

THIRD MEETING* OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES), HELD IN NEW DELHI, INDIA, 25 FEBRUARY TO 8 MARCH 1981

Some 350 delegates from 54 of the then 64 Parties (there are now 73) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), 17 observer States, and over 80 organizations, participated in this Meeting, which was inaugurated by the Hon. Rao Birendra Singh, the Indian Minister for Agriculture, Rural Reconstruction, and Irrigation.

The Meeting highlighted the global importance of the Convention, and the participation of many observer organizations with trade interests showed that its impact is not limited to conservationists. In its short life (the Convention was signed in 1973 and entered into force only in 1975), the implementation of the Convention has made considerable progress, and control of trade in rare and endangered species is a matter of concern for most of the main importing and exporting countries although loopholes still exist†.

Agreement was established on several new measures to improve governmental implementation of the Convention. The following decisions should be mentioned: adoption of a standardized permit form; a particular security measure to improve the quality of original documents (to avoid forgeries); a recommendation concerning the trade in rhinoceros horn (illegal trade in their horns being one of the main reasons for the animals' rapid decline), African elephant ivory, and whale products‡. The Parties also adopted a procedure for authorization of trade in products from ranching operations which are conducted in a manner that is beneficial to endangered species.

The first chapter of the Identification Manual was presented to the participants of the New Delhi meeting. This Manual is being developed by the Parties, with financial assistance from UNEP, with a view to assisting national customs and other agents in their work of international trade control.

The lists of species covered by the Convention were amended in New Delhi. In order to control a very large volume of international trade which has led to the extinction of some species or subspecies and endangered many others, all parrots were listed in the appendixes (except for three which are either very common or usually bred in captivity). Species or subspecies of several other groups (mammals, birds, reptiles, plants, and the black corals) were either added to the list or transferred from one appendix to another for stronger protection. However, the amendments which probably will have the greatest impact concerned the inclusion of three large whales (the Sperm Whale, *Physeter catodon*, in particular) in Appendix I, which makes their commercial trade illegal under the Convention. This amendment certainly played a role in the IWC decision, taken at its recent annual meeting, to adopt a one-year moratorium on sperm whaling‡.

*The second such meeting was reported in *Environmental Conservation*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 162–3, 1979.

†See, for example, the instances reported by Paul S. Wachtel on pages 215–6 of this issue.—Ed.

‡Cf. the comment and footnote on page 186 of this issue.—Ed.

The next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES is scheduled to be held in Botswana in April 1983. Further information may be obtained from the undersigned.

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INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON RESPONSES OF MARINE ORGANISMS TO POLLUTANTS, HELD AT THE NERC INSTITUTE FOR MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH, PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND, UK, DURING 19–21 MAY 1981.

The main purpose of this symposium was to bring together individual research workers and research groups (such as the PRIMA Group financed by the National Science Foundation in the USA) involved in determining physiological, cellular, and biochemical, responses to chemical contaminants in the marine environment, in order to develop indices of biological effect which could be used as 'early warning' indicators of environmental deterioration.

The scientific emphasis of the meeting was on responses to organic contaminants—mainly polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and chlorinated aromatic hydrocarbons, with a smaller number of papers on the metabolism and effects of metals. Application of potential indices of effect under field conditions was also covered by several papers.

Four overview papers were given on the comparative roles of cytochromes P-450 at different levels of biological organization (D. V. Parke, Surrey); progress in understanding the metabolism of metals (K. Simkiss & M. Taylor, Reading); practical considerations on the measurement of pollutant effects and the ecological consequences of the stress response (B. L. Bayne, K. R. Clarke & M. N. Moore, Plymouth); and the importance of considering xenobiotic interactions on biological systems when investigating environments which are generally contaminated with a large number of potentially toxic compounds (D. C. Malins, P. M. Falk & T. K. Collier, Seattle, Washington).

Papers dealing with the effects of organic xenobiotics on cytochromes P-450 (mixed function oxygenases) emphasized the complexity of the biochemical situation and demonstrated that the use of tests for induction of either cytochromes P-450 or mixed-function oxygenase activity could not, in many instances, be used simply and in isolation as indicators of the effects of xenobiotics on the detoxication system of invertebrates. Evidence was presented which showed induction of mixed-function oxygenase in certain marine birds, fishes, and invertebrates. A more novel and interesting response, involving alterations in substrate-binding constants of cytochrome P-450 in Blue Crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*) in response to certain organic compounds, may indicate a potentially useful index of xenobiotic toxicity (R. F. Lee, J. W. Conner & S. C. Singer, Savannah, Georgia).

Papers dealing with responses to metals indicated a better level of understanding of the physiological effects of metals, as opposed to organic xenobiotics. A number