

European Eel could be more promising than implementing a new listing on Appendix I with unforeseen consequences.

A genus-level listing of *Anguilla* in Appendix II would aim to enhance the transparency of the global eel trade through mandatory reporting to the CITES database. Listing the genus rather than individual species is required as species identification is problematic both at the glass eel stage and as consumer products (e.g. grilled eel fillets). For trade to then continue, strict monitoring and control in compliance with CITES requirements would be needed. Following its listing on Appendix II, control measures were significantly improved for the European eel, helped by introduction of the *EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking* and Europol's lead on this from 2016 onwards. To maximize the positive impact of a genus-level listing, similar actions would be needed for the other 18 *Anguilla* species, many of which occur in countries with poor governance that lack control capacity. Listing of the European eel in Appendix II led to an increase in trafficking of the American eel (for example in the Caribbean, the USA and Canada), and further expansion and intensification of the illegal glass eel trade could be expected.

Before any changes to the CITES listings, a comprehensive assessment is needed to evaluate the expected impacts on stocks, eel aquaculture, legal trade and smuggling relative to conservation targets and risk analyses.

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New surveys reveal high biodiversity of Lake Télé, Congo

Lake Télé is an ovoid, endoreic 23 km² lake in northern Republic of the Congo. Surrounded by vast areas of swamp forest, Lake Télé is famous for its rounded shape (long thought to be the result of a meteorite, a theory now abandoned; Masters, 2010, *Journal of African Earth Sciences*, 58, 667–679) and the reputed presence of a dinosaur-like creature, the Mokele-Mbembe. The lake lies within the eponymous Lac Télé Community Reserve. This, in turn, is part of the largest peatland complex known in the tropics: the swamp forests of the Cuvette Centrale of the Congo Basin, which are of global importance for biodiversity and carbon stocks (Dargie et al., 2017, *Nature*, 542, 86–90).

Because of its remoteness, Lake Télé has been the subject of few scientific studies, the last one dating back to 1992

(Laraque et al., 1998, *Journal of Hydrology*, 207, 236–253). As a financial and technical partner of the Reserve since 2001, the Wildlife Conservation Society, together with the Ministère de l'Economie Forestiere, organized two biodiversity surveys of the lake in July and August 2024. The first focused on the amphibians and reptiles of the swamp forests surrounding the lake, and the second on the fish community of the lake itself. A total of 37 amphibian and 38 reptile taxa were found, of which 26 (15 amphibians and 11 reptiles) were unidentified and could be new to science. Thirty-two fish species were recorded, including eight taxa that could not be identified to species. Water samples were collected from the lake for subsequent eDNA analysis. The fish community is dominated by the family Cichlidae, unlike that of the nearby river Likouala-aux-herbes, where Mormiridae is the most common family (Bilola et al., 2024, *Sustainability*, 16, 3353). Our findings confirm the high biodiversity of the lake and its conservation significance. Further surveys are scheduled in 2025, for insects and ungulates.

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New records of the clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* in the Qomolangma National Nature Reserve, Tibet

The clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* is categorized as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and has experienced significant population declines over the past decade, driven by habitat loss and overexploitation. Historically, the species was widely distributed across China (Smith & Xie, 2008, *Journal of Mammalogy*, 90, 520–521), but its estimated range in the country (calculated using the geographical range data published by IUCN) declined substantially during 2000–2020, from 1,211,284 km² (Grassman et al., 2016, *IUCN Red List*) to 62,199 km² (Gray et al., 2021, *IUCN Red List*). Petersen et al. (2020, *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 24, e01354) estimated that key habitat for the species in China has diminished by c. 97% during this period. Recent surveys indicate that the clouded leopard occurs in only four counties in China: Medog County in Tibet, and Gongshan, Yingjiang and Mengla Counties in Yunnan (Li et al., 2021, *Oryx*, 55, 177–180; Ma et al., 2022, *Biodiversity Science*, 30, 22349).

To study felid species in Qomolangma National Nature Reserve in Jilong County, a region characterized by a temperate semi-monsoon climate and located in the core region of the Himalayas, we deployed 200 infrared camera traps that operated continuously during August 2023–April