



Attendees at the 2019 CITES Conference of the Parties. Photo by Yula Kapetanakos/USFWS

The CITES Master's Course, formerly known as the Management and Conservation of Species in Trade: The International Framework, is a master's degree program developed in the 1980s under the leadership of Dr. Margarita Clemente and with the support of the CITES Secretariat and the Spanish Government. The graduate program, offered at Spain's International University of Andalucía (UNIA) Baeza campus, includes three months of coursework and nine months of independent research. The course covers 11 subjects and is clustered into three sections: 1) Loss of Biodiversity and CITES, 2) Administrative Implementation of CITES, and 3) Scientific Issues - Animal and Plant Species in CITES.



Dr. Margarita Clemente at the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP 18).
Photo by Yula Kapetanakos/

The mission of the CITES Master's Course is to strengthen technical knowledge and regional collaboration needed for successful implementation of CITES around the world. In regions where wildlife-related crime undermines national security and negatively impacts species, the initiatives of the CITES Master's Course help combat these issues and strengthen regional collaboration for enforcing wildlife regulations and laws. The success of CITES hinges on the ability of all countries to implement it and enforce relevant laws.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) sponsors scholarships for regional cohorts, selecting candidates from countries that are most vulnerable to illegal trade. Students receive logistical and academic support, and an opportunity to attend the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP). USFWS has supported cohorts from Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central Africa.

WHAT IS CITES? CITES, or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, is a multilateral treaty that aims to ensure that international wildlife trade does not threaten the survival of CITES-listed species in the wild. Thus far, 184 Parties, including 183 countries and the European Union, have ratified CITES.



Gorilla with young. Credit: Julie Larsen Maher/Wildlife Conservation Society. **African grey parrot.** Credit: Keith Allison/Creative Commons. **Hawksbill sea turtle.** Credit: Caroline Rogers/NOAA. **Timber yard.** Credit: Sreejith Chakkattu/Creative Commons.

USFWS' CITES Master's Course Scholarship Timeline



April - Arrival in Spain

Students arrive in Spain and begin the CITES Master's course at the UNIA Baeza campus

April-June - Course Work

The students attend classes and complete course work on the three sections of the CITES Master's course



July - Thesis Work

The students return to their home countries to carry out research for their Master's thesis



April/May - Graduation

All thesis work comes to an end. Students defend their thesis to a University committee and take a final exam to obtain the Master's title



Future - Attend CoP

Through the USFWS scholarship, many students get the chance to attend the CoP and see CITES in action

After students complete the program, they continue in their professional careers to apply what they learned through their academic training.

"Graduates of the CITES Master's Course come away with a better understanding of the implementation and nuances of the Convention and the role of CITES in ensuring sustainable use of CITES-listed species."

- Anne St. John, Senior Biologist, USFWS

Many graduates of the CITES Master's Course become CITES experts, wildlife policy advocates, and conservation leaders. In addition to advancing professionally, graduates strengthen national implementation and technical understanding of CITES, and regional and global policy change. This course helps build the capacity of countries to effectively implement CITES, to ensure that the global trade of plants and animals does not negatively impact the survival of species in the wild.

"For our world to realize the full potential of CITES, a dedicated network of educated and experienced professionals is required to convey diverse views, and negotiate important outcomes for conservation of species affected by international trade. The CITES Master's Program has proven to be the nurterer and incubator of the world's potential in this regard."

- Pamela Scruggs, ePermits Program Coordinator, USFWS



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