

# AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

## Other Proposals

### A. PROPOSAL

Transfer of Felis geoffroyi from Appendix II to Appendix I.

### B. PROPONENT

The Federative Republic of Brazil.

### C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

#### 1. Taxonomy

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 11. Class:        | Mammalia  |
| 12. Order:        | Carnivora   |
| 13. Family:       | Felidae   |
| 14. Species:      | <u>Felis geoffroyi</u><br>(d'Orbigny & Gervais 1844)  |
| 15. Common Names: | English: Geoffrey's cat<br>French: chat de Geoffroy<br>Spanish: Gato montés<br>Portuguese: Cato-do-mato de Geoffroy |
| 16. Code Numbers: | ISIS 5301412007001010000<br>(Honacki et al. 1982)   |

#### 2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: The geographic distribution of the Geoffroy's cat ranges from the Bolivian Andes and the mountains of north-western Argentina through the Gran Chaco to Uruguay and southernmost Rio Grande do Sul State in Brazil, south through the length of Argentina to the Rio Gallegos in Patagonia (Guggisberg, 1975).

Geoffrey's cats according to Honacki et al. (1987) occur in Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil.

The subspecific status as designated by Ximenez (1991) follows:

F. g. euxantha (Pocock 1940). Type locality: Tiraque, Departamento de Cochabamba, Bolivia, altitude 3,300 meters. Distribution from extreme southwest of Bolivia to the Provinces of San Luis and Mendoza in Argentina (Cabrena, 1958).

F. g. geoffroyi (d'Orbigny & Gervais 1844). Type locality "by Rio Negro, in Patagonia". Distribution: from southern Buenos Aires Province to the

Magellan Strait. In its southernmost distribution the subspecies crosses the Andean Chain and spreads through southern Chile (Ximenez, 1975).

E. g. paraguae (Pocock 1940). Type locality: Paraguay. Distribution: Chaco region of Paraguay and Argentina, reaching west to the wet areas that border the Chaco in Salta and Tucumán Provinces, extending through Santiago del Estero north of Santa Fé, Corrientes, Entre Ríos and all of Uruguay and west Rio Grande do Sul State in Brazil (Cabrena, 1961; Ximenez, 1971).

E. g. salinarum (Thomas 1903). Type locality: Cruz del Eje, Córdoba Province, Argentina. Distribution: mountain areas of northwestern Argentina, from Jujuy and Salta Provinces to southern Mendoza and northern Neuquén Provinces through Tucumán, La Rioja and San Juan (Cabrera, 1961).

The geographic distribution of Felis geoffroyi, is limited compared to other wild cats in South and Central America. Of the eleven species of Felidae occurring throughout Latin America, only F. jacobita and F. guigna have more restricted ranges (Koford, 1974; Kitchener, 1991), neither of which is in trade to any known extent.

22. Population: The following update on populations of Geoffroy's cat was prepared by Ximenez (1991) for the National Secretariat of the Environment of Brazil:

Argentina: Average export of F. geoffroyi furs from 1975 to 1985 was 39,632 individuals, with 1977 being the peak export with 123,678. In 1984 only 2,000 pieces were exported, and 1985 saw no exports of this species (legal at least). The species is clearly being reduced as is shown by reduction observed on its original distribution (Gruss & Waller, 1988). In 1987 exports amounting to 67,000 furs were authorized (Broad, 1987).

Bolivia: No information is currently available.

Brazil: Though the species does not occur yet in southern Brazil (Koford, 1973), development initiatives translated as deforestation and expansion of croplands may be leading to the partial or complete extinction of its populations, already limited by the naturally narrow distribution of the species (Ximenez, 1982). It is quite possible that illegal trade in this species does occur and it is easily mistaken for Felis tigrina in trade.

Chile: It is quite possibly vulnerable already due to intensive hunting pressure on the species in the recent past (Millet et al., 1983).

Paraguay: Possibly very vulnerable, as its capture for the fur trade is reported as frequent.

Uruguay: Though it is considered to be locally frequent in areas throughout the country, it is hunted heavily and its fur traded on the national fur market.

In a status survey of F. geoffroyi carried out by Melquist (1984), 80% of the respondents to questionnaires sent to government officials, scientists,

and other pertinent individuals in all range states, felt that numbers of this species were declining. Daciuk (1974) felt that the situation was critical for Geoffroy's cat populations in Patagonia.

23. Habitat/Ecology: *F. geoffroyi* is poorly known; little field research has been carried out on behaviour and ecology in the wild.

Geoffroy's cats are known to inhabit scrubby woodland and open bush country in plains and foothills (Guggisberg, 1975) from sea level to about 300 meters in subtropical and temperate biomes (Ximenez, 1975). The species is mainly nocturnal, but occasionally crepuscular, preying on small birds and mammals in addition to some aquatic creatures (Ximenez, 1975). Geoffroy's cats climb and swim to catch prey (Line, 1985). No other predators other than humans are known for this species (Ximenez, 1975). Breeding seems to be limited to December-May; a single litter of 2-3 kittens is produced (Ximenez, 1975).

Measurements for the species, according to Guggisberg (1975), are 55-65cm. average length for head and body, plus 35cm. average length for tail.

Habitat destruction along with over-harvest and human disturbance has been noted as one of the main threats to this species (Broad et al., 1988). Koford (1973) reported that Geoffroy's cat was versatile and tolerant of moderate deforestation. However, the current cleaning of large areas of Chaco forest for cattle ranching, particularly in Paraguay, has been emphasized as a problem to the survival of this species (Broad et al., 1988). Broad et al., (1988) noted that Gonzalez Ruiz, the Argentina CITES Management Authority at the time of their study, reported that the Geoffroy's cat inhabited a wide variety of habitat types and that the extent of the destruction and alteration varied from region to region in Argentina.

In Brazil, the Geoffroy's cat is dependant on the gallery forests of the State of Rio Grande do Sol (Broad et al., 1988). Melquist (1984) concluded that poaching and habitat loss were major threats to the species in Brazil.

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: National utilization is primary for tourist souvenirs (Koford, 1974); for example, in Bolivia, Indians hunt small cat species for handicrafts (Lobão Tello, 1986) and Koford (1973) mentioned the income derived by the Chaco Indians from Geoffroy's cat pelts. Melquist (1984) noted that Indians in Paraguay sell live cats to urban residents. Lobão Tello (1986) also mentioned the shooting or trapping of small cat species for sport.

32. Legal International Trade: Along with ocelot (*F. pardalis*), margay (*F. wiedii*), and oncilla or tiger cat (*F. tigrina*) (species placed in Appendix I at the meeting of the Parties, 1989), Geoffroy's cats have been heavily exploited and traded since the 1960's. These four species have constituted the bulk of the spotted cat trade from South America for several decades and, since the virtual commercial extinction of the jaguar, have been the main targets of fur hunters and trappers throughout the continent.

Hunters interviewed by Mares and Ojeda (1984) in Argentina spoke of the declining population levels but increased values for skins of Geoffroy's cats. In a study of the economic magnitude of wildlife exploitation, the same authors calculated a value of US\$ 8.695 million for Geoffroy's cat skins over a four-year period (1976-1979) from Argentina alone. *F. geoffroyi* was the fourth ranking wildlife commodity behind grey fox, nutria, and all species of lizards combined. Individual skins cost approximately US\$ 51.00 (Mares & Ojedas, 1984). Sale prices in foreign markets may be 10-20 times higher (Broad, 1987).

Koford (1974) reported that the manufacture and sale of cat-skin coats of all species are a major business in Montevideo and Buenos Aires. He calculated that a Geoffroy's cat coat in the early 1970's cost US\$ 3,000. In 1986-1988 large numbers of skins were still available in fur shops in Montevideo and Buenos Aires; coats were priced at US\$ 240-1,600 (Broad, 1987).

By 1979-1980, Geoffroy's cats exceeded all other wild-cat pelts in trade (McMahan, 1983). In the 1970's and early 1980's, the Federal Republic of Germany was the major importer of Geoffroy's cat pelts (Broad, 1987, Caldwell, 1984; see Table I). The German market disappeared during the mid-1980's, however, due to changes in fashion trends and attitudes (Broad, 1987).

Paraguay became the main supplier of *F. geoffroyi* skins after 1978. Numbers increased from 14,000 skins exported in 1978 to a peak of 84,921 in 1983 (Caldwell, 1984; WCMC, 1991) (see Table II). From 1983 to 1986 Bolivia became the major exporter of Geoffroy's cat skins, with Argentina succeeding Bolivia in the years 1987 to 1988, probably due to the legalization of stockpiled pelts (Broad et al., 1988).

In the 1980's, several analyses of trade in Geoffroy's cat skins predicted gradual declines in commercial volume of this species (Caldwell, 1984; Broad, et al., 1988). However, these declines have not been sustained and new sources have undoubtedly succeeded each other as main exporters. Whether, as the species is hunted out in one area, trade is shifted to other areas is not known because of lack of data in wild populations, but this explanation may merit attention.

33. Illegal Trade: Melquist (1984) noted that although the Geoffroy's cat is ostensibly protected throughout its range by national law, some respondents to his survey/questionnaire reported that laws which prohibit hunting and exportation of pelts are not enforced. Lobão Tello (1985) goes so far as to say that wildlife laws do not in reality exist in some regions. Broad et. al. (1988) have suggested that Paraguay, despite

TABLE II. Exports of *Felis geoffroyi* pelts, 1980-1989 derived from CIJES annual reports  
 (From Anon. 1991b, EROAG et al. 1988, WCMC 1991)

	Item	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1/
Argentina	Plates					1			73			
	Skins	8124	1233	3126	8	2024	335		39595	14000		
Belize	Skins			2								
Bolivia	Skins		1		3310	13844	1847	8460		3217		
Canada	Skins	151	10									
France	Skins	28										
FRG	Skins	349	14									
Nicaragua	Skins				1							
Paraguay	Skins	58767	81871	21137	84921	4500	118	3997				
	Kg					363						
UK	Skins		2079					22				
USA	Skins					1000					300	
Unknown	Skins	1388	1633	843	10130	4319	1	22		3		
	PLATES					1			73			
TOTALS	SKINS	68807	86841	25108	98370	25667	2381	12501	39595	17220	300	
	KG					363						

1/ Export figures for 1989 available only from USA

efforts of its authorities, may remain a centre for illegal trade in Geoffroy's cats although harvests have been reduced considerably in recent years.

The EEC banned future import of *F. geoffroyi* in 1986 (Anon., 1987). This import regulation noted that export of feli pelts from Paraguay has been illegal since 1975 yet continued up until the time of the EEC ban. As recently as 1988, a shipment from Paraguay containing 450 skins of *F. tigrina* and *F. geoffroyi* was confiscated in Belgium.

TABLE I: Import of *Felis geoffroyi* 1980-1985, 1988-1989. Skins only unless otherwise noted. From Anon. 1991a and b, Broad et al., 1990

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1988	1989*
Argentina		3941						
Austria	79	237	318	331	66	67		
Belgium	2327		79		1000			
Cyprus			22					
France	5				14844	1683		
FRG	51612	76802	15874	77605	3544			
Greece	3819		5412					
Italy	8470	2861	32		2365			
Japan				1	363kg			
Luxembourg			32					
Malta	7							
Monaco				25				
Netherlands				2				
Singapore				1				
Spain	424	908	761	302	653			
Switzerland							1	
UK	1871							
USA	1	601	3	1	1		501	357
TOTAL	66615	84900	22533	78278	22473	1751	501	357
				363 kg				

\* Import figures for 1988 and 1989 available only from USA

#### 34. Potential Trade Threats:

341. Live Specimens: There is no current threat stemming from collection of Geoffroy's cats for the pet trade. Some trade in zoo specimens exists (see Table III).
342. Parts and Derivatives: Commercial trade in skins of Geoffroy's cats represents the existing and potential threat to the survival of this species.

TABLE III Exports of live specimens of Felis geoffroyi, 1983-1989  
(From Anon. 1991b, WCMC 1991)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	*
Argentina	4	4	2	2				
Bolivia	6							
Canada		3	4					
GDR	2	1			1			
FRG	1							
UK					3			
USA			1				1	

\* Export figures for 1989 available only from USA

#### 4. Protection Status

41. National: All range states are Parties to CITES and have legislation that protects this species.

TABLE IV National laws regulating hunting, internal trade, and commercial trade in Felis geoffroyi: years when legislation came into force. (From Broad et al., 1988, Broad 1987)

	CITES	Hunting	Trade	Export
Argentina	1981	1001	1901	1981
Bolivia	1979	1979	1979	1979
Brazil	1975	1967	1967	1867
Chile	1975	1972	1972	1972
Paraguay	1977	1975	1975	1975
Uruguay	1975	1978	1978	1978

Legislative protection varies greatly from nation to nation depending on the degree of enforcement (Broad et al., 1988) but, overall, has not been actually effective (Lobão Tello, 1986; Mares & Ojeda, 1984; Melquist, 1984). National export controls have been particularly unsuccessful in stopping international trade in Geoffroy's cat pelts.

42. International: F. geoffroyi has been listed in Appendix II of CITES since 1977. The European Economic Community instituted regulations preventing commercial importation of skins of F. geoffroyi in 1986 (Anon., 1987).
43. Additional Protection Needs: As was the case with F. pardalis, F. wiedii, and F. tigrina, if the Berne Criteria are interpreted narrowly, then the paucity of biological information on population trends and the difficulty in determining the origin of skins of F. geoffroyi makes total fulfilment of such criteria nearly impossible. However, and again for the same reasons as the above three small South American cats previously listed in Appendix I the Geoffroy's cat is in dire need of the strongest possible protection.

Presently there is insufficient information on the status, distribution and ecology of this species to ensure a sustainable harvest; furthermore, illegal trade has flourished for more than a decade, and the enforcement of laws regulating take and export are problematic in many range states for reasons often beyond their control. It is therefore considered that only a transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I will ensure that the future survival of the species is not prevented by the trade.

F. geoffroyi shares a large portion of its range with populations of F. tigrina, F. pardalis and/or F. wiedii (Berrie, 1978). Furthermore, the skins of these spotted cats are similar and manufactured garments are particularly difficult to distinguish by species. In the 1970's, for example, F. wiedii, F. tigrina and F. geoffroyi were collectively called "maracajá" and entered trade as such (Doughty & Myers, 1971).

After the initial population decline in large spotted cats (i.e. jaguar, leopard), ocelot and margay became the focus of the fur trade. As these also declined, the trend shifted to even smaller spotted cats from South America, e.g. F. geoffroyi and F. tigrina (McMahan, 1983, 1986). Exploitation of smaller cats is exacerbated by the larger number needed to make garments. While eight leopards are killed for one coat, 25 Geoffroy's cat pelts are needed for the same item (McMahan, 1986). Kitchener (1991) noted that since the demise of the ocelot and margay populations, the Geoffroy's cat has suffered the depredation of the fur trade.

Currently, lack of CITES Appendix I status for F. geoffroyi has two major drawbacks:

- 1) Pressure may well have shifted from F. tigrina, F. pardalis and F. wiedii onto F. geoffroyi when the former three species were listed in Appendix I in 1989. Population trends in Geoffroy's cat are unqualified but all evidence points to heavy exploitation combined with declining populations.
- 2) A serious loophole exists with F. geoffroyi remaining in Appendix II, making it simple for illegal trade to continue in pelts of F. tigrina, F. pardalis and F. wiedii due to similarity of appearance with Felis geoffroyi.

The International Society for Endangered Cats (1991) has called for Appendix-I status for Geoffroy's cat due to concern over diminishing populations caused by increased hunting pressure, mislabelling of skin shipments of other endangered spotted cats as F. geoffroyi, and lack of a viable gene pool in captivity to use for replenishment of the populations lost in the wild.

Finally, of great importance is the fact that the foremost authority on Felis geoffroyi, Dr. Alfred Ximenez, has recommended transfer of this species to Appendix I.

##### 5. Information on Similar Species

The ocelot (F. pardalis), margay (F. wiedii), tiger cat or oncilla (F. tigrina) and Geoffroy's cat comprised commercially exploited small spotted cats of South America. Much ..... and all four species are indigenous to Brazil.



The closest similar species is F. tigrina which is smaller and has a relatively longer tail.

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

7. Additional Remarks

71. Skin Quality/Coloration: Coloration and markings are variable according to Ximenez (1975): ground colour varies geographically from ochre in the north of the species range to silvery-grey in the south. The body is covered of small black round spots less distinct in F. g. salinarum of northern Argentina. Spots are arranged in thin stripes on the face and neck (Line, 1985). Ears are black with central white spots, the tail is spotted at the base and ringed towards the tip (Ximenez, 1975).

72. Captive Breeding: According to Broad et al. (1988), an annual average of 12 animals were bred between 1972 and 1981. The International Society for Endangered Cats (1991) cautioned that there is not a viable gene pool of F. geoffroyi currently in zoological institutions. Most individuals are hybrid and inbred.

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## International Society For Endangered Cats, Inc.

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September 13, 1991

On behalf of our organization, the International Society for Endangered Cats, I would like to submit this letter of endorsement in favor of the proposal to transfer the Geoffroy's cat, *Felis geoffroyi*, from Appendix II to Appendix I under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Fauna (CITES).

There is growing evidence that Geoffroy's cat populations are diminishing throughout their range in South America due to habitat destruction and harvesting for the fur trade. Authorities from countries where Geoffroy's cats are found point out that sightings of these cats have declined as hunting pressure on this species has increased since three other small South American spotted cats, ocelot, margay and oncilla, were placed on Appendix I in 1989.

There is also evidence to show that because legal trade continues to exist for this species, other spotted cats from the region are still taken illegally, and shipped under the designation "Geoffroy's cat." Clearly, the most effective way to curtail the illegal trade, and to relieve the serious pressure on the Geoffroy's cat would be to include that species in Appendix I.

Another concern that our organization has identified involving the overall status of *F. geoffroyi* is that there is not, at this time, a viable captive population in zoological institutions which could be utilized as a reserve to replenish populations lost in the wild. Recent genetic work has indicated that most Geoffroy's cats in zoos in the United States are hybrid subspecies, and that the incidence of inbreeding of these captive animals is quite high.

Given the combination of factors above, we would like to give this proposal to elevate the Geoffroy's cat to Appendix I our strongest endorsement.

Sincerely,

John Becker, Ph.D.  
Executive Director