

COP 13

Conservation TRIBUNE

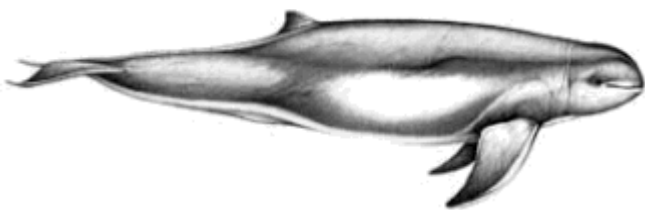
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Irrawaddy Dolphin Proposal Reflects Intricacies of the CITES Process

It now looks as though there may be difficulty in reaching agreement on Thailand's Proposal 3, the transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I for *Orcaella brevirostris*, the Irrawaddy dolphin. Even inside the Thailand government, two ministries appear to be at odds over this proposal, which according to *The Nation* (Tuesday October 5, 2004) would put an end to whatever amount of international trade takes place at this time. The Irrawaddy dolphin is featured in some aquaria and water shows, and it is traded in presently unknown numbers for this purpose. In other newspaper reports, it was denied that any disagreement exists.



According to *The Nation* article, the Thailand Fishery Department is concerned that accidental by-catch of Appendix-I listed Irrawaddy dolphins would likely result in trade problems for fishermen – as has happened in the past with the turtle by-catch issue. The Thailand Ministry of Natural Resources apparently feels this is groundless as there should be no fishing in the

habitat of the animals. A ban on live specimen trade would be irrelevant to Irrawaddy dolphin conservation in view of this problem across the range.



Because of practical problems associated with Appendix-I listing, and of the lack of effective conservation results, several national fisheries institutions are seriously questioning the appropriateness of an Appendix-I listing for the Irrawaddy dolphin. Most fisheries groups strongly oppose the proposal. CITES will need to listen carefully to the arguments presented by Thailand and to those with direct responsibility for fisheries management in all range states. No matter what the truth is behind the newspaper reports, they illustrate the complexity and diversity of opinions that exist on CITES listing proposals. □

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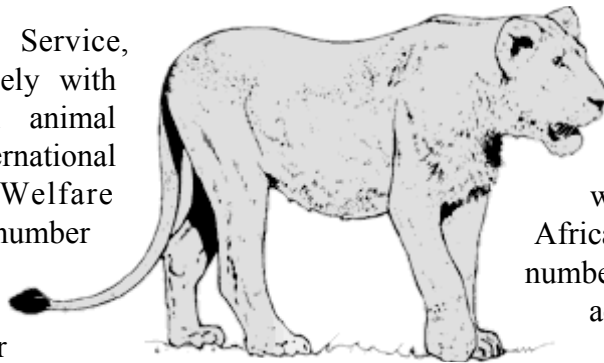
News and Commentary provided free at Bangkok for the Media, CITES Delegates and the Public.

Kenyan data misleads over Status of lion populations

Experts have warned that the survey cited by Kenya as the basis for its proposal to ban all international trade in lion trophies and skins contains incomplete data. A more comprehensive report demonstrates that African lion populations are not under threat.

The Kenya Wildlife Service, which collaborates closely with the wealthy American animal rights group the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), claims that the number of lions in Africa has dropped from 200,000 to 39,000 over the past quarter century.

“The African Lion Database”, updated in May 2002, is a partial collation of data from various published sources. Its authors concede that the figures are incomplete, with numbers being unavailable in many regions and disputed, queried or questioned in others. Kenya also admits that half of all African lions are already protected because they live inside national parks. However, based on its survey, Kenya is



proposing the transfer of all African lions to Appendix I.

A more extensive and recent survey on African lion populations has been prepared for Conservation Force, a pro-hunting organization, under the auspices of the International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife. Author Phillippe Chardonnet, in coordination with 40 wildlife experts across Africa, identified nearly twice the number of areas containing lions across 42 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Chardonnet also documents that most of the lion sub-populations are stable.

John Jackson of Conservation Force told the *Tribune* that Kenya’s figures don’t add up and should be withdrawn. “It is clearly disingenuous to produce a partial survey on lion populations and then use it as the basis to persuade the international community that numbers are falling dramatically. The Kenyan data is simply unreliable and misleading.” □

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