

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

Regional matters

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

1. This report, covering the period from March 2014 to August 2015, was prepared by Rosemarie Gnam, Alternate Regional Representative for North America, in collaboration with the CITES authorities of Canada, Mexico, and the United States.¹

Overview of major developments

a) Review of Significant Trade

2. The Canadian Scientific Authority, on behalf of Canada's Scientific Authorities Working Group (SAWG) and the United States' Scientific Authority (DSA), participated in a face-to-face meeting of the Advisory Working Group on the Evaluation of the Review of Significant Trade, which met at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, United States in April 2015 to further discussions of the working group and prepare documents for review by the Animals Committee and Plants Committee.
3. At AC27, the Significant Trade Review Working group selected *Ursus maritimus* and *Hippocampus erectus* for review. Canada responded to the Animals Committee concerning information on Canadian management and trade in these species. We provided detailed biological and trade information for *Ursus maritimus* (polar bear) and information regarding Canada's implementation of Article IV, paragraphs 2 (a) and 3. We explained that Canada is only marginally a range state of *Hippocampus erectus*. It is rarely encountered in Canadian waters and collection of this species from Canada is not authorized. The United States also responded to the Animals Committee concerning information on U.S. management and trade in these species.

b) Periodic Review

4. Canada and the United States have submitted a document to AC28 to complete the periodic review process for *Puma concolor cougar* and *Puma concolor coryi* as part of our commitment toward the completion of the Periodic Review of the Felidae.
5. The intersessional working group on Periodic Review is chaired by Canada and Mexico (Carolina Cáceres and Hesiquio Benítez, respectively). The working group is developing amendments aimed to streamline

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the process outlined in Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP16), and its progress will be presented by the co-chairs through a working document of the present meeting.

6. The U.S. conducted a Periodic Review of the species *Epioblasma sampsonii* (an extinct mollusk). The results of this review will be submitted at AC28.

c) Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes

7. Canada has recently registered a new operation that breeds *Falco peregrinus anatum*. There are now twelve CITES-registered captive-breeding operations in Canada, breeding *Falco rusticolus*, *Falco peregrinus*, *Tragopan caboti* and *Acipenser brevirostrum*.
8. In the U.S. during the reporting period, the following facilities were registered: Lance Christensen for *Falco peregrinus*, *Falco rusticolus*, and *Falco peregrinus* x *Falco rusticolus*; Hyacinth Macaw Aviary for *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*; James Robison for *Falco rusticolus*; Brian Paul Stoddard for *Falco rusticolus* and *Falco peregrinus*; and Michael Garcia for *Falco rusticolus*, and *Falco rusticolus* x *Falco peregrinus*.

d) Non-detriment findings

9. With respect to narwhal, based on new population estimates, in June 2015 a Non-Detriment Finding was issued for narwhal originating from the Jones Sound and Smith Sound summer stocks, also called the Parry Channel, Jones Sound and Smith Sound management unit. The new abundance estimates show harvest is sustainable. A Non-Detriment Finding has been issued for narwhal products harvested from Jones Sound and Smith Sound from 2010 to 2014 based on the updated abundance estimates and the sustainable harvest levels for those years. This Non-Detriment Finding for narwhal from Jones Sound and Smith Sound replaces the previous detriment finding for these stocks that was due to insufficient scientific data and information.
10. The Standing NDF Reports for terrestrial species and the science advice used as a basis for the NDFs for marine species are available on the Environment Canada website at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/cites/default.asp?lang=En&n=2942DC30-1>.
11. Following the entry into force of Appendix II listings for hammerheads (*Sphyrna lewini*, *S. zygaena* and *S. mokarran*) and white tip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), the Scientific Authority of Mexico (CONABIO), along with experts and national fisheries authorities, met in April 2014 and March 2015 to agree on standardized procedures and methods of ecological risk assessment and management. These procedures will be further considered during a nationwide expert workshop to be held in July 2015 in Mexico City; and are expected to provide more elements for the formulation of NDFs for CITES listed sharks exported from Mexico.
12. In August 2014 the U.S. DSA made a positive CITES Non-Detriment Finding for the export of porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) legally harvested in the commercial fishery by U.S. fisherman in the 2014 harvest season. The positive finding was based on a species management plan, produced by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2006, which was developed to rebuild the porbeagle stock. The yearly harvest is based on a quota and all harvest is suspended when 80% of the quota is reported; all harvest must be reported within seven days of landing. The fishery was closed to harvest in 2015.
13. In June 2015 the U.S. DSA made a positive CITES Non-Detriment Finding for the export of wild *Sphyrna lewini* (scalloped hammerhead shark), *Sphyrna mokarran* (great hammerhead shark) and *Sphyrna zygaena* (smooth hammerhead shark) harvested in the commercial fisheries of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico by U.S. fisherman in the 2015 harvest season. The positive finding was based on a management plan, produced by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2013, which was developed to rebuild the hammerhead stocks. There are two separate management groups, one in the Atlantic and one in the Gulf of Mexico; each group has a separate harvest quota. Each group is regulated separately and all harvest in the group is suspended when 80% of its quota is reported; all harvest must be reported within seven days of landing.
14. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), a workshop was convened by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) in January 2014 to discuss management measures and the conservation status of the paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*). Representatives from 20 U.S. State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and three USFWS regions attended. The primary outcome of the workshop was

agreement that paddlefish should be managed by river basins, rather than individually by each state. The Lower Mississippi River Basin States previously developed a management plan for paddlefish in Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama which may serve as a model for management of the species on a multi-state level. In an effort to implement recommendations that came out of the workshop, the states began aging paddlefish. The aging data is needed for the models the states hope to develop in order to inform paddlefish management and set regulations. The aging data should be available by August 2015. Also, the commercial paddlefish states continue to advance the development of basin-wide management plans and look for ways to provide the funds needed to manage paddlefish.

e) Other

15. On December 31, 2014, after a distinguished career of nearly 35 years with the USFWS, Roddy Gabel, Chief of the Division of Management Authority, retired from government service.
16. U.S. CITES Export Tagging Program: The U.S. cooperates with its States and Indian Tribes in utilizing a tagging program for the export of skins of the following Appendix-II species: bobcat (*Lynx rufus*); river otter (*Lontra canadensis*); Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*); gray wolf (*Canis lupus*); brown bear (*Ursus arctos*); and American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*). During the reporting period, the USFWS approved the State of Montana's request to annually export up to 200 gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) hides/skins. This approval was for 1 year, with renewal conditional upon compliance with tagging and reporting conditions.

Activities of Regional Representatives

17. Ms. Carolina Caceres, the Regional Representative for North America and Chair of the Animals Committee, is co-chairing the Advisory Working Group on the Evaluation of the Review of Significant Trade with the Plants Committee's Nomenclature Specialist, Mr. Noel McGough, co-chairing the working group on tortoises and freshwater turtles, with Mr. Soemorumekso, Regional Representative for Asia, co-chairing the joint Animals and Plants Committee working group on periodic review with Mr. Hesiquio Benitez, the Plants Committee Regional Representative for North America, and chairing the Standing Committee working group on bushmeat. Ms. Caceres is also a member of the Standing Committee working group on annotations as Chair of the Animals Committee.
18. Dr. Rosemarie Gnam, the Alternate Regional Representative for North America, in April 2015 coordinated activities for the CITES Table at the Canada/U.S./Mexico Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management meeting. In addition, she made arrangements to host and participated in the Advisory Working Group on the Evaluation of the Review of Significant Trade.

Regional cooperation and priorities

19. The members of the North America Region communicate regularly as part of our ongoing commitment to meet and discuss regional CITES issues. The North American Region meets as the CITES Table at the Canada/U.S./Mexico Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management meeting to discuss issues of mutual interest. The U.S. hosted the 20th North American Trilateral Meeting from April 13-16, 2015 in San Diego California. The three countries discussed CITES implementation issues, preparations for CITES technical committee meetings, and CoP17 and other CITES issues of interest to our region. In addition, these CITES Table discussions allowed regional authorities to address the 2015-2016 main priorities of the CITES working table: a) improving regional cooperation for CITES implementation; b) follow up on the progress of CoP16-CoP17 intersessional working groups; and c) address illegal wildlife trafficking.
20. In between meetings, the North America Region maintained communication through conference calls and email.
21. The Canadian network of CITES scientific authorities keeps in regular contact to discuss Canada's interests and challenges regarding national implementation of the scientific aspects of CITES, to provide advice and comments on Canada's international activities and to further develop species-specific standing NDF reports.
22. Canada's CITES scientific authority participated in the annual meetings of the Canadian Furbearer Management Committee in 2014. The purpose of this committee is to coordinate and communicate on jurisdictional management of furbearer species in Canada.

23. In 2014-2015, Environment Canada expanded its CITES outreach activities with the installation of two new CITES airport displays and the publication of two posters that will be distributed to locations such as travel agencies, small airports, border crossings, passport offices and veterinary offices to educate the travelling public about CITES.
24. Following recommendations in CITES Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16), Canada has established sustainable caviar and meat quotas. Canada would like to finalize the Regional Conservation Strategy for Atlantic Sturgeon and is working with the U.S. towards this goal.
25. Fisheries and Oceans Canada conducted a comprehensive population assessment for narwhal in the Canadian high Arctic in 2013. The results from this survey were peer-reviewed through Fisheries and Oceans Canada's scientific advisory process and approved in June 2015.
26. In 2014 Fisheries and Oceans Canada conducted an aerial survey of two walrus stocks in the Canadian Arctic to update the population estimates for these stocks. The results of this survey will give a more comprehensive and updated population estimate for the Hudson Bay and Davis Strait stock and the South and East Hudson Bay stock. The results will be peer-reviewed through Fisheries and Oceans Canada's scientific advisory process in October 2015. Canada is in the process of developing an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for walrus which is expected to be completed in 2016.
27. Since 2010 Mexico has implemented the "*Mexico-Belize-Guatemala Morelet's Crocodile (Crocodylus moreletii) Monitoring Program*" in Mexico. The data so far generated through this program (2010-2013) is available at the institutional webpage of CONABIO: <http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/planeta/cites/publicaciones.html>. Additionally, the 2014 monitoring season has concluded, and the 2015 season is currently in progress. The information generated since the launch of the Monitoring Program suggests a stable wild population of about 80,000 individuals of *C. moreletii*, with a healthy population structure (good production of hatchlings and juveniles). Based on this program's results Mexico will present an amendment proposal to the zero quota currently in place for wild specimens of *C. moreletii*, and substitute it with a precautionary quota of egg harvest through a well stabilized program in collaboration with the *Responsible Ecosystem Sourcing Platform* (RESP). This program will start with 3 pilot sites with UMA (*Management Units for Conservation of Wildlife*), where the main goal will be to link local communities and Mexican producers (farms) with international companies in the fashion industry in EUA and Europe, under fair benefit sharing and traceability schemes.
28. A two year project submitted by the North American Region CITES Authorities on "*Strengthening conservation and sustainable production of selected CITES Appendix II species in North America*" has been approved by the *Commission on Environmental Cooperation* (CEC) for funding under its "2015-2016 Operational Plan", with a total budget of \$300,000 USD: \$65,000 for the first phase; and \$235,000 for the second phase. The Project's aim is to portray the trade of Appendix II listed species in the Region to promote their legal and sustainable trade, through: [phase 1] the identification and prioritization of highly traded Appendix II species, followed by a comprehensive trade analysis; and, [phase 2] the establishment and implementation of action plans to strengthen and improve regional collaboration on the implementation of CITES provisions for the selected species. The project is tentatively set to start in July 2015.
29. With regard to the Standing Committee's working group on the *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity* (IPBES, - established through Decision 16.15 and chaired by the Secretariat and Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico) —, during their last meeting the Joint Sessions of the Scientific Committees (AC27/PC21; Veracruz, 2014), developed a set of recommendations related to the forthcoming assessment on sustainable use (requested by CITES, and incorporated in the IPBES work program 2014-2018 under deliverable 3b) iii)). These include guidelines for the scoping process, and the nomination of experts to develop the assessment. The co-chairs of the working group have closely followed the process of the sustainable use assessment and will provide updates on this matter during this meeting.
30. On December 17th the USFWS Director Ashe hosted an all-day meeting with the Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ms. Sue Milburn-Hopwood, and the Wildlife Director for the Nunavut, Mr. Drikus Gissing, among others, to discuss polar bear conservation. Topics addressed included: updates from both countries on recent conservation actions, the range-wide circumpolar conservation action plan, traditional ecological knowledge, improved collaboration on science, polar human conflict, management and CITES.
31. Canada and the U.S. hosted a Polar Bear Stakeholder Forum at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia from June 10 to June 12, 2015. Since Canada and the U.S. have shared responsibility for the management of polar bears in our countries, we convened the Stakeholder Forum to allow for the presentation of information about polar bear conservation and management amid a

broad range of perspectives. Forum participants took the opportunity to ask questions and come to an understanding about the different perspectives to polar bear conservation and management.

32. The US Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP) and the USFWS CITES offices, with funding from the US Department of State, worked with the United Nations' Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to develop and produce the Analysis of CITES trade: Central America and the Dominican Republic, a comprehensive analysis of CITES trade data for the region, published in February 2014 in English and Spanish. At a workshop held in Guatemala City, the report was presented by DOI and UNEP-WCMC to the CITES officials of Central America and the Dominican Republic for their review and discussion, along with training on use of CITES databases.

The report is located at the following links:

<http://citescentroamerica.unep-wcmc.org/wordpress/english/> - English

<http://citescentroamerica.unep-wcmc.org/> - Spanish.

Meetings and Workshops

Within the Region:

33. On October 16th and 17th 2014 the "Workshop for strengthening intra and inter-institutional coordination between authorities responsible for the enforcement on issues of international illegal trade in wildlife Mexico" was held in order to establish operational bases to coordinate federal efforts in the detection and interception of attempted illegal export of species of wild origin (marine species mainly). This workshop was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT); Attorney General's Office (PGR); Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development and Fisheries (SAGARPA); National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO); National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP); Mexican Navy (SEMAR), Federal Police (PF) and the National Institute of Migration (INM) and Customs. The main product was a contact directory of first responders and a protocol for joint action which is being executed. The event was funded by the "Wildlife Without Borders" Program of the USFWS.
34. From December 2014 to April 2015, Mexico's *National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries* (CONAPESCA), in collaboration with the *National Institute for Capacity Development in the Rural Sector S. A.* (INCA Rural), conducted eight training courses in the states of Sinaloa, Sonora, Oaxaca, Campeche, Colima, Veracruz, Tamaulipas and Baja California to enhance the species-specific reports of hammerhead catches by means of visual cues and improve traceability. In total, 270 fishermen attended these courses.
35. Additionally, throughout October and November 2014, CONAPESCA conducted workshops to socialize the Fisheries Management of Sharks and Rays Program in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, as well as the applicable CITES' provisions, and the importance of accurate species-level recordings of catches. A total of 115 stakeholders of the shark and ray fisheries participated.
36. On April 22 and 23, 2015, the Mexican Law Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA) and TRAFFIC North America (of the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF) organized the "*Mesoamerican Workshop on Sea Cucumbers: International Trade and basis for identification*" aimed to strengthen national and regional capabilities in the regulation of the international trade of sea cucumber species, particularly *Isostichopus fuscus* which is mainly imported by USA and China. The event was attended by 27 inspectors from PROFEPA and authorities (national and regional) and specialists from Central America and the United States. This information will be passed along from the inspectors to their regional offices. The event was funded by the Embassy of the United States of America in Mexico.
37. On 24 April 2015, PROFEPA participated in the "Workshop on Trade and identification of precious and semi-precious corals" organized by TRAFFIC in Mérida Yucatán, with the participation of authorities (national and regional) and specialists from Mexico, Central America, the U.S. and Canada. The event was funded by the "Wildlife Without Borders – Latin America and the Caribbean" Program of the USFWS.
38. NOAA Fisheries and the USFWS hosted a meeting on June 4-5, 2014, in Silver Spring, Maryland with several chambered nautilus species experts. The goal of the meeting was to bring these experts together to share and discuss recent and historical, biological and trade data. This species has been recommended for listing in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

(CITES) Appendices in the past, however, to-date there has been a lack of biological and trade information on the species.

39. The U.S. CITES Authorities participated in the mid-year Meeting of the American Zoological Association held in Columbia, South Carolina on March 21-27, 2015. A workshop was held on CITES permitting requirements for the export and/or import of animals.

Other Meetings and Workshops (Outside the Region):

40. The U.S. participated in the Third Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings (NDF), Guatemala City, Guatemala which was held between March 11 and March 12, 2014. The objectives of the workshop, which was attended by 32 participants including several representatives from the U.S., were to share the progress made by countries on the implementation of the new CITES listings, including manta rays and three shark species in Appendix II; to share efforts in preparing their NDFs considering the agreements and recommendations of the workshop in September 2013, in San Salvador, El Salvador; and to establish collaborative mechanisms regionally and nationally among CITES authorities, fisheries and organizations to contribute to sustainable and responsible management of shark species in Appendix II.
41. Canada, Mexico and the United States attended the workshop in Bonn Germany hosted by the German CITES Scientific Authority from 2-22 August 2014 to aid in developing a Non-Detriment Finding Guidance document for shark species. At the workshop Canada presented the Northwest Atlantic porbeagle stock and Mexico presented the *Sphyrna lewini*'s fisheries in Chiapas (southeastern Mexico) as two of the ten case studies to test and improve the guidance. The main outcome of the workshop was the development of General Guidelines for the formulation of NDFs of CITES-listed sharks. It is now available to all Parties to help guide their making of Non-Detriment Findings for sharks.
42. The U.S. finds that effective implementation of CITES is a critical component for the control of international wildlife trafficking, therefore, assistance through capacity building is key to improving CITES implementation. As such, francophone Africa is a priority area for these efforts given its high biodiversity and volume of traded wildlife. At the request of both Gabon and Cameroon, personnel from the U.S. CITES Authorities recently conducted two CITES Needs Assessments in Gabon (June 2014) and Cameroon (Dec 2014) in order to provide them with recommendations to improve CITES implementation.
43. Canada and the U.S. participated in the 11th Meeting of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The meeting occurred from 4-9 November 2014 in Quito, Ecuador. While not signatories to CMS, Canada and the U.S. have many international commitments with CMS-listed species. CMS agenda items of conservation interest to the United States and Canada included migratory birds, sharks and rays, polar bear, Asiatic and African lion, and wildlife crime.
44. CITES Authorities from Mexico and the U.S. and the USFWS' Office of Law Enforcement, and the National Marine Fisheries Service participated in the "International CITES Workshop: Articulating Experiences and Strategies for the Implementation of Shark Species Included in Appendix II", in Santa Marta, Colombia from Nov. 25-27, 2014. More than 60 participants, representing over 20 countries, participated in a workshop where topics discussed included: making of Non-Detriment Findings to ensure sustainable use of these species in international trade; species identification; and traceability of products (fins and meat). The presentation of the identification software sharkfin (an application to aid the identification of shark's fins through photographs) was an outcome from this workshop. The participants also identified current needs and recommendations for effectively implementing the recent shark listings. This workshop was hosted by the Government of Colombia, with support from the CITES Secretariat, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, and the USFWS.
45. The U.S. DSA participated in a regional workshop in Georgetown, Guyana, on May 21, 2015 at the request of the U.S. Embassy. The workshop, which was organized by Panthera and the government of Guyana, and was partially funded by a USFWS grant, was designed to build the capacity of governments in the region to make scientific-based decisions under CITES, particularly in the setting of export quotas for wild-caught specimens.
46. The USFWS co-hosted with the Government of Vietnam the First Pangolin Range States Meeting held in Danang, Vietnam from 24-26 June 2015. Pangolin species occur in both Asia and Africa. This meeting gave pangolin range States an opportunity to develop a unified action plan to protect the eight pangolin species against over-exploitation as a result of international trade. The IUCN estimates that over one million pangolins have been traded illegally in the last decade, possibly making pangolins the most heavily

trafficked wild mammal in the world. This meeting was attended by participants from 30 pangolin range states. In addition to participating in the meeting, the USFWS contributed funding through a grant, that will enable the participation of delegates from many of the Asian and African pangolin range States and species experts, thereby, fulfilling the key objective of ensuring international cooperation from all stakeholders working for pangolin conservation.

Other Regional Information

CANADA

47. The Government of Canada places temporary "holding reservations" on decisions taken at the Conference of Parties. The Convention, written in 1975, allows 90 days for countries to update their regulations. As Canada is unable to meet these short timelines for making the necessary regulatory changes, a holding reservation on decisions taken at the 16th meeting of the CoP was placed to allow time for implementation of regulatory changes. In April 2015, the CoP16 amendments to the list of CITES-regulated species were legally in force in Canada with completion of the regulatory process to update the Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations (WAPTR) of the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA) and the temporary reservation on the CoP16 decisions was lifted in June 2015. The Government of Canada is serious about protecting species at risk within its borders and internationally, and committed to our responsibilities to CITES.
48. Canada has been active in ongoing monitoring of Canada's polar bear population, involving annual review of the status and trends of the bears within each of Canada's 13 management units. Canada is a leader in advancing the technology of non-invasive monitoring techniques such as remote sensing, aerial survey, and biopsy darting (genetic mark-recapture). In 2014-2015, harvest and trade reporting and data management were enhanced and microchip and DNA identification methods were tested for implementation in the near future. In February 2015, Canada's Polar Bear Technical Committee considered the available monitoring and research results, as well as Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, in their annual review of the status of bears within all 13 management units. The Range States to the 1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears have been collaboratively developing a Circumpolar Action Plan for the conservation of polar bear, which is expected to be finalized at the Meeting of the Parties in September, 2015. This plan will supplement national plans developed by each range state. Canada's plan will similarly integrate provincial and territorial plans, ensuring efficient and effective integration while keeping decision making at the appropriate level. Canada continues to systematically document Traditional Knowledge: in 2015, a report for the western arctic was published and it is available online at <http://www.wmacns.ca/>.
49. Canada and the U.S. (Dr. Rosemarie Gnam and Dr. Adrienne Sinclair) are co-chairing the Trade Working Group which was established at the 2013 Meeting of the Polar Bear Range States Meeting in Moscow, Russia. The mandate to explore mechanisms to counter the threat of poaching and illegal trade and to strengthen international cooperation to improve clarity of legal trade data and verification of trade documents.

MEXICO

50. During the reporting period, the Mexican Scientific Authority (CONABIO) has coordinated a series of activities and projects to evaluate the conservation status of CITES-listed, and potentially to be listed (i.e. possible amendment proposals by Mexico at the next CoP), species:
 - *Crax rubra*, *Meleagris ocellata*, *Penelope purpurascens*: From 20-22 May, 2015 CONABIO sponsored a workshop on the "Assessment on the conservation status, uses, management and trade of *Crax rubra*, *Penelope purpurascens* and the *Ocellated Turkey*" in order to evaluate whether the three species of birds (imported as hunting trophies mainly by the U.S.) meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I or II of CITES. The workshop was attended by 30 participants, including landowners, non-governmental associations, government sector and experts. As part of the outcomes, the participants concluded that the level of international trade in the three species poses no threat to their survival, and therefore they do not warrant listing under Appendices I or II.
 - Projects on *Isostichopus fuscus* (developed by Ph D. Francisco Solís of the Limnology and Sea Sciences Institute ICMYL, UNAM), *Xenosaurus grandis* (by PhD. Victor Hugo Reynoso, of the Institute of Biology, UNAM), *Claudius angustatus* and *Staurotypus triporcatus* (by PhD Julio Alberto Lemos, of the Faculty of Superior Studies Iztacala, FES Iztacala, UNAM), *Holacanthus clarionensis* (by Ph D.

Hector Reyes of the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur, UABCS): Similarly, these projects are aimed to assess the pertinence of listing these species under Appendix I or II; their outcomes and recommendations are currently in process and under revision by CONABIO.

- Species of the genus *Abronia* (alligator lizards imported mainly by the U.S. and Germany): On the basis of the feedback received by members of the Animals Committee during AC27, Parties delegates, and NGOs, CONABIO is under consultations with all range states of *Abronia* spp. (Honduras, el Salvador and Guatemala) to evaluate the pertinence of listing the whole genus under Appendix II. Mexico will present the findings and recommendations of said consultations as a working document of the present meeting.
51. Following the inclusion of genus *Agalychnis* (five species of tree frogs) in Appendix II (CoP15 Prop. 13; co-sponsored by Mexico and Honduras), and in compliance with Resolution Conf. 11.19 on identification manuals, CONABIO is preparing information sheets for the five species which are to be included in the *CITES Wiki Identification Manual*.
 52. Update of the "Bird and Mammal Identification Guide": To provide the Mexican official personnel responsible for wildlife monitoring and inspection with scientific information on the identification of heavily traded wild birds and mammals in Mexico listed under CITES, an updated version of the Guide, drafted in 1998, is being developed (the webpage is under construction at: http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/planeta/cites/publicaciones/guia_am/). This Guide will be published online and formatted to fit into electronic tablets of the main operating systems in the market.
 53. CONAPESCA is coordinating the process for the modification of the Mexican Official Standard NOM-029-PESC-2006, responsible fishing shark and rays, which establishes regulations for the sustainable use of elasmobranchs in waters under federal jurisdiction of Mexico. This Amendment to Mexican Official Standard is in the developmental phase (attention to comments received during the consultation phase). Before its publication in the Official Gazette, it will be endorsed by the Technical Working Group, the Subcommittee on Responsible Fisheries and the National Advisory Committee on Agrofeed Standardization (SAGARPA).
 54. Between April 2014 and April 2015, the CITES Law Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA) conducted 8,473 verifications to the transboundary movements of specimens, parts and derivatives of species of wild origin in major maritime and inland ports, international airports and border crossings.
 55. Mexico is focusing efforts in drawing the attention of the region towards the critical situation of the totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) and the vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), both species endemic to Mexico and listed under Appendix I, and recognized as critically endangered by the IUCN's Red List. Totoaba is a fish highly valued for its swim bladder (to which medicinal and aphrodisiac properties are attributed), and imported mainly by China and Japan, occasionally through the U.S. Vaquita is subject to by-catch during totoaba's illegal harvest, and its wild populations are estimated to be under 100 individuals. Following the recommendation of the U.S. and Canada within the "XX annual meeting of the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management" (San Diego, California; 13-17 April, 2015), Mexico is to request the Secretariat issuance of a Notification aimed to: a) raise awareness and seek international cooperation to address the critical situation of both species; b) request Parties to seize all illegal shipments of totoaba and notify the Mexican Authorities and the Secretariat on these activities; and c) share successful experiences that might help address the totoaba-vaquita problem.
 56. From April 2 to 20, 2014, a joint operation was carried out between authorities in marine species (PROFEPA), General Administration of Customs-SAT, National Commission on Fisheries and Aquaculture (CONAPESCA), and the Secretary of the Navy of Mexico, resulting in 870 inspections of private vehicles at checkpoints and fishing vessels. In those inspections, dry pieces, similar to Totoaba Craw (totoaba), were secured.
 57. PROFEPA is working in the "Barcode of Life Project" coordinated by the Mexican Network of Barcode of Life (Mexbol) which is composed of several institutions of higher education and research. The goal is to give an additional tool for the law enforcement in order to identify species under international trade by genetic means, and serve as scientific and technical evidence in administrative and criminal cases. So far we have made significant progress building a genetic reference library (the goal is to have 200 priority species and 800 similar), as well as providing training courses to the law enforcement staff; and pilot tests on processing samples from marine species like sharks. Funding is from the Google Foundation, administered by the International Consortium of Barcode.

UNITED STATES

58. The U.S. (DOI-ITAP and USFWS) on June 23, 2014, presented a talk on CITES and anti-wildlife trafficking measures to about 20 trainees of the Department of State (Foreign Service Institute). These trainees will be assigned to U.S. embassies and consulates around the world.

U.S. Law Enforcement Activities

59. U.S. Turtle Trafficking – On September 24, 2014, a Canadian citizen and another individual were arrested by USFWS special agents in Detroit in connection with an ongoing investigation of trafficking in U.S. turtle species. The Canadian had been caught carrying 51 live turtles from the U.S. into Canada on August 5, 2014. His smuggling operation involved traveling to the U.S., picking up turtles and tortoises that had been shipped to Fed Ex and UPS locations, repackaging them, shipping some out of the country and taking others to Canada for sale there. Shipments suspected of being linked to this suspect were intercepted in Anchorage, Alaska, on August 17 (218 live turtles) and in Hong Kong in early September (317) live turtles. The second defendant, arrested in Detroit, was intercepted at the Detroit airport where he planned to board a flight for China; over 900 turtles were found inside his checked luggage.
60. Totoaba Trafficking – A defendant was sentenced in San Diego for smuggling 241 totoaba swim bladders into the U.S. from Mexico. The man, who is 75 years old, must spend one year in home confinement and pay \$120,500 in restitution to PROFEPA in Mexico. In a separate civil action, resolved in February, this defendant agreed to pay the government \$138,750 (75 percent of the value of the California house used in the smuggling scheme for drying out the swim bladders).
61. Staff at the San Diego law enforcement office met with the Chief, Political/Economic Section of the U.S. Consulate in Tijuana at that official's request to discuss illegal fishing of totoaba. A briefing was provided on ongoing totoaba trafficking investigations in Southern California, and the official accompanied staff to San Felipe where totoaba are being gutted for their swim bladders along the beaches.
62. Operation Bruin – To date, seven defendants have been sentenced as a result of this cooperative U.S./Canada investigation of illegal guiding and wildlife trafficking between the U.S. and Canada during 2002 through 2011. Approximately 24 illegal commercial hunts for brown bears and/or mountain goats were documented with a value of \$8,000 to \$14,000 per hunt. To cover the illegal take, numerous false documents, including sealing certificates, guide hunt records, and CITES export permits, were used to facilitate the movement of illegal wildlife from the United States into Canada. Penalties assessed to date total more than \$89,000 in fines and restitution and the forfeiture of some \$100,000 worth of assets, including a Super Cub airplane. Five defendants await prosecution on Federal charges in the U.S., while another five face State charges. Eight defendants are slated to go to trial in Canada.
63. NACLEC Leadership Academy – The first class of wildlife law enforcement officers graduated from the NACLEC Leadership Academy at the NCTC on September 18, 2014. The Academy, which was developed by the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs (NACLEC) in partnership with the Service Office of Law Enforcement, provides advanced leadership training within the specific context of wildlife and natural resource conservation law enforcement. This first graduating class included 34 students from 20 State wildlife agencies and a representative from Nova Scotia. States represented included the Dakotas, Maine, California, Oklahoma, Missouri, Wisconsin, Alaska, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Wyoming, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Kansas, Rhode Island, Montana, Utah and Oregon
64. Grants: Conservation Grants: The USFWS administers a number of grant-making programs focused on CITES-listed species, including the African Elephant Conservation Fund, Asian Elephant Conservation Fund, Great Ape Conservation Fund, Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund, and the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (collectively termed the Multinational Species Conservation Funds). The USFWS Division of International Conservation implements a competitive award process for each fund biannually. In 2014, the combined awards of these Multinational Species Conservation Funds totaled approximately USD10.26 million, with an additional USD18.69 million leveraged through matching funds.
65. The USFWS also implements the Critically Endangered Animals Conservation Fund and the Amphibians in Decline Fund. Both of these annual competitive grant programs make awards for the conservation of CITES-listed species or other species which may be impacted by trade. In addition, the USFWS operates the Wildlife Without Borders—Regional programs, which are regionally (rather than species) based. The Regional programs award competitive grants and support capacity building for conservation work in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico, Russia, and East Asia. In 2014, the combined awards of these

Funds/Regional programs totaled approximately USD11.91 million, with an additional USD10.83 million leveraged through matching funds. Additional information regarding these grant programs can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/international/grants-and-reporting/>.

U.S. Aid for International Development (USAID) and CITES: Recent Relevant Actions and Results

66. USAID takes a comprehensive approach to conservation, including efforts to counter poaching and illegal trade in endangered species. Ongoing bilateral, regional and transcontinental activities in Africa and Asia are helping governments in 25 countries detect and deter poaching, improve wildlife law enforcement and prosecution, disrupt illegal transit, and reduce consumer demand for wildlife products. Using FY 2014 and FY 2015 funds, USAID is starting more than 35 new projects, for a total of more than 65 activities that advance the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking. New interventions reinforce site-based efforts while also addressing weaknesses in judicial systems, local and national policies, international law enforcement cooperation, and more recently detecting and discouraging transport of wildlife products on ships and airlines, especially from Africa to Asia. We support technology applications to scale impact, including a systematic approach to DNA and isotopic sampling of seized rhino horn and ivory that is helping CITES members adhere to international agreements. A new Wildlife Crime Technology Challenge is sourcing innovative science and technology-based solutions to detect transit routes, strengthen forensic evidence, reduce consumer demand, and tackle corruption. USAID also supports wildlife surveys and wildlife trafficking analyses to prioritize and track effectiveness of interventions.
67. Illustrative results of USAID assistance in the last two years include: training provided to more than 1000 law enforcement officials contributed to at least 500 poachers and wildlife traffickers being arrested in 2014 alone; since April 2011, campaigns to reduce demand for wildlife products have leveraged 4 million USD from governmental and private partnerships to reach over 740 million people across Asia through the internet, TV spots, and installations at airports, train stations and border crossings; three regional workshops in Central, East and Southern Africa in 2013 and 2014 brought to scale the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART), designed to improve the effectiveness of wildlife law enforcement monitoring, and now an essential component of USAID's work in Central Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique and the Philippines; WildScan, a new multi-language mobile application that identifies more than 300 endangered species, is now supporting a rapid response to wildlife trafficking in southeast Asia; following 2014 assessments on elephant ivory, rhinoceros horn and abalone trafficking, authorities in South Africa and elsewhere are taking action to build capacity to detect and disrupt illegal wildlife trade; in Thailand, a campaign started in 2013 to keep shark fin off restaurant menus now has over 180 participating establishments (as of June 2015).