

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



Thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-21 July 2018

Species specific matters

Aquatic species

PRECIOUS CORALS (ORDER ANTIPATHARIA AND FAMILY CORALLIIDAE)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.190 to 17.193 on *Precious corals (Order Antipatharia and family Corallidae)* as follows:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

***17.190 The Secretariat, subject to external funding, is requested to:***

- a) issue a notification that invites precious coral range States and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, on a voluntary basis, to complete a questionnaire/survey (Annex 2 of document CoP17 Com. I. 11) to report data on their precious coral resources (black, red, and pink coral species including species within the order Antipatharia, and family Corallidae), especially current and historical abundance, biological status, management, and any known harvest for domestic or international trade; and
- b) compile range States' and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations' data into a report for submission to the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee for its consideration.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

***17.191 The Secretariat, subject to external funding, is requested to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to commission a study by species experts on CITES and non-CITES listed precious coral species (black, red, and pink coral species including species within the order Antipatharia, and family Corallidae) including:***

- a) consideration of any responses received to the Notification issued in response to Decision 17.190;
- b) compilation of available data and information on the biology, population status, use and trade in each species, as well as identification of gaps in such data and information;
- c) comparison of the management and harvest regulation schemes for black and red and pink coral species; and
- d) preparation of a report for consideration at the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee, on the conservation status and trade of precious corals, including guidance, if appropriate, on the actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of precious corals.

**Directed to the Animals Committee**

**17.192** *The Animals Committee is requested to:*

- a) *analyse the outcomes of the precious coral survey and the FAO study and prepare recommendations, as appropriate, on actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade; and*
- b) *report these recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 70th meeting.*

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

**17.193** *The Standing Committee is requested to consider the information and recommendations of the Animals Committee, made in accordance with Decision 17.192, and make its own recommendations, as appropriate, for communication to the Parties or for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. The Secretariat previously reported on its implementation of Decision 17.190 to the Animals Committee in document [AC29 Doc. 22](#), which contained in its [Annex](#) the responses to the Notification issued pursuant to Decision 17.190, paragraph a).
4. The Secretariat further informed the Animals Committee orally at its 29th meeting (AC29, Geneva, July 2017) that the United States of America, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), had generously provided funding for the implementation of Decision 17.191, specifically to commission a study by species experts on CITES and non-CITES listed precious coral species (black, red, and pink coral species, including species within the order Antipatharia, and family Corallidae).
5. In order to facilitate the implementation of its mandate in Decision 17.192, the Animals Committee established an intersessional working group tasked with analysing and reviewing the study produced pursuant to Decision 17.191 as soon as it becomes available. The tasks of the working group as agreed in its mandate are as follows:
  - a) *to analyse the study commissioned in response to Decision 17.191 and to formulate recommendations for consideration at the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee;*
  - b) *to analyse the outcomes of the study and prepare recommendations on actions to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest;*
  - c) *to review other relevant issues, such as identification of corals and coral products in trade issues; and*
  - d) *to think about potential future enforcement issues such as synthetic corals.*
- (see [AC29 summary record](#) for the membership of the working group).
6. As requested in Decision 17.191, the Secretariat worked closely with FAO to develop the terms of reference for the abovementioned study. It was decided to divide the study into a Mediterranean and an Asian component. FAO agreed to oversee these two regional studies, as well as their compilation into a single report for consideration by the Animals Committee.
7. While contractual processes are not yet finalized, FAO advanced the necessary resources to start working on the study and agreed to provide an advanced draft of the study to the Animal Committee's intersessional working group prior to its 30th meeting. This will allow the working group to fulfil paragraph a) of its mandate. The Secretariat expresses its sincere gratitude to FAO for its commitment to moving this important topic forward.
8. FAO will submit a report that incorporates the feedback received from the intersessional working group to the CITES Secretariat. It is to be made available to the Animals Committee at its present meeting as an information document.

### Recommendations

9. The Animals Committee is invited to take note of this document.
10. Taking account of the analysis by its intersessional working group of the outcomes of the precious coral survey and the FAO study, the Animals Committee may wish to consider establishing an in-session working group to prepare recommendations, as appropriate, on actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade for reporting to the Standing Committee at its 70th meeting.