

CoP17 Prop. 36. [Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Togo and United States of America] Inclusion of six species in the Family Trionychidae in Appendix II: *Cyclanorbis elegans*, *Cyclanorbis senegalensis*, *Cycloderma aubryi*, *Cycloderma frenatum*, *Trionyx triunguis* and *Rafetus euphraticus*

The six species of softshell turtles native to Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East are all thought to have declined with one (Nubian Flapshell Turtle *Cyclanorbis elegans*) becoming rare. Traditionally exploited for local consumption, small numbers are recorded in the international pet trade. However, there is concern that as populations of turtles consumed in Asia are depleted, sourcing is turning to Africa as populations in Asia are depleted. An illegal butchery in Malawi was recently found processing relatively large numbers of Zambezi Flapshell Turtles *Cycloderma frenatum*, reportedly for export of processed meat and shell to East Asia. Chinese nationals reportedly started collecting the species from Lake Malawi months after Asian softshell turtles received greater CITES protection. However, it is currently unclear if this is becoming a common phenomenon and if demand from the increasing Asian human population in Africa is also a concern.

The Nile Softshell Turtle *Trionyx triunguis* was listed in Appendix III (Ghana) from 1976 to 2007. Some species are variously protected by law in some range States, and/or require permits for collection.

Softshell turtle demand in Asia is not species-specific, and it is difficult to differentiate traded parts to species although further evidence of international trade in the six species in the proposal would be needed for them to meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix II as lookalikes. Nevertheless, noting the high demand for softshell turtles in Asia, the non-species specific nature of that demand and the report of collection of *C. frenatum* for export to Asia, it may be prudent to facilitate monitoring and enforcement of international trade in the Trionychidae family. Until the degree of their sourcing is better known, the species may benefit from precautionary listing in Appendix II.

ACCEPT

