

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



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Illegal trade and enforcement

Jaguars (*Panthera onca*)

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been submitted by Brazil, as Chair of the Standing Committee intersessional working group on *Jaguars*\*.

Background

2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.110 to 19.114 on *Jaguars* (*Panthera onca*). At its 76th meeting, the Standing Committee established an intersessional working group with the following terms of reference:
  - a) based on the Secretariat's analysis in document SC74 Doc. 75, assess whether a specific draft resolution on jaguars would be appropriate, also taking into consideration the conclusions of the meeting of jaguar range States, where applicable;
  - b) make recommendations to range States, and transit and destination countries, as appropriate; and
  - c) report its conclusions and recommendations at the next meeting of the Standing Committee.
3. The Working Group was initially composed of the following 18 Parties and 15 observers:

Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil (Chair), China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Spain, United States of America, European Union; Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, International Association for Wildlife (IAW), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), IWMC-World Conservation Trust, Panthera, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, TRAFFIC, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF).
4. During the proceedings, at the request of the Chair, the observer organization Humane Society International (HSI) and Suriname, a Party to the Convention, were also included in the discussions of the WG.
5. In accordance with Decision 18.251, paragraph a), the Secretariat commissioned a study on illegal trade in jaguars, contained in document SC74 Doc. 75. The members of the working group were encouraged to draw on this document when assessing the relevance of a specific draft resolution.

\* *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.*

6. In accordance with Decision 19.111, paragraph c), a Meeting of jaguar range States was held in Cuiabá, Brazil, from 18 to 22 September 2023, the results and recommendations of which are contained in document SC77 Doc. 43. The members of the working group were encouraged to also consider the findings of this meeting when evaluating the relevance of a specific draft resolution.

#### Recommendations to range States, and transit and destination countries

7. At the suggestion of Colombia, the starting point for the formulation of the recommendations was paragraph 11 of document SC74 Doc. 75. This paragraph refers to Decision 18.252, adopted at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP18, Geneva, 2019) and especially directed to Parties that are jaguar range States. The recommendations were formulated based on the priority themes identified in this paragraph. The following paragraphs outline the recommendations made by the working group. The annex to the document presents the recommendations in the form of bullet points.
8. In response to the Chair's proposal that the members of the working group identify flaws in their own national legislation that could highlight potential shared issues, Mexico considers that its national legal framework for the protection, conservation and sustainable use of wildlife species, including the jaguar, is already adequate, but that its implementation needs to be strengthened. Brazil, on the other hand, expressed a divergent view.
9. Brazil considers that penalties for jaguar-related crimes are undervalued and lead to the ineffectiveness of criminal legislation in curbing the perpetration of such crimes, whether domestic or transnational. In this regard, a recommendation to improve the corresponding criminal legislation was considered relevant. This understanding was corroborated by Argentina, which is also considering the appropriateness of harsher penalties to deter the perpetration of jaguar-related crimes.
10. In this regard, the working group considers it appropriate to recommend that all Parties adopt legislation providing for sentences involving deprivation of liberty and not only deprivation of rights or pecuniary sanctions, when dealing with jaguar-related crimes. The WG also considers it appropriate to recommend that Parties adopt legislation that is comprehensive enough to cover the various types of criminal behaviours involving jaguars.
11. In an attempt to increase the effectiveness of the control of transactions of jaguar specimens, the working group considered it appropriate to recommend that all Parties adopt regulations that, reinforcing the provisions of Article 8, paragraph 3 of the text of the Convention, restrict the legal import/(re-)export of jaguar specimens to only designated airports with trained environmental enforcement officials.
12. Additionally, with a focus on combating illegal trade, the working group considers it appropriate to recommend that transit and destination countries adopt regulations requiring the presence of trained environmental enforcement officials at airports receiving flights from jaguar range States.
13. With a focus on prioritizing jaguar uses, the working group also considers it appropriate to recommend that all relevant Parties (i.e., range States and transit and destination countries) to the Convention adopt regulations requiring that imports/(re-)exports of live jaguar specimens be necessarily linked to *in situ* or *ex situ* conservation projects approved by national CITES authorities.
14. The representative of the observer organization Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) also suggested that, when developing recommendations to improve legislation, the members of the working group consider a scientific paper entitled *A Range-Wide Analysis of Legal Instruments Applicable to Jaguar Conservation*, by Kretser et al. (2022). After reviewing the paper, the working group considered some of the recommendations included in it relevant, namely: i) adopt jaguar-specific protection laws; ii) establish clear administrative and criminal penalties for the hunting and trafficking of jaguars and refusal to comply with best practices for coexistence; iii) modify existing legislative language to ensure improved adoption, enforcement and prosecution; iv) include non-binding and externally-funded structures in the legal system; and v) improve policy harmonization across range States.
15. Regarding the recommendations aimed at improving the implementation of legislation, the working group agrees on the need for more resources and transnational cooperation. Mexico deems it important to pay special attention to matters related to the implementation of existing legislation, especially inspection and surveillance issues, such as the availability of both human and financial resources, coordination between national and international institutions, and communication and coordination with other jaguar range States, especially those with which a Party shares borders.

16. The working group also recommends that Parties improve the security elements of documentation and traceability through watermarks visible when held up in front of a light source and/or with ultraviolet light. It also recommends that Parties facilitate the implementation of shared (i.e., interagency) and compatible real-time updated databases in which information can be immediately verified/consulted (e.g., illegal killing, illegal trade, movements for conservation purposes), allowing for timely identification of possible inconsistencies in the data and thus *in situ* determination of cases of non-accreditation of legal origin.
17. The working group considers that a number of existing resolutions could also serve as useful references for recommendations to improve implementation, such as Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*, in particular in its section IV, paragraph 9, b); section V, paragraph 13, e); section VI, paragraph 14, c); and Resolution Conf. 17.6 (Rev. CoP19) on *Prohibiting, preventing, detecting and countering corruption*, in particular in its paragraph 2.
18. Following a suggestion by Mexico, the working group agreed to build on the lessons learned at the Meeting of Range, Transit and Consumer States of Totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) (SC74 Doc. 28.5 Annex 4) that could also be applicable to the jaguar. These lessons include, for example, reporting all jaguar-related alerts and arrests to INTERPOL; reaching out to the World Customs Organization (WCO) for support in conducting risk assessments; involving national Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) to support financial investigations; and exploring opportunities for proceeds from penalties to be invested in the monitoring and conservation of jaguars and their habitat.
19. Regarding strategies to reduce the demand for jaguar specimens, the working group considered that educational strategies should be used to change the behaviour of those who kill jaguars or demand their products.
20. The working group agreed that these educational strategies can be divided into three categories: i) long-term, ongoing, long-lasting, targeted to children and youth and whose effectiveness can be accurately measured; ii) ad hoc, aimed at promoting awareness-raising, engagement and increased tolerance towards jaguars (i.e., coexistence), targeted to people directly or indirectly involved in the killing; iii) ad hoc, aimed at promoting awareness-raising and engagement, targeted to people involved in the demand for jaguars, whose effectiveness is less measurable.
21. The working group believes that all these educational strategies are useful and must be applied to protect jaguars. The decision on which environmental education strategies should be implemented must be based on the differences between countries and the nature of the threat to be addressed. Based on the study on illegal trade in jaguars contained in document SC74 Doc. 75, the working group identified some of the main threats and uses that drive demand. Based on this identification, the working group recommends that educational strategies be aimed at these specific target groups, as appropriate.
22. Three main target groups were identified in the range States: i) consumers of accessories (e.g., skins, claws and teeth for jewellery, clothing, bags); ii) retaliatory hunters (i.e., negative interactions between humans and jaguars) and opportunistic hunters; and iii) poachers. Conversely, two main demand drivers were identified in destination countries: i) consumers of accessories; and ii) consumers of specimens for medicinal or superstitious purposes.
23. The working group recommends that countries use strategies to raise public awareness, such as the monitoring of reintroduced specimens, which can illustrate the positive effects of a reintroduction and, consequently, the negative impact of removing an animal from the wild. The group also recommends promoting economic alternatives such as jaguar-based ecotourism or photographic safaris, with ethical and safe practices that respect the natural behaviour of the species.
24. The working group also considers that demonstrating that the illegal use of jaguar specimens is being punished is an effective strategy to reduce demand and change behaviours. Specifically, the WG recommends that enforcement actions curbing illegal use be disseminated and publicized.
25. Another strategy to change retaliatory hunting behaviour in negative interactions between humans and jaguars, mainly by ranchers, was presented by Brazil based on successful experiences in Iguazu National Park. It is recommended that range States create mobile teams designed to promote the prevention and reduction of negative interactions *in loco*. This refers to the creation of a team trained to visit ranchers and address negative interactions, disseminate good prevention practices, provide training in the implementation of such practices, and intervene when negative interactions do occur.

26. The WG also recommends that any dissemination of the work of jaguar *ex situ* conservation breeders should not be conducted for entertainment purposes but rather for educational purposes, reinforcing the presence of the jaguar in its natural habitat, along with its status as a wild animal.
27. In this regard, the working group recommends reducing non-essential interactions between humans and domesticated or pet jaguars, *ex situ* coexistence of jaguars with humans, and their interaction with tourists. Specifically, the dissemination on social media of digital content promoting or advertising human interaction with jaguars in a way not consistent with the animal's natural behaviour to promote entertainment and profit from their exploitation should also be curbed.
28. The working group also considers that a strategy to reduce demand in destination countries is to investigate the origin of any jaguar specimen whose owner does not have a CITES permit authorizing its import. In this regard, it recommends that destination countries always investigate the origin of jaguar specimens found within the country with no CITES permit authorizing their import.
29. The working group also recommends that all Parties review and adapt the ideas contained in the document *Guidance for CITES Parties to Develop and Implement Demand Reduction Strategies to Combat Illegal Trade in CITES-listed Species*, especially those that go into greater detail on defining the target audience, implementing strategies in an adaptive manner, recruiting messengers, that is, spokespersons and advocates (e.g., celebrities) and considering the best communication channels for campaigns depending on the target audience.
30. The group also recommends that range States share previous experiences of strategies/campaigns. Examples of successful materials generated in Costa Rica were cited, such as *Mitos y realidades en Costa Rica sobre el puma y el jaguar* (Myths and realities in Costa Rica about the puma and the jaguar), *Entendamos y convivamos con los grandes felinos de Costa Rica* (Let's understand and coexist with the big cats of Costa Rica) and *Conozcamos a los grandes felinos de Costa Rica: el puma y el jaguar* (Let's learn about the big cats of Costa Rica: the puma and the jaguar). An analysis of this type of strategies/campaigns conducted with similar species was also recommended to draw lessons learned from working with tigers, leopards and lions, for example.
31. The representative of the observer organization Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) suggested to the members of the working group that they should recommend that professional zoological institutions, in their educational programmes and conservation messages, consider the information published in *CATnews Special Issue 16, 2023* by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, with a specific focus on chapters 8 and 9 (8. *Legal status, management and conservation of jaguars*, Payan et al.; 9 *A global perspective on trade in jaguar parts from South America*, Polisar et al.).

#### Relevance of a specific draft resolution on jaguars

32. As the work of the group began, questions arose as to whether it would be more appropriate to deal first with item a) of the terms of reference (i.e., the relevance of a specific draft resolution) or item b) (i.e., the development of recommendations). After a joint decision, the members of the group considered that it would be more appropriate to first develop the recommendations and then, depending on their nature and character, decide on the relevance of a specific draft resolution.
33. Once a set of recommendations had been consolidated, the group considered that the most important objective was making the recommendations derived from the group's work accessible to Parties and for Parties to promote the necessary actions and strengthen the cooperation and coordination of all key actors to address common problems and avoid the duplication of efforts.
34. The group considered that including the recommendations into a resolution makes them easier to find and monitor (e.g., if they only remain as part of the reports of the working group and of a Standing Committee meeting, they might be difficult to find) and lends added weight to their implementation.
35. However, it was noted that many of the recommendations identified by the group may also be applicable to other Appendix-I listed cat species besides the jaguar, despite the specific needs of this species. At the same time, some of the resolutions that address the needs of other Appendix-I listed cat species are also applicable to the jaguar, such as Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19).
36. In this regard, the working group considered that it would be relevant to include these recommendations in a specific resolution on jaguars.

37. Alternatively, including such recommendations into an existing resolution such as Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) with the relevant adjustments may also be appropriate, provide that it achieves the greater objective of disseminating the recommendations, strengthening cooperation and coordinating jaguar conservation efforts.

#### Recommendations

37. The working group invites the Standing Committee to:

- a) take note of this report;
- b) consider preparing a specific draft resolution on jaguars, including the recommendations made by the working group.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO RANGE STATES, AND TRANSIT AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES

- Parties are encouraged to promote coordination between national and international institutions involved in jaguar conservation;
- Parties are encouraged to ensure the availability of human and financial resources to promote jaguar conservation and to combat activities that are illegal or reduce jaguar populations;
- Parties are encouraged to communicate and coordinate with other range countries;
- Parties are encouraged to improve security features in documentation and traceability through watermarks visible when held up in front of a light source and/or with ultraviolet light;
- Parties are encouraged to facilitate the implementation of shared (i.e., interagency) and compatible real-time updated databases in which information can be immediately verified/consulted (e.g., illegal killing, illegal trade, movements for conservation purposes) to enable timely identification of possible inconsistencies in the data and thus *in situ* determination of cases of non-accreditation of legal origin;
- Parties are encouraged to communicate all jaguar-related seizures and arrests to INTERPOL, using the INTERPOL Ecomessage, in real time or as soon as circumstances permit;
- Parties affected by the trafficking of jaguars (i.e., their parts, products, by-products and derivatives) are encouraged to reach out to the World Customs Organization (WCO) to request support in conducting risk assessments to develop jaguar-specific risk profiles, where they do not already exist;
- Parties are encouraged, in cases concerning jaguar trafficking and where possible, to advocate for penalties that will not only address the crime committed but also make provision for penalties in restitution of damage to the environment, and to explore opportunities for proceeds from such penalties to be invested in the monitoring and conservation of jaguars and their habitat;
- Parties are encouraged to involve national Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) [they can help identify money laundering typologies and illicit financial flows] to support financial investigations through:
  - Tracking the illicit financial flows associated with seized and confiscated jaguar specimens;
  - Identifying criminal networks and shell companies involved in jaguar trafficking;
  - Identifying money laundering typologies and illicit financial flows used by jaguar traffickers;
  - Analysing the flow of wildlife crime proceeds;
  - Detecting illicit wildlife activities by analysing Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) and other financial intelligence.
- Parties are encouraged to strengthen collaboration with national FIUs and key stakeholders on matters related to jaguar trafficking;
- Parties affected by jaguar trafficking are invited to encourage their national FIUs to reach out to law enforcement agencies such as Customs, police, CITES and wildlife authorities, through formal and informal channels. Based on information or intelligence received, FIUs should develop red flags/indicators related to jaguar trafficking;
- FIUs are encouraged to reach out to reporting entities regarding indicators to detect Suspicious Transaction Reporting (STR);

- FIUs are encouraged to strengthen cooperation with NGOs and transport companies (e.g., courier companies, airlines) with the aim to gather information about jaguar trafficking;
- FIUs are encouraged to use and contribute information to the Egmont Secure Web, which provides a platform for FIUs to swiftly exchange information;
- Parties are encouraged, where needed, to reach out to INTERPOL for support in mobilizing financial investigations in the fight against jaguar trafficking, through the INTERPOL Global Financial Crime Task Force.
- Parties are invited to adopt legislation that is comprehensive or sufficient to address various types of criminal conduct involving jaguar specimens;
- Parties are invited to adopt legislation strengthening the structures of national environmental agencies responsible for implementing the conservation and protection of jaguars;
- Parties are invited to adopt legislation making provision for custodial sentences, and not only alternatives, for jaguar-related crimes;
- Transit and destination States are invited to adopt regulations requiring the presence of environmental enforcement officials at airports receiving flights from jaguar range countries;
- Parties are invited to adopt regulations restricting the legal entry and exit of jaguar specimens for their legal import/(re-)export to only designated airports with environmental enforcement officials;
- Parties are invited to adopt regulations requiring that imports/exports of jaguar specimens be necessarily linked to *ex situ* conservation projects approved by national CITES authorities;
- Parties are invited to adopt jaguar-specific protection laws;
- Parties are invited to adopt laws to address negative interactions between livestock and jaguars and to prevent retaliatory killing of individuals of this species;
- Parties are invited to establish clear administrative and criminal penalties for the hunting and trafficking of jaguars and refusal to comply with best practices for coexistence;
- Parties are invited to establish clear administrative and criminal penalties for the hunting and trafficking of jaguar prey species;
- Parties are invited to modify existing legislative language to ensure improved adoption, enforcement and prosecution;
- Parties are invited to include non-binding and externally-funded structures in their legal system;
- Range States are invited to improve policy harmonization between them.
- Parties are invited to promote jaguar conservation-oriented education at three different levels, according to the target audiences and actions that can be taken:
  - Long-term, ongoing, long-lasting, targeted to children and youth and whose effectiveness can be accurately measured;
  - Ad hoc, aimed at promoting awareness-raising, engagement and increased tolerance towards jaguars (i.e., coexistence), targeted to people directly or indirectly involved in the killing;
  - Ad hoc, aimed at promoting awareness-raising and engagement, targeted to people involved in the demand for jaguars (i.e., their parts, products, by-products and derivatives), whose effectiveness is less measurable.

- In the case of ad hoc strategies, Parties are encouraged to ensure that their content reflects the specificities identified in each situation of killing and demand, also taking into account the differences between countries of origin and destination;
- Parties are encouraged to ensure that the content of environmental education strategies is targeted to specific audiences:
  - In countries of origin, to three types of audiences:
    - consumers of accessories (e.g., skins, claws and teeth for jewellery, clothing, bags);
    - retaliatory hunters (i.e., negative interactions between humans and jaguars) and opportunistic hunters;
    - poachers.
  - In destination countries, to two types of audiences:
    - consumers of accessories;
    - consumers of specimens for medicinal or superstitious purposes.
- Parties are encouraged to ensure that the content of environmental education strategies highlights the negative impact of hunting and the positive effect of habitat conservation and jaguar reintroduction strategies;
- Parties are advised to use education strategies that raise public awareness, for example, by monitoring reintroduced animals, showcasing the number of free-living offspring generated from them;
- Countries of origin are advised to use sustainable economic alternatives to hunting, such as jaguar-based ecotourism or photographic safaris, with ethical and safe practices that respect the natural behaviour of the species;
- Countries of origin are advised to create mobile teams designed to promote the prevention and reduction of negative interactions *in loco*. This refers to teams trained to visit ranchers and address negative interactions, disseminate good prevention practices, provide training in the implementation of such practices, and intervene when negative interactions do occur;
- Parties are encouraged to ensure that enforcement actions combating illegal use are disseminated and publicized;
- Parties are encouraged to ensure that *ex situ* conservation programmes involving live jaguars are not advertised in a way that generates entertainment or promotes illegal trade or use as pets;
- Parties are encouraged to curb the dissemination on social media of digital content promoting or advertising human interaction with jaguars in a way not consistent with the animal's natural behaviour;
- Parties are encouraged to ensure that any dissemination of *ex situ* conservation programmes is conducted for primarily educational purposes. This educational approach should reaffirm the jaguar's presence in its natural habitat, along with its status as a wild animal;
- Parties are encouraged to reduce non-essential interactions between humans and domesticated or pet jaguars, coexistence of jaguars with humans, and their interaction with tourists in *ex situ* conservation programmes;
- Destination countries are encouraged to always investigate the origin of jaguar specimens found within the country but not covered by the corresponding CITES permit;
- Parties are encouraged to adopt and adapt ideas from the *Guidance for CITES Parties to Develop and Implement Demand Reduction Strategies to Combat Illegal Trade in CITES-listed Species* to address the issue in countries of origin, transit and destination, as follows:



- Defining the target audience more accurately: geographic, demographic, psychographic (e.g., attitudes, values, beliefs) and behavioural characteristics;
- Implementing adaptive strategies;
- Recruiting spokespersons and advocates (e.g., celebrities);
- Considering the best channels for communication campaigns depending on the target audience.
- Countries of origin are encouraged to share prior successful experiences of strategies/campaigns with jaguars;
- Parties are encouraged to exchange information on strategies/campaigns implemented with similar species to draw on lessons learned (e.g., work involving tigers, leopards, lions);
- Professional zoological institutions are encouraged to consider, in their educational programmes and conservation messages, the information published in *CATnews Special Issue 16, 2023*, by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, with a specific focus on chapters 8 and 9 (8. *Legal status, management and conservation of jaguars*, Payan et al.; 9. *A global perspective on trade in jaguar parts from South America*, Polisar et al.).