

Opinions of illegal trade are different

We put a few questions concerning CITES and animals smuggling to Mrs. Dana Fraňková (owner of Animal Source Czechia—a firm trading in animals) and Mrs. Jindřiška Staňková (a secretary of CITES Scientific Group from the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic)

What animal species is most endangered?

Mrs. Fraňková: If you mean a species endangered recently by illegal trade then I think there is not any. None species can be illegally taken from the wild and exported in such amount that could be significant for wild population because of very strong international control.

Mgr. Staňková: There are many species that are nearly or really extinct in the wild because of illegal taking from the wild, collecting and killing and biotop fragmentation. As an example there is a parrot *Cyanopsitta spixii*—Spix's Macaw, whose population was decimated so much, that there are no more left in the wild. Many specialists and conservationists are now preparing very complex and expensive repatriation programmes to return this species to nature on the basis of breeding stock in captivity. Very significant has recently been the trading in dead bodies of animals and animal parts. Trade in parts

and derivatives from rhinos and elephants are are vymazat jedno "are" example. Due to the continued hunt for ivory the African elephant has been moved up to CITES I—the strictest protection.

Have you ever come across smuggled animals and people dealing with it?

Mrs. Fraňková: Forget romantic image of organised groups and illegal traders transporting big lugs stuffed with parrots captured at Indonesian jungle. Leastways I do not know of any and if they have existed, the animals would have been offered for selling somewhere.

Mrs. Staňková: As an example there is an incident from a half of February 2002. A shipment of 100 Grey parrot specimens was seized at the airport Prague-Ruzyně. The birds were jammed into small cages. After one week 20 of them died (see the picture on a title page).

What is your opinion towards the statement: the Czech Republic is a smuggling world power.

Mrs. Fraňková: I think the interest in the breeding of exotic species is the same in the Czech Republic as in other breeding "superpowers", e.g. Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and USA. The Czech breeders can breed animals very well. Sometimes we can speak of economically profitable production of some species.

Mrs. Staňková: The Czech Republic is a superpower for the growing of cacti, orchids and succulents, next to Japan and Austria. We are also "a developed country" in breeding animals. Foreigners often wonder that we have species they have never seen. We export many species



that are bred in captivity very easily. The Czech Republic is a superpower, of course. We really can breed animals and we can trade in them very well.

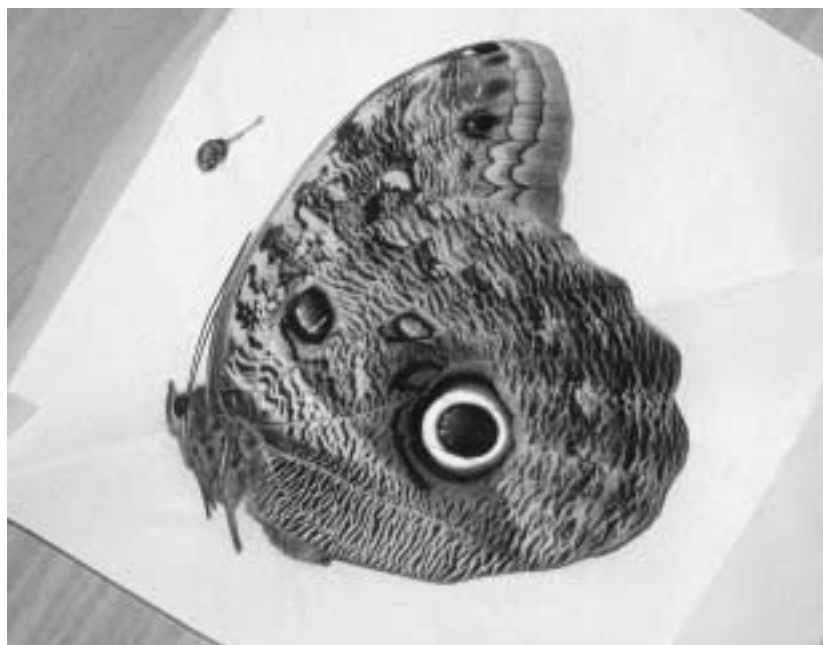
There are many opinions towards breeding and keeping animals. I do not deprecate breeding animals totally. Breeding and keeping animals must be practised under certain conditions and within given borders. Breeding yes, but only if it is carrying out according to the law, scientifically properly, and when it is skilled and sufficiently specialised. This kind of breeding might cause lower pressure on wild populations, because it supplies the demand for exotic species in the market. I condemn people who buy an animal not for breeding and taking care of it, but as a toy. Unfortunately such people predominate. They just come into a pet shop, they buy a turtle but a rule have no idea of the demands and needs of this animal, how to feed it and house it. These animals usually die within half of a year.

Eva Kubátová

Insects are also endangered

Many species of invertebrates can be only studied using collections. It is however necessary to differentiate between scientific research and animal collecting. Whereas a scientific collection has immense value, collections created by

acquired their desired insects, the traders and collectors then sell them on at a handsome (and of course tax- and duty-free) profit at one of the many animal trade fairs that now exist. Such trade is, unfortunately, extremely difficult to prevent as



South American butterflies of the genus *Caligo* are not subject to the CITES protection, trade in them is not regulated.

private „enthusiasts“ often lead to the endangering of a species. It is the larger and more impressive animals that are most likely to attract the interest of collectors and their colleagues, the hunters and middle-men who specialise in their trade. The acts of these individuals endanger not only the species in which they are interested, but also the environment in which they and many other species live. Having

the majority of insects are not covered by CITES. This is because there are a huge number of often very small insect species, many of which only experts can identify. This means that the key to change rests in the hands of the collectors themselves, whether they are interested in endangering or protecting a particular species.

Zdeněk Vermouzek

How to bag an eagle with the flame-thrower

Poachers often leave no stone unturned in their desire to trap the animals. For example, in Siberia they use flame-throwers to capture live eagles. Firstly, the smugglers take the nestlings and then they wait for the parents@ return in order to shoot them with the flame-thrower. If they survive, they are taken and sold.

Some automatic rifles (mostly sub-machine guns) are used for gorillas and orang-utangs. Because primates often protect their offsprings, to get a single young it is often necessary to kill off whole families.

Zdenek Vermouzek

Scrambled eggs

When the customs officers at the Ruzyně Airport inspected a man upon his return from Australia, he began to excitedly pat his intimate bodily parts. Upon closer inspection it was found that he concealed in his underwear 3 packages with parrot eggs, which he broke prior to the inspection to prevent their identification. However, the officers managed to identify them as those of the rare Palm Cockatoo, contrary to the man's statement that they were dove and duck eggs. The offender was fined CZK 75.000 which he, however, did not pay and this case has now been idle for 3 years at the Investigation Office of the Czech Republic Police Department.



Cactus in coffee

Upon inspection of mail containing a 500g package of coffee it was found that the package contained an invoice and bags of seeds of a Mexican cactus (CITES I). The poster was a German citizen who conspired to evade inspection by concealing the seeds in this way. The mail was confiscated and pertinent German authorities, which subsequently fined the offender, were notified.

Parrots fit anywhere

The borderline is witness to concealment of parrots even under car seats and in car engines. The worst case of smuggling was that of an Elegant Parrot which was stuffed into a small paper box and concealed in a car radiator. During another customs inspection a peculiar sound was heard coming from the car's glove compartment. Upon opening the customs officer was surprised to find a Tanimbar Cockatoo. Customs inspection confiscated the bird and placed it in the Rescue Centre in Vlašim.

Succulents from Africa

Together with customs officers the Czech Environmental Inspectorate checked a mail parcel allegedly containing non-cites listed plants, which was sent by a Czech citizen from the Republic of South Africa. However, the parcel contained, besides a small number of non-cites listed plants, over 300 specimens of South African succulents of the *Anacamperos* and *Avonia* species, which are on the CITES II list. The price was estimated at over 30 thousand Czech crown, where after acclimatisation it would increase three to fourfold. The Inspectorate confiscated the plants and fined the importer.

Blue eagles

One June day the phone rang at the District Authority in Břeclav and a terrified voice said, "Here in Lanžhot there are blue eagles flying over our houses, come and catch them or they'll eat somebody". The officer shook his head in disbelief—no blue eagle exists, moreover, what would eagles be doing in Lanžhot? However, the mystery was soon cleared up. A man smuggling Hyacinth Macaw across the border rather let them fly away to avoid their confiscation. Perhaps he hoped to recapture them some-time later.



Frozen pythons

During an inspection at the border in Brno customs officers found a polystyrene box full of reptiles stashed behind a truck cabin. As it was winter and the box must have been outside the whole trip from Italy, officers found 5 frozen Royal Python and 3 mastigures which were luckily saved. Besides that, there were about 1000 small American water turtles of which the majority survived. The reptiles were confiscated by the Inspectorate and placed in the Brno Zoo. However, the driver was not fined because there was no proof that he knew of the consignment.

Turtles in a parcel

One day prior to Christmas a parcel from the Republic of South Africa arrived at the customs post office. It was designated as containing souvenirs and non-living natural products. When the customs officers opened the parcel they were shocked to find 60 turtles cramped inside and wrapped in adhesive tape to prevent any movement. The called inspector found that this was a rare South African species not yet bred in the Czech Republic. The pitiful animals were confiscated and taken to the Rescue Centre.

source: CEI



The exhibition that you have just visited in the rooms of the National Museum, Smuggled Pleasure, is unofficially subtitled "An Ordinary Parrot's Story". The creators of the idea of the project tried to bring attention to a crucial problem in today's world on the basis of an ordinary story of a parrot. The problem is the smuggling of animals and plants. Of course you can object that more critical problems face society such as weapons and drugs smuggling. However, one should realise that we are not speaking of one parrot, but of thousands cases of illegally captured animals and plants from the wild, their smuggling, and sale. Another point to consider is the fact that organised gangs exist with only one goal—to earn money, make profit, in whatever price and in whatever way in this market. It is clear that we are talking about a crime that is dangerous and destructive for society as a whole and it is necessary to fight against it! There is suffering and pain that is hidden behind the smuggling of the wild living animals and plants, as it is in the case of weapons and drugs smuggling. Only a small percentage of such stolen animals and plants can survive their sad pilgrimage. These commercial losses are, naturally, compensated by the number of wild taken animals, very often followed by harsh brutality. If we see this issue from a slightly selfish human point of view, these are not "just" animals that are suffering. The smuggling of animals and plants is a problem common to society, the more discreet and non-destructive it appears, the more dangerous it actually is. We have to see through this illusion and be concerned. Otherwise we not only support criminals, but we also give our blessing to the irreversible destruction of flora and fauna of our Planet.

The main goal of the exhibition is to alert the public to this problem, to identify it and to appeal to visitors to realise the heavy pain that the small home pleasure might cause.

The National Museum tries to draw an attention to the solution of common problems of human society through a series of nature conservation exhibitions.

Michal Lukeš
General Director of the National Museum

Control has rapidly risen for last years

We interviewed a very reputable and acknowledged specialist in the illegal trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora and fight against it. Dr. Ladislav Miko had worked as a head of Nature Conservation Department at the Czech Environmental Inspectorate (CEI) for many years and was closely involved in CITES issues.

The Czech Environmental Inspectorate (CEI) enforces the implementation of the CITES Act in the Czech Republic. What does your work mainly consist of?

CEI is not the only enforcement body. The implementation is also provided for the District Offices (today Regional Offices), where a compulsory registration is carried out. Customs offices are the other very important bodies for export and import checks at the border.

What is the compulsory (obligatory) registration?

Compulsory registration is like making an identification card. If you buy a CITES listed animal, you have to register it at the District Office or the Administration of National Park or Protected Landscape Area pertinent to the place of residence. You then get a registration document that contains information on the origin of the specimen, a means of unambiguous marking, and how the specimen was obtained. You can sell on the specimen only with this registration document (an ID). The compulsory registration works as a very effective tool against illegal trading.

What is the role of CEI?

The mission of CEI is mainly to carry out checks and inspections. Customs officers have our phone number and if it is needed they call us. It happens quite often. Our goal is to find out whether the specimen is CITES listed and, if necessary, confiscate and transfer it to a rescue centre. We have managed to build up this system in such a way that it is effective and functional. This is the biggest success in CITES Act implementation in my opinion. Particular inspectorates provide coverage of the territory of the republic during the day. There are two non-stop inspectorates—Prague and Brno that are obliged to deal with emergency and urgent incidents. To save money they first try to find out whether a particular regional inspector is free at that moment. So, when there is a phone call from the border crossing Rozvadov to Prague,

the inspector from Prague initially contacts a colleague from Plzeň. Should he be busy, the inspector from Prague goes to Rozvadov. The CEI is equipped in such a way as to be able to reach whatever place within the republic within two hours at latest.

Is there an organised illegal trade in the Czech Republic?

The smugglers-adventurers are a phenomenon that we have managed to eliminate quite quickly. They were people with an idea that the cost of a trip to Morocco can be easily paid for by col-



Consignment of smuggled caviar confiscated in Prague.

Do you make checks throughout the country as well?

CEI evaluates issued registration documents, export and import permits and after that we are able to get an impression of what kind of animals and plants are situated in the republic at any given time. We also have information from Interpol and from abroad. We can look for any particular shipment that might be in the country. The success and efficiency of our work has risen rapidly thanks to this information and co-operation. The inspectors often visit local markets. People have become used to their visits and now you can hardly find many illegal specimens being openly sold there. This shift since 1997 is absolutely crucial. These markets represent the best opportunity for smugglers to meet.

lecting some lizards. Hardly any would risk it today.

But there are some groups of people that live from trading in animals and they often need to find something really interesting. If it is legal, they do it legally, if it



As a souvenir from the Orient liqueurs with a snake are often imported.

is not, then they do it illegally. As to it being organised? It is generally not how one imagines organised crime i.e. a hardcore of people who communicate with each other within the framework of an organisation. In reality, these people have the right contacts, and they are able and willing to negotiate concrete shipments and trading. They are also linked to contacts abroad and when necessary they are able to make a deal to suit their particular requirements.

What is the success in exacting fines that have been imposed?

The CEI is required to impose fines in accordance with the law and I have to say that even though it is not 100 %, it is much higher than, say, the success tax offices enjoy. What we miss is a criminal recourse to involve the Police, who have broader competences.

What would you advice people travelling abroad so as to avoid problems at the border?

Do not buy, collect and export anything you do not know about or do not know is permitted. Some "goods" can be traded within that country, but prohibited to export – e.g. ivory. I just would suggest not to buy anything that has something to do with parrots, monkeys, ivory or crocodiles and which don't have CITES permits I think it is a problem of public awareness. Travel agencies and airlines could help a great deal by issuing information brochures or booklets for their customers.

Saint Lucia Amazon

Saint Lucia Amazon (*Amazona versicolor*) comes from Saint Lucia Island where only last 400 specimens remain. Although no export have ever been permitted from this island, some of these parrots are bred in the Czech Republic

Green Tree Snail

A terrestrial snail Green Tree Snail (*Papustyla pulcherrima*) lives at Manus Island at Pacific Ocean (Papua New Guinea). This snail became a popular collecting trophy of collectors from the whole World thanks to its glorious and colorful shell. It has been very rare recently and it belongs to endangered species according to the IUCN Red Book.

Tiger

There were one million tigers (*Panthera tigris*) living on the Earth in 1900. Now the population is only about 5.000 specimens. The reason of this dramatic decrease is degradation of natural environment and over-hunting for valuable fur and other parts of the body that are used for traditional Chinese medicine. There are still many travel agencies offering tiger hunting safari. Tiger bones, whiskers and penises are added to the traditional medicine.



Indigo Macaw

Indigo Macaw (*Anodorhynchus leari*) is a critically endangered species, less than 150 specimens of this majestic parrot live in Brazilian tropical rain forests. Smuggling and illegal taking from the wild of these parrots are not easy to stop because of high trade demand.

Cacti

Cacti of the genus *Turbinicarpus* from Mexico are very popular at the Czech cacti growers and collectors. These cacti are undemanding, resisting to not good breeding conditions and they are often in flower. Most of these species have only restricted distribution range and they can be found on isolated hills only. An illegal collecting has caused a direct threat in over-exploitation and the trade is very strictly regulated these days.



Hawksbill Turtle

A tortoiseshell from the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) is obtained to make spectacles with tortoiseshell rims, decorating hair slide and other luxury goods. These turtles had been killed in a mass way on beaches where they returned every year to lay eggs. Only a strict protection of such beaches saved this species against total extinction.



Black rhino



Black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) belongs to the most threatened mammals of the World, at South African Republic survives the last thousand of this species only. The main reason of this fact is unscrupulous hunting for horns, because many people believe to senseless stories about its medicinal effects, especially men's sexual potency. Market value of one rhino horns kilogram is higher than value of one kilogram of gold.

Gorilla

Poaching and biotop destruction and fragmentation caused that mountain gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*) became nearly extinct. If a poacher wants to get a living young gorilla, he has to kill its mother and often also other members of the social group, who try to protect the young one.



Little Blue Macaw

Poaching is the main reason for extinction of Little Blue Macaw (*Cyanospitta spixii*) in the wild. The last wild living male disappeared in the year 2000. There are some 60 specimens living in the captivity. Repatriation projects are trying to recover the population in the wild, but it is very difficult, complicated and expensive too.



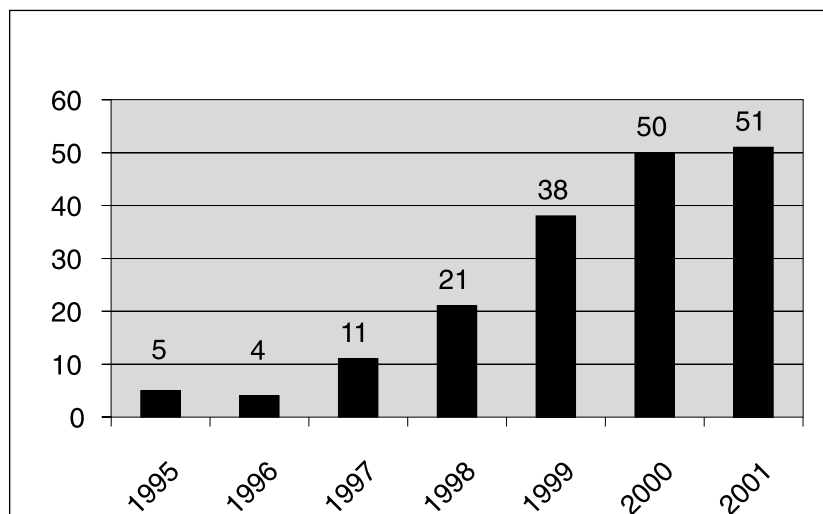
Poslední tři jedinci ary Spixova ve volné přírodě v roce 1986. Brzy poté byli dva z nich ilegálně odchytení a prodáni do chovu.

American Alligator



Shoes and handbags made from crocodile leather are very popular. This fashion caused tragical decline in population of American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*), the biggest North-American reptile. Fortunately there are many farms and ranching facilities that saturate the crocodile leather demand.

According to the ANCLP information



The significant growth in the number of smugglers caught in recent years is evidence of better customs checks in relation to endangered animal and plant species (including their products, e.g. ivory, crocodile skulls and handbags).



Confiscated reptiles are directly transported to a rescue centre.

The Japanese are said to fish whales science

Actions of Japanese whales fishermen have caused the biggest protest event still this time. The programme involving fishing of 440 Baleoptera minor has been in progress in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary in Antarctic since December 1999. The reason is claimed to be scientific—finding out some facts about the population of the whales. However, the public cannot imagine what the use of hundreds of dead bodies of the whales can be for the research. According to MF Dnes

newspapers (January 23st 2002) the Japanese want to establish a whale farm a thousand kilometers far away from Tokio. The farm is supposed to study whales, provide entertainment for tourists and finally to supply local restaurants with meat. This idea horrifies all environmentalists.

The only country that supports Japan is Norway. However, Norway itself has problems with keeping international regulations concerning fishing. And what's

more, fishing is forbidden in this reservation. This fact was confirmed by the International Whaling Commission's standpoint. The commission is supposed to oversee observing the international rules regarding whales' fishing and the commission was strongly against the Japanese activities in Antarctic. According to MF Dnes newspapers Japan profits more than 1 billion Czech crowns a year selling the meat.

Eva Kubátová

The Czech Republic: a smuggling world power?

The breeding passion of the Czechs has made the Republic well known as an important country for illegal activities. "We have the unflattering label of smuggling world power" says Zdeněk Vermouzek. Ladislav Miko adds that, in his international experience, "the success of the Czech breeders, growers and collectors was well known abroad even during the communist period. The late signature of Czechoslovakia to the CITES convention resulted in the continuation of practices that although legal here, were long since banned in other countries of the

world." In spite of developing a proper law during the 1990s, Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic became a very important and key transit and destination country for the international trade in species of wild fauna and flora."

The situation changed markedly after 1997, when a new act came into force. A significant decline in the number of illegally held animals was achieved thanks to stricter controls at the borders, obligatory registration of specimens and regular checks at local markets and selling exhibi-

tions. International co-operation has also improved significantly, but the situation is still far from satisfactory. For example, the highest number of smuggled animals registered by Interpol have been found on Czech citizens. Results from the data base are influenced by the punctuality and diligence of each country in contributing to this data base. And it is necessary to add, that the Czech Republic had been given as an example for some more developed countries of how to put CITES rules into practice.

Jan Bouchal

Who is guilty?

In many developing countries of Africa where the nature is still quite preserved and where the smuggled animals mostly come from, aborigine residents live in a very low and bare way. Poaching is sometimes the only way how to earn some money and assure a livelihood for the family. There is no doubt that the people choose rather poaching than a hunger of their own children. If there still exist people who pay for harvesting and killing of the animals, poaching will go ahead. Middlemen will still purchase and sell animals if there is a demand and vision of earning money. The only one who is responsible for this circle is the customer, the one standing at the end of the line. Only the customer is able to stop this circle or at least bear it. A very simple rule serves here: "demand creates supply". In other words, if there is a demand for baby monkeys, parrots taken from the nest, souvenirs form alligator heads or different kind of stuffed animals, poachers will hunt, kill the animals and produce some strange creatures out of them. Everyone of us on our own can contribute to stopping this – not buying animals taken from the wild (if you would like to breed, chose the one bred in captivity already) and not buying products or souvenirs made from these wild animals. There has been reached success in fur trade in a similar way – such a strong public abomination to killing of animals for fur (especially cats) raised in 70s and 80s of the last century, that wearing a real fur coat became nearly a social transgression. Fur of many endangered species stopped to be used at fur industry. Let's think of a similar proceeding at other animal species and other methods of their use (or abuse)!

Pavla Řihová, CEI

Some facts about CITES in the Czech Republic

The goal of the CITES Convention is to bring the trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora under the common control of all countries in the world, so as to prevent the total extinction of these organisms. The effort to regulate the trade requires international co-operation to safeguard certain species from overexploitation. CITES accords protection to 5.000 animal species and 25.000 plant species. They are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.

Appendix I (CITES I) includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II (CITES II) includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but the trade must be controlled in them in order to avoid use incompatible with their survival. The trade is allowed on a basis of special permits. Species protected in at least one Member State is contained in Appendix III (CITES III). The obligation of implementing the CITES Convention is stated in Act No 16/1997 "Conditions for importing and exporting endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES Act)".

The Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic is the Management Authority that issues the import and export permits. It is necessary to have a pos-

itive decision from the Scientific Authority (the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic—ANCLPCR) before issuing a permit. The positive decision states that the export or import of the given species does not threaten its survival in the wild. The Czech Environmental Inspectorate is the executive and control body charged with carrying out inspections and checks at borders, markets, shops and on the property of breeders and growers. It imposes penalties for infringements against the law and the inspectors can confiscate or seize specimens.

The owner of a specimen has 14 days from the time of its acquisition to declare it for a compulsory registration. The compulsory registration is carried out by the District Office or the Administration of protected area pertinent to the owner's place of residence. The specimen has to be marked in a unambiguous way (microchip—transponder, ring,...). All specimens involved in CITES I and CITES II Appendix and some non-living specimens have to be registered according to Ministerial Decree No 216/2001. Specially protected species of fauna and flora protected under a general legal regulation (No 114/1992—Act on the Protection of Nature and the Landscape) are exempt from this kind of compulsory registration.

Jan Bouchal

Useful Links

- the official web page of the CITES agreement: <http://www.cites.org>
- Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic, Department of International Conventions, Kališnická 4-6, Praha 3, phone:02/6972423, e-mail: cites@nature.cz
- Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, Nature Protection Department, Vršovická 65, Praha 10 – Vršovice, phone: 02/67122480, <http://www.env.cz>
- Czech Environment Inspectorate, Department of Nature Protection, Na Břehu 267, Praha 9 – Vysočany, phone: 02/83890568, e-mail: marik@cizp.cz, <http://www.cizp.cz>



Price for poached animals rises manifold in the chain of middlemen. Whereas the poacher gets some US dollars for specimen (no matter for what species), aboriginal middleman sells it ten much higher. In the market of advanced world the price per one specimen might go up to thousands or tens of thousands dollars or more.

How much is this parrot?

Price that is paid by a customer in Europe or USA for one specimen is much different from the amount of money that poacher or hunter gets in the forest. We can try to show it on the case of a favourite pet—a Grey parrot. An aboriginal hunter or poacher takes young parrots from the nest or catches older birds and sells them to a local middleman for approximately 1-3 USD per specimen. The middleman has contacts to his coverage, e.g. seller or shopkeeper in Europe and he

buys the same parrot for 30 USD. Let's say the shipment has a final destination in the Czech Republic, where they are sold per 10.000 Czech crowns per one grey parrot into different pet shops. The price of each of them is 15.000 Czech crowns there. Although there is a high mortality during the catching, transport and the quarantine due to anxiety and diseases, the financial profit for all the stakeholders remains quite sizable.

Pavla Řihová, CEI

Recorded market prices (there might be a big difference among different countries)

St. Vincent amazon	45.000 USD
Shah-toosh scarf from a Tibetan antelope	10.000 USD
Snow leopard fur	60.000 USD
1 kg of musk from musk deer	100.000 USD
Trained eagle for falconry purposes	10.000 USD
Rhino horn	20.000 USD

Hlavní sponzoři

DFID Department for International Development



Česká společnost ornitologická



Česká inspekce životního prostředí

Výstavu podpořili

GENERÁLNÍ PARTNER



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Agentura ochrany přírody a krajiny ČR



NÁRODNÍ MUZEUM PRAHA



The Story of a Parrot

I am Ferda the Parrot and I was born in a green tropical rainforest. The forest was beautiful, I could not imagine a nicer home.

When I was still small, strange people came to our forest and cut down our big tree. The falling tree killed our father when he was trying to save us. My mother flew away but we have not seen her since because the rest of us were caught and put in a bag. They broke my brother Karl's leg, it hurt him a lot. Then they took us down the Amazon river and presented us at the market in the town. One day a white gentleman came and said he was buying us. He took us all except for Karl with his broken leg, who was left to the salesman, probable for a soup. The gentleman also did not like my sister Emily who was still small and he put her down.

Finally he gave us some water to drink but the water was somewhat strange. We were all very dizzy. I only remember how they were stuffing us to plastic coke bot-

tles and putting us into a false suitcase bottom. The gentleman who had bought us was smiling all the time and gave an envelope to uniformed men.

My brother Rudolf did not survive the flight. After two days, when they took us out of the bottles, he was not moving any more. Only two of us were left. The gentleman provided us with false documents and we started going for trips. We were squeezed in a small cage and hidden under a table so that nobody could see us if an inspection came. Occasionally the gentleman showed us to somebody and was very secretive about it. My sister Rosy got a cold from that and died. I was left on my own. Finally another gentleman bought me for his flat.

I am alone... I am tucked away in a golden cage in a corner together with statuettes carved from our Amazonian tree. The man who bought me does not notice me any more. I think he already does not like me and it is a hassle for him to take care of me. He will probable sell me soon.



The exhibition is taking place under the auspices of the Chairman of the Senate of the Czech Parliament, Petr Pithart. We took the opportunity to ask him about how he, as a politician, sees nature conservation.

"I'd like to believe that nature conservation is a natural part of the conscience of every person, not just a politician, from the moment when one realises that it is endangered and who is endangering it. A politician has both political as well as personal responsibility towards the environment, which on its simplest level can just mean deciding to use washing powder not containing chlorine. One must firstly consider the need to convince others of the importance of nature conservation and secondly establish the best conditions to enable its protection and conservation by others, both by the creation of laws and their application. Furthermore, a responsible politician is never allowed to place the care of the environment into the hands of something as uncertain and irresponsible as the market and its invisible hand, something which we otherwise need."

Interview by Zdenek Vermouzek

CITES—protecting endangered species from their illegal trading

More and more people travel to exotic countries. Almost everybody one day dreams of bringing a piece of the African or American exotica home with them. A marvellous flower, colourful parrot or some present from a local market. But few realise that by doing so they may well be breaking the law, and end up paying a heavy fine, or having the goods confiscated at the border.

Such a trophy, living or non-living, often is on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) list i.e. they are endangered species. The trade in these specimens is prohibited or strictly regulated. In its preamble CITES states that "the trade in wild fauna and flora is the second greatest threat to these species survival in the wild after a biotope fragmentation and destruction of habitat". It was established in 1973 in Washington as a reaction to mass development of the trade in animals in the 1960s and 1970s. Zdeněk Vermouzek, an ornithologist from the Czech Society of Ornithology, supports the claim that the trade in animals and plants is a threat to wildlife even today: "According to IUCN there are 94 from 352 existing species globally endangered among parrots alone. More than a half (48) are affected by illegal capture for trade."

CITES also has major political significance, as evidenced by the fact that 157 States have signed the Convention since 1973, including the Czech Republic. This is enshrined in Act No 16/1997, on CITES. "In a case of the illegal import, export or sale of a CITES species, an individual can be fined up to 200,000 CZK and the animal, plant or related product seized or confiscated. Companies can be penalised up to 2 millions CZK," says Vojtěch Stejskal, a lawyer. Moreover, the

perpetrator can be sentenced to jail according to the Czech Criminal Code. Such a punishment can be applied only in cases of organised black market trading, as one pet parrot being traded without a permit is not classified as a criminal offence. It is estimated that the illegal trade in wild fauna and flora is globally the third most lucrative commodity after weapons and the drugs trade. But, we are not only talking about living specimens. "The smuggling of live animals is more difficult thanks to better and more proper controls at the borders and the international co-operation" says Ladislav Miko, former head of Nature Protection Department at the Czech Environmental Inspec-

torate. "It is nigh on impossible to find a sack with cacti seeds, or a product made from a part of an animal's body, because it is easy to hide and makes no noise" he adds. He goes on to say that "the main part of the black market is focused on products made from endangered species, like traditional Chinese medicine, products from leather, fur and ivory." The tourist sometimes does not realise that there was a living animal that had to be killed before the souvenir had been made.

Customs officers at borders state that people are often very surprised when a souvenir from their holidays has been seized because it contravenes CITES rules. These presents are often bought in

ordinary shops. The traders know that the trade in certain endangered species is legal without any documents within the country of origin. But the export might be prohibited. There is a simple recipe: Do not buy, pick or collect anything you do not know to be permitted by law.

Some traders know very well which species can be traded legally and which are risky because of the law. There are however also breeders and growers who break the law because of a breeding passion, rather than for earning money. Products are smuggled mostly because of lack of knowledge of CITES.

Jan Bouchal

Seized Grey parrots travelled to the Brno ZOO

On February 12th 2002, a shipment of 100 specimens of Grey parrots was seized at Prague's Ruzyně airport. It was suspected that the birds were of illegal origin. The parrots are now in quarantine at Brno Zoological Garden, which is one of the CITES rescue centres, while the details of their case are clarified.

There are about 13 of such CITES rescue centres in the Czech Republic, and they are usually zoological and botanical gardens, as well as centres of the Czech Union for the Conservation of Nature (a



Stressed disoriented parrots after their release to the quarantine.

non-governmental organisation). Such rescue centres have to be sufficiently equipped to take care of the animals and plants. The Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic is the responsible body for making decisions on the further destiny of the specimens.



...one of them, for whom was the transportation fatal



A vet is examining one of the pitiful parrots.

Confiscated non-living specimens are put into storage and can then be used as educational or study material. The objects you can see during our exhibition "Smuggled Pleasure" come from this source.

Zdeněk Vermouzek

Sources: CEI, ANCLP

Hlavní směry a komodity obchodu s ohroženými druhy

