



## SEAHORSES TO BE LISTED UNDER CITES WITH EFFECT FROM 15 MAY 2004

1. With effect from 15 May 2004, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) will regulate the import and export of seahorses through the issuance of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) permits and approval of trade declarations. Live and dried seahorse specimens will be subject to CITES controls. Seafood traders, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) dealers and all aquarium seahorse dealers trading in live and dried seahorses will be required to obtain CITES permits from AVA when they import, export or re-export seahorses.

2 At the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CITES in Santiago, Chile (Nov 2002), a proposal to list all seahorses (Hippocampus species) under CITES Appendix II was adopted. The inclusion under CITES, which will take effect on 15 May 2004, implies that the seahorses may be traded internationally with proper CITES permits. Seahorses are caught in direct fisheries and as by-catch from trawl fisheries. The regulation of seahorses under CITES would contribute positively to the conservation of the species through permits control and the collection of trade and biological data. Research, captive-breeding programs and proper fisheries management of seahorses are also useful tools to assist in their conservation efforts.

3 Last year, Singapore imported approximately 47,700 live seahorses for aquaria trade. The seahorses imported were worth about \$40,000. Each year, Singapore imports some 2 tonnes of dried seahorses worth about \$170,000 for the traditional Chinese medicine trade. For seahorses that are personal effects, owners would still need to obtain CITES permits from both importing and exporting countries.

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4 There are some 32 recognised species of seahorses within the genus *Hippocampus*. They inhabit both temperate and tropical waters. They are vulnerable to over-exploitation and traded internationally for use in aquaria pet trade, as curios and medicine. Used as an ingredient in TCM products, they are believed by Chinese to treat and cure a wide range of ailments such as asthma, injuries, swelling, impotence etc.

5 For more information on the import, export and re-export of seahorses, the public can contact AVA at Tel: 6751 9804 (for live seahorses) or Tel: 6325 7102 (for dried seahorses). Application forms for CITES permits can be found on AVA's website at <http://www.ava.gov.sg>.

### **About CITES**

6 CITES is an international agreement to ensure that trade does not threaten wildlife species with extinction. Singapore became a signatory to CITES in November 1986 and implemented the Convention in February 1987. The Convention currently has a membership of 165 countries. Parties act by restricting international trade in species listed in Appendix I and by regulating and monitoring trade in others included in Appendix II and III that might become endangered.

7 As the Management Authority for CITES, AVA administers and enforces the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, which is the national legislation that gives effect to CITES controls on import and export of wildlife, including their parts and derivatives. The penalties under this Act for anyone convicted of illegal import of endangered species are fines of up to \$5,000 (\$10,000 for repeat offences) and/or jail of up to one year.

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**CITES APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix No.</b>	<b>Species Included</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Appendix I	Lists species that are highly endangered for which commercial trade is generally prohibited.	Rhinoceros, tigers, gibbons, whales, elephants, apes, sea turtles, Asian arowanas, lady's slipper orchid etc.
Appendix II	Includes species that are less endangered and may be threatened if trade is not regulated.	Monkeys, parrots, pythons, crocodiles, whale shark, agarwood etc.
Appendix III	Lists species for which certain individual countries wish to protect and require the cooperation of other parties to restrict their exploitation.	Walrus, rose-ringed parakeets, etc.

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*Live Seahorses*



*Dried Seahorses*

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