

Transfer the population of *Vicugna vicugna* of the province of Catamarca of Argentina from Appendix I to Appendix II for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in wool sheared from live animals, in cloth, derived material products and other handicraft artefacts bearing the label “VICUÑA – ARGENTINA”. Proponent: Argentina.

Summary: The *Vicuña Vicugna vicugna* is a wild camelid, prized for its fine quality wool. It is native to the high Andes of Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Peru. Females produce their first young at 2-3 years and generally produce a single young per year thereafter. The global *Vicuña* population decreased to a few thousand during the mid-1960s and the species was included in Appendix I in 1975. With improving management and increasing populations, a number of populations have been transferred to Appendix II since 1987. Oversight of trade and management is provided for in Resolution Conf. 11.6 which requires *Vicuña* range States to report on levels of exports and numbers of animals sheared and the Secretariat to compile this information for consideration at meetings of the Conference of Parties.

In 1997, the wild populations in the province of Jujuy and captive animals in the provinces coinciding with the range of the species in Argentina were transferred to Appendix II for trade in products from live-sheared *Vicuña*. These captive populations (sometimes referred to as “semi-captive”) are entirely derived from the breeding programme of the Abra Pampa Experimental Station in Jujuy. There are currently 20 authorised farms in Argentina holding approximately 1 500 *Vicuña*. Of the four range States with Appendix-II listings for *Vicuña* populations, Argentina is by far the most reliant upon captive management. The population of Catamarca Province, now under consideration for transfer to Appendix II, is estimated to number some 13 435 *Vicuña*, the area with the highest concentration of *Vicuña*. This population extends over an area of 45 000 km²; numbers in Argentina are thought to be increasing, but systematic censuses have not been conducted regularly. Experimental captive herds have been established and the first live-shearing of captive animals in the Province is due to occur in 2002. The present proposal seeks to transfer the wild population of *Vicuña* from the Argentinean province of Catamarca, and captive populations arising from this population, to Appendix II, for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in wool sheared from live animals and products manufactured from the wool. The proposal does not state under which criteria of Resolution Conf. 9.24 the transfer is proposed.

Analysis: Following Resolution Conf. 9.24 Annex 1, the population of *Vicuña* in Catamarca does not appear to meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I: the population is not small, restricted in distribution or apparently declining. The precautionary measures set out in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 are thus relevant. Precautionary measures B 2bi) and B 2bii) are addressed by the proposed monitoring and management of the wild populations and the management of the captive breeding operations. The management programme annexed to the proposal sets out in detail efforts to prevent the overexploitation of the Catamarca population once transferred to Appendix II. However, the conservation benefits of the captive management system have been questioned. The proposal is endorsed by the signatory countries of *Convenio para la Conservación y Manejo de la Vicuña* (*Vicuña* Convention).

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
Range	
Argentina: Province of Catamarca Range States of <i>Vicugna vicugna</i> are Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru; there is a small introduced population in Ecuador.	
IUCN Global Category	
	LR/cd

Biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I

A) Small wild population

(i) Population or habitat decline; (ii) small sub-populations; (iii) one sub-population; (iv) large population fluctuations; (v) high vulnerability due to biology or behaviour

The area with the highest concentration of *Vicuña* in Catamarca Province had an estimated population of 13 435 *Vicuña* in 1999.

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p><u>B) Restricted area of distribution</u></p> <p>(i) Fragmented or localised population; (ii) large fluctuations in distribution or sub-populations; (iii) high vulnerability due to biology or behaviour; (iv) decrease in distribution, population, habitat or reproductive potential</p> <p>The population of Catamarca extends over an area of 4 500 000 ha of which approximately 3 400 000 ha is suitable for the species. Over-grazing by livestock has had an adverse impact on habitat for the species.</p> <p><u>C) Decline in number of wild individuals</u></p> <p>(i) Ongoing or historic decline; (ii) inferred or projected decline</p> <p>Populations of Vicuña are thought to be increasing in Argentina as in the other range States, although survey methods are inconsistent.</p> <p>The area of distribution is anecdotally described to be an increase over prior decades. Animals are currently observed in areas where they had been previously absent.</p> <p><u>D) Status suggests inclusion in Appendix I within 5 years</u></p>	<p><i>Population size in Argentina has been variously estimated as 23 000 Vicuña in 1990 (Cajal and Puig, 1992); 32 000 Vicuña in 1997 (FWS, 2002) and more recently as 45 000-50 000 Vicuña (Barbarán, 2002 quoting INTA -National Institute of Agricultural Technology).</i></p>

Trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix I

The species is or may be affected by trade

<p>In Argentina, live Vicuña are regularly taken from the wild into captive breeding facilities, but policy requires that no more than 5% of any given population in any given year are taken into captivity.</p> <p>Wool from the population proposed for transfer will be collected by live shearing and should not affect the population.</p> <p>Since 1997 Argentina has exported a total of 807.16 kg of raw wool. Domestic trade will mainly be in hand-woven garments.</p>	<p><i>A recent study estimated a potential global demand for Vicuña wool of 37 100 kg. A fleece can produce 0.2 kg wool on average and raw fibre has been auctioned for up to USD 500/kg (FWS, 2002).</i></p> <p><i>Of the 807 kg of wool reportedly exported by Argentina, since 1997, only 353 kg was recorded in the CITES Annual Report data in 1999. The discrepancy may be due to the fact that 2000 and 2001 reports have not yet been received.</i></p>
---	---

Precautionary Measures

B2b: CoP satisfied with: implementation of Article IV, Annex 4, Res Conf 9.24

<p>Argentina already has 15 authorised Vicuña farms in Jujuy and Salta Provinces, comprising 1 500 Appendix II-listed Vicuña derived from the breeding stock of the Abra Pampa experimental station in Jujuy. These farms produce wool from live sheared animals, mainly for export, although one farm produces garments that are mainly sold within Argentina.</p> <p>Management plans will be developed for the Vicuña population of Catamarca. Population surveys will be carried out annually for managed areas, or every two years in areas of potential use or every three years throughout the entire Catamarca Vicuña range. Other management activities include the training of personnel involved in live capture, shearing and captive management, and research on behaviour.</p>	<p><i>According to the Bolivian SS for CoP 12 Prop. 13, the process of shearing live animals has resulted in an average mortality rate of 0.76%. At a population level, these threats appear to have little impact.</i></p> <p><i>Captive husbandry may be more problematic in relation to the non-detriment finding of Article IV (see the following section on captive breeding).</i></p>
--	---

B2b: CoP satisfied with: enforcement controls, Annex 4, Res Conf 9.24

<p>The transfer of the Catamarca population to Appendix II is unlikely to stimulate trade in, or cause</p>	<p><i>Resolution Conf. 11.6 requires that Parties to the Convenio para la Conservación y Manejo de la</i></p>
--	---

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p>enforcement problems for, any other species included in Appendix I.</p> <p>Annotation °606 allows only for the export of wool sheared from live animals.</p> <p>Plans for the regulation of capture and shearing of live Vicuña and for captive management are also presented. The authorisation and regulation of captive management is outlined, as are systems for commercialization of the products.</p>	<p><i>Vicuña report to the Secretariat annually on the quantity of products exported, the numbers of animals sheared and the local populations to which they belong. The Secretariat will report the results to the CoP in working document, Doc. 24.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed management appears to be sufficient to ensure appropriate enforcement controls and compliance with the requirements of the Convention.</i></p>

Other information

Threats

Poaching is the principal threat to Argentinean Vicuña populations. Other threats include overgrazing by introduced livestock, and mining activity. Diseases to which Vicuña are prone are not thought to have a significant impact on the population.

TRAFFIC South America (2002) notes that whilst some poaching events are reported through newspapers, there is no consensus as to the magnitude of the problem.

According to Barbarán (2002), the confiscation of 370 pelts in March 2002 indicates that the current economic crisis has increased incentives for illegal trade in Argentina.

Conservation, management and legislation

Habitat conservation measures are planned including the creation of a new protected area "Las Parinas" of approximately 2 000 000 ha within Vicuña habitat. This will be in addition to the Laguna Blanca Provincial Wildlife Reserve and Biosphere Reserve of 650 000 ha. A national Vicuña census was planned for March to May 2002.

Poaching and illegal trade have been reduced by co-operative programmes organised by a range of agencies. Vicuña protection has also been the subject of an extensive media campaign in Catamarca for 30 years.

Methods for control and monitoring in Catamarca are described in Annex I, with periodic surveys to be carried out. Methodology will follow the guidelines agreed by the Vicuña Convention.

Torres (2002) reports that this 2002 census was never carried out.

Similar species

Vicuña are readily distinguished from the other three species of South American camelids. The fur of Guanacos and some Alpacas is similar to that of Vicuña, but can be readily differentiated by measuring the hair.

Captive breeding

Argentina currently has an Appendix-II listing for wild populations in the province of Jujuy and captive animals in the provinces coinciding with the species range. These captive populations (sometimes referred to as "semi-captive") are entirely derived from the breeding programme of the Abra Pampa Experimental Station in Jujuy. There are currently 20 authorized farms in Argentina holding approximately 1 500 Vicuña.

In Catamarca, two experimental captures of wild Vicuña were carried out in 1998 and 1999

There was consensus amongst the reviewers that captive management is of doubtful utility to conservation (Barbarán, 2002; Puig, 2002; TRAFFIC South America, 2002).

Supporting Statement (SS)	Additional information
<p>respectively at an experimental station in the Laguna Blanca reserve. In the first year 89 animals were captured and measured and all but 19 were released. In the second year only six animals were captured and none released. The 25 retained animals were used to found two experimental farms.</p> <p>These two farms have been working to enhance reproduction of the species in captivity. As of 2002 these farms will start larger scale production. The management of these two production farms will be transferred to associations of local inhabitants. Shearing of wild-caught Vicuña will also begin in 2002.</p>	

Other comments

This proposal has been endorsed by the signatory countries to the *Convenio para la Conservación y Manejo de la Vicuña* (Vicuña Convention) in March 2002.

The current strict regulation of trade in Vicuña wool has restricted income-generating possibilities for artisans in Catamarca.

Reviewers: Y. Arzamendia, F. Barbarán, G. Lichtenstein, S. Puig, TRAFFIC South America, B. Vilá.

References:

- Barbarán, F., 2002. *in litt* to IUCN/SSC Wildlife Trade Programme, Cambridge, UK
- Cajal, J.L. and Puig, S., 1992. Argentina: The Vicuña, a portion of Section 2, Country Reports. In *South American Camelids: an Action Plan for Their Conservation*. IUCN/SSC South American Camelid Specialist Group, Gland, Switzerland.
- FWS (US Fish and Wildlife Service), 2002. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reclassification of Certain Vicugna Populations from Endangered to Threatened With a Special Rule. *Federal Register* 67(104): 37695-37723, May 30, 2002.
- Puig, S., 2002. *in litt* to IUCN/SSC Wildlife Trade Programme, Cambridge, UK.
- Torres, H., 2002. *in litt* to IUCN/SSC Wildlife Trade Programme, Cambridge, UK.
- TRAFFIC South America, 2002. *in litt.* to TRAFFIC International, Cambridge, UK.