

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

SUMMARY

THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY
MORNING

71. Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) (Decision 19.232)

71.1 Report of the Animals Committee..... SC78 Doc. 71.1

The Committee:

- a) noted the outcome of the discussions on seahorses from AC33 as presented in the Annex to document SC78 Doc. 71.1, including a new set of decisions; and
- b) agreed that Decision 19.231 has been implemented and can be proposed for deletion.

71.2 Report of the Secretariat..... SC78 Doc. 71.2

The Committee:

- a) agreed to submit to the Conference of the Parties revised Decisions 19.229 (Rev. CoP20) and 19.230 (Rev. CoP20), as well as new draft decisions 20.AA and 20.BB, as presented in the Annex to document SC78 Doc. 71.2 and as amended by Australia; and
- b) agreed that Decisions 19.228 and 19.232 can be proposed for deletion.

Directed to source, transit, and consumer Parties for which there is evidence of illegal and/or unsustainable international trade in dried seahorses

19.229 (Rev. CoP20) ~~To effectively implement effectively the inclusion of regulation of international trade in seahorses in Appendix II of CITES, source, transit, and consumer Parties for which there is evidence of illegal and/or unsustainable international trade in dried seahorses are encouraged to:~~

- a) ~~collaborate with key stakeholders and species experts to develop national or regional plans of action to improve CITES the implementation of CITES regulations for seahorses and should include, inter alia, the following, inter alia:~~
 - i) ~~encouraging collaboration and communication between key stakeholders at a national and regional level, including Environment, Fisheries and Enforcement agencies, with respect to CITES implementation and data gathering for the international trade in seahorses;~~
 - ii) ~~improving monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to seahorses in coastal areas and at transaction points (e.g. in the marketplace, online, in maritime areas, and at air- and seaports);~~

- iii) *submitting comprehensive and accurate information on illegal international trade in seahorses in their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat, as required in compliance with Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP19) on National reports; and in support of Decision 19.228, paragraph a)*
- iv) *addressing the main drivers of illegal and unsustainable trade by effectively regulating and constraining the operations of non-selective fishing gears, such as bottom trawls and gillnets, to reduce their impacts on seahorses, and combating illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing of seahorses by developing best practices for sustainable harvest; and*
- b) *share progress in developing and implementing these national or regional plans of action with the Secretariat for its report to the 33rd meeting of the Standing Animals Committee.*

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

19.230 (Rev. CoP20) *Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide financial and technical assistance to Parties to implement Decision 19.229 (Rev. CoP20) and any further recommendations made by the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Secretariat

20.AA The Secretariat shall:

- a) continue to work on and finalize the report on the global illegal trade in seahorses that includes an analysis of data from the CITES illegal trade database, illegal trade *routes, modus operandi*, seizures, information contained in the studies prepared by the Secretariat in previous intersessional periods and information received through consultations with Parties, species experts and regional enforcement networks as applicable; and
- b) make the report available to the Standing Committee together with any recommendations the Secretariat may have.

Directed to the Standing Committee

20.BB The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review the report and any recommendations presented to it in accordance with Decisions 20.AA and 19.229 (Rev. CoP20), and the recommendations in paragraph 12 c), d), f), g) and i) of document SC78 Doc. 71.1, and develop recommendations as appropriate, to strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement regarding international trade in seahorses; and
- b) report on the implementation of the Decisions on *Seahorses* (*Hippocampus spp.*) to the Conference of the Parties at its 21st meeting.

25. CITES Global Youth Network SC78 Doc. 25

The Committee:

- a) supported the efforts of Singapore and participating Parties in the development of the CITES Global Youth Network (CGYN);
- b) noted the support to this initiative by Belgium, Benin, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Gabon, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Qatar, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia, Zimbabwe,
- c) encouraged Parties and observers to support the efforts and to nominate youths affiliated with their organization to attend the CITES Global Youth Summit in May 2025;
- d) requested the Secretariat to continue to provide advice and assist the development of the CITES Global Youth Network; and

- e) invited Singapore to take into account the feedback provided in plenary on the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 17.5 (Rev. CoP18) on *Youth engagement* in Annex 2 to document SC78 Doc. 25 when it submits those amendments to the Conference of the Parties.

26. CITES gender action plan (Decision 19.52) SC78 Doc. 26

The Committee:

- a) requested the Secretariat to take into account the comments made in plenary on the revised outline contained in Annex 2 to document SC78 Doc. 26 and invited those Parties that could not take the floor in plenary (Argentina, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to send their comments to the Secretariat; and
- b) agreed to propose to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting to maintain Decisions 19.51 and 19.53, and revise Decision 19.52 as contained in Annex 4 to document SC78 Doc. 26.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON *CITES GENDER ACTION PLAN*

(new text is underlined and deleted text is in ~~strike through~~)

Directed to the Secretariat and the Chair of the Standing Committee

- 19.51** The Secretariat and the Chair of the Standing Committee, subject to available resources, shall draw on the available body of knowledge, lessons and experiences on gender and how it interacts with other identifying factors in matters related to legal and illegal international trade of wild flora and fauna, to develop a draft gender action plan for submission to the Standing Committee. The draft gender action plan should:
- a) consider the needs of indigenous and local peoples of all genders, especially women and girls, as well as how to incorporate their perspectives, skills and talents at all ages, and local and traditional knowledge;
 - b) aim to ensure that women and girls in all their diversity have equal access to, ownership and/or control over the use of wild flora and fauna, can fully and effectively engage in international trade of species of wild fauna and flora, and receive a fair and equitable share of benefits arising from the use and trade of such wildlife; thus reducing poverty and gender gaps through the promotion of economic and decision-making freedom;
 - c) aim to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in wild flora and fauna international trade chains;
 - d) promote gender equality and increase and strengthen the participation and leadership of women at all levels of decision-making and participation in processes related to international wild flora and fauna trade;
 - e) enhance the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of all genders, in particular women, in the implementation of the Convention, including through the engagement of civil society organizations, women's groups and women delegates, and provide opportunities for building their capacities; and
 - f) identify specific actions to advance the objectives above, across international trade chains for sustainable and legal wild flora and fauna, including parts and derivatives, as well as associated activities, including harvesting, law enforcement, and policy-making.

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 19.52 (Rev. CoP20)** The Standing Committee shall consider any draft gender action plan received from the Secretariat under Decision 19.51 and, if considered appropriate, submit a final version of that action plan, as an annex to the Resolution on Gender and international trade in wild fauna and flora, for approval by the Conference of the Parties at its ~~20th~~21st meeting.

Directed to Parties and relevant stakeholders

19.53 Parties and relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to:

- a) support the preparation of the “CITES Gender Action Plan” by sharing knowledge, case studies and other relevant experiences with the Secretariat;
- b) strengthen the evidence base and understanding of the gender-differentiated impacts of sustainable use and international trade in species of wild flora and fauna, and fair and equitable benefit-sharing; and
- c) provide financial support towards the development and implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

27. Engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities
[Decisions 17.57 (Rev. CoP19) and 18.31 (Rev. CoP19)] SC78 Doc. 27

The Committee established a drafting group chaired by Canada as Chair of the intersessional working group on Engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities and composed of Committee Members or their alternates with the mandate to consider the recommendations in paragraph 17 of document SC78 Doc. 27. Membership was agreed as follows: Brazil, Canada (Chair), China (as alternate), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Poland, New Zealand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

28. Livelihoods [Decision 18.34 (Rev. CoP19)] SC78 Doc. 28

The Committee established an in-session working group on livelihoods with the mandate to review the draft amendments to Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *CITES and livelihoods* contained in Annex 2 to document SC78 Doc. 28 and the draft decisions in Annex 3 to document SC78 Doc. 28; and to report back to the Standing Committee. Membership was agreed as follows: Botswana, Brazil, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Gabon, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia (Chair) and Zimbabwe; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Union for Conservation of Nature; Association of Northeast Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Born Free Foundation, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, International Fur Federation, IWMC-World Conservation Trust, TRAFFIC, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Ranching South Africa NPC, World Wide Fund for Nature.

17. Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - IPBES Assessment report on the sustainable use of wild species (Decision 19.29) SC78 Doc. 17

The Committee:

- a) noted the Annexes to document SC78 Doc. 17 with the amendments proposed to Annex 1 to delete Decisions and only focus on Resolutions;
- b) agreed to submit the draft decisions in paragraph 9 of document SC78 Doc. 17 as amended by the Chair of the Standing Committee and by including a new subparagraph b) proposed by Mexico and Canada for consideration by the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- c) agreed that Decision 19.28 and 19.29 have been implemented and can be proposed for deletion to the Conference of the Parties; and
- d) noted the opposition by Brazil of the use of the term “drivers” in the title of Annex 2 to document SC78 Doc. 17 and the statement made by Argentina that will be captured in the summary record of the meeting.

Directed to the Standing Committee

20.XX The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review the Resolutions ~~and specific aspects relating to drivers of sustainable use and knowledge gaps, challenges and research priorities~~ identified by the Animals and Plants Committees in document PC27 Doc. 10 / AC33 Doc. 11 and the Standing Committee in document SC78 Doc. 17 on the *IPBES Assessment report on the sustainable use of wild species* relevant to the implementation of the Convention;
- b) identify key Resolutions that may require amendments, taking into consideration the review outlined under paragraph a);
- ~~c)~~ propose amendments to these Resolutions, as appropriate, to incorporate aspects that will enhance the implementation of the Convention;
- ~~d)~~ submit the results of the review and proposed amendments as they relate to scientific aspects for consideration to the Animals and Plants Committee; and
- ~~e)~~ consider the inputs received from the Animals and Plants Committee and finalize proposed amendments to the Resolutions for consideration to the 21st meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees

20.YY The Animals and Plants Committees shall review the results of the review conducted by the Standing Committee and proposed amendments as they relate to scientific aspects and provide inputs to the Standing Committee to finalize the review.

31. National laws for implementation of the Convention (*Decisions 19.60 and 19.61*)

31.1 Report of the Secretariat..... SC78 Doc. 31.1

The Committee:

- a) commended Andorra, Botswana, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Uganda for the efforts leading to their legislation being placed in Category 1 and other Parties or territories that have made substantial progress in adopting measures for the effective implementation of the Convention;
- b) agreed on a recommendation to all Parties to suspend trade in all CITES-listed species for commercial purposes with Comoros, Lebanon, and Mongolia. The Secretariat shall inform the Parties concerned of this measure immediately after the present meeting. The recommendation shall take effect 60 days after it is agreed unless the Party concerned adopts appropriate measures before the expiry of the 60 days or takes significant and substantive steps to do so. Upon the expiry of the 60 days after the recommendation is agreed, the Secretariat shall issue a Notification to the Parties informing them of the recommendations to suspend commercial trade taking effect from that date;
- c) requested the Secretariat to issue a formal warning to the Parties that have not reported any legislative progress for more than three years, requesting them to immediately take steps to ensure progress before SC81 and to report such progress to the Secretariat 90 days before the 81st meeting of the Standing Committee. At the time of writing, this includes:
 - Afghanistan: first formal warning;
 - Antigua and Barbuda: first formal warning;
 - Cabo Verde: first formal warning;
 - Chad: first formal warning;

- Eritrea: first formal warning;
 - Iraq: first formal warning;
 - Myanmar: first formal warning;
 - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: first formal warning; and
 - the Syrian Arab Republic: first formal warning.
- d) requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties to seek Parties' inputs on the preliminary guidance on the implementation of the Convention in exceptional circumstances that impede the proper functioning of CITES at the national level and to submit a revised guidance and any recommendations for the consideration of CoP20, taking into account any comments made in plenary at SC78.

The Standing Committee recognized and welcomed the support provided by Parties, development partners as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in support of the development and adoption of national measures to effectively implement and enforce the Convention.