

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

Illegal trade and enforcement

MARINE TURTLES (CHELONIIDAE SPP. AND DERMOCHELYIDAE SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19) on *Marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.)*, as follows:

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.217 (Rev. CoP19) *The Standing Committee is asked to:*

- a) *review the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and any additional information received by the Secretariat in response to Notifications No. 2020/035 and No. 2021/065 and the recommendations of the Animals Committee in document SC74 Doc. 66.2; and*
 - b) *submit its recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*
3. To support the Standing Committee's implementation of Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19), the Secretariat consolidates in the present document information about relevant documents referred to in the Decision and briefly recalls activities undertaken up to CoP19, as relevant. The Secretariat also provides observations for consideration by the Standing Committee in the implementation of its work.

Background

4. The study on the *Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities* is available in information document [CoP18 Inf. 18](#). The full study is available in English only, but the following sections from the study are available in [Annex 3 to document AC31 Doc. 24](#) in the three working languages of the Convention: i) Executive summary; ii) Discussion and overarching conclusions; and iii) Recommendations.
5. A further study examining marine turtle bycatch and its relationship to trade at the global level, which follows up from the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18, is available in English only, as information document [SC74 Inf. 27](#). This study contained a review of existing literature, an analysis of available data, and targeted interviews to assess the scale and importance of marine turtle bycatch in trade.
6. As reported at CoP19, as a follow-up to [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035](#) of 22 April 2020, the Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2021/065](#) of 2 November 2021. Australia, Barbados, Cambodia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Republic of Korea, Thailand and the United States of America provided responses to the two Notifications, which included information on management and actions plans; illegal wildlife trade data; marine turtle DNA analysis; intra- and interregional cooperation; details on trade; and support to fisheries management authorities. For ease of reference, these responses are presented in information document, in the language

and format they were received. It should be noted that if the response to Notification to the Parties No. 2021/065 was update of the previous response, only this has been included in the information document, to avoid duplication. However, if the response to Notification No. 2021/065 provided additional information, both responses were included.

7. Regarding the recommendations of the Animals Committee in document [SC74 Doc. 66.2](#), referred to in Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19), the Standing Committee, at its 74th meeting (SC74, Lyon, March 2022), considered the report of the Animals Committee and proposed draft decisions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties. These draft decisions were presented in [Annex 1 to document CoP19 Doc. 64.1 \(Rev. 1\)](#). At CoP19, the Conference of the Parties considered document CoP19 Doc. 64.1 (Rev. 1), as well as document [CoP19 Doc. 64.2](#) which proposed the adoption of a draft resolution on marine turtles. Based on its deliberations on these two documents, the Conference of the Parties adopted [Resolution Conf. 19.5 on Conservation of and trade in marine turtles](#). Given that several draft decisions proposed in Annex 1 to document CoP19 Doc. 64.1 (Rev. 1) were of a long-term nature, they were incorporated into the Resolution, where relevant and appropriate. Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19) was revised and renewed as the Standing Committee had not had the opportunity to review the study in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 during the last intersessional period.

Observations of the Secretariat

8. In paragraph 16 of Resolution Conf. 19.5, the Conference of the Parties directs “*the Standing Committee to provide guidance on compliance with, and enforcement of the marine turtle listings in Appendix I, including but not limited to, use of forensic sampling of seized specimens and exchange of information on the illegal trade in marine turtles*”. Noting the recommendations of the Animals Committee in document SC74 Doc. 66.2, the associated draft decisions submitted by the Standing Committee for consideration at CoP19, and that these were incorporated in Resolution Conf. 19.5 as appropriate and relevant, the scientific aspects related to marine turtles have to a large extent been addressed. Therefore, in its implementation of Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19), the Committee may wish to primarily focus on the compliance and enforcement aspects relevant to marine turtles in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and in the responses to the Notifications, contained in an information document to SC77.
9. Considering the above and noting the large volume of documents to be reviewed in accordance with the Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19), paragraph a), the Committee may wish to consider establishing an intersessional working group on marine turtles.
10. The mandate of such a working group could be to conduct the review requested in paragraph a) of Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19) with a particular focus on compliance and enforcement aspects relevant to marine turtles and, as appropriate, to propose amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 to further strengthen it, reporting on the outcomes of its work at the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Recommendations

11. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the observations of the Secretariat presented in paragraphs 8 to 10 of the present document; and
 - b) consider establishing an intersessional working group on marine turtles, with a mandate to conduct the review anticipated in paragraph a) of Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19) with a particular focus on compliance and enforcement aspects relevant to marine turtles, and to propose amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 to further strengthen it, for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting.