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## CITES Website Scavenger Hunt

**Directions:** In this activity, you will use the background information about CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to explore the CITES website to complete a scavenger hunt. Use the provided links from the CITES website to answer questions from each of the designated sections below. Be sure to answer all the questions in your own words to better understand the concepts.

### **Standards:**

SS.7.C.4.2: Recognize government and citizen participation in international organizations.

SS.912.A.7.14: Review the role of the U.S. as a participant in the global economy (trade agreements, international competition, impact on American labor, environment.)

SS.912.E.3.3: Discuss the effect of barriers to trade and why nations sometimes erect barriers to trade or establish free trade zones.

SS.912.H.3.3: Identify contributions made by various world cultures through trade and communication, and form a hypothesis on future contributions and changes.

### **Everglades Literacy Connections:**

#### **Grade 8, Lesson 3 - Everglades Dilemmas**

<https://www.evergladesliteracy.org/eighth-grade>

-Students will be presented with different “water dilemmas” affecting the Everglades. Teams will analyze the different scenarios, select which action they would take related to the dilemmas, and justify their reasoning.

#### **Grades 9-12 Amazing Adaptations, Lesson 2 - Design a Perfect Beast**

<https://www.evergladesliteracy.org/9th-12th-amazing-adaptations>

-Students become “bioengineers” by engineering an animal that is adapted to a specific Everglades ecosystem, creating “perfect beast.”

### **Scavenger Hunt Links:**

- A. How CITES Works link: <https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/how.php>
- B. The Structure of CITES link: <https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/org.php>
- C. CITES Listed Species link: <https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/species.php>
- D. Checklist of CITES Species link: <https://checklist.cites.org/#/en>
- E. List of Parties to the Convention link:  
<https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/parties/index.php>
- F. National CITES Authorities link:  
<https://www.cites.org/eng/cms/index.php/component/cp>



## **Background Information**

Diving deeper into understanding environmental conservation as a whole, it is very important to learn about larger scale efforts, especially conservation efforts on the international scale. One major effort in particular that takes the role as a key player in global environmental conservation is CITES, or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. CITES is an international agreement between governments. It aims to ensure that the **international trade**, *the exchange of goods across international borders or territories*, in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their very survival.

CITES allows voluntary international agreement; countries may choose whether or not to partake in the agreement. Any country, state, or regional economic integration organization that has joined CITES is known as a *party*. Currently there are 183 parties bound to CITES (click [here](#) to learn more). Under CITES, a species is listed at one of three levels of protection, each of which have different permit requirements. Appendix I includes species presently threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. CITES directs its most stringent controls at activities involving these species. Appendix II includes species that are not presently threatened with extinction but may become so if not regulated. Appendix III includes species listed by a **range country**, *nearby or neighboring countries*, to obtain international cooperation in controlling trade.

Wildlife trade can take on many different forms, like live specimens and the products made of the specimens such as leather goods, medicine, food, tourist curios, etc. It is important to monitor this vast amount of species trade across borders so nations can conserve their species rather than overexploit or overharvest them, *referring to harvesting a renewable resource to the point of diminishing returns*, which can lead to resource destruction, including extinctions.

For example, in the Everglades, American alligators are very important to the ecosystem. They build “alligator holes” with their large tails, claws, and jaws during the dry season, which acts as a refuge filled with the last remaining water for the other plants and animals of the Everglades. Because of their important role in the Everglades ecosystem, American alligators are considered a keystone species, *a species on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend*, such that if it were removed the ecosystem would change drastically.

However, in 1967, American alligators were placed on the federal Endangered Species List. Illegal poaching for meat and black market alligator goods caused the species to decline rapidly. Because of how unsustainable these illegal hunting practices were, and in conjunction with a quickly increasing human population, by the 1970s alligator populations went almost extinct. But, the American alligator species made a remarkable comeback by 1987 and they were removed from the Endangered Species List. Because of this rapid comeback, American alligators have become a great example of conservation success.

The drastic increase in American alligator populations can be owed to regulating commercialized alligator products (legally) and captive breeding efforts. Wildlife biologists and other professionals determined that, of the captive populations, about 20% were to be released into the wild and the others were to be used for commercial products and meat. By monitoring and regulating the commercial uses for alligators, it stopped the black market demand which then allowed the species enough time to recover, and it also provided farmers a means to make a legal living.

Today, there are over one million American alligators in Florida. Harvesting of the American alligator is legal, but only with specific rules. Alligator hunting is limited and monitored through the use of an approved tag that must be attached to the alligator upon harvesting (these tags are limited; only 2 gator tags are allowed per person per season). This **tag** serves as a serialized identification to state, federal, and international entities to show that that alligator was legally harvested. This helps control and monitor illegal trade. The assumption is that if people are not able to properly benefit from the products they are wanting to trade (skins, teeth, meat, etc. from the alligator) due to the fact that the harvest is illegal and that they will likely get caught and endure consequences, then that reduces the motivation to illegally remove animals from the wild.

When this skin tag system was initially created for crocodylian species, the American alligator in this example, it was immediately seen as a valuable innovation to the monitoring of traded products. This new system was vital to paving the way for other parties of the Convention to adopt similar standards when it comes to implementing traceability into their species trade monitoring efforts. This is seen in how products should or could be labeled, such that they are traceable from production or origin to consumption or sale.

**Directions for Section A:** Using link **A** ([How CITES Works](#)), answer the following questions:

1. What type of system does CITES use to ensure a more controlled international trade in specimens?

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2. Each party of the convention must designate which authorities?

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3. What does the Management Authority do exactly?

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4. What does the Scientific Authority do exactly?

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5. Only some species are covered by the CITES licensing system when it comes to trade. These species are split up into three different groups, called appendices 1-3. What generally determines which appendix a species is listed under?

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6. Describe the differences between species on appendices 1, 2, and 3:

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**Directions for Section B:** Using link **B** ([The Structure of CITES](#)), draw a diagram of the structure of CITES in the space provided below. Review the definitions of the groups that should be included in your diagram. Be sure to include all of these groups in your diagram.

**Definitions:**

**Conference of the Parties=** The CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) is a meeting of the Parties to review the implementation of the Convention.

**Plants committee=** The Plants Committee is made up of plant species experts representing each of the six geographical regions of the CITES. Their role is to provide technical support and to use sound science to inform decision-making about these species.

**Animal committee=** The Animals Committee is made up of animal species experts representing each of the six geographical regions of the CITES. Their role is to provide technical support and to use sound science to inform decision-making about these species.

**Standing committee=** The Standing Committee is responsible for providing general policy and operational direction to the Secretariat regarding implementation of CITES, and it coordinates and advises the Animals and Plants Committees.

**CITES secretariat=** The Secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland. It plays a very important role advising CITES as well as being the distributor of information to the Parties

**UN Environment=** The United Nations Environment Program is responsible for coordinating the UN's environmental activities and assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.

Draw your diagram of the structure of CITES here:



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*Draw your diagram in the space below:*

**Directions for Section C:** Using link [C-\(CITES Listed Species\)](#), answer the following questions:

1. How many species total are protected by CITES?

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2. How many of these species are fauna species (the animals of a particular region, habitat, or geological period) and how many are flora species (the plants of a particular region, habitat, or geological period)?

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3. Which appendix do most animal species belong to? About how many species are listed in this appendix?

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4. Which appendix do most plant species belong to? About how many species are listed in this appendix?

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**Directions for Section D:** Using link **D** ([Checklist of CITES Species](#)), search for the following Everglades species and fill in which CITES appendix they belong to:

Everglades Species	CITES Appendix
American Alligator, <i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	
Butterfly Orchid, <i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	
Leatherback Sea Turtle, <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	
Everglade Snail Kite, <i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>	
Gopher Tortoise, <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	
North American River Otter, <i>Lontra canadensis</i>	
Ghost Orchid, <i>Epipogium aphyllum</i>	
West Indian Manatee, <i>Trichechus manatus</i>	
American Crocodile, <i>Crocodylus acutus</i>	
Elkhorn Coral, <i>Acropora palmata</i>	

**Directions for Section E:** Using link **E** ([List of Parties to the Convention](#)), answer the following questions:

1. What is a party to CITES?

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2. How can a country join CITES?

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3. When may a country withdraw from CITES?

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**Directions for Section F:** Using link **F** ([National CITES Authorities](#)), click on the “United States of America” tab on the left side of the webpage to answer the following questions:

1. What was the date that the U.S. was ratified by CITES?

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2. What was the date that the U.S. officially entered CITES?

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3. What is the name of the CITES Management Authority in the U.S.?

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4. What is the name of the CITES Scientific Authority in the U.S.?

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**Reflection Questions:**

1. After learning about CITES, what are your personal thoughts on the trade of species around the world?

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2. Do you think there are alternative methods to monitoring the trade of species internationally? Please explain your answer.

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## **CITES Website Scavenger Hunt - Answer Key**

**Directions:** In this activity, you will use your background information about CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to explore the CITES website using a scavenger hunt. Use the provided links from the CITES website to answer questions from each of the designated sections below. Be sure to answer all the questions in your own words to better understand the concepts.

### **Scavenger Hunt Links:**

- A. How CITES Works link: <https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/how.php>
- B. The Structure of CITES link: <https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/org.php>
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- D. Checklist of CITES Species link: <https://checklist.cites.org/#/en>
- E. List of Parties to the Convention link:  
<https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/parties/index.php>
- F. National CITES Authorities link:  
<https://www.cites.org/eng/cms/index.php/component/cp>

**Section A:** Using link A (How CITES Works), answer the following questions:

1. What type of system does CITES use to ensure a more controlled international trade in specimens?

**Answer: CITES uses a licensing system.**

2. Each party of the convention must designate which authorities?

**Answer: A Management Authority and a Scientific Authority.**

3. What does the Management Authority do exactly?

**Answers may vary, but should include “The management authority is in charge of administering that licensing system.”**

4. What does the Scientific Authority do exactly?

**Answers may vary, but should include “The Scientific Authority must advise the Management Authority on the effects of trade on the status of the species.”**

5. Only some species are covered by the CITES licensing system when it comes to trade. These species are split up into three different groups, called appendices 1-3. What generally determines which appendix a species is listed under?

**Answer: Species are split up into the different appendices according to the degree of protection they need.**

6. Describe the differences between species on appendices 1, 2, and 3:

**Answers may vary, but should include “Appendix 1 species are threatened with extinction and should not be traded unless for exceptional circumstances. Appendix 2 species are not threatened with extinction however, trade must be controlled in order to protect that species survival in the wild. Appendix 3 species are protected in at least one country, of which it asks other countries to assist it in helping control that species trade to protect that species survival in the wild.”**

**Section B:** Using link **B** (*The Structure of CITES*), draw a diagram of the structure of CITES in the space provided below. Review the definitions of the groups that should be included in your diagram. Be sure to include all of these groups in your diagram.

**Definitions:**

**Conference of the Parties=** The CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) is a meeting of the Parties to review the implementation of the Convention.

**Plants committee=** The Plants Committee is made up of plant species experts representing each of the six geographical regions of the CITES. Their role is to provide technical support and to use sound science to inform decision-making about these species.

**Animal committee=** The Animals Committee is made up of animal species experts representing each of the six geographical regions of the CITES. Their role is to provide technical support and to use sound science to inform decision-making about these species.

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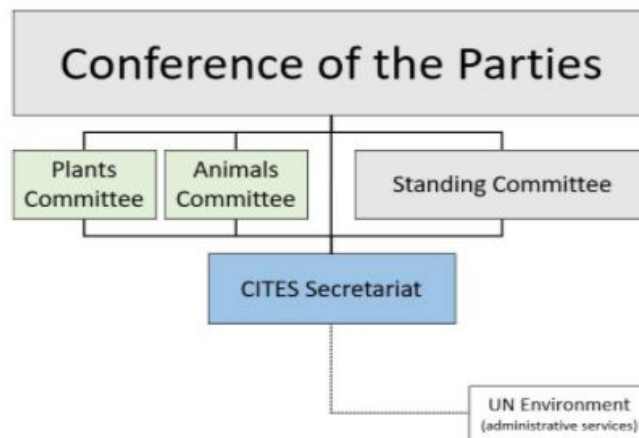
**CITES secretariat=** The Secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland. It plays a very important role advising CITES as well as being the distributor of information to the Parties

**UN Environment=** The United Nations Environment Program is responsible for coordinating the UN's environmental activities and assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.

*Draw your diagram in the space below:*

**Answer: Students should use this blank space below to draw their own version of this diagram provided in the link.**

**The structure of CITES**



**Section C:** Using link **C** (CITES Listed Species), answer the following questions:

1. How many species total are protected by CITES? (use the numbers found in the Grand Total section to find the answer)

**Answer: Over 38,700 species.**

2. How many of these species are fauna species (the animals of a particular region, habitat, or geological period) and how many are flora species (the plants of a particular region, habitat, or geological period)?

**Answer: Animal species= 5,950, plant species= 32,800**

3. On which appendix do most animal species belong to? About how many species are listed in this appendix?

**Answer: Appendix 2, 5056 spp. + 15 sspp.**

4. On which appendix do most plant species belong to? About how many species are listed in this appendix?

**Answer: Appendix 2, 32364 spp. (incl. 109 popns)**

**Section D:** Using link **D** (Checklist of CITES Species), search for the following Everglades species and fill in which CITES appendix they belong to:

Everglades Species	CITES appendix
American Alligator, <i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
Butterfly Orchid, <i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
Leatherback Sea Turtle, <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 1</b>
Everglade Snail Kite, <i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
Gopher Tortoise, <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
North American River Otter, <i>Lontra canadensis</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
Ghost orchid, <i>Epipogium aphyllum</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
West Indian Manatee, <i>Trichechus manatus</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>
American crocodile, <i>Crocodylus acutus</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 1</b>
Elkhorn Coral, <i>Acropora palmata</i>	<b>Answer: Appendix 2</b>

**Section E:** Using link **E** (*List of Parties to the Convention*), answer the following questions:

1. What is a party to CITES?

**Answers may vary, but should include “A State or regional economic integration organization for which the Convention has entered into force.”**

2. Currently, how many parties partake in CITES:

**Answer: 183 parties.**

3. How can a country join CITES?

**Answers may vary, but should include “A country may join CITES by making a formal declaration in writing to the Depository Government, which is the Government of Switzerland.”**

4. When may a country withdraw from CITES?

**Answer: At any time.**



**Section F:** Using link **F** (National CITES Authorities), click on the “United States of America” tab on the left side of the webpage to answer the following questions:

1. What was the date that the U.S. was ratified by CITES? Please note that dates listed on the website are denoted in the date/month/year format.

**Answer: 1/14/1974**

2. What was the date that the U.S officially entered CITES?

**Answer: 7/1/1975**

3. What is the name of the CITES Management Authority in the U.S.?

**Answer: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

4. What is the name of the CITES Scientific Authority in the U.S.?

**Answer: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**