



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



March 19, 2015

Subject: CITES Country-Specific Trade Suspensions

Background: At the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee of CITES (July 2014), eight countries of concern in the poaching of elephants and illegal trade in ivory, were directed to develop and submit a National Ivory Action Plan. On March 19, 2015, the CITES Secretariat issued Notifications No. 2015/012, 2015/013, and 2015/014 indicating that the Standing Committee recommend all countries suspend commercial trade in specimens of CITES-listed species with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Nigeria until further notice for failure to submit the required National Ivory Action Plan.

The Endangered Species Act prohibits trade (import, export, re-export, and introduction from the sea) in specimens contrary to the CITES Convention. Articles II and VIII of the CITES treaty require countries to take appropriate measures to enforce provisions of the treaty and to prohibit trade in specimens that are in violation. These treaty measures also require countries to monitor trade in CITES-listed specimens and file required reports. CITES documents may only be issued and considered valid when it is determined that the specimens have been legally acquired and when the country is appropriately implementing the treaty.

As a member of CITES, the United States is committed to carrying out decisions and policies approved by CITES countries that reflect appropriate interpretations of the treaty. The failure by a country to file the required reports constitutes a major problem with implementation of CITES. In addition, when countries fail to implement the required CITES legislation, the United States cannot establish the legal origin of wildlife that is exported or re-exported from the affected country. The United States also cannot allow trade to the affected country since the necessary enforcement provisions are not in place to ensure the CITES treaty is being implemented.

Action:

Effective immediately, the United States will:

- Prohibit the commercial import or introduction from the sea of CITES-listed specimens from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, or Nigeria;
- Prohibit the commercial export or re-export of CITES-listed specimens to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, or Nigeria; and
- Prohibit the commercial import of CITES-listed specimens with a country of origin of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, or Nigeria when such specimens were exported from the restricted country of origin on or after March 19, 2015.

All such prohibited shipments or specimens are subject to seizure and forfeiture. Additional information on CITES trade suspensions may be found at:

<http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/ref/suspend.php>.

Contact:

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