

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



Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Panama City (Panama), 14 – 25 November 2022

Interpretation and implementation matters

General compliance and enforcement

WILDLIFE CRIME LINKED TO THE INTERNET

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.*
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.81 to 18.85 on *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet*, as follows:

Directed to Parties

18.81 *Parties are encouraged to, as may be needed, draw upon the capacity established at the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore, for advice and assistance in their efforts to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet.*

18.82 *Parties are encouraged to, as may be needed, make full use of the guidelines developed by INTERPOL, on how to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet, in their investigation of cases of wildlife crime linked to the Internet.*

18.83 *All Parties should:*

- a) *inform the Secretariat in the event that any changes that pertain to wildlife crime linked to the Internet are made to their national legislation, as well as of any other relevant domestic measures;*
- b) *submit information to the Secretariat on websites adhering to codes of conduct to address and prevent illegal trade in wildlife;*
- c) *inform the Secretariat of any best practice models that pertain to regulation of online marketplaces and social media platforms;*
- d) *publish the results of scientific research on the correlations between use of the Internet and the rate of wildlife crime, and communicate these results to the Secretariat; and*
- e) *inform the Secretariat of any trends in wildlife crime linked to the Internet identified, including any changes in trade routes and methods of shipment that have been observed.*

* *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.*

Directed to the Secretariat

18.84 The Secretariat shall:

- a) *continue the engagement with its partners in the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), regarding best practices and model domestic measures for addressing wildlife crime linked to the Internet; and*
- b) *share on the Wildlife crime linked to the Internet webpage on the CITES website, as appropriate, information received from Parties in accordance with Decision 18.83, ICWC partner agencies in accordance with Decision 18.84, paragraph a), and other relevant organizations or experts, regarding measures and activities implemented to address wildlife crime linked to the Internet.*
- c) *amend all relevant Resolutions and Decisions to ensure consistent use of the term 'wildlife crime linked to the Internet' with regard to reference to combating wildlife cybercrime and include as appropriate this terminology on the CITES glossary and the new webpage on Wildlife crime linked to the Internet on the CITES website.*

18.85 The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of Decisions 18.83 and 18.84 to the Standing Committee, and subsequently to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

3. Decision 18.81 encourages Parties to draw upon the capacity established at the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore for advice and assistance in their efforts to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet. Notification to the Parties [No. 2019/042](#) of 8 August 2019 provides information on how Parties can access this resource. In document [SC74 Doc. 33.4](#), the Secretariat reported to the Standing Committee that INTERPOL indicated that the resource was underutilized to date, but confirmed that it will remain available to Parties. This resource is also now available at the INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon.
4. The INTERPOL guidelines entitled '[Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet: Practical Guidelines for Law Enforcement Practitioners](#)' (hereinafter '*INTERPOL Guidelines*') were finalized and published in March 2020 and updated in March 2021. The guidelines are available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish since November 2021. The guidelines provide a practical tool for law enforcement officers on how to investigate cases of wildlife crime linked to the Internet. They cover matters such as concepts related to the technology used for online investigations; how to identify wildlife crime linked to the Internet; disrupting wildlife crime linked to the Internet; analysing content; and modern police investigation techniques. The guidelines document is a restricted document available only to law enforcement authorities upon request via their respective [INTERPOL National Central Bureaus](#).
5. To provide further support in this regard, INTERPOL is working to develop a global report on best practices to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet. INTERPOL will also provide further targeted support through capacity-building activities and training on the *INTERPOL Guidelines* and continue its support on this matter in global and regional law enforcement operations and activities.
6. The Secretariat encourages Parties to make use of the tools and resources available and capacity established at INTERPOL in support of their investigations and efforts related to combating wildlife crime linked to the Internet. Due to the ongoing nature of such work, the Secretariat proposes to incorporate the text of Decisions 18.81 and 18.82 into a revised version of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement*. At its 74th meeting (SC74, Lyon, March 2022), the Standing Committee, agreed to propose to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19) other amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) as presented in Annex 2 to document CoP19 Doc. 32 on *Review of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Compliance and enforcement*. The Secretariat therefore used their amended version as a basis for the amendment proposed. The amendment the Secretariat proposes to paragraph 16 d) of the Resolution is presented in Annex 1 to the present document.
7. With the proposed incorporation of the text of Decisions 18.81 and 18.82 in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18), the Secretariat considers that these Decisions may be deleted.
8. As anticipated by Decision 18.83, the Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/031](#) of 1 April 2020 inviting Parties to submit information to the Secretariat. Responses were received from Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union (EU), Malta, New Zealand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Secretariat also reached out to ICWC partners to request information on best

practices and model measures to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet. The Secretariat prepared summary documents in August 2019 and August 2021 highlighting the key matters outlined in information received. These summary documents have been made available on the [Wildlife crime linked to the Internet](#) webpage available on the CITES Secretariat website. The Secretariat continues to welcome additional information and will include it on the webpage as appropriate.

9. The Secretariat proposes to incorporate the provisions of Decision 18.83 and the relevant provisions of Decision 18.84 in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement*. Similar to what is indicated in paragraph 6 above, the Secretariat used the version of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) presented in Annex 2 to document CoP19 Doc. 32 as basis for the amendments proposed. The amendments the Secretariat proposes to paragraphs 16 a) and c) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) are presented in Annex 1 to the present document. The Secretariat further proposes the addition of a new paragraph 17 to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18), as presented in Annex 1 to the present document.
10. In the intersessional period, the Secretariat also contributed to and participated in a number of activities and events to support Parties' efforts to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet (see paragraphs 11-13 of document [SC74 Doc. 33.4](#)). For instance, the Secretariat supported or participated in a series of training webinars (2020) and project activities (2021) of the EU Wildlife Cybercrime project¹, events of the Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online (March 2020² and October 2020), and an online national workshop on crimes against wildlife linked to the Internet, convened by Peru (September 2021). Furthermore, at a side event organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the margins of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (October 2020), the Secretariat highlighted the importance of combating wildlife crime linked to the Internet.
11. In addition, UNODC conducted training courses on tactical online investigations, which included trainings on online wildlife crime investigations for law enforcement officers in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (September 2019 and April 2021) and Malaysia (February 2020). UNODC also plans to launch a series of advanced online investigation training courses for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. UNODC has also provided substantive support to enhance digital investigations and digital forensics. This included mentorships for Cambodia, China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as well as the provision of equipment to conduct digital forensic investigations for Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.
12. Decision 18.84, paragraph c), directs the Secretariat to amend all relevant Resolutions and Decisions to ensure consistent use of the term 'wildlife crime linked to the Internet' with reference to combating wildlife cybercrime. It further directs the Secretariat to update the CITES glossary and the *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet* webpage with the appropriate terminology concerning 'wildlife crime linked to the Internet'.
13. At its 73rd meeting (SC73, online, May 2021), the Standing Committee considered document [SC73 Doc. 16](#) on *Review of Resolutions and Decisions*. In this document, the Secretariat informed the Committee about the amendments it intended to propose to the Conference of the Parties at the present meeting. The Secretariat took into consideration the comments made by Parties as described in summary record [SC73 SR](#), in the proposed revision of the relevant Resolutions concerning consistent use of the term 'wildlife crime linked to the Internet'. The amendments proposed by the Secretariat are presented in document CoP19 Doc. 26 on *Review of Resolutions* and will be discussed under that agenda item at the present meeting.
14. The Secretariat updated the [CITES Glossary](#) to include terminology related to wildlife crime linked to the Internet,³ and also incorporated this terminology in the webpage on *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet* on the CITES website, as required by the Decision.
15. With the proposed incorporation of the text of Decisions 18.83 and 18.84 in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18), the Secretariat considers that these Decisions may be deleted. The Secretariat also proposes new

¹ The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and CITES Management Authorities in the EU regarding tackling wildlife crime linked to the Internet.

² https://cites.org/eng/CITES_SG_Remarks_at_the_reception_of_the_Coalition_to_End_Wildlife_Trafficking_Online_03032020

³ *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet* is defined in the CITES Glossary as: Crime involving any wildlife specimen, enabled or facilitated by the use of information and communication technology networks or any application in the digital world, including inter alia the public (clear) web, the dark web, online marketplaces, social network platforms, instant chat applications, peer to peer networks or email services.

draft decisions on *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet*, presented as draft decisions 19.AA to 19.CC in Annex 2 to the present document.

Conclusion

16. Although more needs to be done, information received suggests that authorities are increasingly responding to and demonstrating commitment in their efforts to combat wildlife crime linked to the Internet. The reporting received from Parties suggests that various Parties are making efforts to bring the criminals involved to justice. Parties and relevant stakeholders have conducted several successful investigations that resulted in prosecutions and the conviction of offenders involved; undertaken targeted operations; or developed of best practices and guidance materials.
17. The Secretariat continues to encourage Parties to place an increased emphasis on combating wildlife crime linked to the Internet, in particular by implementing the provisions [Regarding wildlife crime linked to the Internet](#) outlined in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement*, as well as by using existing tools and services available, in support of their efforts to combat this crime.

Recommendations:

18. The Conference of the Parties is invited to:
 - a) adopt the amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement* presented in Annex 1 to the present document;
 - b) adopt the draft decisions contained in Annex 2 to the present document; and
 - c) delete Decisions 18.81 to 18.85 on *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet* as they have been implemented or incorporated in Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18).

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 11.3 (REV. COP18)
ON COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

NB: Text proposed to be deleted is ~~crossed out~~. Proposed new text is underlined.

The Secretariat propose to amend the version of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement* presented in Annex 2 to document CoP19 Doc. 32, as follows:

[...]

16. RECOMMENDS further that Parties and ICCWC partner agencies ~~INTERPOL~~:

- a) submit information to the Secretariat on best practices and model domestic measures for addressing wildlife crime linked to the Internet, and methodologies used by other agencies that may assist in the evaluation of mechanisms to regulate legal commerce and combat illegal trade of CITES species via the Internet;
- b) ensure that sufficient resources are directed to:
 - i) investigating and targeting illegal Internet-based trade in CITES species; and
 - ii) conducting training and awareness raising as well as monitoring and enforcement of illegal online trade in CITES species;
- c) use data acquired during monitoring activities to establish strategies regarding enforcement, capacity building and public awareness, and further to publish the results of scientific research on the correlations between use of the Internet and the rate of wildlife crime, and communicate these results to the Secretariat; and
- d) promote the use of the capacity established by INTERPOL on wildlife crime linked to the Internet, and the use of the INTERPOL guidelines on *Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet: Practical Guidelines for Law Enforcement Practitioners*;

17. DIRECTS the Secretariat to share on the *Wildlife crime linked to the Internet* webpage on the CITES website, as appropriate, information received from Parties, ICCWC partner agencies, and other relevant organizations or experts, regarding measures and activities implemented to address wildlife crime linked to the Internet.

IX. Regarding available tools, services and resources

~~47~~18. RECOMMENDS further that Parties:

- a) affected by significant poaching or illegal harvest of CITES species, or that have made a large-scale seizure of such specimens, contact the Secretariat to request the deployment of a Wildlife Incident Support Team (WIST), should such support be needed, immediately following such an incident;

[...]

DRAFT DECISION ON *WILDLIFE CRIME LINKED TO THE INTERNET*

Directed to the Secretariat

- 19.AA** Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall commission a study to identify the CITES-listed species that are most commonly found in illegal trade on digital and online platforms, as well as best practices put in place by Parties to address wildlife crime linked to the Internet, and based on the findings of the study, prepare recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee.
- 19.BB** The Secretariat shall report to the Standing Committee, and subsequently the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting, on the implementation of Decision 19.AA.

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 19.CC** The Standing Committee shall review the Secretariat's report called for in Decision 19.AA and make recommendations as appropriate.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.

Proposed amendment to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Compliance and enforcement*

The amendments proposed to Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) would require some time from the Secretariat but should be a core part of the Secretariat's work and accommodated within its regular work programme.

Draft decisions 19.AA to 19.CC

Implementation of draft decision 19.AA would be subject to the provision of external funds. The tentative cost implications are estimated to USD 40,000.

Supervision of the work will require some time from the Secretariat. These tasks are currently completed by temporary project staff and can be accommodated to their tasks with a small contribution towards their staff time. An estimated budget of 5,000-10,000 USD would be required to accommodate these tasks (approx. 2,5 to 5% staff-time).

Implementation of draft decisions 19.BB and 19.CC will require some time from the Standing Committee and the Secretariat but can be accommodated within their regular work programmes.