

IUCN Policy Statement on State Gifts of Animals

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IUCN recognizes the long-standing tradition among governments and heads of state of giving or exchanging live animals, especially those of large and rare species, as tokens of esteem and for other reasons. Increased restriction on the transfer of animals under a wide range of national and international laws for species conservation and for veterinary health reasons have reduced, but not completely stopped, transfers as state gifts of animals of species under threat of extinction.

State gifts of living animals of threatened species, such as those recognized by IUCN as Rare, Vulnerable, or Endangered, should only be made or accepted if they can be completely compatible with ongoing conservation programmes for the species involved, including captive breeding programmes. Such captive breeding programmes should conform with the IUCN Policy Statement on Captive Breeding, 4 September 1987.

Further, as a matter of trust and leadership in conservation, all transfers of animals as state gifts should adhere to national laws of the parties involved, as well as complying with the requirements of international conservation conventions and, in particular, of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. For CITES Appendix I species (and EEC Council Regulation 3626/82 Annex C1 species) the procedure laid down in Article III of CITES should be followed, in particular with regard to import permits and advice of the scientific authorities concerned