



NATURE NEEDS MORE

THE NEW WAY OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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For Immediate Release

Two Australian Conservation NGOs Call For The Modernisation of CITES

Given the current extinction crisis, there needs to be significant focus on the *legal* trade in endangered species. But instead of addressing this trade that is decimating wild populations, some industries want to make trade in endangered species even easier.

Nature Needs More Ltd and For the Love of Wildlife Ltd, two Australian NGO's were shocked to discover that whilst global conservation has been putting its energy (and money) into 'sustainable utilisation', the model enabling the harvesting of wildlife, little has been done to modernise global system that facilitates this highly lucrative trade in endangered species. ***Industry has been allowed to "harvest" without being properly monitored or accountable.***

In 2017, whilst investigating the legal trade in elephant Ivory and rhino horn trade in Australia, it became evident that the **current Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species in Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) system is unfit-for-purpose.**

Decades of evidence demonstrates that the CITES trade system is not coping with the volume of legal trade. Armed with this knowledge, Nature Needs More and For the Love of Wildlife decide meet with Ambassadors of CITES signatory countries, who had Embassies in Canberra. ***"Many of the Ambassadors were shocked at what we presented" said Donalea Patman, Founder and CEO of For the Love of Wildlife Ltd "Saying nobody had ever presented information like this before".***

As long ago as 2102, the **legal trade in endangered species was estimated to be worth more than US\$320 billion annually.** A 2018 World Customs Organisation Illicit Trade Report estimated the **value of the illegal trade to be as much as US\$258 billion annually.**

Wildlife is losing, and it's losing fast. The time it takes to get a government to act on any species facing extinction is years. A new report highlights some species identified in the IUCN Red List as being threatened by trade have **already waited up to 24 years to listed in under CITES for trade restrictions;** that average wait is 12 years from been added to the IUCN Red List to be added to CITES for trade protection.

As far back as 1981 (only 6 years after CITES had come into force) the Australian Federal Government recognised the trade management system's limitations in protecting wildlife. In 1981, Australia made a submission to CITES CoP3 proposing a move to a reverse listing model, which means that only species that are approved for trade are able to be traded but

that wasn't adopted in **1981 as only 700 species were then listed**. Now move to **2019 and we have as many as 36,000 species listed for trade restrictions**.

The current trade system cannot cope with customs and enforcement lagging way behind. As an example, Australian customs officials only get around 3 hours training to be able to identify all those species in both flora and fauna and they are found incidentally, when looking for drugs.

Both NGO's were similarly shocked to discover how little funding CITES receives; its core funding is US\$6 million a year to cope with enormous international trade volumes between 183 CITES signatory parties.

One solution could involve industry contributing to cover the cost of facilitating this global legal trade. Even a 1% levy on the US\$320 billion will give CITES an estimated US\$3 billion annually. "These extra funds could be used to upgrade the CITES trade permit and management system from the 1970s paper-based system it still uses to electronic permitting" said Dr Lynn Johnson, Founder and CEO of Nature needs More "This modernisation to electronic permitting has been discussed for a decade and is long overdue".

CITES signatory parties meet every 2.5-3 years for their trade conference. Wildlife cannot wait 3 years between discussions whilst using this outdated and antiquated system. Endangered species are literally being legally traded into extinction.

Dr Lynn Johnson and Dr Peter Lanius of Nature Needs More Ltd, together with Donalea Patman OAM of For the Love of Wildlife Ltd are traveling to Europe during April and May 2019 to meet with several CITES signatory countries to discuss their proposed solution to modernise CITES.

About Nature Needs More

Nature Needs More Ltd, ABN 85 623 878 428, is a registered charity in Australia with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

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About For the Love of Wildlife

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