

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

IDENTIFICATION MATERIALS

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

Members: representative for Europe of the Animals Committee (Ms. Zikova), representative for North America of the Plants Committee (Ms. Gnam) (co-Chair), representative for Oceania of the Animals Committee (Mr. Robertson) (co-Chair);

Parties: China, Singapore, and United States of America; and

Observers: International Union for Conservation of Nature; Animal Welfare Institute, Humane Society International, and World Resources Institute.

Mandate:

The in-session working group shall:

- a) review the proposed draft resolution contained in the Annex to document AC31 Doc. 15/PC25 Doc. 18, Addendum and, if needed, revise it for consideration of the Animals and Plants Committee and onward submission to the Standing Committee; and
- b) draft or revise decisions on identification materials for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

Recommendations:

The working group recommends that the Animals and Plants Committees submit the draft resolution and draft decisions, annexed to this document, for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 74th meeting.

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 the definition of “specimen” in Article I, paragraph (b) includes any animals or plants, whether alive or dead, and includes readily recognizable parts and derivatives thereof unless otherwise annotated in the Appendices;

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;

RECALLING that paragraph C 9 “information on similar species” in Annex 6 to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) on *Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II* encourages Parties to provide identification information in the proposals for amendment of Appendices;

RECALLING the interpretation of the term “readily recognizable part or derivative” in Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Trade in readily recognizable parts and derivatives*;

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 recognize ~~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~~ advance 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 usefulness of developing or making 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) regularly review and analyse the materials produced by or for Parties to assist in identification of CITES-listed species and gaps in existing identification materials relative to the needs expressed by the Parties, and provide a summary for the Animals and Plants Committees;
 - ba) 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;
 - cb) 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~~ in the CITES Appendices;
 - de) 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;
 - ed) assist Parties in developing and promulgating national or regional identification materials, enlisting input from the appropriate technical committees or specialist organizations when possible;
 - fe) keep the Standing, Animals and Plants Committees informed of progress made and needs identified in the development and maintenance of identification materials, as appropriate; and
 - gf) report progress and developments to the Conference of the Parties as appropriate;
3. REQUESTS the Animals and Plants Committees to:
 - a) Identify where materials are lacking or inaccurate, or where improvements might be made on existing identification materials, taking into consideration information on gaps and needs identified by ~~encourage~~ Parties and the Secretariat, make recommendations when appropriate to prioritize development of new or updated materials; ~~and~~
 - b) provide input and recommendations to Parties and the Secretariat concerning the development of new or updated identification materials, or where draft materials are submitted for input; and
 - cb) identify and suggest to the Secretariat improvements to the access of CITES identification materials;
4. RECOMMENDS that Parties:
 - a) provide identification information to the extent possible in the proposals for amendment of Appendices including information as outlined in paragraphs C 1. "taxonomy", 3. "species characteristics", and 9 "information on similar species" in Annex 6 to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) and the Annex to this Resolution;
 - be) continue to develop and share national, regional, or taxon-based guides to the identification of specimens 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~~ and when practicable include in these identification materials for commonly traded species that are not listed on the CITES Appendices to assist in identifying and differentiating between listed and unlisted species;
 - cb) coordinate with other Parties in the development of identification materials as appropriate by seeking input from the Animals or Plants Committees to review and provide input to draft identification materials under development;
 - d) develop or make available identification materials in the working languages of the Convention, as well as other languages used by Parties where appropriate;

- ee) 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;
 - fe) 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~~
 - ge) inform the Animals or Plants Committee of any difficulties experienced in identifying particular taxonomic groups, species, ~~parts or derivatives or specimens~~, where improved identification guidance would be beneficial, for consideration and any appropriate recommendation under paragraph 3; and
 - h) consider submitting draft identification material under development to the Animals or Plants Committee to review and provide input, as appropriate.
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; and
 - ~~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~~
 - be) 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; colour 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)
- ~~Verifiable methods for 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 and ~~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

DRAFT DECISIONS ON IDENTIFICATION MATERIALS

Directed to the Animals and Plants Committees

19.AA The Animals and Plants Committees shall:

- a) establish a joint working group on identification materials and undertake the following working group tasks, in consultation with the Secretariat:
 - i) continue to draft the proposed new resolution on identification materials if necessary; [to be deleted if the Conference of the Parties adopts the resolution]
 - ii) 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;
 - iii) consider ways to improve the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species; and
 - iv) report on the progress with these activities at the meeting(s) of the Animals and Plants Committees; and
- b) submit the proposed new resolution on identification materials to the Standing Committee for inputs and onward submission to the Conference of the Parties. [to be deleted if the Conference of the Parties adopts the resolution]

Directed to the Secretariat

19.BB The Secretariat shall:

- a) continue collecting information on identification materials and share it through the CITES Website and the CITES Virtual College;
- b) provide inputs to the proposed new resolution on identification materials drafted by the joint working group on identification materials called for in Decision 19.AA; and [to be deleted if the Conference of the Parties adopts the resolution]
- c) report on the progress and make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

Directed to the Standing Committee

[to be deleted if the Conference of the Parties adopts the resolution]

19.CC The Standing Committee shall:

- a) provide inputs on the draft resolution text prepared by the Animals and Plants Committees to ensure that the needs for identification materials expressed by Parties and authorities responsible for wildlife law enforcement are taken into account; and
- b) submit the revised draft resolution to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

Directed to Parties

19.DD Parties are encouraged to support the efforts of the working group on identification materials by providing to the Secretariat information on available identification and guidance materials that are used by Parties, and particularly by enforcement and inspection officers, to facilitate implementation of the Convention.