

# SPECIES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

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## PRESS RELEASE

6 October 2004 – Bangkok, Thailand

### TRADING THE KEA TO SAVE IT

Northland Conservation Board member Kevin Evans' idea that trading the New Zealand kea internationally as a means of helping conserve the species is no different from the way many communities around the world conserve and protect their wildlife populations, Species Management Specialists said.

At the CITES meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, SMS New Zealand spokesperson Glenn Hema Inwood said today that trading the kea internationally through sustainable takes from the wild and/or captive breeding programmes could actually help increase kea populations as the species would be seen as a valuable asset that could generate income for local communities.

“As an island nation, New Zealand is already well placed to implement viable and sustainably managed wildlife programmes for international trade as a means of conserving our wild species, and also has in place excellent mechanisms for eliminating illegal trade,” Mr Inwood said.

Mr Inwood said there were numerous examples where trade in wildlife has actually benefitted a species and examples where total protection has proved detrimental to conservation. Crocodiles in the Northern Territory of Australia in the 1970s were an example where trade has benefitted the species. In the past, crocodiles were unprotected and not subject to any management with the result that populations became seriously depleted. As a result of pragmatic management and enforcement, conservation of the species is assured because it is perceived as a valuable renewable resource that benefits local communities.

“Most species of crocodylians are now abundant, they are farmed in a number of countries and their skins, teeth, meat, eggs and other products sold to benefit local communities,” Mr Inwood said.

On the other side of the coin, he cited an example when environmental NGOs pushed countries to list the sub-Saharan population of the leopard in CITES' Appendix 1 in the mistaken belief that it would protect the species. “This resulted in a complete turnaround, taking the species from one that had value and could be managed as an asset to one where it had no value in terms of trade and was consequently treated as a pest by land-owners and local communities. All opportunities for sensible management techniques were thrown out the window to the detriment of the population.”

Species Management Specialists (SMS) is an international, non-government organisation dedicated to improving the conservation of wild plant and animal species through better management. SMS has its headquarters in Canberra, Australia, and has foundation members in all continents. The glue that unites our members is specialist knowledge and experience in the management of wild species. Our members are driven by a conviction that improved conservation can only be achieved through better management and making and implementing practical conservation policy.

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