

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

Species trade and conservation

SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT (SERPENTES SPP.)
(Agenda item 19)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

- Co-Chairs: representative of Europe (Mr Lörtscher) and representative of Asia (Mr Soemorumekso);
- Parties: Brazil, Czech Republic, France, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, Thailand and United States of America; and
- IGOs and NGOs: UNEP-WCMC, European Commission, International Trade Centre, IUCN, Development Animal Welfare Institute, Association of Western Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Humane Society International, RESP, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, ProWildlife, Species Survival Network, Sustainable Users Network and TRAFFIC International.

Mandate

Taking account of the presentations and discussions in plenary, the working group shall:

Concerning agenda item 19.1

1. Review results of studies commissioned, when available, as well as the ITC study on python snakes in Asia, the UNCTAD/CITES study on Traceability Systems for a Sustainable International Trade in South-East Asian Python, and other relevant studies and information; formulate guidance and recommendations that are pertinent to Decision 16.102, paragraphs a) to d), i.e. relating to:
 - Production systems for Asian snakes listed in CITES Appendix II (use of source codes; guidance for monitoring and controlling production systems);
 - Guidance for NDFs for Appendix-II snake species in trade;
 - Methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes in trade;
 - High-value snake species in the pet trade; and
 - Forensic identification of specimens of CITES-listed snakes in trade.

Concerning agenda items 19.2 and 19.4

2. Examine the findings and recommendations concerning traceability of snake skins presented in the UNCTAD/CITES study on Traceability Systems for a Sustainable International Trade in South-East Asian Python and in the Annex to document AC27 Doc. 19.4.
3. Examine any additional relevant information that is available concerning existing marking and tracing systems for snakes, accompanying certification schemes, and current technologies to implement such traceability and marking systems.
4. Based on these examinations, initiate the drafting of advice on the feasibility, development and implementation of a traceability system for snakes for the Committee to consider and report to the Standing Committee (SC65: progress reporting; SC66: final reporting).

Concerning agenda item 19.3

5. Review the information on Asian snake species presented in the Annex to document AC27 Doc. 19.3, and any additional information, as relevant, on the IUCN Red List assessments for Asian snake species.
6. Formulate appropriate recommendations for consideration by the Committee, and communication to the Standing Committee, Parties or others as appropriate. Such recommendations may focus on species currently not included in the CITES Appendices, and that are or may be threatened by unregulated international trade.

Recommendations

1. Concerning the studies mentioned in Decision 16.102, paragraphs a) to d), the intersessional Working Group on snake trade and conservation, commissioned by the AC, will be reviewing the content and make appropriate recommendations to AC28, in particular:
 - Production systems for Asian snakes listed in CITES Appendix II (use of source codes; guidance for monitoring and controlling production systems);
 - Guidance for NDFs for Appendix-II snake species in trade;
 - Methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes in trade;
 - High-value snake species in the pet trade; and
 - Forensic identification of specimens of CITES-listed snakes in trade,
2. Concerning stockpiles, the AC makes the following recommendations:

In view of the problems related to large stockpiles of Python skins in southeast Asian countries:

 - The SC may consider recommending that such stockpiles be inventoried and tagged by the countries concerned, and that this information be provided to the Secretariat as a baseline before any traceability system is implemented.
 - The inventory should contain information on the species concerned, the stage of processing of the skins (crust, dried etc), the corresponding quantities and tag numbers.
 - The SC may also wish to consider how such stockpiles may enter into international trade.
3. Concerning traceability, the AC suggests to the SC to consider implementing a traceability system for snake skins comprising the following characteristics:

- For the formulation of relevant provisions, the SC may draw upon Res.Conf.11.12 (Rev. COP15) concerning the universal tagging system for the identification of crocodilian skins.
 - In particular, the traceability systems should commence as close to the point of harvest of the animal or production of the skin as possible. It should be made mandatory up to and including finished skins. Any use of the tagging information further on in the trade chain is optional.
 - The identification of skins should make use of devices that are tamper proof, affordable, uniquely serially numbered and contain the following minimum information: Species, country of origin (where relevant regional code), year of harvest or production, unique serial number, source code. In addition parties are encouraged to add other information they deem necessary.
3. Concerning the agenda item 19.3, the WG recommends:
- that at AC28, the Animals Committee considers the list of species provided by IUCN in AC27 Inf. 7 that based on their analysis may deem consideration by the SC for a potential listing in the CITES appendices, together with additional information that may become available from studies underway on snake species in the pet trade by ITC and analysis of snake species that are traded in high volumes. This will allow the AC to make recommendations to the SC based a more complete set of sources.