Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health

Office of Research on Women's Health; Cancellation of Meeting—''Beyond Hunt Valley: Research on Women's Health for the 21st Century''

Notice is hereby given that the Office of Research on Women's Health, Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health, meeting scheduled to be held on April 5, 6, and 7, 1997, at the Pyramid Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico and published in **Federal Register** Notice (62 FR 8033) on February 21, 1997 has been cancelled.

Dated: March 18, 1997.

Ruth L. Kirschstein,

Deputy Director, NIH.

[FR Doc. 97–7723 Filed 3–26–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

[Docket No. FR–4230–N–01]

Federal Interagency Task Force on St. Petersburg Citizen's Advisory Commission: Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Department of Housing and Urban Development.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the upcoming meetings of the Federal Interagency Task Force on St. Petersburg Citizen's Advisory Commission. Notice of these meetings is required under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92–463).

MEETING DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, April 1, 1997 at 3:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Enoch Davis Community Center, 1111 18th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712.

PURPOSE: The agenda of this meeting consists of reports by the Federal Interagency Task Force Coordinator, State Interagency Coordinator and City Revitalization Coordinator. The Commission will vote to adopt the mission and goals statement and make recommendations on currently funded interagency programs.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background. The Federal Interagency Task Force on St. Petersburg Citizen's Advisory Commission was established in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App., as amended, and the implementing regulations of the General Services Administration (GSA), 41 CFR Part 101–6 to advise the Federal Department and agencies participating as members on the St. Petersburg Federal Task Force. Fifteen days advanced notice of this meeting could not be provided because of the desire of the Advisory Commission to expeditiously proceed with its business.

Open Meeting. The meeting will be open to the public. Any member of the public may file a written statement concerning agenda items with the Commission. The statement should be addressed to the Federal Interagency Task Force on St. Petersburg Citizen's Advisory Commission, 25 A 9th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie A. Owens, Coordinator, Federal Interagency Task Force on St. Petersburg, 25 A 9th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705, (813) 893–7201.

Dated: March 6, 1997.

Stephanie A. Owens,

Coordinator.

[FR Doc. 97–7738 Filed 3–26–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Tenth Regular Meeting

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces resolutions and documents submitted by the United States for consideration at the tenth regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). A separate Federal Register notice announces U.S. proposals to amend the CITES Appendices, also submitted for consideration at COP10.

ADDRESSES: Dr. Susan S. Lieberman, Chief, Operations Branch, Office of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 430–C, Arlington, VA 22203.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Susan S. Lieberman, Chief, Operations Branch, Office of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, telephone 703–358–2095; electronic mail; R90MA__CITES@MAIL.FWS.GOV.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, TIAS 8249, hereinafter referred to as CITES or the Convention, is an international treaty designed to control and regulate international trade in certain animal and plant species that are or may become threatened with extinction, and are listed in Appendices to the Convention. Currently, 134 countries, including the United States, are CITES Parties. CITES calls for biennial meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP), which review its implementation, make provisions enabling the CITES Secretariat in Switzerland to carry out its functions, consider amendments to the list of species in Appendices I and II, consider reports presented by the Secretariat, and make recommendations for the improved effectiveness of the Convention. The tenth regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP10) will be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, June 9–20, 1997.

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hereby publishes the list of resolutions and documents submitted to the CITES Secretariat by the United States for consideration at COP10. At this time, the Service has not been provided with all of the resolutions or species listing proposals submitted by the other CITES Parties. Once this information has been received from the CITES Secretariat, the Service will publish it in another notice, and call for public comments on proposed U.S. negotiating positions.

This is part of a series of notices that, together with public meetings, allow the public to participate in the development of the U.S. positions for COP10. A **Federal Register** notice published on March 1, 1996 (61 FR 8019): (1) Announced the time and place for COP10; (2) solicited recommendations for amending CITES Appendices I and II; and (3) solicited suggestions for resolutions and agenda items for discussion at COP10. A **Federal Register** notice published on June 14, 1996 (61 FR 30255) announced a public meeting on July 19, 1996, to discuss an international study of the effectiveness of CITES, and the availability for public comment of a questionnaire as part of the study. A **Federal Register** notice published on August 28, 1996 (61 FR 44332): (1) contained the provisional agenda for COP10; (2) listed potential proposed resolutions and agenda items that the United States was considering submitting for discussion at COP10; (3) invited comments and information from

the public on these potential proposals; (4) announced a public meeting to discuss species proposals and proposed resolutions and agenda items that the United States was considering submitting for discussion at COP10; and (5) provided information on how non-governmental organizations based in the United States can attend COP10 as observers. A separate, concurrent **Federal Register** notice published on August 28, 1996 (61 FR 44324), invited comments and information from the public on possible U.S. proposals to amend the CITES Appendices at COP10. The Service's regulations governing this public process are found in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations §§ 23.31–23.39.

What follows is a discussion of resolutions and documents submitted by the United States for consideration at COP10 and a summary of written information and comments received in response to the **Federal Register** notice of August 28, 1996. Copies of resolutions and species proposals submitted by the United States are available on request, electronically or in paper form, by contacting the Office of Management Authority at the address above. A separate, concurrent Federal Register notice describes the species proposals that the United States submitted for consideration at COP10.

Comments on the possible COP10 agenda items and resolutions that the Service considered submitting were received from 16 organizations: Nine wildlife conservation organizations, three commercial animal exhibitors, one zoological association, one sport-hunting organization, one pet industry association, and a bird hobbyist group. A summary of public comment for each resolution or agenda item is presented below. Those who would like to know in detail what was submitted on a given question may consult the individual submissions, available from the Office of Management Authority upon request at the above address. All resolutions and documents submitted by the Service also took into consideration the views and comments of other affected Federal agencies.

Resolutions Submitted by the United States

1. Permits and Certificates

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf. 9.3, a consolidation of nine prior resolutions pertaining to the standardization of permits and certificates. Resolution Conf. 9.3 has turned out to be lengthy, difficult to use, and unclear in parts. The differences in interpretation that have resulted are creating problems with consistent implementation of the Convention among Parties. To address this, the United States has submitted a resolution that clarifies and reorganizes Resolution Conf. 9.3 using annexes. The U.S. draft resolution clarifies that most provisions of the resolution apply to all permits and certificates (other than certificates of origin), not just export permits and reexport certificates. It also proposes a change in the text of the current resolution to emphasize the need for the data on CITES permits and certificates to be in the same format as used in CITES annual reports. It redefines source code ''F'' to include animals born in captivity (F1 or greater) that do not fulfill the definition of ''bred in captivity'' in Resolution Conf. 2.12. The resolution also adds new purpose and source codes to elicit additional information and to conform with annual report data (''L'' for Law Enforcement and ''O'' for pre-Convention specimens); allows for the use of multiple source and purpose codes when appropriate; and allows for the issuance of permits and certificates for more than one type of activity, provided the accompanying CITES document clearly indicates the type of activity for each specimen. The August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice referenced the recommendation of one organization that the Service clarify the relationship of CITES permitting provisions with those of other conventions relating to marine species, as regards paragraphs 4 and 5 of Article XIV. The Service agrees that the relationship of CITES permitting provisions with those of other conventions relating to marine species, as set forth in Article XIV of the CITES treaty, needs further discussion. For this and many other reasons, the United States also submitted a resolution recommending the establishment of a Marine Fishes Working Group. (For a discussion of the Marine Fishes Working Group, see item number 13 below.) During the comment period, one wildlife conservation organization concurred in the need to reorganize and clarify Resolution Conf. 9.3, and supported redefining source code ''F'' to distinguish ''born in captivity'' from ''bred in captivity.'' No further comments were received. After reviewing the U.S. draft and suggesting changes, the Secretariat indicated that, although they support the U.S. recommendations, they would not have sufficient time to incorporate the Permits and Certificates text into their recommendations to the Parties; thus necessitating a U.S. resolution.

2. Implementation of Article VII, Paragraph 2: Pre-Convention

Article VII, paragraph 2 of the Convention provides an exemption from Articles III, IV, and V for any specimen acquired before the provisions of the Convention applied to that specimen. The resolution currently in effect on this issue (Resolution Conf. 5.11) allows Parties to consider accession dates and reservations in determining whether a specimen was acquired before the Convention applied to that specimen, with the result that sometimes the same specimen is considered ''pre-Convention'' by one country, but subject to the provisions of Articles II, IV, or V of the Convention by another. This situation has increased the risk of infractions, created opportunities for the laundering of specimens, particularly of Appendix-I species, and placed an additional administrative burden on Management Authorities when the exporting, re-exporting, and importing Parties disagree over a particular specimen. To remedy this, the United States submitted a draft resolution eliminating accession dates and reservations as factors for consideration in the issuance of pre-Convention certificates and establishing the date the species was first included in the CITES Appendices as the pre-Convention date. Three wildlife conservation organizations provided comments in favor of standardizing the pre-Convention date for a species; however, one noted their concern that this be done in a way that does not encourage acceding countries to enter large numbers of reservations. The Service consulted the Secretariat on a draft of this resolution, and incorporated useful comments received from them prior to submission of the proposed resolution.

3. Sale of Appendix-I Tourist Items at International Airports, Seaports, and Border Crossings

Merchants in places of international departure such as airports and seaports continue to sell tourist souvenirs of Appendix-I species, despite the fact that these items cannot be legally exported or imported by the traveler purchasing them. In addition, some of these items are offered in ''duty-free'' areas beyond customs control points. The resultant enforcement problem, either intentionally or unintentionally, promotes trade in species listed on Appendix I. In an earlier **Federal Register** notice, the Service stated that it had originally believed that this issue could be addressed directly by the Secretariat through its ongoing educational efforts. However, public

comment following the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice was unanimous in the view that the United States should raise this issue at COP10. Four wildlife conservation organizations submitted comment—three urged the United States to reconsider submitting a resolution, and one of those characterized the Service approach as ''a bit naive.'' The fourth organization felt the issue would be appropriately addressed in a decision document. The Service agrees that this issue should be brought to the attention of the Parties; based on further discussion and the foregoing comments, the United States submitted a draft resolution urging Parties to take all necessary steps to prohibit the sale of tourist souvenirs of Appendix-I species in places of international departure and in ''duty-free'' areas beyond customs control points, including prominent displays of information in places of international departure and inspection, and provision of information to merchants.

4. Establishment of Committees

This proposed resolution was not mentioned in earlier **Federal Register** notices because the question of committee membership did not arise as an issue until very recently, with the result that public comment was neither solicited nor received. However, after discussions with other governments, the CITES Secretariat, and consultations with the U.S. Departments of State and Commerce, the Service submitted a draft resolution to amend the resolution that established the Animals and Plants Committees (Resolution Conf. 9.1.). As currently written, Resolution Conf. 9.1 establishes that the membership of the Animals and Plants Committees shall consist of *persons* chosen by the major geographic regions. In the view of the United States, it is more appropriate that Committee members be Party *governments because:* (1) States are members of the Convention, not individuals; (2) it is not standard practice for non-governmental organizations to serve as a members of official working committees of international treaties (although, in some cases, regions have selected individuals who are employed by or are representatives of non-governmental organizations); (3) the work of the Committees has become more policy oriented, requiring participation by representatives authorized to speak for an accountable to Party States on critical issues; and (4) it is difficult to replace an individual member without consulting an entire region or waiting until the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The U.S. draft resolution recommends that membership on the Animals and Plants Committees be restricted to Parties to the Convention, as is standard practice for the Standing Committee. These governments would then select individuals as contact points for the routine work of the Animals Committee or Plants Committee. The Service consulted the Secretariat and some other Party governments on the draft test of this proposed resolution prior to its submission, and incorporated their useful comments.

5. Illegal Trade Working Group

In response to the March 1, 1996, **Federal Register** notice, five organizations recommended that the United States submit a resolution on enforcement. Four organizations submitted comments in response to the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice: One wildlife conservation organization asked the Service to reconsider introducing a resolution; three wildlife conservation organizations encouraged the Service to submit a discussion paper. One wildlife conservation organization, citing discussions held during the March 1995 Standing Committee meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, offered detailed recommendations on practical measures to improve enforcement. Although the Service had originally thought a new resolution unnecessary, based on extensive further discussions, the results of the CITES effectiveness study, and persistent concerns reflected in the most recent public comments, the United States submitted a resolution that would establish an Illegal Trade Working Group to: (1) Assist the Secretariat in providing advice and training on enforcement to Parties; (2) assist the Identification Manual Committee in the development of training materials for enforcement officers; and (3) facilitate international exchange of illegal wildlife trade information through formal links with ICPO-Interpol and the World Customs Organization. Representatives of the Working Group would attend meetings of the Animals, Plants, and Standing Committees to provide advice and technical assistance. At COP9, a law enforcement working group was discussed, but not adopted, for a number of reasons. The draft resolution submitted by the United States addresses those concerns by limiting Working Group membership to CITES Secretariat enforcement personnel and Party government representatives, and by spelling out specific terms of reference that clarify the Working Group's role.

6. Inspection of Wildlife Shipments

The inspection of wildlife shipments was not mentioned in earlier **Federal Register** notices as a prospective subject for a resolution because it did not arise as an issue until late in October 1996, when the World Conservation Congress (IUCN) adopted Resolution CGR1.90-rev1 at its First Session, in Montreal, Canada. As a result of this timing, the Service neither solicited nor received comment on this issue. The IUCN resolution calls upon all governmental members of IUCN ''to take whatever steps are necessary, including physical inspection of entering and departing wildlife shipments, to curtail the illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife products, and to dedicate the resources needed to accomplish these goals.'' The United States submitted a resolution virtually identical to that adopted by the IUCN, for consideration at COP10, which basically supports and implements the IUCN recommendation to increase the focus and attention on the need for inspection of wildlife shipments.

7. Trade with Parties that Have Not Identified a Scientific Authority

The Service was originally considering submitting a resolution that would recommend against allowing any wildlife trade with any Party that has not provided the name and address of its Scientific Authority to the Secretariat. Public comment from four wildlife conservation organizations supported this general approach, although one wildlife conservation organization thought Parties should accept imports from a country not having a Scientific Authority, as long as that country was able to demonstrate positive scientific evidence of non-detriment. One sport-hunting organization opposed it. The United States submitted a draft resolution: (1) Recommending that Parties not accept CITES export permits from countries that have not identified their Scientific Authorities to the Secretariat for more than one interval between biennial meetings of the Conference of the Parties; (2) encouraging countries to designate Scientific Authorities separate from Management Authorities; (3) directing the Secretariat to continue efforts to identify the Scientific Authority(s) in each country; and (4) recommending that neighboring Parties consider sharing their resources by supporting common scientific institutions to provide the scientific findings required under the Convention.

8. Regulation of CITES Shipments Traveling on a Customs Carnet

Many CITES Parties have acceded to the Customs Convention on the A.T.A. (Admission Temporaire-Temporary Admission) Carnet for the Temporary Admission of Goods, and to the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR (Transport International Routier) Carnets. Both of these conventions created the ability to temporarily enter certain goods without being subject to the normal duty rates. Because of the temporary nature of these transactions, Customs globally views these imports as different from non-carnet imports. Infractions of the CITES Convention routinely include shipments of CITES species traveling on a Customs Carnet which have been allowed entry without meeting the applicable CITES requirements. As a result, many shipments of CITES species traveling on a Customs Carnet without CITES documentation have been refused entry into either the importing country or the country of origin upon return. To remedy this problem, the United States submitted a draft resolution recommending that all Parties ensure that their Management Authority issue appropriate documents for shipments traveling on a Customs Carnet, and strongly urging all Parties to communicate with their Customs and CITES enforcement officials to ensure all CITES shipments traveling on a Customs Carnet comply with applicable CITES requirements. Two wildlife conservation organizations commented in support of such a resolution.

9. Coral Reporting and Identification

Due to the method in which coral is transported and difficulties in species identification, coral reporting and identification for CITES purposes have been problematic. There is both a need for the Parties to agree on the use of standardized units for reporting coral trade information in the annual report and a concern that species identification of readily recognizable coral gravel or ''living rock'' cannot be accomplished at ports of entry. This issue was addressed by the CITES Animals Committee, which requested that the United States submit a draft resolution: (1) Amending the Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Annual Reports (CITES Notification No. 788); and (2) amending Resolutions Conf. 9.3, 9.4, and 9.6. The draft resolution would amend CITES Notification No. 788 to indicate that trade in specimens of coral transported in water should be reported in number of pieces, that trade in those coral specimens not transported in water should be reported in kilograms, and that trade in specimens of readily recognizable coral gravel or ''living rock'' should be reported at the Order level (Scleractinia). The draft resolution would also amend Resolutions Conf. 9.3, 9.4, and 9.6 to conform with the proposed amendments to Notification No. 788, and would stipulate that coral sand, its species being not readily recognizable, is not covered by the provisions of the Convention. Five wildlife conservation organizations submitted comment in support of the Service position. One pet industry association supported the proposed changes in coral trade reporting. One wildlife conservation organization urged the Service to continue discussing with the Secretariat the possibility of including in the CITES identification manual the U.S.-produced coral identification manual.

10. Transport of Live Animals

In adopting Resolution Conf. 9.23, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties transferred to the Animals Committee issues pertaining to the transport of live specimens, and recommended that all live animals be shipped in accordance with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations, and that all permits for live animals be conditioned upon compliance with those regulations. These recommendations were a consolidation of recommendations of earlier meetings of the Conference of the Parties. During the first comment period (beginning March 1, 1996), five organizations had recommended that the Service submit a draft resolution to amend Resolution Conf. 9.23, providing draft text. At their September 1996 meeting, the Animals Committee adopted a decision document and a draft resolution to amend Resolution Conf. 9.23, both prepared by the Working Group on the Transport of Live Specimens. During the second comment period (beginning August 28, 1996), four organizations generally supported the Animals Committee proposed resolution; however, two expressed concern over the elimination of language that would have enabled CITES to enact trade bans on species that continue to be transported in an inhumane way, and one of those organizations objected to the species-by-species approach, advocating that ''species'' be changed to ''taxa.'' As Chair of the Working Group and at the request of the Animals Committee, the United States submitted this revised draft resolution for consideration at COP10. The draft resolution directs the Animals Committee to conduct a systematic review of the scope, causes, and means of reducing the mortality and morbidity of animals during transport, and directs the Secretariat to convey recommendations for improvement to the Parties concerned and to monitor the implementation of those recommendations, reporting its findings at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The mortality information already required by Resolution Conf. 9.23 would be submitted as part of a Party's annual report; failure to submit these data would be noted in the Secretariat's Report to the Standing Committee on Parties' Annual Reports. The Animals Committee requested that the United States consult the Secretariat on its proposed text and then circulate the draft resolution to members of the Animals Committee before submitting it to the COP. Due to workload factors, the Secretariat was unable to forward its comments to the United States before the January 10 deadline. The Service accordingly proceeded to submit its proposed resolution, subject to modification before COP10, based on consultations with the Secretariat and members of the Animals Committee.

11. Bred-in Captivity (revision of Conf. 2.12)

The question of whether and how to revise the criteria for certifying specimens as bred-in-captivity for the exemptions provided for in Article VII, paragraphs 4 and 5 has been the subject to considerable extensive discussion and debate for the Parties, non-governmental organizations, commercial concerns, and technical experts. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision No. 22, which directs the CITES Secretariat, in consultation with the Animals Committee, to prepare a draft resolution that will resolve problems regarding the exemptions under Article VII, paragraphs 4 and 5 for specimens bred in captivity, including: (1) Different interpretations by Parties of the term ''for commercial purposes'' when referring to the breeding of specimens of Appendix-I species in captivity, in particular regarding the sale of specimens that often results in income that, although perhaps not essential to the breeder's livelihood, may be significant, and (2) different interpretations by Parties of the criteria in Resolution Conf. 2.12 (Rev.) to determine whether a captive-breeding operation is ''managed in a manner which has been demonstrated to be capable of reliability producing second-

generation offspring in a controlled environment.''

Consultations were initiated at the 12th meeting of the Animals Committee, which established a working group on specimens bred in captivity, chaired by Canada, as well as a sub-group to discuss the definition of ''commercial purposes,'' chaired by Indonesia. The Secretariat then undertook the preparation of a resolution for consideration by the working group. In December 1995, the Secretariat's first draft resolution was sent to the chairman of the working group, who undertook wide consultations. The chairman of the working group provided the final results of his consultations to the Secretariat in July 1996. The United States and the chairman of the sub-group, among others, also provided comments to the Secretariat. The Secretariat's second draft, a consolidation of three already existing resolutions (or portions thereof), was provided for consideration at the 13th meeting of the Animals Committee, in September 1996, where the draft was discussed and revised.

The United States was not satisfied with the version that emerged from the Animals Committee meeting, for the following reasons. First, the Service believes that it may be reasonable to have a different standard for what constitutes bred in captivity for Appendix-I versus Appendix-II species, but that the criteria should minimally include those in Conf. 2.12(Rev.), and sustainable production of F2 offspring must be clearly demonstrated for Appendix-I species. Particularly disconcerting to the United States was omission of the criterion requiring that F2 offspring must be reliably produced (i.e., more than a single offspring). Second, the Secretariat's draft resolution would allow for the augmentation of breeding stock with nuisance animals, with no definition of the term ''nuisance.'' The United States is concerned that this would constitute a potential loophole for the laundering of wild-caught animals through a captive-breeding operation. The United States is also concerned that the Secretariat's draft resolution would allow for the continued augmentation of breeding stock from the wild rather than limiting augmentation to occasional additions of wild-caught specimens only for the purposes of preventing deleterious inbreeding, as specified in Conf. 2.12(Rev.).

The Service also did not support the establishment of a list of species, as suggested in the Secretariat's draft, which would include species whether or not they had reliably produced F2 offspring in captivity. The addition of species to the list, to be accomplished through a vote of the Conference of the Parties, would be based on proposals developed by the Animals Committee in consultation with appropriate experts. The Service believes that few animals—and no Appendix-I species—are likely to qualify, that this provision would allow specimens of such species to be designated as bred in captivity when they do not otherwise meet the criteria, and that this provision burdens the Animals Committee with additional responsibilities of questionable value.

While the Service appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to try to define ''commercial'' based on the number of specimens or the number of shipments exported by a given operation, we do not agree with this approach at this time due to the variability in breeding characteristics and value among specimens of different species. The Service also objected to provisions of the Secretariat's draft that would make stock legal after two generations, even if the parental stock was originally illegally acquired. Finally, the Service objected to the omission of some of the requirements for registration contained in Conf. 8.15, particularly descriptions of how stock is managed and strategies for avoiding deleterious inbreeding. The Service believes that this information is critical for determining whether an operation's stock managed sustainably and without reliance on continued augmentation from the wild at levels considered to be more than ''occasional'' (discussed below).

Rather than accepting the Animals Committee-passed draft, the United States elected instead to prepare a draft resolution that would revise Resolutions Conf. 2.12 and 8.15 simultaneously, while retaining them as separate and distinct documents. Based upon discussions in the Animals Committee, and taking into account extensive public comment received on this issue, the United States submitted a draft captive-breeding resolution that retains basic elements of Resolution Conf. 2.12 (Rev.), with the following enhancements: (1) It clarifies certain relevant terms previously left undefined; (2) it elaborates on the conditions necessary for a specimen to be considered ''bred in captivity,'' and (3) it provides an annex containing illustrative examples of specimens that do or do not qualify. Discussions continue between the CITES Secretariat and the United States regarding how best to address bred-in-captivity issues. Once the Secretariat has decided on its final draft resolution, should that resolution address U.S. concerns, the United States would consider withdrawing its own resolutions related to captive-bred wildlife.

The volume of public comment addressing captive-breeding issues far outstripped that for any other subject mentioned in the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice. Thirteen organizations submitted comments on the captive-breeding agenda item and/or the two resolutions the Service was considering. A breakdown of the 13 organizations follows: Six wildlife conservation organizations, one industry group, three commercial animal exhibitors, a zoo association, one sport-hunting organization, and a bird hobbyist group. The Service appreciates the effort expended to produce these comments, which were typically carefully thought-out and lengthy. While it is not possible to summarize them here, some representative examples follow. The sport-hunting organization recommended the United States define aspects of captive breeding that foster a self-contained breeding population, and use those factors as the criteria for issuance of Appendix-II export permits (specimens of Appendix-I species bred in captivity for commercial purposes) or captive-bred certificates (for species from any appendix bred in captivity not for commercial purposes). One commercial animal exhibitor suggested creation of an interim list of ''special circumstance'' species that, while not yet capable of achieving F2 status as currently interpreted, are being managed in a way reliably demonstrated to achieve a viable second-generation population, and whose captive breeding has no detrimental effect on wild populations. One wildlife conservation organization urged the United States to advocate retention of Resolutions Conf. 2.12(Rev.) and 8.15, with minor revisions, and develop a new resolution that would incorporate the interpretation of Article VII, paragraphs 4 and 5 (exemption for captive-bred Appendix-I specimens) as set out in Notification 913. Another wildlife conservation organization urged the United States to oppose efforts to weaken resolutions on trade in captive-bred specimens, and to introduce a resolution similar to the one the U.S. submitted to the Animals Committee. Readers desiring more detail are encouraged to consult the individual submissions, available from the Office of Management Authority upon request.

12. Appendix-I Species Bred in Captivity for Commercial Purposes (revision of Conf. 8.15)

Recent discussions by the Parties of captive-breeding issues also

encompassed the subject matter covered in Resolution Conf. 8.15, with the result that the public comment received on proposed revisions to Resolutions Conf. 2.12 and 8.15 tended to be intertwined. For an account of the development of the U.S. captive-breeding resolutions and a general characterization of organizations that submitted comments, please consult the preceding item (#11). To address Appendix-I Species Bred in Captivity for Commercial Purposes, the United States submitted a draft resolution which revises Conf. 8.15 in the following ways. Parts of the original preamble and resolution that encouraged the captive breeding and commercial exploitation of Appendix-I species, particularly in range States, were deleted, since the Service does not believe that such activities are always appropriate and should be discouraged in some cases. Instead, Annex 3 of the draft resolution recommends that the Secretariat encourage the establishment of captive-breeding operations for Appendix-I species where appropriate. The draft resolution would require notification of all Parties in cases where the Party in which the operation is located has not previously registered a captive-breeding operation for the species involved, even if other Parties have registered breeding operations for that species. In Conf. 8.15, for a given species, only the first operation registered with the Secretariat for any Party requires notification of the Parties. The U.S. opinion is that the potential for using captive-breeding operations for laundering wild-caught specimens as well as the methodology for breeding a species in captivity can vary from country to country due to differences in enforcement capability, climate, and availability of technology, and therefore Parties should be evaluated individually on their ability to control trade in captive-bred specimens and of their operations' capabilities to actually breed the species under consideration. Parts of the original resolution requiring findings that the operation must have been established without detriment to the survival of the species were deleted, since this is already required by Resolution Conf. 2.12, which provides the basis for Conf. 8.15. Otherwise, the resolution has not been substantially modified from Conf. 8.15, since it is the United States' opinion that the existing resolution is workable, has been in place for only a short while and thus has not been widely used, and thus does not require extensive modification. However, a significant change suggested by the U.S. draft resolution would be to provide for a Party that has concerns about aspects of an application to register a captive-breeding operation to discuss those concerns with the Party in which the operation is located, and perhaps seek a resolution to the concerns so an objection to the registration and a full vote by the Conference of the Parties can be avoided. A representative sample of the public comment regarding proposed revisions to Resolution Conf. 8.15 follows. One wildlife conservation organization recommended expanding the definition of ''commercial purposes,'' generating a list of problem species with long generational intervals (in the F2 context) requiring CITES interpretation and assistance, and making the purpose for which the animal is being exported the determining factor for deciding ''commercial purposes,'' rather than the nature of the breeding facility. The three commercial animal exhibitors expressed concerns that the Secretariat-drafted resolution then under consideration in the Animals Committee would result in further restriction on acquisition of new breeding stock, and cited conflicts with the interpretations of ''commercial purposes'' found in Resolution Conf. 5.10 and Article VII, paragraph 4, and with domestic law. The sport-hunting organization felt the United States should seek to streamline the system for registering facilities breeding Appendix-I species for commercial purposes or should advocate doing away with it because ''it is not serving its purpose.'' Another wildlife conservation organization wanted to maintain high standards for the production of Appendix-I specimens, and believes the Secretariat should bear major responsibility for registration of Appendix-I species breeding facilities.

13. Establishment of a Working Group for Marine Fish Species

The decision to propose establishing a Working Group for Marine Fish Species was made late in the process, arising out of extensive discussions between the Service and the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. agency with jurisdiction over marine fish species. These interagency discussions have concerned the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.17—which calls for the Animals Committee to report to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the biological and trade status of sharks—an effort which has involved the active participation of the United States, many other CITES Parties, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other international fisheries organizations. A discussion paper has been submitted for consideration at COP10. This implements the first part of Resolution Conf. 9.17. The second part requests that FAO and other international fisheries management organizations establish programs to collect and assemble additional biological and trade data on shark species, and that such information be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. This remains to be accomplished. Further, many questions have been raised regarding technical and practical implementation concerns associated with inclusion on the CITES Appendices of marine fish species subject to large-scale commercial harvesting and international trade. A Marine Fish Species Working Group would provide a framework for this and other activities to implement Resolution Conf. 9.17. Therefore, after extensive review of the available information on the biological and trade status of shark species, both as part of the Animals Committee process implementing Resolution Conf. 9.17 and in evaluating the conservation status of numerous commercially harvested shark species, the United States concluded that: (1) Several internationally traded shark species qualify for inclusion in Appendix II of CITES; (2) many serious implementation and enforcement challenges would result from the inclusion in Appendix II of these and other commercially traded marine fish species, although they qualify for such inclusion; (3) the Parties and conservation of marine fish species would benefit from a thorough evaluation of all aspects of implementation of the Convention for marine fish species, including a clarification of the relationship of CITES with other conventions relating to marine fish species; and (4) the successful Timber Species Working Group is a useful model for evaluating implementation issues pertaining to marine fish species. The draft resolution submitted by the United States directs the Standing Committee to: (1) Establish a temporary working group for marine fish species subject to large-scale commercial harvesting and international trade, which would coordinate preparation of an analysis of technical and practical implementation concerns associated with the inclusion of such species on the CITES Appendices; (2) develop recommendations on approaches to address identified issues; (3) begin to coordinate and advise regional fishery treaty organizations on necessary marine fish species data

collection and consistency in reporting; and (4) report back to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The United States believes that such a working group should focus on technical and practical implementation issues, rather than on whether or not individual taxa of marine fish qualify for inclusion in Appendix II. However, the United States does believe that there are commercially harvested marine fish species traded internationally that qualify for inclusion in CITES Appendix II, and that in such cases CITES is an appropriate vehicle to regulate and monitor trade in those species, to preclude their becoming threatened with extinction in the future. The United States looks forward to discussion of this draft resolution at COP10, to its adoption, and to the work of the Working Group between COP10 and COP11.

Documents Submitted By The United States

14. Trade in Alien (Invasive) Species

The United States submitted a document for discussion at COP10, dealing with the important conservation issue of the international trade in invasive alien species. The document discusses the background on this conservation issue, and the role that the CITES Parties can play. The document defines an alien [nonindigenous] species as a species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring as a result of human activity in an areas or ecosystem in which it is not native. Alien species that colonize natural or semi-natural ecosystems, cause change, and threaten biodiversity are categorized as ''invasive.'' They have been identified in the scientific literature as the second-largest threat to biological diversity globally after habitat loss and degradation. International conservation bodies have recently addressed the issue of alien species and the problems associated with them. The document submitted by the United States discusses recent progress on this issue at: (1) The July 1996 Conference on Alien Species in Norway, sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UNESCO, and the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment of the International Council of Scientific Unions; (2) the World Conservation Congress in October 1996; (3) the IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group; and (4) the Third Conference of the Parties of the CBD in November 1996, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The document submitted by the United States recommends discussion of these issues at COP10 and that Parties: (1) Recognize that nonindigenous species can pose significant threats to biodiversity, that living specimens of flora and fauna species in commercial trade are likely to be introduced to new habitat as a result of international trade, and that awareness of these problems is needed in the business and public sectors; (2) recognize that CITES can play a significant positive role in this issue; (3) pay particular attention to these issues when developing national legislation and regulations, when issuing export or import permits for live animals or plants of potentially invasive species, or when otherwise approving exports or imports of live specimens of potentially invasive species; (4) encourage management Authorities of exporting countries to consult with the Management Authority of a planned importing country, if possible and applicable, when considering exports of potentially invasive species, to determine whether the importing country has established domestic measures regulating imports, or whether the importing country has concerns regarding importation of the species in question; (5) consider the threats of introduction of alien species and the risks to native biodiversity in the context of implementation of CITES and other Conventions, including CBD; and (6) consider requesting that the Animals and Plants Committee establish a formal liaison with the IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group to review species in international trade, collaborate in the development of a global database of invasive species, identify species that may pose problems if they are introduced, and cooperate on this issue to recommend means to ensure that unintentional introductions do not occur.

15. Illegal Trade in Whale Meat

Despite the adoption of Resolution Conf. 9.12, which calls for further cooperation and information exchange by CITES and the International Whaling Convention (IWC), illegal trade in specimens of Appendix-I whale species remains a significant problem for some CITES Parties. While the United States originally considered submitting another resolution urging continued cooperation between CITES and the IWC for consideration at COP10, after further deliberation the United States decided to submit a document recounting the recent history of efforts to control illegal trade in whale specimens and products and asking that the issue be included on the agenda for COP10. Although five organizations submitted public comment in favor of a U.S. resolution, and one wildlife conservation organization urged the Service to ensure that smuggling incidents are fully investigated by Japanese and Norwegian authorities and the information forwarded to the CITES Secretariat, it was felt that submitting a document for the Parties' consideration presented a more effective strategy leading to a more open discussion of the problem. The United States looks forward to a useful discussion of problems of illegal trade in whale meat, and implementation of previous resolutions of the Conference of the Parties, to be considered in the evaluation of both this issue and of any possible proposals to transfer any whale populations to Appendix II.

16. Flora, Fauna, and the Traditional Medicine Community: Working with People to Conserve Wildlife

Pursuant to the COP10 agenda item dealing with the use of wildlife in traditional medicines, the United States submitted this document, which follows up on two separate reports to the Standing Committee on U.S. efforts in support of CITES Resolutions Conf. 9.13 and 9.14. Those resolutions charge consumer states to work with traditional medicine communities and industries to develop strategies for elimination of tiger and rhino use and consumption. The document describes national and international activities undertaken by the United States in the areas of law enforcement, legislation, and education, highlighting cooperative efforts to educate the U.S. traditional medicine community in conservation strategies, and the development of cooperative ties with the Ministry of Forestry in the People's Republic of China. A detailed discussion of accomplishments offers insight into the outreach education process. The document ends with three recommendations that could be useful to consumer states. The United States strongly supports such cooperative educational efforts, working with consumer communities to increase understanding of the impacts of the wildlife trade and wildlife conservation, and facilitating the use of substitutes and alternatives to endangered species products, while respecting the value of traditional medicines and the cultures and communities that use them.

Resolutions Not Submitted By The United States

The following were discussed in the August 28, 1996 **Federal Register** notice as possible topics for U.S. resolutions. A

discussion of the decision to not submit these resolutions follows:

Trade in Appendix-I Specimens

In the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice, the Service indicated that it was considering submitting a draft resolution clarifying the treatment of Appendix-I specimens. Specifically, the United States considered the issue of when Article III should be used for export or import permits for Appendix-I specimens, and when the Article VII (paragraphs 4 and 5) exemptions for specimens bred in captivity for commercial and non-commercial purposes, respectively, should be used. Subsequently, the Secretariat circulated an official Notification (number 913) on this issue. Five organizations—ranging from a commercial animal exhibitor to a wildlife conservation organization—submitted comments, all in favor of the United States submitting a resolution and/or in opposition to the draft resolution presented at the Animals Committee meeting. However, based on discussions with the Secretariat and other Parties, discussions at the September 1996 meeting of the Animals Committee, and an evaluation of comments received, the United States decided not to submit a draft resolution on this issue. Instead, the United States believes that its views on clarifying the use of Articles III and VII have been sufficiently expressed, and that continued dialogue on a case-by-case basis will be more productive. Furthermore, one source of confusion by other countries has been the fact that the United States itself has never registered a commercial facility (under Resolution Conf. 8.15) that breeds Appendix-I specimens in captivity for commercial purposes. The Service notes that few qualified facilities have applied, but the Service is more than eager to register qualified facilities; to that end, a future notice in the **Federal Register** is being drafter to explain the process and encourage submission of applications for registration.

Personal Effects/Live Animals

In the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice, the Service indicated that it was considering submitting a draft resolution clarifying aspects of the personal effects exemption in Article VII of the CITES treaty. Travelers experience some problems because the United States recognizes the personal effects exemption under Article VII, paragraph 3 of the treaty, whereas other countries either do not recognize it or implement it differently. This also causes problems for implementation of CITES at ports of entry. The four organizations submitting comment in response to the August 28, 1996 **Federal Register** notice either supported a U.S. resolution and/or made specific recommendations concerning content. One wildlife conservation organization recommended that the U.S. draft clarify whether live animals are included in the personal effects exemption under Article IV; another noted that not every country interprets properly Article VII paragraph 3(a), which pertains to specimens acquired outside a person's State of usual residence. The United States decided not to submit a resolution, for the following reasons: (1) The Animals Committee agreed to submit a resolution dealing with frequent transborder movement of personally owned live animals; (2) the United States agrees with the text of this proposed resolution, and views it as dealing effectively with a major aspect of the broader personal effects issues, for live animals; (3) the United States submitted a resolution dealing with one aspect of this issue, specifically the sale of Appendix-I tourist items at international airports, seaports, and border crossings (discussed earlier in this notice); and 94) the United States will ask the Parties to direct the Secretariat to survey the Parties and prepare a document clarifying how each country implements the personal effects exemption; such a request does not require a resolution.

Circuses

In the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice, the Service indicated that it was considering submitting a discussion paper or draft resolution to address several technical issues in Resolution Conf. 8.16 (Traveling Live Animal Exhibitions), such as the requirement of a separate certificate for each specimen. Six organizations—two commercial animal exhibitors and four wildlife conservation organization—submitted comments on circuses. One foreign commercial animal exhibitor, communicating through counsel, endorsed the ''passport'' approach considered by the Animals Committee in the context of frequent movement of personally owned live animals. One wildlife conservation organization said Conf. 8.16 should continue to require separate certificates—which should be valid for one year, not three—and felt specimens that do not qualify as captive-bred under Resolution Conf. 2.12 should not be eligible for coverage by a captive-bred certificate. One wildlife conservation organization cautioned against raising the issue at COP10, given the highly controversial nature of any proposal concerning elephants in a meeting held in Zimbabwe, and recommended instead that the United States work out this problem within the North American region. At its September 1996 meeting, the Animals Committee decided that ''frequent transborder movement of personally owned live animals'' should not apply to circuses. Based on the comments received, discussions with other countries, and the outcome of the Animals Committee meeting, the United States decided to submit nothing to COP10, but rather to take up the technical issues directly with the Secretariat and with the individual countries involved.

Crocodile Tagging

In the August 28, 1996, **Federal Register** notice, the Service indicated that it was considering submitting a draft resolution to clarify some points in Resolution Conf. 9.22 (Universal Tagging System for the Identification of Crocodilian Skins) by providing a description of the parts tag and a method for the marking of product containers. During the public comment period, one wildlife conservation organization voiced its support of a U.S. resolution, noting that any marking system must be standardized and that specifications for the design of the tag must be fundamental and generally applied. No further comments were received. At their meeting in September 1996, the Animals Committee agreed upon the text of a Notification to the Parties, resolving these points and obviating the need for a draft resolution.

Observers

Article XI, paragraph 7 of the Convention states:

Any body or agency technically qualified in protection, conservation, or management of wild fauna and flora, in the following categories, which has informed the Secretariat of its desire to be represented at meetings of the Conference by observers, shall be admitted unless at least one-third of the parties present object:

(a) International agencies or bodies, either governmental or non-governmental, and national governmental agencies and bodies; and

(b) National nongovernmental agencies or bodies which have been approved for these purposes by the State in which they were located.

Once admitted, these observers shall have the right to participate but not to vote.

Persons wishing to be observers representing U.S. national non-governmental organizations must receive prior approval of the Service.

International organizations (which must have offices in more than one country) may request approval directly from the Secretariat. After granting of that approval, a national non-governmental organization is eligible to register with the CITES Secretariat and must register with the Secretariat prior to the COP in order to participate in the COP as an observer. All registrations must be received by the Secretariat no later than 30 days prior to the meeting of the COP, and preferably much sooner. Individuals that are not affiliated with an approved organization may not register as observers. Requests for such approval should include evidence of technical qualification in protection, conservation, or management of wild fauna and/or flora, on the part of both the organization and the individual representative(s). Organizations previously approved by the Service (for prior meetings of the COP) must submit a request but do not need to provide as detailed information concerning their qualifications as those seeking approval for the first time. Organizations seeking approval for the first time should detail their experience in the protection, conservation, or management of wild fauna and/or flora, as well as their purposes for wishing to participate in the COP as an observer. Such requests should be sent to the Office of Management Authority (OMA: see **ADDRESSES**, above) or submitted to OMA electronically via E-mail to: R9OMA__CITES@MAIL.FWS.GOV, prior to the close of business on April 1, 1997. That deadline will assure approval in time to submit registration materials to the Secretariat in time. Organizations are encouraged to submit requests for approval as soon as possible, however. Upon approval by OMA, an organization will receive instructions for registration with the CITES Secretariat in Switzerland, including relevant travel and hotel information. Any organization requesting approval for observer status at COP10 will be added to the Service's CITES Mailing List if it is not already included, and will receive copies of all future **Federal Register** notices and other information pertaining to COP10. A list of organizations approved for observer status at COP10 will be available from OMA just prior to the start of COP10.

Future Actions

COP10 is scheduled for June 9–20, 1997, in Harare, Zimbabwe. Through a series of additional notices in advance of COP10, the Service will inform the public about preliminary and final negotiating positions on resolutions and amendments to the Appendices proposed by other Parties for consideration at COP10. The Service will also publish an announcement of a public meeting to be held in April 1997 to receive public input on its proposed negotiating positions for COP10.

AUTHORS: This notice was prepared by Dr. Susan S. Lieberman, Chief, Operations Branch, Office of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (703–358–2095).

Dated: March 19, 1997.

John G. Rogers,

Acting Director.

[FR Doc. 97–7725 Filed 3–26–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–M

Bureau of Land Management

[AK–962–1410–00–P]

Alaska; Notice for Publication, AA–6703–A2; Alaska Native Claims Selection

In accordance with Departmental regulation 43 CFR 2650.7(d), notice is hereby given that a decision to issue conveyance under the provisions of Sec. 14(a) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of December 18, 1971, 43 U.S.C. 1601, 1613(a), will be issued to The Tatitlek Corporation for approximately 1,850 acres. The lands involved are in the vicinity of Tatitlek, Alaska.

Copper River Meridian, Alaska

T. 13 S., R. 7 W.,
Secs. 25 and 27;
Secs. 34, 35 and 36.
T. 14 S., R. 7 W.,
Secs. 2 and 3.

A notice of the decision will be published once a week, for four (4) consecutive weeks, in the ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS. Copies of the decision may be obtained by contacting the Alaska State Office of the Bureau of Land Management, 222 West Seventh Avenue, #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513–7599 ((907) 271–5960).

Any party claiming a property interest which is adversely affected by the decision, an agency of the Federal government or regional corporation, shall have until April 28, 1997 to file an appeal. However, parties receiving service by certified mail shall have 30 days from the date of receipt to file an appeal. Appeals must be filed in the Bureau of Land Management at the address identified above, where the requirements for filing an appeal may be obtained. Parties who do not file an appeal in accordance with the requirements of 43 CFR Part 4, Subpart E, shall be deemed to have waived their rights.

Patricia K. Underwood,

Land Law Examiner, ANCSA Team Branch of 962 Adjudication.

[FR Doc. 97–7771 Filed 3–26–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–JA–P

[CA–060–07–1990–00]

Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period for the Proposed Fort Irwin Expansion

AGENCY: Notice is hereby given, in accordance with Public Laws 92–463 and 94–579, that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of the Interior, is extending the public comment period on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the Army's proposed expansion of the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin to June 3, 1997.

The DEIS analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed expansion of the NTC, which includes the withdrawal and transfer of approximately 310,296 acres of public land managed by the BLM to the U.S. Army, and an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. The NTC is located approximately 35 miles northeast of Barstow in north-central San Bernardino County. The DEIS was released for public comment on January 3, 1997 (61 FR 68289, December 27, 1996).

BLM has not identified an agency preferred alternative in the DEIS. Following analysis of the comments received from all the public, agencies, and organizations on the DEIS, BLM will select a preferred alternative in the Final EIS.

Copies of the DEIS, executive summary, and technical appendices are available for review at most libraries, and BLM's Barstow Resource Area Office, 150 Coolwater Lane, Barstow, California 92311, California Desert District Office, 6221 Box Springs Boulevard, Riverside, California 92507, and California State Office, 2135 Butano Drive, Sacramento, California 95825.

DATES: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Army's proposed expansion of the NTC must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, June 3, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to the Bureau of Land Management, Barstow Resource Area Office, Attention: Mike Dekeyrel, Project Manager, 150 Coolwater Lane, Barstow, California 92311.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Dekeyrel at (619) 255–8730.