas, there is a high presumed rate of habitat fragmentation leading to decrease in species range though not known.

## 2.6 Role of the species in its ecosystem

The species feed on rodents and lizards (Spawls *et al.* 2002). Little is known about its role in the ecosystem to predict the consequences following its depletion. The role of every species is unique in the ecosystem and is crucial for the maintenance of the natural balance.

## 2.7 Threats

The primary threats to *Bitis worthingtoni* are trade and habitat destruction. In its range, there is extensive use of agricultural chemicals and their indirect effects on this species are not known.

## 3 Utilization and trade

### 3.1 National utilization

No domestic use is known on this species.

### 3.2 Legal international trade

The species is not listed in the CITES Appendices and as such there are no records of legal trade in the species as WCMC database is concerned mainly with species that are already listed on the CITES Appendices.

### 3.3 Illegal trade

From the frequent interception of smuggled snakes by the Kenya Wildlife Service, the CITES Management Authority for Kenya and customs officers, it is evident significant number of specimens of *Bitis worthingtoni* is in the illegal trade. The table below shows data of illegal trade in *Bitis worthingtoni* as extracted from Reeve (2002) report. The export value of a specimen of the species is quoted as USD100 based on a price list of reptiles intercepted from one of the illegal wildlife traffickers from Kenya.

**Table 1.** Export of *Bitis worthingtoni* by Mr. Thomas Price between November 1999 and May 2000.

Number of specimens	Destination & country of import
25	Glades Herp, USA
4	Kingiis Animal Imporium, Netherlands
1	Massassauga imports, Canada
7	California, USA
(37)	

Another nineteen specimens (19) of *Bitis worthingtoni* were illegally imported into Germany between May and October 1999. This data is from a survey done by German Customs Authorities and the German Scientific Authority. The survey however did not cover all German airports. This is only part of the trade in one year (Personal communication report from Freyer Daniela in Germany to Rosalind Reeve in Kenya, April 2004).

### 3.4 Actual or potential trade impacts

There exists no official trade data for *Bitis worthingtoni*. The existence of dispersed and isolated sub-populations of the species makes recovery of depleted sites unlikely.

### 3.5 Captive breeding or artificial propagation for commercial purposes

Though no data is available, a significant number of specimens of the species are presumed to be held in zoos and private collections though the captive population is unknown.

## 4. Conservation and management

### 4.1 Legal status

#### 4.1.1 National

The species is included in the list of species protected under the Kenya Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act.

#### 4.1.2 International

The Kenya Horned Viper is not currently listed in the CITES Appendices.

### 4.2 Species management

#### 4.2.1 Population monitoring

Presently there is no population-monitoring program in place.

#### 4.2.2 Habitat conservation

The known population of the species occurs outside protected areas. However, it may certainly occur in Hell's gate and Lake Nakuru National Parks though no confirmed records (Spawls *et al.* 2002).

#### 4.2.3 Management measures

There is none, apart from enforcement of the wildlife law on the species.

### 4.3 Control measures

#### 4.3.1 International trade

There is no relevant international control measure for trade in this species.

#### 4.3.2 Domestic measures

Enforcement of the Kenya Wildlife Laws and provisions thereto.

## 5. Information on similar species

Puff-Adder *Bitis arietans* share the same geographic range with this species however, the presence of horns on the head and small size at maturity differentiate it from the huge Puff Adder.

## 6. Other comments

None.

## 7 Additional remarks

As shown above, *Bitis worthingtoni* meets the biological and trade criteria for Article II (2a) and criteria of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP12) necessary for inclusion in Appendix II because:

- a) it is known, inferred or projected that unless trade in the species is subjected to strict regulation, it will meet at least one of the criteria listed for Appendix I listing in the near future (Criterion A) and,
- b) it is known, inferred or projected that harvesting of specimens from the wild for international trade has, or may have, a detrimental impact on the species by either exceeding, over an extended period, the level that can be continued in perpetuity or reducing it to a population level at which its survival would be threatened by other influences (Criterion B (i, ii)).

## 8 References

Reeve, R. 2002. The reptile trade in Kenya. A report prepared for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). September 2002.

Spawls, S., K. Howell, R. Drewes and J. Ashe 2002. A field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi Academic Press.