AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Ursus arctos [population of Asia (except subspecies isabellinus and pruinosus) Turkey and USSR] in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT

The Kingdom of Denmark.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Mammalia

12. Order: Carnivora

13. Family: Ursidae

14. Species: Ursus arctos Linnaeus 1758

15. Common Names: English: brown bear
French: ours brun
Spanish: Oso Pardo

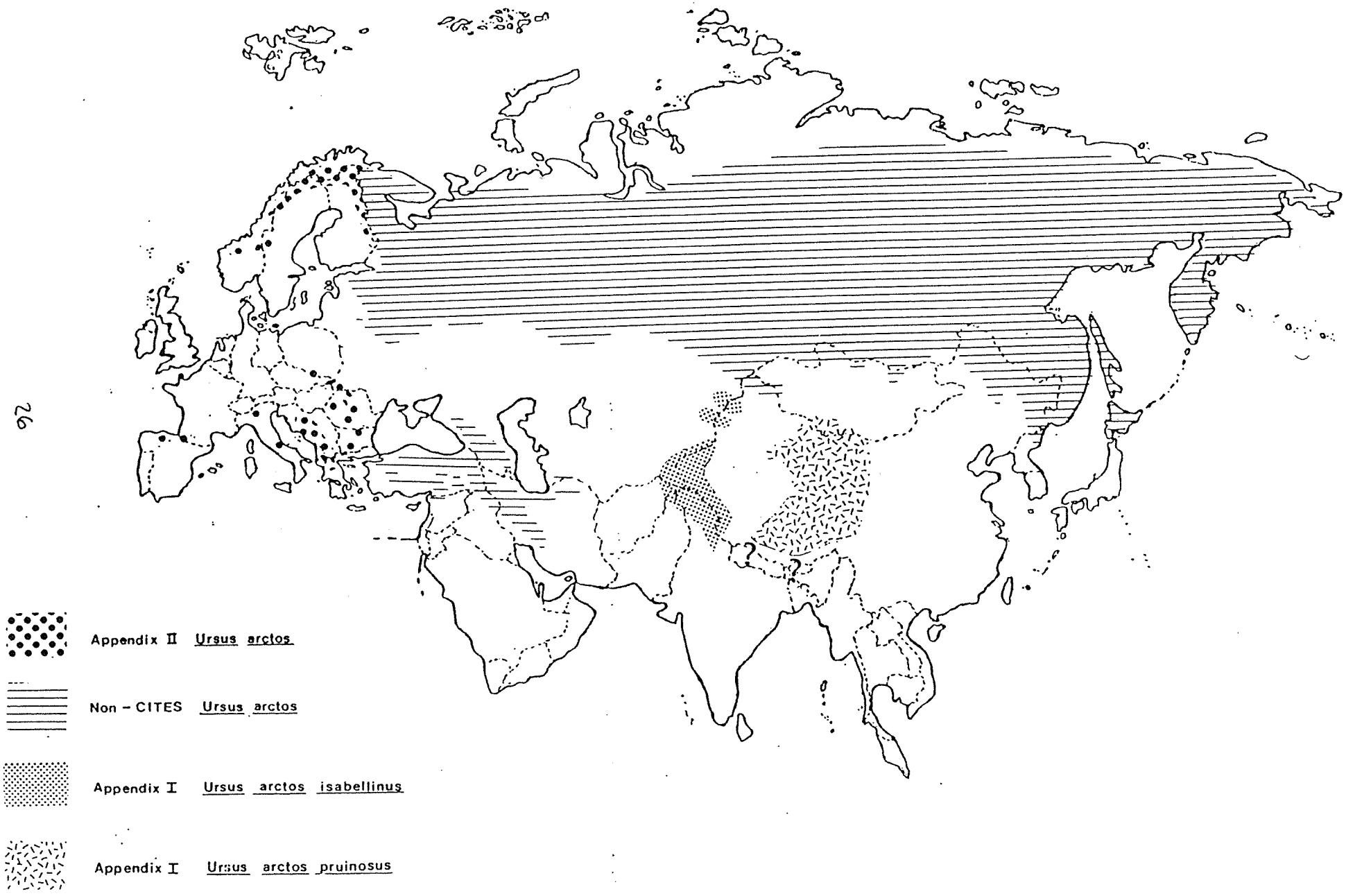
16. Code Numbers:

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: Populations of this species not currently in the CITES appendices occur in China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolian People's Republic, Syria?, Turkey and USSR. See Figure 1.

In China the non-CITES populations of the brown bear are largely confined to the Heilongjiang and Jilin Provinces in the North-East of the country (Ma, 1983). In the Islamic Republic of Iran, populations are probably found in the Elburz Mountains in the North and Zagros Mountains in the West (Lay, 1967). In Iraq Ursus arctos is probably still present in the Kurdistan mountains of extreme North-East of the country (Khalaf, 1983; Hatt, 1959). In Syria the species survived in the Al Sheikh Mountains on the border with Lebanon possibly as late as 1960 (Khalaf, 1983) but it is probably now only found in the mountains in the vicinity of Latakia in NW Syria (Khalaf, 1983). In Turkey, Ursus arctos is confined to the South and East of the country and the Taurus mountains (Mursalogu, 1988). In Mongolia the non-CITES populations of the species are divided into four small discreet populations which are to be found in the Hovsgol, western Altai, Hentei Mountains and upper Onon/Uldz Valleys (Mallon, 1985). In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the species is found in the North-East of the country only. In Japan Ursus arctos is confined to the island of Hokkaido, where it is fragmented into

Fig 1. The Eurasian distribution of Ursus arctos



three sub-populations (Aoi, 1985). The country in which then on-CITES populations of Ursus arctos have the biggest range is the USSR. The range in the USSR stretches through all the forested and partly forested areas from the Chukot and Kamchatka peninsulas in the East to Estonia, Karelia and the Kola Peninsula in the West. In the latter two areas the population is continuous with that of Finland where the animals are thus able to literally walk in and out of the CITES appendices in this area. Small numbers of non-CITES brown bears of the "subspecies" syriacus also occur in the Caucusus area and the extreme South of Turkman SSR.

22. Population: In China the non-CITES populations of Ursus arctos ("subspecies" lasiotus) is described as "common" on the Tahinganlin and Siachinganling mountain ranges bordering the USSR, but less common in the eastern part of its Chinese range. Populations of "subpecies" currently listed in Appendix I occur elsewhere in the country (Ma, 1983). In one 200 km^2 area of the Heilongjiang Province an estimated 1,200 bears were present (Anon, 1983b). However, this looks rather high as previous work in North America has suggested that individual bears require 20 km^2 to 150 km^2 (Shaffer, 1978). Brown bears in China as a whole are on the brink of being threatened by over-exploitation for domestic and international trade (Wang, 1989).

In Japan where the species is confined to the island of Hokkaido, the population in 1970 was estimated at 3,000 (Inukai, 1972). It is declining due to habitat loss and unregulated harvest both as a game and pest species (Aoi, 1985).

In Mongolia the non-CITES specimens of Ursus arctos have disappeared from certain areas. The species is considered "not common" anywhere in the country and has become extinct in certain areas such as the Hingan Mountains (Mallon, 1985).

In Turkey the bear population has decreased rapidly in the last 30-40 years. The situation regarding the bear population still seems "quite good" in certain remote areas although no population data is available (Mursaloglu, 1988).

In the USSR Verestchagin (1967) estimated the total population to be in the vicinity of 100,000 animals. In 1970 Kistchinski, quoted in Cowans (1972), proposed a figure of roughly the same magnitude. A USSR total population estimate of roughly 100,000 given by Verestchagin (1972) was still considered current by Zhyrnov et al. (1978). In 1982 the total USSR population was put at 60,000 (Anon., 1984). As the animal is largely confined to the forested areas of the Soviet Union and there are 7,700,000 sq km of these (Januskis and Knystautas, 1987) this would equate to very roughly 0.8 bears per 100 km^2 if the population were 60,000 or 1.3 bears per km^2 if the population were 100,000 animals. Although populations densities in the USSR vary considerably, comparison with other studies suggest that such figures are of about the right magnitude.

Reference is found to studies of bear populations in certain parts of the USSR and in some cases population estimates are available.

European USSR

10 - 11,000 Kistchinski, quoted in Cowans (1972).
23,000 in 1979 (CIC 1979)
32,000 in 1983 from the Hunting and Economics of Hunting Journal numbers 10 and 11 in 1983, quoted Rosle (1988).

It is not clear how any of these populations estimates were calculated. Zhyrnov et al. (1978) reported that intensive development of the forest zones in central and West European areas of the USSR had resulted in a reduction in numbers of the species there and that it was becoming "extremely rare" in these parts. Around 1981 the population in the Karelia ASSR of European USSR was quoted as being around 3000 (Anon., 1983a).

Asian USSR: Little information could be located about Ursus arctos populations in the forests of the central part of the USSR. However, in a 200,000 km^2 area of North-East Yakutsk ASSR and extensive aerial survey in 1979-80 revealed a population of 840-1000 bears (0.42-0.5 bears per 100 km^2). Such densities are of a similar order of magnitude as Shaffer (1978). In contrast, in other parts of North-East USSR such as the Kamchatka Peninsula, population densities can reach as high as 10-30 bear per 100 km^2 (Zhyrnov et al., 1978). Even higher densities have been recorded seasonally in this area but even in 1970 populations were said to have greatly decrease due to overhunting (Kistchinski, 1972). Anon. (1981) noted a substantial decrease in bears due to overhunting and recommended a hunting ban in the majority of the Chukotka region.

Nothing is known of the status of the brown bear Ursus arctos in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Democratic People's Republic of Korea or Syria, although the range of the brown bear in these countries suggests that populations are going to be small.

Although these bears are long living, their reproductive capacity is not great. Females probably produce their first cubs at around 5 years and thereafter give birth to about 2 cubs at three year intervals. Such a reproductive strategy means that bear numbers recover very slowly after any period of overhunting and makes disturbance of breeding females a serious threat.

23. Habitat: Ursus arctos is largely a forest-tundra and taiga animal although they are also seen seasonally in tundra proper areas and some small populations may even live in barren ground regions. Forested areas in the mountains are preferred but this may be a reflection of the need to avoid contact with man.

3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: In China, several hundred were reported hunted annually (Ma, 1983) and one area of Heilongjiang Province was opened up to foreign hunters (Anon., 1983b). Brown bears are hunted throughout the country for their gall bladders and paws (Wang, 1989). Trade in live animals is common in many Asian countries where cubs are sought as "dancing bears" for use by travelling gypsies. Cubs obtained for this purpose often are taken by killing the mother.

In Japan, there was considerable interaction between man and bears on the island of Hokkaido and between 1955 and 1970 an average of 509 bears were killed every year (Inukai, 1972). A substantial number of brown bears were still being killed annually in the late 1970 and early 1980s.

	Hunting kills	Pest kills
1979	142	not available
1980	128	not available
1981	103	267

Source: Milliken (1985a)

More recently about 300 per year have been killed (Aoi, 1985).

In Syria although the range of the bear is very small, animals are apparently still being killed for their skins (Khalaf, 1983).

32. Legal International Trade: Although the populations referred to in this proposal are not presently listed in the CITES appendices, annual reports from CITES Parties do sometimes refer to trade in animals from these populations. These reports are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Trade in non-CITES specimens of Ursus arctos nonetheless reported in Annual Reports of CITES Parties 1976-1986 inclusive

	Country of Import	Export	Origin	Imports reported (purpose)	Exports/Re-exports reported (purpose)
1977	DE	IR			5 skins
1978	FI	KP		54 skins (C)	
1980	US	JP		1 trophy (P)	
1981	PH	JP			2 live (T)
	TH	JP			2 live (Z)
	US	JP		1 skin (P)	
	US	MN		1 trophy (P)	
1982	DE	CN			15 trophies (C)
	EG	CN			7 live
1983	HK	JP	(XX)		2 live (T)
	JP	HK	(SU)		2 live (T)
	KR	JP			1 live (C)
1984	SU	JP	(SU)		8 live (T)
	US	FR	(SU)	1 trophy (C)	
1985	FR	US	(SU)		1 trophy
	US	MN		1 trophy	
	US	TR		1 trophy	
1986	DE	SE	(KP)		1 body
	KR	HK	(CN)		2 feet (C)
	US	CN		2 live	

Codes

CN	China	MN	Mongolia
DE	Fed. Rep. of Germany	PH	Philippines
EG	Egypt	SU	Sweden

FI	Finland	TH	Thailand
FR	France	TR	Turkey
HK	Hong Kong	US	United States of America
IR	Islamic Republic of Iran	XX	Country unknown
JP	Japan		
KR	Democratic People's Republic of Korea		

(C) Commercial
(P) Personal
(T) Circus

There does appear to be a considerable amount of trade in parts and derivatives of these animals particularly in the Far East. For instance, it has been estimated that in the late 1970s more than half a tonne of bear paws were sent annually from China to Japan. As these are not mentioned in the CITES annual reports it must be assumed (although cannot be proven) that the paws came from the population of Ursus arctos lasiotus found in North-East China. These being the only Chinese bears not in CITES. In recent years this trade has dropped to some 500-600 kg of paws per year (representing 150-180 bears), however, in late 1983 a single shipment of 300 kg was sent (Milliken, 1985b).

The full extent of this trade is not known.

33. Illegal Trade: Not known.

34. Potential Trade Threats:

341. Live Specimens: Probably limited to a few specimens required for circus and zoo purposes.

342. Parts and Derivatives: A very considerable threat. Parts in demand include skins, gall bladders (medicinal purposes), meat and paws (for human consumption) and claws (for decorative purposes).

4. Protection Status

41. National:

China: Listed in the Second Category (= vulnerable) in the State Protected Species List of Wildlife attached to the Wildlife Protection Law, 1988.

Islamic Republic of Iran: Not known.

Iraq: Not known.

Japan: May be killed under licence as game animals but the species is also designated as a pest allowing problem animals to be shot without a permit.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Not known.

Mongolia: Not known.

Syria: Not known.

Turkey: Sale of bear skins is prohibited but hunting by foreign hunters is permitted between August and April in certain areas.

USSR: Generally not protected although close seasons for hunting do exist in some areas and in certain National Parks the species is fully protected.

42. International: Listed in Appendix II of the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats which would apply to the Turkish population. However, upon ratifying the Convention, Turkey has entered a reservation with respect to this species.

43. Additional Protection Needs: The principal reasons for the decline in the numbers of this species have been habitat loss, disturbance and indiscriminating hunting.

High density bear populations and humans often do not go well together. The safeguarding of undisturbed, suitable habitat in areas of low human population is therefore, an essential feature for the conservation of the species.

5. Information on Similar Species

Although readily distinguishable in live form from other bear species it is impossible to distinguish these animals from other Ursus arctos "subspecies" that have been listed in the CITES appendices (Erdbrink, 1953). This is the view of current bear biologists (Herrero, 1988). In the form of parts and derivatives they are unlikely to be separable from other bear species.

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

Sought but no reply received except from China, who supports the proposal.

7. Additional Remarks

The large scale trade in bear parts and derivatives particularly paw and gall bladders and to a lesser extent skins is a threat to the conservation of bears generally. The continuing existence of bears which are not listed in the CITES appendices presents enforcement difficulties and allows products of bears already protected by CITES to enter international trade under the guise of non-CITES products. The listing in the CITES appendices of the bears covered by this proposal is therefore primarily, but not wholly, made under Article II 2 b) of the Convention.

8. References

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