



Turning national commitments into conservation action for seahorses



Seahorses have generated many exciting conservation changes for seahorses and other ocean life - the most important being the emergence of a new tool for regulating global exports of marine fishes. All seahorse species are listed on Appendix II of The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which means international trade can continue but must be managed for sustainability. The listing of seahorses on CITES was a step in the right direction - but as is the case with all agreements, without effective implementation the listing will not mean much for seahorses. Implementation of this listing at the national level is critical, and has been much of Project Seahorse's, and my, focus for the last 6 or so years. My presentation will give you an overview of our efforts in making CITES work for seahorses, the successes as well as the challenges. My focus is on supporting Parties to prove their exports are not detrimental to wild populations, and illegal trade. At its simplest, proving non-detriment comes down to answering a few key questions: where are the seahorses, what threats do they face, what management is in place to mitigate threats and is management working. When exporting countries can't prove non-detriment they face trade bans - and this is now the case for all major seahorse-exporting nations. So where do we go from here?

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Dr. Foster is a conservation scientist dedicated to finding pragmatic solutions for the many problems facing the oceans and the animals that call them home - solutions that work for both fish and the people that depend on them. She has over fifteen years experience working with the international marine conservation organization Project Seahorse on issues related to sustainable fisheries and marine ecosystems, species at risk, and international wildlife trade policy. Since 2010, she served as the Project's Program Manager, focusing on finding pragmatic solutions for the problems facing our oceans and the communities that depend on them for their livelihoods. Her research and conservation work to date have spanned the areas of trade and non-selective fishing practices - with a particular focus in southeast Asia.



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