

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORATwenty-sixth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 5 - 9 June 2023Regional mattersRegional reports

NORTH AMERICA

1. This report, covering the period from June 2021 to April 2023 was prepared by Ruben Boles, incoming Regional Representative for North America, in collaboration with the CITES authorities of Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America*.
2. Overview of major developments
 - a) Review of Significant Trade;
 - b) Periodic Review of the Appendices;
 - c) Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes;
 - d) Non-detriment findings (NDFs);

Canada

In Canada, Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) 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 American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). *Rhodiola rosea*, which was added to Appendix II at CoP19 is commercially exported from Canada only from artificially propagated sources. A standing NDF report for that species is in preparation. 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](#).

Mexico

During the period, the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico (CONABIO) issued 518 Non-detriment Findings (NDF) for 13 species of flora listed in Appendix II: *Euphorbia antisiphilitica* (majority), *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Cedrela odorata*, *Dalbergia granadillo*, *Guaiacum sanctum*, *Stenocereus queretaroensis*, *Stenocereus crispatus*, *Myrtillocactus geometrizans*, *Mammillaria uncinata*, *Opuntia cholla*, *Ferocactus latispinus*, *Echinocereus cinerascens* and *Carnegiea gigantea*.

* 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.

United States of America

The Scientific Authority of the United States (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Division of Scientific Authority (DSA)) provided advice to the U.S. Management Authority (USFWS-Division of Management Authority) on over 3,700 CITES-listed plant species and hybrids, and issued 47 individual export findings, including two non-detriment findings for specimens obtained through 'assisted production,' for the reporting period. The DSA made two non-detriment findings for the export of wild American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) legally harvested during the 2021 and 2022 annual harvest seasons in 19 States and one Tribe. During this reporting period, the Scientific Authority completed 22 individual advices for the registration of scientific institutions, including two forensic institutions, for the issuance of certificates of scientific exchange (COSE) for specimens of CITES-listed plant species.

e) Capacity-Building;

Canada

None to report for this period.

Mexico

CONABIO published the "Informative Guide for the preparation of technical studies for the sustainable use of candelilla (*Euphorbia antisiphylitica*) within the framework of CITES provisions", as a support tool to guide users and forestry technicians in aspects related to sustainable management and use, to facilitate the process of formulating NDFs and as support for decision-making by other authorities, producers, and other actors in the supply chain. The guide was presented during CoP19 (Panama, 2022) as information document CoP19 Inf. 92.

During the period, CONABIO gave more than 15 talks on CITES, its objectives and its 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.

Also, during 2022, CONABIO and PROFEPA (Law Enforcement Authority of Mexico) 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.

As part of the cooperation with higher education and research institutions, PROFEPA participated in 3 academic events at the invitation of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) with conferences on the use of genetic barcodes of wild species in law enforcement, international trade wildlife and associated illegal trade.

In 2021, the procedure manuals for the formulation of NDF for candelilla (*Euphorbia antisiphylitica*), guaiacum (*Guaiacum sanctum*), rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp.) and mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) prepared by the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico were published in the CITES website: <https://cites.org/esp/virtual-college/ndf?page=0>

During the period, PROFEPA 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.

United States of America

The USFWS' Division of Scientific Authority contributed to updating the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) "Primer on Importing & Exporting CITES-Listed Species," which included plant species included in Appendix II at CoP19 (Panama City, November 2022), and information concerning CITES source code "Y" for plant specimens produced through 'assisted production.' The Primer is an online guide for U.S importers and exporters of commonly traded CITES-listed species used as ingredients in traditional

medicines, dietary supplements, and personal care products. AHPA is a U.S. national trade association representing members of the herbal products industry. The Primer is available to AHPA members at: https://www.ahpa.org/ahpa_guidance_documents.

The USFWS' Division of Scientific Authority is developing outreach aimed at commercial growers of goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*, CITES Appendix II). Since 2020, the goldenseal botanicals sector has undergone dramatic changes in the United States. Several long-standing growers retired or went out of business which left a void in supply and led to reports of increased wild collection. Many of the new suppliers entering the goldenseal market did not have sufficient awareness or understanding of CITES to export specimens without sufficient information or documentation to make non-detriment findings. This information will support the important efforts to 'artificially propagate' goldenseal for commercial 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 behaviors 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.

- 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's Combating Wildlife Trafficking, 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 Combating Wildlife Trafficking (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:
 - Understanding and Building Capacity to Address Illegal Wildlife Trade in Rwanda
 - Reinforcing the Capacity to Implement CITES Legislation in Practice in Cote d'Ivoire

f) Other

Canada

None to report for this period.

United States of America

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 CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico coordinated the following projects/activities during the period: "Management, conservation and sustainable use of wild species relevant to international trade - Candelilla (*Euphorbia antisyphilitica*)" which resulted in: A) Historical analysis of the international trade of candelilla and the national implementation of CITES, B) Baseline information to evaluate candelilla according to the criteria for inclusion in the Appendices from Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17), and C) Opportunities for improvement in the candelilla production chain and safeguards in the event of its removal from CITES Appendix II: http://www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/proyectos/resultados/InfRE005_Candelilla.pdf

By request of PC25, Mexico conducted a bibliographical review regarding the synonyms between *Aztekium ritteri* and *A. valdezii*, in communication with the nomenclature specialist. During CoP19, *Aztekium valdezii* was recognized as a separate species and its listing in Appendix II was reestablished (CoP19 Doc. 84.1).

The National Forest Commission (CONAFOR):

- In the context of the Forest Management Program for Forest Resources, supported a total of 125 studies for the use of timber and non-timber resources, which received authorization from SEMARNAT, and are distributed as follows: 72 studies on *Euphorbia antisyphilitica* and 53 on timber of *Swietenia humilis* (29) and *Cedrela odorata* (24).
- Regarding Forest Restoration and Environmental Compensation projects, CONAFOR has 20 current projects for Forest Restoration, which add up to an area of 671 ha of the following species:

Species	Surface area (ha)	State
<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	100	Quintana Roo
	110	Chiapas
	22	Yucatán
Subtotal	232	
<i>Swietenia humilis</i>	36	Chiapas
	268	Guerrero
Subtotal	304	
<i>Cedrela odorata</i>	113	Chiapas
	22	Yucatán
Subtotal	135	
Total	671	

- Likewise, three current projects are reported for Environmental Compensation, which add up to an area of 278 ha, of which 35 ha are *Euphorbia antisyphilitica* and 243 ha are *Swietenia humilis*.

3. Activities of regional representatives

PC North American Regional Representative (Rosemarie Gnam)- Nothing to report for this period except for PC Working Intersessional Working Groups that I chaired – including Identification Materials and Medicinal Plants.

4. Regional cooperation and priorities

Regular North American Region communications

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.

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 had 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 (late 2021/early 2022), with an aim to ensure a manageable meeting agenda given the constraints of working virtually. In preparation for 25th meeting (PC25) of the Plants Committee (held virtually, (2-24 June 2021), the meeting facilitated tri-national development, review, and finalizing of multiple Regional Positions, with at least 17 PC25 interventions.

North American Forest Commission Ad Hoc Illegal Logging Working Group

Under the auspices of the North American Forest Commission, after hosting a series of four virtual workshops that explored illegal logging and associated trade, the United States, Mexico and Canada have established a collaborative ad hoc Illegal Logging Working Group. The working group's mission is to facilitate exchange of information on matters pertaining to wood identification science, illegal logging and associated trade, and to advance trilateral collaboration for the purpose of combating illegal logging and maintaining legal trade of forest products within North America.

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

Canada, the United States and Mexico are collaborating on a project arising from the Operation Plan 2021-2025 of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) titled Strengthening the Implementation and Effective Enforcement of CITES for Timber in North America. The project encompasses five activities: (i) Sharing of relevant national legislation, regulations, and processes for implementation of CITES by enforcement officers in North America; (ii) Provision of training, including information on novel tools and risk assessment, to enforcement officers to improve their ability to determine if a timber import is at high risk of being illegal; (iii) Creation of an alliance of the laboratories providing forensic and research capacity for wood products identification; (iv) Delivery of recommendations to improve North American capacity to track the origin of timber in trade; and (v) Develop guidance on CITES source code Y implementation and conducting non-detriment findings for tree species.

The work described above is being undertaken within the framework of the Action Plan for North America for sustainable trade in timber, and as follow-up to the recommendations raised in the "Regional Workshop on the Evaluation of Capacities to Identify Woods in the Trade of CITES-listed Priority Timber Species" (Chetumal, Mexico, 2018), in which law enforcement officials, CITES Authorities, researchers, producers and industry representatives participated with the aim of exchanging information on six timber species.

Improving the governance and traceability of forest products and international trade

Mexican Authorities are carrying out a project to improve the governance and traceability of forest products and international trade through a partnership between SEMARNAT, PROFEPA and CONAFOR, under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Forest Service. A Mexican research institution in support of PROFEPA's work, received a donation of equipment for DART analysis, for the taxonomic identification of timber species through the stable isotope technique, and 2 workshops on identification of timber subject to international trade and mechanisms for its traceability, were co-organized with American specialists, with the participation of 122 people.

5. Meetings and workshops

a) Within the region;

Canada

On March 20-22, 2023, Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS) organised a Wood Identification Workshop at its Laurentian Forestry Centre, Quebec City. The meeting was the key concluding activity of the 2020-2023 NRCan-CFS Wood Identification Research Project, the purpose of which was development of tools and capacity for Canadian Wildlife Enforcement officers to detect and prevent the entry of illegal wood imports into Canada. The project also aims to develop traceability methods for Canadian tree species.

The workshop brought together more than twenty participants from NRCan-CFS, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency, on site and online. The majority are part of a diverse group, the *Canadian Network of Experts on Wood Identification (CANoEWI)*, that has been working collaboratively on tree species identification, using wood anatomy, mass spectrometry, genomics and other methods. CANoEWI includes wildlife enforcement officers, forest research scientists, forensic scientists, policy and trade analysts.

The objectives of the workshop were to provide updates and catalogue accomplishments of the project over the past three years, as well as to plan the next phase of the project.

Accomplishments include training of over 60 enforcement officers, development of field triage tools, and development of capacity and expertise to identify tree species using wood anatomy and chemical analysis for forensic applications. Related research using genomics and biochemical data in combination to wood anatomy is being conducted by NRCan-CFS researchers with external collaborators, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Université Laval and the University of Alberta, aimed at improving existing methods and developing new techniques for identification and traceability of tree species in trade.

United States of America

In July 2021, representatives of the U.S. CITES Authorities (USFWS-Divisions of Scientific and Management Authorities) participated in an American ginseng webinar hosted by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for harvesters, buyers, and exporters. The webinar focused on Wisconsin's regulations for wild American ginseng harvest and Federal regulations for the international export of wild American ginseng.

In November 2022, the U.S. Scientific Authority (USFWS-Division of Scientific Authority) participated in the American Herbal Products Association's "Congress on Regulatory Priorities in the Natural Products Market," with a presentation on "CITES and botanical crops" to discuss CITES & U.S. medicinal plant species, relevant items on the agenda of CITES CoP19, and the use of the new source code 'Y.'

In January 2023, the U.S. Management Authority (USFWS-Division of Management Authority) participated in the webinar "CITES Impact on Your Supply Chain" hosting by the AHPA, which included information about the plant species included in the CITES Appendices at CITES CoP19, and information concerning CITES source code "Y" for plant specimens produced through 'assisted production.'

Mexico

None to report for this period.

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

Canada

None to report for this period.

Mexico

None to report for this period.

United States of America

The U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP), with funding from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (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.
- November 2022 – DOI-ITAP and USFWS supported participation of regional official in global WEN meeting in Panama including CITES officials and NGOs from the Caribbean, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, and Argentina.

- November 2022 – DOI-ITAP and USFWS supported participation of regional officials at CITES CoP19. Seventeen officials from Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Colombia, Argentina, Paraguay, and 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 U.S. 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 has 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 CITES offices in these countries to support user access to the electronic systems. With the operation of these systems, countries will be able to electronically manage:
 - o Procedures and payments in lines of permits and CITES licenses
 - o Management, monitoring and issuance of permits electronically
 - o Verification of permits at control points, using QR code and electronic signatures
 - o Automation of annual reports of illegal trade and traffic
 - o Digitization of incidents

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. 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 United States of America.
- 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 U.S. Supreme Court of Justice. Participants: 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 (RRSCN)-led training that focused on CITES education and orientation, the importance of eco-tourism revenue for local communities, and safety when interacting with wildlife. Trainees were taught how to write CITES violations, how to manage wildlife confiscation, and how to identify illegal activities inside the protected areas. This training was then 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 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.
- 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 Government of Costa Rica at the request of the Government.
- December 2021 – February 2022 - DOI-ITAP remotely supported three CITES public awareness campaigns held by DEF, the Jordan 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 (CWT) 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 - ITAP virtual presentation regarding ITAP and DOI work on CITES and other topics in Central America and the 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 in Costa Rica 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.
- 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 for additional information.

6. Other regional information

Canada

None to report for this period.

Mexico

The Law enforcement Authority (PROFEPA):

- 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

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released its findings, *An Assessment of Native Seed Needs and Capacities (2023)*, which provides ten recommendations to improve the United States native plant supply. This national assessment is important for informing implementation of the U.S. National Seed Strategy (2015), developed by the USFWS and 14 other U.S. federal agencies, as a coordinated approach to increase the availability of locally adapted native plants for ecosystem restoration and climate change resilience. Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, and Kuwait are also developing Seed Strategies. The report is at: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/an-assessment-of-native-seed-needs-and-capacities>.

In March 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service participated in the National Native Seed Conference, in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, with nearly 500 participants from research, industry, land management and restoration professionals from U.S. state and federal agencies, tribes, and academic and research organizations. The Conference focused entirely on the science, policy, and practice of producing and effectively using native seed to restore ecosystems and habitats. Increasing the availability of native seed is key to resilient ecosystem restoration and aligns with the U.N. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

On March 3, FWS 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. 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. Secretary Haaland provided opening remarks.

During the week of World Wildlife Day, FWS 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 Dirksen Senate Office Building. FWS Director Martha Williams provided remarks and introduced CITES Secretary General Ivonne Higuero.

The United States has undertaken significant outreach to the U.S. regulated community regarding the new timber taxa that were included in the Appendix II at CoP19. These efforts have included preparing and distributing outreach letter, which were provided to industry associations and posted on our website, meetings with stakeholder groups at their request, and participating in the recent annual convention of the International Wood Products Association (IWPA). At the IWPA convention, representatives from the U.S. Management Authority provided an overview of the new listings and the permitting process, including ePermits and the use of partially completed documents for exports of pre-Convention stockpiled wood.