

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

Thirty-second meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 19 – 23 June 2023

Species conservation and trade

AFRICAN LIONS (*PANTHERA LEO*)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.205 to 19.210 on *African lions* (*Panthera leo*), as presented in the Annex to this document.

Implementation of Decision 19.205

Paragraph a): Implementation of activities in joint African lion conservation plans and strategies, and review of such plans and activities

3. The African lion (*Panthera leo*) is one of the four species covered by the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivore Initiative (ACI). Existing conservation plans and strategies that relate to trade in African lion specimens and the implementation of CITES have been included in the ACI Programme of Work (POW) under objective 1 on *International cooperation, coordination and strategic conservation planning* and objective 6 on *Sustainable use and management*. The ACI POW was approved by the Standing Committees of both the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and CITES (see [Notification to the Parties No. 2021/054](#)).
4. The CITES and CMS Secretariats are organizing the Second Meeting of range States of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI2) to be held from 1 to 4 May 2023 in Entebbe, Uganda. This meeting is made possible through the generous financial support provided by the European Commission, Switzerland, the Federal Government of Belgium and the Flemish Government.
5. The main objective of the meeting in Entebbe is for range States to discuss the ACI POW, its implementation, including an assessment of progress at the national level, and prioritization of activities; conservation issues specific to the species covered by the ACI; and operational matters for the future of the ACI (including its governance, *modus operandi*, monitoring of implementation and funding). The Secretariat will provide an update on the outcomes of the discussions as it relates to African lions to the Animals Committee at the present meeting.

Paragraph b): Study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices

6. Thanks to a contribution by Switzerland, funding has been secured to undertake a comparative study on African lion population trends and conservation and management practices called for in paragraph b) of Decision 19.205. The Secretariat will take onboard any relevant outcomes from ACI2 and work in collaboration with CMS and the IUCN to initiate the study in the second half of 2023.

Paragraph c): Capacity-building in African lion conservation and management, including non-detriment findings

7. The Secretariat is developing guidance on the making of non-detriment findings for African lions in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and in close consultation with range States, which can be used as a basis to support capacity-building in African lion conservation and

management. The development of the guidance was made possible through the financial support of the United States of America. The outline of a draft guidance will be shared with range States at AC12, and based on the feedback by the range States, the draft guidance will be developed. This will be shared as part of the “migratory species and shared population” non-detriment findings workstream under the process relating to the implementation of Decision 19.132 on *Non-detriment findings*, as well as at the second international workshop on non-detriment findings, as appropriate.

Paragraph d): Joint CITES-CMS web portal on African lions

8. The CITES and CMS Secretariats are working closely together to maintain an up to date [joint CITES-CMS web portal on African lions](#). All relevant information and guidance on the conservation and management of African lions as well as updates from AC12 will be shared through the web portal.

Paragraph e): Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa

9. The *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* was compiled by the Species Survival Commission/Cat Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and presented at the first meeting of the range States of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivore Initiative (AC11, Bonn, 2018). Based on feedback by the range States, the *Guidelines* (Version 1.0) were updated and made available to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as an information document (CoP18 Inf. 10; available only in English and French).
10. The *Guidelines* document was envisioned to be regularly revised and updated in consultation with African lion range States and relevant stakeholders and experts. The content informs priority areas for the conservation of lions in Africa and can therefore facilitate the cooperation between African lion range States under the scope of CITES and CMS.
11. At its 31st meeting (AC31, online, June, 2021), the Animals Committee considered the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* ([AC31 SR](#)). The Secretariat conveyed the comments and suggestions on the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* generated by the Animals Committee's intersessional working group on lions to IUCN and the CMS Secretariat and made those comments available in an information document ([AC31 Inf. 23](#)). At AC12, the range States will consider and discuss these comments and update the *Guidelines* as needed. The Secretariat will provide an update on the outcomes of the discussions to the Animals Committee at the present meeting.

Implementation of Decision 19.210

Report on the implementation of the previous Decision 18.246

Decision 18.246, paragraph a): Research and analysis on legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats

13. Decision 18.246, paragraph a) called for a study to conduct further research and analysis on the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats to better understand trends, linkages between trade in different species, and the commodities in trade which, contain, or claim to contain, such specimens. A study entitled *The legal and illegal trade in big cats* was completed thanks to financial support from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Strategic Programme of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC). The study reviewed the trade routes and commodities for the following big cats: cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*), clouded leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*), jaguars (*Panthera onca*), leopards (*Panthera pardus*), lions (*Panthera leo*), pumas (*Puma concolor*), snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*), and tigers (*Panthera tigris*).
14. The Secretariat shared the study with the Standing Committee at its 75th meeting (SC75, Panama City, November 2022) and is available in Annex 1 to document [SC75 Doc.13 \(Rev. 1\)](#). The United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe outlined some anomalies in the report, including in relation to trophy quota figures and the source of traded individuals (wild or captive-bred). The United Republic of Tanzania recommended that the report be sent to the Animals Committee for their review and for recommendations to be made to SC77 ([SC75 SR](#)).

Decision 18.246 paragraph b): Purpose code “H”

15. No funding was secured to assess whether the trade in lion specimens reported under purpose code “H” follows the guidance in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates* [paragraph 3 l) in the latest version of the Resolution], and whether additional reporting specificities or descriptions are needed. Paragraph 3 l) states:

- l) *The term ‘hunting trophy’, as used in this Resolution, means a whole animal, or a readily recognizable part or derivative of an animal, specified on any accompanying CITES permit or certificate, that:*
 - i) *is raw, processed or manufactured;*
 - ii) *was legally obtained by the hunter through hunting for the hunter’s personal use; and*
 - iii) *is being imported, exported or re-exported by or on behalf of the hunter, as part of the transfer from its country of origin, ultimately to the hunter’s State of usual residence.*

16. Decision 18.246, paragraph b), was not renewed at CoP19 and therefore the Secretariat will not seek external funds to undertake this assessment. Parties are welcome to write to the Secretariat with any issues with regulating and reporting trade in lion specimens under purpose code H.

Decision 18.246, paragraphs c) and d): Guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens; and forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade

17. External funding was not secured to develop guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens in trade in consultation with relevant experts as mandated in paragraph c) or to develop and support, in consultation with relevant experts, the use of appropriate forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade as mandated in paragraph d) of Decision 18.246.

18. The Secretariat was offered assistance from the University of Applied Sciences Van Hall Larenstein (Netherlands) to help advance the implementation of the Decision. This involved the collation of guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens, and targeted research on forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade by academics in the context of a bachelor students’ final year dissertation. The list of collated guidance materials was added to the CITES Virtual College [Identification Materials database](#).

19. The Secretariat notes that Decision 19.109 on *Asian big cats (Felidae spp.)* encourages Parties to inform the Secretariat of forensic research projects that focus on the development of techniques to support addressing illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens and to share samples with genetic research projects.

Decision 18.246 paragraph e): Information for the CITES Big Cats Task Force

20. The CITES Big Cats Task Force will be held from 24 to 28 April 2023 in Entebbe, Uganda. This meeting is made possible through financial support provided by the United States of America. The study conducted under Decision 18.246, paragraph a), will be made available for consideration by the CITES Big Cats Task Force as reflected in the summary record of SC75 ([SC75 SR](#)) and in document [CoP19 Doc. 72](#). The Secretariat will provide an update on the outcomes of the discussions to the Animals Committee at the present meeting.

Recommendations

21. The Animals Committee is invited to:

- a) take note of the present document and any updates by the Secretariat at the present meeting;
- b) review any relevant updates on the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* from AC12;
- c) make recommendations to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee and African lion range States on the use and dissemination of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*;

- d) consider if the study prepared under Decision 18.246, paragraph a), and any updates from the CITES Big Cat Task Force, require further review by the Committee; and if a review is required, make recommendations to the Standing Committee, as appropriate.

COP19 DECISIONS ON AFRICAN LIONS (*PANTHERA LEO*)

Directed to the Secretariat, in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

- 19.205** Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall, in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and, as appropriate, taking into consideration the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative and the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* in information document CoP18 Inf. 10:
- a) support the implementation of activities in joint African lion conservation plans and strategies that relate to trade in African lion specimens and the implementation of CITES and as needed, the review of such plans and strategies;
 - b) jointly with the CMS Secretariat, undertake a comparative study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices, such as lion hunting, within and between countries, including the role, if any, of international trade;
 - c) support capacity-building in African lion conservation and management including where appropriate, in the making of non-detriment findings by range States according to Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings* and the implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.9 on *Trade in hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II*;
 - d) assist in maintaining a joint CITES-CMS web portal on African lions, that also allows for the posting and sharing of information and guidance on the conservation and management of African lions;
 - e) share any relevant update of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* with the Animals Committee for its review; and
 - f) report on the implementation of the present Decision to the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee and to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.

Directed to the Animals Committee

- 19.206** The Animals Committee shall:
- a) review any relevant update of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*;
 - b) review the information reported by the Secretariat under Decision 19.205 and submit recommendations to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee and African lion range States, as appropriate.

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 19.207** The Standing Committee shall:
- a) review any reports received from the Secretariat and the Animals Committee under Decisions 19.205 and 19.206 and;
 - b) make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties, the Animals Committee, the Secretariat and/or African lion range States to improve the implementation of the Convention for African lions, as appropriate.

Directed to Parties

- 19.208** Parties, including range States and consumer countries of African lion, as relevant, are encouraged to:
- a) increase enforcement efforts to detect illegal, unreported or misreported trade in specimens of African lion and other big cats;
 - b) use, where appropriate, South Africa's Barcode of Wildlife Project to help identify lion specimens in trade and, when importing lion specimens from South Africa, collaborate where necessary with relevant authorities in South Africa to improve the traceability of such specimens;
 - c) provide details on the observed and/or removed lion body parts in trade when collecting and communicating data on illegal killing and illegal trade in lions to CITES in their annual reports; and
 - d) cooperate on lion conservation, including by sharing information on lion populations, illegal killing and illegal trade.

Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities

- 19.209** All Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities are encouraged to support African lion range States and the Secretariat in their efforts to conserve and restore African lions across their range, taking into consideration the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* and the implementation of Decision 19.205 and 19.208.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 19.210** The Secretariat shall:
- a) share relevant information generated through the implementation of Decision 19.208 with the CITES Big Cats Task Force, the Standing Committee, or both, as appropriate; and
 - b) report on the implementation of the previous Decision 18.246 to the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee.