

## Ban On Grey Trade

### **CITES recommends a two-year ban on wild-caught African greys**

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Concerned with an uptick in exports of wild African greys from Africa, CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, recommended a two-year ban on the export trade of these popular parrots that often wind up in the European pet market. CITES, an international body that governments voluntarily adhere to for global trade of animals and plants, recommended the ban for five African countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cameroon. The CITES Animals Committee further suggested that export quotas for African greys from the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo be significantly reduced to about 4,000 and 5,000 birds per year, respectively.

The trade moratorium would affect both the nominate subspecies, *Psittacus erithacus erithacus* (commonly referred to as the Congo African grey) and the smaller subspecies, *Psittacus e. timneh*. All recommendations are to take effect January 1, 2007.

The recommendations come on the heels of a CITES-requested review of the current trade practices for the species. Alison Stattersfield, Head of Science at BirdLife, which participated in the review, said that the recommendations reflect the group's concern with heavy trading and "poor/non-existent scientific justification for setting national quotas." BirdLife fully supports the two-year temporary ban, Stattersfield added.

Although the United States banned wild bird imports in 1992, Europe's pet trade still relies heavily on wild-caught parrot imports. Ninety-three percent of the wild-caught African greys from Africa land in Europe, according to a CITES 2006 report. Since the avian flu scare began in 2005, however, the European Union imposed a ban on all live captive-bird imports, which it recently extended until March 31, 2007. The EU-imposed ban reflects health rather than conservation concerns, Stattersfield pointed out.