

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



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Animals Committee  
Veracruz (Mexico), 28 April – 3 May 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade controls and marking

IDENTIFICATION OF STURGEONS AND PADDLEFISH SPECIMENS IN TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 16th meeting (Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted interrelated Decisions on Sturgeons and paddlefish (*Acipenseriformes* spp.), as follows:

**Directed to the Secretariat**

16.136 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *subject to external funding and in consultation with the Animals Committee, organize a study to:*
  - i) *provide an overview of molecular, DNA-based and other forensic methods that could assist in identifying the species and populations of Acipenseriformes specimens in trade, determining the origin or age of specimens, and differentiating wild from captive-bred or aquacultured specimens;*
  - ii) *review relevant developments in this area, including the availability and reliability of uniform identification systems;*
  - iii) *evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods (including practicality, costs, time-efficiency, reliability, technical requirements, etc.); and*
  - iv) *formulate relevant guidance for CITES Parties, enforcement agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders;*
- b) *ensure consultation with Parties that authorize trade in specimens of sturgeons and paddlefish, appropriate experts, institutions and organizations, and the private sector in the conduct of the study;*
- c) *make the results of the study available to the Animals Committee at its 27th or 28th meeting for its consideration; and*
- d) *disseminate the recommendations formulated by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.138 in a Notification to the Parties.*

### **Directed to the Animals Committee**

16.137 *The Animals Committee shall assist the Secretariat in determining the specifications for the study referred to in Decision 16.136 and monitoring its conduct. It shall review the report of the study at its 27th or 28th meeting, and make recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee.*

### **Directed to the Standing Committee**

16.138 *The Standing Committee shall review the study undertaken in accordance with Decision 16.136 and the recommendations that the Animals Committee formulated in compliance with Decision 16.137, and make its own recommendations, as appropriate, for communication to Parties concerned or for consideration at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. In 2006, the Secretariat addressed issues related to the identification of specimens of sturgeons and paddlefish and engaged the assistance of IUCN to review available techniques and their potential for identifying sturgeons and paddlefishes and their products. The findings were discussed at a workshop on the Identification of Acipenseriformes Species in Trade, held at the Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research in Berlin, Germany, from 29 September to 1 October 2006. The workshop was organized by the IUCN-SSC Sturgeon Specialist Group with the assistance of the German Government and the CITES Secretariat. The outcomes of the workshop were posted on the CITES website<sup>1</sup> as requested in Decision 14.124, now deleted. The results of the study and discussions at the workshop were also reported to the Animals Committee at its 23rd meeting (Geneva, 2008).<sup>2</sup>
4. In light of the above, the Secretariat has identified possible experts to undertake the study directed in Decision 16.136, paragraph a). However, the necessary external funds had not been secured to complete the study at the time of writing. In this regard, donor Parties and stakeholders are invited to contribute the requisite financial support.
5. The Secretariat will provide an update at the present meeting on the status of this Decision.

### Recommendation

6. The Committee is invited to note this document.

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Identification of Acipenseriformes species in trade* (<http://www.cites.org/eng/prog/sturgeon/identification.shtml>)

<sup>2</sup> See: *Document AC23 Doc. 13.1 (Rev. 1)* (<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac23/E23-13-01.pdf>)