

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

Aquatic species

Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

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 on Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

19.228 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *subject to external funding, collaborate with Parties and species experts to prepare a report on the global illegal trade in seahorses, for consideration by the Standing Committee. The report should include an analysis of extracted data from the CITES illegal trade database, consultations with regional enforcement networks as applicable, analysis of illegal trade routes, modus operandi and seizures, and information contained in the studies prepared in response to Decision 18.229 paragraph c) i); and*
- b) *report on implementation of paragraph a) of the present Decision to the Standing Committee at its 77th and 78th meeting.*

Directed to source, transit, and consumer Parties for which there is evidence of illegal and/or unsustainable international trade in dried seahorses

19.229 *To effectively implement the inclusion of seahorses in Appendix II of CITES, source, transit, and consumer Parties for which there is evidence of illegal and/or unsustainable international trade in dried seahorses are encouraged to:*

- a) *collaborate with key stakeholders and species experts to develop national or regional plans of action to improve CITES implementation for seahorses and should include the following, inter alia:*
 - i) *encouraging collaboration and communication between key stakeholders at a national and regional level, including Environment, Fisheries and Enforcement agencies, with respect to CITES implementation and data gathering for the international trade in seahorses;*

- ii) *improving monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to seahorses in coastal areas and at transaction points (e.g. in the marketplace, online, in maritime areas, and at air- and seaports);*
 - iii) *submitting comprehensive and accurate information on illegal international trade in seahorses in their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat, as required in compliance with Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP19) on National reports, and in support of Decision 19.228, paragraph a);*
 - iv) *addressing the main drivers of illegal and unsustainable trade by effectively regulating and constraining the operations of non-selective fishing gears, such as bottom trawls and gillnets, to reduce their impacts on seahorses, and combating illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing of seahorses by developing best practices for sustainable harvest; and*
- b) *share progress in developing and implementing these national or regional plans of action with the Secretariat for its report to the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee.*

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

19.230 *Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide financial and technical assistance to Parties to implement Decision 19.229 and any further recommendations made by the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.231 *The Animals Committee shall:*

- a) *in consultation with species experts, analyse and review the results of any activities under Decisions 19.228 and 19.229, the report produced under Decision 18.229, paragraph c) i), and other relevant available information;*
- b) *develop recommendations to the Parties, the Secretariat, and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to ensure sustainable and legal international trade in seahorses;*
- c) *consider recommending seahorses as a case study to the 2nd international expert workshop on non-detriment findings; and*
- d) *report on the implementation of the present Decision to the Standing Committee, as appropriate.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.232 *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *analyse and review the results of any activities under Decisions 19.228 and 19.229, the report produced under Decision 18.229 paragraph c) i) and, as appropriate, the report of the Animals Committee produced in support of Decision 19.231;*
- b) *develop recommendations to the Parties and the Secretariat, as appropriate, to strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement for international trade in seahorses; and*
- c) *report on the implementation of Decisions 19.228 to 19.232 to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.*

Implementation of Decision 19.228

3. The Secretariat is pleased to report that it has secured funding from Monaco and the United States of America to produce the report on the global illegal trade in seahorses called for in Decision 19.228. The Secretariat will report on progress with the implementation of Decision 19.228 at the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC78; Geneva, February 2025).

Implementation of Decision 19.229

4. On 29 January 2024, the Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2024/027](#) regarding *Request for information on the development of national or regional action plans to improve CITES implementation for seahorses (Hippocampus spp.)*. In response to this Notification, the Secretariat received submissions from Australia, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States of America. These are compiled in an information document, in the language in which they were received. The Secretariat thanks these Parties for the reports submitted and briefly summarizes key aspects contained in these responses Parties below.
5. **Australia** reported that it has no evidence indicating that it is affected by illegal or unsustainable trade in dried seahorses. Australia stated that they permit limited and sustainable trade primarily focused on live seahorses for the aquarium market, with occasional exports of seahorse bodies and derivatives in smaller quantities. The Party reported that it has in place positive and evidence-based non-detriment findings (NDFs) for seahorse exports, which are reviewed every three years by Australia's CITES Scientific Authority under the Environment Biodiversity and Conservation Protection Act 1999. Currently, three operators, engaging in activities involving both captive-bred and wild harvest, are legally authorized to export seahorses.
6. Australia noted in its report that the development of recommendations under Decisions 19.231, paragraph b) and 19.232, paragraph b), provides an opportunity to establish a common understanding of the information requirements for NDFs for *Hippocampus* species. Such work may help to address some of the challenges of dealing with uncertainty over population levels and risk-based management of data-poor CITES-listed marine species. Australia also supported the development of practical steps to address enforcement challenges in addressing illegal trade of *Hippocampus* species, particularly dried seahorses.
7. The Party further noted that many live seahorses exported from Australia come from approved captive bred sources. Noting the provisions in [Resolution Conf. 16.7 \(Rev. CoP17\) on Non-detriment findings](#) which in paragraph 1. a) vi) states “the methodology used to make a non-detriment finding should reflect the origin and type of specimen, such that the method used to make a non-detriment finding for a specimen known to be of non-wild origin may be less rigorous than that for a specimen of wild origin for example”, Australia indicated that it supports the development of further guidance for making non-detriment findings for seahorses from captive bred production systems.
8. **China** highlighted that it had classified all seahorse species as second-class protected wildlife under the Wildlife Protection Law, with strict regulations governing their hunting, captive-breeding, operation, utilization, import, and export. To strengthen enforcement, China established a CITES implementation system that involves various governmental authorities. Its InterMinisterial Joint Conference on Combating Illegal Trade in Wildlife established in 2016 coordinates efforts across 27 ministries to combat illegal wildlife trade. In addition to CITES requirements, China indicated that it is implementing stricter domestic measures and that its authorities over the years have strengthened law enforcement, conducted numerous operations, and significantly cracked down on the illegal trade of CITES-listed species like seahorses.
9. China finally highlighted that it has been conducting research on the captive-breeding of seahorses for many years, focusing on species such as Japanese and Gongda seahorses. It reported that more than 270,000 Japanese seahorses have been released in recent years, which has played a role in restoring the populations of seahorses.
10. **Colombia** reported that seahorse species are considered non-fishery hydrobiological resources in the country, and thus do not have usage quotas. Currently, Colombia has no national or regional action plans to enhance CITES implementation for seahorses in place. There have been attempts at captive-breeding in Colombia, primarily for ornamental use with species such as *Hippocampus reidi* and *Hippocampus kuda*, though there are no large-scale breeding centres for these species.
11. Colombia reported that efforts have been made, working with national experts, to assess the threat level to three seahorse species (*H. erectus*, *H. reidi*, and *H. ingens*) which are considered as Vulnerable. No data on the international trade of seahorses is available to Colombia. However, local trade of dried seahorses emerging in some coastal cities such as Santa Marta, Cartagena, and Buenaventura was reported. Generally, there are no studies on seahorse species in the wild; therefore, information on the status of their populations is scarce and virtually non-existent in Colombia.
12. **Indonesia** highlighted that the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) had developed a National Plan of Action (NPOA) on the Conservation of Seahorses 2016-2020. In addition to the NPOA, seahorses

are included among the 20 priority taxa for protection and sustainable use in 2020-2024. The NPOA outlined comprehensive strategies for the conservation of 11 seahorse species in Indonesian waters (*Hippocampus barbouri*, *H. bargibanti*, *H. comes*, *H. denise*, *H. hystrix*, *H. kelloggi*, *H. kuda*, *H. pontohi*, *H. satomiae*, *H. spinosissimus*, and *H. trimaculatus*). Although the plan officially ended in 2020, actions are still being actively implemented, and an update is expected in 2024.

13. The NPOA includes goals, strategies, and actions across various conservation and management areas, with good progress reported in the implementation of these measures. The efforts include promoting the captive-breeding of seahorses to ensure sustainable production and meeting market demands. Additionally, Indonesia is currently developing a NDF document to explore sustainable use opportunities with a quota system for its wild seahorse population. Furthermore, the MMAF monitors seahorse transportation and illegal trade activities.
14. Indonesia reported several challenges in seahorse conservation and the implementation of its NPOA, underscoring the need for a broader approach to conservation strategies, improved resource allocation, and enhanced education and engagement of stakeholders. For the 2024 renewal of Indonesia's NPOA for Seahorses, they mentioned several key elements are considered to enhance conservation efforts that aim to refine the approach to seahorse conservation in Indonesia, ensuring the sustainable management and protection of seahorse species.
15. **Malaysia** highlighted that regarding an NDF, its Wildlife Ordinance is currently under review by the state board in Sarawak and that the Department of Fisheries maintains a zero quota on the export of all seahorse species. In terms of monitoring, since 2023, Save Our Seahorses (SOS) Malaysia has been collaborating with the National University of Malaysia and the University of Malaysia to monitor the population of *Hippocampus kuda* in its Johor state, using a citizen science approach. Additionally, planning is in progress regarding an underwater seahorse population monitoring project in the Sembilan Archipelago, in the state of Perak, in partnership with the Perak National Parks Corporation. SOS Malaysia is also in discussions with several dive centres across the country to enhance awareness and establish monitoring partnerships.
16. Regarding legislation, Malaysia noted that seahorses have been included in the Wildlife Protection Ordinance of the Sarawak State, which is under review and has been submitted to the state board.
17. Regarding enforcement, Malaysia noted that there had been increased monitoring of seahorse trade across all three its regions, and that two seizures of dried seahorses (6 kg in September 2023 in Sabah) and 90 kg in October 2023 in Peninsular Malaysia, were made.
18. **Mexico** reported that, in the period from 2004 to 2021, the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA) recorded 5,975 seized dried seahorse specimens. According to trade data in the CITES trade database for the period 2004-2022, 84% of the export from Mexico in seahorses originated from captive-breeding. It was further reported that these operations are conducted in facilities with management plans registered with the Administrative Authority (DGVVS-SEMARNAT).
19. The trade in wild specimens of seahorses reported by Mexico is in line with, and supported by, NDFs issued by the Scientific Authority of Mexico. Mexico reported that the technical elements for these NDFs were produced by the project "Analysis of captive-breeding, use, and trade of seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) and opportunities to strengthen the implementation of CITES in Mexico" which incorporated initiatives and materials developed by organizations like Project Seahorse and TRAFFIC North America, among others. The Party reported that the project referred to above also identifies challenges and includes recommendations for strengthening the management of seahorse species in Mexico.
20. Mexico's response included a link to the publication of "Generic Management Plan for Marine Ornamental Fish" by SEMARNAT. This plan is designed for stakeholders interested in conserving, managing, and utilizing sustainably these types of species, including seahorses. They state the plan provides guidelines for establishing objectives, goals, and success indicators; identifying areas with available habitat and fishing grounds (fishing and no-fishing zones); sampling methods (population and habitat); logs of resource use and capture (sites, species, challenges); size and mortality (capture, packaging, and transportation); and overall management measures for the sustainable use of marine ornamental fish.
21. Various workshops had been conducted to train personnel from PROFEPA and other agencies in wildlife trade management, focusing on marine species, including seahorses. The Party noted that since the illegal trade of the *Hippocampus* genus in Mexico and internationally is marginal, specific action plans to combat

this illegal trade are not considered necessary. Instead, they report that improvements are being addressed through national actions and the implementation of Generic Management Plans.

22. **Peru's** response relates to one species of seahorse (*Hippocampus ingens*) and provides updates on progress with activities carried out in seahorse conservation. These include cooperative efforts with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that are providing financial and technical assistance in the country, as well as management measures implemented to control threats occurring in the species' distribution areas.
23. Peru noted that, in 2000, before seahorses were listed in CITES, it was the main exporter of *H. ingens* worldwide and had the largest known domestic trade in South America.
24. Since 2022, Peru reported it has been actively supporting initiatives to fill information gaps related to the biology, ecology, fisheries, and trade of *H. ingens* in the Southeast Pacific. They mention the collaboration that began in 2023 between Peru, Project Seahorse, the University of British Columbia, and ProDelphinus (a non-governmental organization). This partnership aims to generate data along the Peruvian coast concerning the conservation status and trade of seahorses. The Party further reported that these efforts are further enhanced by other activities promoted by the Scientific Authority of Peru, including the development of the document "Diagnosis on the Progress of Seahorse Research (*H. ingens*) and Its Ecological and Population Status in Peru" (MINAM, 2016), which supports related conservation activities.
25. Peru's Management Authority for hydrobiological species, the Ministry of Production (PRODUCE), indicated that it had conducted over 600 inspections of marine resources since CoP19, particularly along the border with Ecuador. In these efforts, approximately 1.81 tons of seahorses and 6,371 desiccated specimens of this species have been seized. Additionally, they reported that the National Customs and Tax Administration plays a significant role in detecting the illicit trafficking of specimens lacking CITES documentation. Peru continues its endeavours to reduce the illegal trafficking of wildlife species. In November 2022, amendments were made to the Peruvian Penal Code, increasing penalties for offenses against flora, fauna, and hydrobiological resources.
26. Peru stressed the importance of clearly and comprehensively including information on seizures of CITES-listed species in Annual Illegal Trade Reports submitted to the Secretariat.
27. More generally, Peru highlighted that combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a priority for the country, considering its vast maritime domain. They mention the enactment of Supreme Decree No. 016-2020-PRODUCE, aimed at addressing illegal fishing activities in its jurisdictional waters and promoting the sustainability of its resources, as a significant milestone in this regard. This regulatory measure stipulates that only vessels equipped with the Produce Satellite Tracking System can enter Peruvian waters. The Party reported that the objective of this provision is to eliminate IUU fishing practices that have been ongoing for years. Although there are persistent challenges in fully implementing this regulation, they state that there are visible positive effects. In March 2020, Peru signed the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing.
28. The ongoing collaborative efforts with Project Seahorse, the University of British Columbia, and ProDelphinus focus on generating seahorse-related information, with particular emphasis on two main components: conducting rapid assessments of biological, fishery, and commercial aspects of seahorses along the Peruvian coast, and undertaking fieldwork in key seahorse concentration areas to deepen understanding of their behaviour, biology, and ecology. These activities, currently underway, are expected to provide valuable input to develop a Seahorse Action Plan in Peru, as suggested in document AC32 Doc. 38.1, complementing existing management measures for the species at the national level.
29. **The Philippines** reported that, since 2013, the government has supported the implementation of iSeahorse Philippines. iSeahorse is a tool for seahorse science and conservation, developed and implemented by Project Seahorse (PS) and the Zoological Society of London-Philippines (ZSL-Ph). The Party stated that it harnesses the power of community scientists to improve the understanding of these animals and protect them from threats such as overfishing and habitat loss. Key achievements of this initiative as reported include the discovery of a rare species of seahorse (*Hippocampus pontohi*) never before recorded in Philippine waters and captured on camera by a diver and submitted to the iSeahorse app. This new discovery increased the total number of known seahorse species in the country to ten. The Philippines additionally stated that the iSeahorse data played a pivotal role in the establishment of a new Marine Protected Area in Anda, Bohol, Philippines.

30. Regarding national legislation, the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, originally enacted as Republic Act No. 8550, was amended by Republic Act No. 10654 on 27 February 2015. The Party reported that this amendment introduced stricter penalties and enhanced monitoring systems to combat IUU fishing while Section 97 of the original Act imposed broad restrictions on CITES-listed species. They noted that the amendment under Section 102 of RA No. 10654 now allows for the legal take and trade of species listed under CITES Appendix II, including seahorse species.
31. In 2016, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and the Scientific and Management Authorities, together with PS and ZSL-Ph, co-organized a consultation forum. The primary outcome of this forum was the Seahorse – National Plan of Action (NPOA). The Party reported that this plan laid out proposed actions for the implementation of CITES and the development of NDF for seahorses.
32. In 2017, as part of supporting the implementation of the Seahorse-NPOA, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources established the Philippine Aquatic Red List Committee (PARLC). This committee consists of local scientists and experts tasked with preparing the Philippine Aquatic Wildlife Red List. This group has submitted reports based on field surveys conducted in 2019, which gathered new data on seahorse fisheries and trade in the Philippines.
33. The Philippines also reported that In 2018 and 2019, DA-BFAR and the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) hosted annual workshops to facilitate the implementation of programmes and activities under PARLC. These workshops were well-attended by a diverse group of local experts and scientists from across the Philippines, as well as international experts and guests.
34. In March 2023, DA-BFAR and NFRDI partnered with PS and ZSL Philippines to co-host the Implementing CITES for Seahorses Asia Region Workshop in Cebu, Philippines. It brought together government representatives and experts from a range of countries from Asia. For more details, see document [AC32 Doc. 38.2](#) on *Implementing CITES for Seahorse - Asia Region Workshop*.
35. The Philippines reported on the review of the Seahorse-NPOA, adjusting its goals to overcome implementation challenges and enhance seahorse conservation through the Philippine Seahorse Programme (PSP). The updated PSP focuses on five major areas: 1) enhancing knowledge of local seahorse species through IUCN Red List Assessments and by establishing the Philippine iSeahorse Network for monitoring and supporting data capture initiatives; 2) strengthening marine protected areas (MPAs) by improving management of existing MPAs, expanding coverage, and advocating for MPAs through policy briefs; 3) addressing issues in fisheries by evaluating harmful fishing practices, developing management plans, and integrating by-catch monitoring at sentinel sites; 4) legalizing sustainable seahorse trade by standardizing data collection on seahorse seizures, training wildlife law enforcers, and implementing NDFs starting in Bohol Province; and 5) developing educational materials to engage the public and provide resources for Aquatic Wildlife Enforcement Officers (AWEOs).
36. In 2023, the Philippines reported that DA-BFAR took several steps to advance the PSP. First, DA-BFAR established a Technical Working Group (TWG) with members from various divisions, to ensure effective collaboration and implementation of the PSP. Additionally, DA-BFAR is in the process of finalizing a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with ZSL-Ph and PS to further solidify their partnership in executing the PSP. In December 2023, DA-BFAR also hosted a national training workshop aimed at enhancing the taxonomic identification skills of regulatory officers and personnel from DA-BFAR regional offices, particularly those assigned to ports, airports, and licensing and permitting sections, focusing on CITES-listed species including seahorses, as well as other protected and regulated aquatic species in the Philippines.
37. **Thailand** reported that the Department of Fisheries (DoF) has suspended the export of seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) since 1 January 2016.
38. Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) are currently classified as "Controlled wild animals" under Thailand's national law, specifically the Wild Animal Conservation and Protection Act, B.E. 2562 (2019). Any person wishing to import or export controlled wild animals, their carcasses, or products derived from such carcasses must obtain a license granted by the Director-General of DoF.
39. The Party reported that the DoF has established a national seahorses working group composed of various experts and dedicated to collecting data on seahorses and preparing information related to the status of seahorse populations in Thai waters. Additionally, they noted that the group evaluates and analyses problems or obstacles and proposes solutions for resolving issues related to the export of seahorses in Thailand, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

40. The DoF, as the primary organization responsible for resource management in Thailand, has developed draft seahorse monitoring procedures, including monitoring at landing sites and port monitoring, as well as trade surveys along both the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. These efforts are in collaboration with the Fish and Production Import and Export Control Group, which is also responsible for the import and export of aquatic species listed under CITES that are classified as high-risk goods. Officers are tasked with inspecting all shipments of high-risk goods, including seahorses.
41. Thailand reported that it has implemented numerous laws, regulations, and measures to enhance enforcement activities related to seahorses, aimed at combating IUU fishing and supporting sustainable marine resource utilization. These include restrictions on high-efficiency fishing gears such as trawl nets and surrounding nets; expanded prohibition areas for trawls and push nets; limits on the length of fishing nets; and a reduction in the number of trawlers. Such measures are specifically designed to protect fishery resources during their spawning period and juvenile stages, thereby preserving critical habitats for species like seahorses. Additionally, various Notifications have been issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Department of Fisheries, which include prohibitions on specific fishing gears and practices, the designation of specific areas and seasons for fish maturation, spawning, and larval development in several provinces, and imposing restrictions on fishing in environmentally sensitive areas such as coral reefs.
42. Thailand submits annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat.
43. Thailand indicated that it would welcome support from CITES and related organizations to develop a comprehensive National Plan of Action (NPOA) for seahorses. They are looking for technical assistance for NPOA development; capacity-building for local researchers and research institutes; enhanced cooperation for information exchange between importing and exporting countries; and assistance in developing area-based conservation strategies for seahorses and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).
44. **The United States of America** reported that it has implemented various measures at both federal and state levels to support the implementation of CITES provisions for seahorses. Within federal waters, the management of seahorses falls under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Seahorses meet the definition as "fish" under the MSA so its provisions apply to these species. Among its requirements, as reported by the United States, the MSA requires that conservation and management decisions be based on the best available scientific information derived from consultation with interested and affected stakeholders to assess the amount and type of by-catch in fisheries. The Party noted that fisheries management pursuant to the MSA draws upon federal, state, and academic capabilities in carrying out research, administration, management, and enforcement.
45. The United States reported that under authority of the MSA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries coordinates with various regional fishery management councils and interstate marine fisheries commissions to implement and enforce management plans for maintaining sustainable seahorse populations. They highlighted that these plans emphasize the importance of by-catch monitoring and mitigation strategies to minimize impacts on non-target species, including seahorses. NOAA Fisheries also works closely with three Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions (Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific States), which coordinate with NOAA Fisheries and states to collect data and manage fisheries resources in their shared coastal regions.
46. While a federal management plan has not been specifically developed for seahorses, the United States reported that state regulations are in place for these species. For example, in the State of Florida, collectors of seahorses are subject to gear restrictions, license requirements, and harvest limits. The State of New York prohibits the harvest of seahorses for commercial purposes. In addition to harvest regulations, the US noted that several states obtain data on seahorses through fishery-independent monitoring surveys. For instance, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission coordinates two regional Atlantic coast fishery-independent data collection programs: the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Programme (NEAMAP) and the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Programme (SEAMAP). The Party stated that these data support the assessment of the status of seahorse populations.
47. The United States further reported that MSA requires the protection and restoration of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) to maintain productive fisheries and rebuild depleted fish stocks. They highlighted that NOAA Fisheries collaborates with regional fishery management councils to use the best available scientific information to identify, describe, and map EFH to help protect sensitive habitats. The United States stated that EFH includes all types of aquatic habitat where fish spawn, breed, feed, or grow to maturity. Seagrasses, which

provide important habitat for seahorses, are among the EFH designated by NOAA Fisheries and are included under several fishery management plans.

48. The Party states that the United States Endangered Species Act (ESA) enables the government to assess the status of species, including seahorses, to determine if they are in danger of extinction. If so, they may be added to the list of threatened and endangered species and receive the protections of the ESA, which prohibits take, import, export, interstate and foreign commerce, among other activities, with ESA-listed species. Moreover, the United States notes that a recovery plan must be developed and implemented for ESA-listed species, and critical habitat must be designated. All federal agencies must ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out (including permitting and regulating fisheries) does not jeopardize the continued existence of the ESA-listed species or destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat.

Conclusion

49. Based on the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2024/027 summarized above, some Parties have taken significant steps that align with Decision 19.229, such as the National Plan of Action for the Conservation of Seahorses for 2016-2020 developed by Indonesia, which remains valid and will be updated in 2024; the Seahorse National Plan of Action (NPOA) developed by Philippines in 2016, which has been revised to address implementation challenges and enhance seahorse conservation through the Philippine Seahorse Programme, and other measures and activities outlined in the present document. Where not yet done, source, transit and consumer Parties affected by illegal and/or unsustainable international trade in seahorses are encouraged to pursue similar activities, drawing upon the knowledge and experiences gained by other Parties.
50. Among the challenges highlighted by Parties are substantial data gaps regarding seahorse populations and trade dynamics, as well as limited financial, technical, and human resources to implement conservation and enforcement measures.
51. The responses from Parties to Notification to the Parties No. 2024/027 will be taken into consideration in the implementation of Decision 19.228, paragraph a).

Recommendations:

52. The Animals Committee is invited to note of the present document and the information provided by Parties in their responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2024/027.