

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-22 July 2011

SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT (DECISIONS 15.75 AND 15.76)
(agenda item 18)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

- Co-Chairs: Representative of Asia (Mr Soemorumekso) and the alternate representative of Europe (Mr Lörtscher);
- Members: Alternate representative of Asia (Mr Giam);
- Party observers: Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Poland, Thailand, the United States; and
- IGOs and NGOs: the European Union, IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, Animal Welfare Institute, Conservation International, Ecoterra International, Humane Society International, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, Pro Wildlife, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, TRAFFIC.

Mandate

- a) Consider the relevant results of the Asian snake trade workshop contained in the Annex to document AC25 Doc. 18; and
- b) Provide recommendations to the Animals Committee for approval to be presented to the Standing Committee.

Recommendations

1. Subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, the Animals Committee should, as a matter of priority:
 - a) undertake a study of production systems for Asian snake species listed in CITES Appendix II and the use of CITES source codes. In evaluating different production systems, the biological feasibility and, where possible, economic viability of captive production operations should be considered;
 - b) based on this study, develop guidance to assist the Parties in evaluating captive breeding operations and other production systems; and
 - c) conduct one or more workshops in the use of this guidance for CITES and other relevant authorities of range States of Asian snake species, including sea snakes, subject to international trade.

The status of this work should be reported to AC26 and SC62.

2. The Animals Committee should review the output of the IUCN Red Listing process for Asian snakes and make recommendations at AC26 for the consideration of the Parties with regard to amending the CITES Appendices.
3. Given the current lack of sufficient scientific data, the Animals Committee encourages Scientific and Management Authorities to establish conservative annual catch and export quotas for any snake species (including sea snakes) in trade and communicate those quotas to the CITES Secretariat (for CITES-listed species) and relevant stakeholders. The Animals Committee will ask the Secretariat to communicate this recommendation through a Notification to the Parties.
4. By CoP16, the Animals Committee will assist the Parties (through consultation with relevant experts) by identifying the types of data and building on existing examples of good management practices that could assist the Parties in making non-detriment findings and setting quotas for Appendix-II snakes in trade.
5. Subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, the Animals Committee should select one or more high-value snake species in the pet trade (e.g., unique color or morphological forms, range-restricted endemics), engage independent consultants to carry out case studies to determine the impacts of legal and illegal harvest for the pet trade on wild populations, and identify the information necessary to prepare non-detriment findings for those species. Recognizing that such case studies are a high priority, the Animals Committee shall liaise with the Secretariat, Parties, and the academic and conservation communities to enable such studies to be carried out. Those species identified in Document AC25 Doc. 18 as meeting these criteria should be considered as potential case studies. The Animals Committee should provide a progress report at CoP16.
6. The Animals Committee should:
 - a) subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, engage independent consultants to investigate methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes, including parts and derivatives, in trade;
 - b) encourage interested institutions to investigate forensic identification and make this information available to the Animals Committee; and
 - c) report on the status of this work at CoP16.
7. Through an inter-sessional working group, the Animals Committee should collate and evaluate existing identification materials for live snakes, parts and derivatives, and make recommendations at AC26 regarding the need for additional materials. With the assistance of the Secretariat, existing materials should be brought to the attention of the Parties.
8. Noting the potential conservation impacts of undocumented trade in CITES-listed snakes, and specimens thereof, the Animals Committee encourages the Standing Committee to examine the trade, including the trade in venom and other frequently unreported specimens.