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**INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION NEEDED FOR CORAL USED IN
JEWELRY - SeaWeb, WWF**

Secretariat of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
recommends increased trade protection for red and pink corals.

GENEVA—Countries participating in a major endangered species trade conference in March must back better protection for red and pink coral, according to SeaWeb and WWF. These coral species are disappearing because of overfishing to make jewelry.

Red and pink coral (also known as *Corallium*) are a type of deep-sea precious coral found in the Mediterranean and Pacific. Between 30 and 50 metric tonnes of these corals are fished annually to meet consumer demand for jewelry and decorative items. The United States alone imported 28 million pieces of red and pink coral between 2001 and 2008.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Secretariat today recommended that countries support increased trade protection for red and pink corals, based on the available population data for these species. Science has shown that trade is having an adverse impact on red and pink corals' ability to maintain healthy populations and to reproduce.

Meanwhile, the United States and the European Union are co-sponsoring a proposal to list red and pink coral under Appendix II of the Convention at the 15th Conference of Parties (CoP 15) in Doha, Qatar in March. Such a move would still allow trade, but only in legally and sustainably harvested coral and coral products.

SeaWeb and WWF support the Secretariat's recommendations and are urging CITES member countries to support the EU and US proposal.

Kristian Teleki, SeaWeb's Vice President for Science Initiatives said, "Red and pink coral are among the world's most valuable wildlife commodities. They are long-living, slow-growing species and have been intensively fished for centuries to meet demand in the jewelry and curio trade. A CITES

Appendix II listing is needed to ensure these species aren't fished to extinction."

"A CITES Appendix II listing would be in line with protection for other coral species," said Colman O'Criodain, Wildlife Trade Analyst for the WWF Species Programme. "An Appendix II listing for red and pink coral would support local management measures and also help combat poaching, which regularly occurs in the Mediterranean."

Red and pink coral were proposed for protection at the last Conference of Parties in 2007. The parties initially voted in favor of the proposal, but the vote was overturned in a secret ballot on the final day of the conference, after intensive lobbying from industry interests. Parties will once again take to the floor during CoP 15, March 13 to 25, to consider the proposal. Alongside red and pink coral, several species of sharks, and Atlantic bluefin tuna will also be considered for trade protection.

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For further information:

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About SeaWeb

SeaWeb, founded in 1996 to raise awareness of the growing threats to the ocean and its living resources, is a communications-based nonprofit organization that utilizes social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation. By increasing public awareness, advancing science-based solutions and mobilizing decision-makers around ocean conservation, SeaWeb has brought together multiple, diverse and powerful voices for a healthy ocean. www.seaweb.org

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org/media
for latest news and media resources

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): <http://www.cites.org/>

SeaWeb's *Too Precious to Wear* campaign: <http://www.tooprecioustowear.org/> Images and further information on CITES and red and pink coral is available. For b-roll of red and pink coral and soundbites from spokespeople, contact Julia Roberson (jroberson@seaweb.org or +44.77(0) 04.54.83.92.