

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



Twenty-eighth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Tel Aviv (Israel), 30 August-3 September 2015

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

SNAKE TRADE AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT (SERPENTES SPP.)  
(Agenda item 14)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Chairs:            | Representative of Europe (Mr Lörtscher);   |
| Committee members: | Alternate Representative of Asia (Mr. Giam);   |
| Parties:           | Austria, China, European Union, Germany, India, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, United States of America, Viet Nam and Thailand;   |
| IGOs and NGOs:     | International Trade Center, UNEP-WCMC, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Animals Exhibitors Alliance, Association of Midwest State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Association of Southeastern State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Animal Welfare Institute, Creative Conservation Solutions, Global Standards 1 (GS1), Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, Humane Society International, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, Responsible Ecosystems Sourcing Platform, Species Survival Network, Sustainable User Network and TRAFFIC International. |

Mandate

Concerning agenda item 14.1:

1. Review the activities and studies mentioned in document AC28 Doc.14.1, including the four studies commissioned by the Secretariat and their recommendations, and the observations by the Secretariat in paragraphs 15 to 19 of document AC28 Doc.14.1.
2. Based on this review and other information, develop guidance and recommendations that are pertinent to Decision 16.102, paragraphs a) to d), 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; and
- High-value snake species in the pet trade.

Concerning agenda item 14.2:

3. Review the studies concerning traceability of snake skins mentioned in document AC28 Doc.14.2.1 paragraphs 3 and 4 [i.e. the UNCTAD/CITES study on *Traceability Systems for a Sustainable International Trade in South-East Asian Python*; the Annex to document AC27 Doc. 19.4; and the four studies on the snake trade and conservation management that were commissioned by the CITES Secretariat pursuant to Decision 16.102, paragraph a) and the information provided in document AC28 Doc.14.2.2].
4. Examine the findings and recommendations concerning traceability of snake skins in trade in the documents and studies mentioned above.
5. Draft advice for consideration by the Animals Committee (and subsequent reporting to the Standing Committee) on the feasibility and implementation of a traceability and marking system for snake skins in compliance with Decision 16.103.
6. Consider the matters identified in documents AC28 Doc. 14.2.1 and AC28 Doc. 14.2.2 and in the plenary discussion regarding traceability systems more broadly, such as issues of standards and compatibility, and formulate recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee.

Concerning agenda item 14.3:

7. Review the information on Asian snake species presented in document AC28 Doc.14.3, and any additional information, as relevant.
8. Draft recommendations for consideration by the Animals Committee, including recommendations to the Standing Committee, range States, 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

**Concerning Decision 16.102 and Decision 16.103, the Working Group makes the following recommendation to the Animals Committee:**

The Animals Committee invites the Standing Committee to consider the drafting of a Resolution on the conservation, sustainable use of and trade in snakes based on the results achieved under different decision on snakes adopted at CoP16 with a view to increasing coherence, reducing duplication of effort and providing guidance to Parties trading in snakes. The suggested draft to this resolution is found in Annex I in this document.

**Concerning the recommendation above to draft a Resolution on the conservation, sustainable use of and trade in snakes, the Working Group recommends to the Animals Committee to invite the Standing Committee to draft a decision on the conservation, sustainable use of and trade in snakes based on the information below:**

Encourages the Standing Committee and Animals Committee to:

- a) Review information on the conservation, sustainable use of and trade in snakes, particularly information on non-detriment findings;
- b) Instruct the Secretariat to make this information available through the CITES website;
- c) Recommend revisions to Resolution Conf. 17.XX on the conservation, sustainable use of and trade in snakes in light of this new information as necessary.

**Concerning document AC28 Doc.14.1 Annex 1 and 3, the Working Group invites the Animals Committee to submit the following recommendations to the Standing Committee:**

- the Standing Committee recommends that Southeast Asian countries engaged in the snake trade endeavour to verify the origin of animals traded between countries in the region and to ensure the appropriate use of source codes.
- the Standing Committee encourages Honduras to ensure that measures are in place to address poaching of and illegal trade in the Cayos Cochinos boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor imperator*).
- the Standing Committee encourages Benin to implement the following measures for the Ball python (*Python regius*), in particular by:
  - Design and implement a management program for the species;
  - Make non-detriment findings based on studies of the species, basic demographics, harvest and trade in the species.
  - Strengthen national regulations relating to trade control and monitoring, including stricter control policies for production systems.

the Standing Committee encourages Ghana, Togo and Benin to implement the following measures for the Calabar ground boa (*Calabaria reinhardtii*):

- Make non-detriment findings based on studies of the species, basic demographics, harvest and trade in the species.;
  - improve systems to monitor harvest, captive breeding, and trade in the species.
- The Standing Committee invites Indonesia to improve enforcement of existing laws and take into account the recommendations provided in the document to more effectively regulate the collection of and trade in the populations of the wild green tree python (*Morelia viridis*) and the Boelen's python (*Morelia boeleni*).
  - the Standing Committee invites Parties affected by the above recommendations to report to the Standing Committee at its 69th meeting.

**Concerning document AC28 Doc.14.1 Annex 2, the Working Group invites the Animals Committee to consider the following recommendation**

The Animals Committee further recommends that the draft guidance to assist Parties in the making of Non-Detriment Findings, management systems for wild populations and the establishment of export quotas for Appendix II snake species as called for under Decision 16.102 a) ii) be reviewed by the intersessional working group and relevant experts and finalized in advance of the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee. The Animals Committee may wish to extend the mandate of the intersessional working group in this regard.

**Concerning document AC28 Doc.14.1 Annex 4, the Working Group invites the Animals Committee to consider the following recommendation**

The Animals Committee is invited to take note of document AC28 Doc.14.1 Annex 4 and also invites Parties to make use of the information contained in the document with a view to enhancing opportunities to better differentiate between wild and captive bred CITES-listed snakes in trade. The Animals Committee should draw the attention of the Standing Committee to Annex 4 of document AC28 Doc. 14.1, as it may be important from an implementation and enforcement perspective.

**Concerning document AC28 Doc.14.2.1, the Working Group invites the Animals Committee to consider the following recommendation**

The Animals Committee invites the Standing Committee to consider the drafting of a decision on traceability based on the different decisions related to traceability adopted at CoP16 with a view to increasing coherence, reducing duplication of effort and providing guidance to Parties implementing traceability systems. The suggested draft to this decision is found in Annex II in this document.

**Concerning document AC28 Doc.14.2.2, the Working Group invites the Animals Committee to:**

Note the report and notes the contribution of the document to the development of guidance on traceability systems.

**Concerning document AC28 Doc.14.3, the Working Group invites the Animals Committee to consider the following recommendation**

The Working Group recommends to the Animals Committee to adopt the recommendations found in document AC28 Doc.14.3 with the following revisions to paragraph 12 a) of the recommendations and the suggested revision to the categorization of two species in Table I.

12 a) Range States, importing countries, and other Parties are encouraged to conduct more detailed assessments of those species indicated in Table 1 for which available information suggests that international trade is “likely to be a threat” (4 species) or “may be a threat” (29 species). Range states are encouraged to submit listing proposals for the 4 species categorized as “likely to be threatened by trade” and for the 3 species categorized as “may be threatened by trade” and have an IUCN status (CR, EN, VU), including: *Euprepiophis perlacea*, *Enhydris longicauda*, and *Cryptelytrops rubeus*. Range states are also encouraged to consider including the remaining species categorized as “may be threatened by trade” with listing in the Appendices.

The Working Group recommends to the Animals Committee to categorize two species in Table 1, *Acrochordus arafurae* and *Acrochordus granulatus*, as unlikely to be impacted by international trade, and requests IUCN to revise document AC28 Doc. 14.3 accordingly.

## Annex I

# Resolution on the conservation, sustainable use of and trade in snakes

## DRAFT

AWARE that certain species of snakes are successfully bred in captivity, collected from the wild and traded in high numbers in and outside range States, *inter alia* to supply the demand for use as food, skins, traditional medicine, and for the pet trade;

AWARE that the harvesting of snakes, and in the case of some species the initial processing of their skins and other body parts, is of economic importance and contributes important revenue to local communities;

ACKNOWLEDGING that unregulated or unsustainable trade in snakes can pose significant threats to wild populations, and that international cooperation is needed to address these threats urgently;

OBSERVING that the collection of snakes is carried out through an extensive informal network of trappers, hunters and middlemen, and that collection efforts and trade volumes are considerable, especially in Asia;

ACKNOWLEDGING Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev.) on Specimens of animal species bred in captivity

ACKNOWLEDGING Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on the Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes

NOTING Resolution Conf. 14.7 (Rev. CoP15) on Management of nationally established export quotas

NOTING Resolution Conf. 16.7 on NDFs and its concepts and non-binding guiding principles in considering whether trade would be detrimental to the survival of a species.

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#### **Regarding non-detriment findings (NDF)**

ENCOURAGES range States that wish to export species of snakes listed in Appendix II to make use of available guidance, in particular the results of the Cancun workshop on NDFs in 2008, for making non-detriment findings for trade in snakes of wild origin, and guidance on other species as appropriate.

ENCOURAGES also Parties and stakeholders in snake conservation, sustainable use and trade to share their experiences and lessons learned with regard to making NDFs.

DIRECTS Parties and the Secretariat to use the snake NDF guidance and its updates in capacity-building workshops and relevant training materials;

#### **Regarding management of wild snake populations**

ENCOURAGES Parties to establish national harvest and trade policies for snake species;

INVITES Parties to identify those snake species that are impacted by international trade and, where appropriate, propose possible CITES listings and implement national management strategies including establishment of export and harvest quotas, size or season restrictions, among others, to further conservation of the species concerned;

ENCOURAGES all Parties to explore ways to enhance the participation of the private sector in the conservation of and sustainable use and trade in snake species;

ENCOURAGES Parties and stakeholders to increase public awareness of the ecosystem services provided by snakes, of the benefits and consequences of non-detrimental and legal trade and the threats to the survival of the species in the wild and livelihoods posed by illegal trade in snakes and their parts and derivatives;

### **Regarding monitoring and trade controls**

ENCOURAGES Parties to use guidance developed for monitoring wild populations and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems;

ENCOURAGES also Parties and stakeholders in snake conservation and trade to share their experiences and lessons learned with regard to the application of guidance developed for monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems.

ENCOURAGES range States to apply methodologies for differentiating wild and captive-bred specimens of CITES-listed snakes in trade;

URGES Parties to enhance and increase enforcement efforts with regard to existing legislation as a matter of urgency;

URGES Parties with trade in snake parts and derivatives to enhance efforts to better regulate such trade;

URGES Parties to enhance cooperation amongst wildlife-law enforcement agencies at national and international levels concerning control of trade in snakes, and between enforcement agencies and national CITES authorities;

ENCOURAGES Parties to test, and consider the introduction of innovative traceability and enforcement methods in range and consumer States and, as a matter of priority, to strengthen enforcement efforts;

URGES Parties that have snake captive-breeding or ranching facilities in their territories to engage in regular monitoring of such facilities, taking into account the origin of parental stock and whether they were obtained legally and without detriment to wild populations, as well as the practicality and capacity of producing the offspring claimed and for those facilities that breed Appendix I species to register those facilities with the CITES Secretariat in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15).

URGES Parties to pursue the development and dissemination of forensic methods to assist Parties in the identification of snake parts and derivatives, and for examination of products labelled as containing parts and derivatives of snakes;

### **Regarding traceability systems for snake skins**

Encourages Parties to share experiences in the use of traceability systems for specimens of CITES-listed snakes, including the use of identification technologies;

Encourages Parties to take into account lessons learned from projects on traceability implemented for other CITES-listed species

### **RECOMMENDS**

- a) 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.;
- b) 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 or technologies that may accomplish the same requirements. In addition, Parties are encouraged to add other information they deem necessary;
- c) The Secretariat should compile such information on available identification technologies and projects to make them available to Parties;

- d) CALLS UPON governments and intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies, non-governmental organizations, the industry and other donors to provide financial support and other assistance to implement this Resolution;
- e) Encourages Parties to engage in the development of traceability systems and to explore ways to enhance the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders in this process.

Annex II

Draft elements for a Decision on traceability:

*Invites the Standing Committee to consider the following elements on a decision on traceability for submission to the 17th Conference of the Parties:*

XX.XX Establish a working group on traceability systems in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat to:

- a) Recommend a working definition of traceability systems to assist Parties in work related to the implementation of such systems;
- b) encourage that the development of traceability systems be mutually complementary, supportive and standardized, as appropriate, and that they also meet the unique needs of any CITES-listed species;
- c) provide general guidance on a governance structure to administer and oversee the development of traceability systems using lessons learned from the development of the global CITES permits and certificates system;
- d) develop and use umbrella guidelines, and recommend standards, as appropriate, to develop traceability systems for different species that are mutually supportive and that generate standardized data;
- e) describe the CITES value chain using Unified Modelling Language and identify points throughout the value chain where species must be located, identified and its application defined;
- f) Collaborate with the Working Group on E-permitting to ensure links between CITES permits and certificates and traceability identifiers;
- g) Collaborate with United Nations and other relevant organizations involved and that have experience in the development and use of traceability standards and systems;
- h) Draft a Resolution on traceability for consideration at the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

Invites Parties to:

- a) Support the working group in its work on traceability;
- b) Advise the working group on the development of projects and new information related to traceability
- c) Adhere, whenever possible, to international standards and norms related to traceability systems in the development of these systems;
- d) Use data, as appropriate, generated from traceability systems in activities related to non-detriment findings and monitoring programmes;
- e) Collaborate in the provision of capacity building programmes that promote South-South and North-South cooperation in the development of traceability systems.

Invites the Secretariat to:

- a) develop a portal on the CITES website on traceability to make available:
  - 1) Recommendations by the working group on a definition on traceability, general traceability guidelines, and other relevant information;
  - 2) Information on new projects on traceability
  - 3) Information on global organizations working on traceability standards and systems;
  - 4) Relevant documents, research papers and guidelines on traceability.