



## NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



June 19, 2009

### **Subject: Denied Issuance of CITES Permits for Export of Paddlefish from Kentucky Lake in Tennessee**

**Background:** Commercial harvest of paddlefish in Tennessee is managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). In addition, harvest regulations in Tennessee are reviewed and approved by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission (Commission). On October 7, 2008, the Service contacted the Commission expressing concerns about proposed changes to eliminate all paddlefish harvest regulations, the potential effects on paddlefish populations, and the subsequent effect on issuance of CITES export permits due to our inability to make a determination of non-detriment for this fishery.

Despite the concerns of the Service and TWRA, in November 2008, the Commission retreated from implementation of the State's five-year plan and adopted less restrictive harvest regulations than those being proposed by TWRA. Under the current regulatory framework, the Kentucky Lake paddlefish population is not being managed in a sustainable manner and export cannot continue without a detrimental impact to paddlefish populations. The Division of Scientific Authority (DSA), within the Service's International Affairs program, is unable to make a non-detriment finding for paddlefish harvested from the Tennessee portion of Kentucky Lake. Therefore, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finds it necessary to deny issuance of CITES permits for the export of commercially-harvested paddlefish from Kentucky Lake in Tennessee.

This finding affects the State of Tennessee only; separate General Advices and non-detriment findings will be made for the other commercially harvesting states. The denial of CITES exports permits for paddlefish roe (caviar) from Kentucky Lake in Tennessee during the completed 2008-2009 harvest season will not impact the sale of this caviar domestically in the United States. Roe buyers in Tennessee and the caviar sellers/exporters nationwide will likely be impacted because they will not be able to export Kentucky Lake caviar even though they can sell it domestically.

**Action:** The caviar trade should be aware that the Service will not be able to issue export permits under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) for the harvest of paddlefish and its products from Kentucky Lake, in Tennessee, during the recently completed 2008-2009 harvest season. Further information on these actions taken by the Service can be found at: [Service Press Release](#).

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