

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

Regional matters

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

1. This report, covering the period from June 2020 to March 2023, was prepared by Hesiquio Benítez, Regional Representative for North America, in collaboration with the CITES Authorities of Canada, Mexico, and the United States\*.

**Overview of major developments** - A summary of the regional representatives' comments on the most important developments relating to the work of the Committee within the region including those relating to the:

a) Review of Significant Trade.

None to report for this period.

b) Periodic Review of the Appendices.

Canada. None to report for this period.

Mexico.

As a result of the periodic review process, the Animals Committee supported the conclusions presented by the Scientific Authority of Mexico (CONABIO) during AC31 to keep the Mexican Grey Tarantula (*Aphonopelma pallidum*) in Appendix II, keep Coahuila box terrapin (*Terrapene coahuila*) in Appendix I, and to transfer the Mexican prairie dog (*Cynomys mexicanus*) from Appendix I to Appendix II. The amendment proposal about said transfer was adopted by CoP19 (Panama, 2022, CoP19 Prop. 6) and *T. coahuila* was recategorized from Threatened (A) to Endangered (P) in the Mexican list of species at risk (NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010).

United States of America.

The Scientific Authority of the United States (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Division of Scientific Authority) submitted a periodic review for the Aleutian Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis leucopareia*) and the Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) to the Thirty-first Meeting of the Animals Committee (AC31) in 2020. The AC supported the conclusion of the Periodic Review process that these two species be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II. At CITES Cop19, the U.S. submitted proposals to transfer these two species from Appendix I to Appendix II and the proposals were adopted by consensus.

c) Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes.

Canada. None to report for this period.

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\* 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.

#### Mexico.

Taking into account the favorable opinion of the Animals Committee (SC71 Doc. 17), at the 74th Meeting of the Standing Committee (Lyon, France, March 07-11, 2022), the registration of the UMA Earth Ocean Farms S. de R. L. de C. V. was approved as an operation that breeds Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes, coming into force from March 25, 2022 (SC74 Doc. 59.1.2; SC74 SR).

#### United States of America.

In 2022, the USFWS registered 2 commercial breeding operations, one for Gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*) and Gyrfalcon hybrids (*F. rusticolus* x *F. mexicanus*, *F. rusticolus* x *F. peregrinus*) and another operation that breeds Hyacinth Macaws (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*).

d) Non-detriment findings (NDFs).

#### Canada.

In Canada, NDFs are determined on a permit-by-permit basis. For heavily traded species, standing NDF reports are prepared to support the issuance of export permits. Canada's species-specific standing NDF reports are developed in collaboration with the federal-provincial/territorial CITES Scientific Authorities working group, as well as participation and review by species experts and Indigenous peoples. Canada has standing NDF reports that cover the majority of Canada's trade including for Atlantic sturgeon, black bear, bobcat, Canadian lynx, cougar, goldenseal, grey wolf, grizzly bear, narwhal, polar bear, river otter and sandhill crane. Standing NDF reports are reviewed regularly and, as necessary, updated with the most recent information. They are available on the Environment and Climate Change Canada's [website](#).

Canada funded the preparation of a report by Ernest W. D. Cooper entitled Review and Analysis of Canadian Trade in Polar Bears from 2012–2021. The report was completed in 2022 and is available [here](#). It is a sequel to an earlier 2015 analysis by the same author which covered polar bear trade from 2005 to 2014. Canada is in the process of reviewing and updating its standing NDF report for polar bear.

#### Mexico.

From June 2020 to March 2023, the Scientific Authority (CONABIO) formulated 746 NDFs on a permit-by-permit basis for 17 animal species (*Alopias pelagicus*, *A. superciliosus*, *A. vulpinus*, *Carcharhinus falciformis*, *Hippocampus ingens*, *Isurus oxyrinchus*, *Leopardus pardalis*, *Leopardus wiedii*, *Lynx Rufus*, *Ovis canadensis*, *Panthera onca*, *Phoenicopterus ruber*, *Puma concolor*, *Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran*, *S. zygaena* and *Porites panamensis*).

In January 2023, aerial monitoring of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) was conducted in Baja California Sur. The Management Authority (DGVS-SEMARNAT) and the Scientific Authority (CONABIO) will use the results to determine the harvest quotas and issuance of NDFs for the next three seasons and to identify future management and conservation actions.

#### United States of America.

The USFWS' Division of Scientific Authority (DSA) provided advice to the USFWS' Division of Management Authority on numerous animal species. The DSA issued approximately 800 individual non-detriment findings (NDF) for the export of CITES-listed species during the reporting period, in addition, to the NDFs we make in the form of General Advices. New general advices were also made for the export of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) from Montana and the import, export and introduction from the sea of biological samples collected by NOAA. We made our first NDFs on Spiny Softshell Turtle (*Apalone spinifera*), Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Common Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*), Razorback Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus carinatus*), Loggerhead/Stripeneck Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus minor*) and Eastern Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon subrubrum*).

e) Capacity-Building.

Canada. None to report for this period.

#### Mexico.

The Scientific Authority (CONABIO):

- In order to strengthen the implementation of Appendix II for sharks in Mexico, CONABIO coordinated together with [CICESE](#) and [INAPESCA](#) the publication of the book "Conservation, use and sustainable harvest of Mexican sharks listed in CITES" (2022), developed a video-capsule together with WWF and [SOMEPEC](#) to strengthen NDFs (2021), designed information materials and imparted capacity building courses in the main fishing ports of the country in the framework of the project "Strengthening the

implementation of CITES in Mexico for Appendix II listed sharks“ (SOMEPEC-CONABIO-WWF; financed by the Shark Conservation Fund; 2022). These materials are available in the link: <https://bit.ly/mitiburon>.

- In 2021, the procedure manuals for the formulation of NDF for bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), puma (*Puma concolor*) and lynx (*Lynx rufus*), seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) and sharks prepared by the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico, were published on the CITES website: <https://cites.org/esp/virtual-college/ndf?page=0>
- Gave more than 15 talks on CITES objectives and implementation in fora such as: certificate programme on "Environment, climate change and human rights" for the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation; Forum "Towards the transformation of zoos"; certificate programme in "Local Management of the Environment and Territory" for the Secretary of Environment and Territorial Planning of Guanajuato; certificate programme on "Environmental Law and Access to Environmental Justice" at the Mexican Institute for Justice; and in the "National Meeting of UMAs and PIMVS" with producers of CITES species, among others.

The Law Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA):

- In December 2021, carried out a "Totoaba (maw or swim bladder) Identification Practical Course", in which 226 customs verifiers were trained, as well as CONAPESCA and PROFEPA personnel.
- Delivered 45 tool kits to verify the cross-border movement of specimens, parts and derivatives of wild species, as well as quick reference materials for the taxonomic identification of species, to verification and inspection personnel assigned to maritime and inland ports, airports with international flights and land border crossings.

During 2022, CONABIO and PROFEPA worked on the development of materials on CITES, identification tools and proposals were generated to implement joint operational actions for the Green Customs initiative, which seeks to train officials of the National Customs Agency of Mexico ([ANAM](#)) in terms of goods that are considered environmentally sensitive. In addition, both CITES authorities participated in a certificate course aimed at National Guard personnel, with the purpose of training 50 members of the Environmental Battalion, with a series of conferences on CITES implementation, identification tools, procedures for verification to the import and export of wildlife, and the import of forest products and by-products, subject to regulation by SEMARNAT.

#### United States of America

The U.S. Department of State provided funding to the CITES "Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants" (MIKE) to build the capacity of elephant range States in South-East Asia to meet their international commitments made under CITES. They also supported "Combatting Wildlife Trafficking in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands" that aims to build enforcement and CITES capacity throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, leading to increased enforcement efforts and reductions in poaching and illegal trade.

#### *Combating Wildlife Trafficking Program:*

The USFWS International Affairs program, through its financial assistance to combat illegal trade, is funding numerous projects around the globe relevant to CITES species in collaboration with NGO partners, universities, governments, and the CITES Secretariat. Additionally, USFWS recognizes the integral role of people in conservation and, as one of its strategic priorities, aims to address the human dimensions of the illegal trade in wildlife. This priority makes explicit a focus on understanding and influencing the behaviours of the varied actors along the illicit trade chain. To this end, rigorous social science is needed to identify, describe, and understand the range of actors involved in wildlife trafficking, including their roles, characteristics, and motivations, which can be context-specific and can change over time. This social science information is critical to informing more targeted, context-specific, and effective interventions.

- Launched in 2022, the USFWS' Species Conservation Catalyst Fund (SCCF) takes a comprehensive, and strategic approach to reduce the trafficking of targeted species by supporting work that catalyzes significant and sustained change at either the demand or range points along a species' trade chain. The first two trafficking issues to be addressed through the SCCF are: 1) The poaching of saiga antelope (*Saiga* spp.) for the international trade of its horn, and 2) The illegal capture of cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) cubs from the Horn of Africa for the live pet trade. A third initiative is in the early stages of implementation targeting both CITES and non-CITES listed species of songbirds trafficked from Latin America and the Caribbean for singing competitions and the pet trade. A Notice of Funding Opportunity for the songbird initiative is expected to be released in 2023.
- USFWS has cultivated a close working relationship with the CITES Secretariat and other partners to fund the implementation of Decisions and Resolutions and help develop CITES Parties' capacity. In 2022, USFWS established a cooperative agreement with the CITES Secretariat to support CITES Authorities in the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia to strengthen CITES compliance and wildlife law enforcement.

- USFWS social scientists have been working closely with the CITES Secretariat to provide technical expertise for the development of the CITES demand reduction guidance. USFWS is also funding aspects of this work.
- To help build CITES technical capacity in countries most vulnerable to wildlife trafficking and unsustainable harvest of CITES listed species, DOI-ITAP, in partnership with the USFWS Combating Wildlife Trafficking Program, facilitated participation in the 2022-2023 CITES Master's Course for 14 CITES officials from nine countries across Central and East Africa. These scholars have completed their thesis research on topics relevant to the CITES needs of their respective countries and will be defending their theses to the International University of Andalucia in June 2023.

Since 2018, ongoing USFWS CWT funded projects (N=20) are supporting initiatives focusing broadly on law enforcement and CITES capacity, as well as specific measures to counter trafficking for threatened CITES taxa and species. Project examples include:

- Improving awareness and capacities for management and enforcement in relation to lion bone and associated wildlife trade in Lao PDR, Vietnam, and the People's Republic of China.
- Saving Africa's Lions Through the Development of a Range-Wide Threat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan Based on Improved Understanding of Threats and Associated Lion Mortalities.
- Strengthening Law Enforcement and Improving Awareness for Conservation of Pangolins, Star Tortoises, and Other Lesser-Known Species in Illegal Wildlife Trade in Peninsular India.
- People for Snow Leopards: Local Community Action Integrated with National and Global Strategies to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trade in India.
- Protection for the Critically Endangered Ploughshare Tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*) Against Wildlife Trafficking in Madagascar.
- Strengthening Malaysia's Effectiveness in Implementing and Enforcing CITES in Order to Reduce Illegal Trade of CITES-Listed Species.
- Understanding the trafficking of raptors in the Middle East.
- Understanding and Building Capacity to Address Illegal Wildlife Trade in Rwanda.
- Reinforcing the Capacity to Implement CITES Legislation in Practice in Cote d'Ivoire.

*Capacity Building Activities by the USFWS' Office of Law Enforcement, Wildlife Inspection Program.*

- a) Tanzania and Zanzibar / CITES and Counter Wildlife Trafficking / September 2022 – USAID/DOI-ITAP - Partnering with the Tuhafadi Maliasli program.  
USFWS' Wildlife Inspectors (WI) planned, conducted, and facilitated three counter-wildlife trafficking workshops in Tanzania/Zanzibar targeting 60 non-law enforcement personnel that work in the aviation industry. WI's collaborated with Tanzania and Zanzibar CITES officers, Traffic-Tanzania, Tanzanian Wildlife Authority, and other local natural resource and travel industry experts to provide training that included a basic overview of CITES, wildlife trafficking interdiction, and health and safety practices. WI's recommended future efforts to include focused training with law enforcement authorities of Tanzania and Zanzibar.
- b) Wildlife Trafficking Investigators Program (WTIP) and Virtual Wildlife Trafficking Investigators Program (VWTIP)  
This two-week in person (80 hours), one-week virtual (20 hours) course, taught by USFWS' Office of Law Enforcement, provided an overview of various wildlife trafficking investigative topics. The curriculum focuses on endangered species law; CITES implementation and trafficking interdiction; wildlife identification; case initiation and management; digital evidence; forensics and crime scene processing; surveillance; undercover operations; money laundering; interviewing; ethics and corruptions; raid planning; report writing and court preparation. The course emphasizes an open dialogue throughout the course which provides the opportunity for host nations to gain insights on specific wildlife trafficking problems faced by the participating countries. Instructors introduce and discuss techniques and methods available to combat specific wildlife investigative issues. An open forum session with a USFWS Attaché allows participants to build direct investigative exchanges with their U.S. counterparts. This exchange of intelligence and investigative cooperation is essential in combating trafficking of CITES protected species. During 2021, these VWTIP training courses were attended by many African, Asian, and Latin American countries.
- c) Wildlife Border Inspection Training Program (WBITP) and Virtual Wildlife Border Inspection Training Program (VWBITP):  
This one-week in person (40 hours), five-day virtual (20 hours) curriculum, taught by USFWS and United States Customs and Border Protection, provided an overview of various wildlife border inspection topics that are reinforced through classroom exercises. The WBITP involves intensive instruction concentrated on smuggling interdiction at various types of international ports of entry. The curriculum focuses on CITES implementation and enforcement; wildlife trade data; wildlife identification; case initiation and

management; interviewing; border interdiction; evidence processing; ethics and corruptions; and court preparation. Instructors offer best practice techniques to combat specific wildlife inspection issues. An open forum session with a USFWS Attaché allows participants to build direct investigative exchanges with their U.S. counterparts. This exchange of intelligence and investigative cooperation is essential in combating trafficking of CITES protected species. During 2021, these VWBITP training courses were attended by many African, and Asian countries.

- d) Wildlife Seizure Training Program (WSTP) and Virtual Wildlife Seizure Training Program (VWSTP): This three (3) day curriculum provides an overview of CITES enforcement and implementation; wildlife identification; seizure authority; inspection techniques and evidence handling at port of entry environments. This program focuses on the legal authority to seize and the ability to meet the legal threshold for seizure illegal wildlife and wildlife products. Elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn parts and products are the primary wildlife identification of focus, but regionally specific wildlife is included in the curriculum for this program. The WSTP encourages interaction between instructors and class participants and concentrates on the wildlife inspection and identification techniques used by USFWS in combating trafficking in the United States. During 2021 and 2022, this WSTP training program was Conducted Botswana, India, Namibia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

f) Other

Canada. None to report for this period.

Mexico.

Mexico submitted the project "Fostering sustainable, legal and traceable use and trade of wild native species in Mexico" (2020) in the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-7). The PRODOC is in the development phase and is intended to be submitted to the GEF in June of this year. The objective of the project is to promote the conservation of native Mexican wild species and their habitats through sustainable, legal and traceable harvest and trade, the improvement of national and international value chains and actions to address the main factors causing the loss of biological diversity in five bicultural focal areas. The focal species list considers several species listed in CITES Appendix II.

As part of the GEF-8, the draft project called "From conflict to co-existence, safeguarding Mexico's biological corridors for sustainable development", was prepared; which seeks to contribute to stopping and reversing the loss of wildlife populations and their habitats in Mexico by promoting coexistence and favoring their legal use through sustainable livelihoods aimed at transforming landscapes to make them prosperous and resilient.

The Scientific Authority (CONABIO) coordinated the following projects/activities:

1. "Evaluation of the impact and relevance of experimental releases of captive bred totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) as a wild populations conservation strategy" carried out by the Autonomous University of Baja California since 2020, the results of which will be published in 2023. Through genetic samples of specimens released and recaptured, seized and collected for scientific purposes, the project suggests that: the totoaba population has remained demographically stable; there is high genetic diversity (one of the highest in the Scianidae family); the effective size of the population is not reduced and does not show effects of overexploitation; 99.9% of the released specimens can be identified and trace their origin to the captive parents, differentiating them from any other specimen in captivity and in the wild; there was no evidence that the releases put the genetic diversity of the wild population at risk; the specimens are released between 3 and 6 months of age, and some have been found in confiscations of illegal fishing already in adulthood (over 6 years), which reflects that there is recruitment of the released specimens.
2. American Crocodile (*C. acutus*) Monitoring Program, with the support of Universities and Civil Society Organizations, developed in four coastal regions of the Caribbean and the Pacific between 2021-2022. The analysis and the baseline of the current state of the national population will be published in 2023.
3. Development of the Monitoring Manual for the three species of Mexican crocodylians since 2021, based on the previous manual for *C. moreletii* (Sánchez-Herrera, et al., 2010), and of a financing strategy for its long-term implementation, to be published in 2023.
4. Update of legal and illegal biological and commercial information on the freshwater turtles *Claudius angustatus* and *Staurotypus triporcatus* in Mexico, carried out by the Institute of Biology (UNAM) between 2020-2021, which served as the basis for their inclusion in CITES Appendix II at CoP19 (Panama, 2022; [CoP19 Prop. 28 \(Rev. 1\)](#); [CoP19 Prop.30](#)).
5. With the support of academia and NGOs, and in in co-proposal with Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, the United States of America and Panama, the amendment proposal to include two species of the genus *Kinosternon* in Appendix I, and the remaining 20 species in Appendix II, was prepared and presented, later to be adopted by CoP19 (Panama, 2022; [CoP19 Prop. 29](#)).

#### United States of America

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) provided 50,000 USD in grant funds towards the Sponsored Delegates Project to ensure that delegates of developing CITES countries were able to participate at CITES CoP19, and the 75th and 76th meetings of the CITES Standing Committee.

In fulfilment of Decision 18.229, NOAA Fisheries provided 306,695 USD in grant funds to Project Seahorse for an analysis and study of implementation and enforcement challenges concerning the trade in dried seahorses; an analysis and study on trade in live seahorses in key consumer countries; dissemination and presentation of the results at CoP19; and plans for an expert workshop to advance implementation of CITES for trade in seahorses, focused on Asia. NOAA Fisheries also provided 50,000 USD in grant funds for a consultancy to complement the work undertaken by Project Seahorse and co-funded an expert workshop.

**Activities of regional representatives** - A summary of the activities of regional representatives including any problems they have encountered, or which are faced by their region, including participation by regional representatives in any national, regional or international meetings or events relevant to the work of the Committee.

None to report for this period.

**Regional cooperation and priorities** - A summary of key cooperative activities within the region relevant to the work of the Committee including regional priorities to strengthen the scientific basis of the implementation of CITES including activities to provide capacity building to the Scientific Authorities (i.e., projects and publications, etc.) within the region and cooperation with relevant stakeholders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The members of the North America Region communicate regularly as part of our ongoing commitment to meet and discuss regional CITES issues including CITES implementation, preparations for CITES meetings, and other CITES issues of interest to our region.

#### Canada.

Canada (Environment and Climate Change Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and Mexico hosted the second edition of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Workshop on Combating Illegal Trade of Wildlife Species, with a focus on sharks and rays, May 2-4, 2023. The focus of the workshop was to highlight the importance of these species to our oceans, to discuss the current status of illegal trade of sharks and stingrays in the Trans-Pacific region, and to learn about some science-based tools for the identification of illegal trade and related species. The overall objective was to inform scientific, legal and policy experts to draw on lessons to continue developing effective public policy to protect these species where needed.

#### Mexico.

Within the framework of the 25th meeting of the Canada/Mexico/United States Trilateral Committee for the Conservation and Management of Wildlife and Ecosystems (virtual, May 2021), the CITES Working Group met, during which work was carried out in preparation for AC31 and PC25. The Shared Species of Common Interest Working Table also held a session, in which support is planned for cross-border movements of live specimens and parental material in binational projects for the conservation of priority species.

During the 26th meeting of the Trilateral Committee, the Shared Species of Common Interest Working Table met again, during which PROFEPA reported to have facilitated and verified the cross-border movement of Blue-footed Boobies, Mexican Wolves, Little Owls, and Pronghorn.

#### United States of America

In this reporting period, we discussed CITES issues at the CITES Table during our annual Trilateral Meeting. 2021 Meeting of the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management: On May 17-20, 2021, the CITES Table of the Trilateral Committee was convened by the Scientific and Management Authorities of Canada, Mexico, and the United States to coordinate on CITES activities in all three Committees and prepare for the next Conference of the Parties. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual Committee Meetings continued during this timeframe. So too, this was the first ever virtual meeting of the Trilateral. Outcomes from the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC73; May 5-7, 2021) Virtual Meeting were discussed, and priorities and topics of mutual interest were identified for SC74 (March 7-11, 2022), with an aim to ensure a manageable meeting agenda given the constraints of working virtually. In preparation for the 31st meeting (AC31; that was to be held virtually May 31– June 24, 2021) of the Animals Committee 25th meeting

(PC25) of the Plants Committee (held virtually, June 2-24, 2021), the meeting facilitated tri-national development, review, and finalizing of multiple Regional Positions, with at least 24 specific AC31 interventions and at least 17 PC25 interventions. Among the outcomes of preparations for the CoP19; initiated at the Trilateral, Mexico and the United States, with Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Panama, submitted a proposal to include *Kinosternon cora* and *K. vogti* in Appendix I and all other species of *Kinosternon* spp. in Appendix II (except the species included in Appendix I), which was adopted by the Parties at CoP19.

**Meetings and workshops** - A summary of meetings and workshops held significant to the work of the Committee.

a) Within the region.

#### Mexico

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, CONABIO and PROFEPA participated in the workshop on Combating Illegal Wildlife Traffic of Turtles and Tortoises, within the framework of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty (TIPAT). Talks were given on "Public Policy and Regulations: Developing effective policies for the sustainable use of wildlife species while addressing illegal trade" and "Case Studies: Detecting, investigating and notifying illegal trade of turtles." Participants in this activity include border control and law enforcement officials, members of the technical-scientific community, as well as diplomats and experts in international affairs.

and

b) Other Meetings and Workshops (outside the Region).

#### Mexico

From July 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Chetumal, Mexico, hosted the 26th Global Meeting of the Crocodile Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (CSG-IUCN). With over 200 participants from more than 35 countries, the meeting represented an important space for the exchange of knowledge regarding the 24 species in the world and success stories in their management and sustainable use. 4 keynote presentations, 84 oral presentations and the exhibition of 66 posters were held, as well as a public forum in which 25 talks were presented and 77 audiovisual material were projected, with a reach of over 11 thousand people through the social media of the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) and the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP). During said meeting, the participation of DGVS-SEMARNAT was important to position it before researchers and producers as an essential part in activities related to crocodiles and it presented the following posters: "Cross-Border Trade in Specimens, Parts and Derivatives of Wildlife" and "Intensive management of wildlife in Mexico".

PROFEPA participated in the "Workshop on Traffic and Threats to Wild Cats in southern Mexico: Laguna de Términos-Calakmul Corridor" (Cancun, August 2-3, 2022), given by the CSO Panthera, whose objective was to evaluate and prioritize the threats of cats on a regional scale and in the focal sites (Laguna de Términos-Calakmul corridor), the identification of threat drivers where synergies occur, as well as the detection of probable hunting perpetrators, illegal trade in body parts or sale for pets, mainly jaguar (*Panthera onca*) as well as hunting as retaliation for attacks and predation on sheep. In addition to the participation of officials at the federal level, there was also the participation of law enforcement officials at the state and municipal levels, as well as CONANP, researchers, land owners (ejidatarios), and various CSOs. According to Morcatty et.al. 2020, CITES 2021, Asian demand is associated with the trade of cats in South America due to the demand for teeth and claws, as well as the transit of products and by-products of *Panthera onca* in the Mesoamerican corridor Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras, cross-border transit that facilitate illegal trade and supply the demand, which is diversified. Training was provided by a *Panthera tigris* specialist, outlining the *modus operandi* in Bangladesh.

On September 2022, a live webinar on "Totoaba swim bladder (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) identification practical course" was taught by PROFEPA to the World Customs Organization, with the participation of 200 attendees from different parts of the world, which was translated into English, French, Chinese, thanks to the contribution of South Korea. The webinar had the purpose of reaching destination and transit countries with the problems our country faces due to illicit trafficking, mainly for Asian markets.

CONABIO is supporting the organization of the "IUCN regional workshop to update the threat status of Mesoamerican terrestrial and freshwater turtles" to be held in Mexico City in July 2023, where the IUCN and experts will evaluate the Red List criteria of 36 species.

## United States of America

Saiga antelope efforts - In March 2023, USFWS convened a cohort of project partners working to counter the illegal trade of saiga antelope with USFWS funding. The purpose of this meeting was to strengthen collaboration amongst the partners, align with broader saiga conservation initiatives, identify joint opportunities, and avoid duplication. During this meeting, the project partners mapped their activities onto the 2021-2025 Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope (MTIWP) to identify where each project was contributing to the MTIWP. The project partners also conducted a collaborative evidence gap analysis to identify where evidence gaps still exist and how those gaps can be filled. Efforts are underway to ensure that this work is aligned with complementary investments, including those also led by the United States, to support the CITES Secretariat's efforts related to stockpile management and monitoring.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP), with funding from the U.S. Department of State and the USFWS and partnerships with governments, NGOs, and academia, provided a variety of support to CITES officials and efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean during the period June 2021 – April 2023. Highlights include the following:

### *Regional coordination and support to attend CITES CoP19:*

- June 2022 and August 2022 – DOI-ITAP hosted virtual pre-CITES CoP19 coordination meetings for CITES Scientific and Management authorities from the U.S., Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic, and Panama.
- Nov 2022 – DOI-ITAP and USFWS supported participation of regional official in global Wildlife Enforcement Network meeting in Panama including CITES officials and NGOs from the Caribbean, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, and Argentina.
- Nov 2022 – DOI-ITAP and USFWS supported participation of regional officials at CITES CoP19. A total of 17 officials from Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Colombia, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay received support.

### *Creation and launch of technological solutions to improve CITES implementation and enforcement:*

- Throughout 2021 - DOI-ITAP and a USFWS database specialist provided ongoing support and technical advising on the CITES permit database developed for Morocco.
- March 2022 - The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), in partnership with the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), and the US Embassy in Amman hosted an event to launch the CITES electronic application for mobile devices that was developed during the past years to support the implementation of CITES in Jordan. High level attendees included Princess Basma and Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein from Jordan.
- 2021-2023 - DOI ITAP contributed to the development of CITES+ permit and border control electronic systems: El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Panama (development stage completed). DOI also donated computer tablets to these CITES offices to support user access to the electronic systems. With the operation of these systems, countries will be able to electronically manage:
  - Procedures and payments in lines of permits and CITES licenses
  - Management, monitoring and issuance of permits electronically
  - Verification of permits at control points, using QR code and electronic signatures
  - Automation of annual reports of illegal trade and traffic
  - Digitization of incidents
- March 2023 - DOI Assistant Secretary Carmen Cantor participated in "Our Ocean" conference in Panama including a visit to the CITES offices in Panama to see electronic CITES+ permit system.
- 2022-2023 – DOI-ITAP, Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura (INCOPECA), and start-up fisheries tech company Remora created and launched a fisheries digitalization platform project with Costa Rica including CITES-listed species. The system will also include a module adding INCOPECA as a CITES Authority to the platform.

### *Strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement via collaborative training, scientific research, networking, and coordination:*

- June – July 2021. 106 Panamanian officers graduated from two diploma courses on environmental law applied to wildlife. Both diploma courses included modules on the general aspects of CITES, the observance and application of the agreement in Panama. This effort was possible thanks to the collaboration between DOI ITAP and the Higher Institute of the Judiciary (ISJUP) and the Fiscal Training School of the U.S. Department of Justice Nation's Attorney General's Office.
- October 2021 – 109 officials from different countries participated in the Virtual Seminar on CITES legal issues and enforcement "Strengthening Capacity on the CITES Convention" virtual presentation and CITES training -. CITES Secretariat This effort was coordinated by the Legal Unit of the CITES



- Secretariat, the ROAVIS Enforcement Network and DOI ITAP. Participants included CITES and Enforcement Authorities. Countries included Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and the USA.
- October 2021 – 100 Guatemalan officials graduated with a diploma in environmental law which included modules on international treaties/CITES and CITES implementation and enforcement in Guatemala. This effort was coordinated with the Training Unit (UNICAP) of the Public Ministry and the School of Judicial Studies of the Supreme Court of Justice. Participants included judges and prosecutors.
  - October 2021 - DOI-ITAP supported a CITES training for Jordan's Royal Rangers, which monitor environmental rules. The one-day training focused on CITES regulations and the challenges that Jordan faces with wildlife trafficking and confiscation. The training also included biodiversity education and the importance of cooperation between different agencies and organizations.
  - October 2021 - DOI-ITAP supported the Jordanian Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN)-led training that focused on CITES education and orientation, the importance of eco-tourism revenue for local communities, and safety interacting with wildlife. Trainees learned how to write CITES violations, how to manage wildlife confiscation, and how to identify illegal activities inside the protected areas. This training was followed by case studies and mock situation practices.
  - October-December 2021 - DOI-ITAP, in partnership with RSCN, held three trainings for the Customs Department for agents stationed at the borders. RSCN delivered a hands-on training on the CITES mobile application using newly issued computer tablets. The sessions included interactive discussions about CITES and the challenges that Jordan faces, Jordanian regulations and its position as a Category 1 country, and partnerships to implement CITES.
  - December 2021 – DOI-ITAP, in conjunction with the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, Fundación Entropika, and the Colombian and Peruvian National Police, delivered an animal handling and sampling training course, which included hands-on exercises, in Leticia, Colombia. Participants also included police, CITES officials, veterinarians, and U.S. technical experts. Because of this workshop, Fundación Entropika created the first ever Spanish language animal forensic sampling field guide.
  - December 2021 – DOI-ITAP provided support to the International Primatological Society meeting in Ecuador.
  - 2022-2023 – DOI-ITAP facility supported the CITES and Fisheries authorities of Guatemala in the implementation of the Study on Estimation of biometric data and parameters to set the commercial quota for dry fins and skin of dusky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) and thresher sharks (*Alopias pelagicus*, *Alopias superciliosus*, *Alopias vulpinus*) landed on the Pacific coast of Guatemala. The generation of biometric parameters of fresh and dry fins of the species included in the study are an important input for the elaboration of the NDF. As a result of the study, a mobile app has been developed to track equivalency of dry versus wet fins when carrying out the inspection of landings in Guatemalan ports.
  - 2022-2023 – The USFWS National Forensics lab and DOI-ITAP are working on a jaguar DNA forensics project with NGOs, researchers, and government officials through the jaguar range countries. The goal is to analyze georeferenced jaguar DNA samples and develop a method that allows researchers and officials to determine the individual identification and geographic/population provenance of a jaguar DNA sample. Results will be shared for use by all countries.
  - March 2022 - 51 Honduran officers graduated from the Diploma "Environmental Law applied to wildlife and forest resources in Honduras." This effort was coordinated by the Doctor Orlando Arturo Chavez Public Ministry Training School and implemented by the Zamorano Agricultural University. The Diploma included modules on the legislation applicable to CITES in Honduras, the international framework of application and the mechanisms for the observance of the law. Participants included prosecutors, judges, and technicians.
  - May 2022 - DOI-ITAP worked with RSCN to conduct a training for 14 judges and Reserve Managers in Jordan, as they play major role in evaluating cases and enforcing wildlife laws. During the training, participants discussed case studies, CITES basics, how to deal with confiscated products, and how to effectively work with law enforcement personnel.
  - June 13-16, 2022 - DOI-ITAP worked with USFWS law enforcement officers and a CITES Management Authority specialist to conduct a four-day training on CITES and wildlife law enforcement. Participants included the Environment Authority and the Royal Oman Police's Customs unit. The training was the first time these two groups were trained together, and advanced cooperation between the two while simultaneously highlighting the issue of wildlife trafficking.
  - Sept. 2022 - March 2023 – DOI-ITAP supported a series of four workshops in Honduras with local officials regarding updates in Honduran environmental law including CITES implementation and enforcement.
  - September 2022 – DOI-ITAP, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, and the Brazilian NGO Freeland conducted a Wildlife Inspection and Enforcement Training to include CITES training at Port of Santos, Brazil for a group of Brazilian port and related enforcement officials.

*Raise awareness of CITES with governments and the public:*

- June 2021 - DOI-ITAP provided a presentation regarding CITES priorities and needs in the region to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
- June 2021 - DOI-ITAP provided an overview of CITES and other support to the Environmental Security Council of the Govt of Costa Rica at request of the government.
- December 2021 – February 2022 - DOI-ITAP remotely supported three CITES public awareness campaigns held by DEF, the Management Authority in Marrakech, Rabat, and Tangier; the USFWS continued to assist DEF by providing remote support in operating and maintaining an electronic CITES database.
- September 2022 - DOI-ITAP supported and organized three counter-wildlife trafficking workshops in Tanzania and Zanzibar targeting 60 personnel working in the aviation industry, with a focus on companies operating charter flights in the priority areas of connectivity (e.g. Kwakuchinja and Amani-Nilo corridors).
- January 2023 – DOI-ITAP virtual presentation regarding ITAP and DOI work on CITES and other topics in Central America to Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) countries.

*Develop CITES-related training and awareness materials, equipment, and tools:*

- January 2021 - DOI-ITAP and Central American Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAWEN) launched the first ever Spanish language jurisprudence and case example manual based on cases in Central America, including CITES cases.
- February 2021 – CITES 101 training video launched in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWRA9N-pB9Y>.
- September 2022 - DOI-ITAP donated computer tablets to CITES office to support users and access to electronic system. The tablets will be used by the wildlife inspectors and the phytosanitary services of Costa Rica whose role is the inspection of shipments and validation of documents, including Box 14 of the CITES permits/certificates at the main ports of entry/exit.
- January 2023 – DOI-ITAP donated equipment to INCOPECSA, the CITES Scientific and Management Authorities for Costa Rica, to improve inspection processes for landings of marine species and validation of Box 14 of CITES permits/certificates at seaports authorized for international trade.
- DOI-ITAP continues to work with partners to expand the Vida Silvestre mobile app. Since 2022, portions of the app are now available in English as well as the existing information in Spanish. See: [www.videsilvestre.net](http://www.videsilvestre.net) for additional information.

**Other regional information**

Mexico

The Law Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA) conducted the following activities:

- Worked on various strategic lines for the reported period, being the strengthening of the verification of transboundary movements of species regulated by CITES, the establishment of cooperative efforts for a better implementation of the Convention as well as the prevention and attention to priority issues in international illegal trafficking, among others.
- However, at the level of Cooperation between the Parties, it is considered that the lack of use of the notification mechanism contemplated in CITES (Article VIII) by the Parties, makes it difficult to officially know the cases of illegal export or import and to proceed consequently.
- 10,136 verifications were carried out on shipments with regulated wild species, out of which 1,448 corresponded to wild flora species. With this, compliance with the Non-Tariff Restrictions and Regulations (RRNAs) related to the cross-border movement of regulated species was guaranteed. In order to guarantee compliance with the obligations subsequent to the use of the verified and validated CITES Permits, 25 verification and inspection acts were carried out on natural or legal persons, making the respective notification to the CITES Management Authority when necessary.
- Participated in various cooperative, regional and global operations, coordinated by the The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in order to prevent, detect and deal with international trafficking in wildlife and forest resources, namely: Operation "THUNDER 2020" , Operation "MADRE TIERRA III 2021", Operation "IRAKERE 2021", Operation "MADRE TIERRA IV 2022", Operation "THUNDER 2022". At the national level, the "Permanent Surveillance Operation in Airports with Frequency of International Flights" was executed with the purpose of detecting, preventing and combating the illegal trafficking of wild species for irregular export purposes.
- Work was done on the signing of collaboration instruments with governmental and private institutions, in order to promote compliance with the legal framework regarding transboundary movements of regulated wild species, including CITES, and for coordination in prevention and attention of cases of international illegal traffic. The collaboration agreements with the Mexican Postal Service, Estafeta, Volaris, the

National Service for Food Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) and ANAM have a high percentage of progress.

- During the period, work was done, together with the CITES Management Authority, the Ministry of Economy and ANAM, in updating the "Agreement that establishes the merchandise whose import and export is subject to regulation by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources" in order to adapt national legislation to the 7th edition of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System", approved by the Customs Cooperation Council of the World Customs Organization, to facilitate the international trade of wild species regulated by CITES, among other things.

#### United States of America

On December 20, 2022, President Biden signed the Big Cat Public Safety Act (BCPSA) into law. The BCPSA covers species and hybrids of lion, tiger, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, jaguar, cheetah and cougar. The law will effectively end private ownership of big cats in the United States by allowing current private owners to keep their big cats, but will require owners to register each big cat with the USFWS no later than June 18, 2023, and prohibit owners from breeding their big cats (whether internationally or negligently). The BCPSA also includes prohibitions on import, export, transport, sale, receipt, acquisition, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce, or in a manner substantially affecting interstate or foreign commerce, except for certain exceptions for licensed exhibitors, licensed federal facilities, certain State entities, State licensed veterinarians, and wildlife sanctuaries. The BCPSA also prohibits facilities that exhibit big cats from allowing direct contact between the public and the big cats. Detailed information can be found at: <https://www.fws.gov/what-you-need-know-about-big-cat-public-safety-act>.

On March 3 2023, USFWS co-hosted a World Wildlife Day event at the National Geographic Headquarters in Washington, DC with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), in partnership with the Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), and Jackson Wild (a non-profit organization). This World Wildlife Day marked the 50th anniversary of CITES, and the theme for World Wildlife Day this year was Partnerships for Wildlife Conservation. The event was broadcast via the CITES Secretariat's YouTube channel. U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Haaland provided the opening remarks.

During the week of World Wildlife Day, USFWS also participated in a Congressional Reception on International Wildlife Trade: Past, Present, and Future, which was sponsored by the International Conservation Caucus Foundation and held at the U.S. Dirksen Senate Office Building. USFWS Director Martha Williams provided remarks and introduced CITES Secretary General Ivonne Higuero.

On March 3 2023, USFWS co-hosted the first of three "Toss the Tusk" events with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), at the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA) Safari Park. At each event, members of the public had the opportunity to surrender unwanted ivory or other wildlife products to USFWS. At SDZWA, USFWS wildlife inspectors provided education around the illegal wildlife trade and facilitated the surrender of 222 wildlife products including ivory, with support from California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Toss the Tusk events follow at Dallas Zoo on April 14 and the Saint Louis Zoo on August 11, 2023.

The USFWS has undertaken significant outreach to the U.S. States regarding the new reptile and amphibian taxa that were included in the Appendix II at CoP19. These efforts included an in-person meeting with the regional members of Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) to discuss implementation and hosting a CITES informational webinar with AFWA and State agency personnel. USFWS has also reached out to the hobbyist community with an article in Reptiles Magazine on *New 2023 CITES Herp Listings. What do the new listings mean to herp owners?* At: <https://reptilesmagazine.com/new-2023-cites-herp-listings/>.