

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

MARINE TURTLES (CHELONIIDAE SPP. AND DERMOCHELYIDAE SPP.)

1. This document has been submitted by the United States of America as Chair of the Standing Committee intersessional working group on marine turtles.*

Background

2. As outlined in summary record [SC77 SR](#), the Standing Committee at its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), in its consideration of agenda item 40 on *Marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.)*, agreed to establish an intersessional working group with the following 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.

3. The Committee requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties to invite Parties and observers to express an interest in participating in the Standing Committee's intersessional working group on marine turtles. The Secretariat subsequently issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2023/131 of 24 November 2023](#), and based on replies to the Notification the composition of the working group, comprising Parties and Non-Party observers, was agreed as follows: Angola, Australia, Barbados, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Gambia (the), Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, New Zealand, United States of America (Chair); Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Conservation Alliance of Kenya, European Pet Organization, Fauna & Flora International, Global Guardian Trust (GGT) Japan, Humane Society International (HSI), International Iguana Foundation and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Working group discussions

4. The working group was initiated by the Chair on 7 April 2024, through correspondence by email. The Chair proposed that the working group undertake the following activities:
 - a) focusing on the compliance and enforcement aspects, review the study contained in information document [CoP18 Inf. 18 on the Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities](#), as well as responses to [Notifications to the Parties No. 2020/035 of 22 April 2020](#) and [No. 2021/065 of 2 November 2021](#), as consolidated in information document [SC77 Inf. 2](#);

* 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.

- b) identify if [Resolution Conf. 19.5 on Conservation of and trade in marine turtles](#) needs to be further strengthened; and
 - c) if so, propose amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting (SC78, Geneva, 2025).
5. At the suggestion of Australia, the Chair subsequently prepared a synthesis of the progress made in implementing Decisions 18.210 to 18.217 on *Marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.)*. This was done to assist working group members with the review of the comprehensive study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and to identify the outstanding compliance and enforcement aspects that may need to be considered for inclusion in Resolution Conf. 19.5. This synthesis took into consideration the information and findings in the study (information document CoP18 Inf. 18) and responses to the Notifications issued by the Secretariat referenced in paragraph 4 a) above.
 6. Based on this work, the Chair prepared an initial draft set of proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 aimed at addressing potential gaps in compliance and enforcement aspects relevant to marine turtles.
 7. The Chair invited the working group members to:
 - a) review the synthesis and potential compliance and enforcement aspects identified in it that are not already addressed in Resolution Conf. 19.5;
 - b) provide their view on whether Resolution Conf. 19.5 needs further strengthening to address these elements; and
 - c) review and provide comments on the initial draft set of amendments proposed by the Chair and aimed at addressing the compliance and enforcement aspects identified in the synthesis referenced in paragraph 7 a) above.
 8. The Chair addressed comments and incorporated proposed changes received from working group members in a second draft revised version of Resolution Conf. 19.5, which was sent to the working group on 28 August 2024 for review and feedback.
 9. The Chair received extensive comments and suggested edits to the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5. Revisions sought to improve, further clarify, or restructure the language in the resolution.
 10. After the feedback from the working group membership was addressed, the Chair circulated a third version of draft amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 on 4 November 2024. Working group members were requested to focus their review on any essential changes to the proposed amended resolution.
 11. Additional revisions were recommended, and all relevant suggestions were addressed by the Chair as appropriate. The final proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 are shown in the Annex to the present document for consideration by the Standing Committee and onward submission to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP20). Should the Committee agree to the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5, it can be recommended to CoP20 that Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19) has been implemented and can be deleted.

Recommendations

12. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) consider and agree to the proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 19.5 on *Conservation of and trade in marine turtles*, as presented in the Annex to the present document, for submission to CoP20 for consideration; and
 - b) recommend to CoP20 that Decision 18.217 (Rev. CoP19) has been implemented and can be deleted.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 19.5 ON
CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN MARINE TURTLES

New text is underlined and deleted text is in ~~strike~~through.

RECOGNIZING that marine turtles face significant threats, including bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries; loss and degradation of nesting and foraging habitats; climate change; entanglement in marine debris; vessel strikes; and illegal take and trade for their meat, shells, and eggs;

RECOGNIZING that the conservation and recovery of marine turtles require international cooperation to ensure the survival of these highly migratory species;

RECALLING that all species of marine turtles are included in CITES Appendix I, and as such, international trade for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited for these species;

RECALLING that these species are included in Appendices I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) (except for *Natator depressus*, which is only in Appendix II), which requires CMS Parties to strictly protect these species by prohibiting take and controlling other factors that endanger them, and enhance their conservation status;

RECALLING that the Inter-American Convention (IAC) for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles promotes the protection, conservation, and recovery of populations of six marine turtle species (all except *N. depressus*) in the Western Hemisphere;

RECALLING that the Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention) prohibits the taking of and commercial trade in marine turtles, their eggs, parts or products;

RECALLING the Indian Ocean–South-East Asian (IOSEA) Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a non-binding intergovernmental agreement that aims to protect, conserve, and recover sea turtles and their habitats in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia;

RECALLING also that Resolution Conf. 17.4 (Rev. CoP19) on *Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species* urges Parties where there is a significant market for illegally traded wildlife products to develop strategies to reduce the demand for illegal products of wild animals and plants through demand reduction campaigns and to enhance, as appropriate, policy, legislation and law enforcement in this regard, and EMPHASIZING the importance for Parties to develop such plans for illegally taken marine turtles parts, products and derivatives;

CONCERNED that the illegal take and trade of marine ~~turtles~~ turtle parts and derivatives is contributing to their decline and poses a significant threat to their survival;

WELCOMING studies commissioned by CITES, IAC, and IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU to help determine the extent of illegal take and trade in marine turtles and provide recommendations on needed actions;

WELCOMING the Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region, developed under the auspices of CMS and its IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU;

WELCOMING projects aimed at uncovering illegal trade routes from source through to end user, and factors driving marine turtle use, supply, and demand, which can be used to inform policies aimed at marine turtle conservation; and

FURTHER WELCOMING initiatives to help combat the illegal trade in marine turtles by transferring genetic techniques, technologies, and building greater capacity for marine turtle genetic studies;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. RECOMMENDS Parties collaborate ~~and assist in building~~ strengthening their financial and technical capacity ~~in developing countries~~ to implement and enforce CITES and other related international obligations that apply to protect marine turtles, including protection from unsustainable use and illegal trade;
2. INVITES Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities to provide financial or technical assistance for, *inter alia*:
 - a) training and capacity-building of relevant authorities at the national and regional level, including on the implementation and enforcement of national regulations and international measures that apply to marine turtles, identification, monitoring, reporting, and wildlife and fisheries enforcement; and
 - b) building community and political awareness on the conservation status of marine turtles and the importance of compliance with CITES at the national level to promote conservation of these species;
3. URGES Parties to:
 - a) if not yet in place, develop and enact legislation to prevent and address unsustainable harvest of and trade in marine turtles;
 - b) conduct a thorough review of existing domestic legislation that protects marine turtles to ensure its effectiveness and implementation of relevant international obligations and commitments;
 - c) actively seek to strengthen national legislation and international obligations and commitments to protect marine turtles across their full life history;
 - d) regularly conduct a review of national measures that protect marine turtles to ensure that they remain effective and are adapted as needed, to respond to any newly identified trends; and
 - e) actively pursue enforcement of all provisions regulating the take and trade of marine turtles;
24. RECOMMENDS Parties affected by illegal trade in marine turtles; ~~provide capacity-building interventions,~~
 - a) take all necessary actions to prevent the illegal trade in marine turtles, including through addressing its drivers and developing and implementing evidence-based strategies, in engagement with indigenous peoples, local communities, and other stakeholders;
 - b) provide capacity-building assistance for national enforcement agencies and the judiciary, including (as appropriate) identification manuals or contact information for experts to identify marine turtle species in trade, raise awareness about the importance and benefits of addressing and preventing the illegal trade in marine turtles, and integrate training on illegal wildlife trade into national enforcement curricula of relevant training academies as appropriate;
 - c) ascertain key illegal trade routes, methods, volumes, and 'hot-spots' of marine turtles, and scale up efforts to address illegal harvest and other illegal activities at key locations in domestic markets associated with illegal trade, ~~and take action to decrease consumer demand for illegal marine turtle parts, products and other derivatives;~~
 - d) take action to decrease consumer demand for illegal marine turtle parts, products, and other derivatives; and
 - e) promote public understanding (including among vendors, tourists, and others) of the legal provisions and implications of engaging in the illegal take, use, and trade of marine turtles;
35. RECOMMENDS Parties ~~improve:~~
 - a) enhance monitoring, detection, and law enforcement ~~activities efforts~~ at all key transaction points (e.g., including markets, online platforms, ports) ~~to help and landing sites~~ to combat the illegal take and trade of marine turtles; and ~~enhance~~
 - b) strengthen cooperation and collaboration in the control of trade in marine turtles amongst ~~between~~

wildlife-law enforcement agencies at national and international levels to address illegal take and trade in marine turtles, including in through the exchange of information and actionable intelligence regarding the illegal take and trade of marine turtles;

- ~~46.~~ URGES Parties whose national legislation is not sufficient to control put in place mechanisms to collect data on the unsustainable harvest of and illegal trade in marine turtles, to enact legislation in a standardized manner from different governmental agencies to protect and manage these species appropriately facilitate comprehensive and accurate submissions of data on illegal trade in marine turtles by Parties in their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat;
- ~~57.~~ RECOMMENDS Parties collect samples from seized marine turtles for scientific genetic analysis to determine the species involved and populations of origin, and as appropriate provide these to, collaborate with forensic and research institutions capable of reliably determining the species and geographic origin of the samples in support of research, investigations, and prosecutions;
- ~~68.~~ RECOMMENDS Parties develop and follow best practice protocols for safe handling, care and rehabilitation, and release back into the wild of confiscated live marine turtles and marine turtles caught as bycatch;
- ~~9.~~ URGES Parties to coordinate efforts at the regional level, including working closely with Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other relevant regional bodies organizations, to identify and address illegal trade, use, and other threats, including to marine turtles, such as fisheries bycatch, use, and illegal trade;
- ~~710.~~ URGES RECOMMENDS Parties to address the fisheries related threats that contribute to illegal trade in marine turtles by working with fisheries fishing communities and fisheries bodies RFBs to ensure effective fisheries management measures are in place, and capture in fisheries is not undermining efforts to tackle the illegal trade, including by: implementing best practice such as:
- ~~a)~~ measures to reduce and document sea catch of marine turtles catches whether (targeted or bycatch; assessing) and improve post release survival rates;
 - ~~b)~~ measures requiring documentation of fisheries interactions with marine turtles;
 - ~~c)~~ measures to assess assessing catch rates and mortality based on reported interactions and the best scientific data available, continuing improving the;
 - ~~d)~~ measures that continue to strengthen observer programme programmes through the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)/RFB's framework in Organization (RFMO)/RFB frameworks to increase data collection in fisheries and improve our understanding of fisheries where bycatch of related impacts on marine turtles is not adequately addressed; and
 - ~~e)~~ measures that are enforceable and effectively addressing address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing that is a threat to threatens marine turtles.
- ~~811.~~ ENCOURAGES Parties to share information and provide training to fishers on bycatch mitigation strategies, such as turtle exclusion devices, selective fishing gear, and safe handling and release practices, that have proven effective at reducing bycatch or bycatch and associated mortality;
- ~~912.~~ ENCOURAGES Parties to undertake, as appropriate, research that can support the development of protection and conservation measures for the protection of marine turtle foraging, nesting and migratory areas;
- ~~103.~~ ENCOURAGES Parties, where marine turtles turtle hatchery establishments exist, to develop science-based operational protocols for marine turtle hatchery establishments to and ensure that they provide conservation value to marine turtle populations;
- ~~144.~~ RECOMMENDS that:
- ~~a)~~ any Party seeking to allow international trade in products of sea turtle ranches satisfy all the requirements of the Convention and Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on *Ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II*;

- b) any Party seeking to transfer a marine turtle population from Appendix I to Appendix II pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) provide information in accordance with the guidelines contained in Annex to the present Resolution; and
- c) any Party whose population of marine turtle is transferred to Appendix II pursuant to the present Resolution and Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) ensure that procedures for regular adequate reporting to the Secretariat exist and are implemented. Failure to satisfy this requirement and to demonstrate conservation benefit to the population or compliance with other requirements of Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) may result in the application of paragraph 5 d) of that Resolution.

125. ENCOURAGES Parties to share holistic regional marine turtle survival probability models and their output and other information to assess the sustainability of current harvest and bycatch levels while taking into account other threats to the populations across their range (number of turtles of different age classes taken from populations), reproductive success (number of turtles recruited per year), natural survival probabilities, and marine turtle biology; and for any Party that intends to engage in sustainable use of marine turtles, develop robust frameworks for the sustainable use of marine turtles that are based on the best scientific advice available taking into consideration the advice, resolutions, conservation and management measures of relevant bodies including competent fisheries authorities and experts, as appropriate;

136. DIRECTS the Secretariat to maintain close collaboration with RFBs, ~~CMS, its the CMS Secretariat and the~~ IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, and the IAC on the management and conservation of marine turtles to ensure the compatibility of activities, optimization of resources, promotion of research to address information gaps, and enhancement of synergies;

147. DIRECTS the Secretariat, subject to support available resources, to provide capacity-building assistance to Parties, especially developing countries and small island developing states, upon request, with ~~the CITES-relevant aspects of the development and/or~~ implementation of the Convention for marine turtles, including building financial and technical capacity the development, review, or revision of national legislation to help ensure compliance with CITES obligations for the conservation and regulation of international trade in marine turtles;

18. DIRECTS the Secretariat to, based on analyses of annual illegal trade reports, bring to the attention of the Standing Committee, as appropriate, any significant changes in the illegal trade of marine turtles;

159. DIRECTS the Animals Committee to make recommendations, if necessary, to ensure the conservation of marine turtles;

1620. 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;

1721. DIRECTS the Animals Committee and Standing Committees to report progress on the conservation of marine turtles at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate; and

1822. REPEALS Resolution Conf. 9.20 (Rev.) on *Guidelines for evaluating marine turtle ranching proposals submitted pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)*.

NOTE: No amendments are proposed to the Annex on
*Guidelines for evaluating marine turtle
ranching proposals submitted pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)*

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 19.5
ON CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN MARINE TURTLES

Clean version

RECOGNIZING that marine turtles face significant threats, including bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries; loss and degradation of nesting and foraging habitats; climate change; entanglement in marine debris; vessel strikes; and illegal take and trade for their meat, shells, and eggs;

RECOGNIZING that the conservation and recovery of marine turtles require international cooperation to ensure the survival of these highly migratory species;

RECALLING that all species of marine turtles are included in CITES Appendix I, and as such, international trade for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited for these species;

RECALLING that these species are included in Appendices I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) (except for *Natator depressus*, which is only in Appendix II), which requires CMS Parties to strictly protect these species by prohibiting take and controlling other factors that endanger them, and enhance their conservation status;

RECALLING that the Inter-American Convention (IAC) for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles promotes the protection, conservation, and recovery of populations of six marine turtle species (all except *N. depressus*) in the Western Hemisphere;

RECALLING that the Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention) prohibits the taking of and commercial trade in marine turtles, their eggs, parts or products;

RECALLING the Indian Ocean–South-East Asian (IOSEA) Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a non-binding intergovernmental agreement that aims to protect, conserve, and recover sea turtles and their habitats in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia;

RECALLING also that Resolution Conf. 17.4 (Rev. CoP19) on *Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species* urges Parties where there is a significant market for illegally traded wildlife products to develop strategies to reduce the demand for illegal products of wild animals and plants through demand reduction campaigns and to enhance, as appropriate, policy, legislation and law enforcement in this regard, and EMPHASIZING the importance for Parties to develop such plans for illegally taken marine turtles parts, products and derivatives;

CONCERNED that the illegal take and trade of marine turtle parts and derivatives is contributing to their decline and poses a significant threat to their survival;

WELCOMING studies commissioned by CITES, IAC, and IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU to help determine the extent of illegal take and trade in marine turtles and provide recommendations on needed actions;

WELCOMING the Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region, developed under the auspices of CMS and its IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU;

WELCOMING projects aimed at uncovering illegal trade routes from source through to end user, and factors driving marine turtle use, supply, and demand, which can be used to inform policies aimed at marine turtle conservation; and

FURTHER WELCOMING initiatives to help combat the illegal trade in marine turtles by transferring genetic techniques, technologies, and building greater capacity for marine turtle genetic studies;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. RECOMMENDS Parties collaborate in strengthening their financial and technical capacity to implement and enforce CITES and other related international obligations that apply to protect marine turtles, including protection from unsustainable use and illegal trade;

2. INVITES Parties, governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities to provide financial or technical assistance for, *inter alia*:
 - a) training and capacity building of relevant authorities at the national and regional level, including on the implementation and enforcement of national regulations and international measures that apply to marine turtles, identification, monitoring, reporting, and wildlife and fisheries enforcement; and
 - b) building community and political awareness on the conservation status of marine turtles and the importance of compliance with CITES at the national level to promote conservation of these species;
3. URGES Parties to:
 - a) if not yet in place, develop and enact legislation to prevent and address unsustainable harvest of and trade in marine turtles;
 - b) conduct a thorough review of existing domestic legislation that protects marine turtles to ensure its effectiveness and implementation of relevant international obligations and commitments;
 - c) actively seek to strengthen national legislation and international obligations and commitments to protect marine turtles across their full life history;
 - d) regularly conduct a review of national measures that protect marine turtles to ensure that they remain effective and are adapted as needed, to respond to any newly identified trends; and
 - e) actively pursue enforcement of all provisions regulating the take and trade of marine turtles;
4. RECOMMENDS Parties affected by illegal trade in marine turtles:
 - a) take all necessary actions to prevent the illegal trade in marine turtles, including through addressing its drivers and developing and implementing evidence-based strategies, in engagement with indigenous peoples, local communities, and other stakeholders;
 - b) provide capacity-building assistance for national enforcement agencies and the judiciary, including (as appropriate) identification manuals or contact information for experts to identify marine turtle species in trade, raise awareness about the importance and benefits of addressing and preventing the illegal trade in marine turtles, and integrate training on illegal wildlife trade into national enforcement curricula of relevant training academies as appropriate;
 - c) ascertain key illegal trade routes, methods, volumes, and 'hot-spots' of marine turtles, and scale up efforts to address illegal harvest and other illegal activities at key locations in domestic markets associated with illegal trade;
 - d) take action to decrease consumer demand for illegal marine turtle parts, products, and other derivatives; and
 - e) promote public understanding (including among vendors, tourists, and others) of the legal provisions and implications of engaging in the illegal take, use, and trade of marine turtles;
5. RECOMMENDS Parties:
 - a) enhance monitoring, detection, and law enforcement efforts at all key transaction points (including markets, online platforms, ports) and landing sites to combat the illegal take and trade of marine turtles; and
 - b) strengthen cooperation and collaboration between wildlife-law enforcement agencies at national and international levels to address illegal take and trade in marine turtles, including through the exchange of information and actionable intelligence;
6. URGES Parties to put in place mechanisms to collect data on the illegal trade in marine turtles in a standardized manner from different governmental agencies to facilitate comprehensive and accurate submissions of data on illegal trade in marine turtles by Parties in their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat;

7. RECOMMENDS Parties collect samples from seized marine turtles for genetic analysis to determine the species involved and populations of origin, and as appropriate, collaborate with forensic and research institutions capable of reliably determining the species and geographic origin of the samples in support of research, investigations, and prosecutions;
8. RECOMMENDS Parties develop and follow best practice protocols for safe handling, care and rehabilitation, and release back into the wild of confiscated live marine turtles and marine turtles caught as bycatch;
9. URGES Parties to coordinate efforts at the regional level, working closely with Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other relevant regional organizations, to identify and address threats to marine turtles, such as fisheries bycatch, use, and illegal trade;
10. URGES Parties to address fisheries related threats that contribute to illegal trade in marine turtles by working with fishing communities and RFBs to ensure effective fisheries management measures are in place, such as:
 - a) measures to reduce catch of marine turtles (targeted or bycatch) and improve post release survival rates;
 - b) measures requiring documentation of fisheries interactions with marine turtles;
 - c) measures to assess catch rates and mortality based on reported interactions and the best scientific data available;
 - d) measures that continue to strengthen observer programmes through Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO)/RFB frameworks to increase data collection in fisheries and improve our understanding of fisheries related impacts on marine turtles; and
 - e) measures that are enforceable and effectively address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing that threatens marine turtles;
11. ENCOURAGES Parties to share information and provide training to fishers on bycatch mitigation strategies, such as turtle exclusion devices, selective fishing gear, and safe handling and release practices, that have proven effective at reducing bycatch and associated mortality;
12. ENCOURAGES Parties to undertake, as appropriate, research that can support the development of conservation measures for the protection of marine turtle foraging, nesting and migratory areas;
13. ENCOURAGES Parties, where marine turtle hatchery establishments exist, to develop science-based operational protocols and ensure that they provide conservation value to marine turtle populations;
14. RECOMMENDS that:
 - a) any Party seeking to allow international trade in products of sea turtle ranches satisfy all the requirements of the Convention and Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on *Ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II*;
 - b) any Party seeking to transfer a marine turtle population from Appendix I to Appendix II pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) provide information in accordance with the guidelines contained in Annex to the present Resolution; and
 - c) any Party whose population of marine turtle is transferred to Appendix II pursuant to the present Resolution and Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) ensure that procedures for regular adequate reporting to the Secretariat exist and are implemented. Failure to satisfy this requirement and to demonstrate conservation benefit to the population or compliance with other requirements of Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) may result in the application of paragraph 5 d) of that Resolution.
15. ENCOURAGES Parties to share holistic regional marine turtle survival probability models and their output and other information to assess the sustainability of current harvest and bycatch levels while taking into account other threats to the populations across their range (number of turtles of different age classes taken from populations), reproductive success (number of turtles recruited per year), natural survival probabilities, and marine turtle biology; and for any Party that intends to engage in sustainable use of marine turtles,

develop robust frameworks for the sustainable use of marine turtles that are based on the best scientific advice available taking into consideration the advice, resolutions, conservation and management measures of relevant bodies including competent fisheries authorities and experts, as appropriate;

16. DIRECTS the Secretariat to maintain close collaboration with RFBs, the CMS Secretariat and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, and the IAC on the management and conservation of marine turtles to ensure the compatibility of activities, optimization of resources, promotion of research to address information gaps, and enhancement of synergies;
17. DIRECTS the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to provide capacity building assistance to Parties, especially developing countries and small island developing states, upon request, with implementation of the Convention for marine turtles, including the development, review, or revision of national legislation to help ensure compliance with CITES obligations for the conservation and regulation of international trade in marine turtles;
18. DIRECTS the Secretariat to, based on analyses of annual illegal trade reports, bring to the attention of the Standing Committee, as appropriate, any significant changes in the illegal trade of marine turtles;
19. DIRECTS the Animals Committee to make recommendations, if necessary, to ensure the conservation of marine turtles;
20. 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;
21. DIRECTS the Animals Committee and Standing Committees to report progress on the conservation of marine turtles at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate; and
22. REPEALS Resolution Conf. 9.20 (Rev.) on *Guidelines for evaluating marine turtle ranching proposals submitted pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)*.

Annex

Guidelines for evaluating marine turtle ranching proposals submitted pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)¹

1. Resource management

A. Biological information

The proposal should provide information on the biology, management and geographic extent of each population that will be affected throughout its range. Geographic extent should be described using sound scientific techniques. Range is defined as all the range States and waters in which the population occurs.

The following characteristics of the population of marine turtles that is the subject of the ranching proposal should be detailed:

- a) Population distribution. Describe the current (and, if possible, the historical) nesting grounds, feeding areas and migratory range of the population. Nesting areas from which eggs and/or hatchlings are to be taken should be described in detail.
- b) Population status and trend. Describe the population and its trend using indices of abundance for the different life stages with particular attention to the age/size structure of the population.
- c) Reproduction. Provide an estimate or calculation of the annual reproductive rate or size of the annual production (e.g. numbers of eggs and/or hatchlings).
- d) Population mortality. Provide an estimate of hatching success and estimates of human-induced mortalities of the population.

B. National management

A prerequisite for approval of a ranching proposal will be the effective implementation of a national management plan for marine turtles. The plan should include:

- a) Monitoring. A description of the annual programme to monitor population trends and mortality rates.
- b) Habitat protection. All important nesting beaches, feeding grounds and other significant habitats should be protected from disruption including development, urbanization and pollution.
- c) Harvest regulation. Harvesting for ranches should normally be restricted to eggs and/or hatchlings. The annual numbers (and percentage) of eggs and/or hatchlings proposed for removal to the ranch must be specified. The proposed harvest rate should also be presented as a proportion of the natural production of the population being harvested for ranches.
- d) Protection of the population. Human-induced mortality of marine turtles, such as uncontrolled harvests, incidental catch in fisheries and pollution of habitat should be identified and mechanisms be in place to control such mortalities.
- e) Rules for stopping harvests. Predetermined threshold values of population trends and changes in status, mortality or habitat should be proposed, the passing of which would automatically trigger the suspension of harvests, and the initiation of additional conservation measures.

¹ Corrected by the Secretariat following the 11th, 14th and 15th meetings of the Conference of the Parties: originally referred to Resolution Conf. 10.18, later corrected to Resolution Conf. 11.16, then to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP14).

C. Regional management

Because of the migratory behaviour of marine turtles, that segment of the population occurring within the jurisdiction of any one State can not be considered in isolation. Any management of the population should involve the range States sharing the majority of the population.

A Party submitting a ranching proposal shall take the lead in the development and effective implementation of a regional management protocol designed to enhance the conservation of the population.

- a) Activities undertaken by the proponent to develop cooperative regional management among the range States sharing the majority of the population should be described. Regional management should entail cooperative mechanisms for:
 - i) assessment of the conservation status of the population throughout its range and identification of key recruitment areas (e.g. breeding and nesting sites);
 - ii) regular monitoring of population trends, with an assessment of sources of annual mortality, including the impact of the ranching operation;
 - iii) effective protection of important nesting beaches and other essential habitats (e.g. feeding areas);
 - iv) regulating, where necessary, harvests and domestic sale of marine turtle specimens; and
 - v) effective controls, sufficient to prevent the stimulation of illegal trade in products from wild populations.
- b) The regional management protocol designed to enhance conservation of the marine turtles in the wild should also document existing conservation legislation and trade controls by range States and provide a forum through which more effective or complementary trade controls, enforcement activities and other conservation measures may be developed.

2. **Trade controls**

Proponents must take every reasonable measure to ensure that the trade in products from approved ranches does not stimulate an increase in trade from other sources in a manner detrimental to the survival of the population, other populations or other species of marine turtle, or serve as a cause for such trade. Therefore, before international trade is authorized, the proponent Party should ensure that both it and any country to which the products of the ranching operation are destined have adequate legal frameworks and administrative measures for monitoring and reporting, and adequate local and national enforcement capabilities. In particular each proponent Party must:

- a) Agree that exports of marine turtle products derived from the population covered by its proposal will be restricted to those from the ranching operation, in specified amounts (i.e. a quota may be set) that can be met by proposed ranch production. Importing States shall undertake to provide documentation of their domestic laws to regulate the import, re-export, possession, sale, purchase and transport of marine turtles and their parts and derivatives, and the measures taken to control existing stockpiles of such specimens.
- b) Document its domestic laws and enforcement mechanisms (including those in any territories and overseas political units) that regulate the taking of marine turtles from the wild and the possession, sale, purchase, transport, import and export of marine turtles, and their parts and derivatives.
- c) Undertake registration of any existing stockpiles of marine turtle parts and derivatives held within its territorial jurisdiction, and instigate marking and control systems to ensure that such items are readily distinguishable from similar items deriving from approved ranches.
- d) Describe marking and tracking procedures for all parts and derivatives from approved ranches that will allow the unambiguous identification of ranch products, including methods for marking products and packages, packaging types, transport methods, shipping routes, product documentation, secure storage of products, inventory control up to the point of export and specification of the maximum quantities of products (quotas) to be exported annually.

3. **The ranching operation**

To satisfy recommendation in paragraph 2 d) ii)² of Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)³, the proponent should provide information on:

- a) Financial operation. Identity of the owners and a business and financial plan taking account of market demand and production goals and objectives.
- b) Physical plant. In accordance with technical and professional standards, descriptions of:
 - i) site, including geographical location, lay-out, size and technical specifications;
 - ii) facilities for maintaining stock, food storage, quarantine, slaughter and processing, refrigeration and freezing;
 - iii) sea-water source, including circulation, filtration, waste disposal and quality control systems; and
 - iv) staff, including numbers and qualifications of technical and management personnel and numbers of support staff.
- c) Operating procedures, taking account of:
 - i) stock collection, including location of source sites, methods used in collection and removal of specimens, age- and size-classes of specimens (e.g. eggs, hatchlings), collecting seasons, number of specimens to be collected each year and the proportion of natural annual production that the harvest represents, methods of handling and transport to the ranching operation, and injury levels and mortality during collection and transport;
 - ii) stocking rates, including the number or weight of turtles per 1,000 litres of sea-water and square metres of surface area;
 - iii) production schedules, including production profiles by age- and size-class, growth rates, methods used to identify ranch stocks, culling procedures exclusive of harvesting, reports of non-harvest mortality, methods of disposal of carcasses from non-harvest mortality and number of specimens by age- and size-class that will be harvested each year;
 - iv) feeding, including sources of feed, general nutritional composition, evaluation of additives and contaminants, and feeding regimen (amount, frequency and method of distribution);
 - v) health care, including monitoring methods, veterinary care and treatment procedures; and
 - vi) slaughter procedures, including specimen selection, methods used to collect and transport specimens to the processing site, humane slaughter technique, processing techniques and waste disposal.
- d) Record keeping, indicating procedures followed in inspecting and monitoring records maintained by the ranching operation.
- e) Benefits, indicating how local people would benefit from the operation.

4. **Summary statement describing benefit to the population**

Proponents should summarize the legal and enforcement mechanisms that will prevent detrimental impact of the renewal of legal trade and summarize the benefits resulting or expected to result from the management actions implemented for the population to be harvested for ranches, including regional management protocols.

² Corrected by the Secretariat following the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties: originally referred to "paragraph e) ii)".

³ Corrected by the Secretariat following the 11th, 14th and 15th meetings of the Conference of the Parties: originally referred to Resolution Conf. 10.18, later corrected to Resolution Conf. 11.16, then to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP14).

5. Reporting

Proponents that achieve a transfer of their national population of marine turtles from Appendix I to Appendix II subject to this Resolution should report to the Secretariat updated information on:

- a) population status and trends;
- b) any change in the area of beaches that provide suitable nesting habitat;
- c) any change in enforcement effort; and
- d) amendments to cooperative agreements to preserve and manage the marine turtle resource.

Reports should also detail the nature of and progress in developing and implementing effective regional management protocols.