

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Sixty-second meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 23-27 July 2012

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

1. This document has been submitted by Switzerland as Chair of the Standing Committee Working Group on snake trade and conservation (SCWG)*.
2. At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 15.75 to 15.78 as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

15.75 *The Secretariat shall, subject to available funds, convene a technical workshop to consider the conservation priorities and management and enforcement needs related to the trade of snakes in Asia, with a particular focus on the markets and commercial trade in East, South, and Southeast Asia.*

- a) *The Secretariat shall invite the members of the Animals and Standing Committees, representatives from range, exporting and consumer states, and relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in this workshop, to be held within 12 months of the conclusion of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
- b) *The Secretariat shall contract with appropriate technical experts to prepare documents on Asian snake conservation, trade management, enforcement, and biology for the workshop and shall invite workshop participants to submit the same.*
- c) *The findings and recommendations of this workshop should be reported by the Secretariat to the Animals and Standing Committees.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

15.76 *The Animals Committee shall consider the results of this workshop and provide their recommendations to the Standing Committee for its consideration.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

15.77 *The Standing Committee shall consider the recommendations by the Animals Committee and make its own recommendations at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

3. In compliance with Decision 15.76, considered at its 25th meeting (Geneva, 18-22 July 2011) the Animals Committee the results of the Asian snake trade workshop held in Guangzhou, China, from 11 to 14 April 2011 and reported its recommendations to the Standing Committee in document SC61 Doc. 46.1.
4. The Animals Committee formulated its own recommendations on the basis of the workshop report. These concern primarily the scientific aspects of the workshop report and can be found in the Annex to document SC61 Doc. 46.1.
5. The Standing Committee was requested in document SC61 Doc. 46.2 (Rev. 1) to consider these recommendations and make its own recommendations at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16).
6. At its 61st meeting (SC61, Geneva, August 2011), the Standing Committee noted the recommendations of the Animals Committee in the Annex to document SC61 Doc. 46.2 and agreed that these would be considered by an intersessional working group that would also develop draft recommendations for consideration at the present meeting.
7. The SCWG met in the margins of SC61 and decided that Switzerland would chair this WG and that they would communicate by electronic means.
8. The SCWG considered the recommendations from the Animals Committee and based on them formulated decisions, that are presented in the Annex 1 to this document and that could be put forward to CoP16.
9. Based on the results and recommendation from the Guangzhou workshop on Asian snake trade contained in document SC61 Doc. 46.1, the SCWG developed its own set of decisions. In sections 10 to 13 of this document, the rationales for the draft decisions contained in Annex 2 of this document are listed.
10. Concerning trade in parts and derivatives of snakes, the recommendations were mostly centered around the fact that in the CITES trade data base there is very little trade in parts and derivatives being reported (meat, blood, venom, gall bladders etc.). However, the participants of the workshop were aware of considerable demand on the market for such products and the actual trade happening.
11. The SCWG also considered the recommendations about the issuance of an Alert message on "Illegal Trade in Snakes in Asia" and the encouragement of other bodies dealing with enforcement aspects of illegal trade in wildlife such as the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) to take note of the concerns about illegal trade in snakes, their parts and derivatives and to take these concerns into account when developing their work plans and programmes.
12. The Guangzhou workshop addressed in detail the concerns expressed about the breeding facilities for Asian snakes, the use of the source code C for captive bred snakes in trade and the effectiveness of the controls of such facilities. In the modified recommendation 1 from the Animals Committee on the subject presented in Annex 1, of this document as well the work of the Standing Committee Working Group on the use of source codes, these aspects are dealt with in detail. Therefore the SCWG was of the opinion that no additional recommendation was necessary.
13. The Guangzhou workshop recognized the need for accurate and up to date contact details of the Parties on the CITES website. Based on the discussion the WG would recommend the Secretariat to continue to ask Heads of delegations to CoP16 to control and if necessary amend the contact details of their respective parties.
14. The Secretariat informed the WG that under a capacity-building project funded by the European Commission, the Secretariat is currently in negotiations with TRAFFIC about commissioning a user friendly manual for MA/SAs in Southeast Asia to assist in their inspection of captive breeding and ranching facilities, and plant nurseries. This work would include on-the-spot training in use of the guidance in key countries. The outcomes of this project will have to be taken into account when dealing with some of the recommendations in Annex 1.

Recommendations

15. Late in the discussions of the SCWG, several important comments were made that could not be discussed in detail. The Chair tried to include and conciliate as much of them as possible, but for some (paragraph 14 and text in square brackets) there needs to be further discussion in a meeting of the WG at this meeting before the Standing Committee can adopt the recommendations in the Annexes 1 and 2. In particular the work outline in Annex 1 involves 4 different studies that the Secretariat is proposed to coordinate. It would be useful to streamline the review of the outputs of these studies.
16. Concerning paragraph 13, the SC may ask the Secretariat to perform the recommended action.

Draft Decisions from the SCWG on Snake Trade and Conservation to CoP16
based on the recommendations from the Animals Committee
in the Annex to document SC61 Doc. 46.2 (Rev. 1)

Draft decisions for recommendation 1 from the AC25 recommendations

Directed to the Secretariat

The CITES Secretariat, subject to external funding, shall as a matter of priority:

- a) Hire an independent consultant, with the concurrence of the Chair of the Standing Committee [Resolution Conf. 15.1 already requires the Secretariat to consult with the AC and PC Chairs to assign scientific consultants and define terms of reference for specific science-based projects], to undertake a study of production systems for Asian snakes listed in the CITES Appendix II, the use of source codes and develop guidance to assist Parties in evaluating captive breeding operations and other production systems. In evaluating different production systems, the biological feasibility and where possible, economic viability (i.e. whether it is financially viable for commercial facilities to produce and export specimens as permitted by national authorities) of captive production operations should be considered;
- b) report to the next regular meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65) after CoP16; and
- c) conduct one or more workshops in the use of the guidance, as agreed by the Standing Committee in Decision XXX (see below), for CITES and other relevant authorities of range states of Asian snake species in international trade.

Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall

- a) consider the report submitted by the Secretariat as well as the results of the UNCTAD Biotrade Initiative's Working Group on Asian snakes, the results of the ITC study on the "Trade of Python snakes in Asia" or any other relevant information or study conducted relevant to the topic;
- b) evaluate the guidance developed by the consultant and agree on its use for conducting one or more workshop for CITES and other relevant authorities of range States of Asian snake species in international trade; and
- c) make recommendations as it deems appropriate at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Draft decisions for recommendation 4 from the AC 25 recommendations

Directed to the Secretariat

The CITES Secretariat, subject to external funding, shall

- a) hire independent consultants to identify the types of information and data that could assist Parties in making non-detriment findings and establishing export quotas of Appendix-II snakes in trade through consultation with relevant experts and building on existing examples such as the results from the Cancun workshop; and
- b) report about the progress at the next AC 27.

Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall

- a) based on the report from the Secretariat develop guidance on [develop recommendations to parties concerning] the making of non-detriment findings and setting quotas of Appendix-II snakes in trade available to the Secretariat for posting on the CITES website.

The status of this work should be reported at the next regular meeting of the Standing Committee (SC65) after CoP16.

Draft decision for recommendation 5 from the AC25 recommendations

Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall at its 27th meeting

- a) select one or more high-value snake species in the pet trade (e.g., unique colour or morphological forms, range-restricted endemics) for which case studies could be carried out to determine the impacts of legal and illegal harvest for the pet trade on wild populations, and identify the information necessary to prepare non-detriment findings for those species, and
- b) based on the results of the case studies provided by the consultants and the Secretariat develop recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee and the next Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Secretariat

The CITES Secretariat, subject to external funding, shall as a matter of priority

- a) hire an independent consultant, with the concurrence of the Chair of the Standing Committee [Resolution Conf. 15.1 already requires the Secretariat to consult with the AC and PC Chairs to assign scientific consultants and define terms of reference for specific science-based projects], to undertake a study of the high-value snake species in the pet trade selected by the Animals Committee to determine the impacts on wild populations of legal and illegal harvest for international trade, and identify steps necessary to fully implement and enforce the Convention as it relates to trade in those species.

Draft decisions for recommendation 6 from the AC25 recommendations

Directed to the Secretariat

The CITES Secretariat, subject to external funding, shall:

- a) hire independent consultants to investigate methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes, including parts and derivatives, in trade;
- b) through a Notification to the Parties, encourage them to engage with interested institutions to investigate the possibility of forensic identification and make the results available to the Animals Committee;
- c) ensure that the work carried out is in line with recommendations agreed by the Standing Committee based on the proposed recommendations by the Standing Committee working group on source codes; and
- d) report on the status of this work at the next regular meeting of the Animals (AC27) and Standing Committees (SC65).

Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall:

- a) based on the information provided by the consultants and by the Secretariat develop recommendations for the consideration of the Standing Committee.

Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall:

Consider the report of the consultants referred to in Decision 16.xx and the recommendations made by the Animals Committee in Decision 16.xx and prepare its own recommendations for submission at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Draft Decisions from the SCWG on Snake Trade and Conservation to CoP16
based on the recommendations from the Guangzhou Workshop on Trade in Asian snakes,
contained in the Annex to document SC61 Doc. 46.1.

Draft decision concerning trade in parts and derivatives

Directed to the Parties

Recognizing the large-scale unreported trade in parts, products, and derivatives from CITES-listed snake species on a large-scale, Parties to CITES shall

- a) address this problem within their national systems to ensure that CITES permits are properly issued;
- b) fully report the trade of these parts, products, and derivatives in the Annual Reports;
- c) ensure that those reports are fully in line with the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of annual reports established under Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP14);
- d) examine their enforcement efforts regarding the trade of these parts, products, and derivatives, to ensure that adequate steps are taken to deter and detect illegal and unreported trade;
- e) conduct education and outreach efforts directed towards snake farms, buyers and sellers of snake parts, products and derivatives, product manufacturers, and shippers and brokers to better ensure that snake parts, products, and derivatives are traded in compliance with national laws and CITES requirements; and
- f) report on their efforts in all of these areas via the Secretariat to the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) issue a Notification to the Parties drawing attention to the provisions of Decision 16.xx and requesting responses in time for consideration at SC65;
- b) compile the information provided by the Asian Parties to CITES on their efforts to address the problem of undocumented trade in parts and derivatives of snakes and submit a document to SC65 for its consideration; and
- c) make recommendations as it deems appropriate.

Directed to the Standing Committee

At its 65th meeting, the Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the reports submitted by the Parties and the Secretariat's recommendations, and make recommendations as it deems appropriate to the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Draft decision concerning the issuance of an alert on "Illegal trade in snakes in Asia"

Directed to the Secretariat

- a) The Secretariat shall before CoP16 issue an Alert Notification on "Illegal trade in snakes in Asia" using any relevant information provided by the parties and relevant organizations to the Guangzhou workshop as well as any other information available and deemed appropriate.

Draft decision concerning the encouragement of ICCWC and ASEAN-WEN to take note of the concerns about illegal trade in Asian snakes, their parts and derivatives

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties encourages the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) to take note of the concerns about illegal trade in snakes, their parts and derivatives and to take these concerns into account when making their work plans and programs.