

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



Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Panama City (Panama), 14 – 25 November 2022

Species specific matters

Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.)

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Standing Committee.*

Background

2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.228 to 18.233 on *Seahorses (Hippocampus spp.)* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

18.228 *The Secretariat shall include available materials to support CITES implementation for seahorses (non-detriment findings guidance, identification materials, etc.) on the CITES website.*

18.229 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *issue a Notification to the Parties inviting them to inform the Secretariat of any national management measures that regulate or restrict international trade in seahorses, and on how they are implementing and enforcing such measures for seahorses;*
- b) *compile the responses received to the Notification issued as per paragraph a) of the present Decision and communicate them to CITES Authorities through a Notification to the Parties and through its website; and*
- c) *subject to external funding:*
 - i) *commission a study on trade in *Hippocampus* spp., including applicable regulations, to understand shifts in international trade patterns since the inclusion of seahorses in Appendix II and the Review of Significant Trade of *Hippocampus* spp., as well as the implementation challenges and possible solutions; and*
 - ii) *organize an expert workshop to discuss the implementation and enforcement of CITES for trade in *Hippocampus* spp., including the recommendations and outcomes from the Review of Significant Trade process, and propose practical steps to address implementation and enforcement challenges; and*

* *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.*

d) report on the implementation of paragraphs a) through c) of the present Decision to the Animals and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to Parties

18.230 To support the effective implementation of Appendix II of CITES for seahorses, Parties are invited to:

- a) inform the Secretariat of any national management measures that regulate or restrict international trade in seahorses; and how they are implementing and enforcing such measures for seahorses;
- b) share copies of their non-detriment findings with the Secretariat for posting on the CITES website to assist other CITES Parties; and
- c) inform seahorse traders within their jurisdiction of any quotas, including any zero quotas, and any trade suspensions for seahorses to further facilitate compliance and enforcement by all participants in the trade.

18.231 Parties are encouraged to:

- a) use existing tools for effective CITES implementation and enforcement that are relevant to seahorses;
- b) where quotas, trade suspensions, or both are in place, develop monitoring programmes for seahorses in their national waters to understand effectiveness of these actions and any other relevant implementation and enforcement actions for seahorse conservation and management; and
- c) share the design and initial results of these programmes with the Secretariat to report to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Animals Committee

18.232 The Animals Committee shall analyse and review the results of any activities under Decision 18.229 and other relevant information available to the Animals Committee and develop recommendations as appropriate to ensure sustainable and legal trade in seahorses.

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.233 The Standing Committee shall analyse and review the results of any activities under Decision 18.229 and develop recommendations as appropriate to strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement for trade in seahorses.

3. The Secretariat published a Notification to the Parties on 28 February 2020 (Notification [No. 2020/015](#)) requesting information on any national management measures for seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.), and on how Parties are implementing and enforcing such measures. The Notification also invited Parties to share information on their non-detriment findings with the Secretariat for posting on the CITES website to assist other Parties. The Secretariat received responses from the following 14 Parties: Australia, Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Peru, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. These responses were collated and presented in the [Annex \(Rev. 1\)](#) to document AC31 Doc. 26 in the language and format in which they were received. They were also communicated to CITES Authorities on 13 October 2021 in Notification to the Parties [No. 2021/062](#).
4. Among the responses to Notification to the Parties on 28 February 2020 (Notification No. 2020/015) are two non-detriment findings on *Hippocampus* spp. (from the United States of America), which are now available on the CITES website NDF database.
7. At the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee (AC31, online, June 2021), the Secretariat noted in the [addendum](#) to document AC31 Doc. 26 that, in support of the implementation of Decision 18.229, Project Seahorse, based at the University of British Columbia (UBC), had independently secured funding from the

United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to undertake a study on seahorse trade. The Project Seahorse study consists of two parts (i) a review of the changes in international trade in live seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) following the CITES Appendix-II listing; and (ii) an analysis of implementation of the CITES Appendix-II listing for dried seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.), through the production of a series of implementation reports, focusing on a selection of net exporters of seahorses that have declared national bans or suspensions for such exports and a selection of key importers for dried seahorses. Thanks to funding provided by Monaco and NOAA, the Secretariat was able to contribute to the production of a subset of the implementation reports. The Secretariat was not involved in the selection of the countries for the implementation reports and is not responsible for any geographical references or opinions expressed in the reports produced by Project Seahorse.

8. The Secretariat also commissioned Project Seahorse to produce two summaries of the reports on the live trade study and the implementation reports focusing on the CITES' mandate. These summary reports were presented to the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC74, Lyon, March 2022) in English in Annex 1 (the live trade study) and Annex 2 (the implementation reports) to document [SC74 Doc. 70.1](#), respectively.
9. To renew activities for which work is either ongoing or could not yet be completed, the Animals Committee agreed to submit draft decisions to the Standing Committee at its 74th meeting for its consideration and submission to CoP19:
10. At SC74, the Standing Committee considered the reports from the Secretariat in document SC74 Doc. 70.1 and the Animals Committee in document [SC74 Doc. 70.2](#). The documents presented an update of work on seahorses and the information gathered on any national management measures for seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.), including non-detriment findings (NDFs), and on how Parties are implementing and enforcing such measures. The document also includes the findings of two studies by Project Seahorse entitled *Changes in the international trade in live seahorses (Hippocampus spp.) after their listing on CITES Appendix II* and *Implementation of CITES Appendix-II listing for seahorses in the context of export bans and suspensions*. The Secretariat explained that it had been intended for the studies to form the basis of an expert workshop, but that it was not clear if or when this could take place due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.
11. The Committee noted documents SC74 Doc. 70.1. and SC74 Doc. 70.2 and agreed to submit to CoP19 the draft decisions contained in Annex 1 to this document.

Recommendations

12. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decisions contained in Annex 1 to this document.

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat recommends that the Conference of the Parties adopt the draft decisions in Annex 1 to this document but makes a number of comments that are outlined in the paragraphs below. The Secretariat further recommends the deletion of Decisions 18.228 to 18.233 as they have been carried forward in the new set of draft decisions.
- B. Based on the progress made on the implementation of the CoP18 Decisions on seahorses, the Standing Committee proposes the adoption of a set of draft decisions that would essentially carry over those elements that were not possible to complete before CoP19.
- C. Project Seahorse, based at the University of British Columbia (UBC), had independently secured funding from the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to undertake a study on seahorse trade. The Secretariat commissioned summaries of these studies, which were presented in the Annexes to document SC74 Doc. 70.1, in support of the implementation of Decision 18.229 c) i). These reports were intended to form the basis of an expert workshop called for in Decision 18.229 c) ii), but the workshop itself will not take place until after CoP19.
- D. This document is closely linked to document CoP19 Doc. 69.2, which has been submitted to the present meeting by nine Parties.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON SEAHORSES (*HIPPOCAMPUS SPP.*)

Directed to the Secretariat

19.AA The Secretariat shall:

- a) subject to external funding, organize an expert workshop to discuss the implementation and enforcement of CITES for trade in *Hippocampus* spp., including the recommendations and outcomes from the Review of Significant Trade process, and propose practical steps to address implementation and enforcement challenges; and
- b) report on the implementation of paragraph a) to the Animals and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.BB The Animals Committee shall:

- a) analyse and review the results of any activities under Decision 19.AA, 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 trade in seahorses; and
- c) report on the implementation of Decision 19.BB to the Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.CC The Standing Committee shall:

- a) analyse and review the results of any activities under Decision 19.AA, the report produced under Decision 18.229 paragraph c) i) and, as appropriate, the report of the Animals Committee;
- b) develop recommendations to the Parties and the Secretariat, as appropriate, to strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement for trade in seahorses; and
- c) report on the implementation of Decisions 19.AA to 19.CC to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.

**TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS**

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.

The Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding:

Decision	Activity	Indicative costs (USD) (excludes Programme Support Costs)	Source of funding
Decision 19.AA	Online technical workshop	40,000	Extrabudgetary