

Preface

In 1976 the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of animals and plants has been created to protect species from unsustainable international trade. The species concerned are listed in three appendices.

CITES is applied through legislation adopted by its parties, and implementation at national level. Permits and other CITES documents are issued on the basis of species names. Therefore, taxonomic standard references are needed to define which specimens are covered by the use of a specific taxon name. CITES documents may serve as a basis for the issuance of other documents, such as re-export permits that are issued years or sometimes even decades later. Therefore, what is covered by a scientific species name cannot change continuously, especially not with regard to splitting of species. This would lead to serious confusion in implementing the Convention. The nomenclature under CITES should therefore be as conservative as justifiable from a scientific and species conservation point of view, and taxonomic standard references adopted under CITES should represent a generally widely accepted nomenclature.

Chelonians represent a major group of reptiles listed in the CITES appendices. Until 2006 the nomenclature used for turtles and tortoises was mainly based on the publication of Wermuth & Mertens (1996)¹. This book contains the reprint of the original publication of 1961², updated by an appendix listing newly described taxa and comparing the taxonomy used by Wermuth and Mertens in 1961 and those of subsequent works. However, no recommendations were given which scientific names should be used.

The necessity of updating the taxonomic reference for turtles and tortoises had been discussed at various meetings of the former CITES Nomenclature Committee (NC) Fauna. As in many other animal groups, in addition to published taxonomic papers on families, subfamilies or genera, many taxonomic databases were and still are available on the internet that differ in part considerably. Furthermore, it turned out that research in turtle and tortoise taxonomy and nomenclature had been very active in the past years, and still is, with new taxonomic or nomenclatural findings being published continuously.

In 2005, the NC fauna chair therefore asked Uwe Fritz and Peter Havaš to review the taxonomic information available and compile a taxonomic checklist for turtles and tortoises. Drafts of this checklist were presented and discussed at the NC meeting in 2006 and were reviewed by the co-chairs of the IUCN/SSC Turtle and Tortoise Specialist Group, P.P. van Dijk and A. Rhodin who provided detailed and extremely helpful comments. Finally, in June 2007, the CITES Conference of the parties adopted the checklist as new taxonomic standard reference for the nomenclature of turtle and tortoise species listed in the CITES appendices. For pragmatic reasons (see introductory paragraphs), however, it was also decided to treat the names of the hybrid taxa *Mauremys iversoni*, *M. pritchardi*, *Ocadia glyphistoma*, *O. philippeni*, and *Sacalia pseudocellata* as accepted names under CITES.

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¹ Wermuth, H., Mertens, R., 1996. Schildkröten, Krokodile, Brückenechsen. Reprint edition. Jena, Fischer, xxvi, (1), 506 pp. (supplement by F.J. Obst).

² Wermuth, H., Mertens, R., 1961. Schildkröten, Krokodile, Brückenechsen. Jena, Fischer, xxvii, 422 pp.