

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

CITES BIG CATS TASK FORCE (FELIDAE 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 Decisions 19.92 and 19.93 on the *CITES Big Cats Task Force*, as follows:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**19.92** *The Secretariat shall, subject to external resources*

- a) *establish and convene, the CITES Big Cats Task Force (Task Force), in accordance with the terms of reference and modus operandi agreed by the Standing Committee as presented in Annex 2 to document CoP19 Doc. 67 on CITES Big Cats Task Force (Felidae spp.);*
- b) *provide support to the Task Force allowing it to effectively carry out its mandate as stated in the terms of reference, including to:*
  - i) *discuss enforcement and implementation issues related to the illegal trade in specimens of big cats;*
  - ii) *as deemed appropriate, exchange intelligence and other information on the illegal trade in big cats; and*
  - iii) *develop strategies and make recommendations to improve international cooperation regarding the enforcement of CITES concerning illegal trade in specimens of big cats; and*
- c) *report the findings and recommendations of the Task Force to the 77th and 78th meeting of the Standing Committee for its consideration, and for making its own recommendations as appropriate.*

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

**19.93** *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *consider at its 77th meeting the reports submitted by the Secretariat, as per Decision 19.92, and make recommendations to the Secretariat and big cat source, transit, and destination countries, as appropriate.*
- b) *report on the implementation of the present Decision and any relevant recommendations as appropriate to the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.*

- c) *publish information generated by the Big Cat Task Force on the CITES website to keep relevant stakeholders informed and support the development of appropriate measures by source, transit, and destination countries.*
3. As reported in document [SC77 Doc. 39.3](#), the Secretariat convened the [CITES Big Cats Task Force meeting](#) in Entebbe, Uganda, from 24 to 28 April 2023. The Secretariat published the agreed [outcome document of the CITES Big Cats Task Force](#) on the [Enforcement matters](#) webpage of its website.
  4. At its 77th meeting (SC77; Geneva, November 2023), the Standing Committee encouraged all Parties affected by illegal trade in specimens of big cat species to make every effort to implement the strategies, measures, and activities outlined in the CITES Big Cats Task Force outcome document, as a matter of priority (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)).
  5. One element outlined in paragraph 1.1 of the outcome document required further consideration by the Standing Committee. This concerned the merits of a resolution on illegal trade in big cats to strengthen effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention with regard to illegal trade in big cat specimens, including a possible revision of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species* to increase the scope to make it applicable to all big cat species. Opinions expressed by Parties at SC77 on this matter were diverse. Consequently, the Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties to invite perspectives on a possible resolution on all big cats and to prepare an analysis of the merits and drawbacks of developing a resolution on all big cats, in consultation with the Animals Committee, and to submit its conclusions and recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 78th meeting.
  6. The Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2023/130](#) of 24 November 2023, in which it addressed a number of matters, including inviting feedback on a possible resolution on all big cats. The Secretariat received responses from Brazil, the European Union and its Member States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Wildlife Conservation Society.
  7. To consult with the Animals Committee at its 33rd meeting (AC33; Geneva, July 2024), the Secretariat prepared document [AC33 Doc. 34](#). The Secretariat summarized the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2023/130 and reported its preliminary findings outlining the merits and drawbacks of a possible resolution on all big cats. The Secretariat also highlighted in the document that only a limited number of responses were received to the Notification and that there was a lack of responses from range States. Nevertheless, the responses received showed that perspectives on the merits of a resolution on all big cats remained divided.
  8. The Animals Committee considered document AC33 Doc. 34 and invited the Secretariat to take into consideration the comments made during the AC33 discussion in the preparation of its report to the Standing Committee, noting that there was no support for a new resolution on all big cats and limited support for a revision to Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I big cat species*.
  9. Considering the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2023/130 and comments made during the discussions at AC33, the Secretariat concludes that there is limited support for the development of a new resolution on all big cats. While some Parties expressed interest in revising Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) to encompass all big cat species, the overall feedback suggests limited consensus for such a revision at this time. Therefore, as outlined in paragraph 11 of the present document, the Secretariat recommends that the Committee agree not to pursue the development of a resolution on illegal trade in big cats or a possible revision of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) to make it applicable to all big cat species.
  10. The strategies, measures and activities identified and presented in the CITES Big Cats Task Force outcome document provide a solid basis for Parties to initiate or strengthen efforts aimed at combatting illegal trade in specimens of big cat species. To follow up on the implementation of the outcome document, the Secretariat therefore proposes draft decisions 20.AA to 20.CC as presented in the Annex to the present document.

## Recommendations

11. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) agree not to pursue, at this time, the development of a resolution on illegal trade in big cats, nor to consider revising Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP19) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species* to extend its applicability to all big cat species;
- b) submit draft decisions 20.AA to 20.CC presented in the Annex of the present document to CoP20 for consideration; and
- c) recommend to CoP20 that Decisions 19.92 and 19.93 on the *CITES Big Cats Task Force* have been implemented and can be deleted.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON *ILLEGAL TRADE IN BIG CATS*

***Directed to Parties***

**20.AA** Parties affected by illegal trade in specimens of big cat species are encouraged to make every effort to fully implement the strategies, measures and activities outlined in the [CITES Big Cats Task Force outcome document](#), as relevant to them, and to report on the implementation of this Decision to the Secretariat.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**20.BB** The Secretariat shall report to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Decision 20.AA, together with any recommendations it may have.

***Directed to the Standing Committee***

**20.CC** The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the report and recommendations of the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 20.BB and make recommendations to the Parties or the Secretariat as appropriate; and
- b) report on the implementation of the present Decision to the 21st meeting of the Conference of the Parties together with any recommendations it may have.