

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



Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 6–10 November 2023

INFORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FOR THE CITES SECRETARIAT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAIGA DECISIONS ADOPTED
AT THE 19TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO CITES (PANAMA, 2022)

1. This document has been submitted by the Russian Federation in relation to agenda item 65.*

* *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.*

Information of the Russian Federation for the CITES Secretariat on the Implementation of the Saiga Decisions Adopted at the 19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Panama, 2022)

a) In accordance with decision 19.213, paragraph (a), it is recommended that the Russian Federation implement the measures envisaged for it in the Medium-term International Programme of Work on Saiga for 2021-2025 (hereinafter referred to as the MSP).

Points of the Northern Sea Route directly related to Russia:

2.4 Strengthen national capacity and legislation, where applicable, to improve poaching detection, prosecution and prosecution of offenders, including measures to prevent conflicts of interest.

***Comment:** Since 1999, saiga antelope hunting has not been carried out in the Russian Federation. In 2020, the saiga antelope was listed in the Red Book of the Russian Federation in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia) dated 24.03.2020 No. 162 "On approval of the List of wildlife objects listed in the Red Book of the Russian Federation".*

In accordance with Federal Law No. 7-FZ of 10.01.2002 "On Environmental Protection" and Federal Law No. 52-FZ of 24.04.1995 "On Wildlife", wildlife objects listed in the Red Book of the Russian Federation are subject to special protection and are excluded from economic use. In 2013, the illegal extraction and trafficking of saiga, its parts and derivatives was exclusively criminally liable.

The strategic planning document in the field of wildlife protection and use is the Strategy for the Conservation of Rare and Endangered Species of Animals, Plants and Fungi in the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2030, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated 17.02.2014 No. 212-r, and the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the Conservation of Rare and Endangered Species of Animals, approved for its implementation. Stage III (2021-2030), approved by the order of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia dated 08.12.2021 No. 53-r.

The Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, by Order No. 30-r dated 11.08.2021, approved the Strategy for the Conservation of Saiga in the Russian Federation, developed as part of the implementation of the Federal Project "Conservation of Biological Diversity and the Development of Ecological Tourism" of the national project "Ecology", focused on the development of a long-term system of fundamental principles and methods for the conservation of saiga, as one

of the priority species of the fauna of Russia.

3.3 Encourage range, trading and consuming countries to implement CITES decisions and recommendations related to saiga.

Comment: *In accordance with Federal Law No. 7-FZ of 10.01.2002 "On Environmental Protection" and Federal Law No. 52-FZ of 24.04.1995 "On Wildlife", wildlife listed in the Red Book of the Russian Federation are excluded from economic use and their extraction is prohibited. A consequence of the ban on saiga harvesting is the observance of a zero quota for the export of saiga, its parts or derivatives.*

The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation provides for liability for any possession and trafficking of saiga parts.

3.5 All range countries that are Parties to CITES are encouraged to bring their current national legislation into line with CITES requirements and to achieve CITES Category I.

Comment: *According to the CITES classification, the legislation of the Russian Federation corresponds to category I.*

3.6 Call on countries trading in saiga parts and derivatives to introduce internal market controls, for example through the registration, control and monitoring of stocks of raw materials, including confiscated parts and derivatives; labeling of parts and products; registration of manufacturers and sellers; and verification of the source and legality of the origin of saiga products in trade, taking into account experience in the labeling and identification of parts and derivatives of wild animals.

Comment: *Saiga is listed in the Red Book of the Russian Federation. Saiga hunting has also long been completely banned at the regional level. Due to the ban on saiga hunting since 1999, there are no commercial stocks of saiga horns in Russia, which means that there is no legal domestic market and all related operations for market control, monitoring, etc. Confiscated horns are material until the investigation is completed and the sentence is handed down evidence that is destroyed by law enforcement agencies after sentencing. A batch of 1,500 saiga antlers confiscated in the Far East, as well as 187 pairs of horns from dead saigas collected and labeled on the territory of the Black Earth State Nature Biosphere Reserve, were transferred to the All-Russian Research Institute for Environmental Protection (VNIIEcology) for scientific research in coordination with the CITES Administrative Body in the Russian Federation.*

3.10 Initiate studies on the feasibility, conditions and requirements for the sustainable use of specific saiga populations, taking into account all relevant factors, including diseases and mass mortality, level of sustainable use, abundance

thresholds, demographic structure of populations, socio-economic aspects, compliance with CITES regulations (e.g. Rationale for Sustainable Use), capacity to monitor and control use and trade, and as well as the ability to identify and track saiga derivatives in trading.

Comment: *Such studies are not carried out in Russia due to a complete ban on the use of saiga.*

4.1 Promote the active participation of all interested individuals and organizations in saiga conservation and promote the involvement of the local population in saiga conservation.

4.2 Monitor the attitude of the local population to conservation measures and threats to the saiga, using sociological research at the local level and monitoring with the participation of local communities.

Comment (paragraphs 4.1-4.2): *Since 2015 , Public Councils for the conservation of biodiversity in general and saiga in particular have been established in each district of the Republic of Kalmykia as part of the implementation of the UNDP-GEF-Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia project "Improving the system and mechanisms for the management of protected areas in the steppe biome of Russia". Sociological studies and surveys were also conducted.*

4.7 Use saiga tourism pilot projects and, where appropriate, promote them as an effective approach to increase local involvement in conservation and create incentives for local populations to conserve saigas.

Comment: *Ecological tourism is actively developing in the Black Lands State Nature Biosphere Reserve, there is a visitor center, five ecological routes, and observation decks for observing saigas have been built similar to such sites in US national parks.*

5.3 Ensure that the local population in the saiga range is aware of the conservation and legal status of the saiga.

5.4 Continue to develop, update and widely disseminate information and educational materials on saiga ecology and conservation for children in range countries.

5.6 Using all relevant media, develop and widely implement campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of saiga at the local, national and international levels.

Comment: (paragraphs 5.3-5.6): *Annual support is provided for the work of steppe clubs created on the basis of secondary schools in villages located near the saiga population area of the North-Western Caspian region in order to increase*

attention to work with children of different ages, to awaken interest in the problems of environmental protection among the younger generation by involving them in practical activities for the conservation and protection of saiga, and to prepare children for independent cognitive training. research, development of communication and leadership skills. Annual competitions (for example, "Steppe Antelope" in Kalmykia) and educational trainings, theatrical performances, sports events, quizzes and quests, as well as large-scale events dedicated to the Day of the Steppe (an official holiday in the Republic of Kalmykia since 2015), the Day of Migratory Animals and the Day of the Saiga are held. Events in the life of the saiga, as well as the detention of poachers and the confiscation of batches of antlers, are widely covered in the media of all types.

6.1 Remove or reduce barriers to the movement of saigas (guardrails, roads, railways and other linear infrastructure) in accordance with the CMS Guidelines for Reducing the Impacts and Disturbance of Mammals in Central Asia (Resolution 11.24) and the recognized international standards IFC1 and IFC6.

Comment: *The issue of mitigating the impact of border linear structures on migratory saiga populations is constantly in the focus of attention within the framework of environmental cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan. At present, a solution to the conflict situation with agriculture in the Volga regions of Russia is being sought. After this issue is resolved, the issue of the most rational placement of passages in border linear structures will be resolved.*

Promote the development of national networks of protected areas for the conservation of saigas, paying special attention to the protection of key areas (rutting and calving areas) and migration routes, based on the recommendations in paragraph 6.3.

Comment: *Specially protected natural areas ensure effective protection of saiga. At present, there are four specially protected natural areas (SPNAs) of federal significance and two protected areas of regional significance in the population of the North-Western Caspian Sea, two protected areas of federal significance and two protected areas of regional significance in the area of the Volga-Ural population, and one protected area of federal significance in the area of the Betpakdala population. A project has been prepared to expand the buffer zone of the Black Lands State Nature Biosphere Reserve, and the creation of regional wildlife sanctuaries is being considered. The Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences has prepared a project for the creation of the Troitsky Regional Reserve in the Orenburg Region.*

8.1 Conduct annual saiga population counts using appropriate methods, including modern non-invasive techniques, to obtain a series of long-term observations of the saiga population to assess the effectiveness of achieving the

objectives of the MOU.

8.8 Conduct scientific monitoring of saiga populations, their demographic parameters, and their habitats in a broad sense, including trends in sex ratios, mortality, reproductive success, age structure, genetics, predator and competitor impacts in the context of environmental and land-use change.

Comment: *This monitoring is carried out in full by the Black Lands State Nature Biosphere Reserve, the Institute of Problems of the A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IPEE RAS) and other interested scientific organizations.*

10.8 Conduct general saiga veterinary studies, including regular monitoring of mortality among all age groups during field visits of missions to calving sites.

Comment: *The Black Lands Nature Reserve conducts this monitoring on an ongoing basis, and submits annual reports to the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia and the All-Russian Research Institute of Ecology. Veterinary research is carried out by the Moscow Zoo.*

11. Population of the North-Western Caspian region

11.1 Increase the effectiveness of anti-poaching and law enforcement activities in the saiga habitat using modern methods.

Comments: *In 2015-2018 Nine cases of poaching (1-4 saigas) were registered. Since 2019, no cases of poaching have been registered in the Republic of Kalmykia due to the active work of inspectors of the Black Lands Nature Reserve and the Steпноy Regional Reserve of the Astrakhan Region, as well as thanks to the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kalmykia, with which the Black Lands Nature Reserve has a separate cooperation agreement.*

11.2 Provide research on the morphological and genetic diversity of the species to identify individuals, herds, saiga populations, the impact of climate change on the saiga antelope and its habitats, and the impact of predators and diseases on the saiga.

Comment: *In 2022, VNII Ecology began developing methods for genetic identification of saiga horn population. Since 2021, employees of the Moscow Zoo have been monitoring saiga diseases in Kalmykia. The Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the Russian Academy of Sciences is working on the influence of wolves on the saiga population in Kalmykia.*

11.3 Conduct regular science-based monitoring, assessment of saiga abundance and distribution using non-invasive methods.

Comment: *The Black Lands Nature Reserve conducts an annual expert assessment of the number of saigas in the North-Western Caspian region, calving results, sex-age counting, and during the rutting period. Weather conditions, the state of the food base (a geobotanical map has been made), cases of wolf fighters, as well as the restoration of the habitat due to the increase in numbers, which are currently estimated at about 18 thousand individuals, are constantly recorded.*

11.4 Carry out systematic work to involve the local population in saiga conservation through joint monitoring, education, enlightenment and the creation of sustainable livelihoods, including the development of eco-tourism that does not harm saigas.

11.6 To ensure the development of a network of protected areas of federal and regional importance and activities to optimize the use of natural resources in saiga habitats in order to ensure the protection of key saiga habitats in the Russian Federation.

Comment: *A project has been prepared to expand the buffer zone of the Black Lands Nature Reserve, as well as a project for the regional Troitsky Reserve of the Orenburg Region on the border with Kazakhstan.*

11.7 Ensure the implementation of the Saiga Conservation Strategy in the Russian Federation and the roadmap (action plan) for the conservation and restoration of saiga in the Russian Federation.

Comment: *The Strategy and the Roadmap are being implemented on an ongoing basis. A draft National Plan for the implementation of the Strategy has been prepared.*

11.8 To ensure the effective work of the section of experts on the conservation and restoration of the saiga antelope of the Working Group on the Conservation and Restoration of Certain Rare and Endangered Wildlife Objects in the Russian Federation under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Comment: *Work Section of Experts on the Conservation and Conservation of Recovery Saiga Antelope of the Working Group is carried out by the permanently.*

11.10 Support the participation of business structures and public organizations and their financial support in the implementation of measures for the protection, study, monitoring of the saiga and the involvement of the local population in its conservation activities.

Comment: *The Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation has signed an agreement on financing saiga conservation activities with PJSC Lukoil, which finances the activities and provides equipment and vehicles to the Black*

Lands Nature Reserve. The reserve also cooperates with the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which takes part in financing saiga conservation activities.

12.0 Ural population

12.1 Improve anti-poaching activities through close cooperation between wildlife services and other law enforcement agencies, with the involvement of local communities.

Comment: *In the Volga region, law enforcement agencies identify cases of transportation of large consignments of saiga horns of unknown origin. Judging by the size of the batches of horns up to 1500 pieces, they originate from the territory of Kazakhstan, as follows from the confirmed case of importation of horns by a citizen of Kazakhstan. In recent years, there have been isolated cases of poaching in the Saratov and Volgograd regions, from 1 to 10 animals, as well as the sale of one pair of saiga horns through Information and telecommunication network "Internet".*

12.5 Strengthen cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan on the management of this transboundary population within the framework of existing and planned agreements.

Comment: *An Agreement has been signed between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Protection, Reproduction and Use of Transboundary Saiga Populations (Saiga tatarica) (signed on September 29, 2021). Saiga protection issues are considered as part of the agenda of the Joint Russian-Kazakh Commission on Environmental Issues, established in accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of environmental protection. The Program of Russian-Kazakh Cooperation in the Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2021-2024 (March 2021) was approved.*

12.7 Develop a scheme to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts to enable peaceful coexistence between humans and their livestock and saigas.

Comment: *A working group on the conservation and restoration of certain rare and endangered wildlife in the Russian Federation has been established and is operating within the framework of the federal project "Conservation of Biological Diversity and Development of Ecological Tourism" of the national project "Ecology". Work has begun on the development of possible ways to mitigate the conflict. In Kazakhstan, one of these methods is considered to be the*

regulation of the saiga population by shooting, which is impossible in Russia due to the inclusion of the saiga in the Red Book of Russia.

b) In accordance with decision 19.213, paragraph (b) of the Secretariat, the Secretariat hereby invites the Russian Federation to provide information on the establishment of internal controls over the market for saiga parts, including the registration of stocks, the labelling of parts and products, and the registration of producers and traders. The secretariat would be grateful for information on: [i] the size and nature of saiga stocks in the Russian Federation; [ii] saiga stockpile management practices applicable in the Russian Federation; and [iii] monitoring and control of saiga stocks in the Russian Federation.

Due to the fact that saiga is included in the Red Book of Russia and its hunting is completely prohibited, as well as the possession of saiga parts and their circulation are prohibited, there is no domestic market for saiga parts in Russia. In this regard, there is no special registration and labeling of designs.

One batch of saiga horns confiscated in the Far East (1,500 pieces), as well as horns from dead saigas (187 pairs) collected and labeled on the territory of the Black Lands Nature Reserve, were transferred in coordination with the CITES Administrative Body in the Russian Federation to the All-Russian Research Institute of Ecology (CITES Scientific Body) for scientific morphological and genetic research.

Consignments of gratuitously seized or confiscated horns are used in accordance with the Rules for the Use of Freely Seized or Confiscated Wild Animals and Plants, Their Parts or Derivatives Falling under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora of March 3, 1973, approved by Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 304 of 28.05.2003.

c) In accordance with paragraph (b) of decision 19.214, the Secretariat is consulting with the Russian Federation on the management of saiga specimens.

There are no reserves, so the question of their management is unfounded.

The Secretariat would also like to remind you that, in accordance with decision 19.214, paragraph (b), the Secretariat is mandated to provide assistance to saiga range States and major trading and consumer States to ensure the effective management of stocks and the monitoring of available saiga specimens, including the establishment of inventories and the enhancement of stockpile security. In this regard, we would like to know whether the Russian Federation intends to seek the assistance of the Secretariat in this matter, noting that any such assistance should be

conditional on the involvement of external resources.

At present, there are no stocks of saiga samples in Russia and there is no need to consult with the Secretariat on this issue.