Crocodilians and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

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1. Effects of CITES on the World Trade in Crocodilian Skins
   - 1960s: 6-8 million skins in world trade
   - Today: 1.5-1.8 million skins in world trade

2. Evolution of the Convention
   - 1960: First discussion of problems of illegal wildlife trade at 7th General Assembly (GA) of IUCN.
   - 1963: 8th GA of IUCN passed resolution on illegal wildlife trade -> call for an International Convention.
   - 1964: First draft by IUCN for a Convention.
   - 1969: 10th GA of IUCN discussed list of species to be controlled.
   - 1 July 1975: CITES entered into force after 10 Ratifications.

3. Core Contents of the Convention
   - CITES protects 7000 animals and 25,000 plants through listing in 3 Appendices (I, II and III).
   - CITES regulates international trade through a system of permits required before specimens enter or leave a country -> ANNUAL REPORTS provide trade data.
   - National implementation of CITES important (ie designation of authorities, legal protection of CITES species, sanctions).
   - Over 95% of CITES protected species are legally classified as not being endangered -> sustainable commercial trade is permitted.

Many exemptions (Article VII) under the Convention (captive-bred, personal effects, pre-Convention, etc.)


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<th>1973</th>
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<td><em>Alligator mississippiensis</em></td>
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<td><em>Alligator sinensis</em> (CR)</td>
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<td><em>Alligator sinensis</em></td>
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<td><em>Caiman c. apaporiensis</em></td>
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<td><em>Caiman latirostris</em></td>
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<td><em>Melanosuchus niger</em></td>
<td><em>Melanosuchus niger</em> (LR)</td>
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<td><em>Crocodylus cataphractus</em></td>
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<td><em>Crocodylus cataphractus</em> (DD)</td>
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<td><em>Gavialis gangeticus</em></td>
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<td><em>Gavialis gangeticus</em> (EN)</td>
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5. Major Crocodilian Conservation Relevant Decisions Adopted at CITES Conferences

5.1. CITES - 1st Conference of the Parties (1977)
- Criteria for the addition of species and other taxa to CITES Appendix I and II (biological and trade criteria) - Resolution Conf. 1.1 (now Resolution Conf. 9.24)
- Criteria for deletion of a taxon from Appendix I or transfer to Appendix II - Resolution Conf. 1.2 (now Resolution Conf. 9.24)

5.2. CITES - 2nd Conference of the Parties (1979)
- Transfer of the American Alligator to Appendix II
- Trade in hunting trophies - Resolution Conf. 2.11:
  - Only for non-commercial activities;
  - Acknowledgment that killing of App. I animals could enhance the survival of a species
- Specimens bred in captivity or artificially bred - Resolution Conf. 2.12:
  - Aims to avoid that wild taken specimens are considered as captive-bred (ie ranched specimen);
  - Defines term 'captive bred' for Appendix-I species (biologically and legally)
  - Marking requirements

5.3. CITES - 3rd Conference of the Parties (1981)
- Transfer of the Saltwater and the American Crocodile (C. porosus and C. acutus) to Appendix I
- Trade in ranched specimens - Resolution Conf. 3.15 (now 11.16):
  - New system for transfer of populations from Appendix I -> Appendix II
  - Initiative originated from adoption of CITES captive breeding Resolution (Resolution Conf. 2.12)
  - Focus on crocodilians
  - Rearing wild specimens in controlled environment must be beneficial to wild population
  - Monitoring, reporting and marking requirements

5.4. CITES - 4th Conference of the Parties (1983)
- Transfer of Zimbabwe Nile Crocodile population to Appendix II pursuant to CITES Resolution on "Ranching"
- Control of captive breeding operations of Appendix I species (Resolution Conf. 4.15 now 12.10):
  - Establishment of a register of operations based on Parties information;
  - No trade with operations which are not registered

5.5. CITES - 5th Conference of the Parties (1985)
- Transfer of several crocodile populations to Appendix II under temporary system based on annual export quotas (Kenya, Somalia, Malawi, Sudan, Zambia, Indonesia, etc.)
- Legal basis: CITES Resolution Conf. 5.21 (Special criteria for transfer of taxa from Appendix I to Appendix II)
  - Transfer under quota system only for species (in reality mostly crocodiles) sufficiently safe in the wild (studies);
  - No application of Berne Criteria (Resolution Conf. 1.2) necessary if species were included in CITES Appendix I before listing criteria existed;
  - Temporary approach only (review at COP7 and COP9).

5.6. CITES - 7th Conference of the Parties (1989)
- CITES Resolution Conf. 7.14 (Special criteria for the transfer of taxa from Appendix I to Appendix II):
  - Extension of mandate of quota resolution adopted at COP5 until COP9;
  - After COP9 either maintenance of populations in Appendix II under normal downlisting criteria or ranching criteria;
  - Evaluation: in many, but not all cases quota system was useful (Madagascar, Somalia, Sudan).
5.7. CITES - 8th Conference of the Parties (1992)

- CITES Resolution Conf. 8.3 (Recognition of the benefits of trade in wildlife)
- CITES Resolution Conf. 8.14 (Universal tagging system for the identification of crocodilian skins)
- CITES Resolution Conf. 8.22 (Additional criteria for the establishment of captive breeding operations and for the assessment of ranching proposals for crocodilians):
  - Acknowledges ranching as valuable conservation tool;
  - Being more beneficial for conservation ranching should be given priority over farming;
  - No wild-caught animals should form the breeding stock unless justified by national management plan.

5.8. CITES - 10th Conference of the Parties (1997)

- CITES Resolution Conf. 10.17 (Animal hybrids)
  - COP decided that trade in hybrids should be controlled in order to support controls on trade in the species included in Appendix I and II;
  - Determination of legal status of hybrids through the respective CITES protected animal (Appendix I or II) in the recent lineage (= 4 generations).

5.9. CITES - 12th Conference of the Parties (2002)

- CITES Resolution Conf. 12.9 (Personal and household effects):
  - definition of term personal and household effects (legality, personal owned and possessed);
  - no CITES documents for up to 4 specimens per person made of crocodilian leather from Appendix II species;
  - Parties should provide in general information on CITES for tourists and more specific at places of international departure, etc.

6. CITES Generates Trade Data

Estimated Trade in Crocodilian Skin by Method of Production (including caiman production), 1983-2002

![Graph showing estimated trade in crocodilian skin by method of production, 1983-2002](image-url)

- **Series 1**: Wild
- **Ranched**
- **Captive-bred**

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