



2010 ELISABETH MANN BORGESE LECTURE



Science versus Politics: Tales from CITES

Abstract

This lecture will examine how politics and other issues can get in the way of governments making science-based policy decisions. As an example, it will discuss the marine species proposals submitted for consideration at the March 2010 meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

In particular, Dr Lieberman will discuss the proposals to include the Atlantic bluefin tuna in CITES Appendix I, which would have prohibited international commercial trade, and the proposals to include eight species of sharks in CITES Appendix II, which would have regulated their international trade. None of these proposals was adopted — in spite of both strong science, and the support of the CITES Secretariat and IUCN for all the proposals, and of the FAO for the tuna proposal and all but one of the shark proposals.

Dr Lieberman will examine what this means for the future — not only for CITES itself, but for the use of international treaties and other measures to regulate trade in endangered, threatened, and vulnerable species. Some of the questions she will answer are: What were the roles of the US, Canada, European Union, Japan, and China? What is the problem that CITES might have been able to address? What does this mean for sharks and bluefin tuna? And what are the next steps?

International Ocean Institute
Dalhousie University
www.dal.ca/ioihfx