



“Working within CITES for the protection and conservation of species in international trade”

## Cedrela spp.

CoP14 Prop. 33 (Germany) Inclusion in Appendix II

SSN View: Support Adoption of Proposal

### 250 YEARS OF HARVEST COMBINED WITH HABITAT LOSS HAS RESULTED IN POPULATION DECLINE

Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) is a tropical hardwood found throughout Central and South America, from Mexico through Central America and the Caribbean south to Bolivia and east to Brazil's coastal Atlantic Forest. It is one of the world's most important timber species—second in value only to bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*). Esteemed for its aromatic and attractive pink to salmon-red wood, which is resistant to rotting and insects, the species is used in a wide array of products, including building and cabinet work, furniture, and musical instruments.

Where present, Spanish cedar generally occurs at extremely low landscape-scale densities, ranging from one tree per two hectares to one tree per 100 hectares (0.5 – 0.01 ha<sup>-1</sup>). A long history of exploitation has left the species rare in many parts of its range. Population declines have been compounded by habitat loss through deforestation. In Costa Rica, for example, suitable habitat has been reduced by 56.7 %. Today, *C. odorata* is listed as Vulnerable on IUCN's Red List. Two related species, *C. fissilis* and *C. lilloi*, are listed as Endangered.

### THREATENED BY CONTINUED HARVEST AND TRADE

Where forest remains, Spanish cedar is threatened by selective logging that targets 90% or more of commercially-harvestable trees, reducing landscape densities to near zero at local and regional scales. Current logging practices are exacerbated by the absence of natural regeneration or silvicultural techniques to provide for future supplies.

Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil are the largest exporters of *C. odorata*, although much of Brazil's trade does not appear in the UNEP-WCMC database. Most of this wood is destined for markets in the United States and Mexico

Country	Peru	Bolivia	Brazil	Mexico	Total
Sawn Wood Exports of <i>C. odorata</i> in Cubic Meters	3,085	1,372	47,038	23,391	14,149
Value of Exports in US\$	45,542	10,896	385	385	385

CITES trade statistics derived from the CITES Trade Database, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK.

In addition, Bolivia has reported exporting *Cedrela fissilis* Vell.: 13,000 cubic meters of sawn logs in 2003 and 16,000 cubic meters in 2004. Exports of *C. fissilis* from Peru and Brazil to the United States are found in the PIERS database of import/export information, but it is not possible to determine the volume.



#### Cedrela Fast Facts

- ❖ **Threats:** Long history of exploitation, illegal harvest and trade, habitat loss
- ❖ **IUCN Red List Status:** *C. odorata* Vulnerable; *C. fissilis* and *C. lilloi* Endangered.
- ❖ **Trade:** Exported by Peru and Bolivia. Imported by the United States and Mexico. Sawn wood, doors, and furniture in trade.
- ❖ **Supporters:** Brazil, the CITES Secretariat, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC, and WWF. Plants Committee supported the development of the proposal.
- ❖ All species must be listed for look-alike reasons

As noted below, because the Appendix III listing is only applicable to the populations of *C. odorata* in Peru and Colombia (per Resolution Conf. 9.25(a)(iv)), other range States are not required to issue certificates of origin, and, consequently, the volume in trade could be much greater than reported. Furthermore, U.S. import data indicate significant trade in doors, furniture, and other products made from Spanish cedar, which do not fall under the current annotation for *C. odorata* in Appendix III.

### THREATENED BY ILLEGAL LOGGING THROUGHOUT ITS RANGE

In many range States, much of the remaining Spanish cedar population is located in protected areas and lands reserved for indigenous peoples, where logging is prohibited or strictly regulated. However, due to lax enforcement in remote regions, significant volumes of cedar are harvested and exported in violation of national laws, often in tandem with bigleaf mahogany.

In addition to the reports of illegal logging in Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela referenced in CoP14 Prop. 33, there is evidence of illegal logging for Spanish cedar in Honduras, Peru, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. An investigation published in March 2007 documented illegal logging of the species in the Alto Purús National Park in the Peruvian Amazon. The illegal loggers targeted both bigleaf mahogany and cedar, depending on which would fetch a higher price. Because mahogany shipments have been mislabeled as Spanish cedar in the past, including *C. odorata* in Appendix II would benefit enforcement efforts for both species.



The Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve in Honduras is also under threat from illegal logging. Cedar extracted from the park, often under the cover of darkness, and exported to islands in the Caribbean. An operation by the Environmental Prosecutor (Fiscalía Especial del Ambiente) and the military in October 2006 decommissioned 180,000 thousand board feet of cedar and mahogany, logged from the Biosphere Reserve, in a sawmill near Tegucigalpa.

Spanish cedar continues to be exported from Nicaragua to the United States, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica despite a Nicaraguan export ban on the species, in place since 1997. A new ban on the harvest of Spanish cedar was put into place in June 2006, but dozens of shipments have been documented subsequently.

### CURRENT APPENDIX III LISTING IS NOT ADEQUATE TO GUARANTEE SUSTAINABLE TRADE

The current Appendix III listing of *C. odorata* is confined to the populations of Peru and Colombia. Consequently, exports of Spanish cedar from other range States do not need to be accompanied by a certificate of origin. This limitation has prevented comprehensive trade data from being compiled, which could have further assisted Parties in assessing the merits of this proposal. Many shipments of Spanish cedar go unreported or are mixed with other tropical hardwoods, including mahogany. Furthermore, the loophole also facilitates illegal trade, allowing shipments of the species to be smuggled out of Peru or Colombia into neighboring countries and exported with no CITES permits.

Accordingly, SSN urges Parties to support the inclusion of this genus in Appendix II. Spanish cedar clearly meets both the biological and trade criteria for inclusion in Appendix II. The high commercial value of *C. odorata* and *C. fissilis* have suffered extensive declines in population and range as a result of overexploitation and illegal harvest for international trade. Because *Cedrela* species are not readily distinguishable by non-experts, inclusion of the remaining species in the genus in Appendix II is necessary to ensure effective enforcement of the listings for *C. odorata* and *C. fissilis*.