

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

Species conservation and trade

Terrestrial species

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 Annex 1 to the present document.
3. At its 32nd meeting (AC32; Geneva, June 2023) the Animals Committee considered document [AC32 Doc. 32](#) on *African lions* (*Panthera leo*) that included information relating to the implementation of the Decisions. A further update on the implementation of the Decisions is provided in the present document.

Implementation of activities in joint African lion conservation plans and strategies, and review of such plans and activities as well as the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa*

4. As reported to AC32, the second range States' meeting of the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI-2) considered several issues relating to the African lion, including the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa*. The Secretariat shared information relating to the outcomes of the ACI-2 in information document [AC32 Inf. 7](#). The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in consultation with the range States, would update the *Guidelines* and would prepare, in collaboration with the CITES and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariats, a web-based document on the [Joint CITES/CMS/IUCN Lion Web Portal](#) that would be a "living" document to be updated as new information becomes available. At ACI-2, a review group responsible for considering proposed amendments to the *Guidelines* before its online publication was established, but it has not yet initiated its work. The Secretariat will continue to collaborate with the IUCN and the CMS Secretariat to support the review process.
5. Taking into consideration the process agreed by range States at ACI-2, the Secretariat proposes that paragraph a) of Decision 19.205 be retained with an amendment to the chapeau to remove reference to the previous version of the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa*. Since ACI-2 agreed that the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* would be a living document, the Secretariat further proposes that paragraph e) of Decision 19.205 be amended. The proposed revisions to the Decisions are contained in Annex 2 to the present document.

Study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices

6. The Secretariat initiated the comparative study on African lion population trends and conservation and management practices called for in paragraph b) of Decision 19.205. The study was undertaken in partnership with the University of Oxford and was made possible through the financial support provided by Switzerland. The Secretariat appreciates the support provided in this regard. A meeting of the African lion range States took place on 3 May 2024, facilitated by the Secretariat, and attended by 46 participants,

including representatives of the 23 African lion range States¹, the CMS Secretariat and IUCN. The main objective of the meeting was to consult the range States on the proposed approach for the study, sources of information to be used, key research questions, criteria to identify the countries for the comparative assessment of population trends and conservation and management practices, and to invite African lion range States to actively participate in the study.

7. The following aspects were raised by the African lion range States during the meeting:
 - a) Key considerations to inform the study:
 - i) different management approaches are successfully delivering lion conservation;
 - ii) cross-border protected areas and populations (e.g., the Masai Mara in Kenya and Serengeti in the United Republic of Tanzania), including management practices, monitoring and aspects that could inform policies and management;
 - iii) there should not be a bias towards well-studied populations for which there is ample data. The study presents an opportunity to collect up-to-date data held by range States and to fill (at least in part) apparent data gaps;
 - iv) an opportunity to collect information on challenges experienced by range States in filling important data gaps on African lions, e.g., on lion populations and population trends that are important to inform lion management;
 - v) overarching policy environment / context and its impact on outcomes taking into consideration that range States have different wildlife management policies;
 - vi) socio-economic data in range States, e.g., poverty levels and human population density, as well as potentially high-level data on tourism;
 - vii) obtaining data on revenue and expenditure related to protected areas and their management and similar data related to other forms of land use could be challenging, and the available data may not be rigorous due to limitations in obtaining detailed and accurate information.
 - b) It was proposed that a questionnaire be prepared and shared with all African lion range States to obtain relevant information and a 'baseline' relating to *inter alia* gaps in data, management challenges, including human-wildlife conflict and opportunities associated with successful conservation methods.
8. The CITES Secretariat shared the summary outcomes of the online meeting with the African lion range States after the meeting. The above considerations by the range States will inform the approach to the development of the study and consultation with range States will continue throughout. Based on the timeline for the study, the report will be available for consideration by the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee and the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Capacity-building in African lion conservation and management, including non-detriment findings

9. The Secretariat developed draft guidance on the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) for African lions in collaboration with IUCN and in close consultation with range States. The development of the guidance was made possible through the financial support of the United States of America. The Secretariat appreciates the support provided in this regard.
10. The outline of the guidance to be developed was shared with range States at ACI-2, and based on the feedback by the range States, the draft guidance was prepared as noted above and presented at the international NDF expert workshop that took place in December 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya (see document PC27 Doc. 16 / AC33 Doc. 16). The Secretariat incorporated the inputs received during the workshop and shared this revised draft with the African lion range States in February 2024 for a final round of comments. The inputs received were incorporated and the final version of the *Guidance for Non-Detriment Findings for African lions (Panthera leo) under CITES* is attached as Annex 3 to the present document. The final version

¹ Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia.

was translated into French thanks to the generous support from the Netherlands. The Secretariat appreciates the support provided in this regard.

11. The Secretariat invites African lion range States to test the general *CITES NDF guidance* developed pursuant to Decision 19.132 on *Non-detriment findings* and the *Guidance for Non-Detriment Findings for African lions (Panthera leo) under CITES* and to provide feedback to the Secretariat on their experiences. The Secretariat will consider the feedback received and update the guidance, as appropriate. The recent NDF guidance developed can be used to support capacity-building in African lion conservation and management.
12. In light of the above developments, the Secretariat proposes that paragraph c) of Decision 19.205 be amended and proposed revisions to the Decisions are contained in Annex 2 to the present document.

Joint CITES-CMS web portal on African lions

13. The [joint CITES-CMS web portal on African lions](#) that allows for the posting and sharing of information and guidance on the conservation and management of African lions has been updated to reflect the outcomes of ACI-2. The CMS Secretariat included the report on the [State of the World's Migratory Species](#) on the portal since this report includes information relating to the species included in the African Carnivores Initiative and the impact of habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation on the species, including disruption of connectivity due to intensified human impacts on the natural habitats and barriers to movement. Land use planning and habitat conservation and restoration is a key objective of the Programme of Work of the ACI. The Secretariat will include the *Guidance for Non-Detriment Findings for African lions (Panthera leo) under CITES* referred to in paragraphs 9-11 of the present document on the web portal. The Secretariat is of the view that a decision is not required to ensure the web-portal is maintained and therefore proposes the deletion of paragraph d) of Decision 19.205.

Decision 19.209 directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities

14. The Secretariat notes that specific reference is made in Decision 19.209 to the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* and proposes that the Animals Committee consider adding a reference to the Programme of Work (PoW) of the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivore Initiative. The guidelines will become a 'living' document but key activities that may benefit from support are also included in the programme of work of the African Carnivore Initiative and will facilitate the consolidation of decisions that support activities in the ACI PoW.

Decision 19.210 directed to the Secretariat

15. The Secretariat has implemented Decision 19.210 by sharing relevant information generated through the implementation of Decision 19.208 with the CITES Big Cats Task Force and the Standing Committee and by reporting on the implementation of the previous Decision 18.246 to AC32 in document [AC32 Doc. 32](#). As indicated in this document, the previous Decision 18.246 has been implemented with the exception of two subparagraphs c) and d) that required the Secretariat to develop guidance material for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens and to develop and support the use of appropriate forensic techniques for the identification of such specimens in trade.
16. The Secretariat notes that tools for identification and the use of forensic techniques are priorities that have been identified by the range States at ACI-2 (see document AC33 Doc. 10). They are also covered by the outcome of the CITES Big Cat Task Force meeting that took place in April 2023 (see document [SC77 Doc. 39.3](#)). The Secretariat proposes draft decisions to be considered by the Animals Committee in AC33 Doc. 10 on the *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivore Initiative* to address these aspects. The Secretariat proposes the deletion of Decision 19.210.

Recommendations

17. The Animals Committee is invited to consider the information in the present document and the draft decisions contained in Annex 2 for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting and onward submission to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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.

REVISED 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 (Rev. CoP20) 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. 40:

- 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*, taking into consideration the available guidance on the making of non-detriment findings; and
- ~~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;~~
- ~~ed) share any relevant update of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* that relate to the Committee's mandate with the Animals Committee for its review; and~~
- ~~f d) 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 21stth meeting.~~

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.206 (Rev. CoP20) The Animals Committee shall:

- a) review any relevant update of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* that relate to the Committee's mandate and that has been brought to the Committee's attention by the Secretariat;
- b) review the information reported by the Secretariat under Decision 19.205 (Rev. CoP20) and submit recommendations to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee and African lion range States, as appropriate.

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.207 (Rev. CoP20) The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review any reports received from the Secretariat and the Animals Committee under Decisions 19.205 (Rev. CoP20) and 19.206 (Rev. CoP20) 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 (Rev. CoP20) 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, the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative and the outcomes of the CITES Big Cat Task Force meeting, and the implementation of Decision 19.205 (Rev. CoP20) 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.~~