

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



Thirty-third meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 12 – 19 July 2024

Regulation of trade

Exemptions and special trade provisions

IMPLEMENTATION OF PARAGRAPH 5 J) OF RESOLUTION CONF. 12.10 (REV. COP15)
ON REGISTRATION OF OPERATIONS THAT BREED APPENDIX-I ANIMAL SPECIES IN CAPTIVITY
FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. In accordance with paragraph Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15), *Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes*, the Conference of the Parties RESOLVED the following in paragraph 5 j):
 - j) *the Management Authority shall satisfy itself that the captive-breeding operation will make a continuing meaningful contribution according to the conservation needs of the species concerned;*
3. The application form for registration, included as Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15), invites operations wishing to be registered to describe the strategies used or activities conducted by the breeding operation to contribute to the conservation of wild population(s) of the species; (see question 15 of the application form).
4. At its 77th meeting (SC77, Geneva, November 2023), following consideration of agenda item 33.8 on the application of Article XIII in the European Union, the Standing Committee invited the Secretariat to submit to its 78th meeting a document with draft elements of guidance on the following matters:
 - a) *specific guidance on the chain of custody required for demonstrating the legal acquisition of the parental stock, i.e., the chronological documentation, to the extent practicable and in accordance with applicable laws and records, of the transactions pertaining to the removal from the wild of a specimen and the subsequent ownership of that specimen; and*
 - b) *standardized and objective criteria to implement the requirement stated in paragraph 5 j) of Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) to assist Management Authorities in making the findings about the continuing meaningful contribution that the captive-breeding operation will make to the conservation needs of the species concerned.*
5. To respond to the request of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat first conducted an overview of the situation to identify which strategies the Management Authorities have considered appropriate for including operations in the CITES Register. Next, the Secretariat prepared a summary of the information provided by the Parties to question 15 of the application form on the contribution to the conservation of wild populations of the species.
 15. *Description of the strategies used or activities conducted by the breeding operation to contribute to the conservation of wild population(s) of the species.*

To do so, the Secretariat reviewed the information included in the applications for inclusion in the Register of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes. The Secretariat notes that a question on the contribution to conservation was only added to the Resolution in July 2000 (after CoP11) and therefore that the analysis only applies to operations registered since 2000.¹

Objectives of the analysis

6. The analysis aims to determine which conservation strategies have been mentioned in the applications for registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes. The Secretariat recalls that, by requesting the inclusion of operations in the Register, Management Authorities have estimated that “the captive-breeding operation will make a continuing meaningful contribution according to the conservation needs of the species concerned”. However, the Secretariat can only review the answers provided to question 15 and cannot verify whether such strategies have been implemented or not.
7. The analysis is also aimed at identifying whether the strategies differ depending on the species concerned.

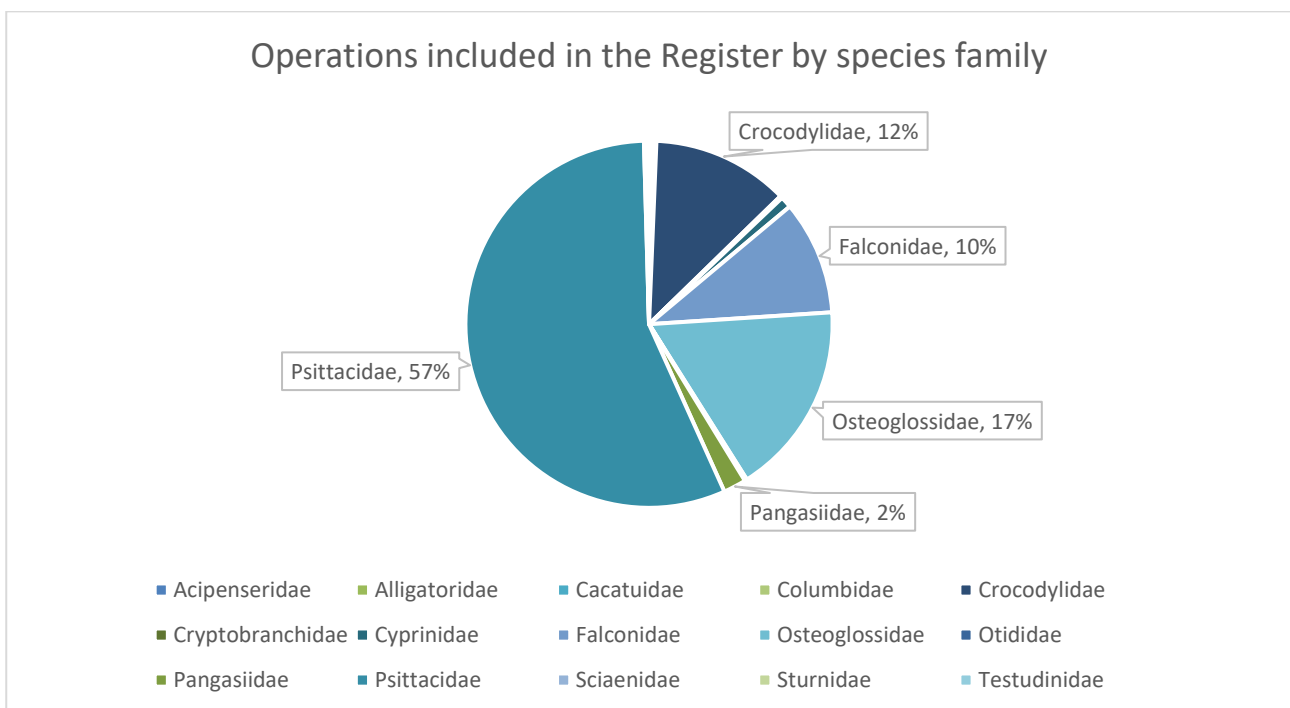
Description of the analysis and variables used

8. This is a quantitative analysis of the information included in the applications submitted by the 406 operations breeding Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes that are registered with the CITES Secretariat. Twenty-nine different species were documented in the analysis.
9. To determine the current situation regarding the conservation strategies of operations, based on the answers provided to question 15, the Secretariat identified the seven conservation strategies listed below:
 - a) “Reduction of the pressure on wild populations”: the issue is to determine whether the operations concerned contribute to the reduction of the pressure on the wild populations of the species that they breed in captivity by preventing wild specimens from being harvested to meet the international demand. However, the Secretariat notes that the operations registered with the Secretariat breed Appendix-I animal species for which trade of wild-harvested specimens (source code W) for commercial purposes (code T) is not allowed. Consequently, the contribution to the conservation of the species would be mainly to limit illegal trade of wild-harvested specimens by meeting the international demand.
 - b) “Contribution to the genetic diversity of the captive-bred population”: the issue is to determine whether the operations concerned contribute to the genetic diversity of the population they breed in captivity by providing genetically different specimens for potential reintroduction into the wild.
 - c) “Potential reintroduction into the wild”: the issue is to determine whether the operations concerned are considering the reintroduction into the wild of the specimens they breed in captivity.
 - d) “Contribution to research on the species”: the issue is to determine the number of operations that contribute to research on the species that they breed in captivity.
 - e) “Financial contribution to a conservation fund”: the issue is to determine the number of operations that financially contribute to a conservation fund.
 - f) “Public awareness”: the issue is to identify the operations that contribute to public awareness about the species that they breed in captivity, namely by allowing visits to the premises.
 - g) “Contribution to capacity building”: the issue is to determine the number of operations that contribute to capacity building within their establishment and of people involved in it.
10. All the strategies reviewed in this analysis are dichotomous. A “yes” answer to one or several strategies implies that the conservation strategy concerned was reported by the operation registered with the CITES Secretariat. Conversely, a “no” answer to one or several strategies implies that the conservation strategy concerned was not reported by the operation.

¹ The Secretariat also notes that it was not able to find the application documents of 30 operations but notes that these operations breed species that are included in the analysis thanks to other captive-breeding operations. Only three species (and four operations) are missing from the analysis: *Acinonyx jubatus* (cheetah), *Eos histrio* (red and blue lory) and *Tragopan caboti* (Cabot's Tragopan).

11. The Secretariat has also classified the responses according to the 15 different families of species included in the Register:

- Acipenseridae (sturgeons)
- Alligatoridae (alligators, caimans)
- Cacatuidae (cockatoos)
- Columbidae (Nicobar dove)
- Crocodylidae (crocodiles)
- Cryptobranchidae (giant salamanders)
- Cyprinidae (cyprinids)
- Falconidae (falcons)
- Osteoglossidae (golden arowana)
- Otididae (bustards)
- Pangasiidae (pangasid catfish)
- Psittacidae (parrots)
- Sciaenidae (totoaba)
- Sturnidae (Rothschild's mynas)
- Testudinidae (tortoises)



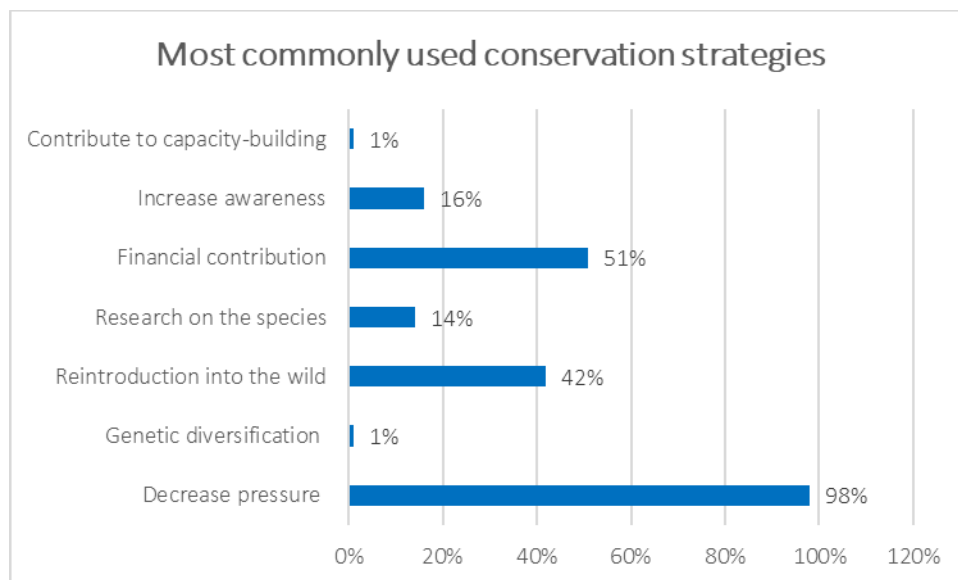
Results of the analysis

12. To report on the results regarding the conservation strategies, it is important to define how many operations (of a total of 406) reported each strategy. It should be noted that, of the 406 operations, 204 are in South Africa, which represents approximately 51% of the total number of operations registered with the CITES Secretariat.

13. The main conservation strategies reported by the operations were the following, based on the responses of Parties to question 15: “Reduction of the pressure on wild populations”; “Potential reintroduction into the wild” and “Financial contribution to a conservation fund”, specifically:

- a) most operations (396 out of 406; 98%) reported contributing to reducing the pression on wild populations;
- b) 42% of operations (173 out of 406) reported considering the reintroduction of captive-bred specimens into the wild;
- c) 51% of operations (208 out of 406) reported contributing to a conservation fund. Yet, it is important to mention that 204 of these operations for *Psittacus erithacus* are in South Africa.

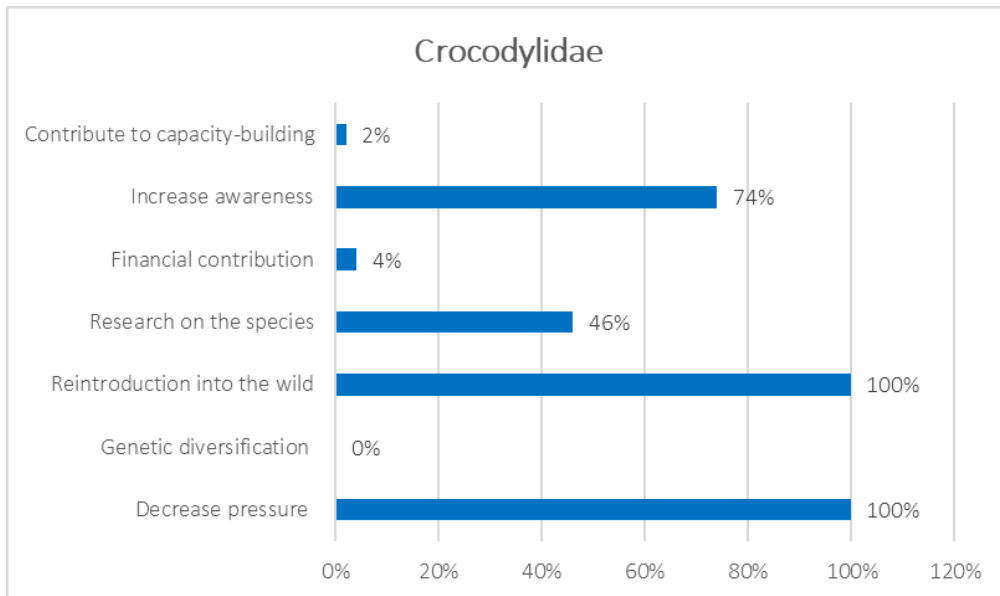
14. According to the answers provided to question 15, the following strategies were used by relatively few operations:
- “Contribution to the genetic diversity of the captive-bred population”: only 3 operations (out of 406; 1%, reported contributing to the genetic diversity of the captive population.
 - “Contribution to research on the species”: 56 operations (out of 406; 14%) reported contributing to research on the species to improve its conservation.
 - “Contribution to capacity building”: 3 operations (out of 406; 1%) reported contributing to capacity building as a means to conserve the species concerned.
 - “Public awareness”: 66 operations (out of 406; 16%) reported contributing to public awareness of the species concerned to improve its conservation.



15. Results were highly influenced by the fact that 204 operations are in South Africa, given that such operations represent 51% of the total number of operations.

Results disaggregated by family

16. As a reminder, 15 families are represented in this analysis. The family Psittacidae alone represents over 56% of operations; the most widely used conservation strategies are listed in paragraph 20 below. The following results are only provided for families present in more than five operations.
17. Of the operations breeding in captivity species of the family Crocodylidae, according to the answers provided to question 15, the conservation strategies most widely used are the following:
- “Public awareness”: 74% of operations breeding species of Crocodylidae in captivity (37 out of 50 operations).
 - “Contribution to research on the species”: 46% of operations breeding species of Crocodylidae in captivity (23 out of 50 operations).

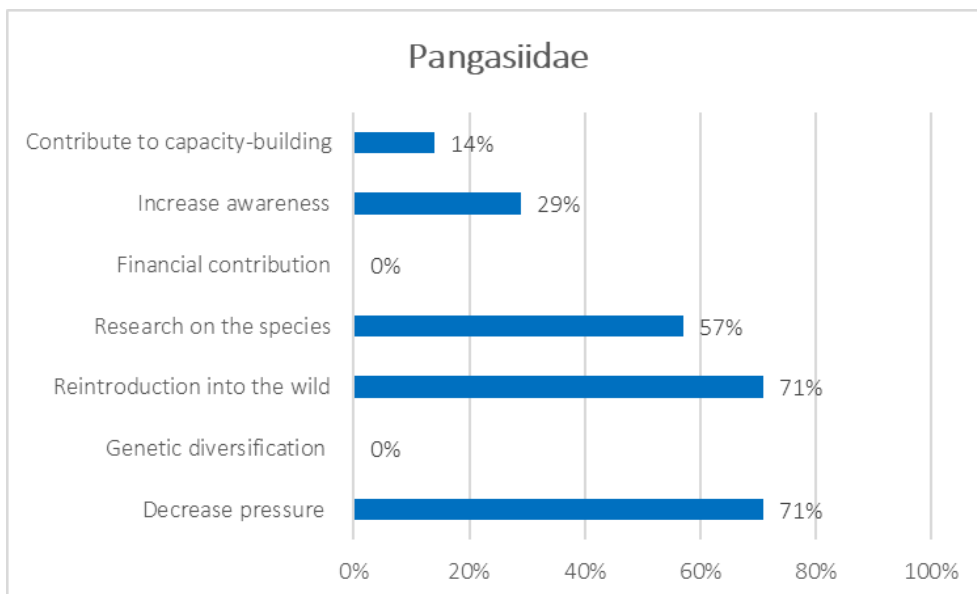


18. Of the operations breeding in captivity species of the family Osteoglossidae (golden arowana), according to the answers provided to question 15, the conservation strategies most widely used are the following:

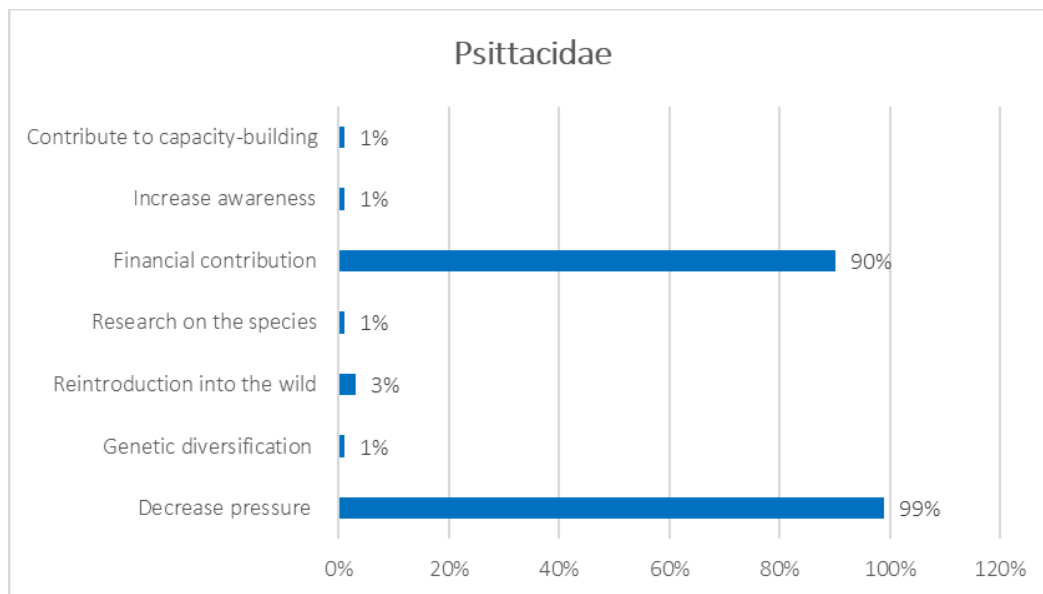
- a) “Public awareness”: 18% of operations breeding species of Osteoglossidae in captivity (12 out of 67 operations).
- b) “Contribution to research on the species”: 33% of operations breeding species of Osteoglossidae in captivity (22 out of 67 operations).

19. Of the operations breeding in captivity species of the family Pangasiidae (pangasid catfish), according to the answers provided to question 15, the conservation strategies most widely used are the following:

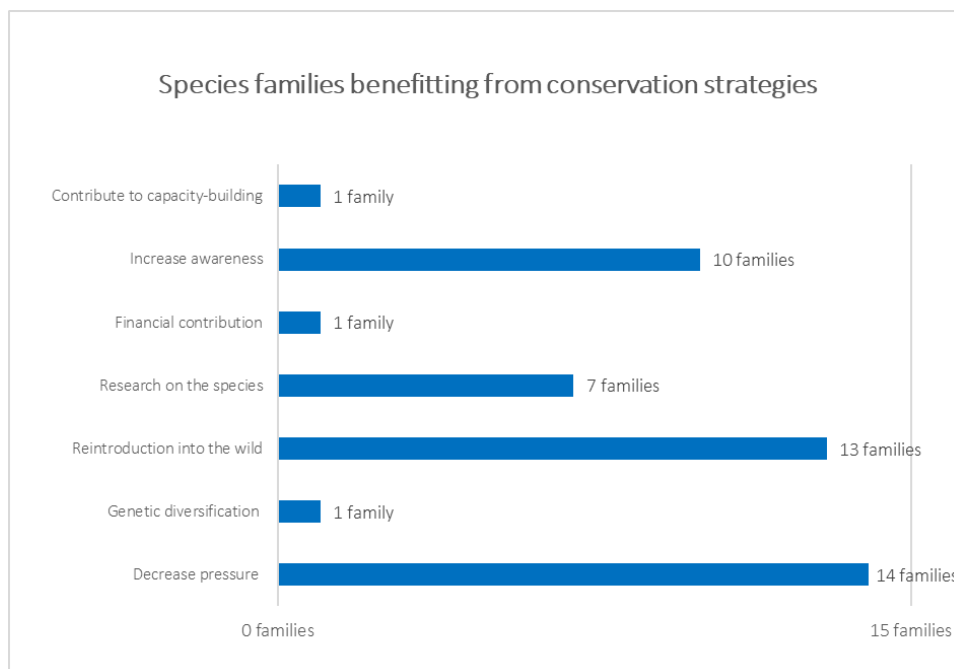
- a) “Public awareness”: 29% of operations breeding species of Pangasiidae in captivity (2 out of 7 operations).
- b) “Contribution to research on the species”: 57% of operations breeding species of Pangasiidae in captivity (4 out of 7 operations).
- c) “Contribution to capacity building”: 14% of operations breeding species of Pangasiidae in captivity (1 out of 7 operations).



20. Of the operations breeding in captivity species of the family Psittacidae, according to the answers provided to question 15, the conservation strategies most widely used are the following:
- a) “Financial contribution to a conservation fund”: 90% of operations breeding species of Psittacidae in captivity (206 out of 229 operations).



21. Conservation strategies such as “Public awareness” and “Potential reintroduction into the wild” were reported for many families; specifically, for 60% (9 out of 15 families) and 87% (13 out of 15 families) of families, respectively, according to the responses provided to question 15.
22. By contrast, conservation strategies such as “Contribution to capacity building”, “Financial contribution to a conservation fund” and “Contribution to the genetic diversity of the captive-bred population” were only reported for a low proportion of families, specifically 7% (1 out of 15 families) each.



Reintroduction into the wild as a conservation strategy

23. Operations included in the Register do not have the obligation to report any introductions into the wild to the Secretariat. Some operations breeding species of Falconidae and Crocodylidae in captivity reported having released specimens into the wild. Given that these reintroductions often take place domestically (and

therefore without CITES permits), the Secretariat does not have any accurate information on the implementation of this strategy. Yet, the Secretariat has tried to identify cases of reintroductions into the wild of specimens bred in operations outside the range of the species bred in captivity.

24. The Register includes operations that breed non-native species in eight Parties: Australia (*Amazona oratrix*); the Philippines (*Guarouba guarouba*); Serbia (*Falco pelegrinoides*); Singapore (*Psittacus erithacus*); South Africa (*Psittacus erithacus*); Tunisia (*Crocodylus niloticus*) the United States of America (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* and *Primolius couloni*); and Zambia (*Psittacus erithacus*).
25. Interestingly, all the Parties reported that reintroduction into the wild was a possibility, except South Africa and Singapore for *Psittacus erithacus*. As a reminder, the Parrot Breeder Association of South Africa (PASA) created a fund for the conservation of this species (i.e., the African Grey Conservation Fund), which has a dedicated bank account that South African breeders of this species make contributions to. For more detailed information, see information document CoP18 Inf. 59.
26. The Secretariat tried to verify whether any exports for reintroduction purposes have taken place from any of these eight countries. To do so, the Secretariat searched for transactions of live specimens from Australia, the Philippines, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Tunisia, the United States of America and Zambia for each species concerned with source code D, that is, "Captive bred/artificially propagated (Appendix I)" with the purpose of "Reintroduction or introduction into the wild", that is, purpose code N. From the data available in the CITES Trade Database, none of the registered operations that breed non-native species have exported any specimens for the purpose of reintroduction into the wild.

Concluding remarks

27. As a first step before developing "standardized and objective criteria to implement the requirement stated in paragraph 5 j) of Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) to assist Management Authorities in making the findings about the continuing meaningful contribution that the captive-breeding operation will make to the conservation needs of the species concerned", the Secretariat first conducted an overview to identify which strategies the Management Authorities have considered appropriate for inclusion in the CITES Register. This analysis shows that "Reduction of the pressure on wild populations" is the main conservation strategy used, followed by "Financial contribution to a conservation fund" and "Potential reintroduction into the wild", in particular for the families Crocodylidae and Pangasidae. Only eight Parties have registered operations for non-native species and no reintroductions into the wild have been recorded.
28. The Secretariat reiterates that there is no way to determine whether the above-mentioned strategies are implemented or to determine their impact on the conservation of wild populations. In this regard, the Guidance for Inspection of Captive Breeding and Ranching Facilities does not mention what Management Authorities can do to monitor the effective implementation of conservation strategies or to determine their impact on the conservation of wild populations.
29. The Secretariat also notes that Parties have no obligation to inform the Secretariat of the reintroduction into the wild of specimens bred in captivity (even if this strategy is mentioned in the application for registration of an operation) as this is often an activity implemented on a domestic level for operations breeding native species. The Secretariat also recalls the existence of the following guidelines:
 - IUCN Guidelines for reintroductions and other conservation translocations
30. For operations breeding non-native species, the Secretariat also recalls the existence of the following guidance:
 - Resolution Conf. 13.9 on Encouraging cooperation between Parties with ex situ breeding operations and those with in situ conservation programmes
 - Non-binding practice guidance on how to determine whether "the trade would promote in situ conservation"
 - IUCN/SSC Guidelines on the Use of Ex Situ Management for Species Conservation (available only in English and Spanish)

The Secretariat also notes that, in document AC33 Doc. 27 on *Conservation aspects of captive-breeding of Asian big cats (Felidae spp.)*, the IUCN/SSC Guidelines on the Use of Ex Situ Management for Species

Conservation were identified as providing useful guidance that could assist Parties in evaluating the conservation aspects of tiger captive breeding facilities.

31. The Secretariat also notes that the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee implement Decisions 19.179 and 19.180 on *Review of CITES provisions related to trade in specimens of animals and plants not of wild source*. In the context of its work, the intersessional working group issued Notification to the Parties No. 2024/021, which included a questionnaire asking about the potential conservation benefits of captive-bred or artificially propagated Appendix-I specimens for commercial purposes (source code D) (see document PC27 Doc. 21/ AC33 Doc. 25). The conclusion of work on these decisions could inform the draft guidance requested by the Standing Committee.

Discussion

32. Based on this analysis and the concluding remarks provided above, the Secretariat seeks the advice of the Animals Committee on how to proceed to develop the draft guidance requested by the Standing Committee. Specifically, the Secretariat seeks the advice of the Animals Committee on the following issues:
- a) Are the conservation strategies identified in paragraph 9 and the existing guidance mentioned in paragraphs 28 and 29 enough to provide standardized and objective criteria to implement the requirement stated in paragraph 5 j) of Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) to assist Management Authorities in making the findings about the continuing meaningful contribution that the captive-breeding operation will make to the conservation needs of the species concerned?
 - b) If draft guidance is needed, is it preferable to develop separate draft guidance for native species or not, considering the available guidance already mentioned in paragraph 29 above?
 - b) What specific elements should the guidance focus on?
 - i) additional guidance to include in the Guidance for Inspection of Captive Breeding and Ranching Facilities to help CITES authorities monitor the strategies of the operation or its activities contributing to the conservation of wild populations of the species?
 - ii) additional guidance for individual species or families on the frequency with which the parental stock should be augmented to increase the genetic pool of the captive population in order to avoid any deleterious inbreeding without any detrimental effect on the conservation of the species in the wild?
 - iii) any other specific guidance related to one of the seven strategies identified?

Recommendations

33. Based on the responses provided to the questions asked in paragraph 32, the Animals Committee is invited to ask the Secretariat to prepare a document for the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee:
- a) proposing that the seven conservation strategies identified in paragraph 9, the already existing guidance mentioned in paragraphs 28 and 29 as well as any relevant conclusions related to the implementation of Decisions 19.179 and 19.180 be circulated through a Notification to the Parties and published on the CITES website to help Management Authorities determine whether the captive breeding operation makes a continuing meaningful contribution according to the conservation needs of the species concerned;

OR

- b) proposing draft decisions for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties asking the Secretariat, subject to the availability of external funding and in consultation with the Animals Committee, to prepare additional guidance with standardized and objective criteria to implement the requirement stated in paragraph 5 j) of Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) to assist Management Authorities in making the findings about the continuing meaningful contribution that the captive-breeding operation will make to the conservation needs of the species concerned, for approval by the Standing Committee. The guidance should focus on the gaps identified by the Animals Committee at the present meeting.