from overexploitation and to prevent biological invasions. This is a serious oversight, as many ant species are not only ecologically sensitive but also endemic to small ranges and vulnerable to overcollection and disturbance. The clandestine nature of the trade, often facilitated through informal online channels and mislabelled shipments, hinders accurate monitoring and enforcement.

We call on CITES Parties to recognize the emergence of the international ant pet trade as a conservation and biosecurity issue of global concern. We propose the following measures: (1) Initiate a comprehensive review of the ant species currently in the international trade. (2) Prioritize the assessment of species that exhibit traits associated with invasiveness or are known to be threatened in the wild. (3) Consider listing all ant species (Formicidae) under CITES Appendix II to enable monitoring and regulation. (4) Develop identification tools and training resources for enforcement officers, to help them detect and manage ant trade cases effectively. (5) Strengthen collaboration between CITES, IUCN, invasive species experts and entomological societies.

Proactive intervention is critical to prevent irreversible ecological impacts and avoid costly eradication efforts. The window for preventative action is rapidly closing, and CITES has the mandate and the mechanisms to act.

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Adoption of new IUCN resolution guiding the conservation of amphibians

IUCN can issue specific resolutions, which are first presented as motions that are debated and voted on. Two resolutions related to amphibian conservation have been released in the past: Stopping the amphibian crisis (Resolution 4.017; Barcelona, 2008) and Further steps to combat the amphibian crisis (Resolution 5.020; Jeju, 2012). These resolutions built on knowledge of the amphibian extinction crisis, documented by the first Global Amphibian Assessment (Stuart et al., 2004, *Science*, 306, 1783–1786).

However, the scaling up of investment in amphibian conservation action has been inadequate, resulting in a continuing decline in conservation status. The recently completed second Global Amphibian Assessment lists 41% of species as threatened and confirms the extinction of 37 species, with a further 185 possibly extinct, and also highlights the emergence of climate change as a significant threat in addition to habitat loss, disease and exploitation (Luedtke et al., 2023, *Nature*, 622, 308–314). Subsequently the amphibian community submitted a new motion related to amphibian conservation in January 2025, which was adopted as a resolution on 9 October 2025 by the IUCN World Conservation Congress at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Despite the worsening conservation status of amphibians, conservation actions are having a positive impact, and the 2024 Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (IUCN Species Survival Commission Occasional Paper No. 57, doi.org/10.2305/QWVH2717) provides a roadmap for global and regional amphibian conservation. However, to prevent further extinctions and achieve Target 4 of the Kumming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, an urgent and large-scale increase in investment in amphibian conservation is imperative.

This latest resolution outlines a comprehensive global action plan to address the ongoing amphibian extinction crisis. It mandates the IUCN Species Survival Commission to develop updated conservation guidelines, focusing on climate change, disease management and protected areas. The resolution also calls on governments to implement long-term national plans, protect key habitats, establish biosecure breeding programmes and regulate trade. It further urges the provision of funding to scientists to develop practical solutions to disease and climate impacts. This new resolution supersedes that from Jeju in 2012, reflecting updated scientific knowledge and threat assessments.

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Policy decision-making for the striped hyaena under uncertainty

The striped hyaena *Hyaena hyaena* has been categorized as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List since 2015, but the

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assessment is annotated as 'needs updating' and the species is currently the subject of international policy discussions. At the 20th Conference of the Parties to CITES in late 2025, a proposal to uplist the striped hyaena from CITES Appendix III to Appendix I was initially rejected, but was subsequently adopted in plenary for inclusion in Appendix II. In parallel, a proposal for the species' inclusion in Appendices I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals is under consideration for the 15th Conference of the Parties in March 2026. These efforts reflect growing concern over illegal trade and continuing decline.

In recent evaluations, some advisory and review processes have recommended not to include the striped hyaena in CITES Appendix I because of the limited availability of robust, peer-reviewed data. These concerns raise an important question: does reliance on comprehensive data inadvertently disadvantage species that are poorly studied? Supporters of the proposal to uplist have emphasized a precautionary approach under CITES regulations, noting that remaining uncertainties should not delay action when evidence points to ecological vulnerability, continued decline and illegal trade. The precautionary principle was developed for such situations, guiding decision-making even when full scientific certainty is lacking. This places scientists in a difficult position. Global policy frameworks depend on scientific assessments, yet many species, especially those that are elusive or considered uncharismatic, usually do not have the detailed data needed to satisfy such expectations. This creates circular dependency. We struggle to obtain stronger protection for species that have been the subject of limited research, yet we often lack data precisely because these species have not benefited from the funding and attention that typically follow, rather than precede, higher-level listings. Consequently, data continue to accumulate for well-studied species, whereas lesser-studied species remain at a disadvantage.

Consultation processes during proposal preparation for Conferences of the Parties do seek additional information from range states, much of it not published in the peer-reviewed literature but nevertheless essential. However, such evidence often carries less weight than formal assessments, and preparing peer-reviewed data is in some cases beyond the capacity of many range states. This raises concerns about equity in global decision-making: countries with limited research capacity may be unintentionally marginalized in this respect. Although the IUCN Red List remains an indispensable global resource, outdated assessments complicate its use as the primary reference for policy decisions. Complementary frameworks such as the IUCN Green Status of Species, which assesses recovery potential and conservation success, may help provide broader guidance for decision-makers.

The ongoing debate about the striped hyaena highlights a deeper ethical and practical dilemma: how can international conventions ensure support for species needing urgent conservation actions but lacking the comprehensive data required to meet existing listing criteria? Without reflection and potential adjustments to current processes, under-researched and less publicly prominent species may continue to face disadvantages within the very mechanisms designed to secure their long-term conservation.

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