



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

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### UNITED STATES TO HOST MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION COMMUNITY IN FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Representatives from 119 countries will gather in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in November 1994, for the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The 20-year-old conservation treaty protects wild animals and plants against over-exploitation and possible extinction due to unrestrained trade.

"CITES is a dynamic tool for animal and plant conservation," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "It continues to grow in membership and sophistication and is now entering a period in which it will truly be put to the test."

In 1973, 80 countries met in Washington, DC, to negotiate a treaty to ensure global biodiversity would not be imperiled by unregulated commerce in endangered and vulnerable species. The United States has played a strong leadership role at ensuing biennial CITES Conferences. At the 1992 meeting in Kyoto, Japan, this country was in the forefront of the effort to strengthen the

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regulation of commercial trade in exotic wild animals and to ensure their humane transport.

At the Fort Lauderdale meeting, nations will be examining a rapidly increasing number of complex wildlife trade issues, such as how to save the rhinoceros from extinction, and how countries can scientifically manage wild animals and plants to ensure trade will not be detrimental to their survival. They will also consider proposed new criteria for evaluating trade restrictions concerning many species at risk such as African elephants and tropical hardwoods.

"Located next to one of the world's most delicate ecosystems, the Everglades, Fort Lauderdale is an excellent example of a community where people are working together to solve sensitive natural resource issues," Babbitt said. "The community also has expressed an overwhelming commitment to support this historic 20th anniversary meeting."

Secretary Babbitt made the announcement while representing the United States at a CITES standing committee meeting in Brussels, Belgium.