

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

Terrestrial species

Snakes (Serpentes spp.)

CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE OF AND TRADE IN SNAKES

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17; Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions on *Snakes (Serpentes spp.)*:

Directed to the Secretariat

17.284 *The CITES Secretariat shall, subject to external funding:*

- a) *compile information and develop guidance that can 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 in trade;*
- b) *conduct one or more interdisciplinary workshops for CITES authorities, and other relevant authorities and stakeholders, of range States of Asian snake species in international trade on:*
 - i) *the use of guidance for monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems; and*
 - ii) *the use of guidance for making non-detriment findings and establishing export quotas for Appendix-II snake species in trade; and*
- c) *report on the results of these activities to the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee, as appropriate, before the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

17.279 *The Animals Committee shall continue to review guidance on the making of non-detriment findings for the export of CITES-listed snakes, information from Benin, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia and Togo provided in accordance with Decision 17.276 and new information on the trade in, and sustainable use and conservation of snakes, and make recommendations to the Standing Committee as appropriate.*

Implementation of Decision 17.284

3. Concerning **paragraph a)** of Decision 17.284, at its previous meeting, the Animals Committee took note of document [AC29 Doc. 31.1](#), and the guidance by the International Union for Conservation of nature (IUCN) that it contained to assist Parties in the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) for trade in CITES-listed snakes (with additional relevance to management systems for wild populations, and the establishment of export quotas for Appendix-II snake species in trade).
4. In compliance with **paragraph b)** of Decision 17.284, the Secretariat conducted an interdisciplinary workshop for CITES authorities and other stakeholders of range States of Asian snake species in international trade. The workshop took place in Bogor, Indonesia, from 1 to 4 May 2018, and was combined with sessions focusing more broadly on captive-bred and ranched specimens (in compliance with Decision 17.102). This capacity-building event was made possible thanks to the generous support from the European Union and the United States of America, and substantial in-kind support from Indonesia, for which the Secretariat is very grateful. Particularly valuable logistical and technical support was provided by IUCN.
5. Indonesia is the world's largest exporter of snakes, including their parts and derivatives – both in terms of number of species and volume of trade. Representatives of most Asian Parties participated in the workshop (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam). In addition, the CITES Secretariat, the Chair of the Animals Committee, and representatives from the European Union and Solomon Islands also attended the workshop.
6. The objectives of the workshop aligned closely with Decision 17.284, with a day dedicated to discussion of monitoring production systems for snakes, and collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to make informed NDFs for trade in CITES Appendix-II listed snakes.
7. Participants were familiarized with guidance produced by the CITES Secretariat on: [applying CITES source codes to snake exports](#); [inspecting snake captive breeding facilities](#); [implementing techniques for differentiating between wild and captive-bred snakes](#); and [conducting NDFs for snakes](#). Participants were able to apply these guidance documents using a variety of classroom exercises modelled after real scenarios for trade in Asian snakes. In addition, participants applied the guidance at two facilities breeding and trading in CITES Appendix-II listed snakes. Live demonstrations were provided on how to specifically monitor captive-breeding facilities, and use methods for differentiating wild and captive snakes. In addition, participants were walked through specific snake data collection techniques for informing NDFs, and able to observe these techniques applied to a variety of snake taxa.
8. Although not all participants can be expected to implement these techniques themselves, it is expected that they have acquired the ability to train other personnel in their home countries. They left the workshop with a far greater knowledge on how to better implement the CITES Convention with regard to snakes. Feedback provided by participants was overall very positive, with suggestions that more (and longer) workshops on these topics (particularly NDFs) would be welcomed in future – particularly in range States heavily engaged in snake trade. As stated under the News section on the CITES website, the Secretariat believes that the workshop was highly successful¹.
9. The Secretariat is reporting on the outcomes of the above-mentioned activities to the Animals Committee, as per **paragraph c)** of Decision 17.284.

Recommendations

10. The Animals Committee is invited to take note of this document, and provide comments as appropriate on the activities conducted by the Secretariat in compliance with Decision 17.284, as described above.

¹ See https://www.cites.org/eng/news/first-training-workshop-in-a-series-kicked-off-in-indonesia-as-cites-strives-to-better-regulate-trade-in-captive-raised-animals_04052018