

Scientific assessment of risk to the population of tortoises listed by CITES as a result of trade

The Norwegian Environment Agency hereby refers to the cooperation agreement between the Norwegian Environment Agency and VKM on 31 January 2019, as well as the mandate for assignments to VKM on risk assessment in 2019, and formally requests VKM to conduct a scientific risk assessment on the effects of trade on tortoises (*Testudinidae* spp.) based on the criteria given under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Cites. The Norwegian Environment Agency is the Management Authority under Cites and hereby designates that VKM for this assignment has the role of Norwegian Scientific Authority in accordance with the requirements set in the Convention text and in accordance with resolution 10.3 'Designation and role of Scientific Authorities'.

Background

Cites regulates international trade in endangered species. This includes many species of tortoises. Imports to Norway generally require both an export permits from foreign Cites authorities and import permits from the Norwegian Environment Agency. Export or re-export of these species also require permits issued by the Norwegian Environment Agency.

The Norwegian Environment Agency receives applications regarding permits for tortoises and specimens or products containing the species. Consequently, a scientific risk assessment (Non-Detriment Finding - NDF) is needed.

The risk assessment shall be used by the Norwegian Environment Agency in the evaluation of applications in accordance with the Norwegian Regulation on importation, exportation, possession, etc. of endangered species of wild fauna and flora (Cites-regulation).

Assignment

1. The Norwegian Environment Agency asks VKM for a scientific risk assessment of trade in tortoises (*Testudinidae* spp.) listed in the CITES appendices and specimens thereof, based on the criteria given under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites). The Norwegian Environment Agency also asks VKM to give an estimate as to when the risk assessment should be updated.
2. The assessment shall be based on the Norwegian Cites Regulation, relevant articles in the convention text and resolutions. The assessment shall contain available knowledge on the following:
 - a. Name, distribution, life history, habitat, role in ecosystem
 - b. Populations and trends
 - c. Legal / illegal harvesting, captive breeding and trade
 - d. Assessment of the threat(s) posed by trade
 - e. Brief summary of other threats and conservation status
 - f. Population monitoring programs in the range area

- g. National regulations / legislation and in the range countries
- h. Current management in the range countries, including harvest quotas
- i. Overall assessment of data quality

3. Limitation: The risk assessment primarily concerns the species imported/exported to/from Norway since 2010.

Background documents:

- Norwegian CITES regulation FOR - 2018-06-15-889
- Convention text, especially CITES Articles II, III, IV, VII, IX, og XIV.
- Res. Conf. 7.12 (Rev. CoP15) Marking requirements for trade in specimens of taxa with populations in both Appendix I and Appendix II
- Res. Conf. 8.3 (Rev. CoP13) Recognition of the benefits of trade in wildlife
- Res. Conf. 8.13 (Rev. CoP17) Use of coded-microchip implants for marking live animals in trade
- Res. Conf. 9.21 (Rev. CoP18) Interpretation and application of quotas for species included in Appendix I
- Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II
- Res. Conf. 10.3 Designation and role of the Scientific Authorities
- Res. Conf. 10.16 Specimens of animal species bred in captivity
- Res. Conf. 10.17 (Rev. CoP14) Animal hybrids
- Res. Conf. 10.21 (Rev. CoP16) Transport of live specimens
- Res. Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP18) Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles
- Res. Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) Ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II
- Res. Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes
- Res. Conf. 13.2 (Rev. CoP14) Sustainable use of biodiversity: Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines
- Res. Conf. 14.7 (Rev. CoP15) Management of nationally established export quotas
- Res. Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP18) CITES and livelihoods
- Res. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) Non-detriment findings
- Res. Conf. 18.6 Designation and role of Management Authorities
- CITES 'Non-detriment findings' background - <http://cites.org/eng/prog/ndf/index.php>
- Interpretation and application of quotas for species included in Appendix I: <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/09/09-21R13C15.php>

Relevant reports / websites etc.:

Cites.org

Conditions:

The risk assessment report must be written in English with a Norwegian summary. The report is published in agreement with the Norwegian Environment Agency. We also refer to the collaboration agreement between the Norwegian Environment Agency and VKM.

The deadline for submitting the report is 20.03.2024.

Contacts in the Norwegian Environment Agency:

Håkon Holand, Senior Adviser, Seksjon for fremmede organismer og internasjonal handel

Janne Øvrebø Bohnhorst, Head of section, Seksjon for fremmede organismer og internasjonal handel