

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



Joint sessions of the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee and
the 25th meeting of the Plants Committee
Online, 4 and 21 June 2021

Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade

ADDENDUM TO IDENTIFICATION MATERIALS

1. This document has been submitted by the co-chairs of the joint working group of the Animals and Plants Committees on identification materials and the Secretariat.*

Progress to date: Decisions directed to the Secretariat

2. In implementation of Decision 17.161, paragraph c), the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) has completed the work of archiving the CITES Identification Manual sheets, and developed additional ways for accessing them through the [CITES Checklist](#) and [Species+](#). The details of this function, made possible through funding from the European Union, are described in the [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/043](#) of 18 May 2020.
3. Pursuant to Decision 18.135 and building upon the archiving work undertaken by UNEP-WCMC, the Secretariat has started the revision and the redesign of the CITES Virtual College in order to make the identification materials available in a more user-friendly manner. The effort is funded by Switzerland and will seek the inputs from the joint working group mentioned below.
4. Pursuant to Decision 18.136, paragraph a), the Secretariat issued Notification No. 2020/030 of 1 April 2020 to collect and compile information on the current state of species identification activities and needs. The call resulted in submissions of new and additional species identification guides, which have been added to the current collection of the materials on the CITES Virtual College. No specific identification needs were expressed in response to the notification that would be of relevance for the review of Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*.

Progress to date: Joint working group of the Animals and Plants Committees

5. The Animals and Plants Committees established a joint working group on identification materials in late 2020 through a virtual process. The membership and the revised terms of reference are as follows:

Co-chairs: Hugh Robertson (AC representative for Oceania); Rosemarie Gnam (PC representative for North America), Yan Zeng (PC alternate representative for Asia), and Aurélie Flore Koumba Pambo (PC Chair);

* *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.*

Parties: Argentina, Botswana, China, Colombia, Georgia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and

Observers: United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Born Free USA, Chambre Syndicale de la Faune Instrumentale (CSFI), Forest Based Solutions, German Society of Herpetology (DGHT), Humane Society International (HSI), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), League of American Orchestras, TRAFFIC and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

Mandate:

- a) review selected identification materials, including material compiled as per Decision 18.136, paragraph a), and assess the need for their revision and improvement, taking into account the materials that are being developed or have already been developed by Parties and materials requested in Decisions or Resolutions;
 - b) review Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, taking into account the proposals of the Secretariat in paragraphs 6 and 7 of document AC31 Doc. 15/PC25 Doc. 18, and the reviews outlined in paragraphs a) and c) of Decision 18.137;
 - c) consider ways to improve the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species; and
 - d) report on progress with these activities at the next meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees.
6. The working group started its work in December 2020, reviewing Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) and agreeing that a new resolution on identification materials would be desirable. It embarked on drafting the text of the proposed new resolution on identification materials, which went through a round of revision by the working group members and was shared with the Secretariat.
 7. On the basis of the draft developed by the working group and pursuant to Decision 18.136, paragraphs b) and c), the Secretariat has prepared a revised draft resolution in the Annex to the present document.
 8. The working group intends to review the Secretariat's draft resolution and may make an oral update on any further proposed revisions for the consideration of the Animals and Plants Committees.

Revised recommendations

9. The Animals and Plants Committees are requested to:
 - a) take note of this document;
 - b) finalize the draft resolution in the Annex to the present addendum and instruct the Secretariat to forward it to SC74 for consideration and onward submission to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting; and
 - c) if no consensus is achieved on the final text of the new resolution, prepare a draft decision to continue this work beyond the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIMENTS
OF CITES-LISTED SPECIES

Conf. 19.X

Materials for the identification of specimens of CITES-listed species

RECALLING that Article II, paragraph, 4 states that the Parties shall not allow trade in specimens of species included in Appendices I, II, and III except in accordance with the provisions of the Convention;

RECALLING that the provisions of Article XII, paragraph 2 (f), require the Secretariat to publish periodically and distribute to the Parties current editions of Appendices I, II and III together with any information which will facilitate identification of specimens of species included in those Appendices;

NOTING that accurate identification of animal and plant specimens, including parts and derivatives, is important to determine whether and which provisions of the Convention apply to their international trade, including, where appropriate, identification that a species belongs to a higher order (e.g., genus or family) listing, as well as the identification of commodities in trade;

NOTING that CITES authorities and enforcement officials need to be able to identify if specimens in international trade are of CITES-listed species in a timely, practical, accurate and effective manner;

NOTING that identification methods continue to evolve and diversify, including the use of molecular, isotope and machine-learning tools;

RECOGNIZING that new electronic formats for providing identification materials are rapidly evolving, and can continue to assist CITES authorities and enforcement officials to identify specimens, including parts and derivatives, in international trade;

NOTING that CITES authorities and enforcement officials will not always have access to real-time electronic databases and may have to rely on printed or printable materials;

RECOGNIZING the need to develop or make available identification materials in the three working languages of the Convention;

AWARE that information facilitating the identification of animal and plant specimens has been and may continue to be developed as a result of various CITES processes, including through amendments to the Appendices, Resolutions and Decisions, and recommendations and agenda item discussions of the Conference of the Parties and of the Committees; and

RECALLING that the CITES Identification Manual was begun in 1977 and continued through Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, but has become obsolete in 2009 when the Identification Manual was no longer updated due to the need for more dynamic and multi-faceted approach in the future;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. ENCOURAGES the development of identification materials that include key elements particularly useful to identifying species and specimens thereof in trade, as presented in the Annex to the present Resolution;

2. DIRECTS the Secretariat to:

- a) publish and maintain in a centralized location on the CITES website access to identification materials in a timely and practical manner and in a format that is readily available for CITES authorities and enforcement officials to use, and make updates as new electronic formats evolve;
- b) where available and practical to do so, continue to link identification materials to existing electronic lists of species, or higher order groupings of species, on the CITES Appendices;
- c) upon request from a Party and subject to the availability of financial and human resources, provide advice in coordination with the Chair of the Animals or Plants Committee on the identification of species or particular specimens, or seek advice from experts on the taxa concerned and, where relevant, share this information through the CITES website;
- d) assist Parties in developing and promulgating national or regional identification materials, enlisting input from the appropriate technical committees or specialist organizations when possible;
- e) keep the Standing, Animals and Plants Committees informed of progress made in the development and maintenance of identification materials, as appropriate; and
- f) report to the Conference of the Parties as appropriate;

3. REQUESTS the Animals and Plants Committees to:

- a) where materials are lacking or inaccurate, or where improvements might be made on existing identification materials, encourage Parties, when appropriate, to develop new or updated materials; and
- b) identify and suggest to the Secretariat improvements to the access of CITES identification materials;

4. RECOMMENDS that Parties:

- a) continue to develop and share national, regional, or taxon-based guides to the identification of CITES-listed species, including their parts and derivatives, especially for those specimens that are commonly traded and/or found in their country or region, together with commonly traded species that are not listed on the CITES Appendices to assist in identifying and differentiating between listed and unlisted species;
- b) coordinate with other Parties in the development of identification materials by seeking input from the Animals or Plants Committees to review and provide input to draft identification materials under development;
- c) develop and promote the use of rapid, accurate and inexpensive techniques to identify species in trade, especially for identifying specimens that are traded in a highly processed or modified form, or where derivatives of multiple species are combined, which may include molecular or isotope techniques, digitized field guides, apps, or other tools being developed for identification;
- d) raise awareness of the availability of identification materials and techniques that are used by CITES authorities and enforcement and inspection officers to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, through training programmes for customs and border officials; and
- e) inform the Animals or Plants Committee of any difficulties experienced in identifying particular taxonomic groups, species, parts or derivatives, where improved identification guidance would be beneficial;

5. INVITES any Party having submitted a proposal for an amendment of Appendix I or II in accordance with Article XV, or having submitted a species for inclusion in Appendix III in accordance with Article XVI, that results in the inclusion of a new species or in new annotations in the Appendices, to:
 - a) develop identification materials as expeditiously as possible following its inclusion in the Appendices, and where possible before such amendments become effective;
 - b) submit draft identification materials or an update on its development for input to the subsequent meeting of the Animals or Plants Committee, as appropriate; and
 - c) provide the Secretariat with identification materials to be published on the CITES website and otherwise shared with CITES Parties;
6. ENCOURAGES Parties and organizations to provide funds to assist in the production and publication of identification materials; and
7. REPEALS Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*.

ANNEX TO THE RESOLUTION

To support implementation and enforcement for CITES-listed species, the following key information should be considered when developing CITES identification materials to provide information specific to the identification of CITES-listed species and commodities in trade.

The development of CITES identification materials should be guided by the need to recognize both *species* and *specimens* thereof and provide information of sufficient quality and detail, to aid enforcement authorities to distinguish between CITES and non-CITES-listed species and commodities.

Main elements: The following information might be considered fundamental to all CITES identification materials:

- Order / Family / Genus / Species
- Synonyms
- Vernacular Names (multi languages, as available)
- Description - Identifying features may include morphological, anatomical, physiological, behavioural, or molecular information
- Images – Consider including line drawings or diagnostic images; color photos of specimens and commodities in trade; finished products
- Geographic range
- Distribution by country
- Protection [Appendix I, II, or III]
- Uses and known trading patterns
- Parts and derivatives in trade (description)
- Commodities in trade (description) – may include information to help implement annotations, distinguishing wild from non-wild specimens
- Similar species or commodities

Additional information pertinent to specific groups of traded specimens, such as:

- Pharmaceutical names, characteristics of the parts or derivatives in trade (odour, taste, other characteristics) for species of plants or animals traded for medicinal purposes
- As appropriate, available information on conversion metrics

References:

- Author, affiliation, date