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

Joint sessions of the 33rd meeting of the Animals Committee and
the 27th meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 12 - 13 July 2024

Regulation of trade

TRANSPORT OF LIVE SPECIMENS

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 19.158 and 19.159 as follows:

Directed to the Animals Committee and the Plants Committee, in consultation with the Standing Committee, the Secretariat and the International Air Transport Association (IATA)

19.158 *The Animals and Plants Committees, in consultation with the Standing Committee, Secretariat, and International Air Transport Association (IATA), shall hold a workshop to share best practices related to live animal and plant transport. The Animals and Plants Committees shall invite Parties with expertise in this area to present on their management of live animals and plants in trade and steps to support other Parties in meeting CITES requirements for live animal and plant transport consistent with Resolution Conf. 10.21 (Rev. CoP19) on* Transport of live specimens*.*

Directed to the Secretariat, in consultation with the Standing Committee

19.159 *The Secretariat shall, in consultation with the Standing Committee, work with IATA to make relevant sections of the* IATA Live Animal Regulations *and* IATA Perishable Cargo Regulations *available to authorized representatives of Management Authorities and enforcement authorities as electronic or hard copies, depending on the needs of the Party and consider making them accessible to other relevant exporters, transporters and importers, free of charge.*

Implementation of Decision 19.158

3. The Secretariat organized the online workshop on transport of live specimens on 21 March 2024. The workshop aimed at sharing best practices in transporting live animals and plants, as outlined in the terms of reference approved by the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting in November 2023 (see summary record SC77 SR). The workshop enhanced participants' understanding of the effective application of the *IATA Live Animal Regulations (LAR), IATA Perishable Cargo Regulations (PCR)*, and the *CITES Guidelines for the Non-Air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants*.

4. Experts from several Parties, including Ghana, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, and from observer organizations, such as Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), GO WILD, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), delivered presentations during the event. The workshop gathered about 200 participants representing Management Authorities, Scientific Authorities, enforcement focal points, border control agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international bodies. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish was made available. It is worth noting that this was the first workshop organized by the CITES Secretariat about the transport of live specimens, with generous funding provided by WCS. In order to facilitate

broader outreach, the event was live-streamed on the CITES YouTube channel where it is still available (see here). Furthermore, the presentations delivered during the workshop are now accessible on the CITES website.

5. The discussions at the workshop touched upon several important aspects. The transport of live animals or plants is subject to complex regulations that ensure the welfare and safety of live animals and plants across international, national, and local levels. It involves meticulous logistics to maintain suitable conditions such as temperature control for lengthy journeys. Considerations for animal welfare, along with risk management strategies, underscore the importance of prioritizing safety protocols and enforcing standards throughout the transportation process. The discussions are summarized below.

Regulatory compliance

6. The IATA LAR and the IATA PCR are the worldwide standards for transporting live animals and plants by air. The IATA LAR are applicable to all airlines that are members of IATA and shippers, who also must apply additional requirements, if any, in the State of origin, transit and destination. The IATA LAR contain chapters on general requirements; shipper's responsibilities; operator's responsibilities; training requirements; State and operator variations; reservation and advance arrangements; listing and description of species; documentation; container requirements; marking and labelling; handling procedures; and a short description of the CITES requirements. The IATA PCR contain chapters on general applicability; responsibilities; State and operator variations; packaging; operations; documentation; and labelling.

7. The *CITES Guidelines for the Non-Air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants* are an addendum to the IATA LAR and the IATA PCR. The IATA LAR and the IATA PCR were designed to regulate air transport but can also be applied to the non-air transport of live animals and plants for all CITES-listed species. However, the *CITES Guidelines for the Non-Air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants* have also been developed because deviations from the IATA LAR may be appropriate or preferred for some CITES-listed animal species. These deviations may apply to fish, ratites, flamingos, storks and cranes, penguins, pelicans, big cats and other species. The complete list of species is available in the *Guidelines*. It is the choice of the shipper to either follow the IATA LAR or the *CITES Guidelines for the Non-Air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants.*

Container requirements

8. IATA LAR includes container requirements for individual species or groups of species. Principles of design of the container requirements must be consulted and adhered to for each transport. The key principles include -

   - Container must be safe and solid with secure door to hold animal, prevent damage, escape, unauthorized access, or injury to animal. Certain species require reinforced containers due to their size and weight and may need lined or metal containers due to their destructive capabilities. The safety of handlers is also important.
   - It must be ventilated on two or three sides. Ventilation requirements may vary for shipment of one or two or more animals in same container. Adequate and appropriate ventilation is crucial to prevent animals from overheating or excessive cooling.
   - Water and food containers – Water and food containers must be provided, either fixed inside the container or attached to it with a means of access provided.
   - Container should have absorbent floor covering or slatted floor. Dimensions must be related to the actual size of the animal and also reflect the ventilation and welfare requirements for the species.
   - Containers should be correctly labeled with emergency contact information, special instructions, contact numbers. Permits or certificates and other documentations should accompany the shipment.

9. The IATA LAR have species-specific guidelines for animal container density. However, there are some general principles including the following -

   - fresh air ventilation requirements, humidity, individual space requirements, ability for animals to dissipate heat must be considered.
   - Animals must be stocked at a density high enough to prevent injuries at take-off, during turbulence and at landing, but not to the extent that individual animals cannot lie down and rise unaided without risk of injury or crushing.
   - In some cases, young animals can share the same container space, if they are raised together or part of same family groups. Birds of the same species can be shipped together in the same container if

they are acclimated to each other. Reptiles, amphibians and many other taxa have specific packing densities.

Contingency procedures at entry points

10. Handling is a key part of contingency planning. Time management including total journey time, transit times, delays and the locations, and the duration of exposure to local environmental (weather) conditions need to be known. Important aspects include temperature, inclement weather, exposure to direct sunlight; switching of aircrafts including holding door and cargo hold size, heating and ventilation in the replacement aircraft; and airport congestion due to lack of appropriate airport facilities and inappropriate climate control.

Confiscation

11. Resolution Conf. 17.8 (Rev. CoP19) on *Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species* recommends considering that the seizure and confiscation are generally preferable to definitive refusal of import when specimens are exported or re-exported in violation of the Convention. When the import is refused, the exporting or re-exporting Party should take the measures necessary to ensure that confiscated specimens do not re-enter illegal trade, including monitoring their return and facilitating confiscation. Different disposal recommendations apply to species in Appendix I compared to those in Appendices II and III. Disposal options include auction, in-country use, education and awareness uses, or destruction, depending on the Appendix concerned, national legislation and conservation goals. Considerations for live specimen disposal include consultation with Scientific Authorities to maximize conservation value. Similar considerations apply to seized plants, with options for cultivation, return to the wild, or destruction, while prioritizing conservation and ensuring that there would be no return to illegal trade.

Handling dead or injured specimens

12. There are three important elements to handling dead or injured specimens – prepare, inspect and respond. For immediate triage, the safety of animals, the public, and the inspection team is paramount. At a minimum, a face mask and gloves should always be worn during inspections. If safe, containers should be isolated to minimize external factors like noise, weather, or temperature extremes. The surroundings should be evaluated for potential hazards and unusual behaviour. A visual inspection for injuries, aggression, or stress in the animals should be conducted. The temperature and hydration needs should be assessed, and water or hydrating foods should be offered gradually, if it is safe to do so. Findings should be documented with photos and videos, noting container conditions and any visible injuries. Local partners should be contacted to discuss proper and safe transport, if needed.

Temporary holding of wildlife before and/or after transport

13. Generally, temporary refers to 24 to 48 hours pre- or post- transport. Key considerations are correct environmental parameters; adequate provision of food and water; and appropriate containment. Environmental parameters include temperature, light and humidity. All of these can be different depending on the species. Food parameters include when and what to feed and water requirements. Containment parameters include safety, escape proof, size, place, and enrichment.

High welfare detentions and biosecurity

14. The World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) terrestrial code, which is being revised at the time of preparation of this document, includes a section on animal welfare. Chapter 7.4 is about transport of animals by air. The code recommends that, in cases of refusal of an import, animal welfare should be the first consideration. The importing Party's competent authority should offer appropriate isolation facilities or resources to prevent animal health and welfare problems, while ensuring no risk to the importing country's health status. Biosecurity is crucial to reduce the risk of introduction, establishment, and spread of animal diseases, infections or infestations to, from and within an animal population.

Transport of flora

15. The IATA PCR guidelines ensure proper handling and transportation of houseplants and cut flowers to maintain shipment integrity. It emphasizes the need for quick handling due to the perishable nature of certain plants. Packaging should allow airflow to ensure plant health. Clear labeling and marking aid in

permit inspections and ensure health and safety standards. All permits and paperwork must be easily visible and accessible during transportation.

Implementation of Decision 19.159

Accessibility to IATA LAR and IATA PCR

16. The IATA LAR and the IATA PCR are available in digital, enterprise library and print versions in English, French, Spanish (in Chinese for printed version). During the workshop, participants reconfirmed that accessibility to the updated versions of the regulations is a key challenge for many CITES Parties, especially for the developing countries who are unable to pay the annual fee but also for developed countries that require a large number of copies to allow access for all of their border officials. The price ranges between USD 320-350 per single-user digital access or printed version, per year. The cost of enterprise library is approximately USD 4,000 per license per year. Accessibility to these regulations is also needed by the traders, shippers or other organizations, who are also required to purchase these regulations annually.

17. IATA has indicated that, as it uses third-party service providers to provide digital, enterprise library or print versions of the regulations, it is not be possible to provide free access to these regulations. IATA is willing to consider offering the regulations with a discount but has so far not indicated the specific rate. The Secretariat has provided an initial forecast to IATA regarding the number of accesses required by developing country Parties in order to initiate the negotiation on the discounted rate. Discussions in this regard are ongoing and a further update will be provided at the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Challenges

18. Several challenges and suggestions for implementing IATA LAR and IATA PCR have been discussed or received from participants. A detailed list of challenges and suggestions is available in the Annex to this document.

Recommendations

19. The Animals Committee and the Plants Committee are invited to

    a) note this document and to agree that Decision 19.158 has been implemented.

    b) request the Secretariat to make the information available from the workshop available on the Secretariat's website.

ONLINE WORKSHOP ON TRANSPORT OF LIVE SPECIMENS, 21 MARCH 2024

Challenges and suggestions for implementing IATA LAR, IATA PCR, and *CITES Guidelines for the Non-air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants*, identified by the workshop participants

- Regulatory compliance
  - Harmonizing regulations across different jurisdictions can be complex and time-consuming.
  - Understanding and interpreting the intricate legal requirements at international, national, and local levels pose challenges.
  - Keeping abreast of updates and amendments to regulations requires ongoing monitoring and adaptation.
- Transport logistics
  - Ensuring appropriate conditions for live animals and plants during transportation, such as temperature control and ventilation, can be technically demanding.
  - Coordinating logistics for long-distance journeys involves meticulous planning and may incur high costs.
  - Providing specialized equipment and facilities to meet the diverse needs of different species adds to the logistical complexity.
- Documentation and permitting
  - Navigating through bureaucratic processes to obtain permits and documentation for cross-border transport can be cumbersome and time-intensive.
  - Ensuring accuracy and completeness of paperwork is essential to prevent delays and regulatory violations.
  - Interpreting and complying with varying requirements from different regulatory authorities can be challenging.
- Risk management
  - Identifying and mitigating risks associated with transportation, including health and safety concerns for both specimens and personnel, requires comprehensive risk assessment.
  - Implementing measures to minimize stress, injury, and disease transmission during transit demands specialized knowledge and expertise.
  - Responding effectively to unforeseen emergencies or incidents during transport requires preparedness and contingency planning.
- Animal welfare
  - Minimizing stressors such as handling, confinement, and environmental changes requires careful attention and proactive measures.
  - Balancing welfare concerns with logistical constraints and regulatory requirements can present ethical dilemmas.
- Customs clearance
  - Navigating customs regulations and procedures, especially for international transport, involves adherence to strict protocols and documentation requirements.
  - Delays in customs clearance can disrupt transport schedules and compromise the health and safety of specimens.
  - Coordinating with customs authorities across different jurisdictions adds complexity to the process.

- Capacity and infrastructure

  - Inadequate infrastructure, such as lack of specialized vehicles, facilities, and equipment, can impede the safe and efficient transport of live animals and plants.
  - Addressing infrastructure gaps requires significant investment and long-term planning.
  - Limited availability of trained personnel to handle and transport live specimens further exacerbates infrastructure challenges.

- Knowledge and training

  - Ensuring that personnel involved in handling and transporting live animals and plants have adequate training and expertise is essential for compliance and welfare.
  - Providing ongoing education and training programs to keep personnel updated on regulations, best practices, and emerging technologies is crucial.
  - Overcoming language barriers and cultural differences among stakeholders may require tailored training approaches.

- Enforcement and monitoring

  - Monitoring compliance with regulations and enforcing standards across the supply chain necessitates robust oversight and surveillance mechanisms.
  - Coordinating enforcement efforts among various stakeholders, including government agencies, industry actors, and civil society organizations, can be challenging.
  - Addressing gaps in enforcement capacity, such as limited resources and personnel, requires strategic allocation of resources and collaboration.

- Public awareness and stakeholder engagement

  - Raising awareness among stakeholders about the importance of adhering to regulations and best practices fosters a culture of compliance and responsibility.
  - Engaging with stakeholders, including suppliers, transporters, and consumers, through outreach campaigns and educational initiatives promotes understanding and cooperation.
  - Building partnerships with industry associations, conservation organizations, and academia enhances collective efforts to address challenges and promote sustainable transport practices.